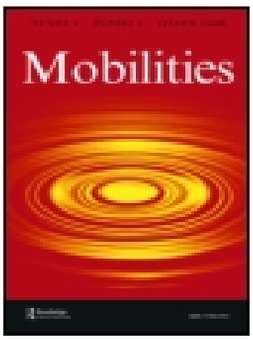

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Capturing the flexibility of adaptation and settlement: anchoring in a mobile society

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on interviews with 40 Polish migrants in the UK, ethnographic and autobiographical research, the article applies the concept of anchoring to theorise the flexibility of migrants' adaptation and 'settlement'. Simultaneity, multidimensionality and changeability of anchoring and the reverse processes of un-anchoring are examined here to bridge the divide between the 'sedentarist' and the mobility perspectives. The paper particularly focuses on anchors overlooked in the adaptation and integration literature, such as: performing gender; daily practices; spirituality; leisure activities; attachment to nature; material objects and technology; as well as constraining illnesses and addictions.

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Adaptation; security; anchoring; integration; migrants; settlement; sedentarist vs mobility perspectives

1. Introduction

The goal of this article is to theorise the complexity and flexibility of adaptation and 'settlement' processes of migrants through the concept of anchoring. Having sketched my conceptual framework elsewhere (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2015), in this paper I use the concept of anchoring to analyse fieldwork research with 40 Polish migrants in the UK, supplemented by textual analysis, observation and autobiographical research, to examine the dynamics and multidimensionality of adaptation and 'settlement' processes in an attempt to bridge the divide between the 'sedentarist' and mobility perspectives; with the emphasis on the factors usually overlooked in the literature on adaptation and integration.

Anchoring is defined as the process of establishing footholds and points of reference which allow individuals to acquire relative stability and security (understood as a feeling of being safe and not exposed to chaos and danger) and function effectively in a new environment. The concept of anchoring links the issues of identity, integration and security to understand how migrants adapt to new life settings and 'settle down'. Significantly, settlement is understood less as putting down roots in a new country and more as making life relatively stable or reaching a state of stability. Anchoring emphasizes, on the one hand, the cognitive and emotional aspects of establishing footholds and, on the other hand, tangible anchors and structural constraints. Its originality and significance lies in the fact that it allows for complexity, multi-dimensionality, simultaneity and changeability of anchoring and the reverse processes of un-anchoring to be captured, as well as giving an opportunity for the development of practical applications.

My key arguments and contributions are presented in six sections and concluding remarks. At the beginning the paper positions the concept of anchoring in relation to identity, social networks and

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integration as well as discussing how this concept may help to bridge the divide between the 'sedentarist' and the mobility perspectives. After a background and methodological section, the importance of security and stability for adaptation and settlement is explained. Then, the article shows the multidimensionality and dynamics of anchoring through three different types of anchors: (1) those contributing to the persistence of Polish identity; (2) those connecting migrants to British society; and (3) other anchors, usually overlooked but important for adaptation and settlement, which constitute the focus of attention in this paper. The article concludes with a discussion of the main findings, their limitations and possible future developments. The originality and significance of this article lies in the fact that it shows how the concept of anchoring may be useful for mobility studies to unpack the complexity of adaptation and the processuality of 'settlement' as well as contributing to bridge the mobility-sedentary opposition.

2. Anchoring – reconnecting identity, security and integration in a mobile society

I argue that the concept of anchoring may provide a promising theoretical framework linking the previously established approaches focused on integration, networks and identity, emphasising the significance of security and stability for migrants' adaptation as well as offering an original approach to 'settlement' in a mobile society. The concept of anchoring responds to criticisms of the integration approach (highlighted, for example, by Favell (2001) or Spencer and Cooper (2006)). This particularly concerns the problem of its adequacy in relation to increasingly complex, fragmented, dynamic and transnationally linked societies where social cohesion as well as internal integration are becoming questioned (Urry 2000). Such questioning, for instance, is leading to an anti-immigrant and anti-progressive backlash promoted by populist and traditionalist political movements, and where diversity and fluidity are progressively being constructed in terms of uncertainty and insecurity.

As Schrooten, Salazar, and Dias (2016) point out, whereas receiving societies frame migration as a process from one state of fixity to another and a 'threat' that calls for social integration, control and the maintenance of national identity, migrants themselves have a more mobile perspective and get used to 'living in mobility'. Anchoring corresponds to new approaches to integration emphasizing its complex and multi-dimensional character (e.g. Bosswick and Heckmann 2006) and its dialectic and multi-layered nature (Bivand Erdal 2013), where more empirically grounded, relational and processual approaches are proposed, such as Paulle and Kalir's (2013) framework based on established vs. outsiders dynamics. It helps to rethink the relationship between migration and settlement and shift the focus from processes of migration to wider societal processes (Penninx, Spencer, and Van Hear 2008), bringing a broader 'mobilities' lens to bear not just on migration *per se* but also the broader social ontology underpinning study of these issues.

The concept of anchoring underlines a need for stability and security in line with Maslow's (1954) theory of needs, confirmed in studies by Ager and Strang (2008). It also emphasises the role of identity in understanding migrant adaptation in the context of an increasingly fluid and diverse world. Identity has become a crucial area of search for a basic meaning and main points of reference while individuals try to find in themselves relatively stable footholds in an unpredictable world. This is despite lived experiences and senses of 'belonging' being increasingly conceptualised by researchers as dynamic, relational and situated processes (e.g. Yuval-Davis 2006). The recognition of identity as a key factor in migrants' adaptation and settlement is reflected in the development of alternative concepts such as belonging (e.g. Fortier 2000), attachment (Grzymala-Moszczynska and Trabka 2014) or embedding (Ryan and Mulholland 2015), with especially the latter acknowledging the processual character of identity and social ties. As Çağlar (2016) notes, deploying such concepts as displacement/emplacement might help to avoid the spatial and temporal impediments of the migrant perspective and instead facilitate a common analytical lens for individuals' experiences in increasingly diverse and dynamic societies. Moreover, the concepts of displacement, dispossession and emplacement are particularly useful for tracing the connections between the ways in which all city residents (migrant or not) respond to the on-going processes of the restructuring and repositioning of the places where they strive to build their lives (Glick Schiller and Caglar 2016).

Anchoring allows for better understanding of adaptation in the context of contemporary mobilities, including what facilitates, limits or prevents mobility. As Hannam, Sheller, and Urry (2006) highlight, mobilities cannot be understood without attention to spatial, infrastructural and institutional moorings that configure and enable mobility. These authors indicate that moorings and mobilities occur dialectically and this dyad is needed to problematize both the 'sedentarist' perspective, which treats place, stability and dwelling as a natural steady-state, and the narratives of deterriorialization, fluidity and liquidity (Bauman 2000). According to Hannam, Sheller, and Urry (2006) analysis of systems of mobilities and moorings or fixities is especially useful to examine how to move and how to settle, what is available for an individual and what is locked in, who can move and who is trapped.

I argue that the concept of anchoring may be helpful to overcome the mentioned divide and bridge the 'sedentarist' and the mobility approaches by capturing people's attempts to establish relative security and stability, even while on the move. In general, anchoring not only links mobility, belonging and the processes of home-making (Ralph and Staeheli 2011) and re-grounding (Ahmed et al. 2003), but also places mobility as constitutive, not just a polar opposite of being settled. In a similar vein, Morokvasic (2004) shows how migrants may 'settle within mobility', for example, after choosing mobility as a strategy to maintain the quality of life 'at home', and a tool for women's empowerment and agency. While resonating with mooring, thus, anchoring also further highlights individuals' agency and focuses on what is between mobility and fixity – the *relative* fixity of being 'moored'. 'Anchoring' does not presuppose 'solid dry land' *at which* to 'moor'. Similarly, it moves beyond social and spatial processes of building and rebuilding networks of connections captured by embedding and emplacement, emphasising instead a multi-dimensionality of anchoring that includes, for example, emotional, cognitive and legal footholds.

Moreover, anchoring retains a key concern of Hannam, Sheller, and Urry's (2006) idea of moorings, in terms of helping to understand differentiated opportunities and constraints in the processes of adaptation and settlement. As Skeggs (2004) points out, mobility may be perceived as a resource to which not everyone has equal access, so likewise anchoring. Although spatial mobility is sometimes portrayed as a catalyst for the advancement of social justice in terms of more opportunities and access to more egalitarian distribution and reward structures, mobility often reflects and reinforces inequalities (Kaufmann, Bergman, and Joye 2004). In this context, the concept of motility is used to underline the interconnection between mobility and stratification (Kaufmann 2014). Mobility may also be imposed or forced, as in the case of refugees, dependent migrants or homeless people whose situation results from policies implemented by local authorities (Cloke, Milbourne, and Widdowfield 2003). Anchoring, like mobility, reflects constraining structures and hierarchies of power and position (Tesfahuney 1998).

Anchors can likewise be compared to resources, defined as assets helping to overcome or deal with problems related to adaptation which are relatively durable and emotionally loaded. But, in contrast to resources as they may be understood from integration perspectives, they may not only play a definitive adaptive and productive role. Although the concept of anchoring still gives particular importance to social or cultural anchors, it also embraces various types of footholds, including material, cognitive and behavioural ones related, for example, to beliefs and practices. In this way, anchoring also extends the vague notion of social capital – defined as a productive property of social relations which stimulates activity and facilitates achievement of goals (Coleman 1988) – and moves beyond the social network approach, by changing the perspective from the structural to the interactional and cognitive and shifting the focus from relations between people to individuals' agency, their resources and constraints.

Despite its conceptual and practical potential, the metaphor of anchor and anchoring has rarely appeared in general sociological theory (mentioned in passing by Bauman (1997) or Castells (1997)) and has not been developed into a broader analytical concept beyond the narrow cognitive and neuro-linguistic approach. In order to use the potency of this metaphor but overcome its limitations, I have developed the analytical concept through empirical research. Exposition of anchoring thus emerges through reference to examples, as below. [1-2] 2 notes: An initial working definition, however, the concept of anchoring refers to the processes of establishing footholds that allow migrants to acquire a relative stability and security and function effectively in new life settings. It emphasizes a need for safety and

security, the simultaneity of anchors in different geographical and deterritorialised spaces, as well as the fluid and reversible character of the studied phenomena.

3. Research into anchoring

The empirical material used in this article is derived from research with post-accession Polish migrants in the UK, conducted between 2013 and 2015 after receiving full ethical approval from the University of Birmingham Ethical Review Committee.[1] The project included alternate, cyclical stages of theory building and fieldwork research inspired by the grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The qualitative methodology of the research aimed to explore the processes of anchoring and provide its in-depth understanding.

The research was conducted in Birmingham, the second largest city in the UK, and its surrounding towns of the West Midlands, characterised by high levels of superdiversity (Vertovec 2007) and concentration of post-accession Polish migrants (who have not been the focus of research to date in this context). The participants, identified through ethnic institutions, personal networks and advertisements, had to meet the following criteria: not having a British spouse/life partner (to eliminate those integrated into British society through their spouses/partners), aged in their 30s and 40s (when people tend to search for security and stability), and having lived in the UK between one and 10 years (so after establishing some new anchors). Maximum variation sampling (MVS) was applied in relation to other characteristics, including: gender, life cycle, family situation, education, economic situation and occupation. As a result the interviewees were highly diverse in socio-economic terms (representing professionals, entrepreneurs, housewives, manual workers, unemployed and homeless) and family situation. MVS was used to capture common patterns that emerge from variation as representing core or central experiences (Patton 1990). In this way the internal heterogeneity of the population researched was acknowledged in accordance with the project's standpoint regarding diversity, and the falsification method applied (Popper 1959). This also allowed for internal generalization alongside the analytic external generalization, and the possible transferability of the theoretical developments to other cases (Maxwell and Chmiel 2014).

Individual in-depth interviews and questionnaires with 40 migrants (20 women and 20 men) constituted the main part of the research. After the minimally structured interviews about experience of migration, and projective techniques including spontaneous sketches of migrants' anchors, the concept of anchoring was introduced as 'footholds, points of reference, issues of particular importance in life which relate to Poland, Great Britain and other possible countries' to explore what anchors were present and what were lacking, in structured interviews. The material was recorded, transcribed, and encoded in NVivo employing substantive (Kelle 2014) and theoretical coding (Thornberg and Charmaz 2014). The quotes used (after anonymization), were selected on the basis of their relevance and succinctness. The interviews were followed by other tests (e.g. a sentence completion test) and a questionnaire gathering socio-demographic and migration data as well as measuring self-assessed levels of adaptation, integration, life problems and satisfaction. In addition, textual analysis of material from Internet blogs and forums was carried out and autobiographical study accompanied by participatory research which allowed for an insight, knowledge-enabling dialog and building boundary-crossing connections (Tyfield and Blok 2016).

4. Searching for security and stability in the context of mobility

Stability and security were one of the central themes in migrants' narratives proving the significance of ontological security and stability (Giddens 1991). The importance of 'stability', 'security', 'safety' and 'peace' could be articulated in the following ways: *How to say it… that stability here* (wm14/w/with family/8y[2]), *My life currently is incredibly peaceful. I do not experience any pressure or stress (…) I feel secure here in every aspect of my life* (wm09/m/single/2y10m), *Somehow we managed to establish a rather stable life* (wm36/w/single mother/5y). This was also visible in the sentence completion test, as in these examples

('The most important *is to have a feeling of security and stability*' or 'The biggest problem *is a lack of stability*'). This corresponds to the results of Bygnes and Erdal (2017), who demonstrated the desire of Polish and Spanish migrants in Norway to enjoy more 'grounded lives' under less 'liquid' conditions.

Migrants' stories showed a search for security and stability after arrival in the UK, as illustrated by Teresa's example[3]:

> I worked for more than 20 years in one company in Poland and felt satisfaction and stability (…) whereas here these two and a half years have been exhausting and disheartening if you do not have a permanent job. (…) I have been under permanent stress for two and a half years while searching for this life stability. (wm17/w/single/2y6m)

Teresa attributed her unsettlement not only to the fact that in spite of her Master's degree and substantial work experience she could not find a proper full time employment on the British job market, but also to the fact that she did not manage to find a partner, start her own family or establish a sustainable friendship in the UK, while all her relatives remained in Poland. The migrants coped with such insecurity by maintaining or re-establishing strong anchors in Poland e.g. through own flats or houses. They could also deal with insecurities by transferring crucial anchors to the UK, e.g. resettling family members which at the same time constituted a type of un-anchoring from Poland. Regularity and predictability (e.g. provided by daily routines) were other important features highlighted by Teresa and other participants corresponding to the strategies described by Giddens (1991).

The adequacy of the concept of anchoring may be supported by spontaneous references to anchoring and related processes in the narratives. For instance, Teresa used a water-related metaphor of a raft to describe her struggle for stability and security:

> So far I have been like a drifting raft, since I spend all my time in searching for work in order to make a living, survive. Costs are much higher here than for example in Poland and I do not have anybody here I can rely on. (wm17/w/single/2.6y)

In this figurative way the woman emphasized her current unsettled 'drifting' life without strong footholds in the UK. Another spontaneous reference to anchoring was made by Pawel who mentioned: *Buying a house. It has anchored me a bit, I may say* (wm11/m/with family/7y).

In addition to security related to legality, employment and stable life conditions, informal and institutional support, another, arguably deeper type of security was emotional and cognitive. It relates to Giddens' (1991) concept of ontological security defined as a basic framework for existence and cultivation of a sense of being, including the coherence of the self in relation to others and external reality maintained by daily practices. The emotional aspect of security could be observed, when someone felt insecure in spite of their stable life and established routines; as for example a single professional, Agata, who despite her successful work and social life in the UK, felt really secure only while reunited with her parents at home in Poland:

> The house of my parents is the only place to which I come back as to home and really 'reset'. I feel there like at home. I come and I am the daughter of my parents, a child. This is such a refuge, where I come and can rest. I take rest there, nowhere else, unless I have a very long holiday. Security… this is only in Poland in general. (wm20/w/single/9y)

Thus Agata's need for security was only fulfilled when she was enclosed in the safety net of her family and culture.

5. Reconstructing the safety net of culture and family

Attachment to the native language, culture and identity strongly grounded the lives of the interviewees in the UK. Polish-ness offered a crucial anchor which remained evident in the collected narratives. Reconstructed Polish ethnicity, even if, to a significant extent, imposed and uneasy, constituted a key reference for the participants in the processes of their adaptation and 'settlement'. In a similar way, Schwartz and his collaborators (2006) demonstrated how identity was an important tool used by migrants to 'anchor' themselves during transition and adjustment to a new society.

When unpacking Polish-ness, attachment to the native language appeared as an essential aspect, followed by the importance of cultural values and traditions, as Anna explained:

> I have to mention about the family and the way we have been brought up, what has been passed on to me by the family – culture and religion. This is important to me and I think I base myself on this. (wm19/w/single/7y11m)

Being anchored in Polish-ness manifested itself not only in daily practices and celebrating important events (e.g. Baptisms, Holy Communions, Christmas or Easter) but also in expressed self-identification and perceived social categorisation. A Polish identity was reinforced in response to difference, and being perceived as a stranger: *I also started to realize that I am a Pole in England* (wm13/w/single/10y). The process of anchoring was thus accompanied by identity reconstruction. The reinforcement of Polish identity and its re-evaluation were taking place in reaction to social categorization or even stigmatization of Polish migrants in the UK (Lopez Rodriguez 2010), as the following quote illustrates:

> For sure I believe in God and I am proud that I am a Pole and I come from this country. I told myself that I will not hide this that I originate from this country. I have such a culture, not different. All I have learnt in Poland, I want to pass to the children. (wm06/w/with family/4y4m)

Ethnicity was also reconstructed in reaction to the new (unfamiliar) socio-cultural environment and surrounding urban diversity, which process included both reproducing an idea of Polish-ness and producing an idea of British-ness and other-ness. Even those migrants who were more critical and distanced themselves from homogeneous and essentialist vision of Polish ethnicity and nationalist feelings, still highlighted the significance of their private homeland (associated with their local communities and private experiences) as verbalised in the following:

> This Poland – it is… all my identity comes from this Poland, even if I would not like this very much (wm03/w/single/1y6m).

> Even though I am not any great patriot, that I do not love everything that is Polish, but, let's say, this Poland which is, let's say, my family and friends. (wm38/w/single parent/4y9m)

However, the attachment to Polish language and culture could be accompanied by emerging other self-identifications – British or European, as visible in Marek's words on his pragmatic plans to become a dual citizen:

> Literature and history – this is in me all the time. I cultivate Polish values, those which I took from my home – Polish culture, history, language. This is very important to me in spite of the fact that I will be a Briton in terms of passport (…) Especially in such a multicultural society as Great Britain you can be a good Briton and a very good Pole. (wm9/m/single/2y10m)

Apart from 'Polish-ness', by and large, one's own family was located in the centre of interviewees' emotional and mental map, with family bonds (even if only desired) remaining crucial in migrants' narratives. This can be illustrated by these examples: *Now everything revolves around my daughter, because in the past it was different* (wm14/f/with family/8y) or *My anchor moved from Poland to Great Britain – it is a family* (wm34/m/with family/2y1m). Similarly Botterill (2014) demonstrates that instead of individualisation, the practice of mobility and settlement among Polish migrants is, to a large extent, produced through the structures of family life. This type of grounding in loved ones may be linked to Castells (1997) metaphorical usage of anchoring to emphasize the value of family and community when neither the Self nor ontological frames provide sufficiently solid foundations for the Self. In the narratives collected, the family was a site that mediated multi-ties (including transnational ties) and temporal imaginings (projections into the future, attachments to a past, ideas of Polish culture and others).

Besides closest family, of importance were bonds and exchanges with a limited number of other relatives and friends. In the absence of family in the UK, the participants tended to establish quasi-family ties with selected Polish friends as, for instance, Marta who explained: *We spend festive periods together (…) this is a group of such five people who can always rely one on another. (…) This is such basic support here and operation* (wm37/w/single parent/2y). Not having families in the UK and failing to establish strong ties with non-relatives led to complaints about limited social support in the UK in comparison to Poland, where generations often share caring responsibilities and are involved in extensive exchange. This could lead to feelings of disconnection and loneliness.

In addition the participants usually established weaker connections with a wider circle of – usually Polish – acquaintances. One of the interviewees, Irek, explained: *I feel under pressure to build an environment of positive people around me. This is also, as I have said, because of the kids* (wm34/m/with

family/2y1m). Similarly, Darek and his wife joined the Polish choir, since they used to sing in Poland and wanted to meet families of World War II migrants perceived as patriotic and well-integrated. The migrants with families spent their free time hosting or visiting Polish friends and acquaintances (including those living in Poland). The singles formed small groups who lived in shared houses to reduce living costs, socialize and avoid loneliness. In general, the interviewees preferred friendship with other Poles although their social connections sometimes extended beyond the Polish community.

The thriving post-accession Polish community, after transforming post-war ethnic institutions and developing new ones, constituted another point of reference for the interviewees. Particularly, traditional and electronic ethnic media played an important role in the adaptation and 'settlement' of Polish migrants (Garapich 2008). For many, especially family-focused migrants, Polish Saturday schools and church became prominent anchors in the UK. They were not only places of education and religious practices respectively but also spaces of social contact and reinforcement of ethnicity. Polish priests also pointed out the therapeutic role of church and practical support. Polish school could also play a substitution role when teachers worked there voluntarily to practice their profession, rebuild their self-esteem and re-establish their social position, as illustrated by the following quotation:

> Actually, over the last months, I dedicated a lot of time and attention to it and I have lots of plans, so if there is something which stops me or keeps me [here], this would be school certainly more than my work, because – quite strangely – it looks as though I dedicate everything to school much more than to normal work. (wm36/w/with partner/5y)

Migrants' voluntary activity remained predominantly within the Polish community. Being so immersed in their families and Polish community, the participants were usually not willing to go beyond their comfort zone to establish new social anchors. Polish language and culture, close family, relatives and friends, ethnic institutions and the wider Polish community represented different layers of ethnic safety net characterised by their different significance and strength. Transferred or reconstructed ethnic footholds in the UK could be accompanied by those maintained in Poland. This demonstrates the simultaneity of anchors in the UK and Poland, where simultaneity is understood as living lives that incorporate daily activities, routines and institutions located both in a destination country and transnationally that may reinforce one another (Levitt and Schiller 2004). Parallel anchors meant that migrants could have dual footholds in terms of homes, friends and/or professional activity both in Poland and the UK, whereas complementary ones occurred when individuals developed other types of connections in different countries. For instance, one of the participants – a single professional – in this way distinguished between her work and entertainment in the UK, and her family and recovery time in Poland:

> In Great Britain: mainly work at this moment, but also entertainment, acquaintances and friends. (…) When I return to Poland, I do not even think about going out. If yes, I meet one of the girls I know. Polish is a rest. Here [in the UK] is my place where I do what I want and I like to. If I fancy dancing, going for a party it is here not in Poland. (wm20/w/single/9y)

Over years though ethnic footholds left in Poland could become replaced by those in the UK (e.g. Polish friends) illustrating the flexibility of anchors and the opposite phenomenon of disconnecting from previous footholds.

6. Connecting to British society

The concept of anchoring allows for in-depth analysis of processes of connecting to a hosting society and then turning connections into anchors (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2017). New types of anchors were those tying the migrants to British society. The essential role of work in interviewees' lives was reflected in its centrality in their narratives, which were usually built around family and employment. Work played a crucial function in enabling connections between the participants and British society. It provided not only financial means for living but also regularity and stability which were of key importance, framing migrants' time, increasing their agency, confidence, self-esteem and feeling of safety. Even if restricted, work offered chances for development, improving language skills and establishing connections outside the Polish community which could be then turned into potential anchors.

However, transcending Polish-ness at the workplace was not always possible, due to some workplaces being dominated by Polish migrants, limited social contact at the workplace or unemployment (for example because of child-care arrangements or health related issues). Self-employment, short-term or zero hours contracts hardly provided sufficiently secure, stable and long-term conditions for establishing sustainable social relations in the work environment, as also shown by Krasas Rogers (2000). Nevertheless, the interviewees rather appreciated job possibilities in the UK (including existing, albeit limited, opportunities for upward mobility), which contributed to their overall feeling of security and stability.

For some, English language played a vital role in anchoring in the UK. Darek reflected on this in the following way:

> From a formal point of view national security [National Insurance Number], no, I always liked English language, maybe this. Maybe this English language linked me to the UK. (…) I always wanted to get to know whether I can use it equally for example with somebody from England. And it turned out that more or less it is possible. (…) these connections Great Britain – English language – the school, I work at, this is something that I could prove myself that I know something so maybe these aspirations are something that link me to this country. (wm22/m/with wife/2y1m)

English was not only a tool for communication but also a means of transforming identity, as well as a foothold grounding migrants in British culture and society. Immersing in the language and culture led to familiarity and contributed to the feeling of stability and safety described by Marta:

> You use names of streets, change to English, change to Polish, think in English, jump from Polish to English television and do not notice the difference while you are watching a Polish or English film. Simply you started thinking normally of shops, doing shopping. (…) So probably the biggest change is normalization. (wm37/w/single parent/2y)

This shows that anchoring may have cultural dimensions and include cognitive aspects, and so cannot be reduced to establishing social links.

Learning English provided an opportunity for interaction and establishing connections in the UK. For example, language courses gave the migrants a secure and accessible space of anchoring to encounter others, transcend their own ethnicity and homogenous networks, and learn new scripts of behaviour, including how to connect to others in diverse British society. Building relationships in a class environment was facilitated by the similarity of classmates' situations in terms of adaptation challenges, the position of being strangers and language disadvantage, which could bring reassurance, reduce power inequalities and help in communication (Wessendorf 2015). However, although the migrants realized the benefits of learning English and having direct contact with the British, and enrolled for English classes either on a voluntary basis or as the requirement of job centres, the majority struggled to continue formal language education due to work and family commitments, and learning English was challenging due to the dissimilarity of both languages, low pre-migratory English competencies and psychological barriers.

Children's school and after-school or pre-school activities also constituted one of the most stabilizing footholds in British society, especially as school was an effective institution in accommodating diversity and facilitating inclusion of migrants' children. Aneta's words show attending English school gave the participants a sense of stability and tied them to the host society:

> Children's school… Now I realize this more, that for our children home is England (…) This is so encouraging, on one hand, that I see that they have been developing here well and have a good school. They speak both languages wonderfully. This is very important and it is now the main reason why we are here in England – I think of the children. [wm12/w/with family/8y]

As Iga highlighted, children's school prevented her returning to Poland:

> This [a lack of her integration] is such my complex, so I miss Poland because I feel there at my place. On the other hand, I know that there are rather no real chances for my return there due to various reasons – at least because of the girls, of whom each is at a different stage of education and no time is good. (wm04/w/with family/7y)

Moreover, meeting non-Polish parents at school provided an opportunity to practice English, establish new relations transcending Polish-ness, socialize and obtain access to new resources. Also children's afterschool activities such as playing football could be a significant form of anchoring for whole families, thanks to meeting other families engaged in the same activity and spending time together. In general, football might be seen as a space of meaningful encounter (Valentine 2008) and one route

for inclusion, in a similar way as Hobfoll (2015) uses *the love of baseball* metaphor as a model for the socio-cultural integration of immigrants in the USA. However, this potential was not widely used by the interviewees due to the language barrier, withdrawal, lack of self-confidence and preoccupation with daily life and own families.

Other noticeable anchors were those in neighbourhoods and local communities, evident in Robert's words: *However, I have never had a strong sentiment towards Birmingham, but I start to like Erdington but this is exactly because, so to say, I have anchored here [after buying his first house]* (wm38/m/single/4y9m). The participants provided various examples of support from neighbours such as help with power cuts, formalities or transport. Acts of kindness were attributed both to English neighbours and residents of mixed neighbourhoods. Marek gave the following example of how he came to feel a part of his neighbourhood:

> I called our agency and asked if I could arrange it [a garden]. They said that it was fine. So I bought soil, flowers and began to do this. At the same time one neighbour came, second, third and they started to help me. All of a sudden this changed into a party, because someone brought cake, rum. (…) when I was opening my office I had already known all my local community I had been interacting with them every day. There was nothing like this in Poland. When I come back home, my neighbour living downstairs, a Pakistani, frequently opens her door and talks to me. My Jamaican neighbour, when he is seeing me with my dog, brings some rum and we talk. (…) I feel like at home, connected to this local community. (wm09/m/single/2y10m)

The latter example illustrates 'commonplace diversity', when people mix together and diversity becomes an ordinary part of life (Wessendorf 2013), and the form of everyday conviviality of boundary-crossing and inter-ethnic solidarity (Karner and Parker 2011).

British governmental and non-governmental welfare institutions represented another type of potential anchors in the hosting society, although the majority of migrants preferred to rely on themselves and their families and friends, as Kuba explained:

> I have never, never, got such an idea that I could rely on [institutions], look for such support. Even in Ireland when my situation was very difficult, I relied on myself and the nature around, maybe also on books and myself. Looking at all my mates and friends here, in fact the majority relies on themselves and the closest circle, not on institutions. (wm18/m/single/8y)

Even if applying for child benefit, tax credit or housing benefit, the participants did not perceive these provisions as crucial issues in their lives in the UK, even though by and large they valued the British public institutions and put trust in them that in the case of misfortune they would not be left alone, as expressed by Aneta: *I think that this is also very significant, so secure that I would know that if something happens to my husband or to me and I could not work, I know that we would get help* (wm12/w/with family/8y).

Governmental and non-governmental welfare institutions played a more central role in the life of only a few unemployed and homeless (male) participants, also suffering from health and mental issues (including alcohol abuse), who either had no family in the UK or were not in contact with them, so welfare institutions replaced informal assistance. Zenon, asked what gives him support in the UK, answered: *Job Centre and house benefit. (…) Thanks to job centre I can afford food and basic maintenance. Housing benefit – I have a place to live. Hospital is also free* (wm29/m/with partner/1y6m). Such participants contacted British institutions not only to get help but also to socialize there with other migrants. As Damian pointed out: *SIFA is such an assembly point for Poles in Birmingham and vicinity* (wm23/m/separated with family/5y6m). Although the relationship with the institutions structured migrants' time, increased their feeling of security and connection to society, there was also ambiguity there – alongside help, the institutions exercised power and control with a possible side effect in the form of dependency and passiveness. Also other users, perceived as a source of emotional support and company, could hamper migrants' attempts to change their lives. Institutions were also important in the life of two vulnerable female interviewees: one single mother suffering from depression and cancer and another mother being the main carer for her disabled son. However, they were both supported by their relatives and active on the job market too.

7. Uncovering additional anchors in adaptation and 'settlement'

Besides footholds related to social networks and the ethnic and family net, the concept of anchoring allows for including other dimensions usually overlooked in the literature on migrants' adaptation and 'settlement'. I argue that these other prominent footholds in migrants' lives, apart from those closely related to migrants' ethnicity and their links to a hosting society, need to be more investigated. Therefore, this section will demonstrate the role of anchors in migrants' adaptation and 'settlement' such as: gender; daily practices; spirituality; leisure activities; attachment to nature and animals; material objects and technology; as well as constraining illnesses and addictions.

One of the key anchors in the lives of my interviewees consisted in doing gender (West and Zimmerman 1987) and homemaking. The participants articulated their gender roles and appreciated the value of the conventional family, based on romantic love and marriage, where women concentrate on homemaking and celebrating their femininity whereas men focus on their role as main breadwinners. Conforming to traditional norms and gender roles gave the individuals a point of reference. Such idealisations were also present in the narratives of singles who, valuing freedom and lack of obligations, at the same time verbalized their desire for romantic love and traditional family. Some of them regretted that they had not established their own families and complained about the lack of closeness in social relations, difficulties in starting a family due to a limited choice of partners, and fear of failure, especially as a number of them had experienced a painful breakdown of previous relationships. The ideas of long-term relationship and home were also expressed by a gay participant. However, the prevalence of the traditional heteronormative family ideal among Polish migrants in the UK could produce multiple insecurities of the self, related for example to social pressure and expectations – particularly among those who do not fit in, such as LGBT migrants. Other research shows tensions with the narrative of the family and the growing diversity of family practices (Botterill 2014).

The migrants with their own families were particularly preoccupied with homemaking. Creating 'a home' was either a major achievement or goal. However, home might be understood not only as a place but also as a set of practices which integrated families and reproduced traditional gender and family roles and structures. The rhythm of a day, daily routines, repeated house chores and transporting children gave the migrants (especially those who did not work) a feeling of control and predictability, contributing to their security and stability as well as helping them to maintain self-esteem as good parents and spouses. As Paulina explained:

> You know I like a well-kept [house], because if I am at home a whole day. I also like to have real flowers in a vase and I have. You know, if I sit at home whole days, this is my duty as I say. Nobody tells me that I have to do this because my husband says to stop running with this cloth. I just like it. I took this from my home. My mother always liked order and I have inherited from her that I like this. I think that my home is such my refuge. I feel so secure. (wm02/w/32/with family/4y)

For the men, DIY activities, redecorating the home and driving the family around played a similar role. This significance of daily practices corresponds to Giddens' point (1991, 167) that 'The development of relatively secure environments of day-to-day life is of central importance to the maintenance of feelings of ontological security'.

Apart from the mentioned cultural and social role of church, spirituality could also provide another type of anchor. Religious beliefs, practices and attachment to faith constituted significant footholds in interviewees' lives and all the interviewees perceived spiritual issues as important. Even though some participants were not religious, they felt a kind of affiliation with God or the Catholic tradition, like Pawel who described this in the following way:

> I like churches. Even though, for many years I have been an opponent of the church as an institution because – I see them – as a big corporation. I like the atmosphere of churches. I like these places, coming there and calming down. Maybe because in Poland whether I wanted it or not, I had to go to church. (wm05/m/single/5y)

These words show how experiencing familiarity and continuity gave the migrants a feeling of peace and security.

Sometimes migration led to an increase in religiosity. Marek provided such an example in his conversion to Islam:

> I have changed my denomination from Christianity to Islam – intentionally and recently. (…) I liked some life principles, most of all, some regulations which you can find in the Koran. They help to take control over life when it begins to be a chaos (…) Over years religion was in my life and it was not. It is Islam that has come and knocked on my door – as I called it. When I converted to Islam, I realized that Islam is simply the update of Christianity. (wm09/m/single/2y10m)

Marek emphasized the stability and security which Islam brought to his life.

A sense of agency and self-sufficiency constituted other significant grounding features for many migrants, often developed after migration. Single migrants in particular could be described as individualistic and focused on freedom and independence, like Kuba:

> So far I do not have any family life mainly because I do not want to tie up with anybody. I want to be alone and focused on my passions. (…) It is important to have work besides this what is my hobby and my passion. My mainstay is the feeling of freedom, independence. (…) in opinions, freedom in sexual life, in everything. This is the most important value above all. (wm18/m/single/8y)

The availability of opportunities in terms of life style or work, as well as possibilities for development also contributed to migrants' feeling of security. In contrast, Galasinski and Galasinska (2007) demonstrated how unemployed migrants could be characterised as not being anchored in the external world and not recognising their own agency, which allowed them to position their outcomes outside and deny responsibility for failures.

Leisure activities might also play a significant role in migrants' lives, particularly in the case of the singles who combined intensive work with time-consuming hobbies (such as sports, going to the gym, travelling, going out or arts). The significance of physical activity and sport was visible in such comments: *Sport is important to me. (…) this is my greatest love in the world* (wm03/w/single/1y6m). *Of course, sport has been always important in my life and now at the workplace we have a gym, so I go there a couple of times a week* (wm20/w/single/9y). Anna, a busy professional, whose private life focused around work, sports and her appearance, provides another example:

> In general, I am happy with my life. I am a single person and I am over thirty. I live in the city centre in a big flat. I share it with somebody simply because I do not want to be alone. (…) I go to the gym a lot, I take part in competitions which are soon. A season is beginning, so I prepare myself in this respect and I run a lot. I try to go out with mates, if I find any time. (…) I want to look good and that's all, the rest does not matter so to say. (wm19/w/single/7y11m)

Although Anna's account stresseed her freedom and activity, it also displays ways of producing security and stability through sports which helped Anna to connect to others, set up new goals and take control over her body and life.

Similarly artistic activity could play a vital role for the migrants and help them sustain their identity, establish social relations and express emotions, as in the case of Maria, who in her free time created artistic installations. Kuba extensively engaged with photography and literature, listening to audiobooks at work and writing short pieces of text at home, and was also involved in artistic activities with others:

> In addition, I started to deal with art because I hung around with artists, musicians. Slowly I am moving towards diverse artistic projects and I began writing. (…) Basically, I did not take part in any Polish projects, but rather in international ones. Unless I do something with my best friends and in this case it is being done by Poles but not for Poles. (wm18/m/single/8y)

Also Pawel used his activity related to organising musical and artistic events to go beyond Polish culture and community and connect to non-Poles.

The term 'anchoring' can also be used in relation to geographical places that migrants became familiar with and attached to (e.g. Mazumdar and Mazumdar 2009; Vertovec 2010). Places of birth or childhood, graves of loved ones in Poland as well as favourite places in the UK such as parks or mountains, although they did not usually play an essential role in migrants' lives, were emotionally loaded resources for identity: *my Tatra mountains, there is such mysticism (…) I go with my brother to these mountains in Scotland or Wales, to me the Tatra mountains in Poland are exactly such a safety valve* (wm31/m/family in Poland/1y4m). Attachment to local spaces constituted a type of 'emplacing' through which migrants

might also become urban actors immersed in the city's everyday life (Williamson 2016). Visiting places of nature could be combined with physical activity and other passions, like fishing in the North Sea described by Marcin: *We are organizing ourselves and going fishing. This is a very important issue to me – we go fishing in the North Sea, Irish Sea* (wm32/m/with family/9y6m). Pets could also play a prominent role in anchoring. To Marek, his dog represented the central feature of his life both prior to migration and after it – which allowed him to preserve the feeling of continuity:

> The closest person for me is my dog that has been with me for eight years. We were separated only for one month when the dog was without me in Poland. Immediately, I arranged his transport to Great Britain because I could not imagine life without him. Street foundling. (wm09/m/single/2y10m)

Marta bought a new dog to help her children settle down in the UK and cope with family breakdown.

The migrants' narratives also encompassed different types of material objects which helped them to recover a feeling of security and maintain continuity. Portable material objects of practical or sentimental importance provide some semblance of home (Basu and Coleman 2008). Similarly, Kaiser (2008) showed how through objects Sudanese refugees sought agency and reconstructed familiarity in their temporary homes. To my participants, rented or owned houses represented the main examples of grounding objects, followed by cars, phones and laptops with access to the Internet alongside objects carrying symbolic and emotional value such as photos or holy pictures. One of the interviewees talked about his car in this way:

> I like my car and this is important to me. I bought the first one in England and it means that I feel independent and I can pop in at friends'. (…) A car means independence for me, in addition, a smartphone is significant to me to have contact. I am addicted to Facebook. (wm33/m/with family/5y10m)

Phones and computers were means of communication and allowed for access to films, electronic media and other information: *Attached is a wrong word, but my laptop serves me for contact with the world, for everything at the moment* (wm25/m/single/10y). Not only did technological devices enable the migrants to sustain relations, but the practices of using technology became a vital part of their life, contributing to their feeling of continuity, familiarity and security. In a similar vein, Williams and her co-researchers (2008) demonstrated how the mobility of transnational Thai migrants was spatially, temporally and technologically shaped and anchored.

Different anchors, substantially constraining the participants due to their limitations and largely involuntary character, were health (physical and/or mental) and substance abuse. These constraints framed migrants' lives and provided other important points of reference. The interviewees spontaneously reflected on their experiences of serious illness or accidents and ongoing impacts. Barbara, the mother of a disabled son who suffered from various medical conditions, built her whole narrative around caring duties starting in this way:

> I gave birth to three children, the last child was born ill. Unfortunately, currently he is 21 years old, I had to sacrifice for him since he was born with Down Syndrome, with heart problems. (…) Thus, in general, I needed to devote a lot of time to him. (wm24/w/with family/1y5m)

For some homeless participants, alcohol was the main feature of their lives as for Zenon who placed this in the very centre of his diagram, just next to the word 'I'. Alcohol had been present in his life for years before he moved to the UK. In contrast, Roman's alcohol problem began in the UK after the unexpected death of his mother while he was working abroad, a traumatic event he could not come to terms with:

> To be honest I did not have a problem. Then, I became homeless when I lost all these jobs. I started to escape from everything, escape, as I say, in alcohol. (…) I hope I will not sink, therefore I want to move away from this city, from all this, because, frankly speaking, wherever I hang around, particularly in such places as this [drop in centre for homeless] people encourage me to alcohol. (wm28/m/single/3y9m)

Roman's words showed the prominent role of social factors in alcohol abuse in addition to psychological problems and illustrate how alcohol addiction limits participants' agency.

8. Concluding remarks

The article theorizes the processes of migrants' adaptation and 'settlement' through the lens of anchoring using data from fieldwork research with Polish migrants in the UK. By capturing the complexity of migrants' adaptation and the flexibility of their 'settlement', it attemps to bridge the divide between the 'sedentarist' and the mobility perspectives. The paper emphasizes the possible simultaneity of anchors and the transnational character of anchoring when migrants maintain tangible, cognitive or virtual anchors crossing state borders, linking them with various geographical localities or un-localized spaces. Anchoring is a dynamic process which includes not only establishing new anchors but also maintaining, transferring, re-reinstalling, transforming or quitting existing ones. The flexibility of anchors includes the opposite phenomenon of disconnecting from previous footholds, evident in selling houses, moving belongings to the UK, changing citizenship or resettling elderly parents.

The article showed the significance of ontological security and stability in the participants' narratives and their attempts to establish and maintain key footholds in the UK related to ethnicity, work and social support, which needs more appreciation in integration theory. In line with Giddens' theory (1991) daily practices and routines played a vital role in providing security and stability which was evident regardless of interviewees' diversity in terms of gender, education, socio-economic position, life cycle and family status. The research demonstrated a great deal of migrants' agency in anchoring, despite the structural constraints and barriers such as the language barrier, or lack of financial and social resources.

Multidimensional footholds (e.g. social, cognitive, economic, material, legal, cultural, spiritual, habitual, emotional) found among the participants could be grouped in three types: (1) anchors reinforcing ethnic identity and ethnic bonds; (2) those facilitating integration; and (3) other anchors which were substantially different to the former ones. This paper paid particular attention to the third type, usually overlooked in mobility and migration studies, demonstrating the role of anchors in migrants' adaptation and 'settlement' such as gender; daily practices; spirituality; leisure activities; attachment to nature and animals; material objects and technology; as well as constraining illnesses and addictions.

The main limitation of the presented research was quite a homogenous sample consisted of 40 Polish migrants in their 30s and 40s; that is with migrants, as it was assumed, seeking stability more than younger people. Therefore, the presented project is treated as a case study and further research is needed to expand the theory and test its applicability within a broader range of migrants (in terms of ethnic origin, type of migration and other socio-demographic characteristics).

The concept of anchoring also shows the promise of possible practical applications to facilitate migrants' adaptation and 'settlement', which needs to be further developed. Anchors differ in terms of role in adaptation and 'settlement' as well as the extent to which individuals are aware of them, and footholds can be subject to change. For example, cognitive anchors are more easily subject to change than physical constraints or psychological dispositions (Dweck 2008; Lau, Quadrel, and Hartman 1990).

The theoretical and practical significance of the proposed concept might go beyond mobility and migration studies and may be related to the wider problem of adaptation of individuals to change and life in an increasingly complex and fluid world, especially in relation to those who have remain unsettled, disconnected and vulnerable (such as the homeless or people with health conditions or impairments).

Notes

1. The project was funded as a Marie Sklodowska-Curie Fellowship 'Social Anchoring in Superdiverse Transnational Social Spaces'.
2. 'Wm' stands for West Midlands, 'w' for woman, 'y' for years, 'm' for months.
3. Names and other details have been changed.

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Capturing the flexibility of adaptation and settlement: anchoring in a mobile society

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DEFINITION: As an initial working definition, however, the concept of anchoring refers to the processes of establishing footholds that allow migrants to acquire a relative stability and security and function effectively in new life settings. It emphasizes a need for safety and
security, the simultaneity of anchors in different geographical and deterritorialised spaces, as well as the fluid and reversible character of the studied phenomena.

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