

***Rethinking  
integration:  
New  
perspectives  
on settling  
practice***

Emilia Pietka-Nykaza

University of the West of Scotland

[Emilia.pietka-nykaza@uws.ac.uk](mailto:Emilia.pietka-nykaza@uws.ac.uk)



# Outline:

- Integration in the context of super-diversity: state of knowledge
- *Settling as relational practice* – an alternative approach to integration
- Trajectories of Polish migrants settling practices
- Implication for research on integration



# Integration in the context of super-diversity

- Integration as prominent idea used in discussions on migrants' adjustment and settlement in Europe
- Widely researched but also contested concept focusing '*a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents*' (EESC 2004)
- Integration – what do we know so far:
  - Functional aspect of integration with indicators of the integration process (Ager and Strang, 2004, 2008)
  - Relation between social and functional aspects of integration: role of social capital, networks and links (Cheung and Phillimore 2013, Strang et al 2017, 2019)
  - Outcomes of integration in relation to education, healthcare, housing, employment, spatial integration
- BUT there are still issues.....



# Integration in the context of super-diversity: Issues...

- Frequently used by policy-makers to imply assimilation
- Based on structural and functional assumptions that immigrants constituted an alien element needing adjustment
- Focus predominantly on immigrants' participation/incorporation into receiving society with little clarity on what is the "unit" into which migrant should integrate into
- Despite the multidimensional (Ager and Strang 2008) and multi-directional (Cheung and Phillimore 2013, 2016) character of integration has been acknowledge, most attention has been paid to measuring integration outcomes: when migrant become integrated and stop being migrant?
- Despite there is no agreed scholarly definition of the term, it is still predominant term to describe migrants settlement



# Alternative conceptual approaches beyond integration

- **Differentiated “embedding”** (Ryan and Mulholland 2014; Ryan 2018), to explore how migrants **negotiate attachment and belonging as dynamic temporal, spatial and relational processes**. *‘Differentiated’* relates to dynamic processes through which migrants negotiate attachments and belonging to varied degrees in different social and structural settings
- **“Emplacement”** refer to ‘a **person’s efforts to settle** and build **networks of connection** within the constraints and opportunities of a specific locality’. (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2013; Wessendorf 2018),
- **“Anchoring”** the process of searching for footholds that allow individuals to acquire socio-psychological stability and security (Grzymala-Kazłowska 2016, 2018).

These concepts recognize the role of place, identity, importance of psycho-social securities, role of social connections, time



# ISSUES ....

Existing concepts focus on migrants – **what about other players?**

To what extent existing frameworks help to capture **multiple relations** that build up and have an impact on migrant's settlement

A problem of the adequacy of the integration concept in relation to increasingly complex and super-diverse societies. **To what extent integration describe well settlement process?**

- While integration is has predominantly been described as process of incorporation/participation, settlement is also about experiences and behaviors related action of staying



# SETTLEMENT AS **RELATIONAL** **PRACTICE** : *defining the approach*

- In this approach **'relational'** means that “objects can only be understood in relation to other objects” (Jones, 2009: 491), while **'practices'** refer to everyday acts, interactions and performances of **'doing'** (Holdsworth, 2013)
- Focus on migrants as skilful agents in the practice of their stay
- The predominant focus is **1- On migrant doing things** in relation to their stay, **2- Multiple relations** that arise from migrant practices but also relations in which migrants actions are embedded.



# Methodology

- Qualitative study:
  - In-depth interviews with 24 Polish migrants living in Scotland (Glasgow or Edinburgh) for at least 6 years
  - Sample selection: diverse in terms of age, occupation, gender, education, marital status
- This study explores Polish migrant's actions (in opposition to motives or intentions) and reasons behind staying in Scotland to identify different trajectories for their settling practices in Scotland, in particular :
  - What drives post-accession Poles to stay in Scotland?
  - How do Polish migrants experience their stay in Scotland?
  - What are the long-term trajectories of Polish migrants in Scotland ?



# Settlement as a ongoing process

Lack of definitive answer or sense of ‘permanence’ about migrant’s stay in Scotland. Instead participants reflect on their present experiences and context:

*Like I said, for now I don’t see any reason to leave. **Rather than declaring that I will stay or leave I prefer to say that at the moment I have no reasons to leave.** I cannot answer yes or no.*

Szymon, arrived 2005, HR adviser

All participants lived in Scotland for at least 6 years, but **the ways in which they “do” and “experience” their stay in Scotland** vary and depend on the multiple relations that they developed upon their stay .





***I like living** here, I have a bunch **of friends**, I **know people**; Glasgow is small and apart from some things that drive me absolutely up the wall, **I love this city for so many things and I know my way around**, and I think this explains everything. I'm here because **I like it here** – it works both ways. I really appreciate the opportunity to live independently here, plus **I work here, my partner lives here ..***

- Franciszek, arrived in 2006, architect, age 33



# Settlers (Anchored Migrants)

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Instead of referring to duration of their stay (sense of permanence), settlers tend to emphasize their **sense of attachment** to the place they live in

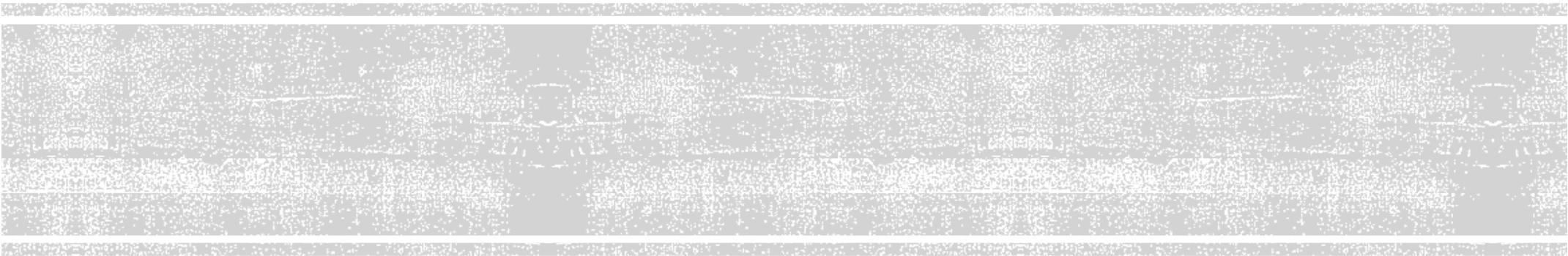
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The sense of attachment was defined in relation to **number of links** including **social** (own family, and friends) **economic** (stable work, collection of goods and properties) **emotional attachment** and **psycho-social stability** ( emotional attachment “feeling happy”) **spatial attachment** (neighborhood, city and landscape of Scotland, Limited links with Poland) that anchors them to their country of residence.

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**No plans** or intentions **for moving** instead actively develop further links to Scotland by applying for citizenship; setting up family; becoming household owner





- I sometimes say to my husband: 'And what now?' And he says that he wants to go back to Poland eventually but **there's still time...** Days go by and one doesn't really think about it. If you spend more than two years in a place, you **start accepting it; you get to know it and you start feeling better and better there.** It's about how we **get used to** and familiar with the place we live in – the area, shops, neighbours – all of that starts to **become familiar** and we attach ourselves to it. This is the attachment.., and what would happen if we go back? ; we'd have no idea how things work....Here instead **I have the rhythm, the routine and economic stability...** you have a daily, weekly and monthly routine; you know exactly what you're meant to do, and if you know exactly what you're doing, it's easier.

- Agata, arrived in 2007, Early Childcare educator, age 35



# Over - stayers

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Express intentions to migrate from Scotland but they tend to **postpone their decisions** about future mobility

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Postpone their decision about migration and thus **do not have active plans**. Express some form passive attitudes to their stay which illustrates discrepancies between migrants intentions and actions

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Tend to “**used to**” their live in **Scotland** but are **lacking emotional attachment**

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Over-stayers **emphasized the convenience of their live** in Scotland and ability to achieved desired sense of economic stability and lead ‘normal live’ (having modest earnings and ability to achieve certain goods).

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Their settlement is expressed in everyday rhythm, actions and familiarity with environment they live in

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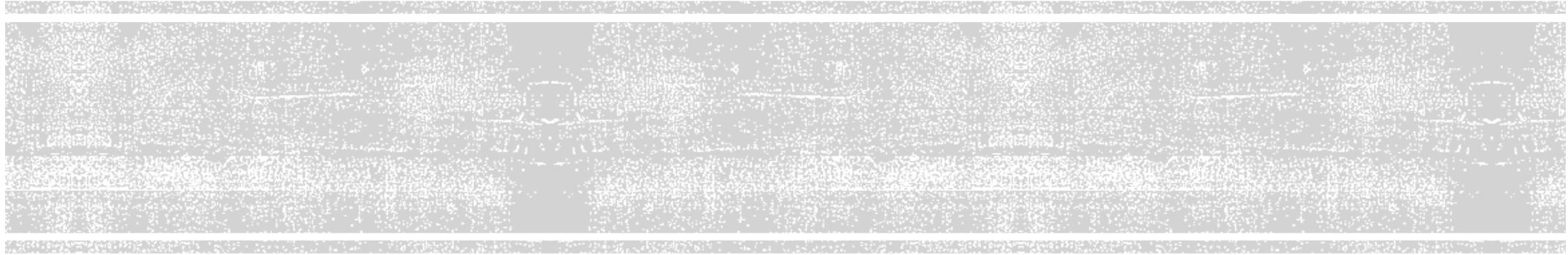
Postponing decisions about moving and thus discrepancies between settling intentions and actions were related to **the risk of loosing convenient live in Scotland**

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Their decision about staying was also linked to significant others – partners or children

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- I feel **at home in Edinburgh, like it here...**but I': I'm **connected to Łódź** because of my **family** and the past – I was born and grew up there, and still have a lot of **friends**. **My partner is now living there** as well.. I'm **connected to Warsaw** because I studied there and still have friends there. I do to go to these places or keep in touch with all those places
- Joseph, arrived in 2005, PhD student, age 33



# Circular / In-Between migrants

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Maintained **diverse social, economic and emotional links with both home and destination** country. These links were facilitated through EU open borders, cheap international flights and technology (skype, facebook, viber, whatsUp etc)

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**Undecided** about their future place of staying thus **keep on trying different opportunities for short period of time**

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Circulation between both countries was for some participants **a form of strategy** for obtaining the best of two worlds but also strategy of coping with nostalgia



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- Three years went by... Then somebody told me that if I worked here for at least five years, **I would become eligible for the state pension. I thought that if I had already managed to stay here for three years, I should be able to do it for another two.** I calculated that in order to complete those five years (minus the sick break I had), I had to stay here till April, no, sorry, till June – summertime was a perfect time to return to Poland, I thought .. **I'm alright here – financially I'm doing alright.** I would never make this kind of money in Poland. I can realize my plans. **I'm crazy about electronics – I love testing things;** I switch things on and off – I love it. I drive a car which I wouldn't drive in Poland ... **but I'm not happy...**
  - Jan, arrived in 2007, warehouse worker, age 55



# Economic migrants

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Strong orientation towards **home country** that is maintained through daily contact with members of the family, remittances, regular visits. Little emotional connection to the place of residency

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Emphasize importance of **economic links** (job, ability to afford goods) with little or no sense of social or emotional attachment to Scotland. However, economic benefits does not fully compensate the social and emotional cost of their stay

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Their stay in Scotland is conditioned by fulfilling **economic reasons/plans for better live in Poland**

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Perceive their stay in Scotland as **temporary** until economic goal are fulfilled



# Summary:

This study focuses on **what migrants are doing** upon their arrival in destination country and how these practices entails different:

**Spatial** (neighbourhoods, city/rural landscape, country of residence, country of origin),

**Time** (age at the time of migration, length of stay, everyday rythm)

**Economic** (stable job, property owner, accumulation of goods and products)

**Social** (having a partner, family (including children) and friends in Scotland) and

**Political** (civic participation)

**Emotional** (feeling happy, sad or lonely) dimensions

These relationships and attachments represent the *means* and *markers* of settling



# Implications for Integration research

- Bringing migrants practice into scrutiny allows more careful attention to the diversity of actions used by migrants to settle. **These actions however create multiple relations of diverse dimensions** e.g. spatial, time, economic, social and political (and their intersection)
- Focusing on settling *as 'relation practice'* helps to identify multiple connections that migrants create and are embedded and which shape their experiences of staying
- Such approach allows us:
  1. To capture and identify the diversities of connections that are meaningful and make up settling
  2. To capture diverse relations in which migrants actions are embedded.



# Future research: what next?

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The study only focused on Polish migrants in Scotland, thus research on migrants of different **migrant and non-migrant backgrounds** is needed to explore how people, places and spaces of different backgrounds meet and interact

The study of Polish migrants helps to identify different dimension (e.g *spatial, time, economic, social and political* ) of settlement and their intersection. Further research is needed to include **migrant and non-migrant population** to identify similarities and differences in the connections that create settlement

