CONVIVIAL CULTURES IN MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES:
NARRATIVES OF POLISH MIGRANTS IN BRITAIN AND SPAIN

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A8: The nation states which entered the European Union in May 2004: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary.

CBOS (Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej): Centre for Public Opinion Research, a major opinion polling institute in Poland.

EU: European Union

ONS: Office for National Statistics

UK: United Kingdom

WWI: First World War

WWII: Second World War
ABSTRACT

The European Union expansion in 2004 has resulted in the most significant migration within Europe in recent years. While a contemporary understanding of multicultural Europe often emerges from politicians’ ideas on managing diversity, this thesis concentrates on a new understanding of multicultural societies which emerges from routine interaction between the recent arrivals and established individuals. These new patterns of interaction are a result of what Gilroy (2004) calls conviviality. While the literature on conviviality tends to focus on non-white ethnic minorities, my study fills the gap in research by concentrating on convivial experience of recent migrants coming from a predominantly white society to super-diverse cities. This research empirically explores how convivial culture emerges in encounters between Polish migrant women and the local population in Manchester and Barcelona, in the context of post-2004 migration. By applying a cross-cultural comparative and gendered approach to research on conviviality, the thesis focuses on Polish presence increasingly affecting multiple and complex relations situated in a specific time and place, and positioned by personal biographies.

It develops the conceptualisation of conviviality by drawing on the historic and contemporary forms of convivencia in the Spanish and Latin American context. This allows an understanding of conviviality as a practical and dynamic process grounded in daily interactions. Furthermore, the conceptual framework is situated within the emerging field of geographies of encounters, and literature on race, racism and whiteness. It draws on the combination of methods, including participant observation, focus groups and narrative interviews conducted with Polish migrant women in Manchester and Barcelona. It stresses the importance of a person-centred approach through a use of cases. This contributes to a better understanding of everyday social relations between these women and the local population, including settled ethnic minorities and other migrants. The empirically explored narratives shed light on interaction in a myriad of quotidian situations in various spaces of the neighbourhoods, homes and in the workplaces. These encounters illustrate various forms of conviviality not necessarily free from tensions and classed, racialised and gendered perceptions of the Other.
DECLARATION

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

European politicians and academics have engaged in debates on how to come to terms with growing super-diversity due to an increase of ‘new migrants’ not only with different ethnic origins but also with diverse migration histories, genders, ages, religions, languages, education levels, legal statuses and economic backgrounds (Vertovec, 2007b). This has raised questions of how migrant populations and host societies can cope successfully with the challenges involved in living together. However, this re-emerging idea of having to deal with the issue of living together often falls into the discourse of immigration and diversity causing a problem often discussed in terms of segregation, competition for housing and welfare, as well as conflict between different groups (Valentine, 2008; Neal et al, 2013). This thesis concentrates on the importance of complex daily encounters between Polish migrant women and the local population in Manchester and Barcelona, including established ethnic minorities and other migrants of non-Polish origin. Conviviality is the main theoretical framework used to understand the process of living together at the local level. It specifically explores daily encounters in various areas of the neighbourhoods and at the workplace in terms of ethnicity, religion, class, gender, age and other categories which often intersect.

Shortly after I began my doctoral studies in September 2011, I noticed a growing number of scholars and researchers focusing on conviviality by exploring the ways of living together in urban spaces (Erickson, 2011; Heil, 2012, 2014; Karner and Parker, 2011; Koch and Latham, 2011; Padilla et al, 2015; Wessendorf, 2014a; Wise and Velayutham, 2014). Nowicka and Vertovec (2013: 1) argue that this “convivial turn” (Neal et al, 2013: 320) reflects a deeper concern about “human modes of togetherness”. My empirical study of conviviality differs from the existing research for four main reasons:

- It acknowledges the shortcomings of previous studies that mostly focus on a single country case. By introducing a comparative lens it allows the exploration of the ways in which conviviality is experienced in two cities with attention to multiple settings, including social, political, cultural, national and local contexts.
I discuss my approach to studying conviviality comparatively and my choice of Manchester and Barcelona in Chapter 3.

- While the study of gender and migration has been marginalised in the larger field of migration studies (Ryan and Webster, 2008), this thesis stresses the importance of women’s experiences of conviviality affected by individual circumstances and the positionality of migrant women. It offers a critical perspective aiming to shed light on migrant women’s daily encounters in multicultural societies.

- Whereas literature on conviviality tends to focus on relations between host society and postcolonial/non-European/non-white ethnic minorities, my study concentrates on encounters between post-2004 Polish migrants not only with the native population but also with settled ethnic minorities and other migrants. What is particularly interesting about these migrants is their unstable racialised positioning as privileged white Europeans and migrant Others. This positioning introduces the discourses of whiteness and racialisation to discussions on conviviality.

- This research contributes to the field of geographies of encounters by focusing on multiple locations. It highlights the importance of investigating largely under-researched workplace relations. Furthermore, while research on conviviality mainly focuses on encounters with difference in public and semi-public spaces, private spaces as sites of convivial interaction have been largely overlooked. Since my research participants often referred to encounters in private spaces of homes, whether in the context of domestic work or interaction with flatmates, neighbours or other mothers they met during playgroups or at schools and colleges, this research contributes to the understanding of conviviality in a domestic environment.

The EU enlargement in May 2004 has become a significant event in the history of European migration. The UK, Ireland and Sweden were the only member states which granted A8 nationals free access to the labour market immediately after EU enlargement (Anderson et al, 2006). Public and political discourses on migration shifted to controversial discussions about new ‘Eastern European’ migrants, the length of their
stay and their impact on the economy and public services. The profound impact of EU expansion on migration patterns within Europe has triggered an immense interest in research on migratory movements from Eastern and Central Europe. Their lives have been examined through contributions to migration studies from a range of academic disciplines which have focused on the economic impact of Polish migration, typologies of migrants, migration strategies and network formation. There is still a significant gap in research on everyday relations between Polish migrants and the local population, especially in Spain which attracts less Poles than people from other non-European countries (Nalewajko, 2012), although there is a steadily increasing body of research on Polish post-2004 migration in Spain (Kruszelnicki, 2008; Main, 2013; Nalewajko, 2012; Władyka and Morén-Alegret, 2013). In Britain, there has been a growing interest in studying Polish migrants’ responses to other ethnic groups (D’Angelo and Ryan, 2011; Eade et al, 2006; Garapich and Parutis, 2009; Gawlewicz, 2015b; Parutis, 2011; Ryan, 2010; Temple, 2011; Cook et al, 2011a; Cook et al, 2011b). Some of these studies often explore attitudes towards difference explained in terms of the ethnic and religious homogeneity of Polish society. Nevertheless, there is still little focus on the actual experiences of conviviality which often differ from attitudes and opinions about different groups and individuals and are influenced by different histories, geographies, gender, individual circumstances and positionalities of migrants.

In the next part of this Chapter, I briefly discuss the socio-historical context of Poland often discussed as an ethnically homogenous country. I then outline the context of Polish migration to Britain and Spain. I also concentrate on perceptions of Polish migrants in both contexts which may influence experiences of conviviality. Furthermore, I highlight the importance of gendered experiences of conviviality from the perspectives of migrant women. Subsequently, I outline the research questions which have guided me throughout the research process and thesis writing. Finally, I offer an overview of the thesis.

1.1 Coming from an ethnically and religiously homogenous country?

As Valentine (2008: 333) points out, “encounters never take place in a space free from history, material conditions, and power”. Therefore, when discussing Polish migrants’ encounters with difference in multicultural societies, it is important to highlight the
socio-historical and geographic context of Poland. Situated between the East and the West, Poland had been culturally, ethnically and religiously diverse for centuries (Podemski, 2012). From the fourteenth century, the First Polish Republic was a multi-ethnic country in which Poles, Byelorussians, Lithuanians, Ruthenians, Jews, Germans, Armenians and Tatars lived side by side (Kłosowska, 1994). According to Dziekan (2011: 37-38), the history of Polish Tatars, who have been present in Poland for more than 600 years, is a perfect example of coexistence of two different cultures, influencing one another, borrowing various elements and leaving out the others. Furthermore, by the end of the sixteenth century 80% of the world’s Jewish diaspora sought refuge from persecution in Spain, Portugal and Germany. Even though the Polish state lost two-thirds of its territory after the period of partitions (1795-1918), Poland’s diverse ethnic minorities remained, consisting of about one-third of the Second Republic’s population (Kłosowska, 1994: 200). Furthermore, the tragic consequences of the Holocaust during WWII, border changes and the communist regime, which excluded Poland from the rest of the world and repressed difference, have left it as one of the most ethnically, culturally and religiously homogenous countries in the world (Podemski, 2012). While before WWII ethnic minorities constituted about 36% of Poland’s population, they made up merely 2-4% of the Polish population immediately after the fall of the Communist regime (Grzymała-Kazłowska and Okólski, 2003: 24-25).

With the end of socialism, Poland began to deal with arrivals of various groups of migrants, mainly from Southern and Eastern European countries, as well as from Asia and Africa who mostly regarded Poland either as a transit place or as a temporary place where they engaged in informal trade and short-term employment in several major cities (Grzymała-Kazłowska and Okólski, 2003: 24). During the first years of the political transformation there was an atmosphere of excitement and curiosity about diversity. Nevertheless, in the light of the economic recession and high levels of unemployment in the second half of the 1990s, the initial euphoria about difference was replaced with anxiety, stereotyping and prejudice. Despite some claims branding Poland as multicultural (Kempny et al, 1997), encounters between Polish people with non-whites are still rare in many areas of Poland, and as some of my research participants note, the presence of their non-white partners and mixed-race children often attracts a lot of attention, staring and surprise in public spaces. Racialised narratives have been more common and acceptable than in countries of mass immigration (Nowicka, 2012). It is
also important to mention national and ethnic minorities in Poland which have a special status with regard to certain guarantees intended for the maintenance of their cultural identity, religious and linguistic identity: Belarusians, Czechs, Karaites, Lithuanians, Lemkos, Armenians, Germans, Slovaks, Roma, Russians, Tatars, Ukrainians and Jews (Mikulska, 2010: 14). While visual difference has become highly marked in Poland, whiteness has remained unnoticed, unrecognised (by the national community) and unanalysed (by the scientific community) (Imre, 2005). Since race has been associated with non-whites, Polish people’s whiteness has been normalised and invisible.

While Poland has adopted racist discourse from Western Europe (see Chapter 4), it was in turn constructed by the West through the use of imperial narrative as the ‘Other Europe’ perceived as poor, backward and underdeveloped (Imre, 2005; Wilk, 2010; Wolff, 1994). Scholars have used postcolonial studies to explore representations of Eastern Europe as Western Europe’s Other (Buchowski, 2006) and as a discursive construct dating back to the Enlightenment (Wolff, 1994). Owczarzak (2010: 4) argues that “Eastern Europe served as the West’s intermediary Other, neither fully civilised nor fully savage”. Poland’s ambiguous position is described as “not quite-Western and not-quite-Eastern” (11). The fall of the Iron Curtain and subsequently the accession of Poland into the EU in 2004 have constituted significant markers of the ‘return to Europe’ and helped Poland in asserting Europeanness closely linked with whiteness. The EU accession of the new member states has resulted in a recent large scale migration of Poles to the UK, and a smaller one to Spain, where many migrants have encountered people from different social classes, ethnic and religious backgrounds.

1.2 The context of post-2004 Polish migration to Britain

The postwar labour migration in the UK is often discussed in terms of the arrival of postcolonial migrants from Commonwealth countries, most notably from the British Caribbean and South Asia in the 1950s. Over the past three decades, the nature of immigration and diversity has changed dramatically in Britain, characterised by diversification of countries of origin, migration histories, gender, age, religion, languages, education, legal status and economic background (Vertovec, 2007b).

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1 According to Polish law, there are two key elements for minority group recognition: it must have been present in Poland for at least one hundred years, and its members must have Polish citizenship. Whereas national minorities are groups that are from nations which have their own state (e.g., Germans, Lithuanians and Ukrainians), ethnic minorities are not associated with a nation-state (e.g., Roma, Lemkos, Karaites and Tatars) (Mikulska, 2010).
According to the 2011 Census data, 13 % (7.5 million) of the resident population of England and Wales were born outside the UK (ONS, 2012: 1). The most common non-UK countries of birth in England and Wales in 2011 were India, Poland and Pakistan. Geographically, the migrant population is not spread out evenly. The 2011 Census shows that over a third (37%) of London residents were born abroad compared to between 5 and 12% in other regions and Wales (ONS, 2012: 12).

There are diverse groups and diverse diasporic identities of Polish migrants in Britain characterised by multiple patterns of mobility as a result of at least three generations of migratory history between Poland and Britain (Eade et al, 2006). The British Isles became home to a Polish post-war diaspora (Zubrzycki, 1956; Sword, 1996). In the 1980s, thousands of Polish Solidarity protesters migrated to the UK as a result of the Martial Law imposed in 1981 (Garapich, 2008). Polish migration to Britain continued in the 1990s and early twenty first century. During the 1990s and up to accession to the EU, Polish migrants were commonly associated with illegal employment and visa overstaying (Duvell, 2004). The status and the situation of Polish migrants changed significantly on 1 May 2004 when Poland joined the EU. They acquired the same rights as other EU nationals who have the right to live and work in the UK without restrictions, to remain permanently in the UK, and to be joined by dependants (Anderson et al, 2006).

The reason behind the immediate labour market access of A8 nationals into the UK was severe labour marker shortages, mainly in low-wage and low-skill occupations in construction, hospitality, transport sectors and public services (Anderson et al, 2006; Eade et al, 2006). Freedom of movement attracted many Polish people, especially the young, affected by high rates of unemployment, low wages, and lack of opportunities in Poland (White, 2010a). Low-cost transport lowered the cost of travel, encouraging ‘fluid migration’ (Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski, 2009; Bielewska, 2011) with no settlement goal and for an undefined period of time. These newly arrived migrants constituted the largest group from the A8 countries entering Britain, quickly filling the gaps in the labour market. The Home Office registered the peak of this migration between 2005 and 2007 when Polish migrants constituted 65% of those registered (Home Office, 2009). Between 2003 and 2010, the Polish-born population of the UK

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2 In January 2004, the unemployment rate reached its peak of 20.6% while in April 2015 it decreased to 11.2% (GUS, 2015). School leavers were particularly affected (White, 2010a).
increased from 75,000 to 532,000 (ONS, 2011a), although estimates on the numbers of Polish migrants in the UK have proved to be a challenge and the exact number is unknown (see Trevena, 2009). The data did not record the length of stay of migrant workers and there is a limited knowledge of how many had left the UK. Due to the economic crisis, the number has steadily fallen since late 2007. According to 2011 data, Poland remains the most common country of birth for non-UK born mothers (ONS, 2011b). This suggests a changing pattern with regard to settlement intention.\footnote{See Ryan (2015c) for a discussion on extended stay in the UK.}

Furthermore, Polish is the second most spoken language after English in the UK (ONS, 2011c).

Polish migrants are distributed very widely across the country. Their socio-demographic profile of the half-a-million Polish minority is highly varied. They are mostly young (Drinkwater et al, 2006; Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski, 2008) and their qualifications often do not match their employment, although this may change over time (Ryan, 2015c). Many speak English and have finished secondary school or have even obtained a degree (Grabowska-Lusińska and Okólski, 2009), although some researchers highlight that the majority are not university graduates and many have poor English language skills (White, 2011). They work in a variety of sectors including administration; business and management; hospitality and catering; public services; agriculture; manufacturing and food; fish and meat processing; as well as construction (Drinkwater et al, 2006; Trevena, 2009). In addition, there has been a growing population of university students.\footnote{Poland is one of the top ten EU countries sending students to study in England in 2013/2014 (HESA, 2015).} According to 2001-2006 Labour Force Survey data, there had been a minor gender imbalance amongst A8 migrants since 58% of registered workers were male (Drinkwater et al, 2006: 7). Even though the numbers of both female and male migrants have increased over time, women have constituted the majority of the migrant population in the UK; in 2013, 54% of the foreign-born population were women (Rienzo and Vargas-Silva, 2014: 3).

\subsection*{1.2.1 Polish migrants in Manchester}

Manchester has been a city of migrants since the end of the eighteenth century (Werbner, 1990: 11). During the first decades of the nineteenth century, Manchester attracted people from other parts of Britain to work in rapidly expanding industries. It
attracted Irish migrants in the mid-nineteenth century and it was a key arrival city for Jewish and Italian migrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the postwar period the city witnessed the arrival of Polish refugees, mainly soldiers who were incorporated into the British armed forces and granted the right to stay in the UK (Sword, 1989; Bielewska, 2011). From the 1950s, Manchester became home to migrants from the ex-colonies of the British Empire, Afro-Caribbean, Pakistani, and subsequently Bangladeshis. In the last decade, the city has seen the arrival of Polish and Chinese migrants, as well as Somalian refugees. According to the 2011 Census data, the largest ethnic minority groups in Manchester are Pakistani, African and Other White (CoDE, 2013: 1). Most ethnic minority groups are evenly spread residentially across Manchester and the Greater Manchester area. Manchester is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse cities in Europe with up to 200 languages spoken by residents in the Greater Manchester area (Multilingual Manchester, 2013). After English, Urdu is the language most commonly spoken in Manchester followed by Polish (Manchester City Council, 2014a: 32).

In the post-2004 period, Manchester has witnessed the arrival of Polish migrants, amongst other A8 nationals, who have contributed to a greater diversity of the city. Apart from many Polish grocery shops, there is the Polish Catholic Church in Moss Side, Polish Saturday school at the Manchester Academy, Polish Catholic Social Club in Oldham and The Polish Circle in Cheetham Hill. The official statistics on the numbers and distribution of Polish migrants in Manchester are very limited. No local authority in Greater Manchester has published up-to-date figures on post-2004 European migration. According to the Census 2011 data, Central and Eastern European migrants are incorporated in an imprecise category of ‘White Other’, which also includes other Europeans, Jewish, Irish, Americans and Australians. Polish migrants constitute approximately 1 percent of the total population of Manchester (503,127) (CoDE, 2013: 1).

1.2.2 Anti-Polish rhetoric in the British media and politics

The theme of Polish migration in Britain has been widely covered in the media and political discourse, affecting not only the way Polish migrants are viewed by the British

\footnote{For Manchester’s migration history from the Irish, to the Jews, up to post-war new commonwealth migration, see Werbner (1990).}
public but also their everyday experiences. The case of Polish migrants in the UK is significant since they can either be portrayed as ‘us’ – white, European, Christians; or as ‘them’ – racialised as Eastern European Others, taking British jobs and exhausting local services, especially in an unstable economic climate. Before the economic crisis, some media focused on the positive work ethics of Polish migrants by emphasising hard-working-ness, punctuality, value for money and diligence. At the same time the same media presented a very homogenous image of these migrants, often referring to them as ‘Polish plumbers’ (Slack, 2007). With the outbreak of the economic crisis in 2008, there has been a rhetorical shift from ‘hardworking Poles’ to Polish migrants seen as an economic threat culpable of society’s malaise: job shortages, unemployment and the strain on social services⁶ (Doughty, 2008; Hickley, 2009). Polish migrants have also been portrayed as unable to integrate into a diverse population. The relationship between them and the British has been described in terms of a culture clash (Daily Mail, 2006; Asthana and Fitzgerald, 2007). Van Dijk’s (1991: 224) findings demonstrate that through extensive reporting, the media “are able to define the public debate and to communicate essential contents of ethnic situation models that have a lasting effect on people’s social knowledge”. In this light, the negative media representations of Polish migrants over a sustained period of time are likely to shape or reinforce unsympathetic attitudes among the public.

In terms of British politics, playing the ‘immigration card’ is not a new phenomenon and has been reflected in the electoral success of the right wing UK Independence Party (UKIP) in the February 2013 by-elections, the May 2013 local elections and the May 2014 European parliamentary elections. UKIP’s popularity, based on anti-immigration and anti-European policies, is seen as a possible reason for pushing immigration to the top of the political agenda. Speaking on the BBC One (2014) Andrew Marr Show, the Prime Minister David Cameron singled out Polish migrants in the discourse about welfare benefits abuse: “there are other European countries, who like me, think it’s wrong that someone from Poland, who comes here, who works hard and I am absolutely all in favour of that – but I don’t think they should be paying, we should be paying child benefit, to their family back at home in Poland”. Immigration fears have been particularly fuelled by politicians’ regular exaggeration of the negative socio-economic

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⁶ The post-war members of the Polish diaspora, who settled in the UK immediately after the war, were also attacked in relation to their perceived effect on employment, living standards, housing and wages (Zubrzycki, 1956).
impact of immigration, despite the clear evidence of the positive impact of EU migration (Dustmann and Frattini, 2014). This anti-immigrant rhetoric fuelled by some media and politicians has contributed to a general climate of hostility (Fox et al, 2015). In Britain, as in other European countries, xenophobia and liberalism permit opinion makers and politicians to discuss migrants and minorities in terms of a threat (Amin 2013). Hardly any attention has been devoted to the actual convivial experiences of Polish migrants with the established local population.

1.3 The context of post-2004 Polish migration in Spain

In contrast to Britain, Spain was predominantly an emigration state until the 1980s. Since its acceptance into the European Economic Community in 1986, Spain has become a country of immigration and a multi-ethnic society (Escandell and Ceobanu 2009). Initially, as in the British context, the immigration flows reflected former colonial ties between Spain and Latin America, the Philippines, Equatorial Guinea and Morocco. In recent years, Spain has been attracting migrants from other European countries, Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia (Solé and Parella, 2003; Escandell and Ceobanu, 2009). The number of migrants with residence permits was 5,333,805 in 2012. The three main countries of birth of these migrants were Romania, Morocco and Ecuador (Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social, 2012a).

Spain had already witnessed the arrival of anti-communist political refugees from Central and Eastern Europe between 1945 and 1989. The arrival of Polish migrants became more significant in the late eighties when some were seeking asylum to flee the oppressive government while others sought a better quality life (Ramírez Goicoechea, 2003). They constituted the largest group of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe until the late nineties and for this reason the Polish migrants were often considered as representative of the groups of Central and Eastern Europe, as a bearer of all traits attributed to these groups (Hellermann and Stanek, 2006). In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Spain attracted a substantially large number of Romanian migrants, as well as Bulgarians and Ukrainians (Stanek, 2007). Along with six other member states, Spain adopted a restrictive immigration policy which effectively blocked access to their labour markets for at least two years following accession of the A8 member

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7 In 2005, there were approximately 307,000 Romanians, 89,000 Bulgarians and 63,000 Ukrainians, in comparison to 34,000 Poles (Stanek, 2007: 288).
states to the EU (Drinkwater et al, 2006). Spain did not open its labour market to the new accession countries until May 2006. The extent of post-2004 Polish migration to Spain is substantially smaller than in Britain. The December 2014 statistics show that there are about 90,835 Polish migrants living in Spain with residence permits (Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social, 2014), compared to 12,817 in 2002 and 23,617 in 2004 (Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social, 2012). However, the actual number of Polish migrants is likely to be much higher. Initially, Polish men worked mostly in construction, while Polish women worked in the domestic sector often not recognised in the statistics (Arnal Sarsa, 1998; Mein, 2013; Nalewajko, 2012; Rodríguez Rodríguez, 1995). While at first, Polish migration to Spain was overrepresented by men, by 1996 women constituted nearly half of the Polish collective (Arnal Sarsa, 1998; Nalewajko, 2012). Since the transition period, Polish migration has been characterised by a new type of Polish migrant: young, educated, coming from bigger cities, entrepreneurial and students (Nalewajko, 2012). Many of them came to Spain not only for economic reasons, but also to gain work experience, attend exchange programmes, postgraduate studies (Kruszelnicki, 2008) and language learning courses. They also came to discover the culture, search for new experiences and seek adventure. Their employment often matched their qualifications or served to improve them. They mostly migrated to big cities. Initially, many arrived in Madrid as well as Toledo, Segovia and Avila, where earlier political refugees had settled. Those mainly employed in agriculture and tourism moved to Valencia, Murcia and Alicante, while those with higher education and who were highly skilled often arrive in Barcelona (Nalewajko, 2012; Władyka and Morén-Alegret, 2013).

1.3.1 Polish migrants in Barcelona

As in the context of Manchester, Polish migrants arriving in Barcelona have encountered a very diverse population from Spain and other parts of the world. Barcelona is situated in Catalonia, one of the seventeen Comunidades Autónomas and a stateless nation, characterised by strong ethnic, linguistic and cultural movements, where its citizens exhibit diverse national attachments to the rest of Spain (Rodon and Franco-Guillén, 2014). During my fieldwork in Barcelona which began in September

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8 The younger age and higher level of education of post-2004 Polish migrants in comparison to those who left Poland in previous years is a shared characteristic in other EU countries resulting in an increase in the brain drain phenomenon (Władyka and Morén-Alegret, 2013; Burrell, 2009; White, 2010a).
2012, Catalonia witnessed pro-independence street demonstrations, especially in the city of Barcelona on 11 September, the national day of Catalonia, *La Diada*. At the time of writing, there has been much tension and anticipation in Catalonia with regard to the question of Catalan independence in the light of regional elections in September 2015.

Barcelona’s twentieth century history of immigration dates back to the times after the Spanish Civil War, in the 1940s and 1950s, when a great number of Spaniards arrived in Barcelona from the rest of Spain to seek employment. In the 1960s, Spaniards from mainly Andalusia and Extremadura continued arriving in the city (Zapata-Barrero, 2014). Since the last decade of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century, Barcelona has experienced major social changes following the arrival of transnational migrants from very diverse backgrounds, including countries from Latin America, Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, China and Europe (Escandell and Ceobanu, 2009). In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century Barcelona saw significant immigration of low-skilled workers from Morocco, the Philippines, Pakistan, Latin America and China (Władyka and Morén-Alegret, 2013). While in January 2000, the number of migrants living in Barcelona represented 3.5% of the total population, at the time of my fieldwork in 2012, this proportion was just over 17% with the highest number of migrants from Pakistan, Italy, China and Ecuador (Barcelona City Council, 2012a). The migrant population in Barcelona decreased to approximately 16% in 2015, with the highest number of migrants from Italy, Pakistan, China and France (Barcelona City Council, 2015a).

The presence of Polish people in Barcelona dates back to early twentieth century and is marked by the foundation of the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Poland to Barcelona in 1930. In 1946 approximately 200 Polish children stolen by the Nazis during the WWII arrived in Barcelona (Barbería, 2008). In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Barcelona saw an increase of the Polish population as a result of EU expansion. Between 2001 and 2009 the number of Polish migrants increased nearly eightfold (Władyka and Morén-Alegret, 2013: 147). At the time of my fieldwork in 2012, they numbered 2,224, increasing to 2,453 in January 2015 (Barcelona City Council, 2015b). According to the Municipal Population Census, the majority live in

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9 See Burgen’s (2012) article in *The Guardian* for more information.
Raval, Poble Sec and Sagrada Familia, but many are dispersed in other areas of Barcelona and they do not tend to live in one particular area (Barcelona City Council, 2012b). Polish amenities and events include: Polish masses in the Catholic churches of Sant Jaume and Santa Eulalia; a Catalan-Polish Cultural Association with a Polish library; a Polish school for children; the Polish grocery store, Krakowiak, and the Polonia-Barcelona group that organises events and activities popular amongst recent migrants and people from other backgrounds.

1.3.2 Positive discourse about Polish migrants in Spain

Even though immigration in Spain, apart from Catalonia, has been used as a political tool for mainstream political parties (Escandell and Ceobanu, 2009), there has been no significant opposition towards Polish citizens who are generally not considered as a problem, in comparison to non-white and non-European migrants. This could be due not only to the small numbers of Polish migrants in Spain but also an assumed cultural historical, political and religious proximity (González Yanci and Aguilera Arilla, 1996; Nalewajko, 2010). In particular, both Poland and Spain are perceived as Catholic countries with past dictatorial regimes. Also, both guard the external borders of the EU. Furthermore, the absence of a negative framing of Polish migrants could be a perception of Poland as the Spanish ally in a socio-political context (Garton, 2004).

Poles are often referred to as a model of a migrant group well-integrated in Spanish society (Hellermann and Stanek, 2006), and they have been used in comparisons with other immigrants, especially in some media and political debates. For instance, in 1991 Jordi Pujol, former President of the Catalan Autonomous Government, said: “In Catalonia, as in any European country, it is easy to integrate the Polish, Italians or Germans, but it is difficult to achieve that with Arab Muslims, even with those who are not fundamentalists” (Cesari, 2006: 236). In this light, it is possible that Polish migrants might be used to distance Spain from its Moorish past, especially considering that Polish Catholicism and preserving religious practices might place Polish migrants in a privileged position in the Spanish imagination (Ramírez Goicoechea, 2003). Furthermore Polish migrants in Spain are often perceived as well-educated, polyglots, well-behaved and therefore accepted by Spanish society and often offered better job opportunities on the Spanish labour market; this may contribute to a sense of superiority of Polish migrants in comparison to less desired groups (Nalewajko, 2012).
1.4 Gender and migration

The issues of gender and women’s experiences have been neglected in migration studies (Mahler and Pessar, 2006). Research on post-war migration to Western Europe concentrated mainly on the male migrants (Erel, 2007; Kindler and Napierała, 2010; Phizacklea, 1983). There were assumptions that women migrated only as family followers or for family reunification, even though, since the 1950s, migrant women have been independent labour migrants, especially from the Caribbean to the UK (Phizacklea, 2003). This has contributed to the stereotype of passive and unproductive migrant women dependent on men and often isolated from the host society (Kindler and Napierała, 2010). The lack of women as objects of study in research on migration was linked to the assumption that their role in the labour market was much less significant for the economy of the host countries in comparison to men.

Some scholars have offered a genealogy of research on feminism and migration, mostly in the North American context (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2000); however, different contexts have different histories of migration. While family reunification processes started in the 1970s in Northern Europe, it was not until the 1980s that countries like Spain became a destination for transnational migrants. One of the most important changes in migration studies from the last decades of the twentieth century has been the focus on the growing feminisation of migration (Castles and Miller, 2009; Phizacklea, 2003; Ribas-Mateos, 2000). In Spain, for instance, female migration was the result of the state response to the gendered demand in the labour market for foreign women as domestic workers since 1993 (Ribas-Mateos, 2000). Phizacklea (2003) argues that women have constituted a significant proportion of labour migrants in transnational movements and it cannot be concluded that migrant women simply follow men transnationally.

There are, however, some issues with the research on migrant women. Firstly, studies on women’s migration within Europe and the United States have mainly concentrated on their role in the domestic sector of the receiving countries, where the demand for domestic work has resulted in the incorporation of women into the destination labour market and unequal distribution of household responsibilities between men and women (Anderson, 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2000; Parreñas, 2009; Ribas-Mateos, 2000). This literature risks reinforcing the stereotype of women limited to the domestic sector. Secondly, migrant women have often been portrayed a) as victimised by the global
structures of inequality, forcing them to migrate, and b) as caught up within oppressive
gender relations of their families and wider ethnic communities (Erel, 2007; Siara,
the economic factors impacting on mobility. She points out that, in the period of
postsocialist transformation, Polish women often migrated as a result of unemployment.
She also suggests that migration in that period was a result of the new possibility of
freedom of movement. Other reasons for migration include: study abroad; learning a
foreign language; work experience; European exchange programmes; saving money for
studies or travelling; better future for children; new life experiences and adventure.
Thirdly, research and literature on migration often represent migrant women as
dependent on co-ethnic social networks and, therefore, experiencing isolation from
receiving society (Hagan, 1998; Kindler and Napierała, 2010). It is also argued that the
nature of their work (presumably with co-ethnics or in domestic work) often limits the
possibilities of establishing relations with the local population in comparison to men
(Kindler and Napierała, 2010). In other words, research on migrants overlooks the
importance of encounters between migrant women with the local population. My study
challenges the perception of migrant women as limited to contact with co-ethnics and it
demonstrates that they have become significant actors shaping conviviality in
multicultural cities.

Migrant women are often discussed as a homogenous group (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2000;
Mahler and Pessar, 2006). Nevertheless, there are many different categories of women
involved in migratory movements, including asylum seekers, refugees, the unskilled,
the skilled, professional migrants, seasonal migrants, undocumented migrants (Anthias,
2008) and all these from different ethnicities, classes, religions, educations, ages, with
disabilities and so on. The situation of Polish migrant women in the post-2004 context
is very different from non-EU migrant women affected by restrictive immigration
policies. This gives Polish women the advantage of entering the labour market without
restrictions and might impact on their encounters with the local population. As I discuss
in Chapter 3, their assumed whiteness is also often considered as an asset and plays an
important part in raced, classed and gendered encounters. There has been a growing
interest with regard to Polish migrant women in European countries in the context of
Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Main, 2013; Ryan, 2010; White, 2010b). Nevertheless, little
attention has been devoted to migrant women’s experiences of encounters with
difference in terms of ethnicity, gender, religion and class in often gendered city spaces.

1.5 Research aims and questions
This thesis aims to explore Polish migrant women’s experiences of cross-cultural
interaction with members of British and Spanish multicultural societies. Whilst there
has been a growing body of work on Polish migration, the daily encounters
characterised by raced, classed and gendered dynamics as well as convivial possibilities
in various city spaces have been under-researched.

This thesis aims to address the following research questions:

- How does convivial culture emerge in encounters between Polish migrant
  women and the local populations in both Manchester and Barcelona?
- Which factors facilitate and which limit conviviality?
- How is difference negotiated through convivial encounters?

In addressing these questions, I explore the narratives of Polish women in both cities to
gain a deeper understanding of how they make sense of the new reality in multicultural
societies; how they negotiate difference in interactions with the local population; and
how their experiences are shaped by convivial practices. Central to this thesis is the
exploration of encounters with difference in terms of social class, gender, religion, age
and other categories which often cut across ethnic lines.

1.6 Thesis overview
The thesis is organised into seven Chapters. Chapter 2 explores the conceptual
framework for studying convivial encounters between my research participants and the
local population in Manchester and Barcelona. It expands Gilroy’s (2004) idea of
conviviality by drawing on the meaning of the Spanish word *convivir* which allows
understanding conviviality as a mode of living together. Furthermore, it draws on the
concept of *convivencia* describing the historical mode of coexistence between Jews,
Muslims and Christians in medieval Spain and to contemporary uses of the term
reflecting the practices of everyday living together. It also draws on geographies of
encounters by situating my research in the cities as spaces of encounters between people
from different backgrounds. Conviviality is explored as a process of interaction not
necessarily free from racism and tensions. Therefore, the conceptual framework expands to writings of race, racism and xenophobia. While the literature on conviviality tends to focus on non-white ethnic minorities, the study fills the gap in research by concentrating on experiences of Polish migrant women coming from a predominantly white and ethnically homogenous society to super-diverse cities. Therefore, I draw on whiteness which may contribute to a wider understanding of encounters with difference.

In Chapter 3, I discuss my epistemological and methodological framework and I reflect on my complex positionality as a researcher studying lives of migrant women with whom I share nationality and mother tongue. The chapter engages in feminist theory and practices which challenge dominant forms of knowledge and recognise the importance of migrant women’s lived experiences. Throughout this Chapter, I reflect upon the relationship with the researched influenced by the feminist approach to research and I also highlight the importance of the reader. I recognise the importance of studying conviviality in multiple contexts through a comparative lens. I discuss my ethnography and I critically reflect on my use of participant observation, narrative interviews and focus groups and the analysis process. I engage with my personal experience and positionality and the translation issues I encountered in my research, the invisible role of the translator, language, context and representation. I explore further ethical considerations and dilemmas faced in the research process.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 address the research questions empirically and analytically. Chapter 4 explores the research participants’ perceptions of the classed, raced and gendered Other upon their arrival in Manchester and Barcelona and how these may influence conviviality. Firstly, it investigates the construction of the classed Other as opposed to that of the imagined upper class British society. Secondly, it reflects on the construction of Britain as a white society and Britishness defined by whiteness. Thirdly, it examines the notion of ‘closed’ Catalans, contrasting with stereotypical views about open and friendly Spaniards and foreigners. Subsequently, after briefly outlining the perceptions of the black Other in the Polish consciousness, the chapter discusses the recurring dual images of blackness in several accounts in both cities. The final section focuses on the perceptions of orientalised men and women of South Asian, Arabic and North African origin. Some of these representations echo the images known from postcolonial studies. Therefore, the postcolonial critique is used to deconstruct some of these constructions.
The Chapter stresses the importance of the context in which these attitudes may have been developed and reinforced. Furthermore, it reflects on a specific language of difference used by the research participants. It also explores the possibility of changing perceptions and the emergence of convivial encounters which are further discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

In the narratives of my research participants, the neighbourhood emerged as a significant space of encounter with the local population in both Manchester and Barcelona. Therefore, Chapter 5 concentrates on these encounters by exploring selected accounts which illustrate complex and multiple experiences within various sites of the neighbourhoods and beyond, including schools, colleges, streets, play groups, places of worship and shared accommodation revealing noticeably multi-layered social realities and various forms of conviviality, for instance, neighbourly and motherly forms. However, the Chapter demonstrates that not all encounters in the neighbourhoods lead to conviviality as a result of structural socio-economic inequalities, competition for and anxieties over jobs, housing and welfare, and the influence of the widespread negative media and political discourse about post-2004 migration specific to the British context. The Chapter also raises the importance of the spatial, temporal, gender, class and race dynamics, such as the street encounters between the informants and Asian men, marked by fear and avoidance, or the tension between desired conviviality and the choice of school with fewer Pakistani children from poor families.

Chapter 6 concentrates on workplace encounters, which remain highly under-researched, especially considering that it is a place where many people spend much of their daily lives often interacting with people from different backgrounds. The selected narratives explored in this Chapter show a complex reality of contact with difference at work demonstrating various forms of conviviality in comparison to existing research tending to focus on negative experiences of migrants and suggesting that workplaces are rarely sites for meaningful interactions (Cook et al, 2011b). This Chapter demonstrates the interplay of language and humour as a means of facilitating playful interaction between co-workers. I also explore more meaningful forms of conviviality by concentrating on under-researched workplace friendships that transcend the space of the workplace. This contrasts with accounts which suggest that relationships formed at work rarely transfer into spaces beyond the workplace (Harris and Valentine,
forthcoming). This form of meaningful conviviality is contrasted with forced conviviality used as a survival strategy. Furthermore, I explain how conviviality can be limited by negative discourse about migrants, exploitation, and ethno-stratification of the labour market.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I review what I have learned from my research participants about conviviality and I bring my key empirical findings together. I finish by considering forthcoming possibilities by referring to my participants’ reflections about the future of living together in Manchester and Barcelona.
CHAPTER 2: CONVIVIALITY IN MULTICULTURAL CITIES: CONCEPTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 Introduction

Until recently, social researchers tended to identify and describe problems when studying social relations between different ethnic groups, while successful interaction was often overlooked (Wise and Velayutham, 2014). In response to this, a growing number of scholars and researchers have shifted their focus to conviviality to explore ways of living together in urban spaces where diverse groups and individuals coexist in multicultural cities (Erickson, 2011; Gilroy, 2004; Heil, 2012, 2014; Karner and Parker, 2011; Koch and Latham, 2011; Morawska, 2013; Padilla et al, 2015; Wessendorf, 2014a; Wise and Velayutham, 2014). As Nowicka and Vertovec (2013: 1) point out, “conviviality across a number of disciplines now conveys a deeper concern with the human condition and how we think about human modes of togetherness”. Neal et al (2013: 320) refer to the “convivial turn” in literature on lived experience and suggested that conviviality:

may offer a frame of analysis, or a means of describing, social relations, interactions, and connections to places that are not hidebound, conditional and troubling as the concept of community. This does not mean it is trouble-free (…) but it may yet be the most appropriate and relevant way of describing and thinking about the rapid and ongoing reconfigurations of multiculture and cultural difference.

Thus, conviviality can be considered as a way to explore and describe complex everyday practices of living with difference in multicultural environments. This thesis demonstrates how my study of conviviality contributes analytically and empirically to the understanding of different forms of encounter in various settings. At the heart of my exploration of conviviality are encounters with difference in terms of social class, gender, religion and other categories which often intersect and cut across ethnic lines.

This Chapter sets out the theoretical background of my research reflecting on the key concept of conviviality. It firstly refers to Gilroy’s idea of conviviality as a frame for studying encounters between my research participants and the local population in Manchester and Barcelona. I argue that the comparative lens enables thinking of conviviality in a variety of ways, thus adding to the theoretical contribution. The Chapter draws on the meaning of the Spanish word *convivir* which allows an
understanding conviviality as a mode of living together. Secondly, it expands my conceptual framework of conviviality by drawing upon the concept of *convivencia* describing the coexistence of Jews, Muslims and Christians in medieval Spain and contemporary uses of the term referring to the practices of everyday living together. Thirdly, it draws on geographies of encounters (Amin, 2002; Cook et al, 2011b; Simonsen, 2008; Laurier and Philo, 2006; Matejskova and Leitner, 2011; Valentine, 2008). It concentrates on cities as spaces of encounters between people from different backgrounds and highlights the importance of gendered spaces often overlooked in debates on geographies of encounter. Subsequently, it discusses how conviviality in this research is explored as a process of interaction not necessarily free from racism and tensions (Gilroy, 2004). I explain the importance of acknowledging the conflicting side of daily encounters, different forms of racism and xenophobia and how my research participants could be affected as both victims and perpetrators of racist discourses which can also be classed and gendered. The literature on conviviality tends to focus on non-white ethnic minorities. This study, on the other hand, fills the gap in research by concentrating on convivial experiences of recent migrants coming from a predominantly white society to super-diverse cities. Therefore, this Chapter draws on whiteness which may contribute to a wider understanding of encounters with difference experienced by Polish women in Manchester and Barcelona.

### 2.2 Defining conviviality and convivial culture

The focus on lived experience disrupts political, media and some scholarly debates which regard migration and cultural difference as a problem and instead shifts attention to the emerging patterns of everyday interaction in multicultural cities. These new patterns are a result of conviviality defined by Gilroy (2004: xi) as “the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of urban life in Britain’s urban areas”. I follow Gilroy’s (2006a: 40) understanding of conviviality as:

>a social pattern in which different metropolitan groups dwell in close proximity, but where their racial, linguistic and religious particularities do not – as the logic of ethnic absolutism suggest they must – add up to discontinuities of experience or insuperable problems of communication.

Thus, racial, linguistic and religious differences are considered as not exclusionary or obstructive to conviviality. These differences do not disrupt convivial experiences and
communication between people who interact and live together. The question of difference is central in this thesis since I explore migrant encounters with difference in terms of categories including not only race and ethnicity, but also gender and class, which are socially constructed categories. For Gilroy (2004: 105), racial and ethnic differences become ‘unremarkable’, ordinary and mundane in convivial settings and they do not constitute a hindrance to convivial interaction. Gilroy (2008: 58) argues that “things which really divide us are much more profound [than racial and ethnic difference]: taste, lifestyle, leisure preferences, cleaning, gardening and child care”. Wessendorf (2014a: 2) conceptualises the normalcy of diversity as “commonplace diversity” based on her research in Hackney, where, as a result of the long history of diversification, residents experience ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity as a normal part of everyday life. Similarly, Amin (2013) uses the phrase ‘indifference to difference’ based on everyday negotiations of difference and shared spaces. The concept of conviviality is not just based on the human capacity to create social relations of inclusiveness and openness (Glick Schiller et al, 2011), as in case of cosmopolitanism, but it is understood as based on daily practices and negotiations of difference. At the same time, I attempt to develop a conceptual framework for the study of conviviality and migration that is not merely dependent on ethnicity as a sole object of study (Glick Schiller et al, 2006). I explore my research participants’ narratives about encounters with difference which are not limited to ethnic trajectories and identifications. As I demonstrate in the empirical Chapters, differences do not necessarily disappear from convivial interaction, and in some cases they may become important resources facilitating conviviality. I attempt to address the questions: how is difference negotiated through encounters in these spaces? When is it considered as an obstacle and when does it become an important resource in convivial interaction? When and where does it become ordinary and commonplace?

In applying a cross-cultural comparative approach to the research of everyday experiences of my research participants in two cities, I find Gilroy’s (2004) idea of conviviality and convivial cultures very useful, although he does not explore them sufficiently theoretically or empirically. Firstly, he does not offer a clear theoretical framework for conviviality. This leaves unclear how conviviality is conceptualised, how it relates to other concepts and how it could be researched. Secondly, Gilroy focuses mainly on the postcolonial context. Convivial encounters can no longer be solely explored in the context of diversity conventionally characterised by the presence of
African-Caribbean and South Asian communities from Commonwealth countries or former colonies but through the lens of super-diversity as a result of an increase of migrants with different ethnic origin, with diverse migration histories, gender, age, religion, languages, education, legal status and economic background (Vertovec, 2007b). This gap is a result of failure to explore conviviality empirically with attention to recent migrants. Thirdly, the impact of gender on conviviality remains underexplored, especially when it intersects with other axes of difference including race, ethnicity, class and age (Morawska, 2013). In this light, there is a need to concentrate on the gender and class dynamics which are lacking in Gilroy’s and other scholars writings’ on conviviality. Here, it is useful to refer back to Gilroy’s quote above which highlights leisure preferences, cleaning, gardening and child care, which are, in fact, classed and gendered. Hence, the class and gender gap in discussions on conviviality is particularly important. As Morawska (2013: 12-13) suggests, “women might be expected to have an emphatic understanding of or even an affinity with being ‘other’, and yet their traditional socialization as the defenders of the family hearth and the transmitters of its unique traditions would likely make them suspicious of outsiders”. This thesis explores complex migrant women’s encounters with the Other.

Furthermore, in Gilroy's work on conviviality, there is hardly any attention devoted to spatio-temporal characteristics influencing conviviality. Therefore, this thesis aims to expand the understanding of conviviality by situating my research in two different cities. While Gilroy (2004) writes about some literature, art and popular cultural forms as expressions of convivial cultures flourishing in British urban areas, I propose to test conviviality as a form of everyday lived experience through my research participants’ encounters with difference. I take on the challenge of using the concept of conviviality in an attempt to generate a new and more comprehensive way of understanding of spatialised social relations between my interviewees and the local population in Manchester and Barcelona. In doing so, I also draw on Morawska’s (2013) recognition of the time- and place-specific circumstances contributing to the emergence of conviviality as a process of “continuous becoming” and its forms as changeable due to various circumstances and never fully determined rather than fixed in time (Morawska, 2012: 2). This approach emphasises the importance of investigating the circumstances, including temporal and spatial, that both may facilitate and hinder conviviality, which addresses one of my research questions.
This thesis explores convivial cultures understood as a product of intermixture across markers of differences which become commonplace and ordinary (Gilroy, 2004). In building on Gilroy's idea of convivial culture, this thesis recognises that culture is no longer understood as a homogenous body of traditions and customs but as a dynamic social process (Yuval-Davis, 1997). “The idea of culture as a set of unchanging and coherent values, behaviours or attitudes has given way to the idea of culture as negotiation” (Simon, 1996: 153). For Morawska (2013: 8-9), “culture of conviviality” is shaped by habituation through the repeated practices of individual actors and it is shaped by class, gender and ethnic features. Drawing on the above literature, convivial culture is defined in this thesis as the actual practices of conviviality across various axes of difference including ethnicity, class, gender, religion, age, language, and other categories. These habitual practices, situated in particular times and spaces, are explored in this thesis in order to gain a better understanding of emerging convivial cultures in Manchester and Barcelona.

Despite a growing attention to conviviality, there is little reference to the contact theory from social psychology which recognises that social contact between members of different groups can reduce prejudice, hostility and anxiety and promote more positive attitudes (Allport, 1954). According to social psychologists, people feel uncomfortable with the unknown and, therefore, become anxious about encounters with difference. Hence, contact, is regarded as an effective prejudice reduction strategy because it lessens feelings of anxiety by allowing people to get to know each other, which then generates a perception of predictability and control. It is suggested that for contact between members of different groups to be meaningful, certain conditions should be ensured; this includes equal status and intergroup cooperation (Allport, 1954; Hewstone, 2003). Hewstone suggests that the above does not mean that group differences should not be maintained, quite the opposite. Cultural differences should not be sacrificed to achieve a successful interaction.

At the same time, recent studies reflect disapproval of idealising encounters between different groups and individuals. Valentine (2008) criticises writers for romanticising urban encounters and argues that contact and proximity between different social groups are not sufficient to produce respect. She uses empirical examples where contact with others leaves attitudes and values unchanged and in some instances hardened, in particular in the areas of relative social and economic deprivation where community-
based narratives of injustice and victimhood are prevalent and where migrants are blamed for ‘stealing’ jobs, undercutting wages and taking benefits. Valentine is sceptical about conviviality and she argues that “everyday convivial encounters often mark instead a culture of tolerance which leaves the issue of our multiple and intersecting identities … unaddressed” (Valentine 2008, 334). Valentine (2008: 325) argues that taken-for-granted civilities towards others in public space do not necessarily mean having respect for difference. Instead, she shifts attention to ‘meaningful contact’ understood as “contact that changes values and translates beyond the specifics of the individual moment into a more general positive respect for – rather than merely tolerance of – others”. In response to this criticism, it is useful to highlight Neal’s et al. (2013: 318) argument that:

fleeting exchanges and mundane competencies for living cultural difference are preferable to the conditional ‘meaningful interactions’ demanded by the UK’s cohesion policy agenda and are more realistic than the transformative expectations of the encounter approach.

This approach stresses the importance of not only exploring more sustained social relations but also momentary encounters. While this thesis concentrates on encounters often understood as contact characterised by a fleeting and accidental nature, yet with significant effects (Nowicka, 2012), it also highlights other forms of contact. Furthermore, it might be possible that fleeting encounters may actually lead to more meaningful interactions. Therefore, instead of engaging in an argument about meaningful versus fleeting interactions, this thesis aims to explore the complexity of daily contact with difference involving various degrees and forms of interaction often conditioned by spatio-temporal circumstances, and classed, raced and gendered dynamics.

Furthermore, existing literature about the practices of living together in diverse multicultural cities (Amin, 2002; Fincher, 2003; Heil, 2015; Lauriel and Philo, 2006; Thrift, 2008; Valentine, 2008) often interprets conviviality as limited to superficial, fleeting and casual encounters in public spaces unlikely to generate meaningful engagement with difference. Nevertheless, this narrow interpretation of conviviality, possibly due to limited research on the lived experience of convivial encounters, overlooks a possibility of different forms and understandings of conviviality. Exploring the origin of this concept might shed more light on how it is understood in my research.
In Latin, *convī* means to live together (con ‘with’ + vivere ‘to live’). In their analysis of the word *convivencia*, Giménez Romero and Lorés Sánchez (2007: 78) also refer to the Latin origin of the word and stress the Spanish interpretation of it as “*acción de convivir*” [action of living together] or “*relación entre los que conviven*” [relations between those who live together]. The authors make a clear distinction between *convivencia* and *coexistencia* [coexistence], which is not always very clear in other languages, including English. In the Oxford English Dictionary (2000: 229) the verb ‘coexist’ is explained as follows: “to exist together in the same place or at the same time, especially in a peaceful way”. Giménez Romero and Lorés Sánchez (2005) highlight that while *coexistencia* marks a mere coincidence in time, *convivencia* involves interaction. García Almirall et al (2013) also make a distinction between *coexistencia* and *convivencia* by stressing that *coexistencia* takes place when people share the same space but they remain separate, without mixing. Therefore, I use the term ‘convivial’, as informed by the idea of *convivir*, to describe relations of living and interacting together in shared spaces.

In my conceptualisation of conviviality I also draw on Overing and Passes’s (2000: xiii) notion of conviviality to define a Native South American mode of sociality as explored in a collection of essays on indigenous social, economic and political life and interpersonal relations. The editors explain their understanding of conviviality which transcends the jovial and festive English meaning of the term, although they stress the importance of the role of humour and laughter in social relations. Overing (2000) explains the vital role of laughter as constitutive of daily social activities of the Piaroa, indigenous people in Venezuela. Similarly, even though I am not using the term conviviality solely in the English sense of having a festive and joyful time in the company of others, in Chapter 6 I discuss the under-researched role of humour in social relations between my research participants and their work colleagues. Nevertheless, the popular English understanding of conviviality might prevent capturing other important forms of living together, including friendship, care and compassion (see also Jamieson, 2000), sharing and exchange generative of a “convivial mutuality” (Overing and Passes, 2000: 16). These under-researched forms represent the social and interactive side of everyday relations often encompassing “the affective side of sociality” (“convivial affect”) (14), which, I also discuss in Chapter 6. In the next section, I expand my
conceptual framework of conviviality by drawing upon the concept of *convivencia* in medieval Spain and contemporary uses of the term.

### 2.3 Drawing on *convivencia*: from medieval to contemporary forms of ‘living together’

In my analysis of conviviality, I embrace a historical approach to sociological analysis which demonstrates how social phenomena come into being and how they have been shaped over time by multiple and changing circumstances (Morawska, 2013; Abrams, 1982). The term *convivencia* has a rich historical context and can be traced back to a Spanish philologist and historian, Ramón Menéndez Pidal who used it to describe the existence of different forms in the early Romance languages of the Iberian Peninsula. Influenced by Menéndez Pidal, Américo Castro wrote in 1948 *España en su historia: cristianos, moros y judíos* in which he first used *convivencia* as a pattern of interaction between Jews, Christians and Muslims, who lived together in close proximity in medieval Iberia. Castro (1948: 208) referred to *convivencia cristiano-islamico-judía* based on spiritual communication and tolerance, especially during the first 400 years of the Islamic domination. In the 1971 revised English edition of the book, *convivencia* appears in the chronological division of Spanish history as a period of coexistence between people of the three ‘castes’ from the tenth to the end of the fifteenth century (Castro 1971: 584). *Convivencia* is translated as “a living-togetherness” possibly to avoid the common translation of the term as coexistence. In order to avoid misrepresentation of the term and to situate it in its socio-historical context, I will use the original Spanish term (and Catalan *convivència*).

Castro argued (1971: 55, 60) that under Muslim domination, even though “the Islamic and Oriental mode of life was clearly dominant”, *convivencia* was manifested through the intermarriage between the three religious groups, linguistic exchange, tolerance and “the spirit of shared common life which united all three [groups]”. Castro (1971: 62) suggested that even though the three groups followed their religions, there was a “belief in a higher religious harmony” reflected in both practical and spiritual life. He also made a reference to the belief in the same God unifying the three groups (89). He considered these groups as “a fabric woven of three threads, none of which may be cut out” (94). According to the historian, Christians, Muslims and Jews were an intrinsic part of Spain, and Spaniards are the outcome of mixing of the three groups. This view
was counteracted by the historiographic approach described by some historians as the “Castilianist” perspective on Spanish history associated with Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz (1962) who saw Castile as “uncontaminated” by the Islamic invasion and by centuries of interaction with the Jews (Soifer, 2009: 20).

Recent scholars have criticised Castro’s view of intergroup relations as idealised by focusing only on the positive while overlooking the negative ones (Gampel, 1992; Glick, 1992; Kamen, 2014; Soifer, 2009). Glick (1992) has explored the cultural and social dynamics underlying convidencia and he has argued that it is difficult to talk about static and unchanging convidencia based on either peace or conflict, since socio-cultural relations varied between the three groups in different historical periods and under changing dominance. For instance, while Abn al-Rahman III, the Umayyad emir in the tenth century who ruled the peninsula, pursued an ethnically and religiously inclusive policy, allowing complex interaction between the three groups; under Almoravid, Almohad and Christian rulers, convidencia was much more turbulent, ranging from some level of mixing to forced conversions, prejudice and violence (Gampel, 1992: 15). This changing nature of convidencia highlights the complexities of the social dynamics of interaction and the changing nature of socio-cultural processes over time and according to specific contexts (Glick, 1992). According to Kamen (2014: 6), convidencia was characterised by “the consciousness of living together in a multiple society” but also commitment to a person’s own religion, despite conversions to the official religion which offered some advantages. He reflects on the complexity of relations between the three groups under the Muslim and Christian rules in different periods of time and regions of medieval Iberia and he argues that there was always another side of convidencia:

Communities lived side by side and shared many aspects of language, culture, foods and dress, consciously borrowing each other’s outlook and ideas (…) Within that social sharing (…) there were permanent elements of conflict, arising out of the different political, economic and religious status of each faith. (Kamen, 2014: 3-4)

In response to Castro’s idea of convidencia, lacking consideration of the uneven distribution of power (also see Soifer, 2009) among the three religious groups, Kamen emphasises inequalities between these groups: “The communities of Christians, Jews and Muslims in Spain never lived together on the same terms, and their coexistence was always a relationship between unequals” (Kamen, 2014: 4). Despite familiarity between
cultures as a result of close contact for long periods of time, he stresses that minorities suffered social disadvantages, although laws were not always exclusive. Kamen also emphasises the more aggressive reality of conflicts including riots and massacres in the later stages of the wars between Christians and Muslims. There was a certain paradox in these complex relations: “Muslims and Jews might dance together in the feasts of Christians, but at the same time they took the opportunity to attack each other” (6).

Glick (1992) has warned that exploring *convivencia* through the binary of conflict/peaceful coexistence runs a risk of overlooking complex social dynamics. Therefore, *convivencia* should be viewed beyond the traditional binary of conflict and tolerance with regard to relations between different groups, as a changing and dynamic process. Other scholars have rejected the notion that violence and conflict are necessarily contradictory to peaceful coexistence. Salicrú (2008: 34) emphasises that “in the mediaeval Mediterranean, conflict and confrontation versus coexistence and communication have to be seen as two complementary realities, inseparable and in no way exclusive: sides of the same coin”. In his study of Jews and Muslims under the Crown of Aragón in the first half of the 14th century, Nirenberg’s (1996: 127) has explored the conflictual nature of everyday relations between members of the three groups and he has suggested that “the threat of violence arises from everyday transgressions of religious boundaries by individuals (through conversion, blasphemy, interfaith sexuality, commensality, dress, topography)”. Similarly, when defining *convivencia*, Gampel (1992: 11) has refused to create an image of “total harmony” enjoyed by all faith groups. Instead, he has rather offered an image of a pluralistic society in which different groups often lived in the same neighbourhoods, engaged in businesses with each other and affected each other’s ideas, but at the same time, there was mistrust, competition and occasional hatred. This demonstrates a fragile and shifting nature of *convivencia*.

Focusing on *convivencia* allows me to reflect on the importance of difference in social interaction. In both al-Andalus (ruled by Muslims) and Christian Spain the dominant group aimed to isolate minorities religiously but not economically, creating an unavoidable tension in between different groups (Glick, 1992). It was this tension, according to Glick, that opened up possibilities for cultural exchange at a market place where ethnic differences were not as important as in other spheres of life. Kamen (2014) points out that the military alliances were made regardless of religion, and that the wars
between Christians and Muslims happened mainly over land. In addition, Ray (2005) stressed that *convivencia* should be discussed beyond religious and ethnic markers as it was a product of a variety of identities, including not only ethnicity and religion but also class and gender.

The echoes of medieval *convivencia* are not only visible in Spanish architecture, language and music, but there is a significant revival of the concept in contemporary debates. The term *convivencia* has been embraced by academics, journalists, and politicians and it has multiple socio-political uses in contemporary Spain (Alvarez Yágüez and Lago Peñas, 2009; de Ramón and Vilarribias, 2014; Díaz-Aguado et al, 2010; Ibarra, 2010). *Convivencia* is a term commonly used in the local context to refer to social relations between people at different levels, for instance, between the family members, neighbours and co-workers in towns, cities and in the country (Suárez-Navaz, 2004). Giménez Romero and Lorés Sánchez (2005) point out that it is one of the most used words today by different individuals, NGOs, civic and religious organisations and in official documents and it is usually understood in terms of harmonious relations between people. *Convivencia* is a key term of popular discourse also in Catalonia (Erickson, 2011). The anti-Catalan Nationalist Convivencia Cívica Catalana (CCC) considers *convivencia* in terms of linguistic policy. In recent years, much of political and academic debate has emphasised the importance of *convivencia* with reference to coexistence between different ethnic groups.

At the policy level, the term *convivencia* is used with regard to immigration and accommodation of cultural difference. The Spanish central government has a common integration programme, *Plan Estratégico de Ciudadanía e Integración 2011-2014* (PECI) which stresses the importance of *convivencia* translated in the document as “living together” (Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración, 2014: 189), and explained as a mode of sociability based on interaction, distinguished from mere coexistence and alternative to hostility (200). In PECI, *convivencia* becomes embedded in the immigration policy discourse in the light of challenges of recently intensified cultural, linguistic and religious diversity which needs to be managed. In Catalonia, the discourse of *convivència* seems to be even stronger. In 2009, the Catalan government promoted a political campaign *Som Catalunya. País de convivència* [We are Catalonia. Land of *convivència*] (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2009) aimed at the whole population to raise awareness of migration and cultural diversity as a reality defining Catalonia and the
importance of maintaining social cohesion. This campaign took place in the context of introducing *Pacte Nacional per a la Immigració* [the National Agreement on Immigration]. In 2010, the Barcelona City Council (2010) released *Pla Barcelona Interculturalitat* [Interculturality Plan for Barcelona], a political strategy towards diversity, which also raises the importance of *convivencia*. Cultural diversity is considered as both a challenge and opportunity for *convivencia* and social cohesion: “The diversity of origins, languages, customs, values and faiths, and finally, world views raise new complexities for *convivencia* and social cohesion but also new opportunities” (3). In this context, *convivencia* at the policy level constitutes an integral part of an interculturalist approach to managing cultural difference and shaping social relations between the local residents and migrants. As is emphasised in the document, Barcelona’s interculturalist strategy is based on three principles: equality, recognition of diversity and positive interaction (6). The latter defines the interculturalist approach and differentiates it from multiculturalism. I discuss these two approaches further in Chapter 3.

While recognising *convivencia* as a political discourse, some researchers have recently focused on *convivencia* as embedded in daily social interaction between different groups and individuals in shared spaces in Spain and Catalonia (Erickson, 2011; Heil, 2012, 2014; Suárez-Navaz, 2004). In her study of Muslims in Granada in Andalusia, Suárez-Navaz (2004) explores examples of social interactions in which migrants engage in the active construction of *convivencia*. Erickson (2011) focuses on *convivència* as an interculturalist discourse shaping relations between migrants and the local residents in Catalonia. Heil (2012, 2014) explores experiences of Casamançais in two neighbourhoods, in Catalonia and in Casamance, Senegal, and how everyday practices of negotiation, interaction and translation facilitate neighbourliness. Heil’s (2015) conceptualisation of conviviality is particularly useful here since he considers conflict as an aspect of conviviality characterised as fragile. Nevertheless, in the above research literature gendered experiences of encounters with difference are rather marginalised and the emphasis is largely on non-white and non-European migrants.

Although I acknowledge the importance of exploring *convivencia* in a specific geo-historical context (Ray, 2005), it is useful to draw on it when exploring contemporary forms of interaction with difference beyond policy discourses. The conceptualisation of conviviality in this thesis draws on the understanding of *convivencia* as not fixed but
rather a changing process characterised by complex social dynamics of interaction (Glick, 1992), including unequal dynamics of power. When exploring conviviality, I recognise the importance of these complexities and the spatio-temporal dynamics involving not only the positive aspects of living together but also conflict and tensions often overlapping each other. Furthermore, by drawing on the contemporary forms of *convivencia*, this thesis follows the understanding of *convivencia* not merely as a theoretical and political discourse but a practical process grounded in daily social interaction facilitating negotiation and accommodation of difference (Erickson, 2011). In the next section, I draw on geographies of encounters highlighting the importance of spatial characteristics shaping conviviality.

### 2.4 Thinking geographically about conviviality

In my conceptualisation of conviviality, I draw on the emerging field of geographies of encounters (Amin, 2002; Cook et al, 2011a, 2011b; Laurier and Philo; 2006; Matejskova and Leitner 2011; Leitner 2012; Simonsen, 2008; Valentine 2008). Convivial encounters do not occur in a vacuum but in a space recognised by Massey (2005: 9) as the product of never finished interrelations and the sphere of multiplicity where different trajectories coexist. Cities, earlier characterised as sites of crime and conflict, have been recently reimagined as sites of connection (Valentine, 2008), described as “being together of strangers” (Young, 1990: 240) and “throwntogetherness” (Massey, 2005: 11). Cities can be defined as “spatial formations resulting from dense networks of interaction” (Simonsen, 2008: 145). Koch and Latham (2011: 515) encourage broadening understanding of how “cities might become more inclusive, more convivial and generally better for the people that inhabit them”. Nevertheless, it is important not to treat cities as homogenous entities. The differences are situated within the wider geographical, temporal and socio-political contexts: “Each part of a city is distinct from each other part, and is different at different times of the day and night (...) depending on the wider sociopolitical context” (Watson, 2006: 2).

As a result of increased mobility and migration, European cities have increasingly become spaces of encounters between people from different cultures. They have become “multicultural and cosmopolitan melting pots where hybrid identities connect the most intimate relations with the most remote places” (Simonsen, 2008: 146). My understanding of multicultural cities is explored through the lens of super-diversity
highlighting complexity with regard to “a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants” (Vertovec, 2007b: 1024). In recent years, the concept of super-diversity has been widely used by scholars from various disciplines and in public policy, and it has been read in many different ways (see Vertovec, 2014). The term has been used in a form of an adjective to describe some phenomena, for instance: super-diverse places, settings, population, societies, etc. However, the concept has been subject to some criticism. During the IRiS (Institute for Research into Superdiversity) Conference on “Superdiversity: theory, method and practice in the era of change” in June 2014 at the University of Birmingham, the policy roundtable (‘Rethinking policy and practice in/for an era of superdiversity’) participants expressed a concern about social inequalities and racism overlooked in discussions on super-diversity. Similarly, Back (2015) offers a critique of Vertovec’s conception of super-diversity considered as one-dimensional and neglecting attention to forms of division and racism. Further theoretical and methodological analysis is needed in order to understand these complexities and the dynamics of super-diversity and social inequalities. Nevertheless, the concept of super-diversity is used in this thesis as it allows moving beyond a simplistic view of diversity viewed solely through ethnic-lens and characterised by the presence of post-colonial ethnic minorities. Many new migrants in both Manchester and Barcelona arrive from countries with no specific historical and colonial links, especially with regard to migrants from Central and Eastern Europe. Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2011) point out that while there are many studies about migration to cities and the life of migrants, cities often appear as containers providing spaces in which migrants settle. I follow Glick Schiller and Çağlar’s recognition of migrants who have become significant actors of the transformation of the daily life, economies and politics of cities throughout the world. Although some research explores how Polish migrants produce and change aesthetics of public space (Nowicka, 2012), there is still limited understanding about how these migrants shape city spaces through convivial encounters.

Convivial interaction may or may not occur in various spaces of multicultural cities such as neighbourhoods, workplaces, colleges or mother and toddler groups, which are explored in the empirical Chapters. Various spaces in the city have the potential to generate varied types of encounters that emerge between new and established
individuals of diverse and complex social groups (Cook et al, 2011b). These ‘contact zones’, defined as the spaces where “people geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations” (Pratt, 1992: 6), are intrinsic in the exploration of everyday convivial experiences. These ‘micropublics’ where individuals and groups coexist and interact and are sites of banal transgression may also serve as sites of inclusion and negotiation (Amin, 2002: 970). This means that people may step out of their daily environments into other spaces which bring them together with those from different backgrounds and allow habitual negotiating of difference. In these spaces, conviviality is characterised by “being in the company of strangers normalised through habits of co-dwelling or shared labour” (Amin, 2013: 4). As I discuss in Chapter 5 and 6, the narrative interviews conducted with my research participants in Manchester and Barcelona reveal complex realities of contact with difference in various spaces of the neighbourhoods and beyond, and in the workplaces revealing various forms of conviviality.

Some sites of encounter, including cafés, parks, streets and squares, are considered by several geographers and urban scholars as places of casual encounter with little opportunity for engagement with difference. Amin (2002: 967) stresses that: “The depressing reality, however, is that in contemporary life, urban public spaces are often territorialised by particular groups (...) or they are spaces of transit with very little contact between strangers. The city’s public spaces are not natural servants of multicultural engagement”. In an ethnographic study of encounters between local residents and recent migrants in eastern Berlin, Matejskowa and Leitner (2011) found that fleeting encounters in public and semi-public spaces often reinforced pre-existing stereotypes, while sustained and close encounters in spaces of neighbourhood community centres often led to positive attitudes towards migrants. While I address the meaningful and sustained engagement with difference, as I have mentioned earlier, I also consider the significance of different forms of conviviality, including often underestimated fleeting encounters and social relations that emerge from momentary and transitory encounters in different spaces. Urban encounters are influenced by different historical and geographic contexts, and embedded in broader relations of power. Therefore, I suggest the recognition of power relations among different social groups and individuals which influence interactions in urban spaces (Matejskova and Leitner, 2011). According to Wise (2009: 42) “power relations are always present in
place sharing as are various degrees of intolerance and cross-cultural discomfort.” Therefore, there is a need to address the underlying power dynamics in research of encounters with difference not only in terms of race and ethnicity but also class and gender. Johnson (1994: 107) has called for a new geography based on the ways “in which women and men are situated, move through, apprehend and engage with space”. In Chapters 4 and 5, I discuss how certain city spaces can be male-dominated and how these spatial dynamics affect daily encounters with difference.

While most studies of conviviality have focused on interpersonal interaction in different sites of encounter, my investigation recognises the connection between places and people (Amin, 2008) and the significance of the urban infrastructure in regulating relations between ‘strangers’ (Amin, 2010: 1). Fincher (2003) and Peattie (1998) consider how urban planning plays a part in conviviality. Fincher (2003: 10) suggests that the task of the planners should include “recognising, identifying and supporting accessible spaces that welcome people and encourage convivial interaction”. Peattie (1998: 248) has pointed out that “conviviality can take place with few props: the corner out of the wind where friends drink coffee together, the vacant lot which will become a garden (…) Conviviality cannot be coerced, but it can be encouraged by the right rules, the right props, and the right places and spaces.” Similarly, Koch and Latham (2011: 522) suggest that conviviality “offers a way of thinking about material-practical arrangements organised not with an aim of ‘making present’ the excluded, but rather toward nurturing the capacity of individuals to thrive in combination with others.” These contributions demonstrate that conviviality should be explored as more than the interpersonal, and that material, structural and spatial dimensions play an important part (Wise and Velayuntham, 2014).

Recent scholarship also makes connection between conviviality and ‘home making’ (Koch and Latham 2011, 2012), which is particularly useful for exploring my research participants’ experiences in neighbourhoods. In Koch and Latham’s (2011) research project on the Prince of Wales Junction in West London, conviviality is considered as a form of ‘home making’. The researchers observed “the efforts to make the Junction more reflective of the area’s diverse population, through making it more comfortable, inviting, even home-like” (Koch and Latham, 2011: 552). They use the term ‘domestication’ understood as “a fundamental part of how people come to be at home in cities (…) This offers a new ways of thinking about “how spaces are being
domesticated” and “how we might help to produce urban public spaces embedded with a greater sense of inclusiveness, conviviality and democracy” (Koch and Latham, 2012: 14).

While the research and literature in the field of geographies of encounters focus mainly on encounters with difference in public and semi-public spaces, private spaces as sites of conviviality have been largely overlooked. In their discussions about experiences in the neighbourhood and workplaces, my research participants often referred to encounters with difference in private spaces of the homes, whether in the context of domestic work or interaction with flatmates, neighbours or other mothers they met during playgroups or at schools and colleges. Therefore, my research contributes to the understanding of conviviality in a domestic environment. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that home is a highly gendered space and the expectations of women to be rooted at home (Ryan, 2001) might limit experiences of conviviality with wider society, as discussed in Chapter 6.

Along with the emphasis on exploring convivial encounters in various localities, I also recognise the importance of the complex dynamics of urban encounters. As Watson (2006: 2) aptly suggests, “Moments of tranquillity or harmony can easily erupt into moments of antagonism and violence. Love and hate, empathy and antipathy coexist in ambiguous and ambivalent tension.” Similarly, Padilla et al (2015: 621) point out that “Cities simultaneously celebrate and reject diversity. Growing concerns with racism and xenophobia compete with a preoccupation with tolerance, civility and intercultural dialogue”. Furthermore Amin (2008: 7) reminds us of the erosion of public space, policing and neglect, resulting in the running down of public facilities and emergence of dangerous streets causing fear and avoidance. The next section highlights the importance of focusing on the complexity of social relations which are prone to racist and xenophobic discourses.

2.5 The other face of encounters: race, racism and xenophobia

Drawing on convivencia in medieval and in contemporary Spain has revealed the complexity of relations between different groups shaped not only by positive forms of interaction but also conflict. Conviviality in this research is explored as a process of interaction embedded in social practice which is not necessarily free from racism and tensions. In his work, Gilroy (2004, 2006a, 2006b) discusses two concepts: on the one
hand, postcolonial melancholia, defining the guilt and grief over the lost British Empire; and on the other, conviviality. Gilroy (2006b: 2) argues that some European nations have been unable to get past their “loss of global pre-eminence” and their inability to get past that loss leads to “all sorts of pathological features in their contemporary encounters with the strangers”. He considers conviviality as the alternative to this postcolonial melancholia and he stresses the significance of how ordinary people manage tensions through the practice of living together. In developing the concept of conviviality, Gilroy discusses it as “unruly” interaction which “has developed alongside the usual tales of crime and racist conflict” (2006a: 39). He argues that: “Recognising conviviality should not signify the absence of racism” (40). Gilroy (2006b: 6) highlights different forms of lived experience he observed in his neighbourhoods: “Alongside racism, resources for the undoing of racism had evolved spontaneously, unseen, unlooked for, unwanted (…) There were conflicts, but people resolved them. They didn’t always get along with their neighbours, but they overcame those difficulties”. Instead of viewing conviviality and racism in a dichotomous way, this quote suggests the possibility of considering the two as highly dynamic and fragile, at times overlapping each other.

Similarly, Wise and Velayutham (2014: 425) highlight the existence of various forms of social relations that “are never entirely rosy, nor entirely negative and thus the challenge is to comprehend the full range of interactions, patterns, behaviours and meanings at work, and the interconnections between ‘happy’ and ‘hard’ forms of coexistence”. Based on their research in Sydney and Singapore, the authors understand conflict as an integral part of social interaction between neighbours. Other studies also reveal complex social realities and ambivalences involving local conflicts, racism and stereotyping and everyday conviviality (Karner and Parker, 2011; Vigneswaran, 2014; Wessendorf, 2014a). This thesis explores how the research participants experience tensions and hostility and also often engage in convivial interaction, illustrating a dynamic nature of both conviviality and racism which may overlap in certain situations. Furthermore, this research also highlights the importance of conviviality as a process marked by power differentials between different groups, for instance, between the hosts and migrants, settled ethnic minorities and recent migrants, men and women from different ethno-religious backgrounds. The social dynamics between different groups and individuals are often influenced by the hierarchies of race, religion, class and gender. As Heil
(2015: 322) notes, “conviviality faces the challenge of contesting and accommodating power hierarchies and differences”. While this thesis acknowledges that these hierarchies are often present in encounters with difference, it also explores the way in which differences are negotiated and the way in which they create some elements of sameness.

While the aim of this thesis is to explore the convivial modes, it is important not to ignore the more conflictual aspects of daily encounters. Amin (2013: 4) refers to ‘the other face’ of the daily encounter with difference as ‘phenotypical racism’ defined as the “precognitive coding of surface bodily differences”, for instance, pigment and attire as racial markers generating aversion. Racialised discourses construct the visible difference as inferior, dangerous and threatening. Race and the practice of racial coding has deep historical roots linked with western colonialism and imperialism which coincided with the formulation of scientific ideas about race in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries associated with inherent physical traits (skin colour, hair type, bone structure, etc.), followed by a process of racialisation as a mode of categorisation of different populations ordered hierarchically with whites at the top and blacks at the bottom (Miles, 1982; Cashmore, 1996). Physical and behavioural differences were linked with the difference in culture. As Goldberg (1993) argues, racist thinking and racialised discourses in the Western world have become increasingly normalised through modernity, although the word blackness acquired its negative meaning through the medieval church associating it with darkness, evil and sin, in opposition to whiteness considered in terms of purity and perfection (Cashmore, 1996; Fanon, 1967; Yuval-Davis, 1997).

In the Spanish context, the ideology of race was manifested through the ideology of *pureza/limpieza de sangre* (purity of blood), referring to pure Christian ancestry, which originated in mid-fifteenth century Spain (Martínez et al, 2012: 1). Initially, Spain’s ‘difference’ with regard to its place in Europe was linked to notions of racial impurity, religious fanaticism, underdevelopment, poverty and its inferiority in relation to developed Western Europe (Flesler, 2008). Spain was seen as racially impure due to its connection to “oriental and African elements and the mingling of Christians with Jews and Arabs” (20). Spanish thinkers deeply engaged with European visions of the Spanish nation and, in order to overcome its inferiority, Spain made the effort to erase its Moorish past. Since the ‘re-conquest’ of Granada in 1492, the construction and
imposition of Spanish-Castilian hegemonic identity legitimised measures of inquisitorial religious persecution – Santa Inquisición – implemented through ‘laws of blood purity’ (Dietz, 2004: 1098). As a result of this ideology Jewish and Muslim converts to Christianity (conversos and moriscos) were considered as impure and became subject to discriminatory and segregation laws and subsequently expulsion (Martínez et al, 2012). This judgment was extended to the Spanish colonies. The Spanish distinguished los peninsulares as a privileged category of those born in Spain based on purity of blood from los criollos (creole), who in turn, had a higher status than Amerindians and enslaved Africans. Martínez et al (2012) suggest that blood became a powerful proxy for lineage or descent and acquired religious-racial significance. The notions of blood and race became strongly connected in the Spanish context. The nineteenth century rhetoric of the modern Spanish nation-state introduced the idea that nation is based on one race, one language and one culture (Labanyi, 2002), the idea later reinforced by the Franco regime in the twentieth century Spain. Spanish interventions in Morocco were used as a way of showing Europe that Spain as an imperial power was capable of redeeming an ‘inferior race’ and demonstrating full European status (Flesler, 2008).

Unlike Spain and Britain, Poland has had no colonies and no historical link to any particular non-European nation. Nevertheless, Polish people have been exposed to a very definite construction of blackness influenced by the Western discourses (Gilman 1985; Ząbek 2007). The main sources of views shaped about non-whites have been affected by the historical imaginaries and colonial narratives transmitted through the literature and the media. The word ‘black’ acquired its negative meaning during the Middle Ages. Black people were imagined in the form of devils or demons having animal features (Ząbek, 2007). Throughout the ages, the images of blacks in Poland were characterised by ambivalence, including demonisation, sacralisation, and fascination.

Even though claims about the innate superiority of whites and inferiority of non-whites have been scientifically discredited, in many societies, race is still perceived as a fixed objective category. The socially constructed racial categorisation is reproduced and “used in everyday discourse to refer to those aspects of physical variation which were used by nineteenth-century science to identify permanent and discrete physical types” (Miles, 1982: 20). Furthermore, at the heart of the racist discourse is not just physical
difference but other variables, including country of origin, religion, nationality and language (Solomos, 2003). The focus of racist discourse has shifted to culture and ethnicity seen as fixed categories giving rise to the new forms of racism (Anthias and Yuval-Davies, 1992; Miles and Phizacklea, 1984). As Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1983: 67) suggest:

```plaintext
... racist discourse posits an essential biological determination to culture but its referent may be any group that has been ‘socially’ constructed as having a different ‘origin’, whether cultural, biological or historical. It can be ‘Jewish’, ‘black’, ‘foreign’, ‘migrant’, ‘minority’. In other words any group that has been located in ethnic terms can be subject to ‘racism’ as a form of exclusion.
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Therefore, racism in this thesis is considered as a dynamic phenomenon often produced and reproduced through political discourse, the media, other institutions, groups and individuals.

A deep resentment towards migrants in the light of the recent European economic crisis has led to new forms of racism, xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiment. The European Parliament’s Committee of Inquiry into the Rise of Racism and Fascism in Europe identified xenophobia as a new phenomenon haunting Europe (Cashmore, 1996), especially manifesting through the opposition to immigration for half a century reflected in opinion polls (The Migration Observatory, 2011). According to Gilroy (1987:43), the new forms of racism have “the capacity to link discourses of patriotism, nationalism, xenophobia, Englishness, Britishness, militarism and gender difference into a complex situation which gives ‘race’ its contemporary meaning”. European migrants in the UK become racialised and imagined through the category of race because they are migrants (Gilroy, 2006a). The widespread negative political and media discourse about Polish migration further contributes to the construction of Polish migrants as responsible for economic and social insecurity affecting the poor in Britain.

Constructions of the racialised Other do not only refer to non-whites, migrants, people from different religions or with another accent (Yuval Davis, 1997). Racialised discourses also encompass class and gender differences (Byrne, 2006a). According to Skeggs (1997: 82), the body carries the markers of class, gender, race and other categories. British working-class was perceived as the Other by the middle classes in the nineteenth century and was positioned as a distinct racial group with distinct characteristics (Bonnett, 2000; Cohen, 1988). Furthermore, working-class and black
women were perceived as sexually deviant (Gilman, 1985). Byrne (2006a: 105) argues that “perceptual practices of seeing (and hearing) difference are as important in constructing class as they are with ‘race’”. Class becomes visible on the body and this is manifested, for instance, in ways of clothing (Lawler, 1999: 14). In Chapter 4, I explore my research participants’ constructions of the classed and raced Others upon their arrivals in Manchester and Barcelona; and in Chapter 5, I demonstrate how Polish migrant women’s bodies may be racialised through gendered encounters with men of South Asian origin. In the next section, I draw on the concept of whiteness which may contribute to a wider understanding of encounters with difference experienced by Polish migrant women in Manchester and Barcelona.

2.6 Whiteness

While exploring narratives of Polish migrant women coming from a predominantly white society to super-diverse cities, I find it particularly important to consider how whiteness is produced through encounters with non-whiteness. By doing so, I also draw on the critical interventions of black feminists who emphasise the classed and gendered nature of processes of racialisation (Lorde, 1984; Mohanty, 1988). The black feminist movement has emerged in the 1980s mainly as a response to the invisibility of black women and to the racism of the white feminist movement (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1983). Black feminists have criticised how white women’s vulnerability was constructed through the representation of black men as threatening and violent and Western woman were constructed in opposition to Third World women as “a singular monolithic subject” (Mohanty, 1988: 333). White feminism overlooked the complexities of racialised, classed and gendered power and oppression (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1983). These debates raised the question of difference and disrupted the homogenous concept of ‘woman’. They highlighted the importance of understanding the intersecting axes of race, class and gender. Furthermore, black feminists have suggested the need to examine white experience as racialised and classed rather than normative (Byrne, 2006a). According to black critique, whiteness works as a form of racial privilege which has the effect on the bodies of non-whites. Whiteness is produced by assigning race to others. Therefore, the study of whiteness as a racialised position is to contest its dominance (Ahmed, 2004) and its notion as a ‘mythical norm’ (Lorde, 1984: 116). Black feminists’ calls for the exploration of whiteness and white racism have led to a wider turn to whiteness referred to as ‘white studies’ which include works
written in 1980s and 1990s by mostly white authors who often overlooked a substantial body of black writing on whiteness (Byrne, 2006a). Ahmed (2004) argues that whiteness studies carry the risk of essentialising whiteness, recentering rather than decentering it and, as a result, reproduction of it. Frankenberg (1993: 1) stressed the importance to explore “racialness” of white experience and she categorised whiteness as multi-dimensional:

Whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a ‘standpoint’, a place from which White people look at ourselves, and at others, and at society. Third, ‘Whiteness’ refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed.

It has been argued that white privilege is mediated by gender, class and ethnicity which often intersect (Lundstrom and Twine, 2011; van Rimsdijk, 2010). Therefore, whiteness can be conceptualised as “a constellation of processes and practices rather than a discrete entity (i.e. skin color alone)” (DiAngelo, 2011: 56). Byrne (2006a: 8) suggests that “The project of studying whiteness should be seen as an integral part of understanding the ‘stratified construction of race/colors’” which “involves a relational rather than self-contained analysis that is suggested”.

When examining accounts of Polish women, I find it important to situate the constructions of whiteness within the geographical and socio-historical context of the home country partly shaping perceptions of difference. As Frankenberg (1993) argues, the context is significant with regard to how whiteness is experienced. Whiteness is not a singular experience and the different ways in which it is produced should be explored (Byrne, 2006a; Imre, 2005). Dyer (1997) recognised the distinction between whiteness of the English, Anglo-Saxons or North Europeans from that of Southern or Eastern Europeans due to the specificity of the former in the past two centuries. While whiteness has been mostly explored in the West, it has been underexplored in the context of post-socialist societies including Poland. As discussed in Chapter 1, while visual difference has become highly marked in post-communist states, whiteness has remained unnoticed and unacknowledged (Imre, 2005). Since race has been associated with non-whites, Polish people’s whiteness has been normalised and invisible. Nevertheless, as I discuss in the empirical Chapters, whiteness is reinscribed when raced Others become visible in Poland and in host countries. As a result of recent large scale migration of Polish people into other European countries, many have become
conscious of being white as a result of contact with non-whites, and at times, not-quite-white through contact with the white hosts (Parutis, 2011; van Riemsdijk, 2010).

The debate with regard to construction of whiteness in the context of migration has concentrated on how various European migrants, including Irish, Italians and Jews, became white in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the United States and in Britain. While Irish migrants initially were racialised by being considered as ‘not-quite-white’ in the USA and UK in the nineteenth century, they used whiteness against blacks to improve their situation in the labour market (Ignatiev, 1995). Barrett and Roediger (1997) have explored how Polish, Italian and other Europeans artisans and peasants who arrived in the USA between the end of the nineteenth century and the early 1920s became involved in the process of becoming white and how they acquired ‘in between’ racial status. Furthermore, after the WWII, displaced persons benefited from immigration policies with racialised preferences for white workers (Fox, 2013; McDowell, 2009). This body of research has demonstrated that even though whiteness can be defined as a category with shifting borders and internal hierarchies, they can be crossed and climbed by certain groups (Dyer, 1997: 20). However, it is important to highlight the difference between the US and the UK contexts with regard to the Irish, who despite ‘becoming white’ faced high levels of discrimination in Britain until 1970s and 1980s. This was manifested through the signs in pubs and lodging houses stating ‘No Irish, No blacks, No dogs’ (Cohen, 1988; Leavey et al, 2004). In fact, Cohen (1988: 14) points out that “Blacks and Irish were interchangeable as animal categories of racial abuse”. Ryan’s (2007) research about Irish nurses in Britain, who mostly migrated in the 1950s and 1970s, reveals the ambiguous position of these migrants as white and European insiders, but, at the same time, as cultural outsiders.

It is important to highlight gender as an important aspect of the construction of whiteness (Dyer, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993) with regard to specific functions assigned to women as biological reproducers of the nation (Yuval-Davis, 1997). In this light, McDowell (2007) points out that Latvian migrant women in the post-war period in the UK were seen as more desirable than other migrants, as they were considered as potential wives and mothers of the future generation of British people. Nevertheless, while whiteness can include certain ethnic and national groups, it does so within limits (van Riemsdijk, 2010). Based on her research of lived experiences of Polish nurses in
Norway, van Riemsdijk (2010) argues that while in comparison to more visible groups Polish migrants are considered ‘like us’; in other contexts they can be seen as undesirable outsiders.

In Britain, following the EU enlargement in 2004, Polish migrants initially have become recognised as a ‘desirable’ migrant group and have been labelled as ‘invisible’ due to their whiteness. The Spectator’s article states: “The New Europeans are hard-working, presentable, well educated, and integrate so perfectly that they will disappear within a generation” (Browne, 2006). Existing research reveals that Polish migrants arriving in super-diverse Britain have become aware of their whiteness and they recognised it as an asset according to a belief that white minorities are treated better than non-whites (Eade et al, 2006). Some emphasise their whiteness/Europeanness and distinguish themselves from other migrants and ethnic minorities on the basis of skin colour and place themselves in the category of whiteness to assert their privileged position (Parutis, 2011; Lopez Rodriguez, 2010). It has been argued that these migrants, along with other Central and Eastern European arrivals, have been involved in the process of ‘whitewashing’, although whiteness is not explicitly claimed most of the times (Fox, 2013; Fox et al, 2015). Whiteness can be used by them as a tool of racism in order to establish their own racial superiority towards those seen as racially inferior (Fox, 2012). Some Polish migrants may occupy an ambiguous position in between an assumed higher racial status of white Europeans and a lower social status as a result of low-skilled employment (Fox et al, 2015). Nevertheless, the presumed whiteness of these migrants in the UK has not exempted them from racism, violent attacks and discrimination, partly fuelled by negative discourse in the British media and politics. Even though research on racism and racial discrimination has mainly addressed people visibly different, recent studies have focused on racialisation of Polish migrants as less visible minorities (van Riemsdijk, 2010). However, as Cohen (1988) has argued, racialised discourses have never been confined solely to the physical traits. The markers of difference with regard to Polish migrants could be the language and the foreign accent, as some of my research participants highlighted. Dawney’s (2008) study on racialisation of Central and East European migrants in Herefordshire reveals some references to the clothes worn by these migrants, which were considered unfashionable, as markers of difference.
In contrast to the British context, the issue of whiteness and migration is relatively under-researched in the Spanish context. Whiteness in the context of Polish migration in Spain is hardly mentioned in literature, possibly due to perception of it as a norm. Recent literature stresses the invisibility and the privileged treatment of Polish migrants who due to their skin complexion are considered as nórnicos from the North, highly respected in Spain (Nalewajko, 2010; Ramírez Goicoechea, 2003). The ‘invisibility’ of Polish migrants is explained by the physical similarity of these migrants not only to other Central European migrants but also to Catalans and Spaniards themselves (Wladyka and Morén-Alegret, 2013). Furthermore, they are rather considered as extranjeros (foreigners), a more neutral category in Spanish, than inmigrantes (immigrants) marked by negative connotations of inferiority. Polish migrants are seen as próximos (close) (González Leandri, 2003) with regard to alleged cultural, historical, political and religious proximity.

While I argue that exploration of whiteness and perceptions of difference should be situated within a particular geographic and socio-historical context, especially with reference to Poland’s complex positionality in Europe, I also recognise the importance of going beyond the methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002) and considering individual histories and experiences of my research participants. Some of them previously lived and/or studied in other multicultural countries and cities where they encountered difference and were exposed to different values. Therefore, in this thesis, I explore conviviality as spatial, temporal and a highly contextualised process which needs to be studied with consideration of historical geographical, socio-economic and personal circumstances.

2.7 Conclusion
This Chapter has outlined the theoretical framework for researching conviviality as experienced and constructed by Polish women in Manchester and Barcelona. Firstly, it has explored conviviality as a frame for interaction across difference with an emphasis on lived experience. It has considered the possibility of various forms of conviviality with attention to gender, class, and other categories of difference which often cut across ethnic lines, as well as spatio-temporal characteristics. It has explored the origin of the concept to provide a better understanding of how conviviality is understood in this thesis.
Secondly, in the conceptualisation of conviviality, this Chapter has stressed the importance of history of mixing in medieval Iberia where *convivencia* was characterised by complex social dynamics and endurance of convivial culture marked by tensions between different groups which opened up possibilities for interaction across ethnic and religious differences. In expanding the concept on conviviality, I follow the notion of *convivencia* highlighting the complexities of interaction and the changing nature of socio-cultural processes over time and according to specific contexts (Glick, 1992). This Chapter has also expanded the conception of conviviality by referring to the contemporary forms of *convivencia* as a process grounded in daily social interaction. Drawing on *convivencia* contributes to a theoretical understanding of conviviality and conflict beyond rigid boundaries as changing and overlapping dynamic processes.

Thirdly, this Chapter has explored how this thesis is situated within geographies of encounter stressing socio-spatial configurations which may influence the experience of conviviality in public, semi-public and private spaces. I follow the understanding of conviviality which involves spatial dimensions. Furthermore, this Chapter has highlighted the importance to study gendered dynamics in various spaces which are often gendered.

Subsequently, this Chapter has emphasised the significance of the full range of interactions – not only the positive but also the conflicting forms, namely racism and xenophobia, especially in the light of anti-immigrant sentiments across Europe. Furthermore, I have argued that Polish migrants might not only become victims of racism and xenophobia but they might also place themselves in the category of whiteness and reinforce racialising discourses. I have suggested that exploring whiteness with reference to encounters between Polish migrants and the local population in both cities might lead to a greater understanding of the shifting positioning of these migrants as racially privileged white Europeans and racialised Eastern European migrants. While I have argued that studying whiteness and perceptions of difference should be situated within a particular geographic and socio-historical context, I have also suggested that referring solely to the Polish context when exploring encounters with difference would obscure the understanding of these encounters.
In this thesis, I attempt to advance the empirical application of conviviality. Before I discuss the research findings, I elaborate on how convivial experiences can be studied qualitatively through participant observation, narrative interviews and focus groups. The next Chapter outlines the methodology I employed to investigate convivial encounters between my research participants and the local population in Manchester and Barcelona.
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCHING CONVIVIALITY

3.1 Introduction

My research project was inspired by my own interest in understanding the daily negotiations of difference in multicultural societies, especially in the context of Polish migration. My personal experiences of living in Poland, Britain and Spain inevitably influenced the research process, including the design, data collection and analysis which I will explore in this Chapter. While researchers of migration have studied households, families and larger social networks, and the incorporation of migrant women into labour force, the way Polish migrant women engage in convivial practices in super-diverse settings is under-researched. Even less attention has been paid to conducting comparative analysis which has the potential to advance our understanding of gender, migration and conviviality. Critiques of ‘methodological nationalism’ have highlighted the dangers of both confining the research frame to that of the borders of the nation and assuming that the nation is an undifferentiated space (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002). Therefore, I recognise the importance of using a comparative lens to gain a better understanding of the convivial experiences in the cross-cultural context; this has been done by situating the research, as mentioned, in Manchester and Barcelona. Having decided to interview Polish women, it was clear to me that the best way to understand their experiences of encounters with difference in multicultural environments was through multi-sited ethnography (Falzon, 2009) and by exploring their lives from their own perspectives.

This Chapter firstly outlines the epistemological framework of this research which recognises the importance of migrant women’s lived experiences. To engage in feminist theory and practice means to challenge dominant forms of knowledge building and determining who can be a knower and what can be known (Hesse-Biber, 2012). According to feminist epistemology, knowledge is not achieved through adding women to mainstream research studies but by highlighting the specificity and uniqueness of women’s lives and experiences. Secondly, I explain my approach to studying conviviality in two different cities and my choice of these cities. Subsequently, I discuss my ethnography which involved a multi-method approach consisting of participant observation, narrative interviews and focus groups. I critically reflect on my use of these techniques and my approach to analysis of the data, and I explore methodological and
ethical dilemmas I faced. Furthermore, I engage with my personal experience and positionality. Stanley and Wise (1993) have stressed the importance of understanding the role that researchers play in the research process and they have argued that the researcher should not be removed from the research in an attempt to eliminate the bias of their values. I explore my position as a Polish migrant female researcher with complex migration experiences of living in different countries and cities, researching Polish migrants in the Polish language and translating the research data into English. Migrant researchers are increasingly studying migrants with whom they share nationality and mother tongue (Carling et al, 2014; Gawlewicz, 2014; Nowicka and Cieślik, 2014; Kim, 2012), and report their findings in English which raises question of the language use and translation of research material (Fathi, 2013; Gawlewicz, 2014; Temple and Koterba, 2009). I explain how I translate the meaning between three different languages and multiple contexts, including ‘the national’ – Polish, English, Spanish and Catalan, and ‘the local’ – Manchester and Barcelona. Throughout this Chapter, I engage in discussion about the relationship with the informants influenced by the feminist approach to research and I also highlight the importance of the researcher-translator and the audience. Finally, I explore further ethical considerations and dilemmas faced in the research process.

3.2 A feminist approach to research

The epistemological framework of this research is grounded in the recognition that knowledge is situated and contextual (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Therefore, my study is contextualised under the feminist research framework which disrupts traditional ways of knowing to create new meanings. Even though feminist research does not offer a single methodology or framework (Letherby, 2003), there is a ‘feminist mode of enquiry’ that centres on the under-researched experiences of women (Maynard, 1994: 10). My research framework recognises the need to account for the multiple relations that my informants maintain in the host countries where various categories of difference intersect and form part of their experience.

Research on people inevitably involves dealing with questions of power and the relationship between knowledge and power. Said (2003) argues that to have knowledge of something is to dominate it and to have authority over it. According to the discourse of modernity in Western philosophy and social sciences, the origins of modernity have
been situated in Europe, and the West has defined itself against the East. In his analysis of Orientalism, Said demonstrates how the power of knowledge production has been exercised in representing subordinated Other against the norms of the West. In this light, according to Mohanty (1988: 353), the project of humanism as a Western ideological and political project defined the East and women as Others. Otherness indicates the process of being constituted as Other and becomes part of power relationships between them/us, knower/known, inside/outside (Ramazanoglu, 2002: 108). I follow the postmodernist and postcolonial approaches to research which emphasise the importance of bringing the Other into the research process and resisting hierarchical modes of shaping social life (Hesse-Biber, 2012; Mohanty, 1988; Spivak, 1990).

The Enlightenment in the eighteenth century highlighted scientific knowledge and prioritised reason as the reliable ways of producing truth. Furthermore, the idea of positivism was to distance the researcher from the ‘object of study’ “by defining the researcher as a ‘subject’ with full human subjectivity and by objectifying the ‘object’ of study” (Collins, 2000: 255). Feminist approaches to research break from the conventions of positivist research and scientific objectivity and seek new knowledges for new understanding that legitimise women as knowers (Harding, 1987; Letherby, 2003; Mohanty, 1988). Haraway (1991) has argued that instead of thinking of knowledge as universal, there is a need to understand it as situated.

This research recognises the plurality of women’s experiences, especially when considering the diversity of their lives, including the differences of class, age, religion, sexuality and so on. It follows the idea of research guided by the intersectionality of social identities which does not simply look at intersecting axes of difference but also seeks to deconstruct social categories in order to challenge social inequalities (Ali et al, 2004). This approach demonstrates the importance of recognising the complex interactions between racialised, gendered and class identities and positions (Phizacklea, 2003). The particular interest of this study is that the positions of women I study shift from privileged to excluded in terms of their racialised positioning – sometimes the white European and other times the migrant.

To advance migration studies with regard to experiences of migrant women in super-diverse settings, it is important to conduct research in multiple contexts. Very little
attention has been devoted to analysing the cross-cultural practices of migrant women. I discuss the multi-sited and comparative character of my research in the next section.

3.3 Researching conviviality in Manchester and Barcelona

Until recently, research in this area concentrated on the nation-state experience of the receiving countries (Martiniello, 2013) and the nation-state was considered as a basic analytic unit. The national research traditions have led to a methodological nationalism which was challenged by scholars like Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) advocating a transnational perspective. They offer an insightful critique of methodological nationalism which limits the ability of social scientists to perceive processes that transcend the nation-state. Despite these advancements in literature, according to Çağlar and Glick Schiller (2008: 3), methodological nationalism remains “deeply embedded in migration studies”. It is important to bear this in mind, especially when situating my research in two cities chosen in two different countries. In this part, I will firstly discuss my approach to studying conviviality in two different cities, and secondly, I will attempt to justify my choice of these cities.

The cross-national comparative approach in European migration studies has played an important role in the development of migration studies as it has been significant in denationalising migration and challenging methodological nationalism (Martiniello, 2013). Stanfield II (1993:25) has emphasised the importance of comparative research:

The best social scientific work is comparative. This is because, whether we are trying to explain something about the world or to predict future trends and tendencies, our arguments are strongest when we are able to bring to the table evidence drawn from more than one case.

In my research, I follow Wise and Velayuntham (2014) who advocate less strict approach to studying ethnographic examples of convivial multiculture in Sydney and Singapore. The authors refer to Keith (2005: 10) who is cautious about too much emphasis on international comparisons because each space is shaped by multiple framings:

Consequently international comparisons must look for a ‘toolkit of concepts for conducting inquiries into contemporary world’ in understanding a history of a cosmopolitan present rather than assume it is possible to stand a rainbow comparison of experiences alongside one another.
In line with the above, this research does not aim to present a perfect set of comparisons between Manchester and Barcelona, although it is inevitable that some similarities and differences will be highlighted. Instead, it aims to advance a better understanding of conviviality and explore different ways in which it is experienced in two different cities, although historically similar in modern times, with attention to differences in social, political, cultural and geographic context. Furthermore, maintaining a strictly comparative angle would seem somewhat mechanical and perhaps unrealistic, given time and word limitations. Therefore, I adopt a use of a more flexible comparative lens to studying conviviality in two different contexts.

Since conviviality takes place at the local level, I situated my research in the cities. The experiences of Polish migrants have been often explored in the context of the capital cities (Polish migrants in London: Eade et al, 2006; McDowell et al 2007; Parutis, 2011; Ryan, 2010; Polish migrants in Madrid: Arnal Sarsa, 1998; Fernández et al, 2002; Ramírez Goicoechea, 2003; Stanek, 2003). However, migration increasingly affects all types of cities and not only the capitals (Martinello, 2013). I have chosen to situate my research in Manchester and Barcelona for several reasons. Both are intensively regenerated and post-industrial cities with a long tradition of immigration reception, although as I highlighted in Chapter 1, Spain used to be the country of emigration, and Britain has a longer immigration history. Both cities are characterised by a super-diverse population, mixed neighbourhoods and workplaces, making them ideal settings for studying convivial encounters with difference in terms of ethnicity, religion, class, age, gender, and other social categories. The presence of migrants and ethnic minorities has profoundly changed the social landscape of these cities. Despite becoming urban locations of significant renewal in recent years, some parts of both cities are still characterised by deprivation and are shaped by class and ethnic dynamics. Both Manchester and Barcelona are cities with a migration-friendly narrative characterised by a wide support from the local governments in both cities (Barcelona: Barcelona City Council, 2010; Zapata-Barrero, 2014; Manchester: Manchester City Council, 2007, 2010, 2014a; Perry, 2011; Smith, 2010). Under the banner of community cohesion\textsuperscript{10} in Manchester and interculturality in Barcelona, a number of policies and initiatives have

\textsuperscript{10} The concept of community cohesion emerged from the government-commissioned report known as \textit{Cantle Report}, following the 2001 race riots in northern towns in England (Cantle, 2001). It stressed the need to “develop some shared principles of citizenship” and “the promotion of cross cultural contact between different communities” (11).
been developed with regard to ethnic diversity and migration in both cities. These policies and initiatives are usually characterised by socio-cultural approach to migration and diversity. For instance, the Barcelona City Council gives priority to campaigns and debates around the themes of diversity and living together (Council of Europe, 2011), as well as projects created to encourage dialogue and prejudice reduction, including anti-rumour strategy to combat stereotypes about migrants and migration (Zapata-Barrero, 2014; Tarantino, 2014). Manchester City Council gives importance to promoting good community relations and mitigating against possible tensions between established communities and newly arrived migrant groups by providing information on practical matters and promoting ‘shared values’, citizenship and common norms of behaviour (Smith, 2010).

Whilst the two cities share a number of similarities, there are nevertheless important differences to be acknowledged. Barcelona is the capital of a Catalan nation without a state. Catalans as members of a sub-state nation “may try to distinguish themselves from the nation-state by pursuing liberal/multicultural integration policies” (Rodon and Franco-Guillén, 2014: 669). Jeram et al (2015: 10) suggest that migrants may be portrayed by sub-state nations either as “foes”, threatening the cultural and linguistic unity or as “friends”, boosting economy and integrating into the group’s language and culture. It is not only Barcelona’s location in Catalonia, characterised by bilingualism and national–regional identification, but also a strong discourse of convivència as part of the interculturalist approach to managing cultural difference at the policy level, as discussed in Chapter 2. Thus, Barcelona appears in the Intercultural City Index as part of the Intercultural Cities programme, a joint initiative between the Council of Europe and the European Commission (Council of Europe, 2011). The intercultural city is defined as a city of “people with different nationality, origin, language or religion/belief” where “political leaders and most citizens regard diversity positively, as a resource” and which, apart from actively combatting discrimination, “encourages greater mixing and interaction between diverse groups in the public spaces” (Council of Europe, 2011: 1). In the British context, the policies of multiculturalism have been developed since the 1960s with the recognition of widespread racial discrimination.

11 The emphasis on shared values emanates from the national level documents, for instance, the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (2007) report entitled Our Shared Future, emphasising the importance of creating a shared vision for the future. This rhetoric is also present in the Interculturality Plan for Barcelona, discussed in Chapter 2 (Barcelona City Council, 2010).
(Modood, 2015) and they have been aimed to promote tolerance and respect for cultural difference in education, through supporting community associations and their cultural activities, monitoring diversity in the workplace, encouraging positive images in the media and other public spaces, and adapting public services including education, health and policing in order to accommodate culture-based differences (Verovec, 2007b). However, in light of the backlash against multiculturalism, it has been argued that multicultural policies have failed to adapt to increasingly diverse society which is in need of developing interculturalism as a totally different concept reflecting the new realities of diversity (Cantle, 2015).\textsuperscript{12} The recent ‘Cantle-Moodod debate’ offers some insights into the two approaches of multiculturalism and interculturalism (Cantle, 2015; Modood, 2015). While these two perspectives are often discussed as opposite to each other, they share similar policy objectives with reference to anti-discrimination, recognition of difference and citizenship. Rattansi (2011) suggests that interculturalism is not necessary a move away from multiculturalism, but rather a transformation beyond it with more emphasis on encouragement of encounters between different ethnic groups. This has also been the idea behind community cohesion in the UK. However, these and other approaches often fail to engage with the actual lived experiences of encounter with difference in various city spaces which I explore in this thesis.

In the next three sections, I elaborate on the data collection process involving participant observation guided by participatory research values, narrative interviews and focus groups. I also discuss the analysis of my data and I reflect on the challenges I encountered during the research process.

3.4 Entering the field and participant observation

I started my fieldwork by approaching various groups and organisations working with Polish migrants and other ethnic groups. In Manchester, I approached Europia and Open Culture Project (OCP), and in Barcelona I became involved with the Catalan-Polish

\textsuperscript{12}The backlash against multiculturalism has been fundamentally driven by anxieties about Muslims and fears among mainstream society that the accommodation of diversity has “gone too far” and is threatening its way of life (Kymlicka, 2012: 3). Trevor Phillips, the Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality declared that multiculturalism is no longer useful as it makes fetish of difference instead of encouraging minorities to be truly British (Modood, 2005: 83). Also, David Goodhart, former editor of the Prospect magazine and the author of The British Dream (2013) regarded multiculturalism as divisive and harmful to the shared sense of community due to the failure of some migrants to integrate. The Prime Minister, David Cameron, proclaimed multiculturalism as failed and linked its failure with Islamist extremism. Nevertheless, the original multicultural framework and anti-discrimination legislation remain in place in Britain (Rattansi, 2011; also see Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2010).
Cultural Association (CPCA), Casa Eslava and, to lesser extent, with Polonia-Barcelona. My fieldwork was conducted between June 2012 and March 2013. I visited Barcelona in May 2012 to initiate contact with the CPCA representatives and volunteers and then I returned to Barcelona in September 2012 and conducted fieldwork for three months. The participant observation in Manchester was facilitated by the fact that I studied and lived there. I took part in various activities and projects organised by these groups, including family events, meetings, workshops, presentations, festivities, hiking trips, and so on. I also participated in meetings and events organised by the city councils. As a result of establishing positive relations with some gatekeepers, I was directed to their existing networks and friends. I have been invited to birthday parties and other events not necessarily related with these groups and organisations. This added a multi-sited dimension to my research. A multi-sited approach enables better understanding of participants’ positionalities in different locations (Falzon, 2009). I have spent many hours immersing myself in the field which enabled me to get to know my research participants, establish rapport, trust and obtain an in-depth knowledge and insights. In this section, I reflect on my use of participant observation and some challenges I faced.

The most significant advantage of participant observation has been the possibility of engagement with the participants through practical encounters. This method opens up the possibility of an understanding of reality which no other method can do (Walsh, 2012). The commitment to the naturally occurring setting allows acquiring some degree of understanding of convivial encounters. It also has offered me the opportunity to learn from social world, from the point of view of my research participants and to reflect on my role of the researcher in the process of knowledge co-production.

The participant observation has raised some issues with reference to the role that the researcher plays in participatory research. Some gatekeepers had expectations, intentions and even suspicions with regard to my participation and my multiple roles. It was clear to me right from the start that I did not want to ‘take advantage’ of my research participants for the purpose of my PhD studies. I understand the importance of the long-term commitment to engage with the research participants. I entered the groups and organisations as a researcher and soon after I became an active member. However, whenever my identity as a researcher surfaced, I could sense some tension. I was expected to ‘do’ and ‘think’ as a member and not as a research scientist exploiting the
group. This is reflected in the email correspondence with the representative of one of the organisations, who wrote:

My only request is that you do not look upon Europia as an interesting experiment, as an external researcher might. (…)

The main question that I ask you to consider is the ambiguity of your role (…) It is one thing to juggle with multiple identities as a human being. That's life. It's something else when you have to deal with the overlapping boundaries and different priorities of two contrasting organisations - a huge academy with a commitment to excellence in its research standards and a very small, start-up voluntary organisation with a commitment to do the best that it can but with few written standards or traditions to speak of. That's where you have to engage with other peoples' lives and their expectations. How will you deal with this role conflict? For example, if you are interviewing a member of Europia one minute under your research hat and then have to work with them in the next minute in a practical way under your Europia hat? (Research Diary, May 2012).

This reflects a high degree of awareness on the part of this representative which might be to do with having experience of being the subject of research or of researching others. This situation involved constant negotiation of my multiple positionalities as a researcher and participant. I also did my best to ensure the research participants of my commitments to confidentiality and anonymity.

The task of negotiating multiple roles requires attention, especially with regard to shaping relations with the research participants through engaging in social activities together and developing friendly relations which often involved emotional experiences and running the risk of becoming too involved. Recent sociological and feminist debates have identified a need for reflexive research and the importance of emotion in the researcher’s relationship to the researched (England, 1994; Gray, 2008). The practice of reflexivity, understood as the researcher’s engagement with their own positioning in relation to the world studied and an awareness of researcher’s emotions, contrasts the idea of objective researcher who is able to shut off emotions. Gray critically reflects on Bourdieu’s model of reflexivity which makes a strong claim for the objectivity of sociological knowledge production and underestimates the reflexivity that is integral to everyday life and the ways in which emotion influences particular cultural and social relations. Instead, she argues that emotionally mediated apprehensions of the object of study and the practice of critical reflexivity cannot be separated when conducting research: “emotional reactions are part of human life and are, therefore, never absent
from the research situation” (Gray, 2008: 936). My participant observation required self-critical and self-conscious analytical scrutiny of my position as a researcher and careful consideration of the consequences of the interactions with those being researched (England, 1994). In doing so, I returned regularly to my research diary which enabled me to reflect on my research practice and be aware of my emotional responses.

The participant observation has been important in conducting an effective fieldwork with the purpose of understanding the research setting from the perspective of those who participate in it. However, participant observation alone cannot always show why people do the things the way they do or what a particular activity means to them as it is difficult to access person’s own understanding and emotions (Darlington and Scott, 2002). Therefore, it is useful to combine this approach with other methods discussed in the next sections.

3.5 Narrative interviews and narrative analysis

As Reissman (2008: 26) suggests, working ethnographically with research participants in their settings offers the best conditions for storytelling. The opportunities for interviews have arisen mostly from my participant observation and field contacts. The narrative interviews form the core of my research project. One of the main reasons I chose the narrative interviewing approach was because it offers less dominating ways of interviewing and facilitates detailed accounts, which respect participants’ manners of reflecting meaning in their lives (DeVault ,1999; Riesman, 2002). I conducted narrative interviews with twenty-one Polish migrant women in Manchester and twenty in Barcelona in order to engage with their narratives and reflect on the meaning of convivial cultures. The interviews took place at different locations, for instance, in cafes, university buildings, libraries and interviewees’ homes. I used a digital recorder to record the interviews and I made notes. In this section, I reflect on my use of narrative interviewing, the co-production of data and narrative analysis.

3.5.1 Narrative interviews

Through narrative interviews the interviewees are allowed to unfold their stories unobstructed by the interviewer as far as possible (Flick, 2009). This approach also allows developing extended accounts over the course of interviews (Riessman, 2002). Narratives “can show us how experiences are reconstructed and interpreted by the
research participants” (Griffin and May, 2012). The narration and questioning may blur the boundary between semi-structured and narrative interviews. However, the main difference is that narrative interviewing is used to elicit less imposed and more extended accounts. The idea behind narrative interviewing is motivated by a critique of the question-response type of research inquiry, during which the researcher imposes and controls the structure of the interview by selecting the theme and the topics, ordering and wording the questions (Bauer, 1996). This type of interviewing means that the researcher has to give up control and follow participants down their trails (Riessman, 2008). Encouraging research participants to speak their way shifts power in interviews. This follows feminist approach to research. I formulated the questions broadly but at the same time specifically for the interest of the interview (Flick, 2009). For instance, the question “Tell me what happened when you arrived in Manchester/Barcelona?” allowed my research participants to tell their stories in their own way and generate detailed accounts. I decided to take this approach because I was interested in if and how my informants discussed their encounters with difference. My role was to be an active listener supporting and encouraging the interviewees to continue their narratives. Then, I addressed some aspects of the narrative by asking additional questions. Occasionally, I had to gently steer the subject back in situations when the interviewees went off track.

Despite the emphasis on research participants’ construction of extensive accounts in narrative interviews, I acknowledge my role in the interviews as the co-producer of data and my influence on what was said. As a researcher, I bring my own experiences to my research and decide what my research is about. This inevitably influences the research outcomes. As Salmon and Riessman (2008: 81) argue, storytelling happens relationally and collaboratively between speaker and listener in a cultural context where some meanings are shared. My research participants’ narratives were a result of interaction with me. Through my presence, listening and questioning I have partly shaped the stories of my respondents (Riessman, 2008). Furthermore, the co-construction is particularly visible in the parts of the interviews when the research participants asked me to share my views and experiences. The sharing of my experiences with the research participants may help reduce the exploitative power balance between the researcher and the researched (Edwards, 1993; Oakley, 1981).

Narrative interviews pose some important issues which require attention. Firstly, there is an issue of opening up and speaking at length about life experiences. The participant
observation allowed me to get to know some of the informants, establish trust and mutual respect. This has immensely facilitated opening up during narrative interviews. However, while some interviewees spoke at length, others produced brief accounts. Byrne (2003) points out that in her research, focusing on white mothers of young children living in South London, not all the respondents produced storied narratives of their lives in the interviews. She argues that “the production of different narratives depends on the respondent’s positionality in terms of normative discourses of ‘race’, class and gender” (Byrne, 2003: 33). Furthermore, Byrne stresses that the storied narrative genre demanding the production of a coherent and whole self may restrict interviewees for communicating subjectivity. While most interviewees felt comfortable telling me about their experiences of migration, several respondents expected me to ask more specific questions as they struggled with producing detailed accounts. Also, there were a few who found it difficult to talk about encounters with non-white people. Several mothers of mixed-race children particularly avoided talking about the race topic. This might be because the theme of mixed-race children is a taboo topic not only in Polish migrant communities and in Polish society. Despite these mothers’ awareness about my relationship with a black partner of African origin, they were possibly concerned about being judged, since women are expected to play a key role in the boundary maintenance and ensuring the continuity of their ethnic group (Anthias and Yuval Davis, 1993; Ryan, 2010). In some cases, I tried to remedy the situation by turning the interview into a conversation and I avoided taking notes. This often worked very well and facilitated more detailed accounts. Secondly, there is a general issue in interviewing regarding the way the research participants construct their identities through storytelling but at the same time they also construct how they want to be known, which raises some limitations. Informants make assumptions about what the interviewer wants to hear. This required me to be aware that the research participants might want to put themselves in a positive light with reference to events or people. For example, one research participant made an effort to speak positively about people from different cultures, but once the digital recorder was switched off, she freely expressed her ambivalent opinion about the issue of veiled Muslim women and security. Finally, what is presented in a narrative is constructed in a specific form and memories of earlier events may be influenced by the situation in which they are told. Nevertheless, all knowledge is partial and situated (Haraway, 1988). Furthermore, meanings of life
events are not static, but change under the influence of subsequent events in life of narrator.

3.5.2 Narrative analysis

The transcription of the interviews became part of the interpretation and analysis process. I transcribed all the recorded material myself. Although it was a very long and painstaking process, in the end it was valuable as I became very familiar with the material. After transcribing, the transcripts were summarised and then coded manually to identify the main themes. Narratives require interpretations as they do not ‘speak for themselves’ (Riessman, 2002: 236). My point of departure is to acknowledge that my analytic interpretations are partial and alternative truths that aim for “believability, not certitude, for enlargement of understanding rather than control” (ibid). I chose narrative analysis for the interviews because it allowed me to use a person and case-centred approach and concentrate on how the interviewees interpret and make sense of their experiences of encounters with difference. The narrative analysis approach draws on postmodern and poststructuralist schools of thought which involve an interest in the role language plays in social interaction and its place in structures of power (Griffin and May, 2011). In my analysis, I paid particular attention to the language of difference used by the interviewees. Furthermore, narrative analysis allowed me to preserve the stories and treat them analytically as a unit instead of breaking them up and analysing fragmented chunks out of context. This is in accordance with Riessman’s (1993: 4) argument that “narratives must be preserved, not fractured by investigators, who must respect respondent’s ways of constructing meaning and analysing how it is accomplished”. I employ a more thematic approach in concentrating on narratives about encounters with difference in various spaces of the neighbourhoods and in the workplaces, as reflected in Chapter 5 and 6. Nevertheless, in doing so, I analyse them in relation to the whole narrative. For the purpose of the Chapter 4, I applied a thematic analysis and focused on themes across different narratives.

In my analysis, I combined two different approaches to narrative analysis. Even though I mainly focused on what was said (the content), I also paid attention to the way a story was told. I firstly identified the themes, patterns, relationships which were common for various cases. Secondly, in analysing the chosen cases, I looked for different examples of conviviality, but also similarities and contradictions across the cases. Even though
narrative analysis is case-centred, it can generate conceptual suggestions about social processes (Riessman, 2008). Finally, I used the data gathered through participant observation and focus groups to cross-check and supplement the data from the interviews. Putting together the data from different research methods was a challenging and time consuming task.

I also found it challenging to select specific cases for in-depth analysis, as all interviews raised important matters and were rich in data. One the one hand, I wanted to be comprehensively faithful to the material gathered and do justice to my research participants who contributed to my research project. On the other, there was the need to leave space for detailed analysis. Therefore, I concentrated on cases demonstrating various examples of conviviality and challenges posed to it. In doing so, I had to downplay some cases or use them as counter narratives, without going into too much detail about them. The data from the narrative interviews was cross-checked with the material from the focus groups which I discuss in the next section. I reflect on my use of the focus group method with the use of the photographs taken by my research participates.

3.6 Focus groups with a visual dimension

I conducted a focus group in each city made up of six Polish women in Barcelona and five in Manchester. Most of them had been interviewed before the group discussions. The focus group conducted in Barcelona took place at the CPCA headquarters. The focus group in Manchester took place at the university library study room. Before the focus group, the participants were asked to bring photographs reflecting everyday situations in multicultural Manchester/Barcelona. These photos were then used to stimulate group discussions. Discussions were audio- and video-recorded for the purpose of transcription. I prepared ground rules, nametags, drinks and snacks. The focus groups lasted for two hours. Each focus group participant had a chance to discuss the photographs which were then discussed by the rest of the group. After the group discussions, I emailed the participants with a request to write their reflections about the group discussions. I included several questions to prompt their responses. This enabled me not only to improve my research practice but also to learn how they felt about their participation. The focus groups were used mainly as a supplement to cross-check and aid in the interpretation of data gathered through the above methods (Merton, 1987), but
also to explore how the research participants discuss, negotiate and contest issues through interaction within a group context.

In my use of the focus group method, I follow Madriz (2000), a Latina feminist, who advocates a more integrative and experiential approach to research. The focus group is a collective method focusing on multivocality of participants’ attitudes, experiences and beliefs, empowering the informants and validating their experiences (ibid). Using this research technique allowed me to observe how my research participants articulated and justified their ideas in relation to others through communication. The assumption underlying this approach is that opinions, attitudes and accounts are socially produced and shaped by interaction with others (Tonkiss, 2011). Group context is important in exploring the way in which social and cultural knowledges are produced. Moreover, in the context of a multi-method approach, focus groups can supplement other research techniques, allowing exploration of attitudes and actions that are not easily accessible through other approaches. It is also more power balanced between the researcher and the participants in comparison to interviews, as the researcher has less control over the data that emerge (Madriz, 2000). I attempted to engage each participant in order to equalise power relations in the group. My role was more of a moderator. This, however, made the discussion hard to manage at times for two reasons. Firstly, the discussions prompted by the pictures lasted longer than I expected, especially during the first focus group in Barcelona. It was difficult to stop the conversation as the participants were very engaged and passionate about giving their opinions and talking about their experiences. I had to stop the discussions at some points and move on to the next person discussing the next photograph. Secondly, there were two or three participants who tried to dominate the conversation. Also, the dominators would often change the topic of the conversation. I had to stop them and ask others to take part. The participants’ post-focus group reflections illustrate the issue of the time limits and dominators:

*How did you feel during the group discussions?*

At some points, talked down ☺ [zagadane – implying that some participants were silenced by those speaking in a domineering manner]. The discussion often went off on a tangent and it was hard to follow it and comment straight away, especially considering that we had little time. During the discussion you could see strong characters who had always something to say ☺. (Nina, Barcelona)
[I felt] good and comfortable, maybe even too comfortable. That’s why, I think, the discussion was going a bit out of control ☺ (…) I apologise, because I surely was one of those who prolonged the discussion. (Julia, Barcelona)

The experience of the focus group in Barcelona enabled me to improve my role as a moderator and I was much more successful at controlling the flow of the conversation and allowing everyone to take part during the focus group in Manchester. I was more proactive in enabling less vocal members to make their views known, dealing with dominant speakers and keeping the discussion around the main themes. The participants were very positive about the focus group in their reflections:

I feel that this discussion has taught me a lot and opened my eyes to questions I had no idea about. (Nikola, Manchester)

I really liked it. It would be great if there were more opportunities for this type of discussions about different topics. (Aldona, Manchester)

Initially, I thought of including participants from different ethnicities and I also wondered how the presence of male participants would affect the dynamics of the focus group discussions. The reflections of my research participants about the possibility of presence of other ethnic groups and men mirror my concerns with regard to limitations, had I included those two groups:

People from different cultures would surely have a huge impact. I suspect that we would not hear that many honest opinions which were expressed during the discussion, especially about people from different cultures. (Gabriela, Manchester)

We were more open thanks to the presence of only women. (Julia, Barcelona)

With regard to the use of pictures during the focus groups, I follow Collier and Collier (1967: 5), who explored photography as a research tool: “The critical eye of the camera is an essential tool in gathering accurate visual information because we moderns are often poor observers”. The authors pointed out that people have always used images to give forms to their concepts of reality. The non-verbal language of photorealism is a language that is most understood cross-culturally. Photographs can be tools with which knowledge can be obtained beyond that provided in direct analysis: “When native eyes interpret and enlarge upon the photographic content, through interviewing with photographs, the potential range of data enlarges beyond that contained in the
photographs themselves” (99). During both focus groups, the photos triggered rich and stimulating discussions which often went beyond the content of the images but mostly were still relevant to the research agenda:

What was the impact of the images on the discussion?

It was a very good basis for the discussion, a point of departure for many statements. (Aldona, Manchester)

The pictures gave us ideas to talk about and helped us express our opinions, in a way. (Nina, Barcelona)

It was good to find out what other girls saw in the pictures, especially considering that each of us looked at them in a slightly different way. (Julia, Barcelona)

Because the photographs were explored by the participants, they experienced less pressure from being the ‘subject’ of interrogation. Their role became that of experts leading through the content of the pictures and offering different interpretations.

The focus group data was particularly insightful at the stage of my research analysis. It added interpretative weight to my analysis. I approached the focus group data with a purpose of identifying broad concepts to complement the analysis of narrative interviews. I learnt that focus group analysis needs to consider the distinctive nature of the data, which is an interactive data emerging from group discussions (Tonkiss, 2011), and incorporating the impact of the group context on focus group data (Carey and Smith, 1994). When coding and analysing the focus group discussions, I became aware of the focus group effect. Carey and Smith (1994) have argued that the potential impact of censoring and confirming is the major pitfall of the focus group technique. Some of the focus group participants in both Manchester and Barcelona adjusted their behaviours and opinions in response to perceptions expressed by the majority group members. Individuals whose opinions are different from the majority will repress and suppress these ideas (Tonkiss, 2011). Janis (1972) has referred to ‘groupthink’ and Carey and Smith (1994) have raised the concept of ‘group mindlessness’ when individuals conform to the majority opinion. Nevertheless, despite the group effect occurring at times, at other times, participants’ contributions sharply contrasted with the majority opinion. This, in turn, encouraged other focus group participants to reveal their actual opinions.
3.7 Sample selection

The sample for narrative interviews was chosen to be as varied as possible and it included Polish migrant women who entered Britain and Spain just before or after Poland joined the EU. The interviewees were mainly recruited through the organisations I conducted participant observation with. Subsequently, I applied snowball sampling. I intended to diversify the sample in terms of class, education level, occupation, age, marital status, religious beliefs and migration history. I recruited women who have been living in Britain and Spain for different lengths of time, but with a minimum of 6 months. In selecting interviewees, I also considered migrants’ working status and area they lived in Manchester and Barcelona. Many were highly mobile and had lived, travelled or studied in different countries and areas in Britain and Spain. The sample included twenty-one participants in Manchester and twenty in Barcelona. As mentioned above, I concentrated on choosing the cases I found particularly insightful in terms of lived experiences of relations with difference. This approach allowed me to gather a group of informants whose narratives revealed a broad spectrum of social positionings.

The role of gatekeepers was especially important in recruiting informants, especially in Barcelona. According to Berg (2007: 185), gatekeepers “hold pivotal positions in the hierarchy of the group or organisation one seeks to study”. When I approached the key representative of the CPCA in Barcelona, he sent a group email to his contacts about my research and this resulted in a very high level of interest in participation in the interviews. The migrant sample is dominated by research participants in their 20s and 30s in both cities. These characteristics reflect the demographics of the recent migration from Poland to Britain and Spain. I found it challenging to recruit older interviewees and those with lower socio-economic status living in Barcelona. This was most likely a result of entering the field through associations and organisations attracting young professionals and students, often with positive convivial experiences with difference. Therefore, in order to diversify my sample, I approached women from different backgrounds, who often participated at the family events and workshops organised by the organisations I did the participant observation with. Some of my interviewees put me in touch with their friends and acquaintances who then took part in the interviews and focus groups. I interviewed some women who knew each other. The inter-relations between my research participants enrich the sample as it offers a multi-layered perspective on convivial practices in both cities. This research is not intended to be
statistically representative of Polish women’s experiences. On the contrary, it challenges the dominant regimes of representation of human agency and privileges positionality and subjectivity (Byrne, 2006a).

3.8 Situating myself in the research: the question of ethnicity, gender, language, class and migration status

Feminist social researchers such as Stanley and Wise (1993) argue that we need to understand the role that we play as researchers in the research process. They have called for recognition of the importance of reflecting critically upon the multiple positionalities of the researcher and the ways in which various social constructions, including gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality and class, may influence and shape research encounters and processes (Hopkins, 2007; Mohammad, 2001; Ryan, 2015a; Valentine, 2002). Griffin and May (2012) suggest that who the researcher is in terms of these categories shapes how the research participants behave and what they say. The discussions in research literature about positionality of researchers are often limited to a conventional hierarchy with regard to the researcher as western, white and privileged, and the researched as non-western and non-white (Kim, 2012). However, there is an increasing number of studies conducted on migrants by migrant or minority researchers (Ganga and Scott 2006; Gawlewicz, 2014; Kim, 2012; Nowicka and Cieślik 2014). When studying Polish migrant women, it is important to consider my position in relation to my research participants, which I explore in this section. As part of this exploration, I suggest a more nuanced approach to researchers’ positionality beyond essentialised categories of difference.

When the relationship between the researcher and the researched is discussed in migration literature, the insider/outsider status of the researcher is often explored. The insider is a researcher who assumes shared knowledge of the studied group because of common cultural, linguistic, national, gender and religious categories with the researched, while the outsider is a researcher with no common heritage shared with the informants (Merton, 1972; Nowicka and Cieślik 2014). There is an assumption that migrant researchers with shared national and linguistic background with their respondents have a deeper understanding of their research participants and are able to obtain better data. When I started my research project, I assumed my position as an insider researcher: a Polish migrant woman studying other Polish migrant women in the
migratory context. I did not give much thought to the complexity of the insider status. My positionality as a Polish female migrant facilitated entering the field and establishing contact, rapport with the informants and more balanced power relations. It also increased the sense of identification some of the women looked for (Edwards, 1993). Research participants tend to make assumptions about shared national belonging and culture with that of the researcher (Kim, 2012; Mohammad, 2001; Gawlewicz, 2014; Temple, 2011). My informants frequently used the pronoun ‘our’ when referring to country, culture, history and tradition:

In my culture, saying ‘good day’ to someone you don’t know is not practised. Here, it is a matter of politeness. Children learn to say ‘thank you’, ‘please’, even in situations in which in our culture it is not required. (Sandra, interview, Manchester)

I am a patriot and whoever is interested, I tell them about our culture and history and I think that this enrich people who want to listen. (Jagoda, focus group, Barcelona)

The discourse about a shared sense of belonging to the Polish nation was particularly significant during the focus group discussion in Manchester:

I think that we as Poles, as our entire national group here in England, are disadvantaged by the fact that we are perceived negatively and because of that we can’t focus on the positive aspects of our culture but we fight with this hatred. (Nikola, focus group, Manchester)

It is up to us to gradually change this opinion from the basis and to somehow show our traditions and speak loud that we are from Poland. Knowledge of own culture helps making good impression on people. (Patrycja, focus group, Manchester)

Getting a group together in a room to talk about coming from Poland to the UK is likely to produce discussions of Polishness in a way that a group of mixed nationalities might not work in the same way. Nevertheless, focusing on the similarities may reduce the differences that constitute different positionalities and identities of individuals. This clearly transpired during the focus group discussion conducted in Manchester, when after a long period of remaining silent, Celina found courage to say that she did not feel Polish in response to strong assertions of ‘Polishness’ and national pride by some participants:

I don’t know if I am brave enough because I am kind of odd [English word used] in this group (...) because we are all from Poland, each of us is proud
of it but I am not and will never be (…) because I never felt Polish. Maybe that’s why. I was born and raised there but… [unfinished sentence]

My participant observation reveals similar tensions with regard to assumptions of national belonging and Polishness. Inka, an interviewee in Manchester, made interesting reflections about how the sense of cultural and linguistic familiarity can be sharply contrasted with different experiences and points of views. Zofia’s narrative about her participation in a Catalan association aiming to promote Catalan culture outside of Spain illustrates the emergence of conviviality through cross-cultural understanding of belonging:

It means a lot to me (…) I was invited to become a part of it and I became an executive member. This was an honour for me because I am the only foreigner there (…) Sometimes when we are away at an event, for example, the Italians ask what we are doing and where we are from, I then feel like part of the group and I say, our culture is like this and like that. I also feel like this is my culture, my language and my family.

Some research participants also often took my knowledge of Poland, Polish culture and Polish migration for granted. They would sometimes say: “you know what I am talking about”. During my participant observation, I was also often ascribed the identity as a member of a Polish/ Eastern European/Slavic collective. For instance, in his email correspondence, the representative of one of the organisations wrote:

I greatly appreciate your optimistic and can-do spirit coupled with a steely pragmatism about what’s happening in your Polish community, communities or non-community. Because however you define it you are also a member of this Polish construct even if you also choose to be a member of other communities, whatever they are” (Research Diary, 22 June 2012).

Another example is that of an assumed commonality of being a Polish migrant woman in a relationship with a black man of African origin. Only some interviewees became aware about the ethnicity of my partner, either because they met him or I revealed it during some interviews, especially with women in mixed relationships. I knew about negative attitudes of some sections of Polish society about mixed relationships with non-white men and I was aware that because of this, some participants would be reluctant to talk about it. This similarity has led to some openness but it was often complicated by racialised and homogenising discourses some interviewees engaged in. Based on her negative experiences of a relationship with an African man ascribed mostly to cultural difference, Sandra, interviewed in Manchester, unexpectedly tried to
offer me advice and warn me about relations with African men. She assumed that I would have similar experiences based on her perception of these men as a homogenous category, contrasting with the highly hybrid and multiple identifications of my partner. This confirms Valentine’s (2002: 122) argument that “many layers of sameness and difference can be operating at the same time with the participants and researcher simultaneously identifying and disidentifying with each other”.

Furthermore, the positioning of the researcher as an insider in ethno-national terms might have an effect of the researcher appearing too close to informants and making them wary of sharing information (Mohammad, 2001: 109). This became clear during the interview in Manchester with Karina, a Muslim convert married to a Muslim man. As a result of very negative experiences with Polish people, she was very suspicious about the interview, despite her willingness to participate. She was particularly concerned about the confidentiality and anonymity and did not want the interview to be recorded. I respected her wish and instead took notes, which she then checked thoroughly and asked to remove some data. She was possibly concerned that some Polish readers could identify her. I assured her about my strong commitment to confidentiality and anonymity and I complied with her requests to put her at ease.

The assumption of being an insider as a result of common ethno-national background reproduces methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002) marked by traditional view of ethnicity and nationality as fixed. However, these categories are multi-layered and shifting, especially in the context of transnational migration (Nowicka and Cieślik, 2014). It is undeniable that my transnational mobility and experiences of living in different locations of the world have also influenced my identifications which are shifting and filled with meaning contextually. Similarly, the identities of some of my research participants have been influenced by the experiences of living and travelling in various countries. These shifting characteristics and lived experiences are of crucial importance in the study of conviviality. As Jorgen et al (2014: 38) argue “ethno-national origin is simply one possible element of individual identity that should not be a priori privileged”. I follow the argument that the understanding of insiders having better and ‘truer’ access to knowledge and a closer connection with the informants than outsiders is problematic, because it reproduces insider/outsider dualism obscuring “multiple positioning and (dis)identifications produced and reproduced during the course of an interview” (Valentine, 2002: 122).
There has been an assumption in feminist literature on interviewing that female researchers have a non-hierarchical woman-to-woman connection with female research participants (Edwards, 1993; Oakley, 1981). When I entered the field I was seen to have a multiple privilege of being not only Polish but also a woman. Some of my research participants told me that they found it easy to talk to me for this reason. Nevertheless, as discussed earlier, this privilege is complicated by structurally based and socially constructed differences between women in terms of their ethnicity, class, sexuality, marital status, age and other categories but also by being positioned in different moments of lives. Therefore, assumptions that women interviewing women are automatically insiders obscure this diversity of experiences and viewpoints between and within various groups (Valentine, 2002). Similarly, Ramazanoglu (2002) argues that feminist research relationships need critical examination free from assumptions of shared female identities. She suggests that even those who are located in socially the same or similar category can feel differently about similarities and differences.

My migration status could also be seen as a commonality with my research participants. However, my migration experience, in fact, differentiated me from some of my informants. My reasons for and experiences of migration were very different to those research participants who left Poland in search of work. I left Poland when I was nineteen with an aim to study abroad and my experiences and relations with people have been affected by several years of studying and working in the academic context. Despite this difference, some research participants made assumptions about my migration experiences of living in Britain and Spain and other countries. For instance, Marlena in Barcelona thought I would be interested in a domestic job: “There is a flat. If you want you can do two hours for five Euros, two hours of ironing.” Some participants thought I would understand well their own experience of migration:

Those houses, those blocks of flats [in Manchester], some are so ugly (…) It is not better in Poland where there are blokowiska [estates with blocks of flats]. But you were in the States, you were in Spain, you know what I mean. It is more positive over there. (Judyta, interview, Manchester)

We talk about multiculturalism, but we also think about our young emigration, our children, if we will pass anything on to them (Gabriela: Exactly.) and what we will pass on to them, where we compromise, which traditions and culture we will pass on, if we say, ‘I will change this a bit, we can add a bit of this, you know what I mean. (Patrycja, focus group, Manchester)
Even though I lived in different countries like Judytta, our experiences were not the same. I could not fully understand what Gabriela and Patrycja meant as I did not have children at the time of my fieldwork. However, I could relate quite well with the experience of my participants affected by the negative rhetoric about Polish migration in Britain. This reflects what Gray (2008) calls “personal empathic identifications with the injustices and inequalities that arise from the wider political and social context”.

In terms of the socio-economic status, my position as a doctoral student attached to a public institution has led to assumptions about a higher social position. Due to these assumptions, some informants coming from a working class background seemed more hesitant to talk to me about their experiences. My strategy was to develop rapport and encourage the informants to open up. Certainly, being able to communicate in Polish enabled some participants to communicate more freely and some used the interview as an opportunity to speak Polish. This was especially the case of several participants living in Barcelona in relationships with non-Polish partners.

Conducting fieldwork in a shared native language carries assumptions of shared language experience between the researcher and the researched (Gawlewicz, 2014). It is argued that a shared language facilitates access and interaction with group members (Carling et al, 2014). However, when a common language is used, we tend to make assumption that we know what the interviewees are saying, and alternative readings tend to be obscured or ignored (Riessman, 2002). In her empirical study of domestic workers and their employers in four European countries, Gutiérrez-Rodríguez (2010a) reflects on the presumed identity between her and her research participants as Spanish speakers. While she tried to establish a connection with her Latin American participants by presupposing that migration and Spanish language were a common point of departure, this was challenged by different positions influenced by historical, political and social contexts in Spain and Latin American countries. I also made assumptions about Polish as a common language with my research participants. However, some interviewees in both Manchester and Barcelona struggled to explain certain things in Polish and this was a source of their frustration, even though I encouraged them to speak English/Spanish if they preferred. Focusing too much on how they spoke could affect the quality of data and the flow of the interview.
Another significant linguistic difference was the use of racialised language to describe difference by some interviewees. The feeling of detachment from some informants on this basis was also raised by Gawlewicz (2014) drawing on her research on migrant encounters with difference and the language of Othering. I discuss this issue further in the next section and in Chapter 4. Would the informants use the same language of difference if they spoke to a non-Polish researcher? Gawlewicz (2014) argues that in a company of a fellow national, specific data is reconstructed as a result of the assumptions of shared language and migration experience. This raised a question about whether and when I should reveal that my partner was black and how this would affect the participants’ narratives about encounters with black people.

To sum up, when exploring the relationship with informants, researchers should not rely on fixed categories. Furthermore, the insider/outside binary prevents considering the complex and multi-layered identities and experiences (Valentine, 2002). Migrant researchers should not be simply labelled as insiders based on their ethnicity since migrant groups are very diverse with differences of class, generation, reasons for migrating, length of stay and so on (Ganga and Scott, 2006; Ryan, 2015a). Furthermore, the encounter between researchers and researched is highly dynamic, as they negotiate their positions, instead of relying on the fixed notions of identity (Mullings, 1999). Valentine (2002) emphasises that connections and disconnections are about wider biographical moments. She reflects on sharing a sense of warmth and connection with some interviewees despite some fundamental differences. I have also experienced a strong sense of connection with some informants based on shared experiences despite differences of age, class, marital and parental status. These similarities “go beyond the ethnic lens by illustrating not only that nationality, or ethnicity, is only one aspect of identity but also that it is highly contingent and constructed” (Ryan, 2015a: 55). This reflexive approach allowed me to be aware of the dynamic nature of the interactions with the informants and multi-layered positionalities influencing the research process.

3.9 Not getting ‘lost in translation’

Collecting data in one language and reporting the findings in another has been increasingly common among social researchers who have to make a number of translation-related decisions (Birbili, 2000; Riessman, 2008). All of my research participants spoke in Polish during the interviews and focus groups, although they could
choose their language of preference. They occasionally used some words and phrases in English/Spanish. After I transcribed all the interviews into Polish and wrote summaries of the interviews in English, I translated some parts of the interviews and focus groups for the purpose of the analysis. Even though Polish is my mother tongue, I found the task of translating challenging. In her novel *Lost in Translation* based on her own life story of migration from Cracow in Poland to Canada in the late fifties, Hoffman (1989) explains that translation is something far more complex than just translating words. It involves translating lives (Temple and Koterba, 2009). Hoffman discusses lack of representation for certain words, the difficulties of expression of feelings in English language, and how sometimes translation just simply does not work. Throughout the research process I tried not to get ‘lost in translation’ when making choices about how to represent my research participants across languages (Simon, 1996; Spivak, 1992; Temple, 2004). In this section, I will explore my position as a researcher and translator and some dilemmas I encountered when translating, including writing in a language other than my mother tongue in the context of English language domination in academia and beyond, the choice of language, the importance of the context and the relationship between the researcher-translator, the researched and the audience.

3.9.1 Challenging the Western dominant approaches to translation

As Temple and Koterba (2009: 1) argue, all languages are internally differentiated. This involves differences in grammatical forms. Even though it is important to create quotations that ‘read well’ to make them accessible and understandable for the reader (Birbili, 2000); attempting adequate translation into English with applying English structure may result in the loss of information and misrepresentation of the meaning (Temple, 2004). Temple and Koterba (2009) suggest that cross-language communication and translation between languages is not solely about transferring meaning from one language to another. I follow Spivak’s (1992: 179) emphasis on the importance of “rhetorical nature” of the language, engaging fully with and surrendering to the text instead of producing an “accurate collection of synonyms”: “The translator, the agent of language, faces the text as a director directs a play, as an actor interprets the script. This cannot be the case when translation is taken to be a single matter of synonymy, a reproduction of syntax and local colour” (ibid). Furthermore, Spivak offers a postcolonial and feminist framework for translation which recognises the hegemonic position of English. Similarly, as is well known, Venuti (1995: 1) argues that Anglo-
American culture has been dominated by domesticating theories favouring fluent translating and producing the illusion of transparency. This domestication through producing “the illusory effect of transparency” not only makes the translator invisible, but eliminates the awkwardness and Otherness of the cultural and linguistic difference (5). Venuti (1995: 18) argues that “Translation is the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target language reader”. According to this dominant approach to translation, the aim is “to bring back the cultural other as the same, the recognisable, even the familiar and this aim risks a wholesome domestication of the foreign text” defined as “the violent effect of translation” (18). “Foreignising translation”, in contrast, is a form of resistance to ethnocentrism, racism and imperialism (20). Nevertheless, this approach to translation can alter the way translations are read and interpreted. I follow Venuti’s and Spivak’s idea of developing a theory and practice of translation that resists dominant and hegemonic approaches to translating and recognises difference. This approach calls for more resistant and less fluent translation practices which consider translating as an ongoing and incomplete process of active cultural creation (Simon, 1996). It is important that the translator is faithful to the original, although “not so faithful as to overturn the privileged status of the English language” (Temple, 2004: 7).

3.9.2 The research-translator, the researched and the audience

Traditional positivist approaches to translation minimise the role of the translators to increase the validity of data (Fathi, 2013). The situation of translators has been defined in terms of ‘invisibility’, especially with reference to the hegemonic position of English language and culture (Venuti, 1995: 17):

The translator’s invisibility is symptomatic of a complacency in Anglo-American relations with cultural others, a complacency that can be described – without too much exaggeration – as imperialistic abroad and xenophobic at home.

I adopt Venuti’s concept of translator’s invisibility to critique the Western hegemonic approaches to translation from below, from the standpoint of translator-researcher translating the lives of interviewees from their mother tongue into English. I follow Venuti’s argument to make the translator more visible. Similarly, as Simon (1996: 154) stresses, there is the need to give voice and body to the figure of the translator, who at the same time, needs to be self-conscious and self-critical, especially when making
choices about how to represent people. Temple (2004: 1) argues that although there is no single ‘correct way’ to represent research participants who speak a different language, there are epistemological and ethical implications with reference to the choices made about representation. Therefore, translation of research material requires extra care to maintain ‘conceptual equivalence’ (Birbili, 2000; Gawlewicz, 2014; Temple and Koterba, 2009). It also requires considering the audience.

Translation can be conventionally thought of as involving a speaker, translator and audience (Fathi, 2013; Kim, 2012). The readers (the audience) should not be considered as a homogenous group but in terms of cultural, social and linguistic diversity (Kim, 2012). This is especially important when the research material is translated from a language different to that of the reader. Fathi (2013) argues that words exist in relation to other people and our positionings are constantly situated in relation to them. Fathi (2013: 56) uses the concept of dialogical translation as “part of a mutual interpretative understanding which leads to the co-construction of meanings across lingual and cultural boundaries”. Therefore, the role of the translator is not invisible, even more so when considering the fact that the translator’s positionality affects the entire research process, the knowledge production (Fathi, 2013), and the language choice which may alter the meaning (Gawlewicz, 2014). Fathi’s conception of the dialogical and transversal approach emphasises the importance of the dialogical construction of meaning involving the researcher, the researched and the multiple audiences. It acknowledges that there are manifold ways of reading data and negotiating meanings.

3.9.3 Translating the ambivalent language of difference and the importance of the context

One of the biggest challenges in terms of translating was conveying the ambivalent expressions of difference used by some informants. This involved words like Angol, Brytol, Pakistan, ciapatylciapak, sudak and Murzyn. Even though the terms Angol and Brytol have a slightly pejorative meaning, the former was used to refer to white English people, while the latter can be translated into Brits or Britons, often used to refer to a much broader group of British people (Gawlewicz, 2014). However, the highly ambivalent terms Pakistan, ciapatylciapak – used to refer to people of South Asian, Arabic, Turkish and North African origin; Murzyn – used to refer to black people; and sudak – referring to South Americans in Spain, are much more problematic when it comes to conveying the correct meaning. Translating these terms into English would
risk misrepresentation and changes to meaning. Therefore, I made a decision to leave the original terms in italics in order not to lose the socio-historical context attached to these terms. I explain further and contextualise some of these terms in Chapter 4. The limited awareness of the racialised undertones of the language used can be partly explained by the relative ethnic and religious homogeneity, normalisation of racialised language and a fairly low degree of social censure and of the penalising abusive and discriminatory language in Poland (Gawlewicz, 2014). However, not all the research participants used these ambivalent expressions of difference. Some were very careful about choosing words to describe black and South Asian people. For instance, several informants used words like ciemnoskóry/czarnoskóry [dark-skinned/black-skinned] when referring to black people, which I translated as black. This important shift in the language of difference possibly reflects not only a growing awareness of political correctness but also a way to challenge highly racialised language.

As it has been argued, difficulties in translation are not limited to a mechanised way of matching one word to another but it also involves cultural meaning and context attached to languages (Fathi, 2013; Kim, 2012; Simon, 1996; Spivak, 1992; Temple and Koterba). According to Spivak (1992), the translator should be familiar with the history of the language used by the research participants and their cultural context. In translation, there should be an emphasis on context within which particular meanings are produced (Fathi, 2013). This required me to pay a great deal of attention not only to translating the narratives but also to the Polish, British, Spanish and Catalan contexts. I used my understanding of different settings in order to translate the meaning. In some instances, I included words and phrases that were difficult to translate in the original form in Polish or in Spanish written in italics with a closest translation and/or explanation in square brackets (see also Gawlewicz, 2014). In addition, I contextualised quotes where it was necessary.

3.10 Other ethical considerations and dilemmas

In this section, I discuss several ethical issues regarding participation in my research project. The researcher should do everything in her/his power to prevent harming participants involved in the process by respecting and taking into account their needs, values, decisions and interests (Flick, 2009). From the outset, and in line with my home institution’s policies on research practice, I aimed to make sure that my research was
based on informed consent where the research participants have agreed to take part on the basis of information received from me, after which they could decide to agree to take part or not. Their involvement was entirely voluntary. When potential participants expressed an interest in the research, I discussed the project with them and explained that the strictest confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained. The participants received both the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form for Participants Taking Part in Student Research Projects (see Appendix 2). I adhered to the ethical practices of the University of Manchester, especially with regard to confidentiality, anonymity and data protection.

During the interviews and focus groups, some research participants discussed personal and sensitive issues and this, at times, involved emotions of anger or sadness. For example, the interview with one of the informants in Barcelona triggered some painful memories about her deceased partner which made her cry. I tried my best to put her at ease by showing empathy. In turn, active listening, sometimes for hours, although mostly pleasant and rewarding, was at times an exhausting experience, and required some time to emotionally recover. This was something I was unaware before I started my fieldwork and, therefore, it was not accounted for in my risk assessment prior to Ethics Committee approval. Although this is hardly spoken about, fieldwork can pose stress, strains and emotional tensions (see Coffey, 1999).

Some research participants had their own expectations with reference to my research and their participation. While some wanted to increase awareness of discrimination, prejudice and exploitation experienced by Polish migrants, others hoped that my research project would contribute to changes in negative perceptions of Polish migrants: “I’m happy that there are people like you, because there is a need for change. Poles should not be exploited” (Marlena, interview, Barcelona). However, I could not make any promises about the ways in which my work would benefit them, especially knowing that the primary audience for a PhD thesis is mostly academic.

Finally, where relations between the researcher and the researched are concerned, there is a question of reciprocity. To be reciprocal involves a relationship in which each person contributes something the other needs (Trainor and Bouchard, 2013). Reciprocity is an ethical position rather than a mere exchange of goods. My research participants contributed their time and effort, shared their lives, experiences, opinions
and knowledge to inform and shape my study. Good research ethics practice requires that researchers consider not only what they take from research participants but also what they give to them (Crow, 2008). Apart from assuring my informants that the material collected would be treated ethically, in some situations, although with limits, I felt obliged to support the research participants if they needed help. For example, one informant in Manchester called me because she was in a very difficult situation and needed help with regard to her health difficulties and financial situation. Due to her limited English language skills, she struggled to get any help. I made sure I put her in touch with Europia volunteers who offered to help her. Furthermore, efforts to provide reciprocity for my research participants also influenced the shaping of friendly relationships that developed throughout the research process.

3.11 Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have reflected upon and evaluated my research process, including the epistemological and methodological framework for studying experiences of migrant women — the comparative lens, research methods, data analysis, sample, my positionality within my study and methodological and ethical dilemmas I faced during the research process. I have stressed the importance of a multi-method and multi-sited approach to studying migrant experiences and their narratives beyond single country cases. I have demonstrated that the combination of participant observation with narrative interviews and focus groups has played an important part not only in establishing rapport and building trust allowing the research participants to open up, but also provided me with an in-depth knowledge of the research setting. The methodologies I employed allowed me to explore the complexity of convivial encounters between my research participants and the local population in Manchester and Barcelona.

This Chapter contributes to the understanding of some challenges facing researchers with regard to their multiple roles of researching, participating, translating and writing in a language other than their mother tongue. It also provides a contribution to the literature about migrant researchers studying migrant women with assumptions about shared national and linguistic background in the migratory context. It raises the issue of the challenge for migration scholars to develop concepts and analytical categories that do not reinforce the vision of the world divided into bounded and fixed national entities.
(Nowicka and Cieślik, 2014; Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002). Furthermore, I have argued that the relationship between the researcher and the researched is dynamic throughout the research process and it involves constant negotiations. Therefore, it should not be addressed through the insider/outsider binary. I have highlighted the importance of the researcher-translator-audience role, especially when translating data into English, the language of global academia and scientific publication (Ferguson et al, 2011).

Having reflected on my methodology and my research practice in this Chapter, in the next three Chapters I explore my empirical findings about convivial encounters with difference in the context of Britain and Spain. In Chapter 4, I concentrate on imagining and encountering the raced, classed and gendered Other upon the informants’ arrival in Manchester and Barcelona.
CHAPTER 4: IMAGINING AND ENCOUNTERING THE OTHER

4.1 Introduction

The public, media and scholarly discourses often construct Polish migrants as struggling to deal with cultural diversity in Britain, mostly in terms of race and ethnicity. However, little is known of how Polish migrants with different biographies and migration histories imagine their host societies and how they encounter difference upon their arrival in Britain and Spain. This Chapter reveals very diverse narratives about perceptions of difference among the research participants, which are often raced, classed and gendered. The empirical data demonstrates that attitudes towards others are not always clearly negative or positive, but rather ambivalent and contextual (Ząbek, 2007), and influenced by time, space and personal histories. The process of encountering difference demonstrates the dynamic and changing nature of conviviality, often influenced by the imaginaries of the Other.

This Chapter demonstrates that Polish migrants may perceive difference in a certain way as a result of their socialisation in a particular socio-historical context of Poland. Their perceptions of the Other may be better understood through Bourdieu’s concept of habitus (Nowicka, 2015), understood as socially acquired predispositions influencing the way individuals perceive the world (Bourdieu, 1984). It could be argued that the socialisation in Poland, where a) constructions of blackness have been deeply rooted in the Polish consciousness and influenced by Western discourses (Gilman, 1985; Ząbek, 2007), and b) contact with difference has been rare in many parts of Poland, may provide a context for socio-spatial encounters with difference and explain why some groups may relate well to particular groups and maintain distance from others upon their arrival in super-diverse cities. However, while habitus is constantly reinforced, it is also modified by life experiences (Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, 2011). Habitus is evolving and it is constantly subject to change, especially through migrants’ encounters with the outside world (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010). It adjusts to the new contexts and to personal experiences. Therefore, it is important to explore encounters with difference not only with reference to predispositions acquired as a result of socialisation in the home country, but also as result of socialisation in the new contexts, while also considering spatial, temporal and personal circumstances.
The aim of this Chapter is to explore diverse and complex narratives regarding encounters with difference upon migrants’ arrival in Manchester and Barcelona. I discuss the main themes I identified in the empirical material based on narrative interviews and focus groups when exploring research participants’ raced, classed and gendered perceptions of difference. In doing so, the influence of the images of Otherness shaped in both Poland and the host countries is considered. Firstly, this chapter concentrates on the constructions of the classed and raced Others, contrasting with the imagination of upper class and white British society. Secondly, it reflects on the perception of Catalans as ‘closed’ and how it contrasts with the stereotype of the open and friendly Spaniards and ‘foreigners’. Subsequently, after briefly outlining the perceptions of the black Other, the recurring images of blackness in several accounts in both cities are discussed. The final section focuses on the perceptions of orientalised men and women of South-Asian and Middle-Eastern origin and some of these representations echo images known from postcolonial studies. Therefore, I propose to use a postcolonial critique to de-code some cultural representations. In doing so, I draw on Said’s (1995) critique of Orientalism.

There is a specific vocabulary that some interviewees use in both contexts to speak about classed, raced, ethnic and cultural difference which is explored throughout this Chapter. Some expressions travel across borders while new categories are created and adopted from fellow migrants. Nowicka (2012) points out that the language of diversity that Polish migrants use lacks expressions to reflect ethnic, religious and cultural differentiation of receiving societies. However, several narratives demonstrate alternative perceptions of difference challenging and disrupting the racialised constructions and offering the possibilities of new ways of discussing and relating across difference.

4.2 The perceptions of English and Englishness

Polish perceptions of Others have been largely determined by the geo-political and cultural position of Poland between the East and the West (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2007). The opposition of ‘us’ and ‘them’ is a result of historical experiences of Polish people and the place of Poland on cultural borderland (Benedyktowicz, 2000). Historical research and public opinion surveys point to a significant difference in perception of people from the East and the West in Poland (CBOS, 2014; Ząbek 2007;
Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2007). One of the most important elements shaping Polish identity and attitudes to Others in Poland is argued to be, on the one hand, a certain inferiority complex towards the Western nations, including admiration of civilisational achievements; and on the other, a sense of superiority towards the Eastern nations, a fascination with difference and, at the same time, a fear of destruction (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2007).

For centuries, there has been a conviction in Poland of the superiority of Western civilisation. In particular, Britain has been perceived as part of the affluent West and it has been imagined as the place of the best universities, royalty and aristocracy associated with high culture, excellence in education and civilisational development (Horolets and Kozłowska, 2012: 51). Based on the data collected from life history interviews with Polish migrants in the UK, Burrell (2011) discusses the widespread fascination with everything western in socialist Poland. Yurchak (2006: 34) has used the term “Imaginary West” to describe “a local cultural construct and imaginary that was based on the forms of knowledge and aesthetics associated with the West but not necessarily referring to any real West”. In this part, I firstly discuss the constructions of the classed Other and secondly, of British society as white.

4.2.1 The classed Other

One of the recurring themes across many interviews was the perception of Britain as a white and upper class society different from the reality of socio-economic deprivation of some inner city areas of Manchester. Some interviewees expressed rather negative perceptions towards white British people from lower social class, in particular, their bodies, lifestyle and behaviour in juxtaposition with their geographical location in deprived areas of Greater Manchester. The narratives often positioned the ‘classed Other’ in specific places adding up to the visibility of Otherness and its fixity inseparable from its location. When exploring the construction of the classed Other, it is important to consider the socio-economic context in Britain which remains dominated by class divisions (Sveinsson, 2009). The issues facing the working class in Britain can be traced to long-term shifts in the economic structure and politics of the country. Income inequality remains high and Britain is positioned at the lower end of social mobility levels amongst comparable nations (4). According to Skeggs (2009), on the one hand, the interests of the white working class are often pitched by the media and
Politicians against those of ethnic minorities and migrants, while larger social and economic structures are overlooked. On the other, widespread classism and explicit contempt of poor white people is often considered as socially acceptable. In the popular imagination, a very diverse category of working class ‘rapidly devolves into a deficient ‘social type’: as a council estate dwelling, single-parenting, low-achieving, rottweiler-owning cultural minority, whose poverty, it is hinted, might be the result of their own poor choices” (Bottero, 2009: 7). Similar categorisation is echoed in the narratives of Patrycja and Aldona.

Patrycja, a 28-year-old full time mother compared her first stay in London with the subsequent arrival in Sheffield and then Manchester. The idealised perception of the ‘attractive’, ‘posh’ and ‘mixed’ London representing the South is sharply contrasted with the grim and rundown North occupied by working class people:

For me, the southern and northern England are like two different countries. I think that the South is more attractive (...) Here, there are many people from working class. Maybe after all these years (...) in the North, maybe I am kind of idealising London (...) But the image of London, of the city, of everything best about England is over there: the culture, the neighbourhoods and the lifestyle. Here it is different. I liked the architecture over there and everything so posh. There was an incredible mixture of cultures and everybody could find their place in this mix. Nobody bothered anybody. But here (...) In some places, I am surprised with a sort of stagnation. Here there are no clean neighbourhoods. There are many warehouses and abandoned buildings (...) Now I think that, ok, if I was British from the North and if my dad lost his job fifty years ago and my mum would work hard in a supermarket and then immigrants from Eastern Europe came and they are doing well and became a competition then maybe I would have some kind of issues with it. On the other hand, I have never felt that I was taking somebody’s job. Even when I looked for a job and I went to the job centre, I was in a queue, there were three of us. One was a skater, dressed totally like… with a big chain and next to me a seventeen years old girl with her cleavage out and these earring and I was dressed modestly. If an employer came, who would he choose?

Firstly, Patrycja’s narrative illustrates the idea of North-South divide described in a very stereotypical way. The vision of convivial London, where people from different cultures mix and live together, is set in opposition to the gloomy and deprived North where conviviality is limited by the competition for jobs between the white working class and the new arrivals, reinforcing the division between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Paulina’s view of the North is possibly a result of her new habitus influenced by the modern stereotypical representations of the North of England. Secondly, Patrycja made an attempt to
understand the working class locals and to express her empathy toward them by placing herself in their shoes, but immediately after she offered a counter narrative to the popular claims she heard in the media about Polish people taking local jobs. Patrycja emphasised the visual difference of the two youngsters at the job centre manifested through inappropriate clothing and appearance in opposition to her modest look. She implied that their visual Otherness was the reason of failure in securing a job. Patrycja’s narrative illustrates what Bauman (2006) describes as ambivalent attitude towards the poor of both compassion and contempt. No convivial interaction took place as a result of social distance marked by the classed and racialised difference. While Patrycja might have been perceived as an Eastern European migrant taking local jobs, she viewed the visually different youth as the classed Others.

In her narrative about people living in Bury, a town in the north of Greater Manchester where she occasionally goes shopping, Patrycja continued her construction of the classed Other characterised by certain look, behaviour and location:

When I see these people in this town I feel depressed. I think these people are neglected. They are mainly people from a very low social class. You can see that by their behaviour and their clothes. They are so neglected, greasy hair (…) I do the shopping and I want to leave as soon as possible. The cafes are covered with chewing gum and the shops are dirty. They sit there and eat chips and no wonder that they have poor health. I’m telling you, a fat woman, tired and she drinks a large cappuccino with whipped cream and on top of that chips [laughter] and I think, Holy Mother, and sometimes I clutch my head and I think to myself, the next potential patient with a coronary disease (…) Here people are neglected, they have some kind of benefits, but they are in love with sales, buying this junk, these earrings and go out on Saturday. They buy a new top in Primark to look like a star and here it’s actually like that. Those people behave like that, but I am talking about lower social class (…) I don’t know if this is the question of the stagnation of the North (…) or expensive education and not everybody can afford it or laziness, because they know they have benefits, they live on them with numerous families, because I see young mothers, they have two or three children and she is not even twenty and she functions well (…) When I arrived here I saw this difference, different kind of English people.

Patrycja’s construction of the classed Other is gendered since her narrative focuses mostly on the working class female bodies. Ideas about the female body have long served as important means of distinguishing class differences (Brooke, 2006). The greater control by middle-class women over reproduction has been contrasted with the working class female body without or with little reproductive control and as “disordered
and uncontrolled as the shadowy warrens of working-class neighborhoods” (Brooke, 2006: 106). This stereotypical perception of the working class female body is echoed in Patrycja’s narrative. The classed Other is also racialised as “different kind of English people”, contributing to the racialisation of the ‘white working class’ (Sveinsson, 2009; Garner 2009). In their research of white and middle-class families in London, Reay et al (2007) refer to Bourdieu’s notion of ‘class racism’ reflecting moral stigma and inferiority often attached to working class while moral superiority is ascribed to higher classes. Furthermore, in Patrycja’s narrative, the homogenous, gendered, classed and racialised Other is defined by the immediate locality. The emphasis on the geographic location of the ‘hot spots’ with very high unemployment, deprivation and with grim features adds up to the visibility of the classed Other (Rogaly and Taylor, 2009).

Patrycja’s narrative also illustrates ambivalence in understanding the reasons behind the deprivation of the classed Other. This confirms Stanaszek’s (2007) argument that, on the one hand, contemporary perceptions of the poor acknowledge the structural factors leading to poverty, for instance lack of jobs, education and economic crisis, and on the other, the belief that poverty is self-inflicted and is a result of unwillingness to improve the quality of life and living at the expense of others. Patrycja considered education as a possible reason behind deprivation within the group in question. Nevertheless, she quickly dismissed this factor by attributing the circumstances of the poor white working class to laziness and reliance on benefits, a common perception in Britain. This raises the question of migrants absorbing the prejudices of the host country. Furthermore, while the research participants are likely to adopt prejudices about the white working class existing in Britain, they may also be influenced by discourses about the poor in the home country. In the last decade of the twentieth century, poverty in Poland was mainly associated with external and structural factors, including mass unemployment, the transformation of the economy and state politics (Tarkowska, 2013). However, a recent public opinion survey on poverty demonstrates that the causes of poverty have been increasingly associated with laziness and lack of responsibility and deemed to be people’s own fault (CBOS, 2012). Although each society creates and interprets the presence of the poor differently, there are some common elements and discourses (Tarkowska, 2013). Therefore, the perception of the classed Other may be a result of a combination of classist discourses in both the Polish and British context.
Aldona, a 34-year-old university graduate and a friend of Patrycja, also perceived the “poor English class” as visibly different in her narrative about Harpurhey, an inner-city area in North Manchester:

What stands out over there, when I pass by, is the poor English class [laugh] so to speak. The majority of people living there are on benefits, right? (...) I don’t go there very often. I will tell you with all honesty I don’t like that area because when I went there last time (...) and when I walked through the shopping centre…if you spent there five minutes, you would know what I am talking about. These women were so fat, tattooed, poor people, it stands out, and white, right? There are migrants living there, but you can’t really see them that much, especially kolorowi [the colourful], you can’t really see them. These are my impressions. Polish people also live there but you can’t see their difference.

As in Patrycja’s narrative, Aldona emphasised the visual and embodied features of the poor white English working class. The construction of the classed Other is, again, gendered as Aldona’s narrative highlights the working class female bodies. Furthermore, the emphasis on whiteness adds to the idea of distinctiveness of the collective. Interestingly, while the visual Otherness of the poor white working class is stressed, the “colourful” Others are constructed as less visible, possibly as a result of fear that to see race is to be seen as racist (Byrne, 2006a). This also transpires in her narrative about a drawing of a black model during an art workshop: 13

This man seemed nice (...) I didn’t pay attention to the fact that in front of me sat a big and black...although when it comes to his origin I had a moment when [I thought]...how to draw him to not emphasise too much that he is black? That’s why I didn’t draw his face very clearly. I thought, if I draw big lips, bigger nose, he would be black, right? So I decided to hide this fact, but his hair fascinated me, so I only drew his hair.

It appears that Aldona might have adopted the social norms in Britain, although in Poland it has also gradually become less acceptable to talk about race in negative terms or with racialised language as a result of reinforcement of the norms of political correctness (Grzymała-Kazłowska and Okółski, 2003; Ząbek 2006). ‘The colourful’ was a term used by some of my research participants to refer to non-whites, although this word is not as contextually loaded as the term ‘coloured’. Even though the latter

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13 The workshop was part of the ‘In Translation’ project led by artists from Ultimate Holding Company in collaboration with three groups, including the Europia group I conducted participant observation with. The project involved creative workshops and creating some art with reference to the themes highlighted in the Empire Marketing Board Posters. This artwork was then displayed at the Manchester Art Gallery between March 2012 and March 2013 (Research Diary, 24 November 2012).
term was accepted in Britain until the 1960s, nowadays it is widely regarded as offensive and outdated (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). My research participants seemed unaware of this difference and ambivalence attached to this terminology. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, the degree of awareness, social censure and the penalising of abusive and discriminatory language are still relatively low in Poland (Gawlewicz, 2014).

Aldona’s reflection on her experience of visiting a friend at a council estate further illustrates how the classed Other is defined by strange activities and immediate location resembling popular images of the white working class in Britain:

There is a totally different world, what these people do, why they sit from dusk to dawn in a garden and drink beer (…) Our friend from the bank moved in to… she was the first person who got a council house and when she had a baby, I arranged to visit her with another friend and this was my first time when I was at a council estate. (…) We arrived at eleven in the morning. It was a sunny day. Young and old people sunbathed in their gardens [laugh] and drank beer. We then looked at each other, what’s going on? We, the hardworking mothers, work in the bank from the morning till the evening and here they are, as if they were in Spain, right? We asked a young guy about the time. He looked at us, didn’t say anything and walked away. It was strange. He maybe heard the accent, and he was like this, hmm, and he left, it was my impression (…) We were at my friend’s garden and we saw a taxi arriving and then we saw her neighbour dressed up as a maid and she got into the taxi [laugh] she went somewhere like that in the middle of the day [laugh], something very unusual.

Aldona’s narrative about visiting the council estate can be compared to British middle class critics scorning and ridiculing the white working class. The narratives of both interviewees discussed above echo the images from what Cohen (2008) calls the “21st century television’s prole porn” commissioned by wealthy media executives making fun of the white working class, including Shameless (Channel 4, 2004-2013), Little Britain (BBC One, 2003-2005) and The Jeremy Kyle Show (ITV, 2005 – present) programmes with grotesque characters “who indulge in perverse pleasures at the taxpayers’ expense”. The recent documentary series Benefits Street (Channel 4, 2014) and Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole (Channel 5, 2014-2015) described as “poverty porn” raise further questions about the issue of “fetishisation of class differences” for popular consumption and the portrayal of benefits claimants as a “different breed” (Price, 2014). At the same time, the systematic nature of class inequality which intersects with other categories as race, gender, ethnicity and disability is often ignored. By discussing the
classed Other in opposition to the ‘hardworking mothers’, Aldona distinguishes ‘us’ – hardworking Poles from ‘them’ – the unemployed benefit claimants. This narrative has to be situated in the context of social hostility towards migrants which “may shape how participants present themselves in research contexts. Experiences of hostility may reinforce a sense of ‘we-ness’ versus ‘them’” (Ryan, 2015a: 55).

While this section focused on encountering white working class Brits, the next part explores how some research participants imagined Britain and Britishness as synonymous with whiteness.

4.2.2 Imagining white Britain

Upon their arrival, many interviewees expected to find not only an upper class but also a white British society. Oliwia, a 32-year-old mother of two from southern Poland, admitted that her myths about Britain collapsed upon her arrival. Even though she stressed that she did not really experience a cultural shock because of her visits to countries in Asia and Africa perceived as less civilised, she recounted her profound surprise when she walked for the first time through Rusholme, a commercial inner-city area in Manchester characterised with its super-diverse population, including a longstanding Asian presence:

I have to say that when you walk through the ‘Curry Mile’ it is in some sense like in Pakistan and Iran. When you walk by the shisha bars or the rubbish bins the smells are the same as over there. It smells like that a lot because this is a Pakistani neighbourhood. These smells and these people, because some are dressed the way they are dressed, you don’t feel you are in England when you are in this neighbourhood. Here you feel more like in Asia, as if it was something totally different. I feel that I don’t really know what it is like to live in England (…) In some sense, I don’t really know what England is, do I? You can’t feel England here. When you open the door to the back yard or when you return home or go somewhere, you can smell curry and the smell comes from every direction by the evening (…) I don’t feel like this is England (…) I would say I am in Pakistan, especially when I am on the Curry Mile.

‘Curry Mile’, is a section of Wilmslow Road with a variety of South Asian and Middle Eastern restaurants, take-aways, shisha bars, grocers, boutiques and other shops. It is one of the most popular areas of Manchester among locals and visitors (Kirmani, 2006). Oliwia compared this area to Pakistan and Iran she had visited in the past. She emphasised the visual difference of the inhabitants and the smell several times and used it to construct her neighbourhood as Pakistani. Oliwia over-estimated the proportion of
Pakistani people in the neighbourhood. The Census 2011 data (ONS, 2012) found that 43% of Rusholme’s population was white while 18.6% was Pakistani. Oliwia, as many other interviewees, used the ‘Pakistani’ category to refer to people of South Asian origin, thus homogenising this group and constructing it through over-visualisation and heightened sensual perception. Her narrative also illustrates Simonsen’s (2008: 153) notion of a “practical orientalism” reflected through the noticing of dress and smell of the ‘others’ which mark their strangeness influencing everyday experiences. Furthermore, this example illustrates how spatialised Otherness is constructed. Oliwia orientalised the neighbourhood through positioning it in the exotic East contrasting with her idea of Englishness and England.

Oliwia’s perception of the ‘Pakistani neighbourhood’ does not fit into her imagined notion of England and Englishness. Her narrative echoes a common narration of an imagined rural England as a supreme marker of national identity (Edensor, 2002; Lowenthal, 1994). Oliwia did not consider the idea of a more inclusive notion of Englishness due to adherence to the notion of imagined collectivity marked by underlying assumption of whiteness and superiority of Western civilisation. It is clear that, for Oliwia, Englishness is synonymous with whiteness. This becomes more apparent when she recounted a conversation with a black woman:

She was fascinated that my son speaks Polish and English and she asked me where I was from and so on and then I asked her where she was from. She was black [Murzynka], and she replied, ‘from England’ [laugh] so it’s like… I mean I understand she was born here or came here when she was little, but for me she is not Eng… [unfinished word ‘English’], I mean she may have English citizenship, but she is not from England and I didn’t really know how to react to it.

In Oliwia’s narrative the non-white Other is explicitly excluded from the category of Englishness and, therefore, is racialised. This example reflects the wider contested and racialised nature of Englishness (Byrne, 2007). Oliwia’s imagination of England and English people echoes the stereotyped version of idyllic, closed and fixed notions of Englishness as ‘pure’ white, middle-class and incompatible with blackness. This perception of Englishness is reflected in Byrne’s research findings based on interviews with white mothers in London. She argues that the classic notions of Englishness “are clearly raced and build upon a racialised discourse of national and imperial superiority” (Byrne, 2007: 527). In their exploration of the experiences of Central and East
Europeans in the UK, Spencer et al (2007) highlight that their respondents possibly imagined ‘British born’ to mean white people and were not aware that ethnic minorities may also have been born in the UK.

The first encounter with non-white others was surprising and somewhat distressing for 51 year-old Krysia from a small town near Krakow, although later she admitted that ethnic diversity became something normal that she “got used to over the years”:

> It was worse in the beginning. At first I was surprised, shocked, shocked, it was weird. I found it a bit difficult [to find my place]. Whoever walked pass me in a shop spoke in a different language and I felt a bit lost. I really felt as if I was in a jungle because here was a Pakistan [‘Pakistani’ with a slightly pejorative connotation], there an Arab and over there Murzyn (...) but since I decided to come here, I thought oh well, if I didn’t like it I should go back (...) At the moment, there is no problem, it is not a big deal for me anymore.

This excerpt illustrates Krysia’s lack of familiarity with people ethnically different upon arrival. She used racialised language by comparing ethnically diverse environment to a ‘jungle’ with culturally different Other. Kryśia perceived ethnic and cultural diversity in colour-coded terms by referring to black and brown people regardless of their citizenship. By stressing differences of colour, they become sharpened in opposition to whiteness perceived as the norm (Fox, 2013). She used a colloquial expression Pakistan, slightly different to Pałucki [Pakistani], with a somewhat pejorative undertone. She also used the ambivalent term Murzyn when referring to black people. Her language of difference and views may have been affected by the very definite construction of blackness persistent in Poland, which will be discussed in more detail in the section about imagining blackness in this Chapter. Even though Krysia used a strongly racialised language to discuss her first encounters with difference, it seems like she was not aware about the racist connotation of the words she used. This could be due to a normalisation of these terms not only in Poland but also within the Polish environment in Britain. It is possible that Krysia reproduced habitus acquired in Poland operating at sub-conscious levels. Nevertheless, as a result of regular contact with ethnic difference, there is a shift in her perception.

Another interviewee, Lucyna, a 34-year-old part-time PhD student from southern Poland was also surprised to encounter ethnic diversity in Britain. However, in contrast to Olivia and Krysia, she began understanding Englishness as a more inclusive category:
I remember that when I came to England it was a sort of culture shock for me. As I told you, I didn’t expect that there would be so many different people with different skin colour. I thought that they were all white, posh, English, but this is not the case. In terms of black people, I’ve had very positive relations with them and all of the ones I have met were really nice (...) and once in the beginning when I worked at a nursery, I worked with a colleague who was black and we went together to the bus stop. This example shows how people judge others unfairly (...) Only because I was white...there was a group of teenagers and they started using racist language directed at her and they were asking me what I was doing with her. They were English, brats, they were 15-16 years old, and I thought to myself, how wrongly they judged the situation. She was native English, born and bred in Manchester. They were asking her why she came to this country while I was standing next to her and only because I was white, they thought I was alright.

Lucyna’s perception of her colleague as “native English, born and bred in Manchester” sharply contrasts with Oliwia’s lack of broader understanding of Englishness. While the encounter between Oliwia and the black woman does not shift her static and unchanging perception of Englishness synonymous with whiteness, Lucyna’s experience of conviviality shifts her perception of Englishness as a more inclusive category. Furthermore, Lucyna is positioned in a highly racialised space where her difference is invisible and where her whiteness is constructed as the norm. As Byrne (2006a) points out, people may become conscious of being white only in the presence of racialised others. Lucyna understood that her positioning as white in the new multicultural environment is a form of privilege of being unnoticed as the Other. Nevertheless, as she had explained earlier in the interview, this white privilege only applies until she opens her mouth and her ethnic difference becomes more apparent through her accent. Thus, whiteness as a racial identity ascribed to Polish migrants varies according to social context. When they are compared to more visible groups, they are considered ‘like us’ (van Riemsdijk 2010). This confirms Frankenberg’s (1997: 21) argument that “whiteness is always emplaced, temporally and spatially”.

While this section has discussed the research participants’ perceptions of British white working class, Englishness and ethnic diversity upon their arrival in Manchester, the next part explores how some informants viewed Catalans, Catalan language and identity as well as other Spaniards and foreigners when they arrived in Barcelona.
4.3 The perceptions of Catalans, Catalan Language and Barcelona

The Catalan context is characterised by ambivalences and contradictions regarding its bilingual status and, therefore, it is very different from the British context. In the aftermath of the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975), during which Catalan identity had been violently repressed, Catalan language, culture, history and territory were recognised by the 1978 Constitution (Pujolar, 2010; Nogué and Vincente, 2004). Immigration to Catalonia has profoundly changed the social landscape of the region and questioned the cultural and linguistic characteristics defining its national identity (Pujolar, 2010). Many narratives illustrate interviewees’ surprise to learn that Barcelona was part of Catalonia, a stateless nation in Spain with its own language and culture:

My first reaction was when my husband, who used to take part in meetings during which he practised building castellers [human towers], took me to the meeting and introduced me to his friends and I remember when I had a conversation with one of them. I said that few months earlier I wouldn’t believe that I would come here, to Spain and that I would start a new phase in my life. When he heard this, he said ‘No, you are not in Spain, you are in Catalonia’. So this was the first time when I realised I was in Catalonia and not in Spain, when before it was one country for me. I didn’t know these differences. (Weronika, 31)

My first impressions were influenced by stereotypes. I wasn’t really aware that Barcelona was a Catalan city or that Catalans were so different from Spaniards and that Catalonia was considered as a nation. I could barely speak the language so it limited contacts with people from here. (Ada, 28)

This lack of awareness about Catalan language and culture could be considered as a result of the persistence in Spain of presenting the entire country as monolingual, despite its linguistic and cultural diversity (Burgueño, 2002). The research participants largely assumed Spanish to be the language of communication. This approach also corresponds with “the naturalised idea that in Catalonia, foreigners are addressed in Spanish” (Codó and Garrido, 2010: 311). As Pujolar (2010: 229) argues, “popular language practices and discourses often seem to suggest that Catalan serves to assert identity while Spanish serves for practical communicative purposes, thus contradicting the official narratives over language and integration”.¹⁴ These discourses are reflected in most of the research participants’ narratives and contribute to the homogenous construction of ‘closed Catalans’ explored in the next section.

¹⁴The role of Catalan as a national symbol has been reformulated in terms of its role as a facilitator of social cohesion in a multilingual society, although the changes at the political level have not been mirrored by changes at the popular level (Pujolar, 2010).
4.3.1 Open Spaniards and foreigners as opposed to closed Catalans

Many interviewees discussed Spaniards and Catalans in binary terms. While the former were portrayed as open, welcoming, optimistic, sometimes compared to ‘foreigners’, the latter were often depicted as closed and difficult to communicate with. For instance, Zofia and Dominika offered their interpretations of Barcelona marked by clear ethnic divisions and described the Catalans as a closed collective in contrast to open and multicultural population:

Basically, there are two Barcelonas. One is multicultural, Barcelona of tourists, foreigners, where you can speak to people in foreign languages (…) open and multicultural, and the other closed, Barcelona of Catalans, Gaudi, monuments and Catalan culture where the stereotype of the open Spaniard, who after the first ‘hola’ becomes your best friend does not apply (…) It was a huge shock for me in the beginning that these two groups coexist next to each other. (Zofia, 28)

Despite everyone saying that Spaniards are so open (…) Catalonia is not so open and nice like it is said (…) Most of the foreigners and Spaniards who come here come to the same conclusion. Sometimes I feel like there are three parallel words. On the one hand, there are Catalans who generally don’t get matty with anybody, they live their lives and they don’t feel like inviting either Spaniards or foreigners. On the other hand there are immigrants who arrive and form their own groups more or less mixed, depending if they know other languages or not; and the tourists. Catalans are always outside (…) and not many people manage to enter their group and to be accepted and treated as an equal member. (Dominika, 28)

These narratives illustrate Simonsen’s (2008: 145) idea of “the multiple faces of the city” based on difference. Catalanness is constructed as a spatially embedded ‘otherness’ which produces boundaries between different groups. The idea of Catalan ‘closedness’ also constitutes the hegemonic view from other parts of Spain (Denis and Matas Pla, 2002; Alén Garabato, 1999), often repeated in media representations.\(^\text{15}\) The distinction between closed Catalans and Spaniards made by some Polish interviewees is also identified by Władyka and Morén-Alegret (2013) in their research examining the experiences of Polish migrants in the Sagrada Familia neighbourhood in Barcelona. As seen above, my research participants’ discussed Catalans and Spaniards along with foreigners in terms of parallel groups “coexisting next to each other” without much interaction. Here, conviviality is limited not only by the lack of interaction between the

\(^{15}\) An example of these representations can be found in the article ‘Cerrados, hedonistas e individualistas: así son los catalanes’ [Closed, hedonistic and individualistic: this is what Catalans are like] (\textit{El Economista}, 2009).
groups but also by the constructions of Catalan closedness, linked with Catalan national territory, language and identity, essentialised as a cultural difference and seen as an obstacle to interaction. Several informants emphasised their identification with Spaniards and other migrants as a result of common narratives of rejection by Catalans and shared experience of migration facilitating conviviality. Nevertheless, this form of conviviality is often limited to interaction with Spaniards, other Europeans and South Americans, possibly as a result of the notions of assumed sameness and cultural proximity of Europeans and Christians (Nalewajko, 2012). The idea of various groups coexisting side by side with limited interaction sharply contrasts with the idea of the interculturalist approach which constitutes a political strategy in Barcelona underpinned by the principle of *convivència* concerned with intercultural difference (Barcelona City Council, 2009), as discussed in the previous Chapters.

A substantial number of the research participants stressed not only the closedness of Catalans but also an immense pressure to speak the Catalan language seen as an obstacle in establishing convivial relations (see also Władyka and Morén-Alegret, 2013). This is illustrated in the narrative of Justyna, a 28-year-old admin worker:

> Some time ago when I lived near Barcelona, I spoke basic Spanish and I didn’t understand Catalan at all. I got lost once and it turned out that the bus I took to my village didn’t take me to my place. I got lost and a Catalan guy didn’t want to talk to me in Spanish and he insisted to speak in Catalan (…) It was a quite bad experience because in this kind of situation he shouldn’t insist to speak Catalan because I got lost, I am not from here and I don’t know the language. Later, in other situations here in the shops in Sant Andreu, for example, I was buying cigarettes and a man didn’t want to sell them to me until I pronounced the name in Catalan. I was pissed off because I remembered the previous experience.

This example illustrates Pujolar’s (2009: 85) argument, based on the research of the process of Catalan language delivery for Moroccan and West-African women in Northern Catalonia, that migrants “are expected or made to learn the national language, or get excluded if they do not do so”. However, as I mentioned earlier, research shows that even when they learn to speak Catalan, they are likely to be spoken to in Castilian. This narrative indicates that the members of the groups marked by Catalanness engage in linguistic practices which may lead to social exclusion. The exclusive language practices of some Catalans, which impede communication, may contribute to the discourse about Catalan closedness. At the same time, this example illustrates how
migrants may be “trapped in the hegemonic language ideological frame that reinforces
the centrality of Spanish and the peripheral (and ideologically marginal) status of other
linguistic codes” (Codó and Garrido, 2010: 328).

The theme of Catalan closedness was also discussed during the focus groups in
Barcelona. Some of the research participants expressed feelings of alienation and
isolation when discussing their relations with Catalans. Jagoda (25), who first came to
Barcelona as an Erasmus student remembers her disappointment as a result of obstacles
to be accepted by a Catalan group at the university and exclusion from the
conversations because of not being able to speak Catalan:

For me, the clash of how closed Catalans are with our vision of Spain was
incredible. Sun, fiesta, siesta, mañana. We thought that everyone would be
open, that we would have so many friends and then at the first seminars
nobody was even interested about us, they had their own groups and they
spoke only in Catalan, nobody wanted to integrate with us at all (…) For me
it was a kind of shock and surprise when I arrived.

Natalia, a 24-year-old volunteer at Casa Eslava, was surprised to learn that Barcelona
was not as open to newcomers as she thought. She was also surprised that because she
did not speak Catalan she had difficulties with opening a bank account. Pujolar (2010)
points out that newly arrived migrants to bilingual Catalonia find themselves in
situations where the administration considers Catalan as a fully functional public
language while it is still treated as a minority language by large sectors of the local
population (see also Codó and Garrido, 2010). The issue of these communicative
challenges also discussed by other research participants raises important questions about
the role of linguistic practices in processes of social exclusion which require further
research. In other contexts, Natalia’s narrative demonstrates the possibility of
transcending the linguistic barriers and the discourse of Catalan closedness. She recalled
a positive experience with a Catalan shop assistant who, at first, was not very pleasant
to her. However, as a result of regular visits to the shop, Natalia felt that the shop
assistant started recognising her and engaging in casual conversations. This made
Natalia feel like part of the local community and partly changed her perceptions about
enclosed Catalans.

Several interviewees tried to make sense of Catalan closedness and the promotion of the
Catalan language by explaining it in terms of oppression of Catalan language and
identity during the Franco regime and by comparing the Catalan situation to the Polish
historical context of the loss of independence during the partitions starting in 1772 by Russia, Prussia and Austria. Many interviewees revealed that Catalans frequently shared with them humorous anecdotes that Spaniards refer to Catalans as *polacos* [Poles] which often brings the interviewees and Catalans closer. This is illustrated in Weronika’s account: “In terms of Catalan culture, many times people react sympathetically when they find out that I am Polish. You probably heard that outside of Catalonia, Catalans are called *polacos*, so this is the moment for jokes and it breaks the ice”. This shows how a derogatory term emphasising ‘Catalan otherness’ in Spain is used in a positive context promoting conviviality across difference. There are many different theories regarding the explanation of the word *polaco* as a term ascribed to Catalans. The most common, often mentioned by my informants, refer to the perceived linguistic parallels between Polish and Catalan language and historical parallels between Polish and Catalan histories of oppression. There are also several other explanations, including the parallels made as a result Poles fighting alongside Catalans during the War of the Spanish Succession between the years 1700-1714, and Polish soldiers participating alongside the Republicans in Catalonia during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). The use of the term was popularised as derogatory, referring to the Catalans and their language, as it was difficult to understand. Despite the derogatory nature of the term, it has been given much playfulness and humour. An example is the TV3 program *Polònia*, written with a Cyrillic-like alphabet, a popular comedy and political satire identifying Catalonia and its political class with Polish communism in the second half of the twentieth century.

Learning Catalan was another way to overcome barriers in communication with Catalans. After a “rebellious phase” with regard to Catalan language and culture, Eliza took part in a voluntary Catalan language learning project (*Voluntariat per la llengua*).16 She was matched with a retired Catalan man who reminded her of her grandfather and who was very curious about Poland and Polish culture. They met once a week for a chat in Catalan. This resulted in a friendly relationship across linguistic, cultural and generational differences and, subsequently, enabled Eliza to form friendships with other Catalans. She also stressed that she acquired more understanding with regard to Catalan identity and culture.

16 *Voluntariat per la llengua* is a program sponsored by the Directorate General for Language Policy in the Department of Culture. The aim is to practice Catalan through conversation in pairs with Catalans (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2014).
This section has illustrated a tendency to view Spaniards and Catalans in binary and stereotypical terms in the context of Barcelona. While the former were portrayed as open, and often compared to ‘foreigners’, the latter were often discussed as closed and difficult to communicate with. Nevertheless, some narratives have revealed convivial possibilities through habitual contact, commonalities and dialogue across difference. The next section discusses the research participants’ perceptions of non-white people and blackness in both cities.

4.4 Imagining the black Other

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, stereotypical views of black people are highly influenced by Western colonialist discourses. This is particularly reflected in classic Polish literature characterised by stereotypes ascribed to black people during the colonisation of Africa (for instance, in Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad; W pustyni i w puszczy [In Desert and Wilderness] by Henryk Sienkiewicz; Murzynek Bambo17 [Bambo the little black boy/ Pickaninny/ Nigrette] by Julian Tuwim). Moskalewicz (2005) offers a powerful postcolonial interpretation of the popular poem Murzynek Bambo learnt by many Polish children, constituting a discursive element of the Polish national heritage, and he argues that it has a strong colonial undertone referring to simplistic and essentialist representations of black people and strongly impacting the Polish consciousness. According to Ząbek (2009: 170), the perception of black people through the prism of race is closely linked with widely used in contemporary Poland term Murzyn.18 This term appeared in the Polish language in the fourteenth century derived from the same root as the English word ‘Moors’ – mauros in Latin, and it indicates a black person (Ząbek, 2007). Although in the opinion of many Poles and scholars it is not an offensive term, many people of African origin do not accept this word because of its pejorative connotations influenced by negative stereotypes and ambivalent translations as ‘Negro’ or highly offensive term ‘nigger’, both echoing the context of the slavery and colonialism (Karpieszuk, 2009; Piróg, 2010).19 In contemporary Polish language, the word Murzyn has largely negative social connotations. Many popular

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17 Murzynek is a diminutive form of Murzyn. The translation into English is somewhat problematic: ‘little black boy’ offers a more politically correct form, although Moskalewicz translated it by using the derogatory term ‘Pickaninny’.
18 Murzyńska is the feminine form, Murzyni is plural. Ząbek (2009) argues that the more adequate translation of Murzyn into English would be ‘Blackamoor’ in reference to the root of the word.
19 In the survey of social perception of verbal abuse and hate speech, 68% of respondents considered the word inoffensive which illustrates a broader tendency within Polish society (CBOS, 2007: 13).
sayings or idiomatic expressions have racist undertones referring to a situation in which somebody is a servant, a slave, a cheap work force or backward (Ząbek, 2007).

The media play an important role in transmitting constructions of blackness in Poland often based on images of primitivism, backwardness and inferiority (Średzinski, 2010). Nevertheless, black people, as well as other non-white minorities, recently started appearing on Polish radio and television, although they have been mainly playing exotic roles which serve as an intriguing supplement intended to make the programs more attractive and colourful (Grzymala-Kazlowska and Okolski, 2003). Średzinski (2010) points out that Polish people hardly have a chance to challenge their opinions about black people with reality since they constitute a very small number, between two and three thousand (Ząbek, 2009: 170). Perceptions of black people may change through experiences of migration or they may be reinforced.

4.4.1 Dual images of blackness

According to Homi Bhabha (1992:19), there is always ambivalence in the imagination of the Other within the colonial discourse as an object of desire and derision. This is reflected in the narrative of Angelika, a 33-year-old cleaner from Manchester: “When it comes to black people (…) their way of being is different. Some are nice and friendly and others would rape you with their eyes (…) No, no, I am not racist, absolutely not. I could easily have a black [Murzyn] or Pakistani mate.” Despite having little contact with black people, Angelika’s stereotypical perceptions echo the construction of black men as “dangerous, violent, sex maniacs” (bell hooks, 1992: 89). Even though Angelika reinforced a threatening image of black men and used racialised language, she denied racism several times. Van Dijk (1992) has argued that racist discourse is often accompanied by denials, the crucial characteristics of contemporary racism which can be used as a strategy of positive self-presentation and face-keeping regarding general norms and values prohibiting ethnic prejudice and discrimination. According to van Dijk’s (1992) argument, Angelika possibly used denials to avoid being perceived as racist, to make a positive impression or perhaps she was unaware of using racialised discourse and language due to a normalisation of this language not only in Poland but

20 One of the examples used by some research participants is sto lat za Murzynami [hundred years behind the Moors/black people].

21 Only 15% of all Poles come across Africans in their localities, and 7% are in personal touch with them as students of higher education institutions, sportsmen, doctors and bazaar vendors in large cities (Średziński, 2010: 40).

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also within the Polish environment in Britain. Her narrative is contradictory. While she used a gendered and racist view implying sexually violent behaviour of black men, she admitted she felt safer in Britain than in Poland in terms of her sexuality and other categories of difference. Although Angelika did not explicitly express her sexual orientation, her narrative implied that she was lesbian. Angelika’s partner, whom I also interviewed, revealed Angelika’s concerns of being ostracised by the ‘Polish community’.  

Some interviewees living in Barcelona also constructed an ambivalent image of black people. Amelia, a 31-year-old hostel receptionist, also perceived black people in dual terms. While she discussed black men in racialised, gendered and stereotyped ways in the context of street encounters, she defended those known in Barcelona as los manteros selling sunglasses, bags and other products often placed on a blanket near tourist attractions:

In terms of black men, it irritates me when on the way to work someone whistles at me and the one that whistles is always a black man (…) These are two extremes, because sometimes they annoy me because they whistle, as if there was no any other nice way of chatting up women. They treat me, I don’t know, like an animal, so this is a typical reaction (…) yet, I defend those blacks, who sell sunglasses and so on. This is their job, they earn the living in the right way. I don’t know where they get the stuff from, but in any case they don’t mug tourists yet, I don’t think they do. So somehow they earn their living and I will defend them here. So as you can see there is the dark colour of the skin, on the one hand annoying because they whistle, and on the other, you know, they work. So you can’t generalise. I don’t know. I just wanted to point out that it never happened to me that a whitey [białas] [laugh] (…) whistled at me. Even Moroccans have never done it.

Amelia made a direct link between catcalling as means of sexual objectification and blackness as a result of gendered encounters on the street and stereotypical perceptions of black masculinity (bell hooks, 1992). She used the colour contrast of black and white to make her point that the behaviour she discussed is characteristic of black men. By using the word ‘whitey’ and mentioning Moroccans, perhaps she wanted to escape being accused of racism. Several other women in both Manchester and Barcelona raised the issue of street harassment which I discuss further in Chapter 5. The narratives of street harassment by Asian and black men in both cities illustrate how these negative

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22 According to a study about attitudes towards gay and lesbian rights conducted in Poland, 83% of respondents consider homosexuality as ‘abnormal’ and 63% believe that they should not have the right to publicly display their way of life (CBOS, 2013). The survey results reflect the political, social and media discourses about LGBTQ in Poland (Selinger, 2008; Binnie and Klesse, 2012; Oliwa, 2012).
experiences influenced their views of a whole group and how they are used to reinforce the construction of these men as sexually deviant.

Another narrative pattern that emerged in the narratives was fascination with the excitingly different Other. This is reflected in Aldona’s and Nina’s narratives:

I remember I got my first job in Pizza Hut as a waitress and that I commuted for forty minutes to work by bus and I remember my first journey. I was in seventh heaven, so many people, so different, colourful, and dressed differently. I really liked it, you know? It was so different of what was in Poland, right? And here you see someone in African clothing, colourful, great, right? But after two weeks of commuting by bus, I saw it differently, but I never had any issue with it and I quite enjoyed living there. This was my first impression. (Aldona, 34, Manchester)

I like living here, it is so multicultural and my children can experience and make the most of it (…) I am from a village (…) I had my own small and closed world (…) When I went to Britain, everything changed because I was there on my own. The whole surrounding was totally different, colourful people from different parts of the world (…) And it all became so obvious and not strange anymore. It became so natural and normal that there are other people. Thanks to being somewhere else we enrich our lives and by living in Poland I miss out (…) Then I met my husband. We lived in Ireland (…) After we returned to Poland, I missed this colourfulness, different people and languages (…) We then came here and again everything is in the right place and again everything is so colourful and more interesting (…) Living abroad and seeing people on everyday basis makes a difference, because in Poland it is not as multicultural as here (…) There are stereotypes in people’s head and they remain there, for example, that Murzyni are dirty and not nice but I met many who are really nice and you can’t judge someone by their skin colour (…) This opens the doors and we hope that our children will be open to different cultures (…) I hope that it would not be like in my case that I didn’t know the Other. The colourful world was only on TV. We didn’t know it in the flesh but they do. (Nina, 33, Barcelona)

Their previous experiences of migration have been significant in shaping their open attitude to difference. ‘Colourfulness’ in both narratives contrasts predominantly white Poland. This fascination with colourful Other echoes Bell’s and Hartmann’s (2007: 909) argument that “Others are welcomed, learned from, or accepted at a table, in a fabric, or in a pot that would otherwise be bland, plain, and basically colorless.” Even though these narratives demonstrate an openness to and acceptance of racial difference, it can be argued that they illustrate a ‘happy talk’ about exoticised difference carrying a discourse idealising and partly racialising conceptions of cultural and ethnic diversity (Bell and Hartmann, 2007). Based on the Roediger’s (1994) idea of whiteness based on
absence, Reay et al (2007: 1052) discuss the process of ‘shading-in’ and ‘adding colour’ to the white middle-class self which serves to mask its privilege. In other words, this process is principally about recognising a ‘more colourful self’ in the ethnic Other (1054). Bell hooks (1992: 21) suggests that:

Within current debates about race and difference, mass culture is the contemporary location that both publicly declares and perpetuates the idea that there is pleasure to be found in the acknowledgment and enjoyment of racial difference. The commodification of Otherness has been so successful because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling.

In Aldona’s case, this fascination faded in time as it became normalised and commonplace through habitual encounter. In fact, as Aldona said during the focus group discussion, she realised she became “one of them, a migrant travelling by bus”. This convivial experience facilitated a certain sense of belonging to a wider migrant group across difference. Based on her study of diversity in the London Borough of Hackney, Wessendorf (2014a) develops a concept of commonplace diversity which refers to ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity experienced as a normal part of life. Nevertheless, Aldona’s narrative demonstrates duality in perception of black people as subjects of fascination and as distant cultural Others. During the focus group discussion, she essentialised the difference of African people as a homogenous group difficult to communicate with.

There is also ambivalence in Nina’s narrative. There is a tension between Nina’s genuine openness to and acceptance of diversity and the importance of her children’s exposure to difference and complex social realities of difference, especially when considering that she hardly spoke about actual convivial encounters with non-whites. Leitner (2012) suggests that the acceptance and tolerance expressed by white middle and upper classes are partly enabled by their greater ability to distance themselves socially and spatially from non-white immigrants. This represents a paradox of desired conviviality and limited encounters with those seen as racially different. Even though Nina wanted her children to be exposed to colourful Others, she sent them to a private school mostly populated by white children. This reflects Byrne’s (2006a: 92) discussion about mothers’ desire to obtain the ‘right’ social and racial ‘mix’ for their children in schooling; this ‘mix’ requires just enough, but not too much of the Other. In addition, Nina appears to be trapped by white privilege despite her moral sentiments regarding
difference. This is also reflected in Reay’s et al (2007) study based on interviews with middle-class London-based families which reveals difficult and uncomfortable issues around whiteness in multi-ethnic contexts. Many of their interviewees – white and middle-class parents – felt passionate about bringing up their children as tolerant individuals and having non-white friends in order to be better prepared for a global economy which requires individuals who can deal with people of other races and nationalities openly and respectfully. However, Reay et al (2007: 1046) argue that:

despite varying degrees of social mixing with the classed and racialized other across the sample, the white middle-class young people remain firmly and primarily anchored in white middle-class networks (…) The white middle-class interest in difference and otherness can thus also be understood as describing a project of cultural capital through which these white middle-class families seek to display their liberal credentials and secure their class position.

Finally, Nina’s narrative demonstrates a critical approach to negative perceptions of difference in Poland. Nina most likely used the ambivalent term ‘Murzyn’ referring to black people to illustrate negative attitudes to non-whites in Poland. In the next section, I discuss disapproval of negative attitude of some Poles towards black people in Manchester voiced by several research participants.

4.4.2 Disapproval of racist attitudes of other Poles

Some research participants, especially those better educated, condemned negative attitudes towards black people amongst other Poles and several referred to Poland as a racist country. This transpired particularly during the focus group discussion in Manchester about the photograph illustrating the Polish Catholic Social Club in Oldham taken by Gabriela (Figure 1).
Gabriela stressed that over time the Polish Club became marked not only by the presence of Polish migrants, but also a wider local population, especially mixed-race families as a result of mixing between Polish and non-white migrants and ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, Gabriela expressed disappointment about the fact that black people\textsuperscript{23} attending the club may feel less welcome as a result of inappropriate comments and staring. Aldona had similar impressions about some Polish migrants’ negative response towards black families during the events for the local community organised by Europia she volunteered with. The focus groups participants attributed racist behaviour to the low class status of some Poles ironically referred to as Polaczki [pejorative form of Poles]. The anti-racist discourse of the participants results in a social distance between them and the Other Poles.

Judyta, a 33-year-old interviewee in a mixed relationship with a black British man contested the idea of the Polish club as a space of conviviality during her interview. She

\textsuperscript{23} Gabriela used the word ‘Afro-Americans’ reflecting missing adequacy of vocabulary to speak about diversity but also an intention to use politically correct language.
criticised its environment as offering limited possibilities for including difference during a Children’s Day event:

It was a nice event, you could eat a grilled Polish sausage, have a pint of Polish beer, but for me it was Polakowo, Poland for Polish people (…) When I arrived with my partner, he felt uncomfortable. I didn’t feel good and I will never go to this kind of event.

Even though mixed-race relationships between Polish migrants and other ethnic minorities are a growing phenomenon, the response of some Polish migrants to this type of relations discussed by the research participants can be negative (see also Siara, 2009). Judyta was told by some of her friends and acquaintances to attend gatherings without her partner. In the end, she decided to end friendships with those Poles who did not accept her partner because he was black. Furthermore, Judyta expressed her fear and concern about taking her son to a Polish Saturday school or to Poland. She feared he would face racist comments. This reminded her about repeated experiences on the bus in Poland when elderly women would make remarks about her son’s skin colour by using the word *Murzynek* strongly disapproved by Judyta. She contested labelling of her child as black by emphasising his bright complexion and by affirming that he is mixed and not “*murzynskie dziecko*” (a black/Negro child) of both black parents. It is possible that this discursive ‘whitening’ is influenced by the deeply rooted images of blackness in the Polish consciousness and by expectations for women to play a key role in the boundary maintenance and reproduction of their ethnic group (Anthias and Yuval Davis, 1993). It might also be an attempt to escape racism of other Poles.

When discussing the disapproval of racist attitudes of other Poles, it is important to keep in mind that “the absence of racist rhetoric does not imply the absence of racialization or racism” (Leitner, 2012: 837). Leitner argues that “more educated and well-off whites are better able to control forms of racial signification than are working-class whites for a variety of reasons, including differences in their linguistic repertoire that provide different resources for expressing beliefs” (ibid). Furthermore, even a sincere and well-intended talk about others may conceal racialised power relations. This certainly transpired in Judyta’s case. Despite her anti-racist stance discussed above, later in the interview she used a racialising rhetoric when discussing relationships with men from black African background:
I think that black men enter relationships with white women because this offers them a higher prestige. I’ve had an impression that for them a white woman is something better. Maybe they feel they are on a higher level because they are with a white woman and they have mixed children and not black ones (...) because black people are treated as more inferior.

Apart from the recurring ambivalent perceptions of blackness and criticism of racist attitudes in the accounts of my informants, a lot of space during the interviews and focus groups was devoted to the perceptions of men and women of South Asian, Middle-Eastern and North African origin which echo the images of the oriental Other known from postcolonial studies. I discuss these and some alternative narratives in the next section.

4.5 Imagining the Oriental Other

As is well documented, twenty-first century Europe faces a crisis related to growing resentment towards Muslims (Cesari, 2006; Dietz and El-Shohoumi, 2005; Flesler, 2008; El-Madkouri, 2006; Modood, 2010; Nalborczyk, 2006; Nowaczek-Walczak, 2011; Razack, 2004; Werbner, 2005). The historically rooted Orientalist representations reappear in the public debate on Islam, migration and integration policies in most European countries. These discourses have been repeatedly reproduced through mass media, politics and public debates constructing Muslims as a ‘problem’ in the host countries due to their numbers, assumptions about terrorism, threat to identity and security, and inability to integrate. Their religious and cultural traditions are often seen as incompatible with Western/European values, especially in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States, train bombings in Madrid in March 2004, London underground bombing on 7 July 2005 and the recent threat of the so called Islamic State militant group members in different parts of the world. While these issues are mainly discussed by scholars in the context of relations between the Muslim minorities and majority populations, the perceptions of Muslims by recent migrants are largely overlooked. After a brief outline of the perceptions of Arabs and Muslims in Poland, this section explores the narratives about the imaginaries and first encounters with Muslim people in Manchester and Barcelona, often described as Asian, Pakistani or Arab, regardless of substantial differences between and within Islamic, Arabic and Asian cultures. It also discusses how negative perceptions may change over time.
The Eastern influence in Poland dates back to the medieval times and the presence of Polish Tatars for more than 600 years (Dziekan, 2011). The perception of the East changed radically in Poland during the Enlightenment as a result of the influence of the Western discourse of Orientalism, in particular from France, having a strong impact on Polish culture in the eighteenth century (Wawryk, 2012). According to the discourse of invasion of Europe, Poland is seen “as a fortress of the Western civilisation” against the “barbaric, cruel, militant and chaotic East” and the powerful civilisation of Islam (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2007: 232). Żygulski (1991) has suggested that, in contrast to Orientalism of English and French colonial powers, Polish Orientalism was less offensive and ideological but rather romantic and more familiar. Notwithstanding, the influence of the Western discourse about the Orient is echoed in Romantic Polish literature in which the East is often described as mysterious, dark, wild, with themes of revenge and loneliness, and the Oriental Other is linked with madness and cruelty (Piwińska, 1991). These themes can be found in Arab by Słowacki, Sonety Krymskie by Mickiewicz and Agaj-Han by Krasiński.

Negative perceptions of Muslims persist in the Polish imagination despite their marginal numbers. Muslims in Poland are made up of Tatars, converts and Muslim migrants constituting 0.07-0.09% of the total population of the country (Nalborczyk, 2006: 62). Drawing on European Values Survey data from 1999, Górak-Sosnowska (2011: 18-19) stresses the negative attitude towards Muslims in Central and Eastern European Countries, including Poland. According to the opinion poll on hate speech in Poland, the level of acceptance for anti-Muslim hate speech is relatively high and the Internet is the main vehicle for hate speech towards Muslims (Bilewicz et al, 2014). According to the survey, support for anti-Muslim hate speech is strongly related to the belief that Muslims are a threat to Polish culture. Similarly, annual opinion surveys and other studies reveal that Arabs for many years have appeared in the bottom rank in preferences of the Poles (CBOS, 2011; Mikulska 2010). Research on Arabs and gastronomy in Warsaw reveals that “Cruelty of Arabic husbands and Muslims pictured as terrorists are the two most common stereotypes highlighted by the interlocutors as the most harmful in Polish society” (Nowaczek-Walczak, 2011: 120). The negative perceptions of Muslims have become more common in Poland in the light of the recent refugee crisis and terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015. The widespread negative views of Muslims and Arabs in Poland point to the phenomenon of Arabo-
and/or Islamophobia, or what Górak-Sosnowska (2011: 17) calls “platonic Islamophobia” – a negative attitude towards Muslims which often involves lack of contact with these groups. Górak-Sosnowska further argues that Polish media discourse on Islam is ‘transplanted’ since it mostly refers to people and events from outside of Poland. I argue throughout this thesis that these powerful images of the Other reinforced by the media, politicians, academics, writers and other elites in the country of origin and in the host countries play an important role in reproduction of attitudes towards difference. This is reflected in many interviews conducted in both Manchester and Barcelona. In the next sections of this Chapter, I explore some of my research participants’ perceptions of the Oriental Other, often viewed as a homogenous collective and I argue that these constructions constitute an obstacle to conviviality. I discuss these perceptions with reference to Said’s (1995) postcolonial critique of Orientalism.

4.5.1 Ciapaci – oppressive and threatening Others?

Through the course of many interviews both in Manchester and Barcelona, various representations of South Asians, Arabs and/or Muslims men and women emerged, often corresponding with the discourse of Orientalism. While men were often constructed as violent and dangerous, veiled women were frequently perceived as oppressed. Some of the research participants used the ambivalent language of difference when referring to people of Middle Eastern and South Asian origin often in conjunction with Islam. One of the most popular terms used among the interviewees was the word ‘ciapaty’. It is possible that the word originates from chapatti bread. Many interviewees seemed unaware of the negative connotations of the word and why it was used. It is certain, that by the frequent and widespread use, the term becomes normalised and often synonymous with the term ‘Pakistani’ not necessarily reflecting the actual ethnicity. This is how a 27-year-old Paulina, defined the term ciapaci:

AR: You mentioned that in your neighbourhood there were many people you called ciapaci, who were they?

P: They are a mixture of people from countries like Pakistan, Iran. I am not going to say that I am racist because many of them are at my courses and they are nice, but I have read so much about kidnappings and rapes of

24 Ciapaty/ ciapak – singular, masculine adjective; ciapaci or ciapaki – plural, masculine adj.; ciapata – singular, feminine adj., ciapate – plural, feminine adj.
women and about their Muslim religion, totally different than mine, so I always have my concerns about these people.

AR: Why do you use the word *ciapaci/ciapaty*?

P: Honestly? I have no idea. Maybe they are mixed between dark, black-skinned people and us whites. This is just how we call them. I have no idea. I heard this word when my friend used it and I started using it.

Paulina’s account demonstrates the process of how racialised language is acquired from other Polish migrants. The term is raced because the main indicator is the skin colour tied to fixed characteristics. While Paulina denied racism, she paradoxically associated the discussed group with kidnappings and rapes of women and with Islam. Paulina’s narrative matches stereotypical portrayals of the sexually abusive Muslim men based on orientalist discourse (Said, 1995). According to frame semantics, our specific conceptual knowledge is shaped by processing information through language (Harris et al, 2015). The repetition of the term ‘ciapaty’ and of the negative discourse about Muslims reinforces a representation to the point that it becomes accepted as reality and difficult to deconstruct (Harris et al, 2015; Dixon, 2006).

The image of the violent Oriental Other, seen above, was also present in the narratives of the interviewees in Barcelona, although it was used more often with reference to men of Arabic origin, as illustrated in the narratives of Julia and Dominika:

I know it sounds stupid, but it is a question of the way they look at you and you know, Spanish men may look at you indecently, but when it comes to Arabs for me it is a gaze of the predator at a victim. I know that this is prejudice…but I can’t get rid of this feeling. (Julia, 36)

I think that the biggest problem is when it comes to nationalities we don’t know very well. We have a view about most of the European nations and we know what to expect from Italians who would follow you and whistle at you, but if it is an Arab and he looks at you, then you wonder if he wants to drag you behind a first corner and rape you or whether he looks at you this way because this is how they look at people over there. (Dominika, 28)

Both narratives are shaped by the deeply embedded orientalist discourse of a sexually violent Other, although Julia acknowledged that her perception is based on prejudice and it might be wrong. While it is more acceptable for European men to look at women in a sexual way and harass them, the gaze of Arab men is associated with racialised and sexualised male violence. These two narratives indicate the binary of the familiar, culturally close (therefore safe and acceptable) European and the unknown and culturally distant, fearful and sexually violent Muslims/Arabs.
Jagoda, a 25-year-old postgraduate student, discussed Arabs and South Asians in opposition to Chinese (referred to as Asian) migrants by constructing the former in negative terms and the latter as ‘model minorities’:

I think that generally Asians [Chinese] have assimilated much better than Arabs. The Chinese come here, open their shops with their bits and bobs or they run bars open seven days (…) and they speak Spanish and always chat with you for a bit and they try open up but Pakistanis have, not only amongst us, racist Poles, but in general they rather have the reputation… people approach them with suspicion, even the Spaniards, because they are closed, they form enclaves, they don’t learn the language, they don’t work (…) They tried to mug me several times and it never happened that it was an Asian [Chinese]. It was always so called ciapak, someone from Arabic countries. Nobody from Asia tried to sell me hashish, it was always someone from there, or these famous cerveza-beer men, they are always people from there and I think that they have a big problem. They find it hard to assimilate (…) Ciapak is the one who tries to mug you on the street, stick something shining and noisy stuff in your hand (…) even our Spanish flatmates picked it up and they knew straight away what it was about (…) If I saw an Arab but if he was dressed in a suit, for me, this term does not define a skin colour or nationality, I would never refer to him as ciapak. For me ciapak is a hustler [cwaniaczek uliczny] who tries to pull a stroke.

Jagoda expressed quite blatant forms of prejudice about Pakistani/Arab/Moroccan men as suspicious Oriental Other echoing the widespread discourse about these groups unable to integrate into European societies (López Gil, 2010). Jagoda’s construction of ciapak is not only racialised and gendered, but also classed and criminalised. She possibly denied the correlation of the term with the skin colour to avoid being seen as racist. The bodily difference of ‘ciapak’ is coded in terms of both racial and class markers and a sense of threat. Regardless of their citizenship and identifications, they are often seen as threatening racial Others. Jagoda was not sure when and where she first heard the word ciapak but she mentioned that it could have been from her Polish flatmate who had previously lived in England. Hence, Jagoda’s narrative indicates the circulation of racialised language (see also Gawlewicz, 2014) between Polish migrants and also Spaniards.

Male migrants of South Asian origin in Barcelona were discussed by the research participants as often situated in a specific context of street selling activities and attributed with particular characteristics. The interviewees often referred to men of South Asian origin perceived as drug dealers or street beer vendors, also known as lateros or cerveza-beer, visible especially at night when other places stop selling
alcohol after 22:00. Daria, a 31-year-old photographer, pointed out that Pakistani migrants are needed in Barcelona because of the service they provide as street beer vendors. She referred to a graffiti on a wall she once saw in El Raval, a neighbourhood in the Ciutat Vella district of Barcelona, with a phrase ‘No Pakis, no party’ reflecting reliance on street alcohol sellers and, at the same time, reinforcing the racialised stereotype of Pakistani street vendors. The street becomes a space of momentary conviviality between these vendors and the local residents which constitutes a part of everyday life in Barcelona. However, there is a tension in these transitory street encounters with these sellers often perceived as persistent and irritating in trying to sell items. This is reflected in Julia’s narrative explicitly expressing her frustration and a very strong emotion:

Pakistanis and people from India (...) they are incredibly polite, especially people from India. On the other hand, Pakistanis, those who sell on the streets, if I could, I would smash their faces [laugh], because it irritates me. It’s fine that they sell stuff, let them try, but even if you ignore them, they approach you and stick things under your nose and ask you to buy it and you clearly have to say ‘no, I don’t like it’.

This account contributes to the ambivalent image of South Asian street vendors and to further stigmatisation of certain groups already defined by dominant discourses as outsiders situated in marginal spaces in societies (Colectivo Ioé, 1998). The informants were often unaware that certain groups might be subject to various restrictions, including residence and work permits; therefore, they are often forced to work in the black economy sector for a low wage to survive (Colectivo Ioé, 1998).

Several other research participants contested the racialised language of difference and homogenised ideas about people of South Asian origin through their everyday experiences. Nikola, a 31-year-old office worker and a volunteer in Manchester, reflected on convivial encounters with people of Pakistani origin which have the potential of breaking stereotypes:

Look at the influence of the media, massive, because when you are in Poland, what experiences do you have with this culture? None. Apart from what you read and see, it’s logical, is shaped by the media (...) Pakistanis are like this and like that. When you arrive here you have contact with this person. You go to a shop run by a Pakistani and you have a conversation and you think, blimey, they are not that bad (...) and you start thinking differently. I have many friends with different religions and they opened my eyes (...) and I realised that we know stereotypes and our knowledge is from
newspapers, books and television, but it doesn’t mean that this knowledge is accurate and real but it is transferred to us.

Nikola’s narrative echoes van Dijk’s (2002: 152) argument that in countries which are less diverse culturally and religiously “the mass media are today the primary source of ‘ethnic’ knowledge and opinion in society” and “virtually all beliefs about the Others come from mass media discourse, literature, textbooks, studies, or other forms of elite discourse”. Nikola’s arrival in Britain and everyday encounters allowed her to reflect on this transmitted knowledge influenced by the Western discourses of colonialism and Orientalism, which can be challenged through convivial interaction with the Other. Nikola’s narrative illustrates how prejudiced perceptions may change through the experiences of migration and convivial encounters. This example reflects Leitner’s (2012) findings based on her study of white residents’ responses to their encounters with new immigrants in a small town in rural Minnesota revealing that in some instances encounters with difference created moments of reflection that disrupted preconceived categories and boundaries. While it is argued that positive encounters tend to change negative perceptions about individuals and are rarely scaled up to the whole group (Gawlewicz, 2015b; Leitner, 2012, Matejskova and Leitner, 2011; Valentine, 2008), Nikola’s narrative illustrates a possibility of a shift in perception about the entire group.

Inka, a 28-year-old PhD student, contested the use of the term *ciapaki* when she became aware of its negative connotations:

[W]e lived (…) above a Pakistani shop owned by *ciapaki* (…) I really don’t like that this kind of word was used. In any case, I started using it because, as I said, everybody used it so it was the easiest way and I automatically adopted it without thinking what connotations it had and to whom it referred (…) I’m telling you now that it was a Pakistani shop, but maybe it wasn’t Pakistani. Maybe the guy was from Bangladesh or India, I don’t know but I know that he was of a darker complexion and that’s why they used the word (…) Later, I started wondering and I asked the boys why they called him like that and that it was not nice.

There is an important change of ideas about the Other and the possibility of becoming more conscious about the racialised expressions of difference. Conviviality in everyday situations over a period of time serves as an experiential learning opportunity (Wilson, 2013), leading to some changes in stereotypical perceptions.
As discussed in this section, the image of the Oriental Other is highly masculinised and racialised, although the stereotypical perceptions and racialised language of difference may be challenged through habitual encounters over time. Similarly, while several research participants in Barcelona also discussed their perceptions of veiled Muslim women in a highly stereotypical way as submissive and victimised, a few challenged these views. I discuss these observations in the next section.

4.5.3 The veiled Muslim Other

Muslim women have been the focus of stereotypical representations in the Western world and the issue of the veiled women has become one of the most enduring subjects for discussions in political, public and media debates in many European countries, including Spain (Dietz and El-Shouhami, 2005; Dwyer, 1999; Kahf, 1999; Mohanty, 1988; Navarro, 2010). In their study about Muslim women in Southern Spain, Dietz and El-Shohoumi (2005: 11) illustrate the stereotypical perceptions of these women as the “extreme other” contrasting Western notions of religion and gender, despite an immense diversity of self-definitions. Drawing on my empirical data, the image of the veiled and oppressed women was particularly recurring in several interviews and during the focus group conducted in Barcelona, while this issue was hardly discussed in the context of my research in Manchester. Some interviewees were fascinated by veiled Muslim women, while others reinforced the discourse of oppression of these women by Islam, even though it is argued that it is not religion but patriarchy which negatively affects the situation of Muslim women (García et al, 2011). The rhetoric of the headscarf in the informants’ narratives in Barcelona may have been influenced by the frequent media, political and public debates in Spain considering the veil as a symbol of Islam and a sign of backwardness and oppression (Cesari, 2006; García et al, 2011; Martín Muñoz, 2000; Navarro, 2010; IHRC, 2011; Román et al, 2011).25 The favoured discourse of convivencia in Spain is contradicted by the influential media framing of Muslim women in a problematic way promoting negative attitudes (Román et al, 2011).

Emila, a 35-year-old mother of two, spoke at length about veiled women. She described the veil as a symbol of religious burden imposed on Muslim women. Emila contrasted the image of oppressed and suffering veiled women with the discursive self-representation of free and liberated European women:

25 In 2010, Barcelona became one of the first large Spanish cities to announce a ban on the wearing of the veil covering the face (burqa).
Our life is like a fairy tale. We are from Europe (...) Think about being a mother. You come here, ok, you are prepared for all of it. They put a headscarf on you when you were 12. When you were 13 you had a baby and were already a wife and then you come here and you see women in your age, who look younger than you, and this is when they start their own life, have their own money. Their daughters have freedom without limits and I suppose that these women suffer terribly looking at their daughters. This is terrible. I wonder if this is going to change in twenty years.

The model of the ‘Oriental woman’, perceived as someone oppressed and passive (Said’s 1995) is mirrored in Emila’s narrative, which also echoes a clear distinction between First and Third World Women, the latter perceived as “a singular monolithic subject” (Mohanty, 1988: 333). This simplified binary reduces the complexities and social, geographical, political and historical differences of the women in question. This is due to persistent stereotypical representations of submissiveness and subordination of Muslim women irrespective of their cultures, ages, education levels or social class. In fact, Emila used a quite extreme construction of Muslim women having a child at a very early age. Mohanty (1988: 352-353) argues that the idea of the superiority of the West produces a universal image of “the veiled woman” and she suggests that this image “exists in universal, ahistorical splendor, setting in motion a colonialist discourse which exercises a very specific power in defining, coding and maintaining existing first/third world connections.”

Emila’s narrative about veiled women also surfaced during the focus group discussion in Barcelona:

You know what? We waste energy with these differences instead of accepting them (...) While being in this country where we are, I mean in free Barcelona, this woman puts a veil on her daughter’s head at a certain age (...) Maybe in few years the time of wearing the veil will reduce. My daughter has a friend, you saw the picture. When she was twelve or thirteen, her mother put a veil on her head (...) but my daughter later said she was supposed to wear it when she was eleven. Can you see it? It is positive that they put it on two years later. Maybe they were learning from our experiences and they observed us free women and after a while that mother will want to be a free woman. Maybe she is already getting it, right?

There is a certain ambivalence in Emila’s narrative. While she called for acceptance of differences, she suggested ‘they’ – veiled and oppressed women should learn from ‘us’ – liberated women. Following Mohanty, Emila’s idea of freedom is embedded in the Western humanist discourse according to which the veil is a symbol of oppression. Mohanty (1988: 353) suggests that:
Universal images of the “third world woman” (the veiled woman) (...) are predicted upon (...) assumption about Western women as secular, liberated and having control over their own lives. This is not to suggest that Western women are secular, liberated and have control over their own lives. I am referring to a discursive self-representation, not necessarily to material reality.

Emila’s perceptions of veiled Muslim women were contested by Julia, another focus group participant, who did not see the veil as a symbol of oppression. She challenged the universalist idea of freedom:

The question of freedom may mean different things to different people. This is frustrating, really, because of our cultural and language differences this often leads to conflicts. What we do may be an attack on freedom of another person. We also judge, I judge too. For example, the headscarf, I try not to think negatively, but for me it is like a symbol, but I’m not sure if of oppression.

While Emila continued with her agenda of liberating the veiled women, Amelia drew attention to the Western idea of clothing and suggested to see both sides of the argument:

Amelia: But don’t you all think that on the other hand, they can see us [pause] we are basically undressed in the summer, maybe they think that we don’t dress appropriately [many voices of participants]. You have to look at it from both sides, you know? It is their culture and I respect it and I understand. It is what it is and we have to accept it, as they accept us (...) just accept it. If they want to wear a veil, let them wear it. If this is what they want and it is their religion and culture then great.

Emila: This is exactly what I was saying.

As seen above, as a result of the ‘group effect’, Emila adjusted her contribution according to the social expectation of the group. However, this self-censorship did not last. The homogenising discourse of the ‘veiled women’ as oppressed continued during the focus group. Jagoda expressed her fascination and curiosity about veiled women:

These veiled women seem to me so interesting and I would like to talk to them and ask if they want to wear these veils or not, because if they don’t, they should have the right to take them off, because if they live in Spain and Europe, where the culture is different, they shouldn’t be enclosed in these ghettos.

This example is particularly interesting as it involves the fascination about the veiled Other and desire of conviviality but, at the same time, assumptions of self-ghettoization of Muslims based on the idea that it is the veil which creates a social distance, rather
than the response to the veil. García et al. (2011) point out that apart from negative and stereotypical images of Muslims, there is an image of the exotic Other which is not only accepted but also desired. This illustrates a duality in perception of veiled Muslim women as oppressed, victimised and enclosed on the one hand, and as exotic and desired on the other.

Another participant, Natalia, tried to convince others that “Wearing the veil is like learning Polish. A 10-year-old child can’t tell you, ‘mum, I am not going to go to Polish school, I will not learn Polish’, but you want him to learn.” Following this, Julia suggested that there are different types of oppression and she shifted focus to Polish society and her own example of coming from a small village in Poland with certain norms and rules she had to follow. Jagoda then reflected on a strong social pressure on women in Poland to get married and have children at a certain age.

The interviews and focus group discussion about Muslim women have illustrated some tensions and ambivalences, possibly reflecting the discourses in Spain about these women. While some research participants drew on orientalist and essentialist constructions of veiled women, other informants questioned the Western notions of oppression and freedom and recognised alternative possibilities. I discuss these issues further in Chapter 5.

4.6 Conclusions

This Chapter has explored the interviewees’ most common perceptions of difference in terms of ethnicity, religion, class and gender after their arrival in Manchester and Barcelona. It has drawn upon extensive empirical material which suggests various and often contradictory attitudes to difference amongst the research participants pointing to the complexity of social and personal perceptions. It has demonstrated how raced, classed and gendered perceptions of difference, partly shaped by the discourses in Poland and in the receiving countries, may influence encounters with Others. This Chapter contributes not only to understanding of how certain perceptions and the language expressed by some migrants to describe difference may be influenced by socio-historical context in Poland but also how these attitudes and language may be reinforced or change as a result of migration and convivial experiences.
The exploration of the attitudes towards difference upon arrival in the two cities has considered not only categories of race and ethnicity but also religion, gender and class and has examined how these different categories work on each other. The Chapter has also demonstrated how classed, racialised and gendered Otherness is also often spatialised with reference to its immediate locality and this is discussed further in the next Chapters. I have discussed how some research participants anticipated an imagined Britain which was both white and upper class and instead were surprised with ethnic diversity and a range of class positions. Others quickly adjusted to the new reality by recognising ethnic and cultural difference as part of Britishness/Englishness. The language used in some narratives of the classed Other in Britain was similar to that in the elite debates about the people at the bottom of social hierarchies constructed as social inferiors. Social distance partly shaped by negative rhetoric about both Polish migration and the poor white working class constitutes a significant barrier to conviviality.

In the context of Spain, many interviewees arriving in Barcelona were often unaware about Catalan culture and language. They often perceived Catalans as closed, in contrast to open and friendly Spaniards and foreigners. The perceptions of Catalan closedness were more extensively discussed than attitudes and encounters in terms of other forms of difference. The class discourses were hardly present in the narratives. Barcelona has been perceived as a place where different parallel groups coexist next to each other without much interaction. This division constitutes the main obstacle to conviviality, mainly between the interviewees and Catalans perceived in stereotypical ways. Nevertheless, some interviewees stressed the historical and linguistic commonalities with Catalans which may facilitate convivial possibilities. Eliza’s case illustrating Catalan language conversations with an elderly Catalan man has demonstrated an example of conviviality through interaction across linguistic, cultural and generational differences. This is an example of how these differences become important resources for conviviality and how they do not become obstacles to communication and convivial experience.

A common feature in many narratives was the attention to visual difference often seen as both fascinating and threatening. Most of the research participants in Manchester and Barcelona tended to see ethnic and cultural diversity in colour-coded terms. Some interviewees spoke about difference by using racialised language brought by the
participants from Poland (Murzyn), but also adopted from other Poles living in Britain and Spain (ciapaty/ciapak). This suggests a circulation of racialised language across borders and adopting it from other counterparts. However, some interviewees were careful when discussing difference and several demonstrated that language of diversity may change over time through everyday experiences of conviviality. As Nowicka (2012:120) points out, meanings “travel - and they alter as they travel”. These findings contribute to research literature on racialised language circulation and fill the gap on language adjustment practices in the context of migration (see Gawlewicz, 2014).

The imagery of the non-European and non-Western Others was often discussed through dichotomous representations. The orientalised image of the violent and dangerous Muslims and Arabs was a recurrent theme in both cities. Some research participants in Barcelona reinforced the discourses of veiled Muslim women perceived as an oppressed and homogenous group, yet fascinating, and in need of liberation. I have demonstrated that these attitudes are likely to be influenced by the socio-historical context in Poland, which has partly been shaped by colonialist and Orientalist discourses essentialising cultural differences. I have employed the concept of habitus to explain prejudiced attitudes acquired in relatively ethnically and culturally homogenous areas in Poland with deeply rooted images of the non-white Other, reproduced in super-diverse environments in Britain and Spain. However, I have also argued that the interviewees’ perceptions of difference may have been affected by the media, political and public discourses not only in their country of origin, but also in host societies. It is not just language that travels with people but also attitudes towards difference which are also reinforced, reshaped and transformed (see also Datta, 2009a; Gawlewicz, 2014) according to different contexts, times and spaces. Prejudiced perceptions may change through the experiences of migration and everyday convivial interaction with difference disrupting preconceived ideas. Furthermore, Nikola’s example has demonstrated that convivial encounter may influence migrants’ perceptions not only about individuals, as some scholars claim (Gawlewicz, 2015b; Leitner, 2012, Matejskova and Leitner, 2011; Valentine, 2008), but they may also reshape views about a whole group. This suggests the possibility of developing a convivial habitus over a period of time understood as socially acquired predispositions of recognition and negotiation of difference in everyday practice in super-diverse environments facilitating the emergence of convivial culture.
The next two empirical Chapters demonstrate how the perceptions discussed in this Chapter are challenged and, at other times, reinforced through the daily experiences of living together in super-diverse environments. They reveal some of the processes of change and adaptation which may lead to possibilities of convivial interaction across difference. The next Chapter focuses on migrant encounters with difference in the neighbourhoods of Manchester and Barcelona as potential sites of convivial encounters between the research participants and the local residents. It explores three narratives in each city which demonstrate multiple forms of encounters within various spaces of the neighbourhoods and beyond, marked not only by conviviality but also by tensions and avoidance of contact. It also develops further the discussion on street spaces which started to emerge as important spaces of encounter in this Chapter.
CHAPTER 5: CONVIVIALITY IN THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF MANCHESTER AND BARCELONA (AND THEIR ENVIRONS)

5.1 Introduction

Traditionally, neighbourhood has constituted an important space for cooperation, for instance common protection against natural disasters, working together when building a house or at the harvest (Łukowski, 2009). However, in modern times, urbanisation has introduced fundamental changes in the quality of social relations (Sennett, 1977). Increasing social mobility has weakened family and neighbourly ties (Wirth, 1956). Recently neighbourhoods have retained a new relevance as sites where new convivial patterns of interaction emerge and new identities are forged as a result of globalisation and migrations.

In the narratives of Polish migrant women, neighbourhood emerges as a prominent space of encounter with the local residents. Therefore, this Chapter aims to explore examples of conviviality that exist in real, lived environments of neighbourhoods where individuals interact with one another in a myriad of quotidian situations. The particular empirical emphasis of this Chapter lies in an exploration of the following questions: where and how do the research participants engage in daily encounters with local residents? What facilitates and what limits conviviality in their neighbourhoods? How do the narratives about the experiences of research participants in different spaces of the neighbourhood contribute to the understanding of conviviality or its lack?

In this Chapter, neighbourhoods are explored as ‘contact zones’ (Pratt, 1992) where the research participants encounter people from different class, ethnic and religious backgrounds. According to Kearns and Parkinson (2001: 2104), neighbourhoods are multi-layered since people function in different social networks across different times and spaces and they are places which allow “dwelling in nearness”. This ‘nearness’ can vary from low-level acquaintance to strong and intense interpersonal relations. This is reflected in the context of various forms of conviviality discussed in this Chapter.

I explore the neighbourhood as the space of encounter with fluid boundaries since everyday practices of the research participants develop through continuous border crossings as they go to work, college, café-bar, mosque, church, playgroups or visit friends across different urban areas. Most research participants have a general
perception of their neighbourhoods, although these perceptions do not necessarily match the actual ward or district delineations. Therefore, it would be inadequate to study neighbourhoods as closed containers with clear limits. While most discussed their immediate neighbourhood, block of flats, streets or estate, others referred to the wards and boroughs in Greater Manchester, and quarters and districts in Barcelona. In their stories about the neighbourhoods, they often constructed narratives about various activities in different places which did not necessarily take place in the neighbourhood but extended through the city and beyond. Hence, the analysis of their narratives also stretches outside their immediate neighbourhoods.

Although there are some common elements across the narratives, the perceptions of the neighbourhoods are very diverse and each represents a unique story. Therefore, instead of making general claims across all cases, I have selected several accounts to explore various forms of encounters with difference in several neighbourhoods in both cities. This Chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, I explore narratives of Paulina, Krysia and Maryla about their experiences in the neighbourhoods of Manchester, and in the second part, I concentrate on stories of Julia, Marta and Emila in Barcelona.

**Part 1 Conviviality in Manchester neighbourhoods**

**5.2 Manchester neighbourhoods**

Greater Manchester, a metropolitan county in North West England, includes ten metropolitan boroughs. The city of Manchester, one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse in Britain (Multilingual Manchester, 2013), is divided into thirty-three wards. Polish migrants are dispersed across Manchester and the rest of Greater Manchester and there is hardly any tendency to cluster (CoDE, 2013). Many research participants arrived in less advantaged areas with cheaper rent and poor housing, which they often described as dirty and dangerous. Along with their improved socio-economic situation and English language skills, a substantial number moved to more affluent residential neighbourhoods some time after their arrival.

In this part, I firstly explore a range of inter-personal interactions experienced by Paulina in several neighbourhoods across Manchester. Her first experiences illustrate

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26 Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan, and the cities of Manchester and Salford
fearful street encounters with the South Asian men and anti-social white youth. In contrast, habitual contact and accommodation of difference in her new neighbourhood facilitated various degrees of neighbourly conviviality. Secondly, I concentrate on Krysia’s everyday interaction with neighbours which involves not only some racialised tensions and fleeting forms of neighbourly conviviality but also the experiences of cooperation, interdependence and gift giving reflecting a more meaningful form of conviviality which develops gradually between the residents and over a period of time. Thirdly, I discuss Maryla’s narrative to explore conviviality reflected as a form of connection with the neighbourhood facilitating convivial encounters across difference. In Maryla’s case, the intersection between religion, gender, similar values, interests and lifestyle facilitates convivial relations with other women. I also reflect on the role of religion and places of worship facilitating conviviality with the local residents. Finally, I discuss some examples of spatialised practices of motherly conviviality by focusing on the narratives of Judyta and Paulina who, once they became mothers, used their neighbourhoods more intensely than before to establish links with other mothers.

5.2.1 Paulina: from local tensions to neighbourly conviviality

Paulina is from a small town in the northern Poland where she completed secondary education. She is 27 years old, married and has two children. Paulina arrived with her Polish husband in Manchester in 2006. She worked as a cleaner and a hospital attendant before giving birth to her first daughter. Paulina’s narrative mainly illustrates a journey through various neighbourhoods within different areas in Greater Manchester and complex experiences of encountering difference. Paulina’s case illustrates a multidimensional account of living in close proximity with different groups and individuals which may result in both tensions and conviviality. It sheds light on how the tensions are influenced by fear combined with discourses of classed, raced and gendered Others, on the one hand, and on the other, by racialised and gendered perceptions of Polish migrants. Paulina’s case also demonstrates different forms of conviviality, the fleeting and superficial in everyday interaction in the neighbourhood, but also more sociable forms involving socialising with neighbours in the space of home, where difference is used as a resource in convivial interaction.
Dangerous neighbourhoods and dangerous Others

Paulina remembers her disappointment upon her arrival in Greater Manchester. As discussed in the previous Chapter, some research participants imagined Britain as a well-developed and safe country with well-mannered people. Instead, she learnt that her new neighbourhood in Salford was unsafe due to high crime rates. Salford, a borough of Greater Manchester, is a place of contrasts with regenerated areas, including Salford Quays attracting young professionals, next to some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Britain. The socio-economic deprivation in some areas of Salford has led to increased levels of gang and organised crime (Walsh, 2003). Although the crime rate in Salford has decreased in recent years, hostility towards recent migrants has often been undetected by the authorities.27

Paulina moved to a shared flat in a high-rise block of flats in Salford with her husband and his friends from Poland. She described her neighbourhood as dangerous and populated mainly by ciapaci, an ambivalent term discussed in Chapter 4, used by some Polish migrants to describe people of South Asian/Arabic origin; and ‘kapturowcy’ (‘hoodies’), white young males whom she saw as the most dangerous group. Paulina’s narrative indicates a very limited interaction with the group she refers to as ciapaci as a result of fear. This is illustrated in her narrative about encounters with men of South Asian/Arabic origin on the way to college when she was pregnant:

I felt stressed when walking through that neighbourhood. People would accost me on the street and look at me in a strange way. I had blond hair then and those from ciapaci cultures would try to stop me and make inappropriate comments so I felt uncomfortable. They tried to make contact because I think that they know that many Polish women are keen to meet them (…) Their comments weren’t nice (…) I felt really scared and uncomfortable.

This account reflects Ahmed’s (2000: 8) argument that some encounters involve conflict, especially when it involves not a meeting “between two subjects who are equal and in harmony” but “the meeting is antagonistic” marked by an asymmetry of power. This unequal encounter is characterised by street harassment. Although the experience of it is very common and it often seems to be an inevitable part of life, having a profound effect on women’s full participation in the public sphere, physical well-being

27 This is reflected in Jones’s (2008) article in The Guardian ‘Get them Polish out of your house or I’ll burn it down’.
and freedom (Bowman, 1993); street harassment is rarely discussed in literature on migrant encounters. Several informants reported accosting, catcalling, following or stalking in both cities, as a result of which they felt emotionally distressed, uncomfortable or unsafe. These negative encounters were often discussed mostly with reference to men described as South Asian, Arab and Muslim. Previous research demonstrates that Muslim men are often represented as aggressive and patriarchal and participating in a ‘street culture’ that is “male dominated and highly macho”, and are portrayed as “policing the streets, often using aggression and violence, and closely examining the behaviour and conduct of their female counterparts” (Hopkins, 2009: 300). Razack (2004: 129) calls social and political approach to Muslim men’s violence against women as ‘culturalist’, meaning that “violence is understood as originating entirely in culture, an approach that obscures the multiple factors that give rise to and sustain violence”. She argues that racism limits opportunities for effective anti-violence strategies and is likely to strengthen patriarchy and violence against women.

As Valentine (1989: 385) argues, the sociology and criminology literature of Western Europe suggests that “women are the gender more fearful of crime and that this is related to women’s sense of physical vulnerability to men, particularly to rape and sexual murder”. Thus, the forced encounter on the street affected Paulina’s sense of security. Furthermore, the accosting and inappropriate comments discussed by Paulina may be considered as a physical forcing of her attention and the need to assert masculinity shaping uneven power dynamics and “spatial expression of patriarchy” (Valentine, 1989: 389). Social and emotional aspects attached to harassment, including feelings of vulnerability and of not having control over what is happening to oneself, have spatial consequences manifested through exclusions reflecting gendered power relations (Koskela, 1999: 111). It is argued that these feelings often increase in pregnancy when women change their spatial behaviour as they may feel discomfort or less welcome in many places and stop visiting some places (Koskela, 1999), as observed in Paulina’s case. Wilson (1991) explored the notions of gendered harassment in urban space and she argued that even though the city offers freedom to women, it also poses new dangers. In her study on street harassment in Cairo, Egypt, Ilahi (2009: 66) argued that it “serves as a means to maintain traditional gender norms that mask male violence against women (...) It is a masculine performance rooted in normative patriarchal ideals”. 
Even though it is clear that women face the issue of being targets of public harassment globally (Ilahi, 2009; Kissling, 1991; Nielsen, 2002; Wilson, 1991), it is important to explore how the research participants make sense of these encounters which are situated in specific times and spaces. In Paulina’s case the street encounter with Asian men elicited strong emotions of fear possibly having long-lasting effects. Leitner (2012: 832) stresses the importance of “the emotive nature of Othering and racialization” manifested by the strong emotions unleashed in encounters with difference, often overlooked in literature. Nowicka (2012) also raises the importance of affective reactions caused by momentary encounters in her discussion about Polish presence in the UK. The street encounter shaped Paulina’s feeling of fear and discomfort and, according to Ahmed’s (2000: 8) argument that that “each encounter reopens past encounters”; her experiences were used to understand these encounters within a racialised schema. The gendered spatial practices of the Asian men are understood as racial practices. Her narrative illustrates how the experience of street harassment influenced her view of a whole group and how it is used to reinforce the construction of South Asian and Muslim men as dangerous and oppressive to women. Furthermore, her views may have been reinforced given the extent of negative representations of this collective in some media and public opinions in many European countries including Britain and Poland (Górak-Sosnowska, 2011; Nowaczek-Walczak, 2011; Razack 2004; van Dijk, 2006).

Although the views of the men harassing Paulina are unknown, she made an assumption in her narrative that “many Polish women are keen to meet them”. This view corresponds to the stereotypical perceptions expressed by some Polish male internet forum users in a study conducted by Siara (2009). Some of these men revealed that men of other ethnicities may see Polish women in an objectifying way and that Polish men are laughed at by men of other ethnicities because Polish women are sexually active with them. This indicates a possibility that the men Paulina encountered on the street may have had stereotypical views about Polish women wanting to engage in inter-ethnic sexual relations. Furthermore, Polish women are often discussed with reference to homogenising notion of the ‘Slavic’ beauty and described as tall, slim, blond and with fair skin (Goodwin, 2015, Nowicka, 2012). A foreign appearance highlighted by Paulina may possibly make these women feel more prone to harassment. Ilahi’s (2009) research on street harassment in Cairo illustrates that women whose features stood out more in terms of their ethnicity felt prone to higher and more severe degrees of
harassment. Looking more explicitly foreign was linked with a higher likelihood of harassment and racialisation. This raises the feminist concern for sexualised bodies moving through space structured by patriarchy (Johnson, 1994).

The gendered encounter experienced by Paulina is characterised by the fear of the Other in a public space of the streets in the neighbourhood constructed as dangerous. According to Amin (2002), streets offer very little possibilities of contact between individuals as they are considered not as a space of inter-dependence and habitual engagement. Amin (2008: 11) further argues that they can generate “social pathologies of avoidance, self-preservation and intolerance”, especially if the space is marked by uneven power dynamics. Matejskova and Leitner (2011) suggest that even though streets are the most common spaces of encounter, they offer opportunities for rather superficial exchanges that often harden negative attitudes. Hence, Paulina’s experience of the street encounter was used to reiterate and justify powerful negative stereotypes about Asian men as the entire group. As Leitner (2012: 837) argues “space and race fuse in mutually reinforcing ways”.

While this conflictual encounter draws attention to encounters with men, Paulina did not mention women of South Asian/Arabic origin in the context of the neighbourhood. This is because clearly they do not fit into the category of dangerous South Asians and Muslims, possibly because street presence is often gendered and largely marked as masculine. However, Paulina mentioned friendly interaction with these women in the college. Several focus group participants in both cities also mentioned convivial interaction with coursemates from a range of backgrounds during language courses. The research participants in Manchester discussed the image illustrating an English lesson (Figure 2).
I took this picture and for me it carries a very positive message, because there are people from different cultures. It doesn’t matter how they communicate, because this was pre-entry level, so people can’t really say more than ‘good morning’, but they are nice to each other. But the most important thing is that they leave home and have a chance to sit next to a Pakistani or Roma person, about whom they normally say all sorts of things. (Aldona, focus group in Manchester)

Habitual engagement and the locality of the classroom or discussion space promote the establishment of social relations in a relatively safe manner, free of concerns experienced on the street. This example echoes Amin’s (2002: 969) argument that colleges bring together people from different backgrounds engaged in common activities, where dialogue and “prosaic negotiations” take place. Convivial encounters at the college allowed Paulina to get to know some coursemates as individuals and temporarily shift her stereotypical views about people of South Asian and Arabic origin.

The second group Paulina discussed in her narrative were the anti-social youths described as dangerous and violent. She witnessed drug dealing, breaking windows and burglaries which were a frequent occurrence when she lived in Salford. She avoided going out on her own and she only used to leave the flat accompanied by her husband
and the flatmates. This is an example of how she restricted and modified her mobility in the neighbourhood as a result of fear. This finding confirms previous research on the behavioural consequences of fear. Keane (1998) conducted secondary data analysis on a national survey of Canadian women and revealed that fear may be limiting women’s movement around their environment. As discussed above, by restricting women’s mobility, “masculine domination is reproduced over space” (Koskela, 1999: 113). This highlights the disparity in equal access to space in the neighbourhood. In this instance, “fear acting as a mechanism to drive women back into dichotomous conceptions of space limits their equal access to public spaces and infantilizes them as helpless and prone to danger by men” (Ilahi, 2009: 56).

The spatialised domination is not only gendered but also classed and raced. Paulina and her husband became a target of racist harassment:

It was a very dangerous area...there were a lot of council flats, high-rise blocks and there were many people hostile towards us, Polish people. When they saw we had a car with Polish registration plates, they started harassing us, kicking the car or breaking the windows. This is how they manifested racism toward us (...) In Salford there were many people from poor class. I would say that some of them, out of jealousy, instilled their children with prejudice against different nationalities. They were 15 to 17 years old or even younger and they were very hostile towards other nationalities.

Firstly, Paulina describes the council estate as dangerous. As Hope (2001) suggests, poor areas carry a higher risks of crime. This may lead to “geographical concentrations of fear, risk and insecurity” which may lead to “the likelihood and intensity of racist violence and disorder” (Webster, 2003: 95). Secondly, Paulina’s narrative raises the issue of racism and xenophobia expressed by anti-social youths in deprived areas of Salford. Paulina’s car with the Polish registration plates became the symbol of Otherness and, therefore, the target of violence. Nowicka (2012: 116) emphasises that Polish migrants “disturb a certain invisibility of white immigrants with the legal equal status of European Union citizens”. While previously the conflict and tensions used to affect relations between white British majority and non-white minorities, currently there are new tensions and new forms of racism between newly arrived migrants and the locals. Even though Polish migrants often identify as white, they are racialised and constructed as the unwanted Other. As discussed in Chapter 2, race is not only to do with non-white skin colour, as known historically from Jewish and Irish experiences in Britain. Even if the newcomers are white, they are imagined through the category of
race because they are immigrants (Gilroy, 2006a: 56), although their racialisation is more temporary compared to highly visible Others, especially over generations. As discussed in the Introduction Chapter, in the light of socio-economic deprivation of the inner city areas where many Polish migrants move into, some established residents perceive these arrivals as a source of competition for jobs, welfare services and housing (Cook et al, 2011b; Sveinsson, 2009). Paulina’s narrative demonstrates that popular anxieties over jobs and welfare are mobilised through hostility towards ‘new strangers’ (Amin, 2012; Valentine, 2008). It is clear from existing research that convivial relations between people are closely dependent on the existence or absence of competition for local resources and services (Vertovec, 2007a). The widespread negative political and media discourse about Polish migration further contributes to tensions in the neighbourhoods by “constructing such new minorities as the main agents of the decline of established white British working class communities” (Garner, 2009: 48), while the wider socio-economic inequalities in British society are overlooked. Paulina’s narrative and the narratives of many other informants reflect Hudson’s et al (2007) study which explored relationships between new and established communities in ethnically diverse Moss Side in Manchester and North Tottenham in London. The research identified that deprivation and disadvantage played a vital role in neighbourhood relations and that racial tensions were often driven by struggles for employment and housing. The study also stressed the influence of the media in fuelling negative attitudes.

**Neighbourly conviviality**

Despite fear and avoidance of the locals, Paulina established a friendly contact with a male neighbour she described as a white English drug dealer who lived in the same block of flats: “He visited us to borrow a hoover regularly. This is how I met him. He was very nice and when he saw that I was on my own he would do shopping for me and buy fruit so that I wouldn’t have to leave home in fear.” Convivial interaction between Paulina and her neighbour occurs at a micro-scale of the flats as a contact zone which allows for interaction and the opportunity to get to know each other as individuals contrary to the street encounters discussed earlier. Lending the hoover to the neighbour and doing shopping for Paulina represent a quite developed form of neighbourliness and trust established over a period of time. Despite the fear of the raced, classed and threatening Others on the streets, there is a possibility of neighbourly conviviality beyond raced and classed difference in a more intimate spaces of the flats as convivial
spaces. The possibility of both tensions and convivial encounters has already been acknowledged in previous research (Karner and Parker, 2011; Saldrove and Valentine, 2012; Wessendorf, 2014a). This example represents what Gilroy (2006a: 39) calls other varieties of interaction which “have developed alongside the usual tales of crime and racial conflict”. Paulina’s multi-layered experiences in the neighbourhood reflect both “multi-vocality of place” (Grasseni 2009: 37), which signifies the possibility of contradictory tendencies of both conviviality and conflict (Karner and Parker, 2011), and “multilocality”, which “conveys the idea that a single place may be experienced quite differently” (Rodman, 1992: 647).

As their financial situation improved, Paulina and her husband moved to Didsbury, a prosperous suburban area in the south of Manchester with nearly 80% of “all White groups” and just over 20% of “all non-White ethnic groups” (Manchester City Council, 2012: 2). The largest ethnic minority group is Pakistani (4.8%). There is a shift in Paulina’s narrative about encounters in the neighbourhood, which is no longer considered as dangerous. Paulina described her new area as very quiet and safe. She was surprised that people in the park exchanged greetings even though they did not know each other and that nobody asked where she was from. Wood et al (2010) examined the association between the sense of community and aspects of the built environment, physical activity and neighbourhood perceptions. Their results emphasise the importance of convivial pedestrian-friendly areas with regard to social interaction among local residents. It is argued that walkable environments increase opportunities for casual social interaction between people in their neighbourhood (Wood et al, 2010; Leyden, 2003; Lund, 2002). Paulina’s activity of walking through accessible destinations such as parks contrasts with her restricted movement in the previous neighbourhoods negatively associated with fear of crime.

Paulina established positive relations with friendly white English neighbours who helped her and her husband when their car broke down and offered to lend them a ladder to fix the bedroom window. This social interaction consisting of neighbourly help became an important part of everyday convivial culture. The convivial character of the neighbourhood was established through habitual gestures of civility, fleeting interaction and offering a helping hand.
Paulina also noticed the absence of the negative discourse about Polish migrants in the
neighbourhood and she linked this with the higher socio-economic status of the
residents and the absence of competition for jobs: “They don’t have this view that
Polish people steal jobs (…) I would say that this is a matter of class. They were the
people from higher spheres who were not worried that someone would take their job
because they had their own”. This passage confirms Lancee and Dronker’s (2011: 8)
findings revealing that “people with a different economic background are less likely to
compete with each other”, thus facilitating conviviality. The authors suggest that
economic diversity in the neighbourhood facilitates opportunities to build bridging ties.

After several months of living in Didsbury, Paulina and her husband were allocated a
council house in a residential area in Baguley in South Manchester. The largest ethnic
minority groups in Baguley are identified as ‘Other White’ (3.1%) and Black African
(2.5%); Polish is the second most common language spoken after English in the area
(Manchester City Council, 2014b: 5). Even though there was a degree of tension in
Paulina’s new neighbourhood as a result of the cars of the Polish neighbours being
scratched by an unknown perpetrator, Paulina described the relations with the local non-
Polish neighbours as positive, but often limited to courteous greetings and
acknowledging each other. This is reflected in the following quotation: “An English
neighbour, I don’t know his name, always waves at me and asks me how I am. He told
me that he is moving out and that he will miss us. So it is very nice that we are here.”
This example of neighbourly conviviality is based on often underestimated fleeting but
regular encounters between neighbours allowing them to become familiar, even if they
do not know each other personally. Based on her research on neighbourhood encounters
in two cities in the Netherlands – Nijmegen and Utrecht, Peters (2011) suggests that
transitory encounters lead to feelings of comfort, make people feel at ease and evoke
positive emotions. Despite some criticism of fleeting encounters in research literature
(Valentine, 2008), Vertovec (2007a: 33) challenges the expectation of meaningful
interaction and shifts attention to courteous but distant relations between neighbours:

Urban contexts are known to function through the lack of deep and
meaningful interactions among city-dwellers; indeed, most people seem to
be more than satisfied with maintaining cordial but distant relations with
their neighbours and particularly with strangers (…) We cannot and should
not expect everyone in a complex society to like each other or develop
numerous wide-ranging friendships.
While some neighbours have a need for a closer contact with neighbours, others might have a preference of casual acquaintance as reflected in the British saying: ‘Good fences make good neighbours’ (Kearns and Parkinson, 2011: 2105). Although Valentine (2008) claims that fleeting encounters and taken-for-granted civilities do not automatically lead to respect for difference, as they might be characterised with ritualised codes of etiquette rooted in dominant western discourses regardless of views and values; Lauriel and Philo (2006) argue that low-level sociability should not be underestimated as it represents mutual acknowledgement. Similarly, Boyd (2006: 872) discusses the importance of civility in facilitating social interactions:

As trivial as they may seem, then, casual signifiers of human respect such as ‘please’ or ‘thank you’, ‘excuse me’ or how’s it going’, serve to awaken a sense of sympathy and to breed an easy spontaneity among urban-dwellers whose primary interactions with others are both fleeting and superficial. Despite their evanescence, however, they are not devoid of moral significance. Insofar as they communicate to others a basic and elemental respect, these ritualised practices and everyday formalities are the cement that makes modern society possible.

The fleeting forms of neighbourly conviviality through greetings and casual acts of kindness constitute an important element of convivial interaction which Fincher (2003) calls small scale interaction in urban spaces. She refers to Peattie (1998), who introduced the idea of conviviality into urban planning, and she suggests that “conviviality is something more fleeting, and is about many small connections” (Fincher, 2003: 9). Bridge (2002: 3) has suggested that relations in the modern western neighbourhood are largely “neighbourly” entailing “non-intimate, convivial relations between people who know each other to nod and wave to, or engage in limited conversation”. Furthermore, fleeting interactions with neighbours discussed by Paulina may also contribute to ‘feeling at home’ (Peters, 2011) and, therefore, a sense of belonging, an important dimension of the neighbourhoods.

Paulina’s narrative offers the possibility that these fleeting convivial encounters between neighbours may lead to a more meaningful form of contact and a sense of belonging as a neighbour which may develop over time as the residents become more familiar with each other:

I am still aware that I am an immigrant from Poland, but definitely I feel better here, because they don’t treat me here like one but as a neighbour. This is very positive for me. When I invite them to barbecues, they eat
Polish food, I tell them about Polish culture and they tell me about theirs so we exchange experiences and it is nice (...) They don’t judge me ‘a Pole lives here, let’s break the windows’. It is different, they don’t judge me and this is very important to me.

The categorisation of Paulina as a member of a homogenous out-group observed in the previous neighbourhoods is deconstructed through habitual contact and familiarity over time which are important factors influencing the intensity and nature of conviviality. Paulina feels acknowledged by the local residents as a ‘neighbour’, a more inclusive category transforming her from ‘them’ to ‘we’ as she shares this membership with other residents.

Furthermore, Paulina gave an example of neighbourly home visits resulting in friendly relations and a sense of acceptance across difference. This illustrates a more intimate form of neighbourly conviviality in the private space of the home where difference is used as an important characteristic of interaction. Previous research demonstrates how traditional food is used to reinforce national identity (Bell and Valentine, 1997; Douglas, 1984; Rabikowska and Burrell, 2009). However, while Paulina’s example of preparing and sharing Polish food and telling her neighbours about Polish culture may constitute the making of home and ‘rooting her life’ (Rabikowska and Burrell, 2009) in her new neighbourhood, it also serves as an important aspect of interaction, contrary to previous instances of racialised difference assigned to her and her husband. Conviviality in this example permits the possibility of being different contrary to the assumptions that to be convivial requires sameness or conformity (Amin, 2008: 18). This example reflects Gilroy’s idea that racial or ethnic difference is not an obstacle to conviviality, as discussed in Chapter 2.

The role of food in shaping social interaction has been emphasised in previous research. For instance, Douglas (1984) argued that food preparation and consumption are primarily social phenomena and stressed the importance of the connection between food sharing and social integration. Dunlap (2009) explores conviviality through the practice of dining as a social event during which individuals gather together with friends and acquaintances, eat together, mingle and develop connections. Similarly, based on their research of the slow food movement in Australian print media Germov et al (2011: 1) define conviviality as “social pleasures of sharing ‘good food’” involving spending
time, connecting with friends, family, and community. The role of food in shaping conviviality is discussed further in this Chapter.

Paulina’s case has demonstrated a possibility of multi-layered interactions with local residents in more and less convivial spaces of the neighbourhoods. It has highlighted how the streets encounters may offer very limited possibilities of conviviality as a result of fear influenced by classed and raced dynamics and by negative perceptions of Polish migrants. In contrast, it has also illustrated different forms of neighbourly conviviality, including fleeting encounters, as well as more meaningful engagement manifested through neighbourly visits during which cultural difference becomes an important aspect of convivial culture in the neighbourhood.

5.2.2 Krysia: conviviality through adaptation, cooperation and exchange

Krysia is 51 years old and she comes from a small town near Krakow. She arrived in Manchester in 2006. She used to work as a cleaner but due to an injury she is currently unemployed. Krysia arrived alone and moved to a studio in Northern Manchester and, following her son and grandson’s arrival for six months, they moved to a house near Cheetham Hill, one of the most culturally diverse areas in Manchester which in recent years has seen a steady arrival of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe.

Krysia’s account firstly illustrates tensions in her first neighbourhood followed by the arrival of black neighbours. Secondly, Krysia’s narrative demonstrates how convivial interaction in her current neighbourhood develops over time from adaptation practices involving observing and following certain norms, through instances of cooperation and interdependence, to more meaningful forms of contact involving gift giving considered as gesture of care and maintaining ties.

Troublesome neighbours

Upon her arrival in Manchester, Krysia moved into a block of flats where she enjoyed living in a relatively peaceful coexistence with the residents until some black families moved in. Krysia produced a narrative about black neighbours as intruders and racialised Others:

I am not racist. When I moved in it was rare to see a black person there. The problems started when black families started moving into the block. It wasn’t peaceful any longer. There was even a fire. They started having parties and throwing cigarette butts in the staircase. When I moved in it was
clean and the people were very nice, English and Pakistani, but pleasant to each other…until the parties started. As I said, I am not racist, but they made a lot of noise. They sang and shouted at night. Everything changed then.

The untroubled peaceful coexistence with white English and Pakistani neighbours is contrasted with the troublesome black Others. Although Krysia asserted several times that she was not racist, she reinforced the racist stereotype of black people as noisy and disorderly. This example illustrates how in a super-diverse context conviviality characterised by a positive contact across difference with English and Pakistani neighbours coexists with racialised perceptions of the black neighbours. Furthermore, the troublesome neighbours are only seen as black. Krysia did not discuss their age, gender, class or other characteristics. This reflects the failure to acknowledge multiple and changing identities and other ways in which people may see themselves.

Krysia’s views of the black neighbours could have been influenced not only by a very definite construction of blackness persistent in Poland, discussed in Chapter 4, but also by the neighbourhood context where individuals may conform to local norms without being aware of them (Bailey et al, 2013). When I asked Krysia if she tried to talk to the black neighbours she declined and stated that the white English neighbours used to gather together downstairs and discussed the issue of the troublesome neighbours. The negative views held by the English majority could have been transmitted to other neighbours, including Krysia. This finding supports the idea that neighbourhood context may shape attitudes through social interaction which is the means by which individuals accept local majority views (Bailey et al, 2013).

Another important point arising from Krysia’s experience in her first neighbourhood in Manchester is temporariness of experience. Her interaction with the neighbours was limited, possibly due to the fact that she lived there for a very short period of time. As Sennett (2001: 3) suggests, the temporary experience “prompts people to keep loose, not to get involved, since you are going to exit soon”. D’Angelo and Ryan (2011) also suggest that transient groups may invest less time in establishing ethnically diverse relations. The temporariness of experience may result in lack of mutual engagement. This may limit experiences of conviviality. At the same time, local residents may perceive migrants as temporary and transient and, therefore, not worth the effort of getting to know (Kennedy, 2008; Ryan, 2015b).
From adaptation to more meaningful forms of neighbourly conviviality

When Krysia moved to a neighbourhood near Cheetham Hill, she found out that the previous tenants were Polish people who had frequent parties. Therefore Krysia and her family did not receive a warm welcome from the neighbours. However, the residents later changed their attitude when they noticed her cleaning the garden. Krysia’s immediate neighbour offered to lend her a lawn mower and a ladder. She described this as the beginning of a ‘pleasant coexistence’. This example illustrates how first encounters marked by stereotypes and possibly xenophobia might be potentially transformed into something more convivial.

Despite her limited English, Krysia patiently observed her neighbours to understand the existing norms and customs in the neighbourhood and she then followed them:

We adopted their ways, like the bins on the street, they have to be removed so that youths don’t knock them down, because round the corner there is a youth institution (…) It works like this: whoever is at home takes out all the bins and puts them back and everything is in order. I didn’t know this at first, but I observed them doing it and we started doing the same. If there was something we didn’t know, we observed the neighbours and adopted their customs. At the moment it would be difficult to move into a different neighbourhood, even if I had better and more comfortable living conditions. My neighbourhood means a lot to me. I have very positive experiences of coexisting all these years that I have lived here.

Krysia expressed how shadowing the neighbours’ bin practices leads to adopting common practices through which the residential area becomes a space of co-operation where neighbours work together in order to have a clean and peaceful neighbourhood. This example also demonstrates how the newcomers are required to adjust to the existing norms. Furthermore, these common practices of residents illustrate another facet of conviviality based on silent practices without actual interaction which enabled Krysia to fit in and feel at home. Krysia’s strategy of following the neighbours is a way of fitting in through not being different, in contrast to Paulina’s case where her difference in current neighbourhood was used to help her fit in.

It is important to point out here that the littering issue is often part of the discourse on immigration in politics and in some media.\textsuperscript{28} This fits into a long-standing racialised

\textsuperscript{28}The article in the \textit{Daily Express} ‘Exclusive: Another rubbish idea, lessons for immigrants on how to empty bins’ is one of many examples portraying migrants as unable to comprehend the rules around recycling and bin collection (Hall, 2009). In November 2013, in an interview on \textit{BBC Radio Sheffield},
discourse about hygiene (Hunt, 1999). Nevertheless, Krysia seemed to become accepted in her neighbourhood as she lived up to the rules of cleanliness by following bin practices. While in the previous neighbourhood the black families were constructed as the Other failing to meet the standards of order and cleanliness, in this instance it is the anti-social youth breaking the social order in the neighbourhood by kicking the bins. Similarly, in Wessendorf’s (2014a) study of super-diverse Hackney in London, the residents complained about Hipsters and students littering the area. This moves beyond the tensions between white English majority and migrant minorities and it demonstrates that conflicts may involve practical matters.

The neighbourhood becomes the space of co-operation and inter-dependence where the residents come together to make their area safer. One of Krysia’s neighbours prevented burglary of her home when she was at work. Krysia was surprised that, despite being away from home, she could count on her neighbours. She quickly learnt about the home watch on her street. She now informs her neighbours when she stays at home alone and similarly, when the neighbours go away they ask Krysia to watch over their house. These convivial practices demonstrate that neighbourhood can become a space of cooperation, care and trust. As Bridge (2002: 25) has suggested “the neighbourhood provides the realm of practical relations involving the exchange of small services as well as convivial relations that might contribute to a diffuse feeling of security and well-being.”

When Krysia’s grandson arrived from Poland, her neighbours offered him gifts, including a golden chain with a cross. This was very reassuring for Krysia and her family. The offering of gifts by neighbours is an act of accommodating difference, a gesture of care and everyday recognition important not only in creating and maintaining ties but also in producing a sense of belonging (Komter, 2005; Wise and Velayutham, 2014). Komter (2005: 2) stresses that “the concept of the gift does not exclusively indicate certain material acts but has a wealth of cultural, social and psychological meanings as well, all referring to the abstract, symbolic functions of gift giving”. Komter (2005: 7) perceives gifts as “tie signs” which reveal the nature of the tie between giver and recipient. In their case study of Sydney and Singapore, Wise and Velayutham (2014) explore the theme of intercultural gift exchange. They highlight that former Home Secretary David Blunkett criticised Slovak Roma residents for littering the streets (Bowers, 2013).
notions of hospitality and recognition are embedded in the practice of gift giving and are important in producing feelings of belonging and maintenance of ties. A similar example to the gift giving is Krysia’s exchange of flowers and plants with a black female neighbour. This practice takes place on a regular basis as they both share interests in gardening. The exchange of flowers has the potential of not only disrupting racial and ethnic stereotypes but also of sustaining convivial culture through repeated practice. This example of conviviality demonstrates the possibility of shared interests between neighbours which deconstruct easy labelling of the ‘stranger as enemy’ and promotes new attachments (Amin, 2002). When she discussed this example of conviviality, she did not mention the negative stereotype ascribed earlier to black neighbours. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that positive attitudes developed through sustained and close encounters with individuals may not be extended to the whole group (Matejskova and Leitner, 2011). As I have argued earlier, good relations with individuals and stereotypes can co-exist. As Leitner (2012: 842) suggests “exempting individuals does not erode group racial stereotypes”.

Both Paulina and Krysia started their narratives by discussing first encounters in their neighbourhoods with a certain ambivalence with reference to conviviality and tensions. Then, they both moved on to discussing various forms of neighbourly conviviality and finished with more meaningful forms of interaction. It is possible that they constructed their narratives in such way to leave a positive impression, as discussed in Chapter 3. On the other hand, this pattern may highlight the temporal and evolving characteristics shaping conviviality. While initially their interaction with the neighbours was limited possibly due to the temporary and transitory experiences in their first neighbourhoods, habitual contact with neighbours and various practices and interactions over a period of time facilitated convivial culture in their current neighbourhoods. Furthermore, in Krysia’s case, convivial practices shaped the neighbourhood as a space of cooperation, care and trust. In addition, the gift giving illustrates a more significant form of conviviality as a gesture of care and everyday recognition (Komter, 2005). In terms of difference, Krysia tried to fit in through not being different, in contrast to Paulina’s case where difference was used in convivial interaction. Nevertheless, Krysia’s difficulty in speaking English did not constitute an obstacle to conviviality.
5.2.3 Maryla: the connection with place and religion

Maryla is a 31-year-old teacher of English as a foreign language from Krakow, one of the most culturally diverse cities in Poland. Before coming to live in Britain, she worked as a teacher in language schools in Krakow and at summer language schools in Britain. Maryla became fascinated with Islam during her visit to London where she saw many Muslim women on the streets of the multicultural city. Maryla converted to Islam while she lived in Poland. She made the decision to move to Britain because she felt she was not fully able to practise her religion in Poland. Maryla highlighted that she wears a headscarf as a religious duty and to be visible as a Muslim woman. She wants to break the stereotype of oppressed Muslim woman limited to a domestic space. She moved to Manchester because her friend lived there and allowed her to stay at her flat upon her arrival. Maryla had already been aware of cultural and ethnic diversity in Britain when she arrived in Manchester.

Firstly, Maryla’s account is different from the two previous highly relational accounts discussed above since it introduces a different form of conviviality through connection with the space of the neighbourhood. This form of conviviality with space reflects Amin’s (2008) post-humanist approach to conviviality. Secondly, Maryla’s story also raises the importance of social milieus shaped by the intersection of gender and religion across ethnic, class and age difference. Thirdly, Maryla’s narrative also highlights examples of conviviality in a place of worship.

Conviviality through connection with space

Maryla moved to Rusholme where she also worked as a teaching assistant in the Church of England school. Contrary to the previous accounts, Maryla’s narrative demonstrates conviviality in a form of connection with the neighbourhood itself. As discussed in Chapter 4, Rusholme has a super-diverse character, including a long-standing South Asian population. It has also become home to recent migrants, including those from Central and Eastern Europe, and students from a range of backgrounds; this has led to high levels of transience within the area (Manchester City Council, 2007). Until the 1960s it was a suburban shopping district. The retail premises have been converted into a retail and consumer service centre for its South Asian/Muslim population, therefore largely serving halal meat and not serving alcohol. Although there is an increasing presence of North African and Arabic food, as well as kebab takeaway restaurants, the
majority of restaurants are run mostly by Bangladeshis but owned and operated by members of the Pakistani community and they attract mostly white clientele (Barrett and McEvoy, 2006). Kalra (2014) considers Curry Mile as a diasporic space of interaction between majorities and minorities and it demonstrates an example of how people and place become linked. As Maryla’s case illustrates, this interaction also involves recent migrants and converts to Islam.

Maryla was attracted to Rusholme because of its infrastructure suitable with her new lifestyle:

There is the whole Muslim infrastructure, halal shops and shops with Islamic clothes and accessories, etcetera. All this is very important to me, to live in a place where there are many halal shops, the mosque, Muslim people, restaurants where alcohol is not served. I am very satisfied with it.

This passage demonstrates Maryla’s connection with the place and it shows how material conditions may underpin conviviality. Amin’s (2008) proposes a concept of conviviality as a form of solidarity with space. He argues that “human dynamics in public space are centrally influenced by the entanglement and circulation of human and non-human bodies” (5). This understanding of conviviality is not reduced to dynamics of inter-personal interaction. The nature of Maryla’s neighbourhood has a direct impact on her experience of conviviality. This form of experience involving the connection with the space may lead to awareness of “belonging to a larger fabric of urban life” (19). According to Amin, ‘empathy towards the stranger’ emerges as a by-product of the convivial experience involving the connection between human and material bodies. However, it is hard not to notice that, to a certain extent, Maryla’s connection with her neighbourhood is linked with consumption of culture and she may share with other Muslims the same kind of rationale for moving to the area.

**Social milieu: religion and gender connections**

Maryla interacts with people in local shops, bakeries and kebab restaurants where she usually gets a lot of attention, especially from Muslim men. She thinks it is because of being white and wearing the headscarf. This difference rather facilitates conviviality than hinders it since Maryla did not seem to be negatively affected by the attention received. Her difference served more as an ice-breaker in casual conversations which usually evolved about the reasons behind her conversion to Islam often resulting in a sense of surprise that she did not convert because of a Muslim husband. This is another
example of using difference in convivial interaction. Her narrative about encounters with Muslim men is very different to that of Paulina discussed earlier.

For Maryla, the nationality of people she interacts with is not important. It is the intersection of religion and gender that constitutes a commonality between Maryla and women she mostly interacts with: “It does not matter to me whether they are Polish, Pakistani, Somalian or Nigerian women, but most of my friends are Muslim women and this is what we have in common.” Maryla now feels that she has the choice to interact with women of the same religion and similar values, interests and lifestyle, something she was lacking when she lived in Poland. Maryla’s experience in Rusholme can be understood through the concept of ‘social milieu’ which describes social relations both formed locally and beyond the local, and it refers to “collectivities based on shared values and attitudes towards life, shared aspirations and ways of carrying oneself” (Wessendorf, 2014b: 12). Wessendorf gives an example from her study of Turks in Hackney who have built alliances with Kurds on the basis of their political orientation; therefore, have formed a social milieu crossing ethnic lines. Maryla’s social milieu also crosses ethnic boundaries and enables a sense of belonging because she has found her own ‘niche’ of like-minded people with shared religion, gender and similar lifestyle and interests. This offers an instance of convivial culture across ethnic and national difference based on the above mentioned commonalities.

**Conviviality in places of worship**

Earlier research has highlighted the importance of religious networks not limited to ethnicity. Glick Schiller et al (2006: 626) stress current global turn to religion and spirituality bringing people together: “religion becomes more prominent as a pathway for becoming part of the locality, for newcomers as well as for native population of cities experiencing economic insecurity”. Polishness and Polish migration are often linked with the Catholic religion, strongly associated with Polish identity, national culture (Trzebiatowska, 2010) and Catholic practices reproduced outside the Polish borders considered as a distinct marker of the Polish presence in Britain (Garapich, 2008; Gawlewicz, 2015b; Nowicka, 2012). However, experiences of Polish migrants in other places of worship are overlooked in research literature. Only one of my research participants in Manchester told me that it was important for her to attend Polish Catholic Church in the city and to interact with other Poles. Nevertheless, the same
interviewee as well as another research participant attended this church with their black partners and their mixed-race children and admitted they felt uncomfortable in this highly raced and nationalised space.

In Maryla’s case, the local mosque became a convivial space. She perceived the mosques as open spaces allowing an inter-ethnic and inter-faith dialogue:

When it comes to finding out about different cultures it should not be from the media. For example, most of the mosques I know organise at least once a year open days and anybody can come (…) There are sessions aiming to teach people about Islam to clarify some controversial issues. You can go to the mosque and just have a chat because they have open days and anybody can go.

Although many mosques have restricted access to women (Krotofil, 2011), in her local mosque Maryla meets other Muslim women of different ages, ethnicities and from different social classes. Once a week she attends lessons of reciting Koran run by a woman from Syria. The contact with the women who attend these lessons is limited to the course but Maryla stressed that “it is not because we don’t like or don’t understand each other but because we don’t know each other very well just yet.” Maryla explained that lack of close relations does not mean that people do not want to spend time with each other. She finds it difficult to have a rich social life because of her busy lifestyle. She enjoys the company of the women during the course: “The women who attend these classes are very communicative and it is not like they come and don’t say anything. We always talk and this is a group I like spending time with”. The conviviality based on interaction and enjoying the company of the locals without a need for very close and intimate relations is a common theme discussed by the informants.

Another research participant, 41-year-old Celina who lives in Gorton located to the southeast of Manchester city centre, also told me about her regular attendance in a place of worship, a Baptist church in her neighbourhood with mostly British congregation from the local area. Even though in Poland Celina was not a church goer, she decided to attend this church since her Chinese acquaintance recommended it. The people in the church were very welcoming despite Celina’s initial reservations. Gradually she became more open as a result of a familial atmosphere, a sense of togetherness and mutual support. When Celina was going through a hard time, she received empathy and support through prayers. This church support in difficult times was meaningful to her. This
illustrates an example of conviviality based on emotional support and care rather than merely sociality observed in Maryla’s case.

While Maryla was drawn to the mosque primarily for her faith reasons, Celina stressed the importance of the acquaintances she made through the Baptist church. In both examples, the mosque and the church became the places of inclusion. These instances of convivial culture in a place of worship raise the importance of bringing people together through regular attendance. However, while Maryla seemed to be fully accepted in the mosque, Celina’s case of conviviality was not free from tensions. The convivial relations at the church were disrupted by the negative discourse of Polish/Eastern European migrants. One of the church attendants told Celina that “you people come here from the entire Eastern Europe and get everything for free”. Celina was cast simultaneously as ‘one of us’ sharing the same religion and religious space, and as the outsider – Eastern European Other. Therefore, encounters in places of worship can be characterised by ‘multi-vocality of place’ (Grasseni 2009), as mentioned in Paulina’s case.

While the three cases I have discussed above concentrated on encounters with the local residents in their neighbourhoods mostly highlighting various examples of tensions and neighbourly conviviality, and conviviality as a connection with space in Maryla’s case, in the final section I explore motherly encounters with difference in Judyta’s and Paulina’s local areas.

5.2.4 Judyta and Paulina: spatialised practices of motherly conviviality

After becoming mothers, women start using their local neighbourhoods more intensely than before and seek other mothers to spend time with (Fenster, 2005; Byrne, 2006a, 2006b). This has been the case of several informants in both cities, particularly in Manchester. In this section, I discuss the narrative of Judyta’s motherly practices in her neighbourhood in comparison to Paulina’s account. At the time of the interview, Judyta was in a relationship with a partner of African origin. She lived with her partner and their son in a suburban residential area of Salford in Greater Manchester. When Paulina became a mother, like many other informants, she made a lot of effort to get to know other mothers in her local area. Judyta and Paulina met at a group session for mothers in Salford. While Paulina, at first, struggled with the language barrier and therefore interacted less with non-Polish mothers, Judyta started attending various activities,
including baby-friendly screenings, local breastfeeding clubs and playgroups, which became part of her everyday routine. Byrne (2006a: 113) describes these daily activities as “a strategy for relieving the intensity of full-time care of young children, allowing both parent and child to have other company”.

While Byrne’s (2006a) study reveals the social segregation between middle and working class women forming separate groups evolving around classed activities, Judyta’s narrative indicates separate clusters of white British women and migrant mothers of different origin at the breastfeeding club and mother and toddler group. She mostly identified with other women who came from different countries and shared similar experiences of motherhood and migration. In her narrative about activities with other mothers, she focused on those commonalities that intercut the dimensions of fixed identity and difference:

All these women from different countries, who came here like me, they need it, because they don’t have families here, they don’t have many friends, and we all need to meet people, establish friendship, so they are more open. And maybe this is what brings us closer, because for example, there is a mother who came from Zimbabwe (...) she misses home too and she is able to understand that someone may feel homesick, so this is what brings us closer (...) We meet up together with our kids, or we visit each other for a cup of tea and coffee.

The participation at the support groups for mothers and their children and establishing relations based on common experiences illustrate an example of motherly conviviality. It is described as motherly because it is situated at a space particularly for mothers who can get support from other mothers. In this instance, motherly conviviality is experienced by migrant mothers from a range of backgrounds. This finding confirms D’Angelo and Ryan’s (2011) argument that despite the initial shock about ethnic diversity in Britain, some Polish migrants establish stronger links with other migrants on the basis of shared experiences. According to Glick Schiller et al (2011: 404), “the process of engagement with others is always going to be with particular individuals with whom one may want to identify or share moments or spaces of ‘conviviality’”. Another reason why Judyta wanted to spend more time with the mother from Zimbabwe might not only be a shared experience of migration but also possibly the fact that Judyta’s child is mixed-race. As discussed in Chapter 4, she expressed her fear of racism in the context of her son’s interaction with white Polish children. As Byrne (2006a) suggests, mothering practices are not only gendered but also raced. Judyta and
her child’s socialisation with a black mother and her children possibly relieved the pressure from the Polish collective expecting her to fit to a role of the cultural reproducer of the nation (Yuval-Davis, 1997) and it offered a sense of security away from the Polish dominant gaze and stereotypes.

Judyta also raised the issue of isolation of migrant mothers with young children without family support networks and relying on other women for company.29 Through her participation with the Europia organisation, she set up a group ‘Mother and I’ in Salford for migrant mothers and their children to tackle isolation, something she experienced when she first arrived in Manchester and had a baby:

These [migrant] women have similar problems, usually isolation. They simply have nobody to talk to, go out with or invite home (…) It’s monotonous because you don’t work, you have children on your shoulders, little support from the man, so you have to somehow organise your time (…) This isolation is the main problem here, because as they [mothers] say, they attend English classes but despite that there is lack of integration with the local community. There is this barrier all the time and even if it is not a language barrier there is a cultural one and it is hard to change it.

This passage highlights isolation as a result of linguistic and cultural barriers constituting an obstacle to conviviality and the need to address this issue by creating an opportunity for migrant mothers to establish new connections with other mothers. Judyta’s initiative is another example of motherly conviviality which raises the importance of the ‘transversal enablers’ (Wise, 2009; Wise and Velayutham, 2014) and third parties in facilitating conviviality (Amin, 2010). According to Wise, transversal enablers are those who create connections between culturally different people, opportunities for cross-cultural interaction, and spaces of intercultural care and trust (Wise, 2009: 24). This description fits Judyta’s role and several other research participants I recruited through my participant observation with various groups.

While Judyta socialised with mothers from a range of different backgrounds, Paulina mostly interacted with Polish mothers and, when her English improved, with white British mothers. In the context of the discussion about her attendance in the adult education college, when I asked Paulina if her acquaintances were extended beyond the

29Although here I discuss isolation experienced by migrant mothers, several other research participants without children also experienced social isolation which needs further research. This issue is also briefly discussed by Ryan (2015b).
classes, she replied that while she did not have contact with the Pakistani coursemates outside the class, she was in touch with the white English ones:

AR: You mentioned that you meet English colleagues from the course beyond the college, could you give an example?

P: Yes, with Jenny we meet up for a cup of coffee. She visits me and I visit her or we go together to town and to do shopping. She has a child in the same school my child goes to and we always see each other at school and we have a chat there.

It could be assumed that the reason behind the sustained motherly conviviality with the white British coursemate is a shared experience of motherhood, although the experiences of mothering could be also shared with Pakistani classmates. Nevertheless, the white British mother is seen as the right kind of person to socialise with through particular activities involving going shopping or having coffee together. As Byrne (2006a: 117) argues, these kinds of activities reinforce classed and raced positions. While motherly conviviality in Judyta’s case allows her crossing ethnic and racial boundaries, conviviality in Paulina’s example is limited to particular activities and socialising with Polish and white English mothers.

This narrative highlights the multi-sitedness of encounters. It involves interaction with Jenny at the adult education college, at the school gates and beyond. Furthermore, Paulina’s account raises the importance of schools in facilitating contact with other parents. In their study on Polish parents and children in London schools, D’Angelo and Ryan (2011: 239) discuss “schools as sites of socialisation where newly arrived migrants encounter the host society in complex and varied ways.” Wilson (2012) stresses that in Britain schools are considered significant in the strengthening of community relations: “Repetitive interactions of everyday school life shape the capacities of parents to live with difference” (Wilson, 2013: 102). Interaction through school encounters may also permit migrant mothers to develop new forms of social learning (Wilson, 2012). Despite English language difficulties, Paulina developed practical competencies over a period of time which allowed her to interact with non-Polish mothers. At the same time, there is a limited interaction with other groups possibly as a result of perceived cultural and religious differences.

In this part of the Chapter, I have explored different forms of conviviality in various spaces of Manchester neighbourhoods, including fleeting and more meaningful forms of
neighbourly conviviality. I have also explored less convivial forms of street encounters marked by fear, raced, gendered and classed dynamics. In the final part, I discussed motherly conviviality shaped by gendered activities and spaces. In the next part, I focus on the narratives of Julia, Marta and Emila illustrating their encounters with difference in the neighbourhoods of Barcelona.

**Part 2 Conviviality in Barcelona neighbourhoods**

**5.3 Barcelona neighbourhoods**

As it is seen throughout the thesis, despite some similarities, some experiences of the research participants living in Manchester will differ to those in Barcelona as a result of contextual differences discussed in the previous Chapters. The city of Barcelona is divided into 10 municipal districts and 73 quarters (*barris*). Many neighbourhoods have undergone urban changes since the early 1980s, including restoration and rehabilitation of buildings, creation of new spaces and cultural facilities. These urban projects have been underpinned by a rhetoric promoting the everyday interaction between residents (Balibrea, 2001). In recent years, many districts have been influenced by the intercultural approach and have promoted reception plans and community actions to encourage ‘peaceful coexistence’ with a goal of intercultural dialogue (Barcelona City Council, 2010). Polish migrants are dispersed in many different areas of Barcelona and some live outside the city of Barcelona (Barcelona City Council, 2012b). Władyka and Morén-Alegret (2013) identify a visible pattern of these migrants occupying mostly central areas. As in the case of Manchester, most of my research participants have changed accommodation frequently and lived in different areas of Barcelona.

In this part of the Chapter, I firstly concentrate on Julia’s narrative of street encounters contrasting with Paulina’s narrative about street harassment and anti-social behaviour. Julia’s account also highlights the importance of convivial possibilities facilitated by a Catalan partner. Secondly, I explore Marta’s story which allows exploring her neighbourhood encounters with difference during two different life stages: as a student in a shared accommodation and as a parent seeking for interaction with people in family spaces. Finally, I focus on Emila’s narrative highlighting a desire for conviviality with other mothers and efforts for her children’s interaction with difference.
5.3.1 Julia: convivial possibilities in the Catalan context

Julia is 36 and she comes from a small village in south-western Poland. She was the first person in her family to go to university and to travel abroad. She worked as an au pair in Germany, a waitress in the United States and she had lived in Ireland for nine years. After several visits to Barcelona, she decided to move there in 2010, as she needed a change in her life. She is an office worker in an international company in the city of Barcelona. Julia firstly moved to a neighbourhood sharing the eastern border with the city of Barcelona and L’Hospitalet de Llobregat where her encounters with difference were limited to fleeting encounters with neighbours and observations of people on the street.

L’Hospitalet has been a place of arrival for many migrants due to affordable rent. It is a municipality to the immediate southwest of Barcelona and is one of the most densely populated areas in Catalonia. In the 1960s and 1970s it experienced a population boom caused by migration from other parts of Spain, and subsequently from outside of Spain. Over a fifth of its residential population was born outside of Spain, mainly in Bolivia, Ecuador, Morocco, Pakistan and the Dominican Republic (L’Hospitalet City Council, 2013). The residential landscape of the neighbourhood reminded Julia of the blocks of flats in Poland built during the communist regime.

Positive but distant relations with neighbours

Julia described her neighbourhood as ‘a dormitory of Barcelona’ where people mostly sleep and from where they commute to work in the city. This also applied to Julia and it was one of the factors influencing her limited contact with the locals. She spent most of the time in the city of Barcelona where she worked, attended a language school and gym and where her social life evolved. This has left her with very limited opportunities for establishing contact and interaction with the local residents including fleeting encounters in a form of greetings and occasional neighbourly help. The characteristic of positive fleeting but distant relations with neighbours has been highlighted by most informants living in Barcelona. This could be a result of not only preference of such relations and a limited time spent in ‘dormitory neighbourhoods’ but also a constant rotation of neighbours, mentioned by Julia, some of which might be international students and migrants who are highly mobile in Barcelona and beyond. Another interviewee, Klaudia (33) emphasised the temporary character of migration to
Barcelona: “People come here, do the Erasmus or doctorate and it’s just for four years or so. You make many friends for several years and that’s it. Later you can visit them elsewhere or not.” Other interviewees, especially those with families, simply favoured their intimacy over close relations with neighbours. This reinforces Wessendorf’s (2014a) notion of ‘being open but sometimes closed’ with regard to living together in public but dwelling apart when it comes to private relations. This contrasts the more meaningful forms of contact with neighbours discussed in the context of Manchester. Władyka and Morén-Alegret (2013) draw attention to the lack of Polish migrants’ participation in the traditional social life of the neighborhoods and they suggested empowering this kind of social participation involving participatory research methods. I was also surprised that my research participants hardly mentioned their participation in neighbourhood life, despite many rich fiestas de barrios – neighbourhood festivities – across Barcelona.

**Observing street conviviality**

Julia mostly observed the locals in L’Hospitalet on the way back from work. She used to get off the bus one stop earlier to observe people spending time outdoors:

> I used to see people from India, China and from South America on the way from my bus stop to my home. There were many young people from South America, you know, you can tell because you see that they are a bit shorter and have certain face features…you know, these were my everyday observations. I also often heard Catalan language and saw people dancing **Sardana**\(^{30}\) in front of the church (...) I really liked the atmosphere in L’Hospitalet (...) because I liked that people would come out on the streets. It’s seven in the evening and elderly people sit down at a local square and talk, children run around, people don’t sit at home.

This account is similar to those discussed in the previous Chapter about encounters with difference. Julia distinguished different groups in her neighbourhood by using categorisation based on visual characteristics along ethnic and racial lines. Peters (2011) argues that such categorisation is used to create a sense of comfort and because of lacking other frames to interpret other groups. Julia’s account, however, is different to other stories in the way that it does not involve the actual interaction. As Peters (2011) suggests, not all encounters in the neighbourhood have to take place through practical activities. She claims that people-watching is a significant way of understanding what is happening in the local area as it provides a flow of information about others, for

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\(^{30}\) Sardana is a traditional Catalan dance.
instance, who they are, what they are doing and what they look like. She noted that in the public spaces of Lombok and Nijmegen people enjoyed watching the diversity of others because it was perceived as safe. Similarly, despite describing certain parts of her neighbourhood as dangerous, Julia’s movement was not prevented by fear and she felt comfortable observing people. In fact she enjoyed the lively atmosphere in L’Hospitalet. Julia’s gaze is central to the cosmopolitan consumption of the Other and, at the same time, cultural and emotional detachment (Nava, 2002), as Julia’s participation in any kind of convivial interaction was very limited (as discussed in Krysia’s case, this lack of engagement might be related to her temporary stay in the neighbourhood). In the context of Barcelona as a tourist destination, this corresponds with Urry’s (1995) idea of a tourist gaze and ‘aesthetic cosmopolitanism’ involving mobility, openness to others and consumption of landscapes, cultures and cities. Several research participants mentioned that following their arrival in Barcelona they had been fascinated with the city and engaged in tourist activities. The tourist industry is an important characteristic of Barcelona which “turns into a lucrative, luxury, fun commodity that can be rapidly consumed by the tourist” (Balibrea, 2001: 189). Furthermore, Julia, as many other research participants, highlighted the specificity of the local areas in Barcelona characterised by public spaces of socialisation, including streets and squares.

The gathering of people on the streets of Barcelona was also discussed during the focus group. This discussion was stimulated by Julia’s photograph of a crowd of people gathering around street musicians and people dancing to their music in Barceloneta (Figure 3), a neighborhood in the Ciutat Vella district of Barcelona attracting many tourists. She took a route through it on the way back from work.
The photograph portrays the convivial character of Barcelona, the outdoor lifestyle and celebratory character of the city also praised by other research participants. This example highlights the role of Barcelona as a leisure and tourist site (Balibrea, 2001). There is a very intensive use of public spaces in Barceloneta by both tourists and local residents. In line with the intercultural approach, the local government promotes intercultural mixing in public spaces (Barcelona City Council, 2010; Council of Europe, 2011). Nina, who described Barcelona as a “cultural melting pot”, stressed that the street performances attract people from all over the world and “the boundaries between them become blurred” through dance and music “uniting the crowds”. Several scholars have raised questions about celebration of ethnicised difference in public spaces. Amin (2002: 968) has warned about raised expectations from the uses of public space “for even in the most carefully designed and inclusive spaces, the marginalised and the prejudiced stay away, while many of those who participate carry the deeper imprint of personal experience that can include negative racial attitudes.” Heil (2014) points out that although public gatherings are part of Catalan *convivència*, they do not necessarily lead to extended interaction. Despite these arguments, this street interaction highly
contrasts the street encounters marked by fear and hostility discussed in Paulina’s narrative from Manchester as it demonstrates the emergence of conviviality based on negotiation of difference through dance, music and enjoyment. Dancing together allows crossing certain boundaries through touch, which might not be possible in other everyday encounters. Drawing on ethnographic observations of street performances, Simpson (2011) stresses the importance of the street performance producing moments of sociality and conviviality through fleeting interaction that emerges from momentary and transitory encounters between those who watch the performers.

**Convivial possibilities in the Catalan context**

One of the reasons Julia initially found it hard to interact with the locals was due to the issue concerning Catalan language and identity, discussed in Chapter 4. Nevertheless, she entered into a relationship with a Catalan man, Jaume, and after four months of dating they moved in together in his home town near Barcelona, described by Julia as a “proper Catalonia”. At first, her lack of knowledge of Catalan language constituted a substantial barrier in communication with the locals, but as a result of habitual contact over time, a sense of familiarity has developed which enabled the emergence of convivial culture. Through her Catalan partner, Julia became part of *colla*, a grass-roots community group which she described as a group of friends from the same region with family-like bonds, something that she thought she would not have a chance of experiencing in the city of Barcelona. Julia also became a member of the same group operating virtually through a mobile phone messenger and she started participating in regular group meetings:

I am invited to a baby shower of one of the girls who is pregnant. I have known them for five months and they all speak Catalan. You know, they change to Spanish when they talk to me, but in a larger group, you know, I am new (...) they end up speaking Catalan and I switch off. I try to understand something. It is frustrating and tiring but (...) I see that this language is alive here (...) In Barcelona it is a bit different because [Catalan] people may be forced to speak Spanish. I am thrown in at the deep end. It’s like I am totally on my own in this community (...) I know that I am the one from the outside and I have to adjust. It is a new experience for me (...) For now, I actually start feeling like I am part of it [colla], you know? Because at the beginning, I was afraid that I would not fit in, because they are, I think, a bit closed (...) I would like to become friends with some of them at a deeper level because social meetings from time to time and conversations about the weather or work are not something that interests me. I need a deeper friendship. I think that we from the Eastern...I am generalising now but we
from Eastern Europe, we really need deeper relations when it comes to friendship. I don’t need a large number of friends but two or three friends I can call and talk to for a while (…) I hope that I can find myself in this…I think I start connecting with these people. This is just the beginning, but I think that they have accepted me. For now, they have no choice because I am with Jaume, but I know one thing. If right now I disappeared from his life I would disappear from their life too.

Julia’s narrative demonstrates the complexities of interaction with the Catalan members of the group. On the one hand, their practices of speaking Catalan made Julia feel excluded. As discussed in the previous Chapter, it is possible that the Catalan group members engage in situated practices through their language choice mobilised as a way to “mark territory” (Pujolar, 2009: 85). On the other hand, despite the linguistic limitations, Julia feels partly included in the group. There is a clear tension in her narrative with regard to belonging and not belonging to the group also influenced by the pressure to adjust on the one hand, and on the other, a discourse of Catalan closedness and the distinction between ‘us’ (more open to close social relations Eastern Europeans) and ‘them’ (closed Catalans). This tension demonstrates a very dynamic and fragile character of conviviality.

Julia’s narrative also highlights the importance of friendships, largely overlooked in research, even though they are an important part of everyday life. The statement “we from Eastern Europe, we really need deeper relations when it comes to friendship” is not just used to distinguish oneself from Catalans but it echoes the findings of previous studies which have indicated the possibility that people’s culture is important in influencing how people view friendship (Rybak and McAndrew, 2006). In fact, previous research has demonstrated that Central and Eastern Europeans define relationships somewhat differently than people from other nationalities and they use words that distinguish between different degrees of friendship (Abrahams, 1999; Rybak and McAndrew, 2006). While the term ‘friend’ is used much more widely, freely and loosely in Western societies, it is argued that Poles have a more formalised and precise use of words to describe levels of friendship (Rybak and McAndrew, 2006). In Polish, there are three words that describe three different degrees of friendship: from the most intimate to the least intimate, these terms are przyjaciel [best friend, although this phrase is used more freely in the West than it is used by the Poles] kolega [colleague, mate], and znajomy [acquaintance]. Julia expressed a need for deeper friendship beyond linguistic and cultural differences corresponding to the first term which requires a
certain period of time to develop. I discuss friendships in more detail in Chapter 6 in the context of workplace encounters.

The role of the Catalan partner in facilitating convivial possibilities within the group is significant here. The importance of partners in facilitating contact with their family and friends was highlighted by most research participants in inter-ethnic relationships. Julia was aware of some linguistic and cultural difficulties in establishing contact with Catalans and she owed most of her acquaintances with Catalans to her partner who became a gatekeeper to convivial relations between Julia and his family and friends. The partner becomes a transversal enabler (Wise, 2009) discussed earlier in this Chapter, facilitating cross-cultural connections. As a result of the relationship with Jaume, Julia discovered new convivial possibilities. She got to know his family and friends and she learnt why Catalan language and culture are important to them. This has resulted in more interest with regard to Catalan culture and empathy manifested through comparing Catalan historical struggles to the Polish ones. The empathic interest is an important element of conviviality (Morawska, 2013). Similarly, another interviewee, Zofia, explained that she felt as part of her partner’s family: “When I met my partner I became a member of Catalan Barcelona and I entered his family, his circle of friends who accepted me. But it happened because I entered not straight from the street but as his partner.” She told me how participating in baptism in the family of her partner made her feel accepted. She felt honoured when she was asked to do a reading in Catalan. To sum up, these findings demonstrate that inter-relationships may constitute an important factor in facilitating conviviality with other people, although in Julia’s case with some limits, as she was aware that the membership in the group was conditioned by her relationship with Jaume.

5.3.2 Marta: conviviality in shared accommodation and in family spaces

Marta is a 34-year-old marketing specialist from a town in south-western Poland. Before she came to Barcelona as an Erasmus student in 2000, she had travelled and attended language courses in Spain. The multicultural character of Barcelona made her realise that it was the right place for her. After finishing her studies in Poland, Marta returned to Barcelona. As an Erasmus student, Marta lived in a shared accommodation with people from different countries but with similar education level and age. This example illustrates the possibility of conviviality through living together in a private
space of shared accommodation. Currently she lives with her Mexican husband and a 3-year-old daughter who was born in Barcelona. Marta’s case illustrates how difference is negotiated through experiences of motherhood. While Paulina and Judyta highlighted the importance of encounters with other mothers, Marta’s account stresses the significance of family spaces in shaping of convivial culture.

**Conviviality in shared accommodation**

As many other informants, Marta at first lived in a shared accommodation, a very popular phenomenon in Barcelona among young people. This example of sharing a flat facilitates convivial possibilities through the actual experiences of living together. For Marta, sharing accommodation with people from different parts of the world allowed her to engage with difference at different levels:

> These were impressions of a student, a kind of initial excitement springing from getting to know people from all over the world and the possibility to exchange different experiences while cooking together in the kitchen, exploring different flavours and having a totally different world view. It madly interested me.

As most research participants, Marta initially experienced fascination with different cultures and flavours. The kitchen in the flat became a space of exchange and negotiation. Difference is mentioned several times and seems to be an important ingredient of this type of conviviality. Different flavours of food appear as a symbol of difference and it becomes an object for gathering (Simonsen, 2008). It is useful to refer here to research on gap year and youth travel which engages critically with the idea of intercultural learning and cultural cosmopolitanism (Snee, 2013; 2014). Snee (2014) explores the intersection of tourism with cosmopolitanism and she notes that overseas gap years are framed by the claims that foster cosmopolitanism among the young people in a form of openness to difference (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002). Nevertheless, she argues that the notion of cultural cosmopolitanism, which is associated with tolerance based on pluralism, dialogue and a recognition of difference (Savage et al, 2005), tends to be built on acts of consumption. To further explain this, Snee (2014) uses Hage’s (1997) notion of ‘cosmo-multiculturalism’ as a form of consumption, for instance, through dining out in ‘ethnic’ restaurants as markers of good taste and sophistication rather than a commitment to intercultural interactions. This represents a desire for experiencing diversity not necessarily resulting in meaningful engagements with difference contributing to imbalances in power relations (Snee, 2014: 26). The author
points out that the ‘gappers’ are primarily concerned with personal benefits and self-interest rather than a commitment to the Other. Nevertheless, Marta’s narrative differs from a common narrative of the gappers encountering the traditional authentic Other, in opposition to the civilised West.

Marta’s account illustrates a form of bonding through cooking and eating together in a shared kitchen in the private domain. This example of conviviality is not just about the consumption of culture and the Other. It involved the practice of cooking together, sharing food and socialising together. As in Paulina’s narrative about inviting neighbours for a barbecue, the food plays an important role in facilitating social interaction. Several other research participants with a similar profile to Marta’s mentioned socialising together with their flatmates beyond the flats, for instance going out together for a meal. Furthermore, the theme of food sharing and gathering together was also brought up during the focus group and the participant observation. The photograph brought by Natalia (Figure 4), which shows her partner of Indian origin preparing food (roti) in their kitchen, stimulated the discussion among the focus group participants about their experiences of sharing accommodation with people of different origins, sharing responsibilities in the kitchen, preserving own cultural culinary practices and, at the same time, negotiating difference through cooking.

Figure 4: Natalia’s photo of her partner preparing food in the kitchen (November 2012).
Preparing meals and eating together constitutes an integral part of everyday convivial culture in shared accommodation. It is more than consumption of cultural difference. It offers opportunities of gathering together and socialising, accommodating and negotiating difference (Dunlap, 2009; Germov et al, 2011).

Conviviality in shared accommodation is not limited to interaction in the kitchen. For some research participants, shared accommodation offered an opportunity to establish new friendships. In Marta’s narrative, the collective identity of ‘we’ and the feelings of empathy play an important part: “There was a large degree of empathy… because we have a good time, understand each other very well in different group tasks and jointly solve problems”. Convivial culture becomes a product of a habit of collaborative effort and a sense of togetherness (Sennett, 2012) across difference. At this stage, “being in the company of strangers becomes normalised through habits of co-dwelling” (Amin, 2013:2). This normalisation of difference is reflected in Marta’s use of a Polish expression *chleb powszedni* [daily bread], normal, ordinary and commonplace: “In the beginning of my stay it was a curiosity, a cognitive experience (…) Now it is *chleb powszedni*. Now I don’t think about it (…). Now a weird experience is going to Poland where everyone speaks the same language.” This shows how conviviality leads to perception of cultural and linguistic diversity as commonplace (Wessendorf, 2014a).

**Conviviality in the local family spaces and beyond**

After finishing her studies in Poland, Marta returned to Barcelona and when she had a baby, she moved with her Mexican husband to the Sants district in the southern part of Barcelona. This is a post-industrial and mainly a residential area and a tourist hub populated by people from different backgrounds, mostly from South American countries, Italy, China and Morocco (Barcelona City Council, 2012). Marta moved with her family to Sants in order to have a better access to schools and family-friendly areas where she subsequently was able to establish contact with other parents. As in Judyta’s and Paulina’s cases, Marta’s narrative highlights the connection between motherly activities, family spaces and convivial places:

Because we have a small child, it is important for us to have access to schools, parks, and different sorts of attractions for children, family spaces and workshops and in this neighbourhood there is plenty of it so generally we are happy (…) I have managed to establish relations with quite a lot of people since my daughter was born. I have acquaintances from the nursery, preschool, park, workshops and extracurricular activities. I met a Polish
couple, because our children attended the same group in the nursery and a Polish-Catalan couple. The rest of my acquaintances are with people from here, meaning Catalans and Spaniards, mostly Catalans.

As in the British context, nurseries and schools become key sites of encounters for parents, although the Catalan context offers a more complex picture of socialisation in the school environment influenced by the wider sociolinguistic dynamics and ambivalence about language and class (see Alarcón and Garzón, 2013). Through Marta’s experiences of mothering, she learnt that school activities lead to acquaintances with other parents and allow getting to know them better, contrary to fleeting and superficial encounters in other public spaces:

Quick situations in shops, café, hairdressers, bars or shops do not allow getting to know people closer (…) We can talk about getting to know others when we meet each other at parents’ evenings, school events or when we collect children from school. I would say that in these situations I can meet somebody better. I wouldn’t call it a relation when buying veggies or having coffee in a bar, but something superficial, a contact between a service user and a service provider.

Marta contrasts different geographies of encounters within a neighbourhood involving different types of convivial encounters. Marta’s narrative reflects some geographers’ argument that spaces of superficial and chance encounters are not spaces where people engage with each other in a more extended way (Amin 2002; Valentine, 2008; Matejskova and Leitner, 2011). This example contrasts Nina’s message through her image (Figure 5) used during the focus group, stressing the importance of daily fleeting encounters in the local shops often resulting in familiarity.
Marta’s narrative about encounters with Chinese people illustrates how a fleeting encounter in a café/bar may influence some changes in perceptions:

Three weeks ago, together with my daughter we started attending a Chinese course and so far we haven’t managed to establish any relations with Chinese people. It is a very hermetically closed community. For example, in the park it was possible to play with Chinese kids who speak English, but it was impossible to speak to them. It was not a language barrier but a strong cultural one. On the other hand, yesterday I had an interesting situation with Chinese people. We were in a Chinese bar with my husband and our daughter before our class and we had our Chinese resources on the table. We were approached by a Chinese waitress who was very interested that we are learning Chinese. We said two words we have learnt to see if she could understand. This was the first time when a Chinese person started a conversation and took the initiative to make contact. It was very nice.

There is a tension between Marta’s openness to difference manifested through a real desire to learn about different languages and cultures and perceptions of the culturally distant Other. Despite a willingness to interact with Chinese people, Marta used a homogenising discourse and constructed this collective as culturally distant, closed and with insuperable communication issues. Then, her perceptions about Chinese people
are challenged by an actual encounter in the bar, where to her surprise the interaction was initiated by a Chinese waitress. This unpredictable, spontaneous and fleeting convivial encounter allows a disruption of stereotypical views about Chinese people as closed and difficult to interact with and stresses the significance of this type of encounters in café/bars earlier considered by Marta as not a space of engagement with difference. This example confirms Lauriel and Philo’s (2006) findings about interactions in cafés as convivial places which may allow gaining a practical knowledge from the experience of convivial encounters with the unacquainted. In their study of everyday multiculture in café spaces, Jones et al (2015) particularly focused on the ways these spaces work as settings of encounter and shared presence between groups often considered as separated by ethnic difference. Their findings suggest that often dismissed corporate spaces may generate “confident familiarity, ethnic mixity, mundane co-presence and inattentive forms of conviviality” (644).

Like most informants in both cities, Marta discussed the presence of Pakistani people in her neighbourhood. While in the context of mothering Paulina’s narrative highlighted limited encounters with mothers of South Asian origins, Marta mainly discussed contact with this group in the context of her daughter’s schooling:

It could be that…if my daughter went to a school…it depends to which public school, she would have a majority of friends from Pakistan and India. We wanted to avoid this, not because I am against these cultures, but in groups where there is a vast majority of students from Pakistan, from 70 or 80%, unfortunately their parents hardly get involved in the school routine and it is very difficult to maintain classes because they don’t pay basic money, they don’t bring materials for PE or Arts, don’t collect children on time, don’t know the language, form separate groups and ghettos and sending a child to this kind of ghe… not to a place where there are equal groups of immigrants from Asia, Africa and Latin America…In places where the local community is totally dominated by South-Eastern Asia, problems arise and these schools are marginalised. Unfortunately, this is how it is. So we avoided this by sending our daughter to a different school (…) Whenever there are problems in schooling resulting in lack of involvement of parents from certain ethnic group, I would say they would be from Pakistan. Other groups, for example from China, Latin America or Morocco function in the same way as the locals. At the moment, my daughter is in a different school dominated by Catalans, so this year I don’t have contact with people from other cultures but last year when she was in a public school, there were people from Dominican Republic, Morocco, Latin America, China and other groups.
Marta’s narrative shows carefully chosen expressions which indicate possibly some awareness that what she is saying may be seen as discriminatory. Pakistani parents are seen as failing to conform to acceptable norms and, therefore, are portrayed as problematic. The discourse about Pakistani parents uncaring about their children’s education and schools disproportionately populated by Pakistani pupils reinforces the ideas of class and race. Similarly, in Wilson’s (2013) study on parent encounters with difference in a Birmingham primary school, Asian parents were also considered by the British parents as refusing to get involved in the running of the school and its extra-curricular activities. However, neither Marta nor the British parents in Wilson’s study considered the reasons for not contributing, for instance, potential language barriers, socio-economic differences and other forms of exclusion.

The problematic group of Pakistani students is set in opposition to other ethnic groups, for example, Chinese migrants are constructed as ‘model minorities’ in the context of schooling, contrasting the earlier narrative of this group as hermetically closed and culturally distant. According to Reay et al (2007: 1049), a section of the ethnic minority children represent the “acceptable face … of ethnic/racial difference” as “they are the children who are ‘exceptionally bright and very nice’, ‘are doing the best’, those who are a paler shade of dark, and come from families ‘where the parents really care about education’, ‘have high aspirations’ and ‘are really ambitious for their children’ – the ‘model minority’”. They are accepted because they share the normative white middle-class values.

The discourse about schools overpopulated by Pakistani students is contrasted with Marta’s idea of schools with “equal groups of immigrants from Asia, Africa and Latin America”. This idea of equal groups of certain ethnicity illustrates what Byrne (2006a: 120) calls “the right mix” or the right balance desired by some white English mothers in her research, defined as the equal proportion of the raced groups from the ‘global South’. “Getting the mix right”, according to Byrne (2006a: 120), represents openness to difference, as long as there is not too much of it – this represents the discourse of being outnumbered by the classed and raced Other. As Reay et al (2007: 1050) suggest, the gains from social mix only are seen to work if there is a majority of white and/or middle-class students. Similarly, even though Marta expressed her openness to difference throughout the interview, she prevented her daughter from going to a school
with too many students of Pakistani origin. Therefore, Marta’s narrative illustrates “simultaneity of openness and boundary maintenance” (Glick Schiller et al, 2011: 410).

Marta’s categorisation of Pakistani people forming ghettos constructs a “spatially embedded otherness” (Simonsen, 2008: 147) of ‘Pakistani community’ isolated and fixed in the ghetto. Pérez-Rincón et al (2012) points out that there is a high concentration of Pakistani migrants in the central districts of Barcelona and in some peripheral areas, mainly as a result of affordable rent and transnational social networks. Even though there is evidence that the level of concentration of these migrants decreases as they disperse to different areas of the city, certain spaces remain perceived in a stigmatised way. The representation of the neighbourhood populated by migrants as a ghetto feeds a negative mythology in which the discussed migrant group is seen as problematic. It is likely that in Marta’s case the ambivalent construction of Pakistani people serves to justify her choice of a private school for her daughter. However, it is not only the ethnicity but also class which may be considered as the most important concern when thinking about who parents want their children to socialise with (Byrne and de Tona, 2013). It is not that Marta does not want her daughter to interact with children of Pakistani origin. However, education in a private Catalan school may serve as a so-called “social elevator” generating upward social mobility for the children of migrants possible through Catalan immersion (Alarcón and Garzón, 2013: 109). Nevertheless, Marta’s choice of school not only plays part in determining her daughter’s future and her social position, but also shapes her child’s experience of conviviality.

Marta’s story has shed light on neighbourhood encounters with difference during two different life stages: as a student in a shared accommodation and as a parent seeking family spaces and interaction with other parents. Conviviality in shared flats has illustrated not only the cultural consumption of difference but also interaction through the practice of cooking together, sharing food, socialising and negotiating difference. As in Paulina’s case, difference is an important element of conviviality in the kitchen as the contact zone. Furthermore, interaction in shared accommodation may also involve more meaningful relations based on cooperation, empathy and a sense of togetherness. As a parent, Marta stressed the importance of interaction in family spaces, including nurseries and schools, although her narrative also highlighted the significance of fleeting encounters beyond these spaces disrupting stereotypical ideas. Marta’s narrative has highlighted the tension between openness to difference and boundary maintenance.
with regard to certain groups, illustrating the discourse of being outnumbered by the classed and raced Other.

5.3.3 Emila: a desire for motherly conviviality

Emila is 35 and comes from a small town in eastern Poland where she completed secondary education. She worked temporarily in Belgium as a domestic help for a year and then she came with her husband to Barcelona in 1999. She worked as a model and a cashier in a supermarket. She currently looks after her three children who were born in Barcelona and she also does a casual cleaning job. Emila’s case illustrates a tension between her desire for conviviality and the difficulties of interacting with Muslim mothers. Her narrative also highlights the role of the mother in facilitating conviviality experienced by her children.

After several years of living in Barceloneta, Emila and her family decided to move out to Les Roquetes in the Nou Barris district located in the northern part of the city. It was the place of arrival for labour migration from Spain in the 1950s and 60s. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, it has become one of the areas with the strongest presence of migrants from outside of Spain, including Hondurans, Ecuadorans, Pakistanis, Moroccans and Romanians (Barcelona City Council, 2012). This has given Emila the opportunity of contact with people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Similarly to Marta’s case, school became one of the main places of encounter with difference. Although she appeared to be happy that her children have the opportunity to live in an ethnically and religiously mixed environment, she voiced her concerns about the headscarf worn by Muslim girls:

This is a great neighbourhood populated mainly by people from South America. You notice it when you take children to school. But there are also people from Romania and Pakistan. I think that people from Pakistan are amazing, nice, delightful. They bring children up very well, although I feel sorry for those girls wearing headscarves later on (…) My daughter has a friend who is now twelve and they put a red scarf on her head. She is very nice and her parents are too. When I see it… this is not a barrier for me, but I just feel sorry that at some point the doors will be closed for her, she will not do further studies, at some point they will prohibit her for religious reasons. That’s why I feel sorry for the child. As a mother, I would fight for my child to enjoy childhood for as long as possible, while they put an end to it with their free will.
At first, Emila’s praise of parenting by Pakistani people contradicts Marta’s concerns. However, later her narrative is based on stereotypical assumptions about Muslim women oppressed by their parents and religion. As discussed in the previous Chapter, this simplified perception reduces the complexities and differences between veiled Muslim women (Dietz and El-Shohoumi, 2005). These persistent stereotypical representations of submissiveness and subordination of Muslim women may constitute an obstacle to conviviality. This example also illustrates my argument about the contradictory tendencies throughout the thesis illustrating that convivial interaction and openness to difference may coexist with stereotypical views.

**Seeking opportunities to be convivial**

Emila’s narrative about her daughter’s veiled friend continued for some time. The encounter in the shop with the veiled girl and her mother demonstrates an opportunity for interaction:

She was very embarrassed to go out for two weeks and I told my daughter to tell her that she looks very nice in her headscarf and one day I met her in the shop. She was with her mother. She was embarrassed to even say *hola* [hello]. First, her mum said *hola* to me and she told her daughter to say *hola* too. I told her that she looked beautiful in her red scarf and later she again started going out to the park with my daughter and other girls.

This encounter is not only limited to the exchange of civilities but there is an element of empathy and affection in Emila’s narrative as recognition, accommodation and negotiation of difference expressed through praising the girl’s look contrary to Emila’s perceptions of the practice of veiling.

Emila expressed her desire of establishing convivial relations with Moroccan and Pakistani women, who like Emila gathered in front of the school gates:

If we could become more open and get to know a woman from Morocco or a man from Pakistan, if we could become their friends, I would love that. I kind of need it because there are groups of people in front of the school: women from Pakistan in one group, women from Morocco in another and this woman from Poland totally on her own. These groups are a totally natural thing. Anyway, it would be great if we could have a chance to get to know them and be invited to their home, where they all wear veils, and to taste the delicious food. We have a chance, because we live in a country where there are many people from different countries.
Beneath the fascination about getting to know veiled women through being invited to their homes and trying their food, there is an expression of loneliness and a desire for closer and more convivial relationship with other parents. This narrative reflects the argument of several other research participants in Barcelona who highlighted the difficulty of mixing despite living in a multicultural city. These obstacles not only echo the criticism of multiculturalism celebrating difference in favour of a sense of community, but they also illustrate challenges with regard to the Catalan discourses of interculturality and *convivencia* premised on the principle of interaction. Although it is claimed that schools in Barcelona involve parents from migrant and ethnic minority backgrounds in daily school life (Council of Europe, 2011), there might be a need for creating more opportunities for parents to break down some barriers and for coming together to reduce loneliness and isolation. Furthermore, Ryan (2015b) suggests that accessing new relations requires not only opportunities for contact but also reciprocity and mutual willingness to make the effort. She claims that not sharing a common language, interests, lifestyles or beliefs may lead to more effort needed to get to know others. Nevertheless, Ryan also argues that the basis of shared interests may change over time through frequent contact with people through shared activities in shared spaces. This may allow the necessary time for connections to transform into something more meaningful.

Emila’s desire to interact with difference is partly fulfilled by creating opportunities for conviviality between her children and their friends from different cultural backgrounds. As several other informants discussed earlier, Emila is passionate about bringing up her children as tolerant and open to cultural differences. This is manifested through her role as a mother encouraging her children to maintain bonds with their friends from different backgrounds. This offers another dimension to the notion of motherly conviviality discussed earlier. What is different about Emila’s case in comparison to Marta’s, for example, is the fact that her narrative did not include the discourse of her children being outnumbered by the Other. Instead, she discussed the actual examples of conviviality encouraged by her and experienced by her children. She allowed home visits and organised birthday parties. One of the examples is her daughter’s birthday celebration discussed during the interview and the focus group. Emila brought some pictures to the focus group illustrating her children interacting with their friends from different
backgrounds and used these images to discuss these examples of conviviality (Figure 6):

We can see children from different countries. This girl is from Pakistan, here there are four sisters from Morocco. Here is a boy from Brazil and this boy is from Pakistan. Listen, there are no barriers for children, these barriers don’t exist. Look. Let’s learn from them. There are completely no differences. They play, they are celebrating birthday. What difference does it make that this girl is from Poland? It is her birthday and the rest is having fun. There are no differences. A bunch of kids playing together. There are no class or national differences (...) they have a language in common – Spanish, although the girls from Morocco sang happy birthday in English. We made piñata and filled it with sweets and the kids played all together (...) Together with my husband we sang happy birthday in Polish.

This narrative constructs the children’s interaction during the birthday celebration as blurring ethno-national boundaries. Even though Emila tried to make difference invisible, she gave examples of different cultural elements included in the birthday celebration. This account also stresses the importance of convivial practices in convivial spaces of the neighbourhood. The open space seen on Emila’s image and the spatial layout of the neighbourhood facilitate outdoor gathering and birthday celebrations. This convivial space is inclusive and enabling interaction. This again raises the importance of urban planning in facilitating conviviality. Fincher (2003: 8) argues that “spaces can be
planned to make such encounters more likely, more pleasant and unaccompanied by anxiety”.

5.4 Conclusion

The broader areas of neighbourhoods have been explored in this Chapter as potential sites of convivial encounters between the research participants and the local residents in Manchester and Barcelona. The narratives in both cities have illustrated different and often multi-layered encounters within various sites of the neighbourhoods in both cities. Furthermore, the narratives have demonstrated some of the complexities of social realities marked by local tensions and avoidance of contact, as well as different forms of conviviality based on boundary-crossings. This Chapter has shown a tension between convivial interactions where ethnic difference becomes commonplace, and less convivial encounters in situations where difference is raced, classed and/or gendered. It has also highlighted how conviviality can coexist with stereotypical and prejudiced views. Furthermore, while sometimes encounters begin with racial and xenophobic tensions, there is a potential for conviviality to emerge as a result of habitual contact and interaction over a period of time. This is reflected in Paulina’s example of the Polish cars being scratched in her new neighbourhood in Manchester, which in time has become a space of convivial interaction between neighbours. This demonstrates dynamism and fragility of both racism and conviviality. Paulina’s and Marta’s cases have indicated that ethnic difference may serve as an important aspect of conviviality, depending on the context.

The narratives have also revealed many different factors influencing the experiences of conviviality in the neighbourhood, including stereotyped perceptions about ethno-religious difference, class, gender and life stage differences, the length of stay in a neighbourhood, commonalities and shared experience, urban infrastructure and so on. The narratives have also raised the importance of more and less convivial spaces, the former facilitating interaction and accommodation of difference and the latter reinforcing fear, avoidance and prejudice. The temporary nature of some of the experiences narrated, coming as a result of frequent geographical mobility and changing life circumstances, often results in lack of attachment to the place and mutual engagement with people. On the other hand, habitual contact over an extended period of time is likely to generate familiarity and lead to possibilities of interaction across
difference as well as more meaningful forms of contact. Conviviality is generated at specific times and places and by different individuals; therefore, it cannot be explored outside of the context in which it occurs. Thus, it would be more appropriate to use the term ‘situated convivialities’ when referring to the experiences of my research participants.

Not all encounters in the neighbourhoods lead to conviviality. Paulina’s narrative about living in Salford has shown how conviviality can be limited by tensions and hostility possibly due to structural socio-economic inequalities, competition for and anxieties over jobs and welfare, and the influence of the widespread negative media and political discourse about post-2004 migration specific to the British context. Conviviality in some instances was also limited by essentialising, orientalising and racialising difference, especially in the narratives of Paulina, Krysia, Emila and Marta. Nevertheless, it is important to stress the complexity of some situations, especially in the context of tensions regarding gendered encounters with men of South Asian origin. However, Paulina’s case has illustrated possibilities of simultaneity of both conviviality and conflict. Even though Paulina’s initial experiences in her neighbourhoods of Salford were mainly described in terms of harassment, fear and avoidance of the classed and threatening Others, she experienced convivial interaction with her neighbour at a micro-scale of the flats. Julia’s perceptions of the convivial street dynamics in Barcelona starkly contrast with Paulina’s experiences in Salford. The outdoor lifestyle and shared spaces facilitated conviviality on the streets and squares, even though her participation in this convivial interaction was rather limited to a role of an observer. Julia’s narrative has also highlighted positive and fleeting but distant relations. Nevertheless, her case has shown that conviviality with Catalan people can be facilitated by a Catalan partner who enabled her to become part of a Catalan community group. Her example allows understanding conviviality as the ongoing and unpredictable process without any guarantees, since her group membership is conditional. As Amin (2013: 7) suggests, “a politics of interpersonal contact should be treated without guarantees.”

The interviewees in Manchester engaged in various forms of conviviality in the neighbourhoods. The narratives of Paulina and Krysi have demonstrated the examples of what I have defined as neighbourly conviviality based on fleeting but habitual encounters between neighbours, including greetings and acknowledging each other, casual conversations and neighbourly help. This raises the importance of fleeting
encounters, often dismissed or discussed in research literature as insignificant (Amin, 2002; Gawlewicz, 2015b; Valentine, 2008). Several narratives have shown that fleeting and momentary interaction often forms an important part of everyday convivial culture in the neighbourhoods. Krysia’s narrative has also illustrated that conviviality may generate more meaningful forms of engagement with neighbours where contact goes beyond casual greetings and fleeting encounters. This has transpired in the examples of gift giving and neighbourly support which generate a culture of care and a sense of inclusiveness. These forms of convivial culture develop gradually and over a period of time between the neighbours who become familiar through habits of everyday interaction. Maryla’s narrative, on the other hand, has portrayed conviviality reflected as a form of connection with her neighbourhood facilitating convivial encounters across difference. It was not ethnicity, but rather the intersection between religion, gender, similar values, interests and lifestyle which facilitated convivial relations between Maryla and others. Maryla’s and Celina’s narratives have also raised the importance of religion and places of worship in providing opportunity for interaction beyond an ethnic difference.

The narratives of Judyta and Paulina in Manchester, as well as Marta and Emila in Barcelona, have also demonstrated the possibilities of motherly conviviality. Their cases have shown a connection between motherly activities, family spaces and conviviality. Schools, nurseries and support groups for mothers become important spaces of encounter between mothers from different backgrounds. While for some convivial relations crossed ethnic and racial boundaries, others found it difficult to overcome these boundaries. Common experiences of migration brought Judyta closer with other migrant women. In Paulina’s case, motherly conviviality was characterised by certain kinds of activities which reinforced classed and raced positions. Marta’s narrative has demonstrated both openness to difference and boundary maintenance. This openness has been limited by the discourse of being outnumbered by the classed and raced Other. Emila’s case has also illustrated certain ambivalence between stereotypical perceptions of veiled Muslim women and a desire for convivial relations with other mothers. Her narrative also has also raised the importance of mothers facilitating interaction between their children and their friends of different origins.

The next Chapter continues investigating the examples of conviviality by exploring the narratives about diverse workplace encounters in Manchester and Barcelona which have
been largely under-researched. It explores various forms of conviviality at work, including the lighter-touch and playful forms of convivial interaction characterised by the interplay of language and humour; and more meaningful forms of conviviality by concentrating on the workplace friendships. These forms of conviviality are contrasted with the example of conviviality characterised by forced encounters. It also continues exploring how conviviality may be limited, for instance, by discourses about Polish migrants in Britain and ethno-stratification of the labour market in Spain.
6.1 Introduction

First, the typical workplace is a variable hotbed of sociability and cooperation, of constructive and mostly friendly interactions among co-workers day after day, and often year after year. Second, of all the places where adults interact with others, the workplace is likely to be the most demographically diverse (...) the workplace is where working adults are most likely to associate regularly with someone of another race. (Estlund, 2003: 3)

Despite these key observations about contact with difference at work, the research in recent years has mainly focused on exploring various settings as sites of encounter with difference and the workplace as a contact zone remains under-researched. As Fong and Isajiw (2000: 252) note, “the workplace is the most natural place for people to meet, make friends, and develop social networks”. Workplaces have become increasingly diverse as a result of migration and other socio-economic changes in Europe but also due to legal obligations of organisations with regard to equality legislation (Harris and Valentine, forthcoming), although there are still areas with high levels of ethnic and gender segregation (Catney and Sabater, 2015; EHRC, 2011). Furthermore, employers are under pressure to find employees who are not only technically proficient, but who have the ability to work effectively with individuals from cultural backgrounds different from their own. British Council (2015) sets out the value of intercultural skills in the workplace raising the importance of developing these skills and sensitivity to differences. These skills include the ability to understand different cultural contexts and viewpoints, and demonstrating respect for others.

Many Polish migrants are in workplaces where multiculture is an everyday lived experience. Much attention in Britain has been paid to the lower end of the labour force and it has been argued that mixing of Polish migrants and other A8 nationals with co-workers of different ethnic or national backgrounds is “the exception rather than the norm” (Cook et al, 2011a: 11). Furthermore, studies of the workplace encounters between A8 migrants and established communities tend to focus on negative experiences of these migrants (Fox, 2013; McDowell et al, 2007; Parutis, 2011), while
the examples of positive mixing at work are described as “largely superficial encounters” which hardly facilitate genuine integration or challenge prejudice (Cook et al, 2011b: 732). This has led to conclusions that some workplaces are rarely sites for meaningful interactions. In Spain, social relations between Polish migrants and the local population at work are under-researched. The study conducted by Colectivo Ioé (1998), focusing on construction workers of Polish and Moroccan origin in Madrid and Barcelona, highlighted limited contact between these migrants and the native workers as a result of preference for their own national group, language barriers, stereotypes and suspicion based on assumed cultural differences and discrimination. More recent literature stresses that, while interaction between Polish migrants and the native population is often described in terms of cultural proximity, encounters with other migrant groups are referred to in terms of distance and prejudiced views influenced by negative rhetoric about non-white and non-European migrant groups in Spain (Nalewajko, 2010).

The narrative interviews conducted with my research participants in Manchester and Barcelona reveal much more complex realities of contact with difference at work demonstrating various forms of conviviality which can take place in both voluntary and involuntary contact situations (Neal et al, 2013). This Chapter demonstrates how the interplay of language and humour facilitates conviviality characterised by playful interaction between co-workers. It also explores more meaningful forms of conviviality by concentrating on workplace friendships, largely overlooked in research, which provide migrants with support and a sense of inclusion and belonging transcending the space of the workplace, contrary to the research findings revealing that relationships formed at work hardly translate into spaces beyond the workplace (Harris and Valentine, forthcoming). These meaningful relations are contrasted with the example of conviviality characterised by forced encounters used as a survival strategy. This chapter also illustrates how experiences of conviviality may be limited by negative discourse about Polish migrants, exploitation, prejudiced views and ethno-stratification of the labour market.

This Chapter draws attention to the importance of exploring conviviality at the workplace as a possible frame for interaction across difference with an emphasis on lived experience. It investigates examples of conviviality by focusing on the narratives of selected research participants in Manchester and Barcelona. I have carefully chosen
the research participants’ stories which demonstrate a range of encounters at work. The experiences of each research participant are shaped by different employment sectors, social positions and personal histories. I continue exploring conviviality as spatial, temporal and a highly contextualised process which needs to be studied with consideration of geographical, socio-economic and personal circumstances. This Chapter enriches my previous findings by providing detailed accounts of engaging with difference in the workplace.

6.2 Conviviality at work in Manchester

Encounters with difference at work should be studied with regard to the context of Polish migration in Britain. Previous research documents that the majority of A8 migrants work in poor quality, low skilled and manual jobs in Britain (Cook et al, 2011a; Anderson et al, 2006), also referred to as 3D jobs (dirty, dangerous and dull) (Favell, 2008: 704). Nevertheless, there is also evidence of upward mobility among Polish migrants and a growing number of highly skilled professionals settling in Britain. Since many Polish migrants have been considered as overqualified for the jobs they undertake in the UK, according to previous research, some of these migrants believe themselves to be ‘worse off’ than other ethnic minorities (Cook et al, 2011a). It is argued that such views arise because “many A8 migrants see themselves as whites in a largely white country and expect to not suffer discrimination or even be in a privileged position in the job market” (McDowell, 2009: 30). In this part of the Chapter, I aim to explore diverse and complex encounters experienced by my research participants at the workplaces in Manchester, involving not only tensions and conflicts but also more meaningful forms of contact often overlooked in research.

As discussed in the Chapter 1, Polish migrants have been represented in some media and by some politicians as an economic threat and, therefore, they have been blamed for job shortages, unemployment and strain on social services. Lucyna’s case illustrates how this anti-immigrant rhetoric, fuelled by some media and politicians, contributes to a general climate of resentment at work. Bogusia’s case draws particular attention to the situatedness and dynamics of conviviality. On the one hand, her story demonstrates a form of light-hearted and playful conviviality beyond language barriers. On the other, she experienced a form of ‘forced conviviality’ in situations of interaction with her supervisor as a form of strategy in order to get by and survive in a new environment.
Krysia’s case offers a narrative of encounters in cleaning and domestic work marked by care, affection and empathy crossing ethno-religious boundaries. Krysia’s narrative also highlights the importance of language and humour playing an important part in coping with the language barrier, facilitating interactions and group bonding.

6.2.1 Lucyna: the impact of the media and political discourse on relations at work

Lucyna is a 34-year-old interpreting coordinator and part-time PhD student who came to Manchester with her husband in 2008. Like many Polish migrants, Lucyna started from the low-skilled and low-paid jobs in the catering sector, despite her high level of education and work experience. She worked as a kitchen and canteen hand and later in a sandwich shop. Her next job at a nursery finally matched her work experience gained in Poland. Lucyna also worked as a Polish-English interpreter for the National Health Service (NHS). Her narrative about experiences at work mainly focused on how the negative discourse of Polish migrants in Britain impacted on her encounters at work and in everyday life. Lucyna started by explaining that she felt reluctant to speak Polish and admit that she comes from Poland as a result of widespread negative discourses about Polish migrants in the public, political and media debates in Britain:

It sounds sad but if you don’t speak, then everything is alright, because people are not entirely sure if you are Polish, or maybe English, because I am white. But it is obvious that as soon as I start speaking, you can tell that I have an accent and people straight away know and always ask this question: ‘Where are you from?’ And it doesn’t mean that I am embarrassed of being Polish, but I admit that if I don’t have to, I don’t start this topic. More importantly, I avoid it, because it always brings bad experiences, almost always. I have never had a positive reaction. I hear, ‘Oh yes, there are many Poles here’ (...) This implies that Poles come over here, take jobs away from English people, live on benefits, drink, or steal, or something else. It would be best if they all packed up and left.

Lucyna’s narrative reflected an “experienced otherness” (Simonsen, 2008: 153). The construction of Polish migrants’ otherness as recognised in foreign accent contributes to the homogenising rhetoric about Polish migration. Polish names, different letters (ą, ę, ł, ń, ó, ś, ż, ń) and pronunciation constitute visible and audible markers of difference (Nowicka, 2012). Lucyna believes that these negative perceptions are adopted across social classes and she has been subjected to prejudiced comments expressed by medical staff when she worked as an interpreter:
I personally heard these types of comments from people from all the classes and from different groups. For example, I had to deal with doctors when I worked for some time as an interpreter and they asked ‘How much do you earn?’ ‘Those Poles come over here and they don’t learn English’, ‘I don’t need you here, why did you come here? How much is the hospital spending on you?’ Especially when the economic crisis started, these situations became so notorious that I decided to quit that job (…) I don’t take anyone’s job. If they wanted it, they could have had it.

The doctors’ hostility faced by Lucyna echoes the discourse on the costs of providing language translation/interpreting services to Polish patients. This rhetoric not only reinforces a stereotypical view of Poles not wanting to learn English but also raises important questions about conviviality constrained by these negative attitudes. The resentment of the doctors described by Lucyna can also be compared to the attitudes of the majority of interviewees in the study about attitudes towards difference in Leeds, who were “hostile to the idea that minorities should receive what is perceived ‘special’ or privileged treatment” (Valentine and Harris, 2014: 4). Furthermore, these attitudes are voiced despite the workplace being regulated by diversity and equality regulations under the Equality Act 2010 (replacing previous legislation, the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995), which aims to ensure that the workplace environment complies with the law. The literature concerning equality and diversity policy and practice in the UK organisations has identified the gap which very often exists between equality policy and practice (Young, 1992; Dickens, 2005; Colgan et al, 2007). As Valentine and Harris (2014) suggest, this is an important challenge to workplace diversity which requires more effective equality and diversity training to sufficiently challenge discrimination.

Lucyna’s narrative illustrates how the negative discourse about Polish migration affects relations in a wider multicultural spectrum in the context of the workplace and leads to inter-ethnic tensions between some established groups and Polish migrants marked by dynamics of competition and conflict over jobs and resources. Lucyna told me she mostly experienced discrimination and prejudice by established ethnic minorities. She assumed that they were migrants before, although it is possible that they could have been the children of migrants. She gave an example of how the negative rhetoric about recent Polish migrants affected her relations with female workers of South Asian origin.

31 The article in The Telegraph: ‘NHS spends £11 million on interpreters’ (Ward, 2012) highlights that the highest cost for face to face interpreter covers services for Polish speaking patients.
who “questioned whether Polish people should be here”. “Before they were exploited (…) and now they were trying to show me that they have been here longer than Poles and this allows them to be treated better and now ‘you have to go through what I have been through, and you will see how it is’”. Lucyna believed that “these strained relations between the British and the Poles and other migrants result from the media manipulation of the image of the Poles (…) and this badly influences relations between people.” The rhetoric about Polish migrants as invaders stealing jobs harms their relations with the local population that is likely to adopt repeated opinions and stereotypes over a period of time (van Dijk, 1991). Although this negative discourse is not strictly to do with the workplace, as discussed in Chapter 5, this narrative highlights that it may lead to tensions between settled ethnic minorities and Polish migrants at work.

The absence of meaningful interaction in Lucyna’s narrative confirms the findings from earlier research indicating that experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination may discourage minority groups from actively interacting with others (Fong and Isajiw, 2000). The presence of assumed competition between the established population and the new arrivals undermines conviviality in Lucyna’s example. According to Solé and Parella (2003:134), prejudiced attitudes “reflect the image and the perception of foreign immigration not only as a socio-cultural threat (…) but also as an economic threat: real competition in the job market in a society that has a welfare state, which must, it is assumed, give priority to ‘those from here’ over ‘those from abroad’”. This reinforces the rhetoric of the ‘deserving’ established population and ‘undeserving’ recent arrivals.

6.2.2 Bogusia: in-between light-hearted and forced convivialities

Bogusia is 37 and she comes from a city in the north of Poland where she completed vocational education. She has two children and is married to a Polish man. She arrived in Manchester in 2009 with her daughter while her husband had already lived there for one and a half years and worked as a chef in a hotel. Bogusia became employed in the same hotel as a housekeeper. Upon her arrival in Manchester, she did not speak English and this prevented her from establishing contact with people in everyday situations. Thus, the workplace became her most significant place of interaction with people from different backgrounds.
Bogusia’s narrative about encounters at work begins with a description of positive relations with mainly white English co-workers. She told me with pride how much they liked Polish cake prepared by her and her husband for parties and gatherings at work:

English people at work are fascinated with a Polish cake, *karpatka*. Whenever there is a party planned they ask if there will be Polish cake, they love it! Last time we brought one to a farewell party when a colleague was leaving and the first question was, ‘Will you bring Polish cake?’ ‘Yes, we will’. They don’t have to ask us anymore. We know we have to make it.

In this example of conviviality, the Polish cake becomes a symbolic material element in the context of gatherings and parties at work. Furthermore, while for Bogusia, preparing the cake for the work colleagues might signify the making of home and ‘rooting her life’ in Manchester (Rabikowska and Burrell, 2009); for her work colleagues, this part of ‘Polishness’ is accepted, liked and consumed. This narrative also highlights the importance of social events at work during which “work responsibilities can blur into sociality” (Harris and Valentine, forthcoming: 5). This convivial sociality facilitates familiarity and enables co-workers to interact, get to know each other better and bond through interaction during work events.

Another important element of conviviality experienced by Bogusia is the use of Polish words and phrases by some of her work colleagues, demonstrating openness, negotiation and accommodation of difference:

They learn silly Polish words so to speak, not only swearwords but useful Polish phrases too. For example, when I arrive at work I don’t hear ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ in English but they say it in Polish (…) My husband teaches them, but it is nice that they want to learn and try to communicate with us. They know I find it hard to get to know new people, not mentioning those from other countries who speak different languages. But the more time I spend with them, the more I feel at ease. I would like to have these kinds of relations with my neighbours, but there is no way because I think that they don’t really want it, because they think ‘They are Poles’. I can feel the difference in the way they treat us.

Bogusia makes a clear distinction between encounters at work and in the neighbourhood, where conviviality might be limited by the negative discourse about Polish migrants. On the contrary, positive relations at work characterised by incorporating Polish phrases by some work colleagues constituted an integral part of everyday convivial culture making her feel welcome and included. This narrative demonstrates a noticeable change in communication between Bogusia and her co-
workers as a result of language accommodating practices acknowledging the minority language. Similarly, Milena (34) who worked in Manchester as mechanical engineer before having children, recalled convivial banter at work and her co-workers’ efforts to teach her colloquial English phrases: “Our desks were joined together and my workmates taught me different phrases and words. They swore at each other in a humorous way. They would use one new word a day so that I could remember it well”. These examples show routine ways in which cultural and linguistic diversity is negotiated in everyday work settings facilitating amicable forms of conviviality (Neal et al, 2013). Bogusia’s and Milena’s examples confirm that incorporating phrases from a different language in everyday speech “legitimates differences between people and their languages as part of everyday conviviality” (Heil, 2014: 8). Thus, cultural differences may become important resources for conviviality at the workplace facilitating positive relationships across difference in contrast to often fleeting encounters in the neighbourhood. In the above examples, language difference is seen by the interviewees’ co-workers in a very different way than in Lucyna’s case. While Lucyna’s experience as an interpreter indicates that foreign language is considered as a burden for the medical staff she interacted with, the other two cases demonstrate that the minority language may serve as a bridge between people.

In Bogusia’s and Milena’s cases, the interplay between language and humour constituted an integral component of everyday interaction among workmates and helped them feel included. Previous research highlights the importance of humour at work. One of the primary factors which emerged from Graham’s et al (1992) study of functions of humour in conversation was positive affect. Graham’s (1995) later analysis of the impact of humour on relationship development revealed that a high sense of humour facilitated a reduction of social distance between people taking part in the interaction. In their research on communication in New Zealand’s workplaces, Marra and Holmes’s (2007: 153) recognised humour as “a remarkably flexible discursive strategy for achieving a range of communicative objectives”, particularly relevant in the workplace context. The authors argue that humour may serve as a form of relational practice by creating team, building in-group solidarity, collegiality and good relations between workers (see also Holmes and Marra, 2002; Holmes, 2006). They describe it as “the glue that holds groups together and helps people feel included” (Marra and Holmes, 2007: 154). Furthermore, they suggest that humour plays a function of providing relief
from repetitive work and making relationships more enjoyable. They also mention that swearing, humorous abuse and jokes contributed to creating unique team culture and positive relationships within the team. In their study on migrant workers in the hotel industry in London, McDowell et al (2007) found that humour was used as a strategy to deflect harassment. Based on her study of Polish masculinities on London’s building sites, Datta (2009b) highlighted sexual humour shared by Polish men, different to that of their English colleagues and specific to their socio-political histories. In contrast, in Bogusia’s and Milena’s cases, humour and language differences became integral components of contact at work, facilitating more amusing but, most of all, inclusive and bonding interaction with workmates beyond language and cultural barriers. The interplay between humour and language serves as “the lighter-touch, ‘cooler’ qualities of conviviality that enables exchanges to happen through and across difference” (Neal et al, 2013: 316).

Bogusia stressed that despite working as a housekeeper, she interacted more with the kitchen staff because they created a space with a “family-like atmosphere” where she felt accepted. The family-like bonds point to an example of convivial culture in a more meaningful form of sustained and deeper social relations: “They are not just friends, it is one big family. I feel I am in-between because I can talk to them in my language, they speak in their language and we understand each other. They create a separate group and I am in-between”. She added that other workers “don’t know which category to pin me in because I don’t stick with Czech girls, but I am not English (...) so they don’t know which group I belong to and I am in-between, one of a kind”. While Bogusia’s interaction within the ‘family-like’ group constitutes the example of convivial culture beyond ethnic and linguistic barriers, her encounters with other staff are limited. The ‘in-betweeness’ may be arising from the idea of not feeling quite Eastern European but, on the other hand, being perceived as the Other, ‘not-quite-European’ (van Riemsdijk, 2010) with a lower status position of a room attendant. The sense of being ‘in-between’ may reflect a sense of belonging split between different groups and between Poland/Central and Eastern Europe and Britain reflected in several other cases.

Apart from discussing relations with peer co-workers, a substantial part of the interview involved a narrative about Bogusia’s relationship with a black male supervisor which sharply contrasts her experiences discussed above:
There is one Murzyn at work (...) I work with him and I have a feeling, not as a result of his or my racism, but I am his slave. This time I am black and he is white (...) he makes me work hard (...) I partly allow him because he is above me. In Poland, you had to tolerate the hierarchy at work. Here, you don’t have to tolerate it. You can make a complaint but I didn’t want to do it because I would feel bad. I am not a grass (...) Recently, I haven’t seen him the whole week, he wasn’t checking my work. I saw him by the end of the day when I had a break. He came to the canteen and told us that we shouldn’t sit there half an hour before the end of work (...) I wanted to tell him that I had a break and that he shouldn’t tell me when I should take a break and what I should do during my break. I have no problem with my [female] boss. She lets me know when I did something wrong and asks me if I could improve it (...) but from him I only get orders and this is when my racism comes out (...) I am telling you, I have nothing against him but I feel like I am his slave (...) That snotty-nosed brat is not going to keep on at me to do my work. He is so lazy.

Bogusia’s narrative reflects previous research findings revealing that relations between Central and Eastern European interviewees and black supervisors often lead to tensions and demonstrations of power (McDowell et al, 2007; Parutis, 2011). This narrative illustrates how uncomfortable Bogusia was about finding herself in a subordinate position to and being given orders by a black supervisor. Despite denying racism at first, Bogusia reinforced preconceived notions of blackness associated with slavery and laziness. This demonstrates how deeply rooted are notions of blackness and superiority of whiteness in the consciousness of some migrants, as discussed in Chapter 4. It is clear that Bogusia’s preconceived notions of blackness influenced her relationship with the black supervisor. Even though she struggled to see beyond the slave-master and black-white dichotomies, she admitted her racism and awareness of her supervisor’s position. It is possible that conflicting relations have led to sharpening of difference and the racialisation of the Other (Fox, 2013).

Similar attitudes towards non-white people have been noted in previous research and are often attributed to the place of origin, the level of education and the need to reaffirm whiteness to identify with the white majority (Eade et al, 2007; Parutis 2011). Bogusia’s racialised views about her supervisor may have also been influenced by her husband’s perceptions:

My husband tells me that he was not racist until he came here. Not always, but...it is not a typical racism. He only noticed that some different races [laugh], I don’t know how to say this, are different and they are lazy, blaggers. He says that when different races and nationalities come together at work, you can tell who was brought up in which culture.
Thus, racist ideas may not only develop at work, but they can be transmitted to and adopted by family members (see also Gawlewicz, 2015b), in this case not only by Bogusia but possibly also by her daughter, who, as Bogusia admitted, dislikes black children. As Allport (1954) have pointed out, children often adopt the attitudes expressed by their parents. Previous research identified parents affecting intergroup contact of their children (Carol, 2014). It is argued that “when children move into adulthood, parents’ influence becomes an indirect path, through the values they have instilled in their children” (1566).

When exploring Bogusia’s narrative, it is important to consider structural inequalities specific to her workplace. Based on their research on migrant workers in the hotel industry, McDowell et al (2007: 20) argue that “racism mirrors the extreme segregation between jobs and makes solidarity at work harder to achieve”, and they emphasise that the ethnic and gender divisions of labour are reinforced by lack of contact between different groups in the hotel. The researchers note how some migrants tend to be excluded from better-paid jobs and end up in poorly paid service sector with poor conditions, long or irregular hours, low pay and discriminatory practices along with social hierarchies of gender, race and class (2). Bogusia’s narrative confirms a division of labour along gender and ethnic lines. She was expected to fit the stereotype of the hardworking Polish room attendant, even when she was ill. She was not allowed to go home until she had a very high temperature and nearly lost consciousness. The same evening she received a phone call from the supervisor asking if she would come to work the next day with little regard to her well-being. Bogusia has repeatedly refused to report discrimination because she was afraid of being accused of racism.

As a result of her conflictual relations, Bogusia feels reluctant about interaction with her supervisor, and this shows that humour does not always work:

He sometimes tries to say something funny to keep the conversation going, but for me this is forcing a conversation, forcing a smile. I then become very sceptical toward him and I would think: ‘What does he want from me again?’ If there is nobody to talk to, he comes to me but I don’t need to talk to him. I am nice and I say ‘Hello, how are you?’, but I don’t start a conversation and don’t ask how his holiday was. I don’t ask him even out of stupid politeness because I am not interested with this person and I increasingly find it hard to work with him.
This narrative shows an example of forced conviviality which I define as a form of coexistence marked by “involuntariness of interaction” (Estlund, 2003: 4) within the workplace. This means that people have little choice with whom they work and they can be “forced to get along – not without friction” (ibid). As seen in Bogusia’s example, forced conviviality is characterised by superficial and limited involuntary interactions which are strategic. She has developed strategies in a form of everyday performances of forced encounters in order to get by. Datta’s (2009a) research findings indicate that European construction workers’ cosmopolitan attitudes and behaviours partly arise from survival strategies. This strategic engagement with others occurs “through coerced choices in order to survive in new environments” (2). This example of forced conviviality also confirms Valentine’s (2008) argument that polite behaviour towards others does not necessarily mean respect for difference. Despite exchanging civilities at work with her supervisor, Bogusia held prejudiced views and negative feelings. Nevertheless, as Wessenndorf (2014: 394) argues, “civility towards diversity is a strategy to negotiate both positive relations and possible tensions”. Hence, forced conviviality enables Bogusia to deal with her prejudices, although she does not like working with the black supervisor. Similar findings were noted by Parutis (2011: 281) in her study of Polish and Lithuanian migrants in London some of which considered working with people from different backgrounds as a “compromise” in order to reach their goals.

Forced conviviality is specific to particular workplaces where workers are “forced to get along and get things done together not where we choose to do so” (Estlund, 2003:5) and where certain norms of behaviour are expected. These norms are not as clear-cut in the neighbourhoods. Furthermore, in Bogusia’s example, forced conviviality is influenced not only by gendered and raced dynamics of power but also by poor labour conditions and exploitation which is common in the hospitality sector. This form of interaction at work between Bogusia and her supervisor contrasts with the playful and light-hearted forms of conviviality experienced with the kitchen and restaurant staff which facilitate sociality, a sense of belonging and inclusion. In fact, in line with previous research, Bogusia’s peer relations may become closer as co-workers turn to each other for support when confronted with supervisors perceived as unfair (Sias and Cahill, 1998). These multi-layered experiences at work reflect ‘multi-vocality of place’ (Grasseni 2009), discussed in Paulina’s case in Chapter 5.
6.2.3 Krysia: meaningful forms of conviviality in domestic work

Krysia’s narrative of encounter with difference in the neighbourhood was discussed in the previous Chapter. She is the oldest research participant with relatively low level of education and very basic English language skills. Her narrative about encounters at work reveals rich and diverse interactions and examples of conviviality. For Krysia, as with Bogusia, the workplace became one of the main sites of interaction with people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds when she worked as a cleaner in a cinema and subsequently as a self-employed cleaner. Despite the language barrier, Krysia and her workmates at the cinema used humour as a strategy of communication. This fostered a positive and convivial atmosphere:

The supervisors were English women, but there were also two black men, an Argentinian man, people from Spain and few Poles. The atmosphere was nice. I didn’t speak the language. There were two Polish women and they translated for me. It was a kind of cooperation (…) There were always jokes and laughter when we didn’t understand each other. Somebody would say something and another person would do a different thing and we turned it into a joke.

Previous studies suggest that the language barrier constitutes one of the main obstacles of forming social relations with people of other ethnicities and that Polish migrants with poorer language skills, especially ‘slightly older’ and working in low paid jobs mostly depend on strong co-ethnic networks and ‘stick together’ with other Poles (Pietka 2011; Cook et al, 2011b). Positive workplace encounters have been usually attributed to Polish nationals who have good English language abilities and higher levels of education. Nevertheless, Krysia’s case challenges these arguments by demonstrating that humour can be used as a strategy to overcome language and communication barriers, despite low English and education levels, older age and less advantaged employment sector. This example contributes to the earlier discussion on the importance of the interplay between language and humour at work. Humour is used in Krysia’s example to deflect attention from the misunderstandings at work. Her narrative also raises the importance of translation by her Polish co-workers as a vital element of communication with others. This example indicates the use of translation as a key strategy to overcome the language barrier and therefore an important feature facilitating conviviality.
While Bogusia’s narrative demonstrated the possibility of socialising at work, Krysia’s story illustrates an example of mixing with workmates beyond the workplace:

The manager of each group organised activities outside of work hours. There was a social fund for workers so we used to go to different restaurants and we had a nice food or we used to go out for a coffee or a beer and because it was usually in the afternoon, everybody tried to make it and it was fantastic! For a laugh, everybody spoke to each other in their own language, but it was so special and nice, really nice. I would never allow myself to go to a restaurant. I have never done it in Poland and I wouldn’t do it here (…) but this was a chance for me to see this life here, the pubs at weekend, because they love it here, it’s their tradition, and the restaurants from different countries. I would never go on my own. This was a chance for me to see this life from a different side, not only evolving around work and home. This is a very nice memory.

Conviviality transcends the setting of the workplace through after-work activities which facilitated interaction and bonding between co-workers in different environments, allowing the disruption of monotonous everydayness. What is significant about this example is that difference does not have to be dissolved or disappear to facilitate conviviality. In contrast, different languages were used by Krysia and her co-workers in a humorous way demonstrating the emergence of convivial culture across ethnic, linguistic and age differences. As in Bogusia’s case, language difference is used in a positive way to allow self-expression and to engage in playfulness with languages. The pubs and restaurants become spaces of interaction between co-workers. In her study of everyday cosmopolitanisms experienced by East-European construction workers in London, Datta (2009a) explains that while a highly controlled and hierarchical environment at work did not provide the physical conditions for socialising, the pubs after work became the extension of social interactions with English colleagues and supervisors and served to understand the ‘English way of life’.

When Krysia became a self-employed cleaner, she mainly cleaned people’s homes and offices. During the interview at her house, Krysia started the narrative about daily convivial interaction with people she cleaned for by pointing to a framed picture of a family on the living room wall:

Can you see this family? (…) I got this picture for my fiftieth birthday (…) It was very nice of them. It is a Jewish family (…) When I left the hospital, they called me and texted me. I don’t remember how many ‘get well’ cards I received from them. It was very nice. I was in tears when I was receiving the cards, because it was hard to believe that they would treat a cleaner like this.
Yet, you can still be appreciated. I wasn’t well with my injured arm, I couldn’t do anything, but when I heard the ‘get well’ wishes, that the children missed me and asked when I would return, I felt better. I also received greetings from others. They were also Jewish because the family told their friends about me and I got their trust. They used to leave me the keys and it was ok. Jewish people have Shabbat and their own customs as in any other religions and I have always respected it and I still respect it. I try to respect and adjust to their hours, because the Shabbat starts on Friday night and lasts until Saturday night at a particular time.

Domestic work is often associated with exploitation of migrant workers and the feminised and racialised character of its labour force (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2010a, 2010b; Jayaweera and Anderson, 2008). As the demand for domestic workers in the EU increases, migrant women from Central and Eastern Europe and the ‘global South’ are employed to do the housework and they are likely to be subjected to precarious conditions (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2010a). According to Jayaweera and Anderson (2008: 40), domestic workers are particularly vulnerable not only for the reasons of gender and migration status but also because of working in the private household, where employers can exercise and abuse power over workers. This is clear in Paulina’s experience of exploitation when she worked as a domestic worker cleaning homes of several women of South Asian origin, revealing tensions involving established ethnic minorities taking advantage of cheap labour from Poland. It reflects new regimes of inequality with intersections of race, gender and class in private households (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001).

In contrast, Krysia’s narrative shows a strong bond established between her and the private household owners. In her exploration of domestic work as an expression of affective labour in the context of Latin American migration to Europe, Gutiérrez-Rodríguez (2010a) refers to Ortiz’s (2005) concept of transculturation as a form of conviviality developed through a historical, sociological and cultural analysis of the tobacco and sugar industries in Cuba. Gutiérrez-Rodríguez (2010a: 9) considers private households as transcultural contact zones producing ‘transcultural conviviality’ which “defines processes deriving from survival strategies (…) configured by different modes of production through which various groups were forced to live together, but through which also the human ability and creativity to connect and forge common lives was triggered”. Through domestic work, private household becomes a space of contact with individuals from social groups with which Krysia previously did not have any connection. Gutiérrez-Rodríguez (2010a: 10) stresses that although the domestic workers and their employers come from different backgrounds and live in different
neighbourhoods, “in the privacy of the households, these two women meet and share moments of unprecedented intimacy. Moments of worries, anxieties fears and joys are exposed, expressed and exchanged instating the affective encounters between these two women.” Krysia’s narrative confirms Gutiérrez-Rodríguez’s argument considering domestic work as affective labour involving the creation of emotional bonds and relational complexity within private households. Furthermore, Parutis (2011: 274) distinguishes private household facilitating ‘personal interaction’ and ‘friendly relations’ in comparison to other workplaces. She further stresses that during interaction in private households, house owners express interest in the lives of the domestic workers beyond the workplace and this helps migrant women feel that they are perceived as individuals and even friends.

Krysia’s example of conviviality characterised by affection transcends the convivial contact zone of the domestic work through gestures of gift giving, phone calls, text messages and get well cards which demonstrate Krysia’s employers’ sensitivity, compassion and affection in response to her illness. These gestures of conviviality affect Krysia by leaving impact on her body and mind. Her feelings are linked with a body reaction demonstrating her emotions, appreciation and improved well-being. Her narrative illustrates the capacity to be mutually affective and establish meaningful convivial contact with the members of the household contrary to the perception of domestic workers perceived as robots and subjects of exploitation (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2010a). As discussed in Chapter 5, gifts can be considered as gestures of civility, care and recognition (Komter, 2005). They play an important function for migrants who live away from their families and friends, especially in the times of illness. This demonstrates that conviviality at work may lead to more meaningful forms of contact based on social bonds and care. According to Komter’s (2005) theory of giving, the function of the picture from the Jewish family may be the creation of a bond between Krysia and the family, and the maintenance of this bond. The motives of gift giving may involve the desire to express gratitude not only for her work but also for forming ties with the children and respect for religious practices.

Krysia’s respect for different religious customs was also manifested in encounters at work with Muslims:
I also cleaned an office where Pakistani people worked. I think they were Pakistani. I worked in the afternoon and they had their ritual prayers. For example, I walk in, take the litter and suddenly a man with a smile greets me and puts a rug on the floor and kneels, then I know that this is the time for prayer and I have to respect it and I say ‘sorry’ and leave. They would apologise and thank me. They always seemed happy with me and offered sweets and asked if I wanted to have something to drink. At first, I was surprised, but I apologised and said I would return in fifteen minutes (…). We worked very well together. The women were there too and even though I couldn’t understand the language, the atmosphere was nice and they were lovely.

The surprise about different religious practice was followed by familiarity, acceptance and adaptation as a result of regular contact which promoted cooperation and positive atmosphere at work. This example demonstrates how habits of accommodations may be acquired. Through daily encounters, Krysia gained awareness and the ability to accommodate difference.

After discussing encounters with people at work, Krysia reflected back on her perceptions of difference upon her arrival in Manchester and the way she views it now:

When I came here I was closed and shocked, because everybody looked different and used a different language and then suddenly you encounter people of different nationalities and everybody has their own customs and a different way of being, but this has passed and now everything is ok. These differences are less important. We are all human (…) This has taught me to respect everybody and every culture.

This narrative shows how migrants’ attitudes towards other ethnic minorities may shift over time as they become more familiar with difference which becomes commonplace (Wessendorf, 2014a) and part of everyday life. This may happen as a result of ‘unpanicked multiculturalism’ “which reflects the ways difference gets negotiated in everyday lives away from the heat of moral panic and state- and media-driven anxieties about social cohesion” (Noble, 2009: 50). The existence of commonplace diversity and ‘unpanicked multiculturalism’ can be considered as influential factors shaping ‘meaningful conviviality’ understood as a process with a potential to change racialised views over time. By referring to meaningful conviviality in Krysia’s case, I follow Valentine’s (2008: 325) notion of ‘meaningful contact’ which “changes values and translates beyond the specifics of the individual moment into a more general positive respect for – rather than merely tolerance of – others.” As a result of living and working
with people from different cultures, Krysia’s attitude translated into acceptance and respect for different groups and individuals and their practices.

Krysia’s narrative about contact with difference at work has demonstrated two examples of conviviality at work and beyond. The playful and light-hearted forms of conviviality, also discussed in Bogusia’s case, was experienced through interaction with the cinema co-workers, demonstrating that humour can be used as a strategy to overcome language and communication barrier. The more meaningful form of conviviality was shaped by a bond established between Krysia and the household owners. This form of conviviality allowed more intimacy and affection, and it transcended the workplace. I have referred to the concept of ‘transcultural conviviality’ to demonstrate that even though different groups are forced to coexist together, through affective encounters they might develop an ability to connect and share moments beyond ethnic and religious difference. In the next part, I discussed workplace encounter in Barcelona.

6.3 Conviviality at work in Barcelona

As discussed earlier in the thesis, Spain did not open its labour market to the new accession countries until 2006 and the Polish migration since this period has been characterised by the arrival of young and educated migrants from bigger cities. Their employment often matches their qualifications or serves to improve them, sharply contrasting the disadvantaged labour market position and deskilling often experienced by Polish migrants in Britain. They are often referred to as a model of a well-integrated migrant group into Spanish society (Hellermann and Stanek, 2006; Nalewajko, 2012) and good workers. Also, my research results confirm Nalewajko’s (2012) argument that Polish migrants in the Spanish context are hardly associated with anti-immigrant rhetoric, sharply contrasting the negative discourse about Polish migrants in Britain. This, however, does not mean that the rhetoric about immigrants as ‘intruders’ who take native jobs, decrease wages and make working conditions worse does not exist in Spain (Solé and Parella, 2003).

It is also important to stress the significance of the Catalan context. Catalonia represents a new immigration region and it has been experiencing severe consequences of the economic crisis, alongside the rest of Spain. High levels of unemployment rates characterise almost all the Catalan municipalities (Rodon and Franco-Guillén, 2014). However, immigration in Catalonia has not become as politicised as in Britain and in
the rest of Spain, where it has been used as a political tool for mainstream political parties (Escandell and Ceobanu, 2009). According to existing research data, “immigration has decreased in importance and general concerns have been focused on the state of the economy (…) The Catalan political discourse towards immigration adopted a particular approach, which was based on the respect for diversity with the belonging to the Catalan community” (Rodon and Franco-Guillén, 2014: 668). However, while there is emphasis on respect for difference in Catalonia, the issue of socio-economic inequalities experienced by non-European migrants and minorities was raised by some of my interviewees. This reflects the results from the Migration Integration Policy Index revealing that the majority of respondents believed that migrants experience unequal opportunities in the Spanish labour market (Niessen et al, 2007).

This part of the Chapter explores three different narratives of encounters at work in Barcelona. I begin by exploring the case of Eliza who firstly experienced more intimate forms of conviviality in a private household as an au pair and who subsequently worked for an international association and developed friendly relations with co-workers characterised by cosmopolitan openness and support. Eliza’s narrative allows exploring the nature of friendship developed in the workplace, an under-researched area in studies on migrant encounters and conviviality. Then, I concentrate on Irena’s narrative about the importance of working together as equals and the limitations of contact with difference as a result of ethnic stratification of the Spanish/Catalan labour market. Finally, Dorota’s case draws attention to workplace relations with other women in contrast to her experiences when she lived in an oppressive relationship. It also contributes to the understanding of workplace friendships.

6.3.1 Eliza: the narrative of cosmopolitan openness and friendship

Eliza is a 32-year-old office worker who comes from a small town in northern Poland, where she previously had no contact with people from different cultures. She believes that her attitude to difference was shaped by her experiences followed by leaving home when she was 18 years old:

My intercultural experiences started quite early, when I left home to go to university and I think that it shaped me and made me more sensitive to the question of cultural diversity and I have taken it with me because when I used to go back home, I would bring other people with me, for instance, my
Brazilian best friend. I told her: ‘Girl, you are not going to spend Christmas on your own, you are coming with me.’ Many different people visited my family home in Mazury and I really wanted this multicultural aspect to continue and I wanted to cooperate with people from different backgrounds.

This narrative demonstrates that previous experiences and convivial encounters with cultural difference during her studies and subsequent visit to the United States and Spain produced new dispositions and facilitated the emergence of a convivial habitus premised on openness to and respect for cultural difference. These new dispositions were an important condition shaping her experiences at work in Barcelona.

Eliza arrived in Barcelona in 2005 as an au pair, a form of migration to other countries enabling young people to gain new skills and experiences by living with host families and learning a new language. Traditionally thought of as privileged young women on a gap year abroad, au pairs have been overlooked in many discussions about migrant domestic workers (Anderson et al, 2014). Au pairs often live and work in similar conditions as domestic workers: they look after children and carry out some domestic work often referred to as ‘help’ and receive a low pay called ‘pocket money’; in fact au pairs are one of the poorest paid and least protected groups of workers (Cox, 2015). Eliza’s case is an example of the originally intended au pair scheme. She lived with a Catalan family and she felt as ‘part of the family’, one of the main objectives of the au pair programme.\(^{32}\) Similarly to Krysia’s case, this example allows shifting attention to conviviality developed and enacted within private spaces of the home often overlooked in research on encounters with difference:

I have very good memories from that year because I had a fantastic family. I enjoyed living with them. I was practically a member of the family (...) They were a kind of very orthodox family in terms of their Catalan identity. They were nationalists in that respect and they only spoke Catalan. In spite of that, they were incredibly open even though they came from small villages in Catalonia. They were really open and very interested about my culture and they trusted me (...) Right from the beginning we got on well and I had a lot of freedom. After one year, I decided to learn Spanish to get a language certificate and I decided to stay for few more months (...) and they offered me to stay at their home while they left Barcelona.

The host family’s national identity did not constitute a barrier to conviviality, contrary to the narratives constructing Catalan people as closed discussed in Chapter 4.

\(^{32}\) It is important to keep in mind that there are considerable variations between au pairs and between host families about the nature of the relations marked by the ‘part of the family’ rhetoric, especially with regard to privacy, dependence and unspoken power relations (see Spencer et al, 2007).
Convivial culture is developed as a result of everyday interaction and the actual living with difference in a domestic environment offering a higher degree of intimacy which in Eliza’s case has facilitated a certain sense of belonging.

After her au pair experience, Eliza experienced difficulties in finding a job as a result of restrictions imposed on the new EU members in 2004. When the restrictions were lifted in 2006, she realised that she had many more employment possibilities enhanced by English language skills. When Eliza gained more work experience and improved her Spanish, she obtained a full time position at an international association and worked there for 5 years in HR and IT departments. During this long-term position, she established positive relationships with people at work, although she stressed that these relations were not ‘typical’ as they differed from everyday relations with people in Spain:

My position at work was not typical and it does not illustrate the situation in Spain because the organisation was very international, multicultural (...) My Spanish friends were always telling me that I live on a rose-tinted planet, that what happens at my work does not take place at a normal workplace (...) There were people from all over the world speaking different languages. There were Spaniards and Catalans, but there also were people from South America, France, Italy, some from Africa, Ghana, Argentina and the relations between us were very good because there was a strong emphasis on teamwork and positive work climate, and there were hardly any dark situations.

Although little is known about the organisational factors that impact social relations at work (Xerri and Brunetto, 2010), Eliza’s narrative demonstrates that the environment and the type of the workplace become important characteristics shaping relations with workmates. By joining the charitable organisation she worked for, employees are expected to commit to its values and principles and respect their professional code of ethics with respect for cultural and religious beliefs of others. By employing people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and emphasising the importance of teamwork and positive working atmosphere, the supranational organisation concentrating on global concerns facilitates an environment that fosters workplace relationships. Young and educated professional cosmopolitans with diverse backgrounds and with attitudes of openness to difference engage with “cosmopolitanism as a practice which is apparent in things that people do and say to positively engage with ‘the otherness of the other’ and the oneness of the world”
(Nowicka and Rovisco, 2009: 2). Although cosmopolitanism and conviviality are both considered as grounded categories “as something that people do and is ‘in the making’” rather than abstract ideas (2), it is important to distinguish the two. Cosmopolitanism is a competence based on tolerance and openness towards Others while conviviality is explored in this thesis as a process of living together with Others. Therefore, cosmopolitanism at Eliza’s workplace can be considered as an important characteristic facilitating conviviality. Furthermore, there are also other factors influencing convivial culture at Eliza’s work, for instance, her education level. High level of migrants’ education is argued to be not only an important condition for social mobility but also for intergroup contact (Fong and Isajiw, 2000). It is argued that highly educated migrants are more likely to pay less importance to ethnic group membership due to universalistic view of life and therefore stronger preference for contact with Others (Martinovic et al, 2009).

Eliza’s narrative demonstrates the absence of stigmatisation of migrant workers in her workplace, contrary to the experiences of Lucyna and other interviewees in Manchester:

I often used to go to work with a smile on my face and I have never felt that I was an immigrant and that because of that I earned less or that a Spaniard was better treated than me. Sometimes it was quite the opposite. I thought that I received a preferential treatment.

Favoured treatment of Polish migrants by Spanish employers compared to other migrant groups is also reported by Nalewajko (2010) who claims that it is a result of assumed cultural proximity between Polish migrants and Spaniards, which makes them more welcome than other groups. The cultural proximity of Polish migrants is distinguished by their way of life perceived as closer to Spanish society, whiteness, Europeanness and Christianity, as discussed earlier. Nalewajko (2010) and Ramírez Goicoechea (2003) stress the invisibility of Polish migrants and suggest that in the Spanish imaginary they are not considered as a problem in contrast to Moroccans, gitanos (gypsies), or as Eliza noticed South Americans, who paradoxically are culturally closer to Spaniards, although the colonial nature of this cultural similarity should be kept in mind. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 2, Polish migrants are rather considered as extranjeros (foreigners), a more neutral category in Spanish, than inmigrantes (immigrants) with negative connotations of inferiority. Hence, Eliza does not “feel” like an immigrant. Solé and Parella (2003) also highlight the new phenomenon of preference
of EU workers over native ones in Spain, especially in multinational firms. The authors suggest that this tendency is linked with an imagery of the EU workers having a greater professional capacity simply because of coming from abroad. This image is similar to that of Polish migrants in Spain often imagined as polyglots and therefore desired by multinational companies, according to some of my research participants.

Eliza is mindful of her privileged position of being white, European and highly educated. Like some other interviewees in Barcelona, she is aware of discrimination experienced by other ethnic minorities and their absence in public positions contrary to highly super-diverse workforce in Britain:

I realise that there is a lot of discrimination, even in Barcelona, because I have many South American friends, who were discriminated in employment (...) In Great Britain you can see an Indian doctor or a bus driver from Pakistan, but in Barcelona, Pakistani minorities (...) don’t have access to this kind of public positions. The Catalan language is an additional barrier, but their children will be bilingual, because they will be born here and will speak Spanish and English and will be better educated. On the other hand, I have never felt discriminated because of being blond or Slavic. I have never felt negative discrimination, quite the opposite (...) At work they say: ‘You are Polish, you (all) speak many languages over there’ or they straight away think that I speak English and four other languages fluently. This is a kind of positive discrimination, but when it comes to South Americans, they have to try hard to be treated equally and it is sad.

The convictions of Spanish employers about high education and skills of Polish migrants, emphasised by several interviewees, contribute to the myth of the Polish “good worker” in Spain and this puts them in an advantaged position (Ramírez Goicoechea, 2003: 85). Nevertheless, Eliza recognised socio-economic inequalities and expressed genuine concern with social injustice suffered by other groups contrasting her privileged position. These structural factors limit possibilities of conviviality at the workplace. Eliza’s narrative illustrates how certain groups of foreign origin labelled as ‘outsiders’ tend to be pigeonholed in marginal spaces of the labour market. These dynamics result in segmentation of the labour force based on ethnic criteria often intersecting with gender and location regardless of non-EU migrants’ education levels, skills and work experience (Colectivo Ioé, 1998; Solé and Parella, 2003).

One of the most significant aspects identified in Eliza’s narrative about encounters at work are workplace friendships:
Until now, some of my good friendships were made at work and I always was able to count on them. For example, a year ago I moved to another flat in Barcelona (...) it was unfurnished and I only asked at work if anyone had some furniture, and they started bringing everything they had from their homes, of course, after having asked me: ‘Eliza, do you need a blender?’, ‘Eliza, I have some spare chairs and a table’, ‘I have pots I don’t use’, so basically everybody offered some kind of help.

This example raises the importance of friendship as a possible outcome of conviviality at the workplace. Previous research highlights the importance of the workplace friendships. Rawlins (1992) has emphasised that work relations range from ‘friendly relations’ to more complex bonds transcending the work sites. Similarly, Sias and Cahill (1998) have explored the development of workplace friendships influenced by individual and contextual factors. They have distinguished three primary transitions of workplace relations: from coworker/acquaintance-to-friend, friend-to-close friend, and close friend-to-almost best friend (273). The first transition is characterised by working together in close proximity, sharing common ground and socialising beyond the workplace with superficial communication; the second happens when communication becomes broader and more intimate about problems in personal and work experiences; and the third is associated with life events and more intimate communication. These findings demonstrate that contact at work changes over time (see also Martinovic et al, 2009). Workplace friendships are characterised by ‘voluntariness’ since they develop by choice (Sias and Cahill, 1998). While workers mostly have little say in choosing their peer co-workers, they choose which co-workers they befriend (Sias and Gallagher, 2009). Furthermore, Rawlins (1992: 11) highlights that “outside sources cannot impose friendship on two persons”. Therefore, the characteristic of voluntariness distinguishes workplace friendships from forced conviviality marked by obligatory ties discussed in Bogusia’s example.

A major criticism of previous research is, firstly, a tendency to conceptualise friendship networks through ethnicity (Gill and Bialski, 2011), despite the criticised dominance of the ethnic lens within migration research (Glick Schiller et al, 2006), and despite evidence of substantial ethnic diversity within friendship groups (Muttarak, 2014; Ryan, 2015b). Secondly, research has often focused on the friendship choice between majority and minority (Fong and Isajiw, 2000). Thirdly, limited attention has been paid to the possibility of inter-ethnic friendships transcending the spatio-temporal setting of the workplace. Eliza’s narrative raises the importance of inter-ethnic friendships made at
work and transcending the workplace. Even though Eliza’s discussion of friendships made at work does not focus on any particular groups, she made it clear during the interview that her work colleagues were from diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, she made these connections with people who share not only a convivial environment at work but also a similar age, lifestyle and openness to difference.

Eliza’s narrative about turning to her co-workers for support after she moved to an unfurnished flat demonstrates that life events influence workplace friendships. This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that co-workers often become a valuable source of support when individuals deal with important events in their personal lives (Ryan, 2015b; Sias and Cahill, 1998; Sias and Gallagher, 2009). The practical support of Eliza’s friendly co-workers transcends the workplace setting and demonstrates the blurred line between the workplace and personal life. This interpretation is similar to that of Sias and Gallagher’s (2009: 79) who argue that “The common occupational interests and experiences co-workers share make the workplace a somewhat natural ‘incubator’ for personal relationships that extend beyond the professional boundary”. Therefore, workplace friendships are sources of support crucial not only for helping employees to deal with organisational life but also to cope with personal life events.

Eliza’s narrative indicates that some of her workplace friendships continued even though her employment was ended. This contrasts the argument that “one’s current working environment (…) determines one’s current opportunities for social contact”, meaning that after changing work or becoming unemployed one loses contact with former colleagues (Martinovic et al, 2009: 13). Ryan (2015b) stresses the importance of temporal and spatial dynamism which indicate that the relations do not necessarily remain the same over a period of time. She further argues that ongoing mobility can impact on whether or not friendship ties are sustained: “The composition and structure of networks may ebb and flow over time as people drift in and out of one's life” (Ryan, 2015b: 1671). This is particularly the case of migrants, as Ryan suggests, not only because of repeated mobility but because there might not be enough time for friendships to become ‘deeply embedded’ and ‘enduring’. Therefore, friendships require an ongoing effort needed in sustaining it over time.
Eliza’s case has illustrated how conviviality can develop within private spaces of the home and in the headquarters of an international organisation. It has demonstrated how conviviality at work is shaped by personal histories, the nature of the workplace, similar age, education level and lifestyle, as well as cosmopolitan openness to difference. Furthermore, Eliza’s example has highlighted the importance of friendship at the workplace, contrasting forced conviviality characterised by compulsory ties discussed in Bogusia’s example. Eliza’s friendship with co-workers has shown how they may become an important source of support when individuals deal with life events. Eliza’s narrative has contributed to understanding of convivial culture at the workplace through friendships transcending the spatio-temporal character of the workplace setting.

6.3.2 Irena: workplace conviviality as a way of getting to know the Other

Irena is a 28-year-old part-time PhD student and product engineer who grew up in a city in southern Poland. Even though Irena had some contact with people of different ethnicities in her city prior to arrival in Barcelona, she stressed that “it was strange to see a black person because in Poland immigration is not very high”. When she arrived in Barcelona in 2009 after obtaining Master’s degree in Poland, Irena was very surprised with the super-diverse population. She compared her fascination with difference to that of a child visiting a shop with sweets for the first time.

Irena has lived with her Spanish partner in three different neighbourhoods of Barcelona, but her contact with neighbours has been very limited. Irena thought it was because of anonymity in a big city and lack of mixing. For Irena, neighbourhoods in Barcelona are not places of interaction. Instead, her narrative mostly focused on acquaintances made at the workplace considered as the main place of everyday interaction in comparison to other places of encounter:

Most of my acquaintances are from work (…) We sometimes go out for a beer after work (…) I’ve had this job since May, this is not a very long time so I can’t say yet that they are my best friends. Sometimes we go for a dinner, but nothing other than that. When I worked at the university we used to go out together. It was a larger circle of friends (…) You spend eight hours with a person from a different culture you have no idea about. At work you don’t always work, you talk, go for a coffee or do other things. This gives you the opportunity to get to know the other person and if not at work then where? You can sign up at a dance course or a gym, but I go to the gym and I don’t have any acquaintances from there. Sometimes I talk to somebody but I have no idea about them, so if not at work, you don’t have a chance to get to know the person.
This narrative highlights the importance of the spatio-temporal dimension of workplace relations. The length of time of working together becomes a significant factor shaping Irena’s experiences of conviviality at work and beyond the workplace. She stressed the substantial amount of time spent with co-workers from different cultures allowing her to get to know them as individuals through ‘working together’ which involves not only the actual work but also socialising, including talking and having a coffee with workmates. This socialisation takes place at work, during breaks and outside of the workplace. The theme of work-based relations not being confined to work-based activities runs through all the cases discussed in this Chapter (see also Andrew and Montague, 1998).

Habitual contact at work allowed Irena to look beyond ethno-religious differences of Muslims, often stigmatised in Spain (Aixela Cabre, 2007; Dietz and El-Shohoumi, 2002; El-Madkouri, 2006):

If you can see that I work shoulder to shoulder with a Muslim man or woman, and she does exactly what I do, and she is treated exactly the way I am, I start treating her the same way too (…) You see, she wears burka, or however you call it, but she works with me. She is a scientist. She is a normal human being like you and me. I am not saying that before I worked with her she was not normal, but I didn’t know [her] (…) this is a chance to get to know her and her culture.

This narrative is a powerful example of how boundaries along ethno-religious lines become blurred through everyday interaction at work where “people are commonly required to work together as equals on shared tasks in pursuit of common goal” (Harris and Valentine, forthcoming: 5). Through the workplace interaction, Irena found that she shares a common humanity with her co-worker who initially was perceived solely through ethno-religious lens. Furthermore, as it is highlighted in Chapter 2, the equal status, in this example shared between Irena and her colleague, is one of the key conditions under which contact between different groups and individuals should occur in order to foster positive relations (Allport, 1954; Hewstone, 2003). While optimal conditions for contact are argued to be hardly present in everyday life (Matejskova and Leitner, 2011), the example above demonstrates that the workplace may facilitate such conditions. Furthermore, it is the perceived similarity which can have a profound impact on relationship development at work (Sias and Cahill, 1998). As Irena noticed, they both are scientists and they perform similar work. She stressed that even though her co-workers have different values and lifestyles, she learnt to respect these differences.
Irena’s narrative illustrates the possibility of meaningful conviviality at work with a potential to change prejudiced views leading to respect for others. This demonstrates an emergence of workplace relationships encompassing both similarity and difference which might be more or less important, depending on context (Andrew and Montague, 1998).

Like Eliza, Irena stressed the specificity of her workplaces in comparison to lower end, low-paid and low-skilled jobs often occupied by non-European migrants. Irena was aware of the limited possibilities of contact with people from different cultures at the workplace as a result of inequalities in employment based on ethnicity:

Today if you see that people from South America mostly work in bars and serve you a so called sausage (...) and in grocery shops you usually see Pakistani or Chinese people [pause] then they are not seen in the same way. Also, you can’t see them in politics and in public offices. There is a lack of possibility to work with them and to get to know them. The first step is for the employer to treat everyone equally, and then you have a chance to get to know others (...) We spend most of our time at work, so if you have a chance to get to know other people at work and to see that they do the same job as you do, that they don’t just clean, I think that this creates a chance to treat this person equally (...) I think that here is the problem. These people are not treated fairly; they are not given equal chances to get a better job.

Irena’s narrative illustrates her awareness of the socio-economic inequalities faced by other migrant groups at different levels. De Witte and Zapata-Barrero (2008) distinguish three types of discrimination experienced by migrant workers in Spain: institutional - corresponding to the legal framework (the Spanish Foreigners’ Law determining the possibilities for immigrants’ entry into the labour market); structural - as a result of the segmented labour market; and individual - by employers, co-workers and trade unions. While anti-discrimination law is the UK’s greatest area of strength, it is one of Spain’s weakest policy areas (Niessen et al, 2007), as it is limited to the Spanish constitution of 1978 and the Law on the Rights and Duties of Foreigners (LO 4/2000). The effectiveness of this legislation has been criticised. This is reflected in the results from the Migration Integration Policy Index showing that only 30% of the respondents in Spain knew that ethnic discrimination in the labour market is punishable by law (Niessen et al, 2006: 169). The Council of Europe (2011: 5) suggests that a specific recruitment strategy should be implemented in Barcelona “to ensure that the ethnic background of public employees reflects the composition of the city’s population”.

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Irena’s case has demonstrated how important the workplace can be to migrants as a contact zone comparing to other spaces of encounter. It has also shown how working together over time as equals with people ethnically and religiously different allows convivial interaction beyond ethno-religious boundaries without negating these differences. This example illustrates the possibility of the simultaneity of difference and sameness. Workplace conviviality observed in Irena’s narrative allows getting to know the workmates better and reduce biases by gaining the ability to understand individuals with different cultures and viewpoints. Nevertheless, as Irena noticed, this is not often possible due to structural factors, namely unequal opportunities faced by many non-European migrants in access to certain sectors of the stratified Spanish labour market and the preference of certain ethnic groups by some employers. Both Eliza’s and Irena’s narratives have demonstrated their awareness of how these discriminatory practices may lead to a limited contact between different migrant groups and individuals at the workplace and therefore hinder possibilities of conviviality.

6.3.3 Dorota: women’s friendships at work and beyond

Dorota is 36 and she comes from a city in northern Poland, where she completed secondary education. She had previously travelled to Spain in 1998 during summer holidays and attended Spanish language courses in different parts of the country. She married a black Brazilian man in Poland. Ten days after the wedding they moved to Valencia in 2000 where they had lived for two and a half years. Dorota travelled twice to Brazil to spend some time with the husband’s family and she had lived there for one year. She then moved with her husband to Barcelona in 2004 and they had a child. At the time of the interview, Dorota was divorced, lived with her son and was in a relationship with a white Catalan man. Her narrative mainly focuses on her adaptation strategies and fascination with workplace relations with other women, contrasting her experiences when she lived in an oppressive relationship.

Dorota stressed right at the beginning of the interview that she was not a typical migrant looking for a job in Spain. She didn’t have to work as her husband wanted her to learn the language, get to know the culture, cook and look after their home. When she lived in Brazil, she learnt that women were mostly limited to a domestic work and looking after the family while the husband worked and brought money home. Her husband wanted to adopt these traditional gender roles in their marriage. While in several cases discussed
in this thesis home was discussed as a sight of interaction and negotiation of difference, in Dorota’s case the space of home was marked by patriarchal rules. As a Polish woman who had studied and worked since she was 18, Dorota found it hard to apply this model in her life. When she got divorced after several years, she suddenly had to look for a job. In order to get a better job, she completed the highest level of Spanish at a language school and started studying Catalan. She also completed a course for shop assistant and she obtained a job in a department store Corte Inglés where she worked for four years. The workplace became a place of new acquaintances and facilitated socialising mainly with Spanish female co-workers and clients, a very different experience sharply contrasting her daily life practices when she was married:

I again discovered a different culture, because what I was doing when I was married, hosting home visits or having contact with people from church, was very different from my experiences in Corte Inglés (…) It was very different to going to church because those from the church are Christians [Protestants] and they have own rules and lifestyle (…) it was a barrier, not good or bad, but I was separated, not from reality, but the way I lived with people from the church had nothing to do with how Spanish women live their lives. I started going with them to parties (…) I saw how they think and, as they say, *las españolas llevan los pantalones*, that it is the Spanish woman who wears trousers in a relationship, that it is the Spanish woman who decides whether she wants to get married, have children or not, that she will do whatever she wants, and so on. Today the Spanish woman doesn’t want to have anything to do with the past of her mother or grandmother who was kind of imprisoned by the Franco regime (…) In the meantime, when I worked there when I was a divorcée, when my husband could not gag me at home [laugh], I went out to people with freedom, as I am, because he wanted a quiet, a kind of woman who wouldn’t talk or laugh too much (…) but after the divorce my situation changed. I got a job and started interacting with Spanish women. It was a new world for me.

While Julia’s partner facilitated cross-cultural relations, as discussed in Chapter 5, Dorota’s ex-husband in a way inhibited encounters with wider society by making sure that she stayed at home. It was the workplace that enabled rich encounters. She used a metaphor of a fountain to illustrate the multitude of encounters with people at work: “It was a waterfall, it was not a fountain. It was a waterfall where I could meet people from differed cultures.” While places of worship were important to other research participants discussed in the previous Chapter as they enabled conviviality, the church community in Dorota’s case only provided opportunity to meet people with a similar lifestyle and religious values. She also mentioned in the interview that she spent a very
little time in her neighbourhood; therefore, she was not very familiar with her neighbours.

Dorota mainly focused on convivial relations with Spanish female co-workers. She was not only fascinated with the lifestyle of the Spanish women she worked with, but she identified with them. This is reflected in her discussion of liberation from the oppressive husband, and contemporary Spanish women free from the past of the oppressive Franco regime. This identification with Spanish co-workers, despite different lifestyles, underpins the processes of workplace relations formation, a possibility of experimenting with a new lifestyle and a way of distancing herself from the previous experiences of a housewife controlled by others. Convivial workplace relations with Spanish women were also shaped by the nature of her workplace with roles that are still gender-specific (Amuedo-Dorantesa and de la Ricab, 2011). It is possible that workplace friendships served Dorota in replacing previous relations. Rybak and McAndrew (2006) point out that “in many cultures, adult friendships appear to exist at least partially to compensate for the failings of kinship networks”. Nonetheless, several other research participants highlighted the importance of friendship with other women. Ryan (2015b) also points out that in her research on network formations of Irish highly qualified migrants in Britain most of the women had largely female friendship groups. This is not to make claims about the idea of sisterhood as a base for female friendship since it is a challenged concept within feminism as it failed to confront issues of difference and inequalities (Mohanty, 1988). Socialising with female co-workers was for Dorota possibly a way to challenge social control (O’Connor, 1992) over her behaviour manifested by the use of metaphor of her ex-husband “gagging” her at home, reflecting silencing and making sure she stayed at home. This contributes to the argument that women’s friendship might be used to challenge patriarchal practices (Andrew and Montague, 1998).

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33The Franco regime targeted women mainly due to their essential role in the family. The patriarchal family reinforced the unity and the power of the state, as well as the image of women as passive, pure, submissive, inseparable from the family and removed from the workplace (Graham, 1995). Franco’s death in 1975 had major repercussions for Spanish women, for instance, increased life expectancy and falling birth rates, more educational opportunities and the incorporation of women to the labour market. They have been represented as “the motor of contemporary social change” - this representation highlights changing perceptions of women’s social roles, although it also obscures substantial differences in Spanish women’s life experiences (Brooksbank Jones, 1995: 387).
Dorota has worked in the same workplace for several years. This was enough time for connections with her co-workers to transform into deeper and more meaningful relations. However, she made an interesting observation which highlights the distinction between friendships in the ‘public’ and the ‘private’:

There are these kinds of differences. You have a friend and despite having five years of friendship behind us, in reality you have never been in their home because here they don’t invite you home because the social life happens in bars, on the squares, restaurants, *tomar algo*, to have a drink or something to eat, always going out somewhere. When I worked in *Corte Inglés*, the dinner would start in one bar, then another and finished in a fourth or fifth (…) It would take a lot of time until a Catalan would invite you home. Catalans need a bit of distance, but once they get to know you and trust you as a friend, you will have a friend for life.

Socialising in bars and restaurants popular in Spain contrasts with Dorota’s expectations of more intimate relations involving home visits. Her experience is different to some research participants in Manchester who discussed socialising during home visits. It is also possible that Dorota’s co-workers preferred to separate their private lives from work relations. Another explanation could be the possibility that people’s culture is important in influencing how they approach friendship, as I have mentioned in Julia’s case in Chapter 5. Dorota and several other research participants mentioned that it takes a lot of time to make friends with Catalan people. It is possible that, as many Poles, Catalans might prefer fewer friends in favour of deeper and more meaningful friendships, as suggested by some informants.

Even though Dorota was made redundant and had to look for a job elsewhere, she told me she is still friends with some people from work. Her case has demonstrated that conviviality at work can lead to relationships outside of work. Furthermore, as discussed in Eliza’s example, ongoing mobility does not necessarily lead to breakdown of friendships made at work. To explore how these friendships made at work are sustained would require longitudinal research over a longer period of time.

### 6.4 Conclusions

In this Chapter, I have continued investigating the examples of conviviality by exploring narratives about diverse workplace relations, which have been largely under-researched. As illustrated above, migrants spend a large proportion of their time at work and one cannot avoid interacting with others. The narratives have revealed complex
encounters with difference at work demonstrating various forms of conviviality taking place in both voluntary and involuntary contact situations (Neal et al, 2013).

Bogusia’s and Krysia’s cases have shown how humour and language differences may become integral parts of convivial culture at work, facilitating not only playful but also inclusive and bonding interaction. Furthermore, by focusing on narratives of Krysia and Eliza, this Chapter has demonstrated that attention to ethnic and cultural difference becomes less important in the context of work relations and friendships considered in this Chapter as outcomes of ‘meaningful conviviality’ based on deeper social bonds and care, and respect for difference. Nevertheless, the workplace can also be a place of conflict and tensions between different groups and individuals characterised by hostility, prejudice and racism, as illustrated in the Bogusia’s case. When conflicts at work arise, whiteness might be asserted and differences become racialised. However, despite conflict and tensions, migrants may use survival strategies to get by, as manifested in examples of ‘forced conviviality’ characterised by involuntary and superficial interaction. I have pointed out that some workplaces have rules and regulations with regard to diversity and equality, especially transparent in Eliza’s case. Therefore, employees are expected to be convivial.

I have argued that previous experience of encounters with people from diverse backgrounds, the type of the workplace, similar age, education level, lifestyle and equal status may influence relationships with people at work (Allport, 1954; Hewstone, 2003), although these factors do not translate into strict rules, as seen in some cases. Although earlier research identified young age as an important condition in establishing positive relations with people, Krysia’s narrative contradicts this argument. Equal status shared between co-workers and non-competitive working environment seem to aid conviviality at work, while power hierarchies, especially between the established ethnic minorities and new arrivals may result in tensions. The time-varying factor might influence the experiences of conviviality since the longer is the time of employment, the more opportunity there might be to get to know co-workers and establish friendships. The narratives of Eliza, Krysia and Irena stressed the spatio-temporal character of convivial culture with possibilities of establishing more meaningful relations over time and beyond the workplace, which require further research over a longer period of time. Furthermore, Eliza’s and Krysia’s cases shift attention to conviviality developed and enacted within private spaces of the home often overlooked in research, where working
relations may become more intimate, personal and friendly, although previous research shows that employers can exercise and abuse power over domestic workers.

I have evidenced that experiences of conviviality at work are highly contextual. In the British context, the negative discourse fuelled by some politicians and the media about Polish migrants may have enormous implications on everyday convivial experiences at work, as illustrated in Lucyna’s case. Their portrayal as invaders stealing jobs may seriously harm their relations with the local population, including established ethnic minorities, likely to adopt repeated over a period of time opinions and stereotypes. This may lead to a division along ethnic lines and discourage minority groups from actively interacting with others who use a discriminating rhetoric. In the Spanish context, Polish migrants are perceived as culturally close to Spaniards and Catalans mainly due to assumed whiteness, Europeanness and Christianity. Their relations with the native co-workers and employers are influenced by their legal status of EU citizens combined with the Spanish imaginary of Polish migrants as skilled, educated and ‘good workers’. Furthermore, while the deteriorating economic situation has resulted in scapegoating of Polish migrants in Britain, in Catalonia it has not led to politicisation of migration. Nevertheless, ethnic stratification and discrimination in the Spanish labour market observed by Eliza and Irena pose significant limitations to conviviality at work.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

The EU expansion over a decade ago has led to one of the biggest population movements in recent years. The large-scale migration from much less ethnically diverse countries like Poland to multicultural societies enabled complex encounters with the Other. This thesis provides an original contribution to research on migration and conviviality in several ways. By applying a cross-cultural comparative perspective, this thesis has focused on convivial experiences of Polish migrant women in two cities, Manchester and Barcelona in the context of post-2004 migration. Firstly, in my conceptualisation of conviviality, I have drawn not only on recent literature about the concept but also on medieval and contemporary forms of *convivencia* allowing us to think about conviviality as a changing process characterised by complex social dynamics of interaction. Secondly, the thesis has examined under-researched relations not only between these migrants and the majority communities but also with other ethnic minorities, with attention to race, class and gender dynamics. Despite a rapidly growing and fascinating field of academic research from various disciplines with regard to migrations from Poland, little is known about the actual convivial experiences of Polish migrant women in super-diverse cities. In addition, gender has been marginalised in literature on both geographies of encounter and conviviality. This thesis has highlighted the importance of gendered encounters with difference and it has recognised some spaces of the city as gendered. It has discussed the connection between motherly activities, space and conviviality. Several cases have also illustrated how classed and gendered difference is produced, especially in reference to British white working class (with the focus on the working class female bodies) and men of South Asian and Arabic origin. Furthermore, the literature on Polish migration often overlooks unstable racialised positioning of Polish migrants as privileged white Europeans or migrant Others. By drawing on literature on whiteness and race, this thesis has explored these shifting positions in the context of inter-ethnic relations in various spaces in both cities. The empirical examples have shown how whiteness and Otherness are produced through various encounters with white and non-white established population. I have demonstrated how, in some situations, Polish migrants may become victims of racism and xenophobia; in some contexts, privileged white Europeans; and in other situations, enablers of conviviality facilitating connections between people. In addition, while some informants assumed British society to be white, others have developed a more
inclusive understanding of Britishness through experiences of convivial cultures such as those identified here. Thirdly, the importance of the spatial (and temporal) approach in studying conviviality has been highlighted by concentrating on under-researched encounters with difference in various spaces of the neighbourhoods, workplace and highly underexplored more intimate relations at home. By drawing on actual empirical examples, this thesis has offered more nuance and precision to the concept of conviviality and the definition of convivial cultures. The narratives in both cities have offered complex and multi-dimensional accounts of living in close proximity with difference marked not only by different forms of conviviality but also by tensions and avoidance of contact, illustrating a fragile and changing nature of conviviality.

In this Conclusion, I firstly discuss further the main contributions of the thesis to my research field and draw on my key empirical findings by reflecting on different forms of conviviality, the importance of spatio-temporal characteristics and gendered, classed and raced dynamics. I also reflect on the question of difference which has been central to this thesis. The limitations of the approach are also assessed. I finish by considering future directions by referring to my participants’ reflections about the future of living together in Manchester and Barcelona.

7.1 Different forms of conviviality

The concept of conviviality has opened a new understanding of living with difference which emerges from interaction between different groups and individuals in multicultural societies. The growing interest in conviviality across various disciplines in recent years indicates that conviviality emerges in many societies and reflects the importance of studying this mode of living together. Nevertheless, the tendency to focus on problematic relations obscures current debates on conviviality. By the same token, idealising urban encounters disguises hierarchies of power and inequalities. This thesis contributes to the field of studies on conviviality by adding more empirical depth to this concept, by exploring different factors, dynamics, discourses and contexts influencing it. The empirical findings illustrate various forms of conviviality and examples of practices that underpin it, defining thus a set of convivial cultures.

In Chapter 5, the narratives about encounters with difference in the neighbourhoods in both cities have demonstrated the examples of what I have defined as **neighbourly conviviality** based on fleeting but habitual encounters between neighbours, including
greetings and acknowledging each other, casual conversations, and neighbourly help, as well as adaptation strategies by following existing practices. Neighbourly conviviality also involves more sociable forms including socialising with the local residents during barbecues and home visits, and through cooking and eating together in the space of home, where cultural differences are used as a resource in convivial interaction. The narratives of some research participants, especially in Barcelona, illustrate positive fleeting but distant relations with regard to living together in the public but preferring intimacy when it comes to private relations. However, it does not mean that these fleeting encounters are unimportant. In fact, they seem to constitute an essential part of everyday conviviality in both cities and they facilitate a certain level of familiarity with each other. Furthermore, they are also important because they can have a real impact on how people feel about living in an area, and whether they can settle and belong. Most interviewees, especially those with families, seemed satisfied with fleeting but distant relations with their neighbours manifested through everyday recognition, greetings and small talk, and they mostly did not feel the need to closely interact with their neighbours. On the other hand, several narratives in Manchester have illustrated that neighbourly conviviality may generate more meaningful forms of engagement with neighbours in situations where contact goes beyond casual greetings and fleeting encounters, contrasting with the argument in existing literature that conviviality is limited to superficial, fleeting and casual encounters in public spaces unlikely to generate meaningful engagement with difference (Amin, 2002; Heil, 2015; Valentine, 2008).

The narratives about encounters in the neighbourhoods in both cities have revealed examples of motherly conviviality illustrating a significant connection between motherly activities, spaces for mothers and conviviality. Schools, nurseries, breastfeeding clubs and playgroups were discussed as important spaces of encounter and interaction between mothers from a range of backgrounds. This form of conviviality highlights the relationship between the use of some semi-public spaces and gender roles of mothers looking after their children. While the interviewees in Manchester seemed to participate in a wider variety of activities in numerous spaces for mothers and their children where they met other mothers, the main places of encounter with mothers from diverse backgrounds in Barcelona were schools. This raises the importance of places for mothers in shaping convivial culture. Furthermore, exploring the examples of motherly
conviviality has demonstrated the importance of some research participants’ role in facilitating relations with other mothers across difference, as observed in Judyta’s case in Chapter 5. Judyta’s narrative has also shown that more meaningful engagement with other mothers happens with particular individuals with whom they identify, share experience of migration and/or common activities. Whereas for some common experiences of migration brought them closer with other migrant women, for others, motherly conviviality was based on certain kinds of activities reinforcing classed and raced positions. Several narratives have demonstrated the “simultaneity of openness and boundary maintenance” (Glick Schiller et al, 2011: 410), especially in the context of the narratives of the mothers about wanting their children to be exposed to difference, as long as these children were not outnumbered by the classed and raced Other. This again indicates the fragility of conviviality.

In Chapter 6, the narratives about diverse workplace relations have also revealed various forms of conviviality. I have discussed a playful and light-hearted form of conviviality by exploring several narratives which have shown the importance and the role of humour and language in shaping convivial interaction at work. Bogusia’s and Krysia’s narratives have illustrated that humour can be used as a strategy to overcome language and communication barrier. Furthermore, I have argued that humour and language differences may become integral parts of everyday interaction at work facilitating not only sociality but also a sense of inclusion and bonding. While there is a lot of pressure on migrants to learn English, the example of Bogusia’s co-workers learning Polish phrases illustrates a rarely discussed practice of language accommodating practices acknowledging a minority language. This may promote a sense of acceptance and inclusion.

I have also argued that regular interaction at work may lead to more meaningful forms of contact at work with a potential to change racialised views over time. This means that certain views held upon arrival in multicultural environments may not only be shifted but also translated into acceptance and respect for different groups and individuals and their practices. These more meaningful forms of engagement are generated in situations when contact between people goes beyond casual greetings and fleeting encounters between people who become familiar through habits of everyday interaction and often move beyond the workplace. These forms of engagement at work raise the importance of friendships made at work, which are a more meaningful form of interaction based on
deeper social bonds, care and respect for difference. In the discussions on workplace friendships and other meaningful forms of contact, the interviewees hardly paid any attention to ethnic, religious, cultural and other differences which often become commonplace and, as Gilroy (2006a: 40) has argued, do not “add up to discontinuities of experience or insuperable problems of communication”. Several research participants highlighted the importance of friendship with other women. Socialising with female co-workers might possibly be a way to challenge social control (O’Connor, 1992) and patriarchal practices (Andrew and Montague, 1998), as discussed in Dorota’s case in Chapter 4. Gendered workplace relations may also be shaped by the gendered nature of certain employment sectors. The temporal characteristics, equal status, similar age and education level, shared work tasks and interests are among significant factors shaping workplace friendships. Another important characteristic of workplace friendships is ‘voluntariness’ since they develop by choice (Sias and Cahill, 1998). Therefore, the characteristic of voluntariness distinguishes workplace friendships from forced encounters marked by obligatory ties discussed in Bogusia’s example in Chapter 6 with reference to strained relations with the black male supervisor, marked by both power asymmetries and racialised discourse.

This takes me to my next point showing that the neighbourhoods and workplaces can also become places of conflict and tensions between different groups and individuals characterised by hostility, prejudice and racialisation of Others. For instance, the narratives have shown that when conflicts at work with other ethnic groups arise, whiteness is often asserted and differences become racialised. Nevertheless, migrants may use survival strategies in a form of everyday performances of forced encounters to get by at work. I defined this as forced conviviality characterised by involuntary and superficial interaction. This is particularly important in the case of workplaces where workers have little choice with whom they work and where they have to obey the rules and regulations with regard to diversity and equality. Forced conviviality may thrive especially in cases of segregation between jobs along gender and ethnic lines. I have argued that despite exchanging civilities at work, migrants may have prejudiced views and negative feelings towards others. Nevertheless, forced conviviality may help people to deal with their prejudices.

Discriminatory practices in the labour markets and within the workplaces may lead to a limited contact between different groups and individuals and therefore hinder
possibilities of conviviality. Several research participants in Barcelona highlighted that their paths hardly crossed with non-European and non-white migrants and ethnic minorities because they worked in occupations staffed largely by Spaniards and other European migrants. In the British context, the negative perception of Polish migrants partly shaped by a damaging media and political rhetoric may contribute to tensions between co-workers. As Amin (2013: 7) puts it, without strong principles of social justice, “there can be no protection of the fragile achievements of everyday conviviality”.

7.2 Spatio-temporal, race, gender and class dynamics
Conviviality does not happen in a vacuum. In discussing engagement with difference, it is vital to highlight the role of shared space. This thesis contributes to the geographies of encounter literature as it has explored how various spaces may variously facilitate or inhibit conviviality. Firstly, it has emphasised the importance of under-explored spaces of encounter, including the street, educational facilities, spaces for mothers, places of worship, workplaces and the domestic space. Secondly, multi-sitedness has been underlined as a significant spatialised characteristic of conviviality. What is specific about the spatial dimension of conviviality is that interaction may transcend a single contact zone and the extended interaction may take place in other places, for example, after work through socialising in bars, restaurants and other places. Thirdly, the thesis has discussed a spatio-temporal character of conviviality, for example, with possibilities of establishing friendships over time and beyond the workplace. Fourthly, it demonstrates how spatio-temporal characteristics intersect with raced, gendered and classed dynamics and socio-economic factors. These dynamics are likely to be influenced by both the socio-historical context in Poland, partly shaped by colonialist and Orientalist discourses essentialising cultural differences; and by discourses in host societies reflected in the media, political and public debates.

In Chapters 4 and 5, some narratives have demonstrated that street encounters in the context of both cities were often gendered, classed and raced. These encounters, particularly in Manchester, raised the issues of safety and harassment. I have discussed how masculine domination is reproduced in particular spaces (Koskela, 1999) and how it contributes to the disparity in equal access to public space in the neighbourhoods. Paulina’s narrative in Chapter 5 has shown how street encounters might be used by
migrant women to understand difference within a racialised schema and reinforce stereotypical perceptions. The gendered spatial practices of the South Asian men discussed in Paulina’s case were understood as racial practices reinforcing the construction of these men as dangerous and oppressive to women. The tension regarding gendered encounters with these men were also possibly characterised by stereotypical views about Polish women engaging in relations with men of other ethnicities. Paulina’s example has also demonstrated how the council estate can become territorialised by anti-social youths and how it can restrict mobility in the neighbourhood. These encounters are situated in the context of new tensions and new forms of racism experienced by Polish migrants. They also take place at the time of popular anxieties over jobs, housing and welfare, and socio-economic deprivation of the inner city areas where many migrants move into and where they might be racialised and constructed as the unwanted Other. Furthermore, the narratives have shown how spatialised Otherness is constructed, especially with regard to the following groups often defined by their immediate locality: a white British working class and South Asian minorities in Manchester, and black men and South Asians in Barcelona.

In contrast to negative street encounters in both cities, Julia’s narrative of street contact in Barcelona in Chapter 5 has illustrated the lively and convivial atmosphere on the streets and squares characterised by outdoor lifestyle and gathering of people. The image portraying people dancing to the music played by the street artists in Barceloneta discussed by the focus group participants has illustrated the convivial and celebratory character of the city. Even though it is argued that public gatherings constituting part of Catalan convivència do not necessarily lead to extended interaction (Heil, 2014), some street interactions demonstrate the emergence of conviviality based on negotiation of difference, for instance through dance, music and enjoyment by crossing boundaries through touch, which might not be possible in other everyday encounters. These findings raise the importance of moments of sociality and conviviality through fleeting interaction emerging from transitory street encounters.

The narratives about encounters in neighbourhoods have also raised the importance of educational facilities for adults allowing habitual contact and engagement in common activities with people from different backgrounds. I have argued that this may facilitate conviviality and the opportunity to get to know each other and shift stereotypical views,
although this shift might be temporary. Contrary to the street encounters discussed in the context of Manchester, classroom or discussion space may promote social relations in a fairly safe manner. Paulina’s case has revealed that convivial relations with some coursemates may extend to other localities.

Other frequently mentioned localities discussed by the research participants in the context of their local areas were the under-researched family spaces, particularly important for new mothers. As discussed in the previous section, these spaces can facilitate regular contact and become sites of conviviality where migrant mothers interact with other mothers. This interaction can extend to other localities, including shops, school gates and homes, highlighting the multi-sited character of motherly conviviality, which transcends a single contact zone.

In the context of a current global turn to religion and spirituality, local places of worship may bring some people together and may become significant places of conviviality. These under-explored spaces may provide opportunities for interaction beyond ethnic differences and may serve as places of an inter-ethnic and inter-faith dialogue. This has transpired in the narratives of Maryla and Celina discussed in Chapter 5. Nevertheless, Celina’s narrative has shown that places of worship are not necessarily free from tensions. This reflects a ‘multi-vocality of place’ (Grasseni 2009). Furthermore, Dorota’s narrative explored in Chapter 6 has highlighted that while places of worship may facilitate conviviality experienced by people with similar values and lifestyle, they may not offer the opportunity to mix with wider society.

Conviviality developed and enacted within private spaces of the home has been largely overlooked in research on encounters with difference. The empirical examples in this research have highlighted the importance of domestic space as a potential site of conviviality in the context of home visits and shared accommodation, as well as in the context of domestic work. I have argued that preparing and sharing food may not only constitute the making of home (Rabikowska and Burrell, 2009) but may also serve as an important aspect of gathering together with neighbours and flatmates, mingling and developing connections. I have expanded my discussion of conviviality in a domestic space by concentrating on the narrative about domestic work experiences in Chapter 6. I have highlighted the domestic space and domestic work as gendered. I referred to Gutiérrez-Rodríguez’s (2010a) understanding of transculturation as a form of
conviviality by considering private households as transcultural contact zones. Through domestic work, private household becomes a space of contact with individuals from social groups with which migrant women previously did not have any connection. Habitual contact in home spaces between private household owners and Krysia resulted in the emergence of closer and friendly relations and a sense of acceptance across difference. While this occupation is often associated with exploitation of migrant workers, as discussed in Paulina’s case, the narratives of Krysia and Eliza have illustrated the possibilities of conviviality characterised by the creation of emotional bonds, personal interaction, acceptance and care. However, Dorota’s case has shown that home can be a space of patriarchal oppression.

As I have argued in this thesis, and as it has been suggested elsewhere (Ahmed, 2000; Leitner, 2012), past experiences shape present encounters. This was illustrated in the narratives demonstrating how the exposure to people from different cultures before the arrival of some research participants in Manchester and Barcelona shaped their present encounters often characterised by openness and recognition of difference. In contrast, Paulina’s past experience of street encounters with men of South Asian origin reinforced her stereotypical views of the entire collective. On the one hand, the narratives about neighborhood encounters in Manchester have demonstrated that temporality of experience manifested through frequent geographical mobility and changing life circumstances may result in lack of attachment to the place and mutual engagement with people. On the other hand, habitual contact over an extended period of time is likely to generate familiarity and lead to possibilities of convivial interaction across difference. While visible racialised ethnic difference was a subject of surprise and fascination for many arrivals in both cities, as a result of habitual encounters over a period of time this difference often became normalised and commonplace (Wessendorf, 2014a). The research participants also highlighted the importance of time required for relationships to develop. Such changes in conviviality and the ways in which it evolves over time, endures or fades, would doubtless be better measured by a longitudinal research involving repeated observations and interviews over long periods of time.

7.3 The question of difference

The question of difference has been central to this research project. In situations of conflict and tensions, ethnic, religious, classed and raced differences have been often
mentioned by the research participants and perceived as problematic, especially in the context of encounters marked by unequal power relations. These differences were often racialised, orientalised and homogenised. On the other hand, examples of conviviality often illustrate that the differences become integral parts of everyday interaction. This is particularly the case of Bogusia’s workmates learning and using Polish phrases, Paulina’s example of hosting barbecue parties for her neighbours, during which she prepared Polish food and engaged in telling them about Polish culture; and Eliza’s instance of cooking together with flatmates from different parts of the world in shared kitchen. These examples have demonstrated that the above mentioned differences are not necessarily a hindrance to conviviality. In fact, they become an important resource for conviviality permitting the possibility to be different contrary to the assumptions that to be convivial requires sameness or conformity (Amin, 2008).

By focusing on the narratives of Krysia and Irena in Chapter 6, I have argued that attention to ethno-religious difference becomes less important in the context of work relations based on respect for difference, deeper social bonds and care. I have discussed how boundaries along ethno-religious lines become blurred through everyday interaction in the workplace where people work together as equals on shared tasks (Harris and Valentine, forthcoming). The examples from my research give empirical depth to Gilroy’s (2004: 105) contention that racial difference may become ‘unremarkable’ as a result of convivial interaction. However, as mentioned above, the interviews have shown that while in some instances difference becomes commonplace, normalised and unremarkable; in other contexts it might become problematic and racialised, pointing yet again to the fragility of conviviality.

I have argued throughout the thesis that the perceptions of difference are often affected by the media, political and public discourses in the countries of origin and in host societies which often sharpen differences between different groups and inhibit conviviality. As Gilroy (2004: 157) suggested, “we are informed not only that the mutually exclusive cultures of indigenes and incomers cannot be compatible but also mistaken attempts to mix or even dwell peacefully together can bring only destruction. From this perspective, exposure to otherness is always going to be risky”. The findings of this thesis show the importance of countering such perceptions and portrayals by
taking into consideration the socio-economic imbalances affecting different groups, their anxieties and fears, and integral nature of migration

7.4 The future of conviviality in Manchester and Barcelona

Lastly, I offer some reflections of my interviewees with regard to the future of Manchester and Barcelona. When I asked how they see these cities in the next few decades, the research participants mostly thought that both cities would become more multicultural and mixed with a rapidly increasing number of inter-ethnic relationships and mixed-race children. Many also thought that residents would become more used to various forms of difference. They noticed many new homes being built and restored in their neighbourhoods with attractive areas for interaction offering optimistic prospects in both cities. This raises the importance of urban planning in facilitating conviviality and the creation of pedestrian friendly and safe neighbourhoods (Wood et al, 2010) with accessible spaces welcoming people and encouraging convivial interaction (Fincher, 2003). However, material settings might not be sufficient to create spaces for convivial interaction (Nowicka and Vertovec, 2013), especially when encounters are marked by unequal power relations. In both cities there is a need for neighbourhood- and work-oriented activities and initiatives, where cross-cultural interaction may occur on an everyday basis, seeking to break down stereotypes and racism. Encouraging active participation of migrants in social life of the neighbourhoods, for example, during fiestas de barrios (neighbourhood festivities) in Barcelona could help break the stereotype of the close Catalan and divisions between the established local population and migrants in Barcelona. This could be a focus for further research.

In several narratives about the future of the cities, time was seen as a crucial characteristic shaping future social relations. Paulina’s narrative highlights the importance of the temporal aspect influencing her perceptions of difference and relations with others:

I think that I will not pay as much attention [to difference] in the future because I will adjust [bedę już zaklimatyzowana]. I think [Manchester] will still be multicultural, but I think that people will be more closely-knit because now everything has been new to me, because they only opened the border in 2004.
Maryla, who is hoping to get married and possibly settle down in Britain, also stressed that it takes time to get used to living in Manchester, make friends and start a family. These reflections about the future show further possibilities for conviviality to emerge.

While many believed that both cities would be more ethnically mixed, they stressed the importance of preserving their own culture. As a result of her fascination with mixed couples, Maryla pointed out she would like to have a multicultural household without a need to give up own culture. Oliwia expressed her concerns about Polish children who “will lose their culture” as a result of their parents speaking English to them and, what she called, language “shortcuts” influenced by English language manifested through a common practice of combining Polish and English: ‘Ponglish’ (Nowicka, 2012). Nevertheless, she thought that living together in diverse environments and preserving culture might be possible and she referred to the example of the Pakistani community in Manchester. Similarly, Nina from Barcelona stressed the importance of preserving cultural difference and passing it on to the next generations and, at the same time, openness to difference and mixing:

Everybody could learn something from others but not necessarily forgetting about where I come from. As in our example, I don’t want my children to forget they are from Poland, that they have their roots in Poland but at the same time I want them to be open. If they have a partner from a different country it would be nice but it would be also nice if they remembered that part of them is from somewhere else and they could pass this on, although in a mixed version, because there will be two cultures, not necessarily blurred but in a symbiosis.

These accounts raise the importance of negotiating difference which has been at heart of my discussions about conviviality permitting the possibility to be different. They reflect Sennett’s (1977: 255) argument that people “can act together without the compulsion to be the same”. While it is important to be different, several interviewees in Manchester raised the issue of not imposing cultural differences on others and respecting differences with limits, echoing some criticisms of multiculturalism (Rattansi, 2011).

The majority of the research participants in Barcelona expressed their uncertainty about the future of the city as a result of the economic crisis which some thought might result in a fear of anti-immigrant attitudes in the nearest future. A few feared the negative rhetoric observed in the British context. Another major concern with regard to the future of Barcelona was the question of the Catalan independence. As many other research
participants, Ela feared that she would be less accepted if Catalonia became independent:

In twenty years Catalonia might be a separate country (...) I’m afraid that then they would become more closed to people from the outside, the foreigners, and I am the one [laugh], who on top of everything does not speak Catalan, although I plan to learn it, but in any case, I will always feel more confident speaking Spanish, so from my point of view it would be better if Catalonia remained as part of Spain, because this would mean better acceptance of the people from the outside.

These concerns about the future raise the importance of structural socio-economic and political factors influencing social relations. The idea of Catalan identity, often discussed in terms of Catalan independence, was viewed by most interviewees as synonymous with anti-immigration attitudes, although recent research findings show that Catalan identity is related to lower levels of negative attitudes towards immigrants (Rodon and Franco-Guillén, 2014). In terms of Catalan language, as discussed in Chapter 4, migrants are expected to learn it or get excluded if they fail to do so (Pujolar, 2009). This poses questions with reference to multilingualism in Barcelona considered as a significant asset. Many research participants in Barcelona suggested that more encouraging and inclusive ways to learn Catalan would help transcend the communication difficulties. These complex sociolinguistic dynamics require further attention and could be addressed in future research.

Some interviewees in Manchester and Barcelona mentioned the discourse of peaceful coexistence with regard to the future of both cities. Aldona in Manchester hoped that the negative perceptions towards Polish migrants would change in favour of peaceful coexistence which carries a notion of ‘common humanity’ also present in several other narratives in both cities:

I: You mentioned peaceful coexistence [pokojowe współistnienie], what do you mean by that?

A: It means that, for example, when I tell somebody that I am Polish, he would not speak straight away with a very clear language [laugh], but would try to approach me as a human being, right? It is about not imposing stereotypes straight away, right? To try to get to know the person before making comments that he or she is like this or like that.

Weronika in Barcelona sees a peaceful coexistence as an outcome of learning about and getting to know the Other:
I think that peaceful coexistence requires respect towards another person and to look beyond his or her nationality or religion. Once there is respect and patience to get to know and to listen to this otherness then this will be a start and the beginning of a way to learn, because this is like when a dog sees a stranger it starts barking because it is terrified with a new situation and it prefers to warn you ‘listen, this is my territory, stay away’ and I think it is the same with people. When we don’t know somebody we start acting aggressively. But if we start getting to know each other we will realise that this is not so difficult. We will start getting used to the ‘new’.

This account illustrates Weronika’s high awareness of how the learning process may enable individuals to rethink their perceptions of others, disrupt preconceived ideas and racial stereotypes and facilitate more positive ways of living together. The examples of quotidian practices of social interaction I discussed in this thesis demonstrate the possibility of everyday-boundary crossings which have the potential to break through classed, gendered and racialised discourses at an individual level. Furthermore, it is necessary not only for individuals, but for societies as a whole to address classed, raced and gendered discourses to effectively disrupt prejudice and to facilitate new ways of thinking in the context of developing relations across difference facilitating convivial cultures.
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Appendix 1

Research Participants

Interviewees in Manchester

*Celina* is 41 and she comes from a town in northern Poland where she completed secondary education and worked as a waitress in a hotel. She had also lived in the Middle East where she had worked as a child-minder. She had travelled in Asia for several months before arriving in London in 2010 where she worked as a child-minder for a Polish family and then in a restaurant as a waitress. After several months she moved to Manchester. She is single and works as a volunteer at one of the organisations I conducted my participant observation with and at a local school. She lives in Gorton, located to the southeast of Manchester city centre.

*Aldona* is 34 and she comes from northern Poland where she completed her university degree. When she was a student, she worked at a strawberry farm in Kent in 2001. Then, Aldona and her partner had moved to the UK in 2003, just before Poland joined the EU. She had worked in London as a waitress and kitchen support. She then moved to Manchester where she had worked in a bank as an administrator until she had a child. Currently she looks after her two-year-old son, works as a teaching assistant and is as a volunteer at one of the organisations I conducted my participant observation with. She lives with her partner and son in Blackley, North Manchester.

*Lucyna* is 34 and comes from a town in southern Poland. She arrived in Britain with her Polish husband in 2008. She has worked as a kitchen support, waitress, nursery assistant and research assistant. She is a part-time doctoral student and works part time as an office worker. She lives with her husband in Bury, a town in Greater Manchester.

*Inka* is 27 and she comes from a town in southwestern Poland. She studied in Poland and went to London twice, in 2005 and 2007 for several months. She arrived in Manchester in 2008. She is a full time doctoral student and a volunteer at one of the organisations I conducted my participant observation with. She lives with her British husband in Salford, Greater Manchester.

*Judyta* is 33 years old. She was born in northern Poland where she obtained a university degree. Before she arrived in Britain in 2006, she had worked as an au pair in the USA. She had lived and worked in London until she became pregnant. She moved to Salford to live with her partner of Nigerian origin. She lives with her partner and their son (preschool age), in a suburban town in Salford, Greater Manchester. She is a volunteer at one of the organisations I conducted my participant observation with.

*Laura* is 33 and she is from a city in north-western Poland. She comes from a Jehovah witness family. She did not fully complete secondary education. She had worked as a warehouse and as a hostess. She arrived in Britain in 2004 to a town is the South-West
where she had worked as a waitress. She then moved to Manchester where she works as a receptionist in a hospital. She lives with her Polish female partner in Ardwick, south east of Manchester city centre.

Angelika is 33. She did not disclose her education level and where she comes from. She arrived in Manchester in 2006 and has worked as a cleaner and a volunteer at one of the groups I observed. She lives in Ardwick with her female friend.

Milena is 34 and comes from a city in north-eastern Poland where she completed university education. She arrived in Manchester in 2007 where she worked as a mechanical engineer. She lives in Lower Broughton with her husband from Syria whom she met in Poland, and she looks after their two daughters (preschool age).

Dagmara is 31. She was born in a city in Upper Silesia in southern Poland. She obtained teaching qualifications in Poland and arrived in Manchester in 2007. She lives with her Polish partner and their daughter. She works as a part-time teaching assistant and is a volunteer at one of the groups I observed.

Patrycja is 28 from a town in south-western Poland. She obtained a university degree in Poland. She arrived in London in 2000 and worked as an au pair. Her second arrival in the UK was in 2006/2007, in Sheffield. Before she had a child, she worked as a bank staff. She lives with her Polish husband and two years old son in Whitefield, a town in the Metropolitan Borough of Bury, in Greater Manchester. I met Patrycja at the Europia family events.

Paulina is 27 from a town in northern Poland where she completed her secondary education. She arrived in Manchester in 2006. Before she had children she worked as a cleaner and a hospital attendant. She lived in different areas of Manchester and Salford. Currently she lives in Bagley with her Polish husband and two daughters (preschool age). She looks after her daughters and attends courses at a local college. I met Paulina at the Europia family events.

Bogusia is 37 and comes from a city in northern Poland. She has two children and is married to a Polish man. She completed vocational education in Poland. She joined her husband in Britain in 2009. She has been working since then as a housekeeper in a hotel. She lives in Eccles, a town in the City of Salford in Greater Manchester, with her husband and daughter in primary education while her elder son lives in Poland. I met Bogusia at a birthday party of a child of another interviewee.

Maryla is 31, born in a city in southern Poland where she completed university education and worked as an English teacher in private language schools. She also taught English during summer schools in the UK. Before coming to Manchester in 2012, she converted into Islam. She is single and shares a flat in Rusholme, south of the Manchester city centre. She works as a teaching assistant in a primary school.

Jola is in her 20s. She completed university education in Poland and arrived in the UK in 2007. She lives with her Polish husband in Blackley in North Manchester and works
at a warehouse as a manual worker. She is a casual volunteer at one of the groups I observed.

**Nikola** is 31 from a town in eastern Poland where she completed university education. She arrived in Manchester in 2005 and had worked as a bar staff and an assistant manager. She is an office worker and attends a part time college course. She has lived in different parts of Manchester and currently she lives with her British partner in West Didsbury.

**Renia** is 57 from one of the major cities in Poland where she had worked in Human Resources. She arrived in the UK in 2005. She had worked as a warehouse operator. She is currently out of work due to health issues. She lives with her husband in Ashton, Tameside, Greater Manchester.

**Karina** is in her 30s. She completed secondary education in Poland. She had worked as a waitress. She arrived in Manchester in 2011. She lives with her husband from a Middle Eastern country. They met in Poland. They have two children, preschool age. She converted into Islam. I met her though another interviewee.

**Maria** is 31, from a city in central Poland where she completed higher education. She had lived in Holland for six months as an Erasmus student. She first arrived in London in 2004 where she worked for several months in a hotel as a catering staff. Then, she moved to Manchester in 2005 where she worked as a social worker and later as a teacher. She lives in Longsight in southern Manchester with her partner of Pakistani origin. I met her through participant observation.

**Oliwia** is 32 and comes from a Polish major city where she completed university education. She lived in many different parts of the world, including Asia. She arrived in Manchester in 2010 and lives with her Polish husband in Rusholme and she looks after two small children. I met her in the Polish church in Manchester.

**Sandra** is a 35-year-old nurse from central Poland. She arrived in Manchester in 2007 where she married a Nigerian man and they had a child. She is now divorced and lives with her daughter in Harpurhey, an inner-city area north east of the Manchester city centre. I met Sandra in the Polish church in Moss Side.

**Krysia** is 51 and comes from a small town near Krakow. In Poland she had worked as a shop assistant/supervisor, and she also had worked in Germany in a hotel/restaurant. She arrived in Manchester in 2006. She worked mainly as a cleaner. She is currently out of work due to health issues. She lives with a Polish male friend near Cheetham Hill, an inner city area in northern Manchester. I met Krysia in a Polish shop.
Focus group participants in Manchester

Most of the focus group participants were my interviewees, apart from Gabriela, a 42-year-old midwife who arrived in Manchester in 2006, and currently she is not in employment. She lives in Oldham with a Polish husband and two daughters.

Interviewees in Barcelona

Eliza is a 32-year-old office worker who comes from a small town in northern Poland where she finished higher education. She had lived in the United States for few months before she went to Barcelona in 2005 as an au pair. Later she worked as an office worker. She had lived in Gracia and subsequently moved to Sagrada Familia neighbourhood.

Daria is 31, completed secondary education in Poland. She went to Barcelona in 2009, moved to L’Hospitalet de Llobregat, a municipality to the southwest of Barcelona. She had also had a seasonal job in Scotland. She shares a flat with two Catalan men in Sagrada Familia neighbourhood and she does photography.

Julia is 36 and she comes from a small village in south-western Poland where she completed higher education. She was the first person to go to university in her family and to travel abroad. She had worked as an au pair in Germany, a waitress in the United States, and she had lived in Ireland between 2001 and 2010. She moved to Barcelona in 2010. She lived in L’Hospitalet de Llobregat and now she lives with her Catalan partner in Vilafranca, province of Barcelona.

Ela is 24, from a city in northern Poland where she graduated from a university. She arrived in Barcelona first in 2009 as an Erasmus student and the second time in 2011. She has worked as a market analyst and in online marketing. She shares a flat in Eixample district of Barcelona with one Polish and two Catalan female flatmates. Ela was introduced to me by another interviewee.

Klaudia is 32. She completed higher education in Poland. Before she arrived in Barcelona, she had worked in London for two years as a waitress, barmaid and bar manager. She worked excessive hours to save money to travel in Asia for three months. She arrived in Barcelona in 2008. She is a store assistant manager. She shares a flat in Eixample Izquierda with a Spaniard and a Catalan.

Weronika is 29, from in a town in south-eastern Poland. When she was a university student, she had summer jobs in Italy, Scotland and Sweden. She arrived in Spain in 2009. She had lived in Terrassa for two years with her Catalan husband before she moved to Barcelona. She worked in a restaurant and currently she is doing a PhD course and looks after her new-born child. She lives with her husband in Clot, a neighbourhood in the Sant Martí district of Barcelona.

Jagoda is 25, from a city in central Poland where she completed higher education. She firstly arrived in Barcelona as an Erasmus student in 2009. Then she returned to Poland
for one year to finish her studies. She went back to Barcelona for Erasmus internship for 6 months in 2011. After returning to Poland, she went to Ibiza to work as a waitress for three months and now she is a postgraduate student in Barcelona. She shares a flat with one Polish and two Catalan women in Eixample district of Barcelona. I met Jagoda through participant observation.

Nina is 33, brought up in a village in the north-eastern Poland where she completed higher education. After her studies she worked in London as a volunteer. Before she went to Barcelona, she had lived in Ireland. Her husband got a job in Barcelona and they arrived there in 2011. She now lives with her husband and two children (age 2 and 4), in Fòrum, a regenerated neighbourhood on the edge of Barcelona. She is a full-time mother.

Zofia is 28, from a city in southern Poland where she completed university education. She had first arrived in Barcelona in 2006 and returned in 2007 for 4 months. In 2010, she arrived in Barcelona as an Erasmus student. After finishing her studies, she arrived in Barcelona again in 2012 and at the time of the interview she was looking for a job as an event manager. She lives with her Catalan partner in Sabadell, a city 20 km north of Barcelona. I met her through participant observation.

Irena is a 28-year-old part-time PhD student and a product engineer who grew up in a city in southern Poland. She arrived in Barcelona in 2009 and she lives in San Gervasi neighbourhood with her Spanish partner.

Marta is a 34-year-old marketing specialist from a town in south-western Poland. Before she arrived in Barcelona as an Erasmus student in 2000, she had travelled and attended language courses in Spain. After finishing her studies in Poland, Marta returned to Barcelona where she finished postgraduate studies. She lives in the Sants district in the southern part of the city with her Mexican husband and a three-year-old daughter born in Barcelona.

Marlena is 58, from a town in northern Poland, but after marrying a miner she lived most of her life in the southern part of the country and worked as a shop assistant after completing vocational education. She migrated to Madrid in 2004 where she had worked as a cleaner and a waitress. After few years she moved to Barcelona in 2009 where she cleans private homes. She shares a flat with a Bolivian couple.

Amelia is 31, from a town in the south-eastern Poland where she completed university education. She had lived in the UK before she went to Spain. She moved to Barcelona in 2009. She lives in Poble Nou and shares a flat with two women from South America and works as a hostel receptionist. I met Amelia at an event organised by one of the organisations I conducted participant observation with during my initial visit in Barcelona.

Ada is 28, from a city in southern Poland. After completing university education in Poland, she arrived in Barcelona to do an internship. She had lived in France for a year
and returned to Barcelona in 2009 where she has been working as a marketing specialist. She has lived in San Antoni, el Raval and El Born neighbourhoods in Barcelona. She lives with an Italian partner and his Mexican friend.

**Dominika**, 28, is from a town in southern Poland where she completed university education. Before she arrived in Barcelona in 2009, she had studied in Malta as an Erasmus student. She shares accommodation with a French and a German man near Plaza de España and works as a pharmaceutical consultant.

**Emila** is 35 and comes from a small town in eastern Poland where she completed secondary education. She had worked temporarily in Belgium as a domestic help for a year and then she migrated together with her Polish husband to Barcelona before Poland joined the EU. She had worked as a model and a cashier in a supermarket. She has three children (school age) born in Barcelona and is currently unemployed. She had lived in Barceloneta neighbourhood for many years before she moved to Nou Baris, in the northern part of Barcelona.

**Justyna** is in her 30s. She arrived in Barcelona as an au pair. She then returned to Poland to finish her undergraduate studies. After three months, she returned to Barcelona in 2008 and moved in with her partner near San Andreu and Nou Baris. Her partner was born in Barcelona but his parents come from Andalusia. She is an office worker and she has set up a group organising events for Polish people and their friends from different backgrounds. I met Justyna through my participant observation.

**Natalia**, 24, comes from a city in southern Poland where she completed higher education. She first went to Barcelona in 2007 during summer holidays. Since then, she used to go to Spain during summer holidays to work and to visit her partner from India. Since 2012 she has been living with her partner in Lloret de Mar (a coastal town 75 kilometres from Barcelona) and has been working as a volunteer in Barcelona. I met Natalia through my participant observation.

**Dorota** is 36 and she comes from a city in northern Poland where she completed secondary education. She had previously travelled to Spain during summer holidays and attended Spanish language courses in different parts of the country. She married a black Brazilian man in Poland and they moved to Valencia in 2000 where they had lived for two and a half years. She also had lived in Brazil for one year. She moved with her husband to Barcelona in 2004 and they had a child. She is now divorced and lives with her son. She works as a shop assistant. I met Dorota at a Christmas event in Barcelona.

**Hanna** is 30, from a city in northern Poland where she completed university education. She first arrived in Spain in 2005 to do voluntary work. She completed postgraduate studies in Valencia and she had lived there for several years before she moved to Barcelona in 2011. She lives in Sagrada Famila neighbourhood with her Spanish husband from Valencia and she works in Human Resources.
Focus group participants in Barcelona

All six focus group participants had been previously interviewed.
Appendix 2

Participant Information sheet and consent form

School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study as part of a student project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

Alina Rzepnikowska

School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures
The University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9PL

Title of the Research

Convivial cultures in multicultural societies: narratives of Polish migrants in Britain and Spain.

What is the aim of the research?

This research project aims to explore experiences of Polish migrants within multicultural settings in Manchester and Barcelona. The researcher would like to gain a deeper understanding of interaction and shared experiences between Polish migrants and the local population, including migrants of different nationalities, as well as settled ethnic minorities in these cities.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been asked to participate in this study because the researcher would like to know about your involvement in multicultural activities, for example in workshops, events, meetings and projects, as well as in your everyday life. The researcher would like to talk to: Polish migrants over the age of 18, from a
range of backgrounds; group members and representatives; and those who share experiences with Polish migrants.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

- The researcher would like to conduct participant observation with organisations engaging with Polish migrants and local population to observe and take part in their initiatives. The researcher would like to talk to you during these initiatives and she will take notes about her observations.
- The researcher would like you to take part in an interview and tell her about your life experiences you have in Britain and Spain.
- The researcher will also ask Polish migrants and those who participate with them in network activities to take part in a focus group workshop in order to discuss opportunities for and barriers to embracing cultural diversity. The researcher might use photographs to stimulate the discussion. If you and others appearing on the images agree that they can be used for the purpose of this research, the faces will be blurred to maintain anonymity of you and others.
- If you are a representative/chair of an organisation/project, you will be asked to take part in an interview which will inform the researcher about the nature of your work with Polish migrants.

A mutually convenient time and venue to meet to undertake the interview and the focus group workshop will be arranged. The researcher will explain the study and answer any questions you may have. The interviews / focus group workshops will be recorded. You can choose which language, English, Polish or Spanish, you would prefer to use. You will decide how much information you would like to give. You can also decide not to answer certain questions without giving a reason. If you decide to take part in this research, you will be asked to sign a consent form.

What happens to the data collected?

The information that you will provide during this research and the images you will agree to be used will be analysed and used as part of the researcher’s PhD thesis. The results of the study will be presented at seminars or conferences. A copy of a short report will be send to you, if you express a wish to receive it.

How is confidentiality maintained?

All data gathered during the research will be treated as strictly private and confidential in accordance with The Data Protection Act. In order to provide anonymity, any details that may identify you will be removed. Your name will not be used and will be known only to the researcher (you will be given a pseudonym). You will not be identified in any report or publication. The recordings and the transcripts of the interviews, the images and any personal data will be kept in a locked cabinet and on encrypted computer protected with password. If you decide to withdraw from the study, any information that you have provided will be destroyed.
What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without a disadvantage to you.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

The participants’ involvement in the research is voluntary and they will not be paid for participation, as this is a PhD student research project.

What is the duration of the research?

The interviews with Polish migrants will last approximately two hours. The focus group workshops will last about two hours. The interviews with the group representatives and project organisers will last from one to two hours. However, the researcher might ask to speak to you on more than one occasion if you agree upon such arrangement.

Where will the research be conducted?

The participant observation will take place at the headquarters of the organisations and at the events in different parts of Manchester and Barcelona. The interviews will take place at a location chosen by you where you can be assured of privacy and confidentiality.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

The outcome of the research will be presented at seminars, conferences, and will be written up and published as part of the researcher’s PhD thesis. All quoted participants’ views will be ascribed their pseudonyms in a way that a third party will not be able to identify the participant. The findings will be reported accurately and truthfully.

Contact for further information

Further information can be obtained from the researcher Alina Rzepnikowska via email: Alina.Rzepnikowska@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk
Title of Project: Convivial cultures in multicultural societies: narratives of Polish migrants in Britain and Spain.

Name of Researcher (BLOCK LETTERS)

ALINA RZEPNIKOWSKA

School: School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures

Participant (volunteer)

Please read this and if you are happy to proceed, sign below.

The researcher has given me my own copy of the information sheet which I have read and understood. The information sheet explains the nature of the research and what I would be asked to do as a participant. I understand that the research is for a student project and that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded unless subject to any legal requirements. S/he has discussed the contents of the information sheet with me and given me the opportunity to ask questions about it.

I agree to take part as a participant in this research and I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, and without detriment to myself.

Signed: ..............................................................
Date: ........................................
Family Name (BLOCK LETTERS)

Other Name(s) (BLOCK LETTERS)

Researcher
I, the researcher, confirm that I have discussed with the participant the contents of the information sheet.

Signed: ..............................................................
Date: ........................................
School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures

Consent Form for Participants Taking Part in Student Research Projects (Focus groups)

Title of Project: Convivial cultures in multicultural societies: narratives of Polish migrants in Britain and Spain.

Name of Researcher ALINA RZEPNIKOWSKA

School: School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures

Participant (volunteer)

Please read this and if you are happy to proceed, sign below.

You have been asked to participate in a focus group. You can choose whether or not to participate in the focus group and stop at any time. Although the focus group will be recorded, your responses will remain anonymous. There are no right or wrong answers to the focus group questions. The researcher would like to hear many different viewpoints and would like to hear from everyone. In respect for each other, it is ask that only one individual speaks at a time in the group and that responses made by all participants be kept confidential. The researcher will use photographs to stimulate the interview. The photographs will be used only after obtaining your consent. If you agree that images can be used for the purpose of this research, the faces will be blurred to maintain the anonymity of you and others.

The researcher has given me my own copy of the information sheet which I have read and understood. The information sheet explains the nature of the research and what I would be asked to do as a participant. I understand that the research is for a student project and that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded unless subject to any legal requirements. S/he has discussed the contents of the information sheet with me and given me the opportunity to ask questions about it.

I agree to take part as a participant in this research and I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, and without detriment to myself. I also agree that the photographs can be used for the purpose of this research.

Signed: .................................................................................................
Date:  ........................................
Name (BLOCK LETTERS) ........................................................................
Appendix 3 Focus group photographs

Focus group photos in Manchester

Aldona’s photo of the art workshop in The Lowry, Salford Quays.

Celina’s photo of hiking in the Peak District.
Focus group photos in Barcelona

Julia’s photo of her workplace.

Amelia’s photo of Capoeira by the beach.