Citizenship, migration and gender: Polish migrant women in the UK and Poland.

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Abstract:
Accession 8 (A8) migration to the UK has been studied extensively over the last few years. In fact, migration from the new EU member states to the UK has been one of the most significant social phenomena of recent times. However, gender and gender roles, in particular in relation to A8 migration, remain an under-researched area. There is now much evidence to support the view that migrant women constitute a large proportion of international migrants. In fact, when considering migration within the European context, migrant women already outnumber their male counterparts. Evidence suggests that characterising women as passive followers of migrant men is flawed. Drawing on an extensive review of secondary literature in relation to citizenship, gender and the new Accession 8 migration to the UK, in this paper it is argued that migrant women should be seen as active decision makers. The aim of this paper is to explore how migrant women utilise migratory spaces within the European Union (EU) to better their own and their families’ wellbeing. In this paper migration is considered as a catalyst for change in traditional gender roles, and it is explored how Polish migrant women negotiate their gender roles in regard to work and welfare responsibilities when exercising their rights as EU citizens. It is concluded that gender roles may be reconfigured through the migratory process. However, when taking women into account, migration may result in ‘double caring responsibilities’, as the literature suggests.

Keywords: A8 migration, UK, Polish women, gender roles, welfare, public – private dichotomy

WORK IN PROGRESS
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BACKGROUND:

1. Theories of Migration

Morokvasic (2004), argues that the classic theories of migration may have become redundant in light of contemporary international migratory movements. It could be asserted that there is no single consistent theory of international migration but rather a group of theories developed independently from each other (Massey, et al., 1993). The majority of classic migration theories recognise and focus on economic imperatives as the predominant reasons for migratory decisions. It could, however, be that in the ‘age of migration’ (Castles & Miller, 2003) people decide to migrate out of curiosity or simply because they can (Kindler, et al., 2010; Scullion & Pemberton, 2010).

Castles and Miller (2009) have identified a number of different approaches within the economic migration theory paradigm. Neoclassical theory is the dominant one and explains the movement of people from low to high income countries as affected by push (e.g. unemployment in the country of origin) and pull factors (e.g. wages in the destination country). Another economic theory, dual (or segmented) labour market theory, considers that migration is caused by constant structural demand for both high and low-skilled workers. This theory is particularly useful in providing an explanation to migratory movements when international wage differentials decline. For example, for Polish nationals it was more beneficial to migrate and work in the UK in 2004, when one pound sterling was valued at 7PLN, in comparison to 4PLN in 2008 (Index Mundi, 2012). Thus, even though the Polish zloty has strengthened against the pound, the demand for workers remains (Cox, 2008). The new economics of labour migration approach is another economic theory developed in the 1980s. It considers migration decisions not made just by individual social actors but whole families, or even local communities. It stresses the fact that migration cannot be understood solely in economic terms (Castles & Miller, 2009). The historical-institutional approach developed in the 1970s and 1980s explains migration as a way of maximising capital by the rich who aim to accumulate greater wealth by the use of cheap international labour. World systems theory also emerged in the 1970s and 1980s and argued that the world could be divided into ‘peripheral’ and ‘core’ regions and migration is one way of exploiting the peripheries for the core regions’ benefit. In this way, the core capitalist nations control the world economy and maintain the poorer peripheries’ dependency on them (ibid.). It is a relationship dependent on unequal resources distribution between the two regions.

A more interdisciplinary approach is provided by migration systems theory. Here, migration is seen as a result of previously developed and maintained links between sending and receiving countries. This could be the result of past colonisation, political influence or pre-existing trade and/or cultural ties between nations. Advocates of this theory claim that the international movement of people can be
explained by the interconnectedness of macro and microstructures (ibid.). That could be the connections between a nation-state and individual citizens, for example between Zimbabwean nationals and the UK, given the history and the fact that Zimbabwe is a former British colony. A more recent approach – the theory of transnationalism and transnational communities, argues that the rapid development of transport and communication technologies (e.g. the Internet, inexpensive air travel), enables migrants to maintain links between their home and host countries. In these circumstances, temporary and/or circular mobility becomes easy to pursue and may be very beneficial to migrants (Castles & Miller, 2009).

When considering migration theories, it is important to distinguish economically motivated and forced migratory movements (ibid.). The former is the focus of this research project and refers to those who decide to migrate to improve their economic situation. Whereas economic migration relates to voluntary movements of people, forced migration refers to, among others, asylum seekers and refugees who migrate to escape existing conflicts, discrimination, persecution and/or environmental disasters in their country of origin (Castles, 2000).

Whilst it is recognised that simplistic differences between forced and voluntary migration may not be able to explain current migration patterns, the ‘migration-asylum nexus’ provides a valid explanation (Castles & Van Hear, 2005). The ‘migration-asylum nexus’ highlights the current difficulties in separating forced and economic migration. It indicates similarities between the causes of both types of migration and argues that the boundaries between the two have become blurred and difficult to recognise.

2. Gendered Migration

It has been widely accepted that migration is gendered (Caritas, 2011; Kofman, 2004; Pessar & Mahler, 2003). Morokvasic, has argued that although women play a crucial role in contemporary migrations, previously they have been “sociologically invisible, although numerically and socially present” (1983, p. 13) and that the presence of women has been finally acknowledged when they entered waged labour market (ibid.). For many women the change from unpaid work in the home to paid work in the labour market came about through migration (Phizacklea, 1983). Moreover, the assumptions of a male breadwinner family model and traditional gender roles have dominated classic migration theories (Ackers, 1998). As Zlotnik (2003) notes, until the 1970s, most research and publications on international migration focused only on male migrants. Female migrants began to appear in the literature from mid 1970s, whereas previously they were portrayed as “followers, dependants, unproductive persons, isolated, illiterate and ignorant” (Morokvasic, 1983, p. 16). More recent studies consider them to be active decision makers (Kindler, et al., 2010). Morokvasic noted
that paid work in the developed world offered to migrant women from developing countries is one way for them to escape the oppressive patriarchal traditions in their homeland (ibid.). However, these studies fail to recognise whether the dominant economic model of migration – male breadwinning and profit-maximising, evident in academic literature, is founded on empirical evidence or is simply a convenient ideological construct. Hence, additional studies on migrant women and their strategies of negotiating gender roles (i.e. paid versus unpaid work; formal versus informal care) are needed. The importance of a study on migrant women and gender roles cannot be dismissed in times of ageing populations and declining fertility rates. As women have become more active in the paid labour market, they are less likely to be able to undertake informal caring roles in the home (Daly & Rake, 2003). However, the use of migrant workers in the ‘transnational political economy of care’ enables the universal breadwinner model as both men and women are encouraged to seek paid employment (Williams, 2010). It is therefore crucial to recognise that the role of women as workers and carers in contemporary society is undergoing a process of reconstruction.

It can be argued that migrant women who are EU nationals migrating between different EU countries are an “under-researched group in their own right” (Ackers, 1998, p. 1). “It is not the absence of women, however, but their invisibility in the research that is at issue here …” (ibid., p. 139). Recent studies agree that female migration was previously dictated by purely economic reasons; now however, women migrate out of curiosity and interest in other cultures and foreign languages, for instance (Kindler et al., 2010). Furthermore, Anthias & Yuval-Davis (1992) argue that the existing literature considers migrant women to be incorporated in an ill-defined category of women, despite the fact that their migratory experiences are very much affected by their ethnicity and other characteristics. Even though, migration is considered a challenge to the notion of ethnicity, it is key to understanding social trends. It is here agreed that ethnicity is a characteristic, thanks to which one can differentiate between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (ESDS, 2012).

In order to begin to understand women’s experiences as citizens, a consideration of interrelated dependencies and interdependencies is required. Even though migrant men and women’s experiences have some common characteristics, they differ substantially. According to some previous studies, migrant women, in contrast to men, are often overrepresented in the low-paid and low-skilled occupations (Castles & Miller, 2003; Pateman, 1989). However, more recent studies on A8 migration question this view (Kindler, et al., 2010; Scullion, Morris & Steele, 2009; Scullion & Morris, 2009). Moreover, Polish migrant women seem to have higher education level than their male counterparts (Steele, Scullion & Morris, 2009; CBOS, 2006). Castles and Miller (2009) suggest that we can now observe a ‘feminisation of migration’. The UN (UN-INSTRAW, 2007) rejects this view as misleading, as it suggests a large overall increase in the number of female migrants. Zlotnik (2003) however, notes the increase is nonetheless substantial: in 1960s women constituted 47 per cent of all
international migrants, by 1990 that number increased to 48 per cent and in 2000 to almost 49 per cent. Moreover, when taking Europe into account, in 1990 female migrants constituted almost 52 per cent of all migrants and by 2000 reached 52.4 per cent (ibid.).

Despite this, Yuval-Davis (1997) states that women are still seen as the carriers of tradition rather than change. Engle (2004) indicates that the contrast between women’s migrations in the XIX and XXI centuries lies in the reasoning of their travels and the way it is recorded. She writes, “in fact, gender (i.e. perceived roles, responsibilities and obligations – or the lack thereof) may be the single most important factor influencing the decision to migrate” (ibid., p. 6).

Women have always migrated; but, whereas in the past their movement was often more directly related to family reunification or depended on a male migrant, today they are moving as primary migrants in their own right (ibid., p. 17).

3. Gendered Citizenship

Citizenship is not only a gendered but racialised concept too. Being included or excluded is dependent on individual’s gender, race, ethnicity and age (Anderson, 2000). Arguably, women have been excluded from full citizenship “for much of history, ancient and modern” (Lister, forthcoming). A consideration of gender has often been absent in previous writing on citizenship and historically citizenship was assigned to the realm of men (Dwyer, 2010). Many feminists argue that the public – private dichotomy is the primary cause of women’s limited access to the full and equal citizenship status (Lister, 2003; Walby, 1994). Traditionally and stereotypically, women were assigned a place in the private sphere and therefore it was difficult for them to be active in the public arena on an equal basis with men. Social citizenship rights are dependent on women being in full-time employment, which is difficult to achieve if they have caring responsibilities in the home. The value assigned to women’s caring responsibilities makes them unable to exercise full social citizenship status. It has been suggested that informal, familial care should be incorporated into citizenship and both men and women should be given the opportunity to combine paid work and familial caring (Lister, 2003, forthcoming).

According to some authors (Fraser, 2000), the traditional male breadwinner – female caregiver model has become obsolete as gender roles have undergone modification. There have been changes in partnering and we have been observing increasing employment rates for women (Dwyer, 2010). Therefore, the universal breadwinner model may better reflect those changes. Here, women are treated as equal workers and their paid work is being recognised as equally valuable to that of men
The second ideal type model opposing the breadwinner–caregiver dichotomy is the caregiver parity model, where caregiving is considered to be on a par with breadwinning (ibid.). It can be argued that the former is more applicable to childless women whereas the latter to women who are mothers. The third model is the universal caregiver model, which asks men to change and “make[s] women’s current life-patterns the norm for everyone” (Fraser, 2000, p. 25).

The UK is considered to be a strong male breadwinner state, thus the public–private divide is evident. The paid versus unpaid work and welfare division is gendered. Even though it is evident that more women participate in the paid labour market, unpaid work continues to be women’s burden (Lewis, 1992). Arguably, women are still seen as dependants of men (Kofman, 2004). In the past, gendered responsibilities and power relations in families left women in a disadvantaged position (Boyd & Grieco, 2003). The term ‘working mother’ was coined not earlier than during World War II, for instance (Lewis, 1992, p. 161).

In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the male breadwinner model was challenged in the communist era; under communism, women were officially equal with men (Pascall & Kwak, 2005). The gender regimes in CEE countries seemed to achieve, to a certain extent, gender equality with women’s high paid labour market participation and low gender pay gaps. However, it can be argued that in Poland for instance, ‘retraditionalisation’ has taken place post-1989 (Pascall & Lewis, 2004).

The prohibition of abortion demonstrates – in Poland better than anywhere else – that the liberal concept of the separation between the public and private realms is less than absolute, and is applied differently to men and women (Lister et al., 2007, p. 70).

4. A8 Migration to the UK

Accession 8 (A8) refers to the eight former Eastern Bloc states in Central and Eastern Europe that joined the European Union on the 1st May 2004. Accession 8 migration to the UK has been studied extensively since 2004 (Scullion & Pemberton, 2010; Grabowska-Lusińska & Okólski, 2008; Drinkwater, Eade & Garapich, 2006). In fact, migration from these new EU member states to the UK has been one of the most significant social phenomena of recent times (Pollard, Latorre & Sriskandarajah, 2008). That is not to say that Polish migration to the UK is a new phenomenon. Polish pilots fought in the Battle of Britain during the Second World War (Olson & Cloud, 2004) and previous waves of migration to the UK followed in the aftermath of the Second World War (Davies, 1984). However, gender and gender roles, in particular in relation to A8 migration, remain an under-researched area (Pascall & Kwak, 2005). Furthermore, there is now much evidence to support the
view that migrant women constitute a large proportion of international migrants. In fact, when considering migration within the European context, migrant women already outnumber their male counterparts (Zlotnik, 2003). The Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) statistics show that the male–female ratio was 50:50 at the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009. Even though this highlights an even split, it is assumed that there is a proportion of women who did not register as they were stay-in-home mothers and wives (UKBA, 2008, 2009).

There have been a number of studies dealing with migrant workers from the new A8 Accession countries (Cook, Dwyer & Waite, 2012, 2011; Scullion & Morris, 2010a, 2010b). In recent years there has also been much press coverage on A8 immigration to the UK (Pidd, 2011; Harris, 2011; Quinn, 2011; Gentleman, 2011; Ramesh, 2010). It can be argued that the global economic crisis of 2008 has caused host populations to scapegoat recently arrived migrants for increasing competition for scarce resources within marginalised communities (Cook, Dwyer & Waite, 2012). Although, studies have not found a correlation between recent A8 migration and unemployment (Coats, 2008), “in the recession, however, hard-to-fill vacancies are becoming less hard-to-fill” (Glossop & Shaheen, 2009). Historically, migrants are always the first to be blamed as they differ from the majority.

Most papers however, predominantly deal either with A8 migrants as a homogenous group or focus on the economic reasons behind their emigration. Some authors (Kindler, et al., 2010; Zlotnik, 1995), by contrast, highlight that female migration is under-researched and that there is not enough information on the mechanisms that lead women to migrate. As stated earlier, migration from Poland to the UK has a long history. In spite of that, there is very little information on Polish migrant women’s gender roles and social citizenship while exercising their right to free movement within the EU.

5. Rationale for the Study

Lipszyc (2004, p. 21) posed the question: “following traditional gender roles, when women break geographical ties, do they gain independence?” This research aims to shed some light on this particular issue. Previous research has noted that migration can have a positive effect on migrant women and their status (Castles & Miller, 2003). Through migration many women may become more autonomous and independent as they gain income and respect which positively affects their self-esteem. It can be argued that through migrating, women are constantly exposed to new social and cultural norms and different lifestyles which may affect their views on the values they were taught in their home country. All of this may have positive consequences when it comes to gender equality in their country of origin (Caritas, 2011).
Castles and Miller (2003) argue that migration may change migrants’ national identity and this thesis explores the gendered roles of Polish migrant women and how these may have been affected by the migratory process. The researcher asks whether or not migration has emancipated women from their traditional gender roles and how, if at all, their gendered roles in respect of work (paid and unpaid) and welfare (formal and informal) have been altered as a result of their migratory movements between Poland and the UK. A key question for the study is therefore: “How is patriarchy altered or reconstituted after migration?” (Boyd & Grieco, 2003, p. 2). Patriarchy is here understood as the system in which men exercise control over women (O’Connor, 1996, p. 4).

This project will focus on migrant women, not as passive followers and dependants of men but active decision makers. Morokvasic (1984) suggested that female migration is not understudied per se, but rather that the existing body of academic literature on migration has persisted with its male bias. In spite of this being written several decades ago, it can be argued that this is still the case today; and so the aim of this project is to provide balance to the existing literature.

…wherever a woman comes from, wherever she migrates to, whether or not she works, is married or has children her primary role in life will be defined not as a waged worker, but as a mother and a domestic labourer (Phizacklea, 1983, p. 2).

The aim of the thesis is to explore the impact of the migratory process on the gender roles of two groups of Polish migrant women:

1) Polish migrant women who migrated since the European Union expansion in 2004 and remained in the UK;
2) Polish migrant women who having initially migrated to the UK post 2004 have subsequently returned to Poland.

More specific study objectives are as follows:

1) To consider the extent to which migration is a catalyst for change in women’s traditional gender roles;
2) To investigate how social citizenship is understood and actualised by Polish women engaged in international mobility within the European Union (i.e. between Poland and the UK);
3) To explore how Polish migrant women negotiate their formal and informal rights and responsibilities in respect of citizenship, work and welfare;
4) To compare and contrast the differences, if any, vis-à-vis work and welfare between Polish migrant women living in the UK and Polish migrant women who have previously migrated to the UK but have since returned to Poland.
METHODOLOGY:

An abductive research strategy will be employed. This strategy has been chosen as the researcher is interested in social actors’ meanings and interpretations of reality. “It is to the process of moving from lay descriptions of social life, to technical descriptions of social life, that the notion of Abduction is applied” (Blaikie, 1993, p. 177). The abductive strategy allows movement from the social actors’ interpretations to more scientific understandings of the social world. It has been chosen over the inductive and deductive strategies as it requires the researcher to step into the research participants’ world and “discover their constructions of reality” (Blaikie, 2007, p. 10).

The idealist ontology and the epistemology of constructionism will underpin this research project. According to the idealist ontology, the world consists of individuals’ interpretations, and “reality is what human beings make or construct” (Blaikie, 2007, p. 16). Epistemology of constructionism is particularly relevant as it considers knowledge to be the outcome of individuals trying to make sense of their encounters with other individuals and the outside world (ibid.). The epistemological framework of this research is based on the recognition that knowledge is situated and contextual (Yuval-Davis, 1997). From the researcher’s point of view it is also unavoidable that the research will be somewhat affected by the researcher’s own specific positioning. The researcher wishes to adopt the insider’s stance (Blaikie, 2007). It requires the researcher to be thoroughly immersed in the participants’ world and use her own experiences. The researcher also wishes to take the role of an expert and make use of the existing knowledge on the subject. This kind of relationship is seen as particularly useful as the researcher is also a Polish migrant woman, which is an advantage here as she wishes to marry the two – the existing knowledge on the topic and her own experience and analyse these with data from the fieldwork. This will enable her to compare and contrast versatile data sources and achieve more accurate results than if she did not know much on the topic. Finally, when considering the relationship between the researcher and the research participants it is necessary to decide whether to do the research on, for or with people. In this project the researcher’s aim is to be a ‘reflective partner’, a ‘conscientizer’, where the aim is to better the participants’ situation (Blaikie, 2007, p. 12). This will be achieved by giving them voice, thus, providing more balance to the existing literature on citizenship in relation to migrant women.

A feminist approach will be adopted as it is suitable for exploring gender roles and migrant women. This methodology is particularly relevant because migration has, for a long time, been androcentric, with women essentially being invisible (Morokvasic, 2004; Phizacklea, 1983; Oakley, 1981). Feminist researchers argue that their research has to be based on women’s experiences and that “the cultural background of the researcher is part of the evidence” (Blaikie, 2007, p. 166). When adhering to feminist methodology, the researcher needs to recognise that women cannot be treated as research
objects and that subjectivity is not necessarily unscientific or unwanted (Stanley & Wise, 1990). The project will be underpinned by the view that knowledge in social sciences has a male bias and balance is needed (Finch, 1991).

Four main principles of feminist research will be adopted:
1) Active involvement of the researcher;
2) The aim is to explore the experiences and opinions of women;
3) Recognising the need to combine the knowledge and experience of the researcher and the researched;
4) Generally aiming to improve women’s lives in some way (Becker & Bryman, 2004).

RESEARCH DESIGN:

In order to achieve the project aims and objectives, a thorough literature review will be conducted. Secondary data (i.e. previous research reports, newspaper articles, online articles, etc.) collection and analysis will also be undertaken. Prior to fieldwork, all relevant ethical issues will be addressed (i.e. voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, secure storage – see last section on ethical considerations). After ensuring these are sound, data collection will start by fieldwork planning – designing the interview guide, conducting pilot interviews and making any necessary amendments. The purpose of the pilot interviews will be to inform the researcher of whether the questions are understood correctly, need modification and/or changing order. The next step will consist of conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews in the North West of England. This part of England has been chosen as the area with the second highest population density in England (ONS, 2011). At first, the county of Greater Manchester was chosen due to its vibrant international community and being the destination for many migrants. However, it is felt that Greater Manchester may be too narrow and, as a result, limit the scope of the research. What is more, this area has been chosen due to the established links with the migrant community. The researcher already has excellent links with accession A8 migrants and organisations working with them in the area. Through her work at EUROPIA², the researcher is very much up-to-date in respect to this community. This will be followed by a period of fieldwork in Poland where the researcher will use her links with returnees. Snowballing will also be used to identify suitable individuals who fit the selection criteria to be included in the sample (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003).

The empirical research will focus on the migratory movements of women moving between Poland and the UK and the way in which these movements may shape their gender roles. Qualitative, in-depth and semi-structured interviews are the chosen research tools. It is anticipated that one interview
will last approximately 40 to 60 minutes. Qualitative semi structured interviews have been chosen to give depth of information and to allow informal conversation and, when and where appropriate, new questions to be formulated as a result of the interviewee’s responses. This method may be particularly beneficial in terms of more sensitive themes as the researcher may tailor her questions accordingly to the situation and the person she is interviewing. Interviews are favoured over structured questionnaires as the latter only give a limited chance of explaining social phenomena due to their more rigid structure. They were also favoured over the use of focus groups as the topic may be too sensitive to be explored in a group setting. Moreover, the depth of understanding and flexibility which can be achieved through in-depth interviewing make it appropriate for this qualitative research project (Babbie, 2004). During the interviews women will be encouraged to talk about their migration history and its impact on: work – paid and unpaid (public/private dichotomy); welfare – formal and informal; career and financial autonomy (i.e. work-life balance); and general quality of life (and UK welfare systems). Additional field notes will be taken immediately after the interviews to record preliminary thoughts in regard to the respondents and any potential categories and themes for the data analysis.

Thematic analysis of the data generated in the fieldwork will be conducted. This type of analysis is particularly well suited as it is an interpretive process which can, but does not need to, produce a theory. Thematic analysis entails searching for noticeable, recurrent themes in the interview transcripts, coding and analysing them. The researcher will let the data ‘tell a story’ and will not have pre-established themes, rather will let them emerge from the generated material. Arguably, it is the most attainable type of analysis, therefore especially useful for early career researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Data collection and data analysis will be conducted simultaneously enabling the recognition of the data saturation point. The N-Vivo software may be used to aid data management.

**Research questions:**

1. To what extent are Polish migrant women’s lives gendered?
   a. How, if at all, gender roles differ between the UK and Poland?
   b. How do Polish migrant women understand gender roles in relation to work and welfare?
   c. How do Polish migrant women experience and negotiate their gender roles in respect of work and welfare?

2. Has the migratory process affected Polish migrant women’s gender roles, and if so, in what way?
   a. Has migrating changed women’s gender roles?
   b. Has migrating made them redefine their gender roles?
   c. Has migrating made them feel more independent?
3. How, if at all, has migration impacted on Polish migrant women’s roles as carers and workers? How do they manage their roles over time and space?

Sample:

Strategic purposive sampling will be adopted (Mason, 2002). The sample will consist of two groups.

Group 1 – migrants: 15 Polish migrant women who migrated to the UK post 2004 and continue to live in the UK.

Group 2 – returnees: 15 Polish women who migrated to the UK post 2004 but who have subsequently relocated back to Poland.

The number 30 is an indicative figure but it is likely that a total of 30 participants will meet the purpose of the study. However, this will be decided during the course of the project and will be determined by the point at which new data cease to emerge from the interviews (i.e. sampling until reaching data saturation point; Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003, p. 80).

The UK based participants will be selected from EUROPIA members as well as from users of other agencies working in the North West of England (e.g. OCP, Rainbow Haven, GMPERAS, MSM). EUROPIA and other agencies will serve as a sampling frame (Mason, 2002, p. 140). The Poland based participants will be recruited through already established links in some of Poland’s major cities. If necessary, snowball or chain sampling will also be employed (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003, p. 94). It is anticipated that the sample will include individuals from different age ranges (no younger than 18 years old); who are of different socio-economic characteristics; who have been living in the UK for different lengths of time (no less than 6 months); and who are of different relationship status (i.e. married/single/in relationship, with/without children). However, the researcher will be cautious in regard to interviewing older women (i.e. 50+) as this could negatively affect the findings. A study among older migrant women would need to be separately designed and conducted. Nevertheless, older women may be included in the sample if they migrated to the UK to help their families with caring responsibilities. Such a diverse sample should enable individuals of different demographic characteristics to have their say and as a result capture a wide variety of views.

Issues of rigour:

The following strategies will be adopted to ensure the study findings are credible and accurately reflect respondents’ accounts:
1) An on-going engagement with other academics (i.e. at conferences and other events, through publications, etc.) will ensure sound research design and data collection process;

2) Providing respondents with extracts from their interviews will ensure findings are transparent;

3) An on-going critical reflexivity by the researcher with research supervisors will ensure sound themes generation and data analysis.

**Ethical considerations:**

The research will comply with the Social Policy Association Guidance on Research Ethics as these are of particular relevance to this project. As previously mentioned, an application for approval to the College Ethics Panel at the University of Salford will be produced and submitted in year 1. Throughout the research and the fieldwork in particular, the researcher will be mindful of any arising ethical issues. The research and data collection process will be based on two principles: informed consent and confidentiality. The overall aim and objectives of the research will be explained to potential participants prior to the interview. Each participant will have the right and opportunity to ask questions and/or withdraw (without reason) at any stage of the research process. All participants will be asked to sign consent forms. All participants will be asked whether they give consent to being voice recorded. It will be explained that the researcher wishes to maintain eye contact and ensure that no information is lost in the process of transcription hence the use of the digital voice recorder. It will also be noted that the researcher will be the only person listening to the recordings. If a participant will not give consent to being voice recorded, detailed field notes will be taken. All participants will be guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality, were possible; subject to the limits imposed by harm minimisation. To maximise confidentiality, all participants will be asked to choose an alternative name for themselves. The research participants will be informed that the research findings will be published as a PhD thesis and in academic journals. The research outputs will be stored securely on the University F: Drive with restricted access to data (password protected) and removal of personal details. Paper-based data will be stored in locked filing cabinets at the University offices. The researcher will also ensure her own safety by carrying a mobile phone when going to an interview location and informing at least one person of her whereabouts.

The power relations of the interview interaction (Mason, 2002) shall be maintained at a level convenient for both parties (i.e. the interviewer and the respondent), so that no one party will be able to exercise power over the other as it is anticipated when applying feminist methodology. If asked questions unrelated to the research project, the researcher will explain that she will answer them to the best of her ability, after the interview is completed. When relevant, the researcher will refer the research participants to the appropriate agencies (for more on these practises, please see Oakley,
1981). The researcher will endeavour, at all times, to be sensitive to the cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds of the research participants.
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NOTES:

1 They are: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

2 EUROPIA is a community organisation based in Manchester; EUROPIA works with and for Central and Eastern European (CEE) migrants with the aim to help them integrate into wider society, see www.europia.org.uk.