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Title	Parenting in Ireland: Polish perspectives on child-rearing and help-seeking in a culturally diverse neighbourhood
Author(s)	Kealy, Carmen
Publication Date	2019-11-28
Publisher	NUI Galway
Item record	http://hdl.handle.net/10379/15808

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**Parenting in Ireland:
Polish Perspectives on Child-Rearing and Help-Seeking in a Culturally
Diverse Neighbourhood**

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
In Political Science and Sociology
National University of Ireland, Galway

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November 2019

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Declaration

I, the Candidate, certify that this thesis is all my own work and that I have not obtained a degree in this University or elsewhere on the basis of any of this work.

Signature: Carmen Kealy

Date: November 2019

Acknowledgements

This thesis could not have been accomplished without the encouragement and support of many people.

Firstly, I would like to thank all my participants for generously giving up their time, and parents in particular, for having let me into the privacy of their homes to share their experiences. I am truly humbled by the trust you have shown me.

My sincere thank you to my supervisors, Dr Carmel Devaney and Dr Allyn Fives, and the Graduate Review Committee for their support and advice over the course of this study. Further, thank you to the Hardiman Scholarship Scheme for their financial support as without it, the completion of this work would have been impossible.

Thank you to all my family, friends and colleagues, who have contributed to my sanity remaining largely intact and who were a consistent source of support and a shoulder to cry on in times of need.

To Rosemary Crosse, my rock and inspiration in academia. Thank you for sharing your wisdom, for listening to me but also for continuously demonstrating that anything is possible if you set your mind to it.

Alexander Bofilias, thank you for igniting the fire of passion for academia in the first place as without your encouragement I would have never returned to education.

Finally, to my husband Matthew and my children Ciara, Tara and Caolan. No words can describe my gratitude for your love, support and patience during this journey. I am truly blessed and thank you for putting up with the good and the bad and for the sacrifices you all made in order for me to complete this challenge.

Abstract

Despite Ireland's ever-increasing cultural diversity over the last two decades, Irish social science research has yet to give sufficient attention to the actual life experiences of migrant parents. As a result, there is a dearth of knowledge of the everyday processes through which migrant parents in Ireland confront cultural differences. This thesis gives voice to Polish migrant parents of primary school children residing in a culturally diverse neighbourhood in Ireland and examines the norms that shape their role as parents, their parental experiences and their help-seeking behaviour. In doing so, it fills a substantial gap in existing knowledge. The study took a cultural approach to parenting research in order to improve our understanding of ethnic minority and migrant parenting. The findings of this study are based on narratives of both Polish migrant parents and support service providers elicited through qualitative methods and a framework approach to analysis. Based on the findings, an *Integrated Model of Polish Migrant Parenting* has been developed. It provides a useful tool for support service providers and policy makers to help better understand Polish parenting, and can be applied to other parenting scenarios, including but not restricted to other migrant parenting scenarios, as well as add to the theoretical knowledge base. The findings show how, by giving due consideration to parenting as a multidimensional and dynamic construct and recognising the independent effects of, and the complex interaction between, culture, social class and minority status, social policy as well as service provision can more effectively support ethnic minority and migrant parents. The findings have important implications for how we should think of authoritative parenting. Although it is associated with the most successful outcomes for children, it is arguably a construct of Western societies. Migrant parents also can face significant challenges adapting to such cultural norms both because of stressors in their post migration environment but also the demands of and commitment to their home country.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Child-rearing practices and help-seeking behaviour are thought to vary in different cultures (Garcia Coll, 1990; Azar and Cote, 2002; Le et al., 2008; Bornstein, 2012; Gilchrist and Kyprianou, 2014), yet so far Irish social science research arguably has contributed little to explaining how cultural differences are experienced by Ireland's immigrant populations. In order to fill some of the knowledge gap in this area, this research qualitatively investigated the perspectives of Polish migrant parents on the norms that shape parenting as well as parental experiences and help-seeking while residing in a culturally diverse neighbourhood in Ireland.

1.1 Background to the Study

A vast amount of literature has explored childhood and the role of parenting in terms of child outcomes. Initially regarded as solely biological and a universal phenomenon (e.g. Piaget, 1936; 2003) childhood has increasingly been recognised as being impacted by context as well as cultural variability (e.g. James and Prout, 1997). Similarly, parenting, previously thought of as a uni-directional process (Maccoby, 2003), has progressively evolved, resulting in research now not only acknowledging children as individuals with agency and thus, the parent-child relationship as bi-directional, but also the relationship's embeddedness in society's wider values and structures (Lerner et al., 2002). This in turn is thought to call for an understanding of the aspects relating to the social as well as the personal roles for parents and children (Gopfert et al., 2004a).

Positing culture as an integral part of any society, it has been argued that parenting takes place within socio-cultural as well as individual family contexts and is comprised of different beliefs and value systems (Le et al., 2008). Further, parenting practices vary cross-culturally, and interpretations differ in terms of appropriate parenting (Azar and Cote, 2002). This in turn is thought to necessitate the cultural investigation of parenting, which should include the exploration of culture-specific beliefs and behaviours that guide how parents care for their children, which in turn enables comparisons and contrasts to be made (Bornstein, 2012).

Based on families with low income and complex problems (Taylor, 2000), research on ethnic minority parenting had previously been dominated by perspectives that considered variations in parenting and child outcomes as deficiencies (Sears, 1975; Demo et al., 2000), portraying ethnic minority practices as both dysfunctional (Rubel, 1966) and inferior (Garcia Coll and Pachter, 2002). More recent studies have however considered variations as adaptations of parenting to differing contexts (Garcia Coll and Pachter, 2002) and focused particularly on the impact of larger sociocultural contexts on parenting practices (Ogbu, 1981; Harrison et al., 1990; McLoyd, 1990), including sources of stress such as poverty, exclusion and racism. Arguing that ethno-cultural, economic and social contexts are specific to many ethnic minority and migrant parents, studies moreover not only compare across groups but also examine variations within groups (Garcia Coll and Pachter, 2002).

Research on help-seeking repeatedly emphasised the importance of social capital and social networks (Fram, 2003), community as a source of social support (Eissler and Brennan, 2017) and the negative effects of disadvantaged and isolated neighbourhoods on social support (Jackson et al., 2009). In terms of ethnic minority and migrant groups' help-seeking, overall research suggested that it is important to consider circumstances relating to migration and settlement, the quality as well as extent of cultural infrastructure but also previous experience of social and economic capital in the place of origin which all affect people's attitudes to accessing support (Gilchrist and Kyprianou, 2011).

1.3 Contribution to Knowledge in the Field

This study gives first-hand expressions of Polish migrant parents' perspectives on the norms that shape parenting, parental experiences and help-seeking. Given that Polish nationals with approximately 2.6% are the largest non-Irish group in the Republic of Ireland and predominately aged between 25 and 42, the most common age for family formation (Röder et al., 2014), it is argued that in order to better support them, social policy and service provision need to understand both their role and responsibilities

towards Polish parents. The study showed that Polish migrant parenting is a complex, multi-dimensional and dynamic phenomenon, which requires insight to both Polish childhood experiences as well as specific cultural norms and values to better understand parental challenges in the adaptation to their post migration environment. Variations in parenting should not be viewed as deficiency but considered rather as the result of independent effects of, and the complex interaction between, culture, social class and minority status. Thus, the research has filled a substantial gap in existing knowledge in this area.

1.4 Rationale, Aims and Objectives

The rationale for this study stems from my discovery that Irish social science research has given rather little attention to the actual experiences of parenting and help-seeking for members of immigrant populations in Ireland. It derived from the argument that Ireland is largely unfamiliar with its culturally diverse population as well as with the challenges that diversity brings for ethnic minorities/migrants and the majority population (Mc Ginnity et al., 2018). The study's focus on culture and its relevance to parenting stemmed from both an academic and personal interest. Engaging with literature on cultural diversity and parenting led to the recognition that both respect and equal treatment of all cultures is important. A personal interest in the area emerged as a result of my own experiences of residing and parenting in Ireland as a foreign national.

This study examined Polish parents' perspectives on child rearing and help-seeking in a culturally diverse neighbourhood.

The central research questions were:

1. What are the cultural norms shaping how Polish parents perceive their role as parents in the Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska (ARD) neighbourhood?
2. What is the Polish parenting experience in the ARD neighbourhood?
3. What are the attitudes toward help seeking among Polish parents in the ARD neighbourhood?

A further objective of this study was to make policy and practice recommendations concerning parenting support for Polish parents in the Republic of Ireland.

1.5 Research Design and Methods

In order to answer the research questions, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were selected as the most suitable methods of data collection as they allow for the exploration of different perspectives and generate in-depth data on the phenomenon under investigation.

The method of analysis utilised in this study aimed for transparency as well as inclusion and respect for difference in order to counteract potential personal bias and was systematic, enabling the exploration of data in depth while at the same time maintaining an effective and transparent audit trail to enhance the rigour of analytical processes. As such, the framework analysis to data (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994) was ideally suited as it illustrates the linkage between stages of analysis but also enables the comparison within and between cases when generating themes during analysis (Gale et al., 2013).

1.6 Thesis Outline

This is the first of seven chapters in this thesis. As an introduction to the overall study, this chapter has outlined the background and focus of the study as well as the rationale, aims and objectives. It has provided an overview of the theoretical influences and methods used to fulfil the aims and objectives.

In addition, it has presented the study's intended knowledge contribution to the field of parenting studies and policy.

Chapter two is a literature review on the history of childhood, the definition of parenting, followed by classical as well as emerging psychological and sociological theories that pertain to the sphere of the parent-child relationship, parenting roles and types of parenting. The chapter reflects on theories that conceptualised the influence of culture on the construct of parenting before moving on to exploring literature on contextual factors that relate to parenting such as socio-economic status, employment and education. The chapter reviews the concept of social capital and social support as well as its significance for parents and concludes with the consideration of literature that investigated childhood and family life in Poland prior to the country's accession to the European Union.

Chapter three examines the broader context in which Polish parents in this study are positioned. This chapter explores the changing nature of Irish family life, the development of family and parenting policies, but also policies of social inclusion and migrant integration. Further, the chapter provides a brief overview of what is known about migrant families in Ireland before describing the socio-demographics of the ARD-neighbourhood population, which is relevant to the study's participants.

Chapter four outlines the methodology for this study and describes as well as elaborates on the research design and theoretical approach taken. It gives a comprehensive overview of the chosen methods in order to answer the overall aims and associated objectives of this research. Following this is a section on reflexivity to explain my personal position in this study, before moving on to outlining issues around evaluating qualitative research as well as ethical considerations necessary. The chapter then provides an overview of the study population, the sampling method and the data collection, which include explanations and justifications for decisions made during the research process. A detailed account of the approach taken to analysis as well as the outlining of limitations to this study complete the chapter.

Chapter five describes the findings that emerged from the data analysis. The chapter presents the data collected from both parent and support service provider participants and is divided into four sections, which reflect the thematic findings generated through the use of the framework approach to analysis. Data are presented under sub-headings based on the research questions of the thesis, as outlined previously.

Chapter six discusses the findings in relation to the literature reviewed and highlights that Polish migrant parenting is a complex, multi-dimensional and dynamic phenomenon, which requires insight into both Polish childhood experiences as well as specific cultural norms and values to better understand parental challenges in the adaptation to their post migration environment. In addition, the chapter introduces a new conceptual framework which can be used as a tool by service providers for a better understanding of Polish migrant parenting. Although the model was constructed on the basis of findings from this study, it is a useful tool for future research and is applicable to the study of parents from other migrant groups.

Chapter seven is the concluding chapter of this study and contains a brief summary of the thesis as well as the study's contribution to knowledge. The chapter discusses the implications and recommendations for policy and service provision aimed at Polish migrant parents in Ireland and concludes with recommendations for future research.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the background to this study, followed by pinpointing gaps in literature, which this study sought to address. The rationale, aims and objectives were then outlined before moving on to describing the study's research design and methods. Last, the chapter concluded with the thesis outline.

The following chapter will present the review of literature as it relates to the study's research questions.

Chapter Two
Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Much has been written about childhood and the role of parenting in relation to child outcomes. Initially considered solely a biologically determined and universal phenomenon (i.e. Piaget, 1936; 2003), research in the area of childhood has increasingly recognised the impact of context as well as cultural variability on child outcomes (James and Prout, 1997). Further, work on parenting, previously thought of as a uni-directional process (Grusec et al., 2000), has progressively evolved with research now not only acknowledging children as individuals with agency and thus, the parent-child relationship as bi-directional (Pettit and Arsiwalla, 2008), but also the relationship's embeddedness in society's wider values and structures (Lerner et al., 2002).

Beginning the chapter with an overall outline in Section One, Section Two provides a short overview of literature relating to the history of childhood. It then presents contrasting perspectives on child development and personal identity formation by drawing on the arguments of both psychological and sociological literature.

Moving on to the related concept of parenting in Section Three, the definition of parenting is followed by classical as well as emerging psychological and sociological theories that pertain to the sphere of the parent-child relationship as well as parenting roles and types of parenting. The section also provides a review of the discussion of children's rights to liberty from a political theory perspective. Further, the concept of family is explored as it pertains to childhood and parenting. The section concludes with the presentation of Bronfenbrenner's social ecological model (1979; 1986) and Belsky's 'determinants of parenting' (1994; 2014), again drawing on the arguments of psychological as well as sociological literature.

Section Four reflects on the influence of culture on the construction of parenting and how theories including ethnotheories and the cultural frameworks of independence and interdependence conceptualise it. The section further introduces the concepts of deficiency and adaptation and how these contribute to continuing debates on minority and migrant parenting.

Literature that explored the impact of socioeconomic status on parenting, and referred to both majority and minority populations, is reviewed in Section Five before turning to Section Six which considers literature that highlighted how employment impacts on family time and mothering. It also reflects on the relationship between language proficiency and employment as it pertains to migrants.

Section Seven looks at the role of parents in the context of children's education and the influence of class-based thinking in terms of educational values and practices. Further, the concept of ethnic identity is explored as it pertains to migrant children's language acquisition and language maintenance in the education context.

The concept of social capital and social support and its significance for parents is reviewed in Section Eight. It reflects on the debate of community from a political theory perspective and further presents literature that explored the relationship between neighbourhood as well as community and social support. It reflects on the discourse of an 'underclass' which needed state intervention but also on literature that explored formal service provision in culturally diverse settings. The section concludes with an overview of help-seeking as it pertains to majority and minority parents, highlighting the importance of informal support.

Section Nine considers literature that investigated childhood and family life in Poland prior to the country's accession to the European Union and then presents research on Polish migrants' experiences of parenting in European host countries. The chapter concludes with a summary and introduction to the next chapter in Section Ten.

2.2 Childhood

A key figure in the debate on the concept of childhood is Aries (1962), who suggested that childhood did not exist in medieval times. His idea was subsequently incorporated by sociologists to illustrate the variability of human societies (James and Prout, 1997). Considering both childhood and parenting, De Mause (1976) however maintained that childhood remained a human universal, while parenting was said to be a construct and subject to change.

A key concept in the study of children and childhood was development, focusing on core themes of rationality, naturalness and universality (James and Prout, 1997; Guo, 2014). The dominant developmental approach to childhood was provided by psychology and was based on the idea of natural growth (Piaget, 1936; 2003). Rationality was regarded as the universal mark of adulthood, and childhood only represented a transitory period. Childhood was therefore presented as a biologically determined stage on the path to full human status. The naturalness of children was argued to be universally applicable, as was the progression from irrational to rational behaviour. However, in terms of the social development of children, the model was argued to give little account of the significance of children's social life and moreover to the variety of the social contexts of childhood (Vygotsky, 1962; 1978; 1980). Psychological discourses of child development were directly translated into theories of socialisation, by both psychologists as well as in the sociological accounts of Durkheim and Parson. Socialisation was thus defined as the process of transformation, turning the asocial child into the social adult (Tisdall and Punch, 2012). Literature (James and Prout, 1997, p.13; Kellett, 2010) argued that the child was initially portrayed as being 'determined by external stimuli, passive and conforming'. Directed by adults, it was presumed that children belonged to their parents and that their social identity mirrored that of their parents.

New challenges to investigating childhood emerged in the 1970's, when researchers from various disciplines sought to establish the social condition for childhood. Calling for a new 'sociology of childhood', the collaboration

between disciplines resulted in the construction of a new model of childhood with the view of children as persons with agency. The overarching feature of the model was the recognition that childhood is not natural or universal, but rather a social construct which is culturally variable (James and Prout, 1997). The ‘institution’ of childhood provides an interpretive frame for understanding the early years of human life, with biological immaturity rather than childhood being seen to be universal and natural. It was argued that the institution of childhood varies cross-culturally in terms of the phenomenon and can never be entirely separated from other variables such as class, gender and ethnicity (Jenks, 1996; Uprichard, 2008).

2.2.1 Child Development

Developmental psychology literature refers to child development as the sequence of physical, linguistic, cognitive and emotional changes that occur in a child from birth to the beginning of adulthood. Suggesting the process to be biologically determined, a child is argued to progress from dependency on their parents to increasing independence. At present, the interplay of both genetic and environmental factors is believed to be a strong influence on child development (Pem, 2015; Pluess, 2015; Knopic et al., 2016; Decety et al., 2018).

Proposing universal applicability, it is repeatedly suggested that parents play an important part in children’s development and well-being as their behaviours and the quality of the parent-child relationship are seen as key influences (Munro, 2011; Devaney, 2017). Additionally, spaces, places and people which children encounter in early years were argued to have a profound influence on children, as they are believed to learn in context (Hayes, 2012; Hayes and Rooney, 2017). Social environments were proposed to play a critical role as providers of stimulation, support and nurturance (Richter, 2004), and while acknowledging that variations exist in the meaning and importance of social context, research in developmental psychology argues for fundamental and universal principles of child development (Maggi et al., 2010).

The sociological literature recognises the similarity in developmental trends for all children but argues that it does not imply uniformity. Individual differences due to genetic and experiential variations as well as differing cultural and social contexts are proposed to have strong influences on child development (Prout, 2004; Uprichard, 2008). Previous research suggested that the process of human development interacts with the diversity of individuals, available resources as well communities' goals and preferred interaction patterns. Children's development was thus referred to as the bringing together of the biological and social, resulting in the construction of diverse developmental pathways (National Research Council US, 2001).

2.2.2 Personal Identity Formation

According to developmental psychology research, personal identity formation is an integral part of child development and dynamically interlinked with parenting, as parents are the primary source of socialisation (Beyers and Goossens, 2008; Jelic, 2014). Previous work in the area (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1980) suggested a link between attachment theory (see Section 3.3.1 of this chapter) and personal identity formation, proposing securely attached individuals to be more open to intellectual and environmental exploration, which was proposed to be fundamental to identity formation. Identity achievement was associated with both emotional attachment to parents as well as the encouragement of independence (Campbell et al., 1984). In addition to being influenced by parental views and attitudes regarding identity, it was suggested that children also receive messages on identity and its meaning from their teachers, a possibly diverse peer group and the wider society (Padilla, 2006; Jelic, 2014).

A different point of view on identity now largely replacing the developmental perspectives is the presupposition of the existence of a relationship between the individual and society, as the individual can only exist and be meaningful in his/her connection with other individuals or 'entities' (Stryker, 1980). According to Sirja-Blatchford (2001), identity formation should be regarded as a complex process of socialisation which is never completed. Central to the understanding of identity is the proposition that from birth to adulthood,

a child's perspective is constantly evolving. Suggesting that a child is not a constant, universal organism that operates in a vacuum, O'Dwyer (2006) and more recently Jelic (2014) instead posited that children should be regarded as inherently social beings that are influenced by close contacts, a particular culture as well as diverse social influences, which involve reciprocal relationships. Thus, the development of identity was argued to be 'a complex concept which changes along with a child's experiences, activities, relations with others as well as responsibilities and obligations' (Brooker and Woodhead, 2008, p.1).

2.3 Defining Parenting and the Parent-Child Relationship

The term 'Parenting' derives from the Latin word 'parere', and means 'to bring forth, develop and educate' (Hoghghi and Long, 2004, p.5). It has been said that it was initially assigned to teachers ('in loco parentis': 'in place of parents') and can, according to the developmental psychology perspective, be described as 'purposive activities which aim to ensure the survival and development of children' (Hoghghi and Long, 2004, p.5). In its origin, the word 'parenting' was more concerned with the activity of developing and educating children than with the person who does the activity. In today's vocabulary, 'parent' generally signifies the biological relationship of a mother or father to a child, which is qualified by terms such as 'foster' or 'carer' to preserve the biological nature of the relationship as distinct; meanwhile, the verb 'to parent' implies a 'process, an activity and an interaction of a positive and nurturing nature' (ibid, p.5).

Historically, research on parenting was dominated by a unidirectional approach in which only parents were considered active agents, while children were the passive recipients of parental influence (Maccoby, 2003). Parenting was understood as a top-down occurrence of intergenerational transmission, where parents determined the socialization outcomes in children in a unidirectional and deterministic manner (Grusec et al., 2000). Bell (1968) criticised the notion that parenting is a uni-directional process; instead, he emphasised its bi-directionality, as parenting does not simply involve the actions of parents on their offspring.

Evidence illustrates that the parent-child relationship is reciprocal and that children influence parents just as parents influence children (Pettit and Arsiwalla, 2008). Describing the parent-child relationship as ‘transactional’, Ambert (2001) argued that children actively shape their parents’ behaviour towards them as well as the quality and range of parenting practices. In addition, research also highlighted the need to consider the interrelationship between individuals and their social world. Lerner et al. (2002) argued that parenting involves biological as well as social processes and that social interactions

‘provide resources across the generational groups and function regarding domains of survival, reproduction, nurturance, and socialization’ (ibid, p.315).

Thus, they proposed to regard parenting as

‘bidirectional relationships between members of potentially multiple generations, which can expand through respective lifespans. These relationships are embedded in a nation’s history and may engage all institutions, i.e. educational, economic and political as well as social, within a cultural context’ (ibid, p.316).

Discussions of parenting cannot be divorced from perspectives on the nature of childhood. Sociological literature previously argued that there was an emerging shared belief in parenting being more of a social construct than a biologically determined instinct and that conflicting views of parenthood have an ideological basis (Arendel, 1997). Further, it was suggested that parenting refers to a fluid set of social practices which are historically situated (Bainham et al., 1999).

The idea of parenting being culturally determined was supported by Gopfert et al. (2004a). Besides acknowledging that the parent-child relationship is transactional, they argued that the role of parents within society is socially constructed. They suggested the use of the ‘role-relationship paradigm’ as it facilitates an understanding of the aspects relating to the social as well as the personal role for parents and children (ibid, p.6). Inclusive of the context in which this relationship occurs, the model illustrated that parents are one of

many actors who engage with and impact on children. Suggesting the consideration of context, they highlighted the need to account for factors such as parental health, marital conflict and poverty, but also the impact of siblings and extended family on the parental ability to fulfil their role. Consequently, they defined parenting as an

‘interpersonal and social construct which refers to the actions of a person within relationships. These actions are reciprocal in nature and determined by the participating individuals but also by family and social norms’ (ibid, p.63).

Chambers (2012) suggested that social norms of parenthood may appear natural but that parenting values and practices are in fact shaped by and embedded in society’s wider values, institutions and structures.

2.3.1 Parenting Roles and Types of Parenting

According to Spera (2005), research on parenting examines the influence of distinct parenting styles and parenting practices on children’s outcomes, but frequently uses the labels parenting styles and parenting practices interchangeably (Maccoby and Martin, 1983). Darling and Steinberg (1993) suggested that for a better understanding of the socialization process, it is important to distinguish between parenting practices and styles. Parenting practices were defined as specific behaviours that parents use to socialize their children while parenting style described the emotional climate of parental child-rearing. Raya et al. (2013) proposed to consider parenting style as the global aspect of parenting, while practices and attitudes are more particular aspects of child-rearing.

In relation to parental gender and parenting roles, Visnovsky (1998, translated from Slovak in Gežová, 2015), for example, proposed that fathers provide protection, guidance and support towards the outside world, while mothers provide and ensure the emotional background to the family, satisfying the need for safety and love. Research by Brody and Hall (2000) suggested that men and women, though similar, hold many dissimilarities in the ways they were socialized to behave, speak, and think. Women are often perceived and socialized to be more agreeable and are taught to express their emotions more

freely than men. Since women are permitted to express a broader range of emotions but are also expected to be more agreeable and pleasant, they are 'more likely than men to express emotions that support relationships and suppress emotions that assert their own interests over another' (Mc Cornack, 2007, p.12). More recent literature by Nhan (2018) proposed that parents are often seen as a functional unit in which children are raised, playing different roles in their children's life and contributing to children's development in different ways.

From a developmental psychology perspective, and referring to parenting style, Woodcock (2003, p.90) stated that parenting was considered largely in terms of facilitating child development. Knowledge of what children need to grow and thrive facilitates an understanding of both the desirable aspects but also the importance of parenting (Cain and Combs-Orme, 2014). Behaviour which is 'sensitive' to children's needs and 'responsive' to the demands of different development tasks was said to promote 'optimal child development' (Rutter et al., 1983; Belsky, 1984; Melhuish, 1998). Ainsworth et al. (1978) previously observed that mothers of securely attached infants consistently demonstrated sensitivity, responsiveness, accessibility and cooperativeness in their caregiving, while insecure-ambivalent infants had mothers that showed less responsiveness. Mothers of insecure-avoidant infants were found to be more rejecting with less emotional warmth and expression (Melhuish, 1998). Maccoby and Martin (1983; Bowlby, 2008; Durrant, 2012) emphasized 'reciprocity' in parent-child interactions, where parents maintain security as well as consistency, and also communicate, and solve problems, with their children.

Baumrind (1967) combined dimensions of parental warmth and demandingness to categorize parents as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive or neglectful (Cain and Combs-Orme, 2014, p.4). Authoritative parenting was said to be characterised by a balance of both parental demandingness and responsiveness, emphasising support, while also using punishment, with parents directing their child in a 'rational issue-oriented manner' (Baumrind, 1978, p.245; Kail et al., 2006; Barton and Kirtley, 2012). In contrast, authoritarian parents were said to make high demands on their

children with minimal responsiveness in return, clearly stating rules and expectations while leaving little room for negotiation. Permissive parents were described as lenient, failing to establish boundaries for their children and tend to be ‘more responsive than demanding’ (Baumrind, 1991, p.62). Last, neglectful or uninvolved parenting was characterised by minimal demands but also low responsiveness.

Developmental research repeatedly demonstrated that secure attachments are associated with children’s greater self-efficacy, social competence, empathy, and lower levels of anxiety and anger (Weinfield et al., 1999), while, by lacking warmth and consistency, often being excessively critical and punitive in nature, some styles of parenting adversely affect children’s development (Creighton and Noyes, 1989; Claussen and Crittenden, 1991; Gibbons and Gallagher, 1993). It was argued that, ‘growing evidence of empirical studies points to quality of attachment as a fundamental mediator of development’ (Davies, 1999, p.27). While attachment is clearly associated with good outcomes, it does not necessarily follow that authoritative parenting leads to quality attachments and thus positive outcomes.

More recent literature in the area of development suggested a strong link between the “quality of the parent-child relationship” and “outcomes” for children (Hintsanen et al., 2019). Further, Cain and Combs-Orme (2014) argued that while culture (Garcia and Gracia, 2009; Valentino et al., 2012) and context (such as neighbourhood; see Section 3.8.4 of this chapter) impact on parenting styles and practices and may require different parenting styles for “optimal outcomes” (Chao, 2001), authoritative parenting, which was said to be marked by warmth, high expectations, and encouragement of autonomy was associated with the most “successful outcomes” for children (McKinney and Renk, 2008; Blondal and Adalbjarnardottir, 2009; Baumrind et al., 2010; Hove et al., 2011; Rinaldi and Howe, 2012; Argyriou et al., 2016). In terms of which outcomes literature referred to, Gadsden et al. (2016) proposed that child outcomes are interconnected within and across diverse domains of development. Upon review of literature the authors identified physical health and safety, emotional and behavioural competence as well as social and cognitive competence as fundamental to children's well-being.

From a sociological perspective, the literature suggested that culture does play an important part in setting up family dynamics, which, as a result, affect parenting styles and child development (Kail et al., 2006). Arguments of exactly how culture impacts on parenting will be presented in detail in Section 3.6 of this chapter.

2.3.2 The Rights of Children, Parents and the State

Theories on childhood have evolved significantly with children now being largely recognised as humans in their own right. The ‘value accorded to them is visible’ (Byrne, 2016, p.2) in both academia and policy where children and young people are viewed as a distinct population group, who, due to their age, are more vulnerable than adults, thus warranting specific attention and protection.

Those proposing the “caretaker thesis” (Purdy, 1996; Burt, 2003; Archard, 2004; Brighthouse and Swift, 2014) argue against children’s rights to self-determination, suggesting that they should not be entitled to make autonomous decisions. Instead adults should, in children’s best interest, make decisions on their behalf as it is assumed that adults can make rational decisions, while young children are incapable of doing so (Gabriel, 2017).

In contrast, proponents of children’s liberation (Holt, 1975; Harris, 1996; Freeman, 2007) argue that children’s capacity for agency is underestimated and that age is an ‘arbitrary criterion’ (Gabriel, 2017, p.25) which unjustly denies children rights. Instead, the children’s rights approach advocates their right to self-determination, meaning children should be enabled to act and choose for themselves.

The undermining of children’s rights generally stems from the claim that parents have rights over children. Arguments for fundamental parental rights draw on Ferdinand Schoeman’s (1980) paper, where he suggested that the state should facilitate intimate relationships with others and not interfere with parents having intimate relationships with their children. He argued that deep and authentic attachments between parents and children were vital for the well-being of both parties and that since intimacy is central to the significance of the family unit, the state should absent itself from this relationship.

He proposed that relationships between parents and children were ‘universally governed by stringent and nondiscretionary moral norms’ (Brighouse and Swift, 2006, p.92) and that there was a

‘moral burden on the parent imposed by the differences between parent-child and adult-adult intimacy. The parent is responsible for both the immediate well-being of the child and the development of the child’s capabilities, and parent’s fiduciary obligations are to guarantee the child’s immediate well-being and to oversee as well as ensure cognitive, emotional, physical and moral development’ (ibid, p.94).

An argument for granting parents extensive permission to direct their children’s lives and protect them from interference by the state focused on the interest of children (Brighouse and Swift, 2006). Archard (1993) called these rights the ‘caretaker’ argument with the premise of ‘future orientated consent’ (pp.51-57). That is, parents have the right to restrict children’s freedom and to make decisions in children’s best interest guided by the principle that children will eventually agree with the decisions made on their behalf. Parents thus have the entitlement to override children’s current wishes in order to guarantee their future well-being and independence. Further, the caretaker is not only to make choices which children would make if competent, but also consider the interests of adults the children will become (Franklin, 2001, p.28).

Some liberals are rather wary of parents’ fundamental rights to direct the lives of their children, as these are rights over others who have no realistic exit option due to being considered dependent and incapable of formulating or expressing views about their interests (Brighouse and Swift, 2006).

Child liberationists such as Holt (1975) asserted that children should be granted the same rights as adults, particularly in terms of self-determination, in order to ‘overcome the oppression that is the institution of childhood’ (Byrne, 2016, p.3). This idea has been repeatedly challenged as too extreme by suggesting no significant differences between children and adults, including their ability for self-determination (Veerman, 1992). A more nuanced approach to the discussion on children’s rights to liberty was

provided by Fives' (2017) exploration of parents as care takers or liberators. Rejecting the caretaker thesis on the grounds that 'children with the capacity of liberty of action are owed a right to liberty' (p.52), the author argued that while there may be potentially good reasons for interfering with children's liberty, e.g. the promotion of their well-being, it is necessary to recognise that 'the right to liberty is owed to children in the first place' (p.52).

Continued challenges in facilitating positive outcomes for all children and young people as well as the frequently unsuccessful realisation of children's rights are evident in today's society and highlight not only the need for more effective strategies but also the difficulty of implementing a children's rights approach (Byrne, 2016).

2.3.3 The Concept of Family

It has been argued that family is a universal concept and the most fundamental form of social organization (Anastasiu, 2012). Being led by Burgess's (1926) classic definition of a family as a unity of interacting personalities, multiple formal definitions of family have since been proposed (Weigel, 2008). Previous research by Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2004) grouped the various definitions of family into three general perspectives, i.e. structure, function and transaction.

Structural definitions are 'based on the presence or absence of certain family members' such as parents, children, and extended family members' (ibid, p.177) and include the presence of people related through blood or marriage. In the context of structure, Murdock (1949) first introduced the term 'nuclear family', defining it as

'a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults' (p.1).

In line with the previously discussed caretaker thesis, definitions within the functional perspective stress the accomplishment of psychosocial functions and tasks and focus on the institutional aspects of family in the performance

of necessary societal functions (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2004). Functions include maintaining a household, socializing children, providing emotional and material support, and fulfilling roles (Weigel, 2008).

Finally, the transactional perspectives define family as

‘groups of intimates, who, through their behaviour generate a sense of family identity with emotional ties and an experience of a history and a future’ (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2004, p.177).

From a sociological point of view and in agreement with Holstein and Gubrium (1999), who considered family as a fluid concept, socially constructed and changing from person to person, Weigel (2008) argued that the perspectives of structure, function and transaction are not exclusive and that definitions may entail elements from more than one perspective. He proposed that ongoing social and political debates about family-related issues dictate the need for a better understanding of people’s thoughts about family. Findings in his studies indicated that laypeople’s concepts of the features and forms of family are complex, multifaceted, and integrated (Weigel, 2008).

Believing existing definitions of ‘family’ to be inadequate, Beauregard et al. (2009) proposed including recognition of additional family structures and cultural variability in the meaning of family. It was said that family continues to be understood on the basis of the ‘nuclear’ model, but largely ignores demographic structural changes of Western families in recent years, with increasing divorce rates as well as the phenomenon of single-parent households. Evolving definitions of family now include individuals who may not be kin, but who act as family (Beauregard et al., 2009).

It can be argued that progress has been made in terms of formulating formal definitions of family but understanding laypeople’s views on the features and forms of family provides insight into their concept of family. Concepts such as fostering and adoption suggest aspects of family that are important to ordinary people but are often overlooked in academic definitions of family (Weigel, 2008).

Notwithstanding discussions around the definition of the term, the developmental perspective continues to regard family as the most significant context for children, as children's welfare generally depends on families' capacity to meet their needs (Devaney, 2017). However, family life does not exist in isolation and consideration of the interconnected role of extended family (Bengtson, 2001; Nesteruk and Marks, 2009), neighbours and communities as well as a variety of social institutions in family functioning is necessary (Devaney, 2017).

2.3.4 Determinants of Parenting: An Ecological Perspective

Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1986) made several contributions to understanding the context in which human development occurs. Originally proposing the ecological model, he viewed individuals as embedded in their environment, focusing on environmental contexts and identifying four systems (micro, meso, exo and macro) which are interacting, interrelated and interdependent elements. The model emphasised the multiple dimensions, multiple levels and complexity of human life. In his subsequent revisions, Bronfenbrenner acknowledged that the individual was overlooked in earlier work and that biological as well as genetic aspects of the individual are relevant in human development (Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, 1994). He proposed the bioecological model as a lifespan approach to development, emphasising the importance of understanding bi-directional influences between individuals and their surrounding environmental contexts. In addition, he included the component of time (chrono) to indicate that people and environments change. Greater emphasis was placed on processes and the role of biology, which he investigated through the Process-Person-Context-Time model, where all four concepts interact with each other. Of fundamental significance to this model was the shift from a focus on the environment to a focus on proximal processes which conceptualised the interaction between a child and their immediate environment, especially the parent-child relationship (Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006). Further, he suggested that children's outcomes can be affected by a great number of social factors that interact with parenting. This highlighted that parenting does not only occur within a unique

context that is specific to individual parent-child relationships but also within a broader context of family, community, society and culture (Jack, 2000).

Mistry et al. (2003) criticised Bronfenbrenner's ecological model for its tendency to treat culture and context as synonymous. They opposed the view that culture, situated in the macrosystem, was one of multiple systems in the model, 'operationalised as separate from the individual developmental outcomes with which it interacts' (p.236). Instead, they suggested considering culture as more proximal to child development and parenting as it was believed to permeate all layers of the ecological model.

Considering the harmony between the interacting, interrelated and interdependent elements of the ecological model was work by Brendtro (2006). According to the author, a child's behaviour reflects transactions with the microsystems of influence, and at the same time, all systems within the child's ecology also impact one another. He argued that children reared in disrupted ecologies experience a host of emotional and behavioural problems. Systems working in conflict were said to cause a 'dis-ease' in the child's ecology and translate into distress for the child. Similarly, Ryan (2001) had previously suggested that interaction between factors in the child's maturing biology, his immediate family/community environment, and the societal landscape fuels and steers the child's development. Changes or conflict in any one layer will 'ripple' throughout other layers.

Having placed child development into context by reference to the ecological model, I now turn to literature on the related topic of the construct of parenting.

Research by Belsky (1994) explored factors that govern 'competent parental functioning' and indicated individual differences of parental functioning. His model, 'Determinants of Parenting', proposed that child development can be predicted by three core factors that directly or indirectly determine parenting. These include (a) the attributes of children; (b) the developmental history of parents and their own psychological make-up; and (c) the broader social context in which parents and this relationship are embedded.

Seeking to identify, why parents parent the way they do, the model highlighted social-contextual factors and forces that shape parenting, presuming that parental functioning is multiply determined (Belsky, 2014). Calling attention to the role of one's own childhood in shaping parenting, for instance, Belsky suggested that both harsh and supportive parenting tend to be transmitted inter-generationally. Further, he proposed that parents' personality shapes parenting by influencing parental emotions as well as the attributions they make about the causes of child behaviour. He argued that processes are potentially a product of how parents were raised by their own parents. In terms of marital processes, it was said that 'their association with child functioning may be direct and unmediated but also derive from the effect of marriage on parenting' (ibid, p.3). Belsky (2014) concluded that current research 'warns against general conclusions drawn regarding social-contextual forces shaping parental behaviour as individuals vary in their susceptibility to environmental effects' (p.3).

The idea of parenting as a multidimensional and dynamic construct was also supported by Zheng et al. (2017) in their investigation of different parenting patterns and child outcomes. They criticised previous research that assessed parenting with a variable-oriented approach which assumes 'associations among parenting variables with child outcomes to be the same across all individuals' (p.1). Instead, the authors suggested that parenting dimensions do not stand alone but interact with other dimensions in a 'complex and transactional system' (p.3). To capture similarities among parents and examine associations of different parenting patterns with child outcomes, they proposed a person-orientated approach which takes a holistic view towards the multi-faceted dimensions of parenting and helps identify unique components of parenting that interactively predict child outcomes (see also Iruka et al., 2018).

2.4 Parenting and Culture

According to Bornstein (2012), every culture is

‘characterized, and distinguishes itself from other cultures, by deep-rooted and widely acknowledged beliefs and behaviours that are specific to the culture’ (p.1).

Not only that cultural groups embody particular characteristics that are deemed essential for group membership, he argued that culture serves to regulate members’ lives, and culture- specific beliefs and behaviours guide how parents care for their children. In the same construction of parenting, culture is conceived to be ‘maintained and transmitted by influencing parental cognitions which shape parenting practices’ (2012, p.1; Harkness et al., 2007; Bornstein and Lansford, 2010).

Critiquing the concepts of culture and cultural norms

While literature broadly agrees that culture binds individuals together into an integrated whole (Kidd, 2002), the interrelated concepts of culture and cultural norms have and continue to be criticised for various reasons.

First, it is argued that culture is not a neutral concept (Mishra and Kumar, 2014), but rather historical, specific and ideological. It was proposed that it frequently entails a political orientation or value judgement, with a belief of absolute standards of taste and some values being better than others (Kidd,2002).

Second, culture was criticised for classifying (Boggs et al., 2004) and manipulating humans as well as leading to social order and control (e.g. Marx & Engels, 1985). Both culture and cultural norms were argued to act as constraints on individuals by predating those who are born into a culture, are brought up within its influence and lead their lives within a cultural context (Kidd, 2002).

Last, there is the critique of the concept of culture being of homogeneous and static character, binding community by rules and norms (Roepstorff and Bubandt, 2003). Recognising that human societies create and continually

modify cultural norms, goods and associations (Mishra and Kumar, 2014), it has been acknowledged and increased attention is given to heterogeneous and dynamic sets of practices (Roepstorff and Bubandt, 2003).

Cultural investigation of parenting

Bornstein suggested that the cultural investigation of parenting ought to be an investigation of ‘similarities and differences, with evaluating and comparing culture-common and culture-specific modes of parenting as its main goal’ (2012, p.3). Culture-specific influences on parenting were said to shape fundamental decisions about the type of behaviours parents should promote in their children as well as how parents should interact with their children (see also Whiting, 1963; Bornstein, 1991). Thus, caregiving potentially varies between cultures in terms of opinions about caregiving and child development. However, Bornstein added that many parenting cognitions and practices were likely to be similar across cultures. Mechanisms through which parents affect children, for example, were likely universal. ‘Similarities may reflect universals despite varying in form and the degree to which they are shaped by experience and influenced by culture’ (Bornstein, 2012, p.5). In conclusion, Bornstein proposed that parenting needs to be considered in its socio-cultural context, and that cultural study enhances ‘the variability necessary to expose processes’ (ibid, p.3).

Harkness and Super (1995) suggested that studies of culture and parenting within several different disciplinary paradigms share three common assumptions. First, there is a recognition of the importance of settings for both parents and children as they not only define the variables of experience, but also incorporate important cultural meanings. Harkness and Super proposed that parents choose from a range of available possibilities to create settings of development for their children. They argued that this process is on-going and renegotiated in response to the changing needs of both parents and children as well as the changing environment (ibid). Second, key to understanding parents’ cultural construction of a child’s life and its development are the activities that routinely take place within different settings. Harkness and Super suggested that activities, routines, or cultural practices involved in the

care and rearing of children represent cultural themes of importance to parents. Settings and activities were argued to have inherent meaning for particular cultural groups and culturally shared ideas, or images are expressed in a variety of contexts. Finally, parenting was said to be mediated not only by the cultural experiences of parents themselves but also by characteristics and experiences of individual children (ibid).

In order to investigate, how culture influences parenting, child development and outcomes, Super and Harkness (1986) had previously proposed the 'cultural niche' model. The model consists of three interrelated subsystems: the physical and social settings in which the child lives; the culturally regulated customs and practices of childcare and child rearing; and the psychology of the caretakers, including parental ethnotheories (Bennett and Grimley, 2001). The culturally influenced physical environment that parents provide for children may contribute to differences in child development and outcomes. Customs of child-rearing include common practices that are taken for granted within a culture. Further, 'parental ethnographies', which refer to the parent's psychology, includes beliefs and values that are culturally constructed and relate to parenting as well as childhood (Hoghghi and Long, 2004).

While Bronfenbrenner's ecological model provides a useful framework in which to consider parenting issues in different contexts, Harkness and Super's model of the developmental niche focuses more specifically on the importance of cultural context in understanding parenting (Bennett and Grimley, 2001). The subsystem of ethnotheories or belief systems, which are often not explicitly expressed or consistent, come to the forefront, when parents confront choices.

Suggesting that ethnotheories form an indirectly linked hierarchy of beliefs, Harkness et al.'s rational syllogism (2007) stated that:

at the top of the hierarchy are the most general, implicit ideas about the nature of the child, parenting, and the family. Below this triad are ideas about specific domains, such as infant sleep or social development. These ideas are closely tied to ideas about appropriate practices and further to imagined child or family outcomes. Ideas are translated into behaviour as mediated by

factors such as child characteristics, situational variables, and competing cultural models and their related practices. The final results can be seen in actual parental practices or behaviours and actual child and family outcomes (Harkness et al., 2007, p.184).

Similarly, Bose (2016) argued that parental ethnotheories constitute a very important part of the context in which children live and develop but argued that literature on parental beliefs has largely focused on discreet, relatively stable cultural contexts (Harkness and Super, 1996). The author suggested that less had been written about parental ethnotheories in the context of social transformation, such as migration. It was said that as families migrate and successful adaptations to a new environment are required, parental belief systems may change.

Having outlined theories on parenting and culture as well as previous propositions of how to investigate the interplay of both phenomena, I now turn to literature discussing cultural specificities in parenting.

Research frequently makes reference to culture when exploring specific types of parenting, gender role division and parenting practices. Dill (2014), for example, found that the current Western landscape of parenting is dominated by a culture of intimacy and communication, where parents have a strong desire for warm, continual and spontaneous interaction with their children. Appreciating children's open affection and the associated emotional rewards, these interactions often strongly contrast with those of their own parents' approach. Despite Western influences, Uji et. al. (2014, p.294) suggested that in cultures, where men were traditionally assigned the role of primary bread winner and head of the household, paternal parenting was still partly perceived to be more authoritarian than maternal parenting. Comparably, where women were traditionally assigned the role of the caretaker, maternal parenting styles were typically perceived to be authoritative as well as at times permissive in nature.

Bornstein and Lansford (2010) argued that in previous examinations of cross-cultural distinctions in parenting practices, two alternative cultural frameworks of independence and interdependence were most common

(Harkness and Super, 1995; Greenfield and Suzuki, 1998; Bornstein and Lansford, 2010). The primary end goal of development in the model of independence is an autonomous individual who enters relationships and takes on responsibilities by personal choice. In contrast, the interdependence model emphasises the importance of a mature person's embeddedness in a network with others, where actions are ideally for the benefit of a collectivity, most frequently the family (Greenfield and Suzuki, 1998). Eastern cultures are repeatedly argued to adopt practices promoting interdependence and family orientation, in contrast to Western cultures, where parents place greater emphasis on the fostering of individual achievement in their children.

Despite Edwards et al. (2006) having stated that research has now started to criticize the independence-interdependence dichotomy as too simplistic, ignoring fluidity but also cultural diversity, the framework continues to be used (i.e. see Nhan, 2018).

2.4.1 Parenting and Minority Cultures

It has been argued that parenting takes place within cultural as well as individual family contexts and is comprised of different beliefs and value systems (Le et al., 2008). Parenting practices were said to vary cross-culturally, and interpretations differ in terms of appropriate parenting (Azar and Cote, 2002).

In its origin, research on ethnic minority parenting was dominated by perspectives that considered variations in parenting and child outcomes as deficiencies due to comparing disparities against middle-class mainstream culture (Sears, 1975; Demo et al., 2000). Early studies of ethnic minority groups portrayed their parenting practices as dysfunctional (e.g. Rubel, 1966). Most research was said to have been based on families with low-income levels experiencing complex problems, but findings were quickly generalized as descriptive of all families within a particular ethnic minority group (Taylor, 2000). Research in the area was believed to have been historically motivated by the need to inform the effectiveness but also superiority of some childrearing practices over others. The shaping of parenting was regarded as a way to improve developmental outcomes and promote the integration of

ethnic minority families into mainstream society (Garcia Coll and Pachter, 2002).

Research now has become rather wary of the idea of deficiencies and instead considers diverging variation as adaptations of parenting to differing contexts (Garcia Coll and Pachter, 2002). Le Vine (1977; Kellmer Pringle, 1980; Hoghughi and Long, 2004) previously proposed three parental goals, which he believed to be universal, i.e. physical survival and health, provision of environment for successful progression and teaching normative cultural and societal values. While he maintained these goals to be applicable to all parents, he considered parenting as an adaptive process to ‘specific contexts that families are situated in’ (Hoghughi and Long, 2004, p.89). By now, particular contextual factors that impact on ethnic minority families are increasingly acknowledged, measured, and documented. Moreover, studies not only compare across groups but also examine variations within groups, ‘highlighting the heterogeneity within ethnic minority groups’ (Garcia Coll and Pachter, 2002, p.4). Theoretical models that try to investigate ethnic minority parenting tend to focus on the impact of larger sociocultural contexts on parenting practices (Ogbu, 1981; Harrison et al., 1990; McLoyd, 1990), including ‘sources of stress such as poverty, segregation, and racism. It is argued that ethno-cultural, economic and social contexts are specific to many ethnic minority parents’ (Garcia Coll and Pachter, 2002, p.5).

Garcia Coll and Pachter (2002; Garcia Coll, 2000) proposed an integrative model of minority parenting that differentiates between the independent effects of culture, social class, and minority status on parenting, and concurrently acknowledges the complex interrelations among these factors. They suggested that culture, class, and minority status account for issues that are specific to minority populations. Further, they indicated that factors such as social class, environment, cultural traditions and histories, family factors, and child characteristics may have a differential effect on ethnic minority as compared to mainstream populations. Thus, Garcia Coll and Pachter argued that ‘differences in parenting approach are in part adaptive responses to these factors’ (2002, p.6).

In their investigation of immigrant parents in Canada, Ochocka and Janzen (2008) criticised current models of ethnic minority parenting. While acknowledging that previous research in this area has emphasised the importance of ecology (Belsky, 1984; Patterson et al., 1992) and contextual factors (Marshall, et al., 2001; Sundar and Ochocka, 2005), they argued that these models do not focus on immigrant parents. Indicating the need for a framework that incorporates an understanding of other cultures' parenting as well as the role of a new context in shaping the parenting of immigrants, Ochocka and Jansen proposed an orienting model that took both culture and context into account. This model was focused on the process of parenting as an immigrant, rather than on different parenting approaches and their outcomes.

Thus, alongside culture, ethnic minority parenting can be considered as an adaptive process to a multitude of contextual factors. What remains however unclear is what values and principles inform the judgement that some parenting approaches are acceptable while others should be rejected.

2.5 Parenting in Context: Socioeconomic Status

Roubinov and Boyce (2017) argued that it is not sufficient to examine the construct of parenting at the individual level because parenting is situated within and strongly influenced by the larger social ecology in which it unfolds, including the socioeconomic context. Socioeconomic status (SES) is frequently measured by family income, parental education levels, prestige of parents' occupations as well as wealth and material possessions. It was argued that these variables influence parents' views on child development, the characteristics parents wish to develop in their children and their beliefs about parenting in general (Hoff et al., 2002). SES has been claimed to affect parenting beliefs and practices due to an association with families' access to material resources (Duncan and Magusson, 2002); further, parents' occupational conditions were suggested to impact on their beliefs about important values that they should instil in their children, which in turn influence parenting practices (Hoffman, 2002).

According to Luster and Okagaki (2006), SES was said to represent a major source of indirect and direct influences on parenting practices and children's outcomes as the social status of parents influences economic resources and consequently the material lives of children. For instance, the neighbourhood, quality of nutrition, clothes and past time activities as well as the home environment, parent-child interactions and long-term socialisation goals are tied to the economic resources that are available to parents.

Research findings in the area of SES and parenting were consistently negative when investigating parents of families with lower levels of SES. These parents were found to use physical discipline, authoritarian relationship styles and to focus on obedience, conformity and maintaining order (Pinderhughes et al., 2000). In contrast, parents of families with higher levels of SES were found to use psychological punishments, to foster egalitarian relationships between parents and children and to focus on developing independence and questioning authority (Lareau, 2003). Roubinov and Boyce (2017) argued that studies on parenting have largely been 'conducted by high-income and well-educated developmental researchers' (p.2). The authors suggested that the judgments about "good" and "bad" parenting were influenced by researchers' backgrounds and rearing experiences, meaning that extant parenting research often applied

'middle-class parenting standards across the socioeconomic gradient, rather than considering the relative functionality of specific child rearing practices' (p.2).

Ignoring child outcomes and instead focusing on parenting styles and practices alone, Roubinov and Boyce (2017) concluded with the proposition to consider the value, meaning, and functionality of parenting practices across different social and economic climates, rather than universal denotations of "good" and "bad" parenting.

Research in the area of SES and parenting has by now shifted its empirical focus to more complex models of environmental and contextual factors that shape family processes and child development. Recognising parenting as a complex, multiply determined construct with 'variability across the SES

gradient, the presence of mediating and moderating variables' was suggested (Roubinov and Boyce, 2017, p.3). This perspective was also adopted by Hosokawa and Katsura (2018) who argued that while SES indicators strongly influence children's health and well-being, SES also interacts with other factors, both mediating and moderating their influence on child development.

2.5.1 Minority and Migrant Parents, and Socioeconomic Status

Within the context of minority and migrant parenting, and SES, De Haas (2018, p.26) in his work on European migration argued that the 'structure of labour demand in destination societies' is a primary migration driver. Migrants were believed to be willing to engage in low-status jobs without considering these as degrading because of both family and the community of origin being the primary group of reference. Fuligni and Yoshikawa (2003) previously pointed out that traditional socioeconomic indicators may not always have the same meaning for immigrant families as for host country families. They suggested that immigrant groups frequently come from societies with lower overall levels of educational attainment while some immigrants also stem from societies with higher normative educational strata. This is frequently coupled with the lack of recognition of 'their degrees and vocational training' gained in their country of origin (De Haas, 2018, p.27). Fuligni and Yoshikawa (2003) further argued that different immigrant groups exhibit different levels of both expectations of the host country as well as obligations to the family. The authors concluded that immigrant parents may lack traditional measures of economic resources but compensate these with a strong supply of support from their families and communities (see elaboration on Social Capital in Section 2.8.1 and 2.8.2).

Luster and Okagaki (2006) argued that some ethnic minority groups were more likely than others to experience persistent or temporary poverty and associated harmful effects. Besides lower levels of school achievement, their children were proposed to more likely experience harsh parenting as well as exposure to acute and chronic stressors. Similar to the negative findings of low SES parenting within the majority population presented previously, literature proposed parenting to be sensitive to both SES and ethnicity and

suggested optimal parenting to be aligned to the practices of Caucasian middle to upper class families while parenting in lower SES families as well as in ethnic minority families supposedly share many features of parenting that are considered less optimal (Chao, 1994; Park and Lau, 2016).

While literature presented in Section 2.4 and 2.4.1 suggested that cultural differences in minority/migrant parenting were adaptive strategies, Hill et al. (2005) found that the characterization of parenting among families of lower socio-economic status shared similarities with describing parenting of specific minority groups such as African American but also Latino and Asian families. They suggested that it was unlikely for these similarities in values and practices to stem from similarities in cultural values, but that they instead derived from experiences of discrimination, oppressive social stratification and minority cultural experiences.

Luster and Okagaki (2006) proposed that with regards to assumptions about parenting within an ethnic minority community, these either associated a specific ethnic community with a particular SES based way of parenting or treated families of diverse backgrounds as all the same. In order to understand the effects of SES and ethnicity on parenting, they proposed the investigation of widely accepted parenting practices that were found most optimal, thus advocated the return to a universalistic perspective on parenting. The authors further argued that there was evidence of similar effects of SES on parenting across families from different ethnic backgrounds. They suggested that members of ethnic minority groups were likely immigrants and that regardless of their previous educational attainment, they may rely on temporary work arrangements and low wages. In addition, immigrants were likely to value children's education as this was perceived as important for their advancement in the host country.

Hill (2006) argued that while research on the influence of poverty is conducted with ethnic minorities, only a few studies have carefully considered SES and community characteristics when examining ethnic variations in parenting. The author stated that comparative research often highlights between-group differences rather than similarities. Further, it was

said that research often fails to investigate within-group variations by assuming within-group homogeneity; variations among families from a single ethnic group may be as large as variations across ethnic groups. Moreover, similar parenting behaviours may have different meanings and influences on children's development due to ethnic- and socioeconomically based differences in parenting contexts and parenting beliefs (see Park and Lau, 2016).

As previously described in Section 2.4, Western culture is often described as individualistic conceiving the individual as 'independent, self-contained and autonomous'. In contrast, many other cultures are described as interdependent, emphasising the fundamental connectedness of human beings to one another (Park and Lau, 2016). Parallels with parenting that uses elements of individualism and parenting that use interdependent elements have served to reify the existing association between low SES and the valuing of conformity (ibid). While Kusserow (1999) warned about creating an East-West divide and instead suggested that parents from all SES backgrounds incorporate both individualistic and interdependent orientations, Park and Lau (2016) argued that the framework continues to be useful in work with children and families of diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. In their study, the authors found that child independence was more common in nations with greater wealth and higher educational attainment, while obedience was more common in nations with less wealth and lower percentages of educated and urban populations. This was considered important as

'emphasis on child independence without recognizing family connectedness through child obedience may induce stress to families and communities in settings where both child qualities are adaptive and valued' (ibid, p.25)

2.6 Parenting in Context: Balancing Employment and Family, and the Issue of Gender

According to Roman and Cortina (2016), there has been a dramatic change in Western family organization in recent decades due to a decline in men being the main breadwinner. Instead it has become more common for both parents to be employed, which involves a new organization of tasks and a different allocation of time between both parents (Gershuny, 2000). Eagle et al. (1998) argued that as a result of this now-normative family organisation, dual-earner couples are more likely to experience higher levels of work-family conflict than single-earner couples. This was believed to have important implications for employees' physical and mental health as high levels of work-family conflict have been associated with poorer physical health and higher rates of depression, anxiety, stress, and problem drinking (Grzywacz, 2000; Grzywacz and Marks, 2000). Conflict also affects the family as men and women who experience high levels of work-family conflict reported greater marital strain (Hughes et al., 1992). Research identified several antecedents of work-family conflict such as long working hours, lack of supervision and co-worker support, as well as little autonomy in the workplace (Bowen, 1998; Maume and Houston, 2001). Roxburgh (2011) argued that it is important to consider the association between working parent's subjective assessment of time spent with children and parental well-being, as despite an increase in demands on working parents, literature repeatedly defines the good parent as vigilant and involved, spending as much 'quality' time with children as possible; in contrast, the bad parent is defined as one who fails to prioritise quality time with children.

Research suggests that the differences in time allocation between men and women have decreased considerably, although the division of time is not completely egalitarian (Ajenjo and Garcia-Roman, 2014). Family time is also affected by the new organization of paid and unpaid duties as the increase of paid hours reduces the availability to spend time with children as well as a partner (Glorieux et al., 2011). Family time is considered an important value to individuals and is considered a good indicator of well-being and children's development (Pleck, 2010). Presser (2003) pointed out that time pressures

derived from the new employment arrangements of the household have a negative effect on family time and consequently on individual well-being. Attitudes, alongside labour constraints, also matter for family time. Couples who share more egalitarian values, allocate time more symmetrically (Meil, 2005).

Regarding family time, it appears that more egalitarian behaviours predict a greater availability of time and result in a higher participation by fathers (Gimenez Nadal, et al., 2012). Gracia (2014) proposed that the time parents spend with their children is considered a good input for child development, with younger children demanding more basic activities, whereas older children require more interactivity. Similarly, Zick et al. (2001) previously argued that parents' involvement is important in terms of caring and time spent in routine activities, as well as a devotion to more interactive activities; increased parental involvement is positively related to children's development. Roman and Cortina (2016) pointed out that there are also differences in the amount of family time across other sociodemographic characteristics. According to Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001), traditional gender role attitudes favour the separation of male and female spheres with more separate lifestyles and less time together. More family time is recorded by couples with higher education, who work in jobs with standard working hours and are more egalitarian (Glorieux, et al., 2011). Roman and Cortina (2016) stated that quality in addition to the amount of time is an important factor as family time frequently occurs under time pressure. When there is less availability of time, the strategy of multitasking is used to spend more time with the family. However, Offer and Schneider (2011) argued that multitasking is associated with an increase in negative emotions, psychological distress and work-family conflict for mothers, but less for fathers. Thus, the presence of children in unpaid work activities is more common for mothers, indicating that women must perform other activities while providing care for their children (Sevilla-Sanz et al., 2010).

Although the new organization of the household has led to more time pressure and constraints, Bianchi et al. (2006) found that time with children has increased in recent decades. While mothers continue to spend a large amount

of time with children, fathers are now more involved in activities that concern children, particularly less routine and more interactive activities (Baizan et al., 2014). Bloemen and Stancanelli (2014) found that the amount of time fathers spend with their children is positively correlated to mothers' employment and wages, but that mothers' time devoted to childcare is less affected by fathers' wages or working time.

2.6.1 Balancing Employment and Family, and the Issue of Gender in relation to Minority and Migrant Parents

Roehling et al. (2005) in their US study proposed that Western countries' workforces have become more ethnically diverse, but that little is known about the ways in which different ethnic groups are affected by the strains associated with the frequently conflicting demands of work and family. They argued that ethnic groups tend to have differing gender-role attitudes and different work histories, particularly regarding women's employment. These factors may influence the experiences of work-family conflict in men and women of different ethnic backgrounds (Roehling et al., 2005). Cultures that subscribe to more traditional gender-role attitudes were described as expecting men to be the primary breadwinners and women to be the primary caregivers. Cultures with more egalitarian gender-role attitudes on the other hand were said to be expecting men and women to invest more equally in caregiving and economic roles. The authors suggested that gender-role expectations were related to levels of conflict among working men and women. Among minorities/migrants from more traditional cultures, the expectation that women, even if employed, should be responsible for the home, placed women at risk for role overload and higher levels of work-family conflict (2005).

In the European context, Santero and Naldini (2017) argued that the analysis of migrant parents' reconciliation of childcare and paid work in receiving countries remains limited. In their investigation of 'how immigrant families from Romania, Morocco and Peru combine paid work and family commitments around parenthood in Italy' (p.3), the authors found that there were tensions between parental ideals and migrant agency. It was suggested

that despite immigration potentially fostering ‘innovations and gender negotiation’ (p.12), the receiving context can hinder a less ‘gendered division of responsibilities within couples’ (p.12).

2.6.1.1 Migrant Parents’ Employment and Language

Globalisation as a worldwide trend is closely linked to the free movement of labour. In order to improve access to better employment opportunities, workers frequently move to other countries. However, movement does not occur without problems as language ability plays an important role in the labour market. Schumann (1976) for instance argued that the greater the social and cultural difference between two linguistic groups, the more difficult it is to transition to a new language.

Literature on the integration of immigrants repeatedly focuses on both their language skills and economic performance. Gentili and Mazzonna (2017) as well as Picot and Sweetman (2012), for instance, suggested that the ability to communicate in the host country’s language ‘has significant direct and indirect influences on labour market success and is key to positive outcomes’ (Picot and Sweetman, 2012, p.8). Christl et al. (2018) proposed that a considerable number of immigrants possess low levels of language proficiency, which is typically associated with poor labour-market integration. They suggested that wage differences between native and immigrant populations can be explained by additional factors such as education, experience and occupation as well as industry (see Dell’Arima et al., 2015). For immigrants to achieve their full economic productivity, Christl et al. (2018) argued that it is not only critical to improve new immigrants’ language skills but also to encourage ‘the acquisition of official language skills’ (p.27) (i.e. Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing in the host country’s official language) for migrants who have resided in the host country for some time.

In agreement with the statement that skills in the official language of the host country significantly affect the economic integration of immigrants, inclusive of their employment levels and incomes, Derwing and Waugh (2012) suggested official language skills also impact on immigrants’ social

integration in their workplaces and communities. They argued that lack of proficiency in an official language combined with inadequate access to cultural knowledge can lead to limited opportunities for immigrants to fully participate in society. According to Derwing and Munro (2009), adults' ability to learn a second language is influenced by a variety of factors, such as quality of instruction, age, educational level and linguistic aptitude as well as the similarity between the mother tongue and the host country's language. Further, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) identified motivation to play a significant role in language learning. Last, social factors such as social and cultural difference as well as distance but also lack of support by and access to speakers of the official language affect immigrants' acquisition of language skills.

2.7 Parenting in Context: Children's Education

In the past, much had been written about the positive relationship between parental involvement in children's schooling and children's academic success (Epstein, 1983; Baker and Stevenson, 1986; Reynolds, 1989) with predictors of parental involvement generally focussing on demographic factors (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997; Raffaele and Knoff, 1999). Contemporary education research however is strongly influenced by Bourdieu and Lareau's studies on schooling, making important claims about class-related values and practices (Irwin and Elley, 2011). Bourdieu suggested a mechanism by which students, based on their cultural capital (i.e. knowledge, skills) are allocated, channelled and classified by education systems, and he argued that criteria such as performance cannot be separated from children's resources which they have acquired at home (Barglowski, 2018). Lareau (2003, pp.3-5; 2006) proposed different cultural logics of childrearing for middle and working-class families. The middle classes supposedly follow a logic of concerted cultivation, treating their children as a developmental project, whilst in contrast working-class and poor families allow an 'accomplishment of natural growth', in which there was much less parental involvement in children's daily life, recreational activities and style of talk.

Irwin and Elley (2011) argued that middle-class privilege is seen by many (Bourdieu, 1986; Lareau, 2003) to be handed down through socialization practices, often described in terms of investment. Due to middle-class 'investments' aligning with broader societal and institutional values, actions and subjective orientations are argued to be shaped by class context and contribute to the reproduction of social inequalities.

Lareau (2003) described parenting to include involving children in paid-for extra-curricular activities, as well as encouraging a particular style of talk with debate and discussion, both within and outside the boundaries of family. The use of activities was suggested to develop a portfolio of skills and talents. Lareau has argued that concerted cultivation is classed and prevalent amongst the professional middle classes, however Bennett et al. (2012) argued that working-class parents were equally concerned with such activities but constrained in the options available. Instead of private providers, the authors stated that working-class parents in their study relied far more on cheaper activities, provided by schools and churches. Further, rates of working-class participation in what the authors called 'elite cultural activities' (such as orchestra) were also lower. Bennett et al. (2012) argued that while working-class parents saw activities as important, they were not necessarily considered for skill development, but rather for children's access to a safe space in the neighbourhoods. Hence, the authors concluded that differences between the social classes are not so much a question of class cultures, but rather 'class related conditions' (2012, p.152; Vincent, 2017).

Vincent (2017) argued that a binary distinction in education literature overlooks at least two points. Middle and working-class parents, which are usually defined by occupation, are not homogeneous groupings. She argued that in addition to occupation and income, class theory has moved towards a focus on lifestyle and social networks as ways of defining class position. Thus, the established 'centrality of the boundary between the middle and working classes' is inadequate (Savage, 2015, p.26). Additionally, she noted that some class positions, such as the 'intermediate' class (clerical/administrative/sales positions) are largely overlooked in research literature. Little is known about this group's values and behaviours in terms

of parenting and education, raising the question whether they are distinctive from those of the middle and working class (Vincent, 2017; Irwin and Elley, 2011).

2.7.1 Minority and Migrant Parenting, and Education

Literature in the past suggested that home-school collaboration is best facilitated when educators and parents hold similar expectations for children's performance, feel comfortable communicating with each other, cooperate to enhance children's performance, monitor progress and hold children accountable for their work and behaviour (Lareau, 1987; Christenson and Garrettson, 1993). It was suggested that such collaborations may be easier established when parents and teachers share similarities in terms of cultural and educational background, SES and spoken language (Moles, 1993). This was later supported by Heckmann (2008) who argued that there needs to be a mutual understanding between the diverse parent body and teachers, where both become aware of each other's challenges and expectations, can ease tensions and promote a greater sense of trust and cooperation.

Barglowski (2019) argued that migrant parents generally need to undertake efforts to become familiar with new education systems or learn a new language to become involved in their children's education. Literature suggests that the way in which parents approach schools and education is strongly influenced by their pre-migration experiences and by the culture of their country of origin, which may vary considerably. Various practical elements can result in clashes of expectations between parents and schools, which may often be implicit and not openly discussed (Roer-Strier and Strier, 2006; Reynolds, 2008; Ryan et al., 2010a; 2010b).

Barglowski (2019) suggested that while frequently exposed to discrimination, which worsens their social mobility prospects, many migrant parents consolidate these experiences with comparatively high educational aspirations for their children. This aspiration often stems from the fact that parents' migration was driven by the desire for a better future for their children in the first place (Barglowski et al., 2015; Ryan and Sales, 2013). Modood (2004; Coe and Shani, 2015; Mc Taggart and Mc Taggart, 2016)

argued that while Bourdieu's cultural capital helps to explain why disadvantaged populations may expect less and achieve less, it fails to recognise why some disadvantaged groups, like ethnic minorities, who often suffer from misrecognition and discrimination, perform much better.

2.7.1.1 Children's Language Acquisition

According to Tamis-Le Monda and Rodriguez (2008, p.1), the entry into 'formal language' is one of the most significant achievements of early development as language enables children to share meanings, and to participate in cultural learning. In terms of education, language is vital to children's school readiness and achievement (Moskal and Sime, 2016). Snow et al. (2007) argued that research into the factors that promote language growth in young children is central to identifying gaps in achievement that exist in children from different ethnic, language, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Children enter school with different levels of skill, and these initial differences frequently affect children's subsequent language growth, cognitive development and academic achievement. Ferguson et al. (2007) suggested that due to the dramatic change in the demographic profiles of minority and immigrant populations, a shift in focus has generated research on the widespread disparities that exist in children's school readiness across ethnic, racial and socioeconomic lines. Whitehurst and Lonigan (2003) argued that due to the existence of group disparities in learning prior to preschool, research seeks to understand the role of children's early home environment in the learning process. Tamis-Le Monda and Rodriguez (2008) proposed that in light of evidence that children from low-income and minority backgrounds are more likely to exhibit delays in language at school entry, additional work is needed to understand why these differences exist, and how to best support parents in their provision of positive home environments for their children. The authors proposed that future research should investigate the ways in which multiple aspects of the home learning environment jointly contribute to developmental outcomes in children. Further, they suggested that research on the language development and school readiness of children from language minority households should focus on how in- and out-of-home language experiences jointly contribute to children's proficiency in both

English and their native language. Finally, most research on the social context of children's language and learning focused on children's interactions with their mothers. Given children's often rich social networks, future studies should examine the

‘language opportunities offered by multiple members of children's environments, including fathers, siblings, extended family members, childcare providers and the wider community’ (ibid, p.4).

2.7.1.2 Maintenance of Heritage Language

It has been argued that parents pass on their mother tongue to their children, not only to facilitate communication with immediate and extended family members, but also to maintain a sense of cultural identity amongst their children. Children acquire a range of social, cultural and family values through the mother tongue (Rumbaut, 2002; Valentine et al., 2008). Thus, language has repeatedly been linked to cultural identity (Villegas-Torres and Mora-Pablo, 2018) and it was argued that mother tongue maintenance should be ensured (Ni Raghallaigh and Sirriyeh, 2015).

Valdes (2005) suggested that, over time, many linguistic minorities experience a ‘language shift’. As children born in the host country partake in pre-school and school related activities, they are increasingly exposed to the host country language, as well as to peer influence and the media of their country of residence. This can make them feel less positive towards their heritage language and consequently leads to them using it less. Previously specified by Fillmore (2000), there are both internal and external factors that lead to the loss of the native language. The internal force is the desire for social acceptance and conformity to the dominant group, as well as the necessity to communicate with the members of the host society. On the other hand, external pressure comes from the socio-political environment, and the extent to which a society opposes expressions of difference (Fassetta, 2014). Röder et al. (2015) argued that children are aware of these pressures and frequently interpret being different as not acceptable. As language is an obvious and easily identifiable difference, it may be the

first to be eradicated in this context. However, it was previously identified that weakness in the mother tongue in adolescence can lead to conflict and emotional upsets in the home. In addition, there may be conflict between the school and home cultures (Cummins, 2001).

Mackey (2004) argued that due to the global dominance of the English language, heritage language maintenance is a challenge for migrant parents in Ireland. Issues related to language learning, multilingualism, cultural and linguistic diversity in Ireland have only been addressed in the last decade (Ní Laoire et al., 2007; McFayden, 2008). This increased diversity in language can have both positive and negative implications for children and their families. According to Irish research by Molcho et al. (2011), fluency in the language of the country of residence is considered an important factor for integration and an important determinant of the lives of migrants more generally. However, this does not have to be to the expense of immigrants' heritage language. Barac and Bialystok (2011) suggested that bilingualism has positive effects on children, such as improved cognitive awareness.

In the past, it was pointed out that while family dynamics play a crucial role in establishing language use in the second generation, the wider community is also influential. Highlighting the importance of the broader environment, Hulsén et al. (2002), for example, stated that there is a positive association between migrants' heritage language maintenance and the number of contacts in their social network who speak the heritage language. The availability of ethnic social networks provides immigrant families with an opportunity to speak their native language, thus increasing heritage language maintenance (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006).

According to Röder et al. (2015), children with opportunities to use their heritage language in various social domains (e.g. family, religion, work, government) are more likely to maintain it. The availability of playgroups and schools that are supportive of heritage language seem to play an important role in reinforcing parents' efforts in the process of intergenerational language transmission.

2.8. Community

Having already outlined literature that proposed a link between ecological context and parenting in previous sections of this chapter, the argument is presented that parents are embedded within a broader net of community. The following section examines the concept of community more generally from a political theory perspective before moving on to situate community within Social Capital and Social Support literature.

2.8.1 Communitarianism

The nature and significance of community have featured prominently in Western ethics and political philosophy, in both secular history and history of religion (Buchanan, 1998). It has been argued that the term ‘community’ refers to a form of connection among individuals that is stronger and deeper than mere associations with others. Two elements had been proposed as essential to the concept of community:

‘(1) individuals belonging to a community have common ends that are robust, and that are conceived of and valued as common ends by the members of the group; and (2) for the individuals involved, their awareness of themselves as belonging to the group is an integral part of their identity, their sense of who they are’ (Buchanan, 1998, p.1).

It was suggested that the term ‘communitarian’ was first introduced in 1841, to mean ‘of, pertaining to, or characteristic of a community or communistic system; communitive’ (Etzioni, 2001, p.2336). Not drawing on the term but focusing on communitarian issues were works by early sociologists such as Tönnies, Durkheim and Mead (Etzioni, 2001).

The emergence of communitarian theory has been argued to have largely occurred as a critique of liberalism, particularly Rawls’ work ‘A Theory of Justice’ (1971), in which he formulated a concept of justice that was based on the inviolable rights of individuals. Communitarians argued that with a heavy emphasis on choice and autonomy, liberals ignore the important fact that individuals are ‘embedded in societies and are intrinsically affected by external forces that influence their ultimate decision making’ (Etzioni,

2014, p.620). In other words, communitarianism argued that certain goods are essentially communal and therefore need to be ‘part of the political process’, while liberalism tended to the position that ‘the good life is too contested and best left to individual choice’ (Van Leeuwen, 2015, p.1).

In the 1990’s, a new school of communitarianism, referred to as responsive (democratic) communitarianism emerged, stressing that societies cannot be based on one normative principle, and that both individual rights and the common good are ‘major sources of normativity, without either one being a priori privileged’ (Etzioni, 2014, p.620; 2001). Arguing that the preservation of social ties is essential for the flourishing of individuals and societies, the view on responsibilities of the state was that it should sustain and promote social attachments vital to people’s sense of well-being and respect many of which had been involuntarily obtained during one’s upbringing (Beauchamp and Childress, 2001; Bell, 2010; Van Leeuwen, 2015). Aware that early communitarians might have effectively been accused of social conservatism, or even authoritarianism, responsive communitarians argued against a return to traditional communities, which were marked by authoritarian power structures, rigid stratifications, and discriminatory practices, but that, instead, they sought to build communities based on shared values, dialogue and open participation. This feature had also been identified by critics of communitarianism. McClain, for instance, suggested that some communitarians do indeed

‘recognize the need for careful evaluation of what is good and bad about tradition and the possibility of severing certain features ... from others’ (McClain, 1994, p.1030).

Responsive communitarianism is aware that societies have multiple and not always compatible needs, thus proposing that a good society is based on a balance between liberty and social order, but also between communal and society-wide values and ties. Individuals have responsibilities for their families, communities and societies, all of which are argued to be above liberal theory’s universal rights that all individuals call on. While the concept of a good society lies in a skilful balance between liberty and social order,

‘historical-social conditions of specific societies determine different ways a given society in a given era may need to change to attain the same balance’ (Etzioni, 2014, p.2337).

According to Bortolini (2015) responsive communitarianism advanced a

‘deeply embedded vision of the human individual and stressed the need of balancing rights and responsibilities on both the side of the individual and that of the many different communities to which each citizen of a pluralist, democratic society belongs’ (2015, p.320).

Relevant for the investigation of parenting, and in line with responsive communitarianism, Bortolini argued that in order to strengthen the ‘communitarian fabric of society’, a stronger civil society founded on ‘moral education and character formation,’ is necessary (2015, p.320). He emphasized the role of both families and schools, in creating citizens’ awareness of their duties toward each other and wider society.

2.8.2 Parenting and Social Capital

According to Fram (2003, p.1; Kerri et al., 2013), day-to-day processes and practices of parenting are managed by parents through a variety of resources, i.e. knowledge, experience, and skills, as well as material goods and neighbourhood or community resources. With the ability to access desirable resources, affluent parents can manage their parenting role beyond meeting basic needs. In contrast, ensuring safety, providing for basic needs, but also creating spaces and opportunities in which their children are not constrained from realizing their potential, can be a struggle for poor parents with limited resources. To understand that the complex dynamics of parenting related to the individual being situated within a social position, Fram suggested the use of the ‘social capital’ framework.

While the concept is frequently described as elusive, Bhandari and Yasunobu (2009) argued that social capital is a complex multidimensional concept which encompasses cultural and social value systems, and the variety of definition is not due to the lack of understanding of social capital, but rather due to the various dimensions of social capital. Definitions broadly agree that

the foundation of social capital is the social relations that engender individual and collective benefits.

The term 'social capital' is generally traced back to Bourdieu (1986) who, by proposing various forms of 'capital', aimed to explain the sustainability of social stratifications through the reproduction of relationships between groups or classes. In an effort to explain why individuals, despite freedoms, choices, and opportunities, tend to stay positioned within the social classes of their parents, friends, and colleagues, he used the construct 'social capital' to signify the value embedded in durable and mutually obligating social ties (Lin, 1999; 2017).

Fram (2003) posited that because more advantageously positioned individuals tend to have contacts that mirror their social position, their access to resources, information, cultural norms, and related behaviour 'marks and sustains class identity and privilege' (p.4; Pichler and Wallace, 2008). The author argued that while transfer of economic wealth from parents to children is the most visible form of elite group reproduction, transfer of access to highly positioned social capital adds to the mechanism through which social inequalities are maintained.

'The value of an individual's social ties is related to the position of her/his social network in the overall social structure, making social capital implicitly socially situated' (Fram, 2003, p.4).

Also prominent in the discussion of social capital is Putnam's work (1993; 1995; 1996), focusing on trust, norms and networks. While having generally examined localised communities and regional differences, he identified family as crucial foundation for social capital but did not outline the precise way in which family life supports social capital (Gillies, 2004).

Coleman (1988) analysed parent child relationships as a feature of family social capital and defined the concept in terms of value for individuals by focusing on the function of norms and networks. Coleman as well as other writers (Furstenberg and Hughes, 1996; Parcel and Bixby, 2016; Raymond-Flesch et al., 2017) tried to measure children's social capital available within

their families and relate this availability to outcomes such as educational success, development or wellbeing. While emphasizing how individuals can use social resources in obtaining better outcomes for themselves, Coleman (1990) also discussed social capital as ‘public good’ by stressing obligations and expectations, information channels and social norms as well as closure as part or forms of social capital (Lin, 1999; Kao, 2004; Lin, 2017). Coleman, unlike Bourdieu, did not adopt a class vision of society yet considered network closure as an advantage of social capital, due to closure facilitating the maintenance and enhancement of trust, norms and authority (Lin, 1999; 2017). Hawkins and Maurer (2009, Kerri et al., 2013) argued that Coleman’s (1988; 1990) conceptualisation of social capital as co-operative relationships within families and communities, providing direct and indirect resources that are a by-product of social networks and social support systems amongst family, friends or community members’ is most useful in the context of social work.

Social capital has been widely critiqued for failing to provide a coherent concept as well as being a terminology rather than a theory (Woolcock, 1998; Haynes, 2009). Responding to criticism, Putnam (2000) addressed social capital by differentiating between bonding, bridging and linking social capital. Bonding social capital refers to close relationships between family members or good friends. These relations form a strongly tied network based on a shared social identity. Bridging social capital is based on Granovetter’s idea of ‘weak ties’ (1973) and refers to relationships between people who are more loosely connected and have a distinct social identity, such as neighbours, members of a sports club or colleagues. Linking social capital is used to describe relationships that are characterized by power differences, such as the hierarchical relationship between employer and employee, or between citizen and government (Uphoff et al., 2013).

Portes and Landolt (1996) posited that social capital can become a constraint to individuals’ actions and choices as social capital may stem from the exclusion of others to access resources. Leonard (2004) argued that bonding occurs among homogeneous populations, is frequently parochial and tends to only benefit those with internal access. While it can be an effective resource

for ethnic minority groups, its benefits are limited. Tight bonds of trust and solidarity may ultimately prevent group members from reaching their full potential. Being held back by family and community demands, members may only become successful by establishing bridging social capital, which entails the ability to create ties with members in the wider society (see also Ryan, 2011).

Initially suggested by Portes (1998) and supported by more recent research from Villalonga-Olives and Kawachi (2017), social capital can involve excessive demands on group members to provide support to others; entail a restriction of freedom as a result of excessive informal control; be used to exclude out-group members and further, lead to a decrease of individuals' achievement as a result of trying to break free from the demand for group conformity.

2.8.3 Parenting and Social Support

By emphasizing the value of social networks, social capital theory makes a critical connection between person-level dynamics and the broader societal arrangements; however, further investigation is needed into the ways that individuals actually 'encounter, access, and are affected by societal arrangements within their daily lives' (Fram, 2003, p.1).

Whereas Castillo and Fenzl-Crossman (2010) used social capital, social network and social support interchangeably, Dominguez and Watkins (2003) previously subdivided social capital into social support, as the help one gets from close relationships to 'get by', to survive, on the one hand and social leverage, as the weaker connections one has with others to 'get ahead' in life, on the other. Both are seen as interdependent and originating from social networks or connections. Geens and Vandebroek (2012) suggested that not only do all parents benefit from social support, but also local communities and the society as a whole.

According to Christakis and Fowler (2010), social networks support extensive, complex and dynamic systems of exchange and interaction, thereby affecting life chances and outcomes. This is due to informal

relationships linking individuals not only to others in their immediate social realm but reaching beyond this via the contacts of friends and acquaintances.

Literature suggested that patterns of connections reflect a multitude of factors. While some operate at the level of the individual, others are arguably associated with cultural dimensions of society (Wetherell, 2009; Gilchrist et al., 2010b).

Previous as well as more current literature (Taylor, 2011; Owen and Anderson, 2017) proposed that informal social support can be understood in terms of its structural (e.g. the size of the individual's social network), functional (e.g. the level of emotional support provided) and enacted aspects (e.g. the provision of advice concerning a difficult decision). Cohen (2004) summarized these into three main forms of informal social relationship. Emotionally supportive relationships involve the communication of care through verbal and non-verbal means and the reduction of parental stress by allowing parents to voice their concerns and frustrations. Second, informationally supportive relationships involve the provision of advice and guidance and the minimisation of parental concern by providing parents with a sense of control as feelings of confusion and helplessness are reduced. Finally, instrumentally supportive relationships involve the provision of specific material aid, such as money or transport, and the reduction of parental worry by reducing feelings concerning the loss of control (Cohen, 2004; Owen and Anderson, 2015).

Social support can enhance people's ability to cope by reducing negative effects of stressful experiences (Ní Raghallaigh, 2018) and can additionally involve the simple perception that 'resources are available, should they be needed' (Taylor, 2011, p.193).

'Whereas networks of social support are a proven buffer to stress, the perceived or actual presence of a set of people who will offer sustenance and help in times of stress is essential for all people' (Dolan, 2008, p.113).

In terms of parenting, research repeatedly argued that social support is linked to the functional properties of a social network, which through mutual aid helps buffer parents from stresses by providing access to necessary resources (Stack, 1974; Owen and Anderson, 2015; Finney et al., 2015). What remains unanswered is the relationship between social support, types of social resources and individual as well as community/ neighbourhood level characteristics (Fram, 2003, p.4; Crisp and Robinson, 2010; Gilchrist and Kyprianou, 2011; Geens et al., 2015) which I am turning to now in the next section.

2.8.4 Community as Source of Social Support

Parenting is an activity central not only to the functioning of families, but also whole communities (Whittaker and Cowley, 2012). Chaskin (1997) previously highlighted that the terms neighbourhood and community cause confusion as they are both viable units of action, but their operational definitions vary greatly. He described community as ‘some combination of shared beliefs, circumstances, priorities, relationships, or concerns’ (p.522), while neighbourhood referred to a geographical and residential area. In the urban context, the neighbourhood is often considered the more ‘primary unit of actual and potential solidarity and social cohesion’ (ibid, p.523).

Much has been written about neighbourhood characteristics, parenting and social support (Ceballo and McLoyd, 2002; Turney and Harknett, 2010; Byrnes and Miller, 2012), particularly the negative effects of disadvantaged and isolated neighbourhoods on parenting and children (Jackson et al., 2009; Bywaters, 2019). Turney and Harknett (2010) argued that residents in those environments are less likely to have a social network of neighbours that they can trust, which makes it difficult to form social ties with other residents that parents could depend on for support. Second, residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods often lack resources that would allow them to provide support. As such, parents may end up overburdening those neighbours who potentially offer assistance, and this burden may be amplified by the parents’ inability to reciprocate due to their own limited resources and multiple stressors.

Byrnes and Miller (2012) suggested that a specific neighbourhood characteristic that can disrupt parenting is the difficulty of maintaining neighbourhood social and physical order (Shaw and McKay, 1942). Conversely, neighbourhoods that are socially organized, rather than disorganized, tend to have high levels of collective efficacy, which is described by high social cohesion (e.g., social ties, trust, and reciprocal obligations) and informal social control that support parents' efforts for healthy child outcomes (Sampson et al., 1999). Socially organized neighbourhoods can help ease the burden of individual parents in raising their children and assist parents through having neighbours to share in child-rearing duties (Beyers et al., 2003), as well as providing benefits such as greater social support (e.g., emotional, financial, housing, or childcare assistance). Byrnes and Millar (2012; Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Froiland et al., 2014) argued that particularly collective efficacy is important as imposing shared norms for behaviour, creating relationships, and supervising neighbourhood children helps develop social support for residents.

The importance of neighbourhood characteristics for parenting may differ depending on "objective" or "subjective" appraisals of the neighbourhood (Bamaca et al., 2005). Researchers' definitions of neighbourhoods, usually based on criteria derived from sources such as the census, do not always correspond to the views of residents, whose perceptions are arguably more important for their outcomes (Burton and Jarrett, 2000).

Equally, much has been written on the concept of community as source of social support. According to Eissler and Brennan (2017), community is the central component to ensure 'child well-being, and local level response to needs is essential' (p.59). The authors argued that locality is better positioned in effectively responding to sources of issues but also in providing opportunities for development. Literature repeatedly illustrates supporting contexts of child wellbeing to typically comprise of family, friends and peers; however, Eissler and Brennan suggested that community is important as it broadens networks and provides opportunities for interaction with other members of society. Community is where an individual and society meet

(Wilkinson, 1974; 1991) because society being an abstract can never be experienced directly. In contrast, local communities represent ‘a tangible manifestation of the larger social order’ (Eissler and Brennan, 2017, p.63) and provide the range of contacts required in order for social interaction to occur. While sociological definitions of community tend to emphasise personal bonds and interactions deriving from shared territory, common lives and collective actions, community has been argued to be more than a geographical location and should be considered as a ‘social and psychological entity which represents a place, its people and their relationships’ (ibid, p.63). Eissler and Brennan suggested that by strengthening collective bonds, structural barriers and outside obstacles can be reduced.

According to Brennan and Israel (2008; Mc Grath and Brennan, 2011) interaction is the essential element of community. Community emerges through the process of coordinating individual social fields, and it reflects purposive community-wide efforts. The authors argued that community is affected by the context of local life, but more directly is facilitated by ‘purposive interaction among its members’ (Brennan and Israel, 2008, p.88). They quote Wilkinson (1991) who noted, that

‘community implies all types of relations that are natural among people, and if interaction is suppressed, community is limited’ (p.17).

Raising the issue of cultural traditions in relation to community which was found relevant for the exploration of ethnic minority and migrant parents, Mc Grath and Brennan (2011) argued that these are motivating factors not only in the creation of social identity but also of cohesion and solidarity among community members. The authors however identified that contemporary living pattern threaten the connection between people and identity. Without ‘channels of communication, interactions and agents to interpret people’s customs, communities’ loose vital assets and resources’ (Mc Grath and Brennan, 2011, p.345).

The literature argued that strong communities promote and provide opportunities for positive developmental outcomes for children through the provision of

‘social and network supports, protection and safety, mode for attachment and connectedness, intergenerational interaction but also mentoring’ (Eissler and Brennan, 2017, p.64).

Communities were argued to offer potential for strong social and network supports through bridging and bonding social ties (Beaudoin, 2007; see also Brady et al., 2017; Brady et al., 2017). Strong communities were proposed to both integrate and facilitate strong and weak ties among social groups, providing a basis from which children can rely on social and network supports as it extends to children’s families, particularly primary caregivers (Runyan et al., 1998). Actual but also perceived social supports were suggested to extend immediate family boundaries, with friend networks or local community groups potentially becoming more salient in the event of family members being unsupportive (Malecki and Demaray, 2002).

Crisp and Robinson (2010) argued that there has been an increased drive for ‘mixed communities’ in recent times, as it is presumed that neighbours represent a potential source of bridging capital that can enable people to ‘get ahead’. However, attitudes towards neighbours appear to be closely associated with the perceived willingness of others to engage in positive relations. Ambivalence or selectivity can be a consequence of experiencing a lack of collective culture or shared identity, which in turn serves to limit the scope of social ties with others. In addition, high levels of turnover and lack of time or propensity are factors disrupting neighbourhood ties and inhibiting the formation of local social networks (Bailey and Livingston, 2007; Crisp and Robinson, 2010). The capacity to form bonds often appears related to the length and stability of residence in the neighbourhood. According to Warr (2005), individuals construct social and spatial boundaries to maintain distance in response to series of external pressures centring on perceptions of crime and transience in a neighbourhood. D’Angelo and Ryan (2011) argued that some migrants invest more time and energy in maintaining links with

their country of origin and with ethnic-specific communities in the host society, rather than establish new and ethnically diverse relationships. Intolerance towards outsiders was argued to stem from suspicion and lack of trust, often coupled with competition with others for basic necessities such as jobs and housing.

2.8.5 Parental Help-Seeking

The suggestion that parenting is a complex and demanding responsibility as well as the importance of providing support for parents is not new (Dubrow and Garbarino, 1989; Tracy, 1990). The need to investigate help seeking appeared across various fields of research (Hartnoll, 1992; Tucker, 1995; Baistow and Wilford, 2000; Ullman and Filipas, 2001) with the common concern that 'those who may need, or are perceived to need help, do not ask for it' (Featherstone and Broadhurst 2003, p.341).

Keller and Mc Dade (2000) argued that parents have historically relied on informal support of extended family, friends, and neighbours to provide concrete or material assistance as well as advice and emotional support with parenting. In today's mobile society, however, extended family may not be readily available to assist parents, and many may not trust or even know their neighbours.

Soenen (2006b) and more recently Oosterlynck et al. (2014) and Geens et al. (2015) proposed that

'social encounters and temporary relationships between strangers are increasingly important in social life, given today's context of diversity' (Geens et al., 2015, p.2).

Broadhurst (2008) in her UK study on parental perceptions of help seeking found that when considering the welfare problems of parenting, which were generally described as 'domestic' or 'normal', participants routinely referred to the binary of 'inside/outside' the family, indicating the central and normative relevance of 'family' for this kind of support. Outside, professional help was very much believed to be the last option, only to be considered when there was 'no-one to turn to'.

According to Geens et al. (2015), it is often assumed that giving and receiving support only occurs between intimates (such as family or close friends) and that homogeneity is a necessary condition to experience support. The authors referred to Lofland's work (2009):

‘The private sphere consists of contacts between intimates, while the public sphere is characterised by a world of strangers. Rather than physical environments, the private as well as the public realm are social spaces or spheres. Social relations thus influence whether a space is private, public or somewhere in between (parochial), regardless of the predefined function of that place. Each space also carries its own norms and values, created and sustained by a complex web of internal relationships’ (Geens et al., 2015, p.2).

Featherstone and Broadhurst (2003) previously argued that help-seeking is an activity that may not result in the use of formal services, and instead

‘demands a focus on help-seeking as a socially organized activity that is played out in large part outside the boundaries of organizational relevance’ (ibid, p.342).

The authors suggested that a key issue in relation to help-seeking is how individuals or families define and appraise problems.

Literature identified divergence between lay and professionals (Fuller et al., 2000; Tsogia et al., 2001), which relate to evaluating the severity of problems (Greenlay and Mullen, 1990; Parton and Williams, 2019) as well as to labelling and naming problems (Fuller et al., 2000; Fox et al., 2001; Parton and Williams, 2019). Perceived problem severity was more likely to elicit contact with formal services (Featherstone and Broadhurst, 2003).

Literature nearly three decades ago argued that low-income families do not seek formal support due to a lack of trust or hostility toward those who may be in a position of authority or may be economically better off (Horejsi et al., 1992). Formal services were considered to unintentionally undermine the parental role in low-income families thus not providing for the type of needs that the family has identified as being most critical. Keller and Mc Quade (2000, p.286; Ferguson et al., 2016) argued that while all families benefit

from support, not all types of support are perceived as helpful. An understanding is necessary as to what types of assistance is most used and most effective with families. The widely varying needs of families with children may require a continuum of support, and variables such as income, culture, family type, and stage of family development are important considerations in providing services that are relevant to the needs and expectations of families.

More recently, work by Morris et. al. (2018) argued that children and families in poverty are significantly more likely to be the subject of state intervention and thus engage with formal support services. In their UK study, low-income families with “low education” and “no aspirations” were framed as the “traditional” type of families accessing services. Further neighbourhoods categorised as ‘no-go areas’ amounted to the constructions of what Wacquant (2008) has previously called ‘territorial stigma’. That is, ‘the symbolic degradation imposed upon people and urban spaces through their associations with moral degeneracy and risk’ (Morris et al., 2018, p.8). The authors’ data revealed that social work tends to explain poverty in cultural terms, with portrayals strongly reflecting the socially constructed imagery of poor communities and localities. Findings suggested that there was ‘the notion of an underclass that social work must regulate and persuade into respectability (with or without coercion)’ (pp.19-20).

2.8.5.1 Minority and Migrant Help-Seeking

In relation to ethnic minority help seeking, research in the past repeatedly proposed that ethnicity is an important determinant as there are differences between groups emphasising group identity and family, and those that emphasise individual autonomy (Garcia Coll, 1990; Harrison et al., 1990).

As a result of an increased academic as well as public service interest in the pathways of ethnic minority help seeking, there is now vast literature on ethnic minorities’ barriers to formal service engagement in the public sphere. While initially focusing on structural barriers (Carreón et al., 2005), research also recognised the importance to investigate attitudinal and cultural barriers to service engagement (Funk et al., 2010; Mytton et al., 2013).

Overall, studies have argued that it is important to consider

‘circumstances of different ethnic groups, such as their histories and intentions relating to migration and settlement, the quality and extent of cultural infrastructure and previous experience of social and economic exchanges “back home” which affect people’s propensity to access support outside the community’ (Gilchrist and Kyprianou, 2011, p.6).

Research equally addressed professionals’ perspectives on support service provision in culturally diverse settings. Phillimore (2015) argued that the population complexity associated with diversity

‘brings a wide range of challenges for service providers, such as trying to meet the needs of ever diversifying populations as well as identifying the nature of need in rapidly changing neighbourhoods’ (p.568).

Findings from her study on maternity services in the UK indicated that it is perceived impossible for professionals to acquire comprehensive knowledge about or identify the complete scope of needs of migrant women. The author suggested this to stem from the volume and diversity of new arrivals, the speed of change, and the complexity of problems faced. Phillimore additionally found that professionals, despite some of them having been based in long-standing diverse settings, lacked necessary cultural capital to communicate with new migrants from countries with novel, previously or rarely encountered cultural and linguistic features. Further, extreme pressure, associated with caseloads, led to some professionals not being compassionate with new migrants. Migrant women were blamed for being ‘difficult’, when in reality they were disempowered in their striving to care for themselves and their families.

Similarly, research by Lindenmeyer et al. (2016) investigated the experiences of primary care professionals providing care to recent migrants in a culturally diverse city. Their study found that while some providers tried to adapt to the needs of recently arrived migrants, others believed it to be the responsibility of migrants to adapt to practice needs; in a few cases, migrants were seen as a ‘burden to the system’ (p.1).

2.9 Childhood and Family Life in Poland

The literature review has so far presented a more general exploration of parenting and help-seeking, drawing on research of both majority and minority parents. However, in order to support the investigation of Polish perspectives on child-rearing and help-seeking, I will now turn to literature on childhood and family life in Poland as it relates to my research participants, before presenting literature on Polish migrant parents.

Titkow and Duch (2004) argued that due to multiple external occupations of Poland in the past, and the lack of specific social institutions, responsibilities of transmitting values and skills pertaining to Polish identity were taken over by the family. Conflict between the communist ideology and the Catholic Church in Poland resulted in the perception of family being the ultimate source of security and protection of Polish society. The family was compared to a ‘sanctuary in a hostile sea of social relations’ (Buchowski, 1996, p.84; Botterill, 2014).

An important feature of the Polish family in the 1980’s was a felt lack of public welfare security and parental lifespan considerations. Lack of trust and certainty in the public welfare system, particularly after retirement, was believed to encourage Polish men and women to have children early in adult life, so that their offspring could become self-sufficient and be able to financially assist their retired parents. Thus, it was argued that the family was ‘the best insurance company and system of social services’ (Jerschina, 1991, p.288).

Polish parents’ internalised need for upward social mobility became an aspiration spanning over several generations since the hard-economic conditions in Poland after World War II (ibid). According to Niezgoda (2003), about 80% of Polish parents in the 1980’s wished for a university degree for their children regardless of their own educational level or place of residence. Titkow and Duch (2004) argued that the economic problems associated with Poland’s transition to the market economy in the early 1990s left families giving up both material and psychological resources. While the family is argued to have remained one of the few stable institutions in Polish

society at that time, the opening of the Western economy resulted in an increase of Polish people's expectations and needs for material goods, which stimulated competition and eroded solidarity. Poverty of the late 1990s affected many Polish families and according to Szlendak (2003), employment and unemployment were of significance when defining one's social status. Using terms such as 'the unprivileged', 'the unemployed' and the 'underclass' to describe low-income families, he argued that Polish society was

'becoming more and more polarised in a manner typical of post-modernism, where an invisible barrier separates those who have jobs from the unemployed' (p.53).

In the aftermath of 1989, the end of communist rule, Poland experienced a political and economic transformation, where the construction of a new family policy was based on the "parent's rights to raise and educate their children" which in practice meant to continue making families responsible for children's well-being and limiting the responsibilities of official institutions (Rybińska and Szoltysek, 2014).

A review on historical parenting styles and childrearing practices in Poland (Ryndyk and Johannessen, 2015) suggested viewing Polish parenting from the perspective of citizens' perception of the Polish nation. The nation is frequently conceptualised as a 'mother' among Poland's citizens, with the icon of 'Our Lady of Czestochowa' referred to as 'Queen and Protector of Poland' having significant implications for the image of motherhood in Poland (Ostrowska, 2004). The ideal 'Polish Mother' was to embody a woman with absolute devotion to her family, strong enough to care for the family on her own, while at the same time not have 'a meaningful life of her own' (Reading, 1992). Within the communist era, the parent-child relationship was characterised by a strong bond between the mother and child, whereas attachments were supposed to be limited, if not entirely absent, in father-child relationships (Wejnert and Djumabaeva, 2005). Since 1989 however, the involvement and roles of fathers have undergone significant changes due to a gradually more positive valuing of Western models of

fatherhood (ibid). While changes in the traditional division of domestic labour occur slowly, Titkow and Dutch (2004) argued that it is still predominately performed by mothers.

2.9.1 Polish Parents and Migration

Recent years have seen an increased academic interest in Polish migrant families and their experiences of settling into their Western European host countries, particularly Scandinavia, the UK and Ireland. Polish nationals are the biggest migrant group across Europe, frequently migrating with their families which has multiple implications.

Work

Bobek et al. (2018) in their study on Polish migrant workers argued that while better employment opportunities along with higher earnings attract many Polish nationals, financial motivation is not the only reason for migration. Other factors include better career prospects as well as the experience of something new. Findings further suggested that Polish migrants were frequently willing to accept work at the bottom of the structure and financial reward was not always decisive in their employment choice. Aiming to secure more skilled positions, in line with their qualifications, they can neither be classified as stereo-typical low-skilled or high-skilled migrants (Bobek et al., 2018).

Kin

Ignatowicz (2011) argued that Polish migration within the EU is thought of as affordable and risk-free mobility as Polish migrants have the choice to return home at any time of the migration process. He argued that Polish aspirations in their new environments are frequently counterbalanced by feelings of obligation to maintain strong intergenerational ties and cherish kinship relationships. Moskal (2011) argued that many Polish migrants remain registered with local authorities in Poland in order to maintain their permanent residency in their home country. White (2011) observed the important role of family considerations in planning an eventual return to

Poland, while Botteril (2014) argued that the sacrifice of family was viewed by many Polish individuals as most challenging consequence of EU mobility.

Language

In her study of language and identity, Temple (2010) found that Polish migrants view the Polish language as an important part of Polish identity. She argued that participants recognised that changing the language they spoke involved questioning the way they presented themselves and how they related to others. Drozdowski (2011) argued that Polish culture was very much language centred, while Kusek and Wise (2014; Forrest and Kusek, 2016) suggested that Polish migrants use Polish language, relative cultural practices, and ideals from home to re-enact a sense of belonging and identity. Sobków (2014) found that Polish parents in their endeavour to maintain the Polish language are motivated to engage with institutions whose members share similar views or experiences in addition to shared language. In their study of language and migration in Ireland, O'Connor et al. (2017) found that close to 80% of migrants agreed with the statement that nationality is linked to language. Further, there was emphasis on the importance of teaching children the native languages of their parents, both from a perspective of re-integration if they were to return to their country of origin as well as from a familial network perspective to be able to connect on a cultural level with extended family, especially grandparents (O'Connor et al., 2017).

Obligations

Obligations to family in Poland was investigated by Krzyżowski and Mucha (2014). In their assessment of caregiving of Polish migrants in Iceland and their elderly parents in Poland, the authors argued that

‘the culturally determined necessity of the personal fulfilment of children’s obligations to care for older parents, including personal care and practical household help, is a long-lasting element of the Polish normative system, strengthened by the weakness of the institutional support system’ (p.22).

Their study found that migrants (especially women) make use of return visits to Poland to care for their parents, thus fulfilling intergenerational obligations in the eyes of non-migrating family members and the local community in Poland. In addition, Polish migrants frequently visit parents with their own children to facilitate more time spent with their grandparents, who use the opportunity to directly teach them about their Polish cultural heritage.

Parenting Style

According to Ryndyk and Johannessen (2015), parenting styles among Polish immigrants can to some extent reflect Poland's communist legacies and be deeply rooted in their own experience of being children under a more conservative and stricter regime. However, the role of host country settings, including its labour market demands cannot be ignored. Research has shown that considerable constraints were faced in terms of spending enough time with families, as well as gaining access to affordable childcare (Kilkey et al., 2013). Challenges were particularly notable for dual earner families. Thus, it was suggested that traditional parenting styles and gender roles were not necessarily a cultural indication but rather a reflection of an adaptation to the host country's structures (Ryndyk and Johannessen, 2015).

Grandparents

Lack of extended family support was another issue identified (Kilkey et al., 2013), and Polish migrants frequently employed a so called 'transnational care strategy' that saw grandmothers come from Poland to look after their grandchildren for short but also longer periods of time (Kilkey et al., 2013). This finding was partly supported in an Irish study by Bojarczuk and Mühlau (2018) who stated that grandparental support is a common phenomenon but that this option is not available for a substantial number of migrant mothers – even under the facilitating conditions Polish migrants within the European Union face. Highlighting the importance of family in the destination country for a variety of supports, the authors argued that although they provided a 'safety-net', particularly for childcare and emotional support, locally based friends and neighbours are actively involved in providing childcare support.

Education

Much has also been written about Polish migration and schooling. Children's schooling and aspirations for higher level education for children was identified as an important factor in the decision-making of migration from the very beginning (Szlendak, 2003; D'Angelo and Ryan, 2011). Mc Taggart and Mc Taggart (2016) found that Polish parents perceive the education system as an essential tool for upward social mobility, playing an important role in 'life opportunities, such as wage-earning ability' (p.121) and increased social status. They argued that for children in Poland to receive the required education was very difficult as the system only allowed for students with the best grades, who were economically affluent, to do well and progress within Polish education. To do well was equated with being able to afford extra learning support for children outside the formal education system. Inequality due to parentocracy did not end at school but progressed through life as a result of perceived nepotism in the employment selection process. Although Irish education was considered fairer because of its' meritocratic approach, the play based pedagogical approach in primary education was 'at odds with what was considered to be a good education' (ibid, p.122). Similar findings were reported from the UK in work by D' Angelo and Ryan (2011) where the authors argued that parental judgment regarding the quality of Polish and British schools were likely based on the personal weighing of factors. Describing differences between the two education systems, D'Angelo and Ryan (2011) found that parental engagement in children's learning was more emphasised in Poland, while involvement in school life was more prominent in the UK. White (2011) stated that this difference led to frustration and disappointment felt by Polish migrants as they were unable to engage in children's learning to the extent they would do in Poland. D'Angelo and Ryan (2011) suggested that Polish parents' observations about the educational system were not only concerned with teaching and learning but also with the ethnic composition of schools, often lacking familiarity with a multicultural and multilingual education environment, which is different from the Polish schools most parents were used to. Thus, the authors proposed that the perceived intolerance of the Polish community indicates a lack of familiarity

and difficulty to adapt to the ethnic diversity of their environment and all the challenges that arise with it. D' Angelo and Ryan (2011) concluded that schools need to be considered not just as places of learning for children but also sites of socialisation where migrant families can meet and engage with the multicultural society.

2.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, the concept of parenting is considered a multidimensional concept informed by many differing perspectives, incorporating aspects of both universality and cultural construction. The concept is comprised of many specific behaviours and contexts that work individually and together to influence child outcomes.

In terms of understanding parenting in minority cultures, this is largely influenced by how ethnic minority and migrant parenting has been and continues to be conceptualised. Variations in parenting were originally considered as deficiencies but sociological contributions have led to a reformation of this perspective, with parenting now being largely viewed as adaptive process to contextual factors.

It is important to consider the systems of influence surrounding the experiences of family. Parenting is generated within specific socio-cultural contexts and while contextual factors that impact on minority and migrant parents are increasingly documented, more research in the area is necessary to better support them in childrearing.

This chapter reviewed the history of childhood, the definition of parenting, followed by classical as well as emerging psychological and sociological theories that pertain to the sphere of the parent-child relationship, parenting roles and types of parenting. The chapter reflected on theories that conceptualised the influence of culture on the construct of parenting before moving on to exploring contextual factors that relate to parenting such as socio-economic status, employment and education. Finally, the concepts of Social Capital and Social Support as well as their significance for parents were reviewed before concluding with the consideration of literature that examined childhood and family life in Poland.

The next chapter presents the context for this study, outlining both family change and what is so far known about migrant families in Ireland. It describes the study's neighbourhood setting as well as the demographic profile of its population before presenting the legislative and policy context. Last, the chapter concludes with an outline of service provision in the study's neighbourhood.

Chapter Three

Context

3.1 Introduction

Parenting is thought to not be a stand-alone phenomenon but rather positioned in a socio-ecological system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1986; Bronfenbrenner and Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 2006), where it interacts and is influenced by other dimensions in a complex and transactional manner (Zheng et al., 2017). Moving away from the assumption that associations between parenting variables and child outcomes are the same across individuals, research highlights the importance of considering socio-contextual factors and forces that shape parenting (Belsky, 2014). Thus, it is necessary to examine the broader context in which Polish migrant parents are positioned in order to fully understand their perspectives on child rearing and help-seeking in a culturally diverse neighbourhood in the Republic of Ireland.

To explore the position of Polish parents in Irish society, this chapter firstly outlines family and family change in Ireland before examining what we know about migrant families in Ireland. Section 3.3 describes the study's neighbourhood setting and its demographic profile followed by Section 3.4 which presents the policy and legislative context of family and parenting in Ireland. The chapter concludes with an outline of service provision in the study's neighbourhood in Section 3.5.

3.2 Family and Family Change in Ireland

Historically, family has played a pivotal role in the social structure and religious ethos of the Irish State, occupying a core position in policy and public debates. Under Article 41.1 of the Irish Constitution of 1937, for instance, the State promised to 'protect the family' and recognised it as having 'inalienable and imprescriptible rights, antecedent and superior to all positive law' (Connolly, 2015, p.1). Further, women were assigned a very specific familial role within the state as without their support 'the common good cannot be achieved' (ibid, p.1). Contemporary Ireland is marked by conflicting views on family with some arguing for 'the preservation of what they view as the ideal form of family' (ibid, p.1) while others advocate 'more diverse and alternative family forms' (ibid, p.1).

According to Connolly (2014; 2015), much of twentieth century Europe and the developed world experienced a surge in marriage and the nuclear family as more people were married and married at a younger age than at any other time in the modern era. However, by the 1960s, previously held views on family, kinship, marriage and reproduction were fundamentally challenged by the growth of more diverse expressions of family and personal life in western societies, which weakened marriage as the foundation for family formation. The associated increase of European divorce and re-marriage resulted in complex new sets of kinship relationships such as one-parent families as well as reconstituted or blended families. In addition, cohabitation emerged as an alternative to marriage, resulting in more children being born outside than inside marriage. Recent decades witnessed a greater acceptance of gay partnerships and same sex families, as well as new reproductive technologies (e.g. donor sperm and egg or surrogacy), which fundamentally challenge and change the accepted relationship between family, biology and reproduction. Further, there has been a general decline on the overall fertility rate in Europe, resulting in the increasing feature of childlessness and one-person households as well as an ageing population and an insufficient population replacement.

Irish society's adaptation to more secular values of family life occurred rather late in comparison to its European counterparts, with the country often portrayed as a demographic outlier for much of the twentieth century. Connolly (2014; 2015) proposed that the key features of Ireland's society up to the 1960s included a class structure dominated by a large agricultural population, a rural profile and ethos, high levels of emigration and an overall decline in the Irish population. According to Canavan (2012), there were distinctive patterns in family formation, broadly encompassing a late age of marriage, a high rate of non-marriage but also a high marital fertility rate which resulted in families being characterised as distinctively large in size. Further, social control and censorship with regards to sexual and intimate matters resulted in the unjust treatment of women giving birth outside of marriage and their children being categorised as deviant (Connolly, 2014; 2015). By the 1960s, new Irish trends became apparent which coincided with

economic modernisation policies. Social movements emerged and changes occurred which saw the Irish population getting married at a younger age but also engaging in formal schooling for longer. Changes further included greater educational opportunities for women as well as a shift in the state's involvement in family life. The 1970's saw traditional family values as well as women's constitutionally defined primary role in society as mothers in the home questioned, and the right of women to access contraception and to engage in productive work was campaigned for (Connolly, 2014; 2015).

Twenty-first century Ireland has experienced a rapid transformation marked by a relatively high non-marital birth rate when compared to other European countries, in addition to an increasing number of women with young children participating in the labour force. Homosexuality has been decriminalised, cohabitation is evident alongside conventional marriage, and contraception has both been legalised and is accessible. Further, marital separation legislation has been introduced, and a referendum on same sex marriage passed in May of 2015 (Connolly, 2014).

It has been suggested that modern Irish family patterns are converging closely to European trends in some arenas but maintain a distinctive trend in others (Kennedy, 2001; Canavan, 2012; Canavan and Crosse, 2019). In their case study on Ireland, Canavan and Crosse (2019) argued that changes are evident in overall values, demographics and socioeconomics, while previously held values regarding family and marriage continue. Referencing work by Elkink et al. (2017) the authors suggested that the longstanding image of Ireland as a conservative Catholic country has been affected by a generational shift in values, which is most evident in the results of referenda on children's rights and same-sex marriage, as well as abortion and divorce. The Irish state currently deals with the aftermath of their alliance with the Catholic church, which by evidence of child abuse and neglect caused suffering for a significant minority of people (Canavan and Crosse, 2019). In addition, Irish citizens are believed to becoming more liberal with only 'a one third minority now making up the conservative base' (Elkink et al., 2017, p.378).

Today, marital separation has undoubtedly increased, but Ireland still records one of the lowest divorce rates in Europe. Alternatives to traditional marriage have become more common but do not replace marriage as a basis for family formation (Kennedy, 2001), as marriage remains considered a crucial part of society, providing security and stability to children. Representing a historical low by Irish standards, the fertility rate in Ireland ranks in third place among fellow EU states, despite men and women reporting perceived economic constraints to having children. In areas such as marital age and labour force participation, the average age of marriage in Ireland increased from 25 in 1975 to 35 in 2016, and 67.6% of females aged 20-44 were reported to be in employment in comparison to 88.3% of males of the same age group. While there is overall support for female financial independence, a proportion of men fail to recognise that more of their contribution within the household is necessary (Canavan and Crosse, 2019).

According to the most recent Census data available, there are 1,218,370 families in the Irish State. 862,721 of these are families with children, which is reported as a notable increase since 1996. Married couples with children account for 568,317 while the number of cohabiting couples with children stands at 75,587. 592 families consist of same sex couples with children, with the majority being female couples (82.9%). One-parent families with children account for 189,112 in the case of mothers and 29,705 in the case of fathers (CSO, 2016).

In addition to value and demographic changes, Watson et al. (2016, p.496) also noted an 'increasing socio-economic diversity of households experiencing economic stress'. Irish statistics from 2017 revealed 231,000 children living in households experiencing poverty. The biggest adversity for contemporary Irish families arguably relates to the current housing crisis. Statistical reports from the end of April 2019 indicated 1729 families with children and 1003 single parent families to be homeless in Ireland (Canavan and Crosse, 2019).

Arguing that Irish history is dominated by a heterosexual family narrative, Canavan and Crosse (2019) proposed that much of Irish research and policy focus is still too narrow despite the emergence of new family forms and contexts. Irish trends lead to the conclusion that family should no longer be considered a single entity as traditional forms of family life continue and sustain alongside new, more diverse family forms and households (Connolly, 2014; 2015) Further, socio-economic diversity and experiences of familial economic stressors point to the pivotal relevance of more broadly based policy responses to support all families (Canavan and Crosse, 2019).

3.2.1 Migrant Families in Ireland

In addition to having undergone major changes as previously described, Ireland reported one of the highest levels of immigration in the E.U. between 2004-2007 (CSO, 2008). Previously a country of net emigration until the 1990s, immigration transformed the cultural landscape of Ireland rather suddenly as an unprecedented level of diversity was brought to the country by ‘communities of people from all over the world who have come to call Ireland their home’ (Mc Garry, 2012, p.1). According to Röder et al. (2014), Ireland was one of only three countries to allow migrants from the EU Accession States immediate access to the labour market. Coupled with a booming Irish labour market, immediate access attracted many citizens, particularly from Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. Further, migrants are generally overrepresented in the age group between 25 and 44 years, which is considered the prime age for family formation. While in 2008, the downturn in the Irish economy led to a slowing down of the rates of immigration, the levels of demographic, social and cultural diversity in Irish society remain (CSO, 2016).

Lentin in 2010 argued that one of the greatest challenges for contemporary Ireland is the establishment of a society that is inclusive of new cultural and social diversity. Prior to its rapid economic growth from the mid- 1990s to the late 2000s Ireland was characterised by relatively low levels of cultural difference and ethnic diversity. Stating that cultural homogeneity remained a dominant ideology for much of the 20th century, Fanning (2007) argued that

this not only led to a lack of experience in terms of engaging with minority cultures, but also in the denial of cultural difference.

According to Lentin (2010) the lack of engagement with minority groups is also reflected in Irish social science research which by and large ignores the actual experience of life for members of an immigrant population. Irish research has arguably contributed little to explaining the everyday processes through which cultural differences are confronted by immigrant populations. Mc Garry (2012) proposed that research providing an insightful understanding of the actual experiences of members of immigrant populations is crucial in order to address the social and cultural inequalities which characterise contemporary Irish society.

A good attempt at comprehensively tracking the trends of migrants and their children in Ireland was provided by Röder et al. (2014) in their 'New Irish Families' project. Using the national data set which was generated from the longitudinal *Growing Up in Ireland* study (2007-) and focusing on factors that are important for families of young children, the research team tried to identify particular challenges faced by families in order to address these with policies that take into account the increasingly diverse nature of the Irish population. Matters of investigation included maternal age, marriage, intercultural relationships, religion, language, labour market participation and neighbourhood as well as childcare. Of particular interest for this study on Polish parents were findings relating to Accession States. Analysis of this group for example revealed that mothers were on average younger than their peers and in relationships with partners from countries within the same nationality group. Further, group members spoke mainly in their native language and were predominantly positioned in lower social classes despite being well educated on average. The relative disadvantage of households from EU Accession States was evident by many households reporting two or more items on Whelan et al.'s basic deprivation scale (2007) as well as that they found it difficult to make ends meet. Last, migrant mothers from Accession States seemed to be dropping out of the labour market at a very high rate, despite having frequently been found in full-time employment prior to the birth of their children. Röder et al. (2014) argued that this could be

explained by their relatively low occupational attainment, suggesting that career reasons may not be a strong motivation, and that their wages may not justify childcare costs. Where mothers did return to employment, it was found that many children were in relational childcare, which, for a large proportion, was carried out by aunts or uncles. Overall findings give a good indication of what is happening in migrants' lives. However, given the nature of the data base being quantitative as well as the lack of differentiation made between Accession States, neither cultural factors, parental preferences nor lived experiences could be determined.

According to most recent statistics available, there are 535,475 non-Irish nationals living in Ireland, accounting for 11.6 % of the overall population. Non-Irish nationals are almost evenly split by gender with close to 50% aged between 25 and 42. 2016 data on Accession State migrants revealed a decline in family households without children (from 10,751 to 7,630) while the number of families with children increased from 20,830 to 27,425. In terms of employment, there were 293,830 non-Irish nationals at work in Ireland in April 2016, accounting for 14.9% of the State's workforce. Polish and UK nationals dominated the non-Irish workforce and accounted for 42.1% of the total. The remaining workers were made up of 185 different nationalities. While non-Irish workers could be found in all of the main industries, certain sectors dominated. The wholesale and retail trades accounted for 45,812 persons while accommodation and food services employed 40,859 persons. There were 36,387 employed in manufacturing while 21,779 were working in the health sector. Polish, UK nationals, Lithuanian and Latvian workers accounted for 67.1% of all non-Irish in the wholesale and retail sector, while UK, Poland and Indian nationals accounted for more than half of all non-Irish workers in the health sector. In terms of socio-economic status, the distribution of Irish and non-Irish nationalities saw proportionately more Irish nationals being assigned to higher categories - employers, managers, higher and lower professional groups (37.3% combined) - than were non-Irish nationals (27%). Relatively more non-Irish nationals were assigned to non-manual, manual skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers (46.9% combined) compared with Irish nationals (39.2%). In relation to

unemployment, Census 2016 revealed the rate for non-Irish nationals to be nearly 3% higher than for Irish nationals (12.5%).

Of relevance for this study is an exploration of more detailed statistics on Polish migrants. According to Census 2016 data, 122,515 of non-Irish nationals are Polish and 45,292 households in Ireland are headed by a Polish national. While the overall size of the Polish population living in Ireland remained relatively stable since 2011, the number of female Polish nationals in 2016 increased by 2% whereas the number of Polish males decreased by 2%. A total of 47% of the Polish population were reported to be aged between 30 and 40 years old, compared with 17% of the State overall population. In terms of work, 73% of Polish nationals aged 15 and over were reported to be in employment, representing a higher proportion than the State's population at work (53%). Relating to the place of residence, 28% of Polish nationals lived in county Dublin, followed by Millstreet in County Cork, where 17% of its 1555 residents were Polish. Galway city was reported to be the place of residence for 5% of Polish nationals. While generally living in rented accommodation, there was a notable increase in Polish home ownership (up 3,181).

In terms of the younger generation of Polish nationals, the proportion of those aged 21 or less remained stable between 2011 and 2016, at 22.5% and 22.3% respectively. However, the proportion aged 0-5 halved with the number of Polish children aged 0-5 falling from 11,592 in 2011 to 5,392 in 2016. This decrease is partially explained by an increase in the number of children of Polish parents classified as dual-Irish (CSO, 2016).

3.3 The Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska (ARD) Neighbourhood Profile

The Polish sample for this study was chosen from the multicultural neighbourhood of Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska, on the east side of Galway City in the Republic of Ireland. Participants predominately resided in Doughiska. Rather than opting for a more traditional Irish setting, the rationale behind my choice for this neighbourhood was multi-fold.

First, and similar to many other residential areas across an increasingly culturally diverse Ireland, the neighbourhood was identified as a popular settlement for first-generation migrant families who are subsequently surrounded by people whose values, beliefs and interpretations may differ from their own regarding parenting. As a result, it was found a suitable setting to investigate the cultural norms that shape how Polish parents perceive their role as parents, but also how potential differences are negotiated. Second, there is a large concentration of Polish nationals residing in the area, simplifying the access to sufficient participants but also allowing for the exploration of help-seeking and social support being provided by a proximal Polish community. Last, the area has a variety of parenting support services available to both Irish and migrant residents, which was found ideal in terms of capturing the perspectives of professionals on their interactions with Polish parents.

The following section provides an overview of the area's demographic profile.



Figure 1; Galway City East: Location of Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska Area and Galway City Centre (Google Maps, 2019)

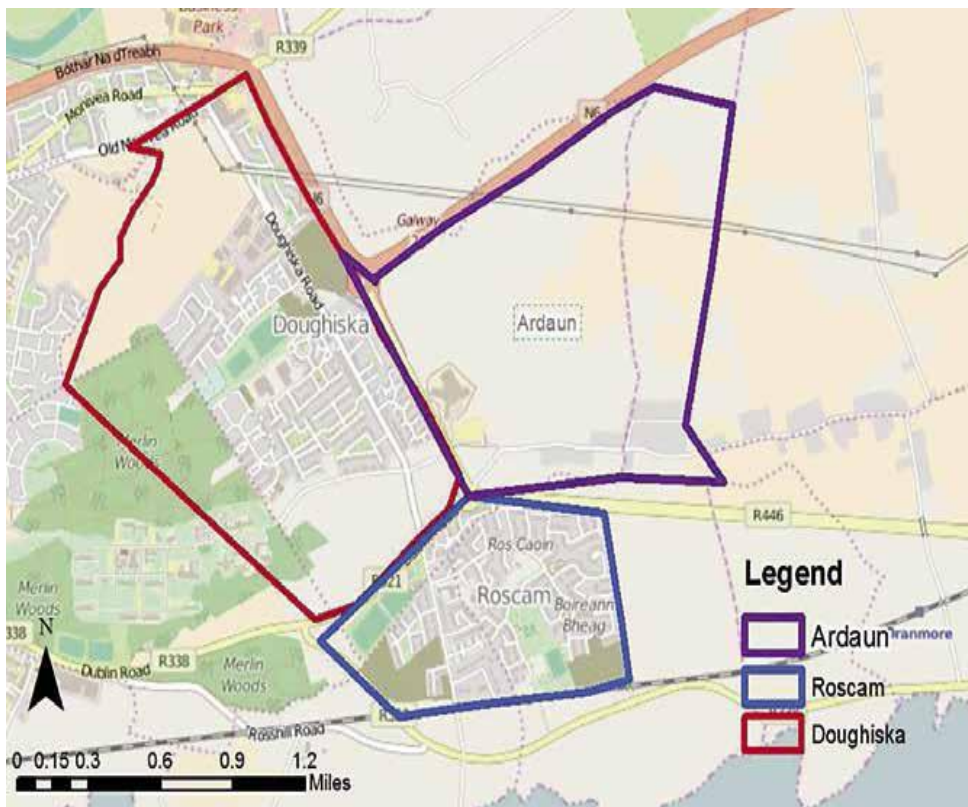


Figure 2; Map of Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska (FitzGerald et al., 2016)

According to FitzGerald et al. (2016), the Ardaun, Roscam and Doughiska (ARD) area is considered a new suburban development with a strong representation of new migrant/ethnic minority communities, and a lower neighbourhood-level socio-economic status. Originally a rural community on the edge of Galway city this area developed into a newly built and exceptionally diverse neighbourhood situated on the most eastern part of the city, with housing and recreational amenities replacing agricultural land. The authors argued that much of this transition had been driven by urban pressures related to demographic and economic growth. The population of the area is termed a “layered population” as it is made up of older residents who lived there prior to its development, foreign national residents who come from a variety of different backgrounds as well as Irish residents who have moved to the neighbourhood since its development (Corrigan, 2016). FitzGerald et al. (2016) notably added that Doughiska is also home to a settled Traveller community, a Brothers of Charity residential home and participants of an Ability West independent living programme for people with intellectual disabilities.

A key feature of the Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska community includes one large road through the Doughiska neighbourhood (see Figure 3 and 4), numerous residential estates as well as hotels and business parks, all of which are located off Bóthar na dTreabh, the dual carriageway leading into the city from the east. Bus links connect the area to the city centre with transport provided from Doughiska’s main road every 15 minutes. The area now has a park, playground (see Figure 5), several playing pitches, a basketball as well as a tennis court but also a skateboard park. Two hospitals and a Primary Care Centre serve the community with Merlin Park Regional Hospital to the west, the private Galway Clinic to the east and the Galway East Primary Care Centre in Doughiska. Being close to Merlin Park woods, which is one of the few expansive areas of matured woodland remaining within the Galway City area, residents are also served by a primary and secondary school. Local sports clubs include hurling, GAA football and soccer (FitzGerald et al., 2016; myhome.ie, 2019).



Figure 3; Doughiska Road from upper Doughiska

Figure 4; Doughiska Road from lower Doughiska (Connacht Tribune, 2016)



Figure 5; Playground in Central Doughiska (FitzGerald et al. 2016)

Most recent data on residential numbers of the area suggest these to be in the region of 6,500. Housing in the ARD area was reported to be a mix of social housing, privately rented but also owner-occupied dwellings, yet the majority of the population (60%) reside in rental accommodation (CSO, 2016; Frecklington, 2019). Residential estates are notably dense and consist of both houses (75%) as well as apartments (23%) with more than half (63%; myhome.ie, 2019) having been built after the year 2000. In addition, there is a visible contrast between upper and lower Doughiska in terms of green areas and the condition of properties. Estates in upper Doughiska are marked by limited green areas (see Figure 6), lack of gardens (see Figure 7 and 8) and overgrown green areas (see Figure 9) as well as unfinished building projects (see Figure 10).



Figure 6; Limited Green Area



Figure 7; Appartments with no garden



Figure 8; Fenced-in apartments with no garden



Figure 9; Overgrown Green Area



Figure 10; Unfinished Building Project

Properties in lower Doughiska on the other hand are well maintained and offer green space both within residential homes as well as around the neighbourhood (see Figures 11 and 12).



Figure 11; Properties with garden



Figure 12; Green Areas in the Neighbourhood

The area is most noteworthy for being both substantially diverse in terms of nationalities and cultures as well as consisting of a relatively young population. Home to over 33 nationalities (King, 2014), nearly half of all residents in Doughiska and an estimated 20% in Ardaun/Roscam are foreign nationals, with the Polish community being the largest of the foreign national communities (1/3 of foreign national residents in ARD; CSO, 2016; Frecklington, 2019). Further, 29% of the area's residents is under the age of 18 compared to Galway City's 19% and the Irish State's 25% (CSO, 2016; Frecklington, 2019).

Previous research by Engling and Haase (2013) identified the area's proportion of lone parents to be significantly above the national average and amongst the highest in Galway City. In terms of social class composition, it was found that the area fell well below the national average with regards to

professional classes, whereas the number of low-skilled workers was significantly above the national rate. Interestingly, third-level education was well above the nationally prevailing rate.

In terms of language skills and unemployment, most recent data suggests the requirement of English language support for 49% of the ARD population. The unemployment rate which includes both retired and disabled residents stands at 8.3% and is above the city's (7.8%) as well as the Irish state's (7.9%) average (CSO 2016; Frecklington, 2013; 2019).

FitzGerald et al.'s study (2016) identified multiple challenges for the area such as diversity and efforts to unify different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. The lack of integration as a result of low interaction between different cultural and ethnic group but also English language proficiency proved to be problematic. In order to meet these challenges, the ARD Family Resource Centre and the ARD Interagency Network were found to be significant resources as both aim to serve the needs of the residents. This is believed to be achieved through the provision of supports to the neighbourhood in terms of information sharing, education but also various support groups catering for different sections of the population. However, despite the evidence of need as well as local efforts to meet those needs, the area has neither 'received RAPID status (as part of the Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development programme) nor has its schools been designated DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) status' (FitzGerald et al., 2016, p.4).

3.4 Irish Policy and Legislation

This following section provides a general overview of the relevant policies, strategies and legislation in Ireland which relate to families and parenting. It then briefly reviews policies on migration and poverty which are found relevant for this thesis.

Supporting families and parenting

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a binding international agreement on the rights of children, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989 and ratified by Ireland in 1992. This framework states that every child has the right to survival, development, protection and participation, and that the State should be both guarantor as well as enabler of these rights. Viewing parents as being responsible for caring for and protecting their children, the framework also recognises the importance of providing resources to meet the needs of parents. Countries that have ratified the UNCRC are expected to submit periodic reports on their progress towards its implementation (Röder et al., 2014).

Ireland's commitment to the UNCRC agreement resulted in the development of multiple policies not only for the support of children but also their parents and families. Further, policies relating to cultural integration and social inclusion are equally important to ensure that resources meet the needs of all families in Ireland.

Family support

While child protection and welfare systems in Ireland arguably date back to 1862's foundation of the foster care system for children in the State workhouses, both have seen pivotal changes in 2012 (Burns and Mc Gregor, 2019). The publication of the *Report of the Task Force on the Child and Family Support Agency*

‘set the blueprint for the establishment of Tusla as a separate independent State authority responsible for child protection and family support services’ (Burns and Mc Gregor, 2019, p.115).

Child protection and welfare services had previously been part of an overall health and social service delivery system under the governance of the Health Services Executive. However, this governance had been criticised as marginalising children's services within a larger health system, where resources and management time were largely invested in hospitals. A further change included the increased regulation of child protection by the Health

Information and Quality Authority and the social work profession by the Health and Social care Professionals Council. Major child abuse inquiries as well as recommendation for both organisational, policy and court level as well as for social work practice and management were major catalysts for change (Burns and Mc Gregor, 2019).

Coinciding with the establishment of Tusla in 2014 was the publication of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People* (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014), which outlines the Irish government's key commitments to children and young people up to the age of 24. Again, highlighting the 'whole child' perspective, it recognises the importance of parents, positive parenting as well as the need to prioritise better support for parents. This is to be achieved through an increase of support provision to all parents 'through universal access to good-quality parenting advice and programmes, and access to affordable quality childcare, as well as targeted, evidence-based supports to those parents with greatest needs' (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2014, Foreword, p.x).

While the initial aim of Tusla was to strengthen all child and family services previously governed by the Health Services Executive, it currently only incorporates child protection and welfare, family support, domestic and sexual violence as well as school attendance (Burns and Mc Gregor, 2019).

Tusla's establishment was based on principles within a broad family support ethos and the launch of the programme of Parenting, Prevention and Family Support was to complement existing services of the agency. An assessment tool and guidance framework were developed and subsequently utilised to inform both the nature and level of intervention needed (Burns and Mc Gregor, 2019). While collectively, the introduction of the Parenting, Prevention and Family Support programme indicates a shift in the orientation of child welfare services towards prevention, early intervention and family support (Devaney and Mc Gregor, 2017), challenges are evident in the balance of universal services and some unmet needs alongside responding to significant needs, risk of harm and acute cases (Burns and Mc Gregor, 2019).

Parenting Support

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs is also committed to advancing parenting support which was evident in a High-Level Policy Statement on Parenting and Family Support (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015). The Statement envisages the development of a system which builds on family strengths and informal support networks to support parents and families as well as the ability of supports to be readily delivered to families through interagency and cross-organisational working. It further promotes the availability, ease of access and timely manner of a coherent continuum of local supports to all families (Connolly et al., 2017).

The policy framework acknowledges that most families have the capacity to cope with challenges that arise but highlights that some families may need more help than others. As such, its approach is proactive, preventive, and based on evidence. It recognises parents, children and young people as key actors in the solution process, which is best aided through interagency working and working in partnership with community and voluntary providers (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015).

More recent developments in the government's commitment to support parents include the introduction of 'First 5', which is a whole-of-government strategy for babies, young children and their families. The strategy's ten-year plan aims to deliver a broader range of options for parents to balance working and caring; a new model of parenting support; new developments in child health, including a dedicated child health workforce; the reform of the Early Learning and Care (ELC) system, including a new funding model; and a package of measures to tackle early childhood poverty (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2018). Further, a Parenting Support Policy Unit was established with the responsibility of co-ordinating policy direction and activity relating to parenting support (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2019).

Supporting Cultural Integration and Social Inclusion

Evidence suggests that both parental experiences as well as circumstances vary considerably in the Irish context calling for different support strategies (Connolly and Devaney, 2017). Daly (2011) previously emphasised that special efforts are required to target the most vulnerable such as lower socio-economic-strata, younger, but also ethnically diverse families as these are unlikely to reach out. While the need for greater diversity of services was identified, parents often lack awareness of the availability of services, their location but also how to access them (Rochford et al., 2014). In addition, families are more likely accessing informal sources of support which serve as early intervention and prevention (Connolly and Devaney, 2017).

Policies on Migration and Poverty

Aiming to target the most vulnerable families in Ireland, the consideration of policies on cultural integration, social inclusion and targeting child poverty were identified as crucial.

Migration Integration Strategy

In recognition of Ireland's increasing cultural diversity, the Migrant Integration Strategy (2017-2020) was developed as the Government's response to challenges relating to the promotion of integration. The strategy aims to enable migrants or individuals of migrant origin 'to participate on an equal basis with those of Irish heritage' and ensure that 'barriers to full participation in Irish society by migrants or their Irish-born children are identified and addressed' (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017, p.8).

The four-year strategy is intended as a steppingstone towards a long-term vision in which integration is strongly embedded in Irish life. The Action Plan aims to 'communicate that successful integration is the responsibility of Irish society as a whole and will require action by Government, public bodies, service providers, businesses, NGOs but also by local communities' (ibid, p.9). According to the Department of Justice and Equality, Ireland has developed an approach to integration that involves both mainstream and targeted services. The focus of this Strategy is to ensure that mainstream

services are responsive to the needs of the diversity of migrants. However, it is recognising that mainstream services may need to adapt over time to ensure that migrant needs are met on the same basis as those of non-migrants. As such the Strategy is directed at Government Departments, public bodies, the business sector, community, voluntary, faith-based, cultural and sporting organisations as well as at families and individuals (Department of Justice and Equality, 2017).

National Action Plan for Social Inclusion

Since 1997, Ireland has developed national anti-poverty strategies to provide a strategic framework for the task of tackling poverty and social exclusion. The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion identifies a wide range of targeted actions and interventions to achieve the overall objective of reducing consistent poverty. A key element is the National Social Target for Poverty Reduction, which sets out the Government's ambition for reducing and ultimately eliminating poverty. Implementation of the plan has been actively monitored over its duration via the annual Social Inclusion Report (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2018). Further, the Social Inclusion Forum is part of the Government's structures to monitor and evaluate the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion.

An annual event is part of the institutional structures put in place to underpin the implementation, monitoring and on-going development of the Government's social inclusion agenda. It provides a forum for wider public consultation and discussion on social inclusion issues, in particular for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and the groups that work with them. In addition, the forum provides an opportunity for engagement between officials from Government Departments, community and voluntary organisations and people experiencing poverty (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2019).

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion for the period of 2015 - 2017 aimed to reinforce Government actions to meet the interim poverty target of 4 per cent by 2016. The plan had 14 updated high-level goals to better reflect current issues as well as interventions to tackle poverty and social exclusion.

It was based on the idea of ‘developmental welfare state’ which adopts a life-cycle approach to placing the individual at the centre of policy development and delivery. The three main policy components included adequate minimum income; Inclusive labour markets; and access to quality services (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2018). In May 2019, a new Roadmap for Social Inclusion (Social Inclusion: An Integrated Strategy 2019-2025) was announced by the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection and subsequently published in January 2020 (Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, 2019; 2020).

Targeting Child Poverty

There is a growing consensus that children experience poverty differently than adults as both causes and effects are different. Poverty impacts more acutely on children than on adults as a result of their vulnerability relating to age and dependency. Poverty in childhood can cause lifelong cognitive and physical impairment, leaving children permanently disadvantaged. This in turn extends the cycle of poverty across generations. The impact of poverty during childhood can have detrimental effects on children which are irreversible, hence investing in children is critical for the achievement of fair and sustainable human development (UNICEF, 2011).

In recognition of the negative effects of poverty on children, the Government set an ambitious and challenging child poverty target in 2014, as part of the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People (Better Outcomes Brighter Futures). Aiming to ‘lift 70,000 children out of consistent poverty by 2020’, the Government undertook

‘the adoption of a multi-dimensional, whole-of-Government approach to tackling child poverty which was built on the lifecycle approach employed in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion and is informed by the European Commission’s Recommendation on ‘Investing in children: Breaking the cycle of disadvantage’, as part of the Social Investment Package’ (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2017, p.5).

3.5 Support Services in the ARD Area

Given the demographic profile of the study's neighbourhood as presented in Section 3 of this chapter, the following outlines the support services available in the ARD area as well as the need for collaboration to meet the complex needs of the area's families.

The ARD Family Resource Centre is part of a nationwide programme of Family Resource Centres (FRCs) which was established in 1994 with the aim to support positive family functioning and combat disadvantage. By now the largest family support programme in Ireland, consisting of 107 centres and two outreach centres nationwide, it was implemented in the ARD area in 2011 and adheres to the National Policy Framework for Children and Young people 2014-2020 with the aim to achieve better outcomes. Like others in the Irish state, the centre is overseen by a voluntary management committee (Mc Keown, 2013), which together with the project manager produces an annual action plan to meet the needs of the community in line with the Family Support Strategy as well produce an annual report for Tusla.

City East Family Service is a community-based service that by means of self-referral and referrals from other agencies supports families, children and adolescence in the building of positive social networks. This is achieved through collaboration with other services as well as in partnership with service users. The service is Tusla funded, employing nine Project Workers, and while it is based in a neighbouring community with no direct access through bus services, it provides support to ARD residents by means of collaboration with the Family Resource Centre (Frecklington, 2017).

Despite the establishment of above-named initiatives, Frecklington (2013) highlighted the need for services tackling significant disadvantage and support needs in the ARD area, which stemmed from lack of facilities for young families, social isolation but also high levels of unemployment. In response to his call, several family support providers as well as services that include the remit of family support formed an Interagency-Network to jointly plan and deliver family support interventions. The network was established in 2013, meets once a month and initially consisted of twelve members.

However, additional services were added on consensus of their relevance in the network. These services represented, but not exclusively, are:

Primary and secondary schools

Principals or head of primary and secondary level educational establishments ensure that school procedures facilitate the effective involvement of parents and pupils as well as the effective implementation of systems to identify pupils' needs and monitor progress methodically.

Tusla Services

- **Child Protection and Welfare**
Social Workers have a primary responsibility to promote the safety and well-being of children. Following an assessment of the needs of children and young people appropriate multi-disciplinary support interventions are agreed and provided.
- **Family Support**
The focus of these services is on early intervention aiming to promote and protect the health, well-being and rights of all children, young people and their families. At the same time particular attention is given to those who are vulnerable or at risk.
- **Education Welfare Services**
This service works collaboratively with schools and other relevant services to secure better educational outcomes for children and young people (Tusla, 2019).

The Health Services Executive Early Intervention Services

This provision of services is for children, aged 0-6 years, and their families who have complex developmental needs. The team comprises of an Occupational Therapist, Clinical Psychologist, Physiotherapist, Social Worker and Speech and Language Therapist (HSE, 2018).

Cope Domestic Violence Outreach Services

This service provides support for women and children who have experienced domestic violence and abuse.

Home School Community Liaison Scheme

This service targets pupils at risk of not reaching their potential in the educational system due to economic and social disadvantage and associated adversely pupil attainment and school retention (Irish National Teachers' Organisation, 2019).

Community Garda

Members of the An Garda Síochána who work with community members, and statutory as well as voluntary agencies to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour (An Garda Síochána, 2019).

Juvenile Liaison Services

This provision of services supports the prevention of young offenders in Ireland from entering into the full criminal justice system by offering them a second chance (Citizens Information, 2014).

It was found that collaborative practices are of pivotal importance in diverse communities as single service providers often feel to lack capacity to provide effective supports for the complex needs of families in the area. As such it was suggested that collaboration potentially has a positive impact on outcomes for families (Frecklington, 2017).

The above section has outlined some of the available services in the ARD area as well as specific service needs which were identified by support providers. The last paragraph will now present a short description of an establishment considered important within Polish parents' narratives as it supports their perceived responsibility towards their children to transmit Polish culture.

Polish School Galway

The Polish School Galway is situated in Mervue (4 km from Doughiska) and was established in 2009 by Polish migrants to care for children and preserve as well as promote Polish and Polish-Irish culture, tradition, and history. The school also organizes programs, courses and events that highlight Polish and Polish -Irish culture and accomplishments.

All teachers within this establishment are qualified and recognised by the Polish Ministry of National Education. According to the school's website, 400 pupils are currently enrolled and taught every Saturday morning for four hours. Students are taught from preschool level to the completion of secondary school. Certificates confirming the child's attendance to school, the list of subjects, the number of hours but also evaluations are issued to parents on a regular basis. Students at Leaving Certification level are being prepared to sit the examination of Polish. In its mission statement the school proposes teaching the language and culture of Poland as well as learning about and respecting other cultures, languages, races, and religions as its main goals (Polish School in Galway, 2020).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the context for this study by outlining both family change as well as what is so far known about migrant families in Ireland. It described the study's neighbourhood setting but also the demographic profile of its population before presenting the legislative and policy context. Last, the chapter concluded with an outline of service provision in the study's neighbourhood, the identified need for collaboration among services to meet the complex needs of its families as well as a short description of the Polish school in Galway which was perceived as important to Polish parents in their endeavour to transmit Polish culture.

In order to contribute to knowledge in the area of both parenting and culture, the next chapter presents the methodology adopted for this study's examination of Polish parents' perspectives on the norms that shape parenting, parental experiences as well as help-seeking in a culturally diverse neighbourhood.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Methodology is considered as both ‘the collection of methods or rules by which a particular piece of research is undertaken’ and ‘the principles, theories and values that underpin a particular approach to research’ (Somekh and Lewin, 2005, p.346). The purpose of this chapter is to outline the development of the methodological approach to investigating Polish perspectives on child rearing, parental experiences and help-seeking behaviour. Firstly, the rationale, aim and objectives of this study form the basis of this chapter by placing the research in context. This will aid in the explanation of the relationship between the research questions and the choice of method and justify the methodological approach. Section 4.3 and 4.4 review key theoretical and methodological considerations, before outlining the research position adopted as well as the overall design for this study. Following this is a section on ethical considerations and locating the participant sample for this research. Section 4.6 and 4.7 detail the implementation process, the chosen analytical strategy for generated data and its application in this study. Section 4.8 discusses the limitations of the research and Section 4.9 concludes the chapter with a chapter summary.

4.2 Rationale, Aim and Objectives

The rationale for this study stems from the argument that Irish social science research has thus far given rather little attention to the actual experiences of its increasingly culturally diverse population over the last two decades and the associated challenges for both migrants and minority groups as well as the majority population (Mc Ginnity et al., 2018). In order to better support an integrated society, the aim of this research is to identify specificities of challenges that arise from cultural difference (e.g. inequality in the labour market but also stigmatisation and misconceptions as a result of differing cultural norms and values) and to make recommendations for dealing with these challenges. Focus on cultural diversity issues and its relevance to parenting stemmed from my academic interests and personal experience. My interest in the area initially emerged from my own experience of residing and parenting in Ireland as a foreign national. Further, engagement with literature

on cultural diversity and parenting have led me to recognise that rather than viewing cultural variations as deficits, it is important to consider the topic from a social justice perspective, which argues for respect and equal treatment of all cultures, including those different from the dominant cultures of any given society (Ang, 2010; Janelidze, 2014; Donnelly et al., 2019). The study took a cultural approach to parenting research as it improves our understanding of the processes through which biological variables merge with environmental variables and experiences.

‘Parenting needs to be considered in its socio-cultural context and its study across cultures furnishes a check against an ethnocentric world view and ‘normative’ parenting, frequently narrow in scope and at times blindly uncritical’ (Bornstein, 2012, p.2).

The aim of this research was to examine Polish parents’ perspectives on child rearing and help-seeking in a culturally diverse neighbourhood.

The central research questions were:

1. What are the cultural norms shaping how Polish parents perceive their role as parents in the Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska (ARD) neighbourhood?
2. What is the Polish parenting experience in the ARD neighbourhood?
3. What are the attitudes toward help seeking among Polish parents in the ARD neighbourhood?

A further objective of this study was to make policy and practice recommendations concerning parenting support for Polish parents in the Republic of Ireland.

4.3 Key Theoretical and Methodological Considerations in Designing the Study

Having placed this research in context, the following three sections outline considerations of key theoretical approaches to research in the social sciences and associated methodologies, before moving on to describe my own research position and the design of this study.

In the process of designing this study, it was found important to recognise that every researcher has his or her own view of what constitutes truth and knowledge, which in turn guides one's thinking, beliefs as well as one's assumptions about society and self (Chilisa and Kawulich, 2012). Describing a philosophical way of thinking, Kuhn (1962) first used the term paradigm constituting the abstract beliefs and principles that shape how a researcher sees the world, and how he or she interprets and acts within it. A paradigm is essentially a conceptual lens through which methodological aspects of a research study are examined by the researcher. However, it also defines a researcher's philosophical orientation, with significant implications for the decision making throughout the research process, including the choice of methodology and associated methods (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017).

Inquiry paradigms comprise four elements, namely epistemology, ontology and methodology (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) as well as axiology, which are briefly discussed below.

The term epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge and explores the basis of knowledge, its nature and form, how it can be gained, but also how it can be transmitted to others (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). Ontology relates to assumptions made about reality and the nature of the social phenomenon being explored (Scotland, 2012). Ontology is essential to all paradigms because it helps to acquire an understanding of what constitutes the world as it is known by the individual (Scott and Usher, 2004). Philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality are

‘crucial to understanding how to make meaning of the data collected as they help to orientate one’s thinking about a research problem, its significance, and how one might approach it in order to contribute to its solution’ (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017, p.27).

The next element of a paradigm is methodology, which is a broad term used to refer to a research design, specific methods, analytical approaches as well as procedures of a research study (Keeves, 1997). Methodology presents the logic behind as well as the flow of systematic processes a researcher follows in conducting a research study in order to acquire knowledge about a research problem. It should include assumptions and limitations as well as how these were alleviated or minimised (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). Finally, axiology refers to ethical considerations and the judgement of values, including assessing the role of the researcher’s own values in all stages of the research process (Saunders et al., 2012; Li, 2015).

4.3.1 Theoretical Approaches

Inquiry paradigms are the essence of theoretical approaches to research. This study is situated in the social sciences domain where research has been dominated by four philosophical traditions and associated paradigms. Positivism, interpretivism/constructivism, critical theory and pragmatism primarily differ in their theoretical perspectives of what defines social reality and how we come to know it. As a comprehensive account of all four approaches is outside the remit of this thesis, a brief overview is provided.

Positivism

The Positivist paradigm defines a worldview grounded in the construction of universal laws and rules of normative human behaviour. Comte (1856) postulated that experimentation, observation and reason ought to be the basis for understanding human behaviour, this being the only legitimate means of extending knowledge and human understanding. Methods in positivism are used to explore observations and answer questions as well as search for cause and effect relationships. According to Fadhel (2002), research adopting this worldview tries to interpret observations in terms of facts or measurable

entities. Kivunja and Kuyini stated that research located in this paradigm relies on

‘deductive logic, formulation of hypotheses, testing those hypotheses, offering operational definitions and mathematical equations, calculations, extrapolations and expressions, to derive conclusions. It generally employs quantitative methodologies and relies on large sample sizes. Positivistic approaches aim to provide explanations and to make predictions based on measurable outcomes.’ (2017, p.30)

However, the paradigm’s objectivity and value free stance has been criticised for devaluing the experience and voice of humans. Hence, the need for interpretivism has been advocated (Creswell, 2003).

Interpretivism/constructivism

Interpretivism posits the existence of multiple realities which arise through human interaction and differing interpretations of reality (Silverman, 1998). According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), the central endeavour of research located within this theoretical approach is to gain an understanding of the subjective world which humans experience. Trying to understand the viewpoint of participants rather than the one of researchers, the authors argued that interpretative as well as participatory approaches to examining the viewpoint of participants not only help to understand individuals but also their interpretation of the world experienced. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) proposed that a key tenet of interpretivism is the social construction of reality and that theory follows rather than precedes research as it should be grounded in the generated and analysed data of the research process. As interpretative approaches aim to interpret meanings of individuals’ ascription to aspects of their lives as well as circumstances, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) argued that there is a tendency to focus on a small number of participants, to utilise qualitative methodologies and to emphasise the depth of research findings rather than generalisability. While positivism has been criticised for lacking the appreciation of humans’ voice, interpretative methodologies are primarily criticised for lacking objectivity due to the influence of researchers’ own opinions and experiences in the research process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Further, the research process has been argued to be time consuming and data collection often ‘messy’, meaning that it is unsystematic and producing large volumes of unstructured data. Thus, interpretative methodologies are criticised for potential ‘sloppiness’ and the unlikelihood of being able to draw inferences from generated data (Guba, 1981).

Critical Theory

Research within critical theory examines social justice issues by seeking to explore political and social as well as economic issues leading to social conflict, struggle and oppression. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017; see also Mertens, 2015) critical theory research is concerned with power relationships within social structures and endeavours to expose ‘conjunctions of politics, morality and ethics’ (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017, p.35). The authors suggested that research within this approach ‘consciously recognises the consequences of privileged versions’ (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017, p.35) of reality by examining individuals’ conditions based on their social position. Critical theory situates the nature of truth both socially and historically and treats research not as discovery, but rather construction. Critical theory makes efforts to ‘uncover agency, which is hidden by social practices, and promote human rights, increase social justice as well as reciprocity’ (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017, p.35). This is achieved through adopting methods of action as well as participatory approaches to research. Critical theory has been criticised for not offering clear guidelines on political action following critique through research findings, instead often explicitly repudiating any solutions (Corradetti, 2012).

Pragmatism

Emphasising usefulness as the criterion of truth, pragmatism essentially argues that for something to be true it needs to be verified (Capps, 2019). James, for instance, who was a principal advocate of the pragmatic theory of truth posed the following pragmatic question while simultaneously providing the answer to what he considered to be the appropriate definition of truth:

‘Grant an idea or belief to be true, what concrete difference will its being true make to anyone’s actual life? ... True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot’ (James, 1963 [1907], pp.88-89).

A pragmatic approach to research was the result of theorists seeking to overcome the shortcomings of both the positivist and interpretivist worldview (Neuman, 2000). Arguing that neither paradigm was sufficient in the endeavour to gain knowledge of the complexity of phenomena, pragmatism promoted a worldview, where truth is continuously renegotiated and interpreted in light of its usefulness to solve problems, and hence proposed the need for methods of research that are found most appropriate for the examination of phenomena at hand (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017; Patton, 1990; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003a, 2003b; Alise and Teddlie, 2010; Biesta, 2010). This Pragmatist argument led to the search for more practical and pluralistic research approaches, where the allowance of a combination of methods could shed light on not only actual behaviour of individuals but also their beliefs and the consequences of difference. The search resulted in pragmatism advocating mixed methods in order to fully understand the complexity of human behaviour (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). Critics argued that due to opposing epistemological as well as ontological positions, the merging of positivism and interpretivism was impossible. Pragmatists however maintained that the combination of methods was acceptable as despite theoretical differences, the choice of methods should be based on their suitability to answer questions and meet research objectives at hand. According to Greene (2007), the combination process of methods can improve understanding of a phenomenon and aid in the connection and confirmation but also the disproval of research findings from multiple data sources.

Having presented an overview of each paradigm considered dominant in social science research, I will now move on to my own position and the study design.

4.4 Establishing Research Position and Study Design

Given the arguably limited knowledge of the study's topic in the Irish context and the need for a better understanding of the phenomenon to provide more effective support, a pragmatic approach was adopted as it allows for many different ways of interpreting the world and undertaking research (Saunders et al., 2012). By placing emphasis on research questions and solution to problems rather than theoretical positioning and associated methodologies, a pragmatic approach allowed a flexible design of the study. Research strategies that were most appropriate to deal with the research problem were subsequently used instead of being tied to theoretical assumptions.

This study neither sided with the realist stance which argues for the existence of an external world 'apart from our understanding of it', nor with the constructivist claim that 'the world is created by our conceptions of it' (Morgan, 2014, p.4). Instead, the study supports Dewey's (1925a/2008) proposition that both stances make equally important claims about the nature of human experience and that neither are superior or more valid than the other.

This research was primarily concerned with its specific research goals rather than with using inquiry to elicit abstract knowledge (Morgan, 2007). Thus, this study replaced older notions which emphasised ontology and epistemology in research paradigms with a specific focus on the inquiry of human experience as previously suggested by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) and Morgan (2014).

A pragmatic approach that is less influenced by philosophical assumptions and directly links the choice of approach to the purpose of and nature of the research questions posed (Creswell, 2003) lifted restrictions in terms of how the research could be carried out. Adopting the philosophy of 'what works' (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006) was not based on philosophical commitment but rather on a design and methodology that were believed to be best suited for this study's research questions (Darlington and Scott, 2002). Taking into consideration that not 'anything goes' in determining the appropriate research tools (Denscombe, 2008, p.274), methods were utilised thoughtfully (Bryman, 2006; Freshwater, 2007;

Denscombe, 2008) by choosing and integrating appropriate methods to answer my research questions.

Theory-informed rather than theory-driven, my aim for this study was to have policy significance. While agreeing with the importance of explaining a social phenomenon in a way that it can be useful, the study was not concerned with generalisation in research but rather with the question of perspective, particularly different perspectives. Reality looks different to different stakeholders and having been exposed to a variety of cultures and societies on a personal as well as a professional level, I was acutely aware of the importance of getting closer to people's deeper understanding of situations rather than engaging solely in methods that provide a more surface account. This for me highlighted the value of an interpretivist approach, whereby I need to be conscious of my own values and theoretical presuppositions in developing research findings and recommendations.

Although aware of power structures within society and the need to highlight inequalities relating to accessing societal resources, too little is known of its relevance in the context of Polish parenting in the Republic of Ireland as well as participants' willingness to explicitly engage in conflict-led social action as proposed by critical theory. Instead, a pragmatic approach was found to be relevant and more appropriate to the task of identifying problems and securing more lasting, long-term solutions.

4.4.1 Research Design

Following a review of theoretical and associated methodological literature, a pragmatic approach and the utilisation of a qualitative methodology was chosen.

The following figure (Figure 13) provides an overview of the study's design before moving on to describing individual elements in more detail in subsequent sections.

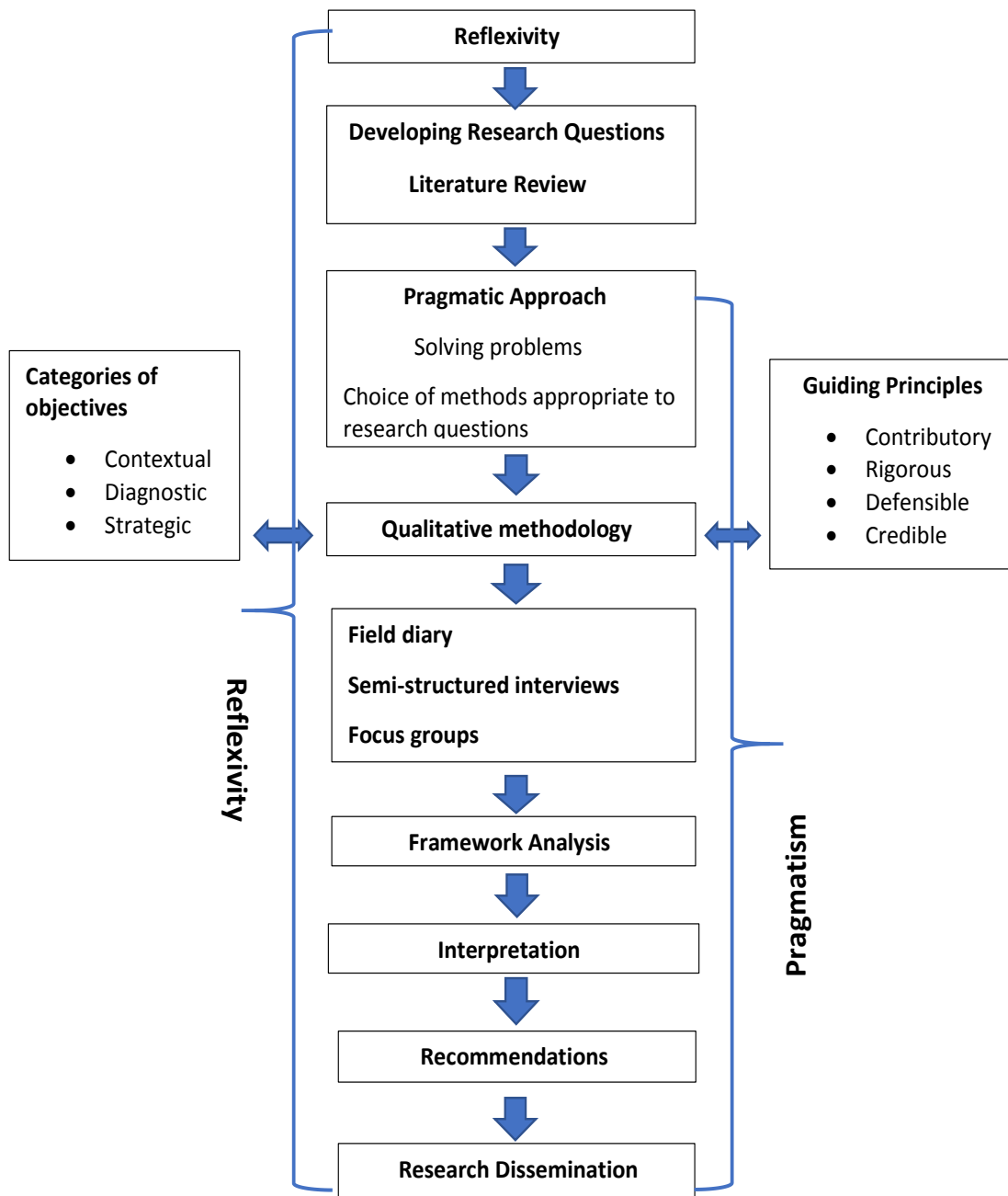


Figure 13; Overview of Study Design

4.4.1.1 Qualitative Methodology

According to Hammarberg et al. (2016), qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are often set against each other due to representing two different world views. Quantitative researchers commonly view qualitative research with suspicion, consider it to lack objectivity, and judge results as being biased due to the influence of researchers' own opinions and experiences. In addition, qualitative research is considered insubstantial by making use of small samples which 'may not be representative of the broader population' (p.498; Cohen and Crabtree, 2008). In contrast, qualitative researchers may critique quantitative methodologies as 'over-simplifying individual experience in the cause of generalisation, failing to acknowledge researcher biases and expectations in research design, and requiring guesswork to understand the human meaning of aggregate data' (Hammarberg et al., 2016, p.498; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Creswell, 2012).

Pierce (2008) suggested that qualitative research is best suited for studies that try to understand the complexity of social life, meaning that human behaviour occurs in increasingly broader and more complicated circumstances of individual and group existence. He highlighted the unique capacity of qualitative methods to learn and understand underlying values and social meanings of individuals as well as groups by 'identifying the interpretative lens which subjects adopt and consequently the wider social context that frames that view', thus allowing the researcher to see the world through the participants' eyes (p.45).

Detailing more concrete features of qualitative methodologies, Bryman (2008, in Crosse, 2015) highlighted the need to use the participant's perspective

'as point of orientation, the emergence of concepts and theories ... out of data collection, the tendency to focus on process, ... the generation of rich meaningful as opposed to hard and unambiguous data as well as the use of words over measurement when presenting an analysis of society' (pp.88-89).

Qualitative methods are used to answer questions about experience, meaning and perspective (Hammarberg et al., 2016) which was found suitable for the research questions under investigation. Arguing Irelands' unfamiliarity with the study's phenomenon, it was believed that the qualitative exploration of Polish parents' perspectives on childrearing and help-seeking as well as their experiences of challenges in this regard is necessary in order to gain an understanding of the phenomenon and subsequently inform policy.

Ritchie and Spencer in 2002 argued that there has been a notable growth in the use of qualitative methods for applied social policy research as

'it aids to explore and understand a diversity of social and public policy issues, either as an independent research strategy or in combination with some form of statistical inquiry. The wider use of qualitative methods has come about for several reasons but is underpinned by the persistent requirement in social policy fields to understand complex behaviours, needs, systems and cultures' (p.174).

A very high proportion of applied policy research is of quantitative nature, deriving from the early years of empirical social inquiry and the result of the dominant requirement of policy-makers for facts (Bulmer, 1982). Fortunately, this is changing, as is the role played by qualitative methods, which are now used to meet a variety of different objectives. Broadly, these can be divided into four categories: contextual, diagnostic, evaluative and strategic.

As the study's objectives were to investigate:

- Polish perspectives on parenting and help-seeking in a culturally diverse neighbourhood (*contextual*)
- the cultural norms which shape how Polish parents in the ARD neighbourhood perceive their role as parents as well as their attitudes towards help-seeking (*diagnostic*)
- the Polish parenting experience in the ARD neighbourhood (*evaluative*)

and to

- make policy and practice recommendations concerning parenting support for Polish parents in the Republic of Ireland (*strategic*), they by and large fit into the description (Table 1) that follows:

<i>Contextual</i> Identifying the form and nature of what exists
<i>Diagnostic</i> Examining the reasons for, or causes of, what exists
<i>Evaluative</i> Appraising the effectiveness of what exists
<i>Strategic</i> Identifying new theories, policies, plans or actions

Table 1; Four Categories of Research Objectives in Social Policy Research (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002)

4.4.1.2 Evaluating Qualitative Research

The problem of how to evaluate the quality of qualitative research is not new (Lincoln and Guba, 2000) and qualitative researchers continuously face the dilemma of how to evaluate the quality of their work, especially when the criteria of quantitative research, such as objectivity, validity and reliability, are used (Spencer et al., 2003; Cohen and Crabtree, 2008). While some researchers have been critical of evaluating qualitative methodologies from the theoretical standpoint of positivism, others openly admit to applying positivist criteria when judging the quality of qualitative research (Lather, 2004).

According to Northcote (2012), qualitative researchers are

‘not known to follow ... pre-defined guidelines ... or rigid standards to guide the selection of research methodologies. Instead they attempt to recognise the diversity and complexity of their participants and contexts, working with rather than within the boundaries of their research setting (p.103).

Because of the wide-ranging nature of qualitative research, Cohen and Crabtree (2008) argued that there is no 'unified field' (p.388), making the choice of which criteria to use difficult.

The problem with selecting appropriate criteria to assess the value of qualitative research does not only depend on the research paradigm and researcher's intentions but also on both the researcher's and research participants' attitudes to knowledge, the field of inquiry as well as the disciplinary field. As it is important for me as a researcher to identify a method of assessment that accounts for these aspects, I suggest justifying the conduct of this study by criteria which benefit the participants for whom the research study was intended, namely Polish parents in the ARD neighbourhood and all Polish parents in similar situations. Keeping their perspectives at the centre of the research process, while simultaneously aiming to inform social policy, Northcote's (2012) four criteria for assessing qualitative research is supported.

Given the wide array of criteria offered by various researchers over the years to assess the quality of qualitative research, Northcote (2012) summarised common elements and proposed a framework, based on Spencer et al. (2003) and Garman's (1994,1996) guiding principles.

Guiding Principle	Guiding question	Specific Criteria suggested in literature
Contributory in advancing wider knowledge and understanding	Have the findings of this study contributed to our knowledge and understanding of....? How has being involved in the research benefitted the participants (in terms of their knowledge and implications of the study's findings)?	Importance of the research (Cohen and Crabtree, 2008); worthy topic (Tracy, 2010); Future focus and contribution to research directions
Rigorous in conduct through systematic and transparent collection, analysis and interpretation of qualitative data	Are the methods used to gather, analyse, interpret and present the data rigorous, systematic and transparent?	Openness and clarity (Cohen and Crabtree, 2008) Ethics: carrying out ethical research (Cohen and Crabtree, 2008; Tracy, 2010); Transparency of data analysis methods Empathic neutrality (Patton, 1990; 2002)
Defensible in design by providing a research strategy that can address the questions posed to evaluate a study	Is the research design of this study defensible and trustworthy, and linked to the study's research questions?	Auditability; audit trail (Whitt, 1991); Reflexivity (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009; Cohen and Crabtree, 2008; Creswell, 2002); transparency of researcher's ideas (LeCompte and Goetz, 1982)
Credible in claim through offering well founded and plausible arguments about the significance of the evidence generated	Are the findings credible and supported by evidence?	Consensus on credibility of findings and meaningful coherence (Cohen and Crabtree, 2008; Eisner, 1991; Tracy, 2010) relevance (Freshwater et al., 2010; Mays and Pope, 2000) Interpretive adequacy (Shank and Villeda, 2004)

Table 2; Guiding Principles and Criteria used to Evaluate the Quality and Method of Research (adapted from Northcote et al., 2012, pp.106-107)

While the previous table (right column) illustrates the various terms and phrases associated with researchers' endeavours to create a set of criteria appropriate to the process of evaluating qualitative research, it also demonstrates the complexity of selecting the most appropriate criteria for a particular research study. In order to provide evidence that the guiding principles proposed by Northcote et al. (2012) were inherent in the design of this study, the next table describes the criteria used to evaluate the quality and methods of this research.

Guiding Principle	Criteria
Contributory	Novelty of topic under investigation; Aim to make policy and practice recommendations
Rigorous	Ethical research; Transparency of data analysis through use of framework method and reflexivity
Defensible	Audit trail of research process; Transparency of researcher's ideas; Reflexivity
Credible	Coherence; Descriptive validity (factual accuracy of researcher's account) Interpretative adequacy

Table 3; Criteria to Evaluate Study's Quality and Methods

4.4.1.3 Data Collection Tools

It is pivotal to any research that all aspects of a study are coherent and aligned. This includes the importance of data collection methods, as the way in which information is collected as well as the explanations it can generate are determined by the researcher's application of methodology and the analytical approach (Wright et al., 2016).

According to Paradis et al., a careful design of the data collection phase requires consideration of:

‘the what, where, when, and how at the different stages of the research process; acknowledging the role of the researcher as an instrument of data collection; and carefully considering the context studied and the participants involved in the research’ (2016, p.263).

For this study, I was aware that the selection of appropriate tools is fundamental to meeting the research objectives and must be informed by theory. Considering literature provided in Chapter Three, the argument that Ireland is largely unfamiliar with its culturally diverse population, and the need to investigate parenting and help-seeking through a cultural lens in order to better understand and support Polish parents, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were deemed most appropriate for the achievement of the study’s objectives.

4.4.1.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

According to Dunn (2005), interviews are verbal interchanges whereby the researcher or interviewer attempts to elicit information from the participant. There are three types of interviews: structured, unstructured and semi-structured, which can be placed along a continuum.

‘Structured interviews follow a predetermined and standardised list of questions. The questions are always asked in almost the same way and in the same order. At the other end of the continuum are unstructured forms of interviewing such as oral histories . . . The conversation in these interviews is directed by the informant rather than by the set questions. In the middle of this continuum are semi-structured interviews. This form of interviewing has some degree of predetermined order but still ensures flexibility in the way issues are addressed by the informant’ (ibid, p.80).

It has been argued that interviewers need to actively listen and question as well as probe and prompt further to collect richer data. Thus, interviews are regarded ideal when used to document participants' accounts, perceptions of,

or stories about attitudes toward as well as responses to certain situations or phenomena (Paradis et al., 2016).

4.4.1.3.2 Focus Groups

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups are similar in that they are conversational and informal in tone. A focus group is a group of people, usually between 6 and 12, who meet in an informal setting to talk about a particular topic that has been set by the researcher. The facilitator or moderator of focus groups keeps the group on the topic but is otherwise non-directive, allowing the group to explore the subject from as many angles as they please (Longhurst, 2003).

Ideally, focus groups are used when the sum of a group of people's experiences may offer more than a single individual's experiences in understanding social phenomena. Focus groups also allow researchers to capture participants' reactions to the comments and perspectives shared by other participants and are thus a way to capture similarities and differences in viewpoints (Paradis et al., 2016). A key characteristic is the interaction between members of the group, making them different from semi-structured interviews which rely on the interaction between interviewer and interviewee. Focus groups are also different from interviews in that it is possible to gather the opinions of a large number of people for comparatively little time. Focus groups are often recommended to researchers wishing to orientate themselves to a new field (Morgan, 1997). Both semi-structured interviews and focus groups can be used as 'stand-alone methods', as a supplement to other methods or as a means for triangulation in multi-methods research (Longhurst, 2003).

For this study the application of the focus group method for service providers and both focus groups and semi-structured interviews for Polish parents had been identified as most appropriate tools to gather data. However, due to sampling and implementation issues (see Section 5.1 and 6 of this chapter) an amendment was necessary. Thus, data from parents was collected solely through semi-structured interviews, while service providers' data came from both focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

4.4.1.3.3 Field Diary

In addition to semi-structured interviews and focus group data, the study's analysis was informed by drawing on the compilation of field notes.

It is argued that qualitative field notes are an essential component of rigorous qualitative research as they add to data by providing rich context for analysis (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2013). Collecting field notes is so widely regarded as pivotal that standardized criteria for qualitative research reporting prescribe the inclusion of a statement of field notes collection in research manuscripts (O'Brien et al., 2014).

Field notes serve many functions, but predominately aid in constructing thick, rich descriptions of the study context, encounters, interviews and focus groups by documenting valuable contextual data. When field notes are disclosed with other study information, they allow for the transmission of the full depth of the study context. Field notes can be valuable when examining data later or providing data to other researchers for secondary analysis or meta synthesis (Hinds et al., 1997).

Field notes are a component of data collection and analysis, requiring the same level of professionalism as face-to-face interactions. However, field notes may contain personal information about the researcher and the description of participants, tentative thoughts on analysis, and critical reflections can be very revealing (Ottenberg, 1990). Berger (2015) argued that just as participants are influenced by their context, researchers are equally a product of their experiences and larger society.

In this study, I made use of a field diary over a period of six months, where in the majority of cases notes were written in the evening. From the beginning of the recruitment process up to conducting the last interview, steps taken to conduct the study, preliminary thoughts and discussions about an analysis strategy as well as impressions I gained from participants, and comments but also advice which was provided by stakeholders (e.g. supervisors, academic community, Polish community) were recorded on the day they occurred (see Appendix A for extract of field diary). The notes were incorporated and aided in the adaptation of a new recruitment strategy (see Section 6 of this Chapter),

were consulted in the familiarisation process of data analysis (see Section 7.1.1 of this chapter) and drawn on in the creation of analytical memos (see Appendix B) to interpret the overall data (see Section 7.1.1 of this chapter). An example of my field notes utilisation is a repeated emphasis on privacy in the study's findings, which was not only verbally expressed during interviews but also in participants' behaviour (e.g. locking the door during the interview), difficulty in recruitment of participants and accounts provided by Polish stakeholders such as the Polish clergy and Polish school principal.

Given not only the personal nature of the field notes' content, but also my positionality as fellow migrant parent in this research, I was aware of the importance to critically reflect on my own opinions and experiences and acknowledge my shaping of the results by being both the collector as well as the interpreter of the study's data (Thoresen and Ohlen, 2015). Hence, reflexivity was necessary to defend the quality of this study as well as its methods.

4.4.1.4 Reflexivity

Being aware that the perspective I bring to the qualitative inquiry of this study forms 'part of the context for the findings' (Patton, 2002, p.64), the following section describes my reflexive account.

Embedded within a qualitative approach to research is the recognition of the researcher's experiences and own background, highlighting the need to include a reflexive account where self-awareness, cultural and ideological awareness as well as ownership of one's own perspective is emphasised (Patton, 2002). It is widely acknowledged within the qualitative social science research community that being reflexive is important, but also that interpretation of data is a reflexive exercise through which meanings are not found but made (Byrne et al., 2004). Being reflexive involves ongoing self-questioning and self-understanding, but also, what is referred to, as 'reflexive triangulation' (Patton, 2002, p.65). This means that reflexivity not only involves one's own perspective and voice, but also those one interviews and to whom one reports (ibid).

An attempt was made to achieve neutrality in the conduct of this research, meaning that I endeavoured to avoid obvious or conscious bias and to be as neutral as possible in the interpretation and presentation of the data. However, it was recognised that this aspiration could not be fully attained, and I was thus reflective about my role and the influence of my beliefs, behaviours and knowledge on the research process.

Despite a repeated emphasis on the value of reflexivity, little information has been provided by literature on how to achieve it. The field notes employed have reflexive elements as they provide my thoughts on various stages of the research process and illuminate any bias that may be inherent in my subconscious. However, in order to understand the direction this study's analysis took, my personal investment in the research topic should be outlined by means of describing experiences that have shaped my position in this research (Corlett and Marvin, 2018). The presentation of relevant autobiographical details is in my opinion the most effective way to be reflexive:

I was born in 1970's Namibia to a Namibian father and a German mother and I am the elder of two daughters. My father was a travel agent and my mother worked as a nurse in the Accident and Emergency unit of the local hospital prior to emigrating to Germany when I was three, after the death of my paternal grandmother. My memories of early childhood include that we moved a lot within the borders of Bavaria, that my parents worked all the time and constantly tried to upskill in their careers, and that I had a good relationship with my maternal grandmother who frequently minded us. Religious values and Catholic traditions were an integral part of our family life, which was most apparent by regular church service attendance on Sundays and church holidays, refraining from meat on Fridays and involvement in various activities within the church community. By the time I was ten, we had moved four times, and it was at that stage that my father planned a move to South Africa, as he apparently had a well-paid job lined up. He went ahead while we remained in Germany for my mother to arrange and manage the move of our belongings. I vividly remember the week our things were packed and about to be shipped, when my father returned and called off the move as he had neither liked his new employment nor found the South African environment suitable for our family. I can safely say that this was a turning point in my

parent's marriage as tension grew and arguments became more frequent, often prolonged, and affected my sister and I in ways we only came to know later. Also, it was during that period of my childhood, that I can first recall parenting strategies and how they differed within the family unit. My mother consistently employed authoritarian strategies with little warmth, while my father was mostly dismissive. By the time I was 16, family life was next to unbearable and I became unruly, drank a lot and didn't return home most nights. My parent's marriage was irreconcilable, but due to religious beliefs, divorce was not an option. Instead, my father purchased a house in South Africa and found suitable employment while my mother remained in Germany, leaving my sister and I torn between two lives. We initially decided to go with my father, and my sister adapted well to the new environment. I, however, struggled immensely, and resorted to drugs and alcohol as well as two suicide attempts which further negatively affected the already strained relationship of my parents. Subsequently, my late teenage years were marked by a constant moving back and forth between the two countries until the age of 20, and no completed schooling as a consequence. With no qualifications but good language skills in both German and English, Lufthansa, (the German airline), hired me at the age of 21. It seemed the perfect solution to my problem of struggling to belong but also helped me to explore the multitude of cultures I encountered, gain a better understanding as well as embrace diversity.

At the age of 23, I met my husband who is Irish, and fell pregnant with child number one 2 years into the relationship, and again 13 months later with our second daughter. The bond to my mother up to this point had been frail and basically non-existent with my father. Post birth of my first child, my parents and I, by and large, made up and were overall supportive of each other.

Now a parent myself, I was once again faced with the struggle of belonging. While I had managed to avoid calling any specific place my home while working as a flight attendant and using my apartment in Munich as base rather than proper residence, parenthood required me to reconsider, in the best interest of my children. As my husband had a site in Ireland's countryside and we both agreed that children need space, we took the plunge and emigrated. Challenges associated with the move were eminent. He struggled to reintegrate, having been away from home for 10 years, and I hated it. No friends, little income, lack of transportation, the weather and residing in a mobile home next to a mother-in-law that didn't approve of me or provide support in any way ultimately led to my return to Germany with the

children. I parented alone with the help of my mother for two years. It was at this point in my life that for the first time I considered the importance of stability, consistency and safety for my children, not wanting them to experience a similar childhood to mine. In 2003, my husband and I reconciled which resulted in my return to Ireland, us building a house, that we call our home, and another addition to the family. While aspects of Ireland that previously left me unhappy, remained, I believe that my children's stable environment is pivotal. Being a migrant myself, I empathise with parents experiencing the lack of family and support networks, that parenting strategies may be regarded as inadequate as well as the difficulty of finding suitable employment. I counteract these by frequent visits from my mother, friendships with people who share similar values to mine, consistency of parenting strategies between my husband and I, and engaging in further education to improve my employability'.

The purpose of the above account is twofold. Firstly, a social researcher is not only a medium through which knowledge is discovered but also a constructor of knowledge. As such, it is necessary to consider the researcher's personal and social worlds that lead to constructions of knowledge (Plummer, 2001).

Secondly, the account draws attention to the fact that my experiences have enabled me to develop a level of understanding of the parents participating in this study that I wouldn't have been able to achieve otherwise. However, I also acknowledge the challenges the origins of my personal perspective as a migrant parent pose to this study. In order to attain a more neutral stance which involved dealing with potential personal biases, and is necessary to 'produce credible, trustworthy, authentic and balanced research' (Patton, 2002, p.51), transparency throughout the research process, continuous external reviews by and discussions with supervisors as well as the rigorous application of the framework approach to data analysis were utilised to derive meaningful and empirically supported findings.

As previously illustrated (see Figure 13), reflexivity was an integral part of the entire research process, informing the initial steps of formulating research questions and reviewing literature, but also my choice of methodology, analysis and interpretation of data and subsequent discussion and conclusion

in terms of the study's findings. Reflexivity involved discussion and disagreements with the supervisory team and the continuous negotiation of thoughts and feelings to achieve an adequate sense of balance.

An example of how reflexivity worked in this study was the deriving of my key finding on authoritative parenting. From the onset of designing this study, throughout my literature review but also during the analysis stage I felt unease with some assumptions made which linked migrant parenting with negative parenting. Personal feelings of these assumptions being unjust while at the same time trying to understand why migrant parents parent the way they do resulted in continuous discussions, but also led to disagreements with my supervisors, which needed resolving. This process led to my questioning and then investigating literature that considered that there are also adaptation strategies at work. The eventual balance between my personal feelings and my role and responsibility as researcher resulted in my more nuanced position with regards to the study's findings.

Throughout the research process, my supervisors played a crucial role in terms of helping me to maintain academic integrity, counteract potential personal bias, validate interpretations, and review my findings as credible. Further, supervisors were vital in supporting me to change both the selection criteria of parents as well as the methods of data collection, when the initial recruitment strategy failed (see Section 6 of this Chapter).

4.4.1.5 Dissemination of Study

According to Chen et al. (2010), the research dissemination process is a crucial aspect of any study, especially when directly involving a community. The presentation of produced knowledge not only informs the scientific field, but it also guarantees that those with a vested interest in the research understand and find benefit from the study's findings.

As I believe this study to hold value for more than a single group of stakeholders, the purpose the dissemination strategy and activities for this study is to inform, empower and engage a multitude of groups interested in understanding Polish perspectives on child rearing and help seeking.

First, a one-day dissemination day is planned post viva, with invitations for all participants from the study, individuals from support services and government agencies as well as community members who would be interested in understanding Polish parenting. At this event, I will present my findings from the research study, encourage stakeholders to discuss the findings with each other, and together suggest strategies for dissemination to a wider audience, impact on practice and future research studies. It is not intended for this event to be a formal one, but rather an opportunity to receive feedback from multiple stakeholders and collectively discuss future steps arising from the results of the study.

Second, and this has already been discussed with as well as approved by service providers in the ARD Family Resource Centre, my aim is to establish a working group in the ARD neighbourhood, consisting of service providers and Polish parents to act on the suggestions provided through the dissemination event, communicate findings to the Polish community and develop a plan of action for collaboration.

4.5. Ethics in Research

After a thorough description of the research design, I now turn to ethical considerations as well as the process of locating this study's participant sample.

The nature of ethical problems in qualitative research studies is argued to be subtle, and potential ethical conflicts exist in regard to how a researcher gains access to a community group, in the effects the researcher may have on participants as well as the sensitivity of issues discussed in the study and potential conflicts of interest. Qualitative researchers focus their research on exploring, examining, and describing people in their natural environments, and embedded in this focus are the concepts of relationships and power between researchers and participants (Orb et al., 2001).

Ethical Principles

The difficulties inherent in qualitative research can be alleviated by awareness and use of ethical principles, so that the conduct of good quality research is done in an ethically sound way (Adams, 2013). Ethical principles are used as a framework to guide the research process, help to ensure the highest possible standards in every aspect of research, and are safeguarded as well as reinforced through Research Ethics Committees.

At a very basic level, core ethical guidelines state that

‘Participation should be based on informed consent; information disclosed during data collection should be treated in a confidential manner; participants should not be exposed to unnecessary risks by researchers and also should be protected from harm; and finally the study design should be such that it is likely to reach reliable conclusions with the smallest number of research participants/volunteers’ (Irish Council for Bioethics, 2004 in Kennan et al., 2012, p.8).

Originating in clinical research (most notably Beauchamp and Childress’s ‘Principles of biomedical ethics’) but generally applied to all fields of research in which humans participate (European Commission, 2018), ethical principles have been explored by diverse research projects and were discussed in numerous literature on best practice (Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, 2015), thus leading to a variety of different terms used to describe core principles as well as the number of principles a researcher needs to adhere to.

Researching participants from cultural or ethnic groups poses its own particular concerns due to the very presence of a researcher, and frequently centres on issues of confidentiality, respect for cultural-specific norms and power.

In terms of confidentiality, it was argued that awareness is necessary of the nature of the community under study as well as possible unintended consequences of the research process which hinder the attainment of confidentiality (Ryan, 1997). Relating to respect for norms, Marshall and

Batten (2004) suggested that cultural norms may not be as fluid as they appear, and cultural values do not change rapidly. This has implications for researchers, as it is difficult to adhere to universal ethics in designing and conducting research while at the same time trying to respect the particular and contextual ethical norms of a given social or ethnic group. Thus, flexibility on the part of the researcher is necessary to deal with such cultural norm differences. In relation to the issue of power, Marshall and Batten (2004) argued that conducting research across any cultural context requires intense attention to ethics, as cross-cultural research inherently involves a dynamic of power. Cross-cultural research design is said to come from an understanding of the culture within which the researcher will be working. Thus, learning about the culture of the participants, their history, language, customs, expectations and aspirations is argued to be imperative.

With the aim to investigate Polish migrant parents' perspectives of child rearing and help seeking qualitatively, a review of relevant literature revealed that ethical considerations and challenges particular to migration are hardly ever discussed (Hernández et al., 2013). Agozino (2000) argued that this gap in the literature reflects the dilemma of the multidisciplinary nature of the study of migration. Bilger and van Liempt (2009) proposed that while there are good ethical guidelines outside the field of migration, these are frequently overlooked or not easily translated to specific issues relating to migration. The limited amount of publications, according to the authors, reflects the reservation towards recognising particular difficulties related to empirical research with 'vulnerable' and 'hard-to reach' migrants. Thus, general ethical guidelines are argued to be a good start, but individual researchers need to decide on a case-by- case basis what is best. The implications of this are the need for transparency throughout the research process as well as the explicit stating of ethical considerations and implementation in research, which I will discuss now.

Ethical considerations for this study

This research was designed in line with good practice ethical principles recommended by Beauchamp and Childress (2001), and these underpin ethical approval from NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee, which was obtained in 2017. Key principles are autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice, as well as virtue ethics. The following table illustrates the principles and their meaning as well as their applicability in research studies before moving on to providing a discussion of the application of these principles in this study.

Ethical Principle	Application
Autonomy (Respect for individual; recognition of rights; interaction in ways that are freely accepted)	Justifiable manner in which participants are recruited Confidentiality Anonymity Informed Consent Right to withdraw
Beneficence (Doing Good, worthwhile and rigorous study)	Ensuring well-being of participant Maximising any potential benefits of the research Justifiable sample size
Non-maleficence (Protection from harm, minimising risk)	Risk to participant and researcher Confidentiality Anonymity Justifiable sample size
Justice (Fair distribution of benefits and burdens)	Selection of participants Consideration who receives the benefits and who bears the burden of research Defending the requirement to include and exclude certain groups from the research study
Virtue (integrity, respect and sympathy)	Risk to participant and researcher Academic Integrity Duty of Care for participants

Table 4; Ethics Application Guidelines (Adapted from NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee, 2019)

In order to distribute benefits and burdens of the study fairly (principle of justice), participants for this study were initially to be selected by meeting the criteria of being a Polish parent who resides in the ARD-neighbourhood and raises 5-year olds. This was subsequently amended to parenting all children who have not yet completed primary school. The sample size (principle of beneficence and non-maleficence) was determined in light of data saturation, meaning that recruitment was concluded when no new information was added to generated data.

Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, my primary concern for this study was the safety and well-being of the research participants, and all available information to identify potential risks was sought (ethical principle of non-maleficence and virtue). Further, means of minimising those risks were established and the ongoing research was continuously monitored for adverse events experienced by participants. For instance, consideration was given, and The Distressed Person's protocol developed for the event that parents may become distressed as they discuss any difficulties they experience (see Appendix C). In terms of minimising the risk for myself as the researcher, procedures e.g. liaison with supervisors and speaking to the Student Counselling Service at NUIG, were put in place to reduce potential emotional and physical risk during field work. These procedures were also designed for and applicable to an interpreter, in the event of participants requesting translation during interviews.

One of the most important ways in which the principle of autonomy was adhered to was by obtaining voluntary informed consent. Research participants provided written consent after they had the opportunity to carefully consider the risks and benefits as well as ask any pertinent questions. The informed consent was an ongoing process so that participants were able to opt out of the study at any point if they so wished. Given the fact that English was not the first language for potential participants, study information and materials were made available in both Polish and English, and an interpreter was enlisted to be present at the participant information session for parents, for follow-up information as well as consent signing. Further, the

interpreter was made available during data collection to accommodate Polish parents, as well as the researcher for clear communication.

The protection of participants' confidentiality of personal information and anonymity (ethical principle of autonomy and non-maleficence) was ensured by having protective mechanisms in place. To prevent the disclosure of data that could be linked to participants' identity and thus compromise anonymity, pseudonyms were used. Further, identifying information including specific statements which could potentially be traced back to a particular participant, as well as names were removed in the write up of the thesis. In terms of protecting confidentiality, unauthorized access to data was prevented by storing hard copy data in locked filing cabinets and electronic data in a password protected computer with access only available to myself and my supervisors. However, in the event of disclosure of child abuse and domestic abuse, a Child Protection Protocol for this study had been put in place.

Answering to the principle of beneficence, the inclusion of participants from an ethnic minority background was vital in order to generate an understanding of their views on parenting and how associated challenges impact on their daily lives. The study aimed to gain an understanding of how Polish parents experience their caregiver role in Ireland. While findings do not provide immediate benefits to participants, illustrating common problems faced and identifying how service providers can best support these parents, the study was believed to be justified by aiming to have policy implications which should lead to long-term benefits through the provision of more responsive services.

Last, I was aware of power and the relationship between the participants and myself, the need for academic integrity, but also my duty of care for participants (ethical principle of virtue). In my ethical responsibility to fairly represent participants' accounts, I was always conscious to accurately report generated data and present them within the context in which they were articulated. In terms of my duty of care for participants, every effort was made to minimise potential risks to their well-being. Aiming to achieve virtue ethics in my scientific knowledge production reflexivity, a transparent analytical

approach to data, departmental resources to assist in best practice as well as dissemination of findings to stakeholders of this study were utilised.

4.5.1 Locating Participant Sample

The Republic of Ireland has become increasingly diverse over the last two decades (Mc Ginnery et al., 2018), yet little is known about how parents from culturally different backgrounds perceive their role as parents. According to the most recent CSO data available, there are 535,475 non-Irish nationals living in Ireland, and counting 122,515 Polish nationals, it is the largest non-Irish nationality. Galway City was the most multi-cultural with 18.6 per cent of its residents recorded as non-Irish. Of these, Polish nationals, accounting for 5%, were dominant (CSO, 2016). To reflect Polish families' post-migration environment as well as social and cultural diversity prevalent in contemporary Ireland, the Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska neighbourhood, located on the east side of Galway City, was chosen for the recruitment of participants (see map for location and neighbourhood demographics in Chapter 2). The research was intended to provide an opportunity for Polish parents in Ireland to have their views heard and to inform future policy and service development.

Literature by-and-large differentiates between probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling refers to a random selection achieved through a systematic procedure with the resulting sample considered as 'inferable to the overall population from which the sample was chosen' (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). In contrast, non-probability sampling is not random but determined by assumptions made about the population of interest and the presence of specific factors which lead to inclusion and exclusion, thus limiting the extent to which findings generated from the sample can be inferred to the wider population (Collins et al., 2007). Determining the most appropriate sampling framework depends on the nature of the research project, research objectives as well as basic assumptions made about the target population.

In determining the research sample for this study, consideration of stakeholders was required in terms of a hard-to-reach population (Polish

migrant parents) and the research interest in a sensitive subject (parenting). Shaghghi et al. (2011) suggest that migrants belong to the list of hard-to-reach groups as they are scattered among host communities and frequently make temporary living arrangements. Further, cultural separateness or simply because of difficulties a researcher may experience in accessing the social network of a special migrant group, leads to their classification as hard-to-reach.

‘Hard-to-reach’, or sometimes referred to as ‘hidden population’, is a term used to describe those sub-groups of the population that may be difficult to reach or involve in research. However, while using this single term to refer to these sub-sections of populations, some literature argues against the term ‘hard-to-reach’ as it implies a homogeneity within distinct groups, which does not necessarily exist (ibid; Atkinson and Flint, 2001). Although I support the notion that just like big populations specific groups are not homogenous, I believe the term ‘hard-to-reach’ justified for Polish stakeholders. After consulting research studies on hidden populations, it was found that these raise several ethical and methodological issues, which are usually less prevalent in known populations but were relevant for the engagement with Polish parents.

Literature suggests that access and the use of gatekeepers, confidentiality but also informed consent (all briefly outlined below), often pose major barriers for the recruitment of hard-to-reach populations (Kennan et al., 2012) as they are generally considered floating and socially invisible (Faugier and Sargeant, 1997).

In order to recruit participants from a hard-to-reach population, it is frequently necessary to identify gatekeepers to gain access. The addition of gatekeepers increases the number of ethical considerations and extends the responsibility of the researcher to not only direct participants of a study but also to potential participants over which the gatekeeper may have influence. The difficulty gatekeepers bring to the research project is that while researchers should be aware of their own ethical considerations, the motivations of the gatekeeper and his/her influence may be harder to determine. Researchers must

understand that the role of a gatekeeper holds power over participants as well as introduces gatekeeper bias to the research process (Bound, 2012). Further, the use of gatekeepers can potentially render the informed consent process meaningless (Curtis et al., 2004) as participants may feel obliged and fear negative consequences of non-participation. Thus, it is necessary to ensure that gatekeepers do not violate ethical standards (Bound, 2012).

The sensitive nature of the phenomenon under investigation poses potential difficulties when working with hard-to-reach groups even after eventually reaching and recruiting an individual. Actual or perceived threat to the participant as a result of research participation can increase the probability of concealing the behaviour or characteristic under investigation as well as hinder truthful responses to interview questions. Further, the sensitive subject may make participants feel that their anonymity as well as confidentiality could be violated by their participation (Shaghaghi et al., 2011). In terms of confidentiality, Kennan et al. (2012) for instance stated that families may fear an invasion of privacy and that drawing attention to a family's situation could result in a child protection intervention which would lead to the break-up of families.

Brackertz et al. (2005) argued that the degree to which consent is obtained to participate in a study by a certain hard-to-reach group may depend on the characteristics of that group, the recruitment method used as well as the subject of interest. The authors suggested that a group may be hard-to-reach to some extent and in some locations but not in all circumstances. Even when studies are explicitly designed to reach socially excluded groups, researchers generally face challenges in recruiting enough participants in practice (Emmel et al., 2006). Cultural, economic and social factors but also the lack of a sampling frame can raise barriers to access a special subgroup of a population. While numerous sampling techniques were introduced to recruit hard-to-reach populations (Atkinson and Flint, 2001; Magnani et al., 2005; Ferreira et al., 2008), research with hard-to-reach populations tends towards combining purposeful, snowball or respondent-driven strategies.

Purposeful sampling refers to intentionally selecting participants who have experienced the central phenomenon under investigation (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). As the sample selection is informed by emphasis on gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon at hand, information rich cases are selected, which increase both reliability and efficacy of the information obtained (Cournoyer and Klein, 2000). Snowball sampling relies on referrals from initial individuals to recruit new participants, which is common in studies on certain groups including migrants (Gillies, 2002). The main value of snowball sampling is its usefulness when some degree of trust is needed to initiate recruitment.

This study's aim was to employ purposeful sampling with pre-defined criteria. For the inclusion of service providers, professionals had to either offer universal support, meaning that the service was available to the entire population, or targeted support, which refers to dealing with specific needs. To meet the eligibility criteria for the parent sample in the first strategy of sample selection and recruitment, Polish parents had to reside in the ARD neighbourhood and be caregiver of a 5-year-old. The latter criterion was chosen to enable the exploration of parental experience with a specific stage of child-development, which could potentially have been compared to national data on 5-year olds from the Growing up in Ireland study. While purposeful sampling was successful in the recruitment of service providers, the hard to reach nature of the population of interest (Polish parents) as well as the research interest in a sensitive subject (parenting) proved to problematise the recruitment of parents in the first instance and led to identifying the need for a radical change in strategy to engage Polish parents in this study.

The next table (Table 5) states both the initial and amended recruitment strategy before illustrating how individual parents were recruited through use of gatekeepers and snowballing. Further, the recruitment of service-providers is presented.

	Eligibility Criteria	Recruitment
Strategy 1	Parents of 5-year olds residing in ARD neighbourhood	Self-referral Service provider referrals
Strategy 2	Parents of all children up to 6 th class of Primary School	Gatekeeper referrals: Psychotherapist School ARD Family Resource Centre Snow-ball sampling through participants

Table 5; Strategy 1 and 2 for Recruitment of Parents

Although the study primarily sought self-referral, there was a heavy reliance on gatekeepers and some snowball sampling to recruit Polish parents to participate in the study. This led to a subsequent amendment of the eligibility criteria to include parents of all children up to the end of primary school (see Section 6 of this chapter). Reliance on gatekeepers was previously found justified by Kennan et al. (2012) who argued that the use of gatekeepers is often necessary for purely pragmatic reasons given that the group of interest is hard to reach. Similar to the authors' study on young carers in Ireland, time had to be taken in explaining to gatekeepers the nature and purpose of the research and its potential merits for participants as the study aimed to make recommendations for both policy and practice concerning parenting support for Polish parents in the Republic of Ireland. Further, a relationship of trust needed to be built with gatekeepers, all of which was to ensure that ethical requirements were met. The temporal and ethical as well as methodological challenges involved in recruiting parents, and how these were mitigated, are now discussed in thorough detail in Section 6 of this chapter.

4.6 Implementing Study

After having provided an overview of the consideration of ethical issues as well as how the participant sample was located, the following section now outlines how the study was implemented.

Ethical approval from NUI Galway's Research Ethics Committee to commence recruitment of participants and data collection for this study was awaited. During that period, various strategies were used to familiarise myself with the research setting as well as become a familiar face in the neighbourhood. The strategies were hypothesised to ease the recruitment and data collection process. I volunteered in the ARD Family Resource Centre to teach English as second language as well as aid the facilitation of a parent-toddler group, and 'hung out' in the area (e.g. shops, playground). Further, a visit to Warsaw, Poland to meet multiple Polish service providers, who had the task to support Polish parents in their child rearing responsibilities, enhanced not only my awareness of common problems experienced in Polish families, but also my knowledge of Polish cultural norms and values.

Deciding initially on a specific population, namely Polish parents of children aged 5, in order to explore the transition from home to school as well as other factors at this child-specific developmental stage, study materials (e.g. information leaflet, consent form, interview and focus group schedules, information on support services; see Appendices) were translated into Polish by a staff member of the UCFRC. The employee was subsequently recruited as translator in order to facilitate the recruitment of and data collection from as many parents as possible.

Once ethical approval was obtained, the recruitment process for both parents and service providers commenced simultaneously.

Recruitment of and Data Collection from Parent Participants

Despite previously mentioned field work preparations, extensive efforts and radical changes needed to be made for the recruitment of Polish parents, which was agreed with and approved by my supervisors. The timeline that

follows is divided in three phases, outlining these efforts, before describing them in more detail.

<p>First Strategy</p> <p>March 2017- April 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance of Interagency Meeting to introduce study and ask for help in recruiting parents and service providers • Display of posters in local shops of neighbourhood, advertising study • Advertisement of study via Social Media (Facebook pages of Polish organisations and Ardaun-Roscam-Doughika Family Resource Centre (ARD FRC)) • Study invitations distributed by teachers to children in Junior and Senior Infant classes of the local primary school • Contact with Polish school to help with recruitment • Reminder note about information event distributed by teachers to children in Junior and Senior Infant classes of the local primary school • Information event unsuccessful
<p>Second Strategy</p> <p>May 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance/Facilitation of Mother/toddler group in ARD/FRC to communicate with Polish attendees about the study • Distribution of study invitations to Polish mothers attending Yoga classes in ARD FRC • Introduced to Polish mother (previous chair of local school's parent council) by school principal to discuss recruitment issues, identify potential participants and approach them on my behalf • Meeting with Polish school principal to discuss recruitment issues, identify potential participants and approach them on my behalf • Recruitment of two mothers facilitated through ARD FRC (n=2) • Parent interviews • Design of new flyers to advertise study among Polish parents and propose new date for information event upon advice from Polish mother (previous chair of local school's parent council) to emphasise potential policy implications of this study in my recruitment strategy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement of study on Social Media (Polish Facebook Groups) • Emails to Radio stations • Interview at local radio station (no success) • New invitation flyers distributed to parents at local school at collection times • New posters displayed in local shops and maternity ward of University Hospital Galway • Polish Mother's Day: Distribution of biscuits and study invitations at school gate • Attendance of Polish family event in Merlin Woods Park distributing flyers
<p>Third Strategy</p> <p>June 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced to Polish psychotherapist by ARD FRC Support worker to discuss recruitment issues, help identify potential participants and approach them on my behalf • Change of selection criteria to parents of primary school children and abandonment of focus group method upon discussion with and approval by supervisors • Self-referral of psychotherapist to participate in the study (n=1) • Invitation to psycho-therapist's brother and sister-in-law/ recruitment of same by researcher (n=2) • Invitation to friends, neighbours and acquaintances / recruitment of same by researcher (n=7) • Meeting with Polish priest to discuss recruitment issues and help advertise study • Parent interviews • Recruitment of further participant through snowball sampling (n=1) • Recruitment of previous chair of local school's parent council as now eligible to participate (n=1) • Invitation extended to previous chair's neighbour/ recruitment of same by researcher (n=1) • Parent interviews

Table 6; Timeline of Recruitment of and Interviews with Parent Participants (n= individual numbers of participants recruited)

The study was initially introduced at an interagency meeting in the ARD neighbourhood with the purpose of asking both statutory and voluntary services to help identify parents and service providers, and approach them on my behalf to participate in the study.

An information event for parents was planned to be held in the local school to present the study, and the school was contacted. An application for the use of the school was sent to the board of management and subsequently approved, both for the information session as well as planned interviews and focus groups with parents. At the same time, posters with information about the study were displayed at various locations around the neighbourhood (e.g. shops, playcentres, ARD FRC, school), but also on public Polish Social Media platforms, and invitations to the information event were distributed by teachers to Junior and Senior Infant classes. I also contacted the Polish school to create awareness about the study.

On the day of the information event, the researcher and translator set up a room on the ground floor next to the school entrance with study materials and refreshments, waiting to welcome parents at collection time of their children. However, despite clear visibility to parents, no one attended the event nor made subsequent contact with the researcher in the days to follow.

Discouraged from the lack of success in recruitment despite extensive efforts to that point, I continued to help facilitate the parent/toddler group which was attended by Polish mothers, distributed invitations to attendees of various groups run by the ARD Family Resource Centre as well as increasing my appearance at the school gate on collection times to engage parents in conversation and encourage them to participate in the study. Further, contact with and introductions to Polish women were made (e.g. Polish school principal and previous chair of Merlin Wood Primary School parent council) to discuss barriers but also help facilitate parent recruitment.

Seven weeks into the recruitment campaign, two mothers were identified through the help of the ARD Family Resource Centre and subsequently recruited and interviewed after obtaining written consent. However, following no further response from Polish parents despite a strong drive, new

strategies had to be developed which were multi-fold. An interview about the study was broadcasted on the local radio station and new flyers were developed and distributed in the neighbourhood, school and maternity ward of the University Hospital Galway. Information about the study was also displayed on closed Polish Social Media Groups, which had been recommended by the two mothers previously interviewed. In addition, public Polish family events were attended, and biscuits distributed at the school gate on Polish Mother's Day to display my interest and knowledge in Polish culture, to break barriers and encourage parents to participate in the study. Nonetheless, efforts remained unsuccessful.

It was at this point, that a staff member from the ARD Family Resource Centre referred me to a Polish psychotherapist who resided in the neighbourhood, fitted the sample criteria and had collaborated with the centre before. I presented the research study to her in detail, informing her of the type of participant sample that was required as well as the barriers I had encountered in the recruitment of parents. Giving her point of view, she suggested that the difficulty in recruiting Polish parents in the ARD neighbourhood was likely explained by the nature of the research topic, Polish cultural norms as well as parents' time constraints, and that extending the selection criteria to a wider Polish population may prove more successful.

Taking the psychotherapist's suggestions into consideration, a supervisory meeting was called to discuss ongoing recruitment problems as well as suggestions on how to progress. The meeting resulted in the approval of major changes both with regards to data collection tools as well as a shifted focus in the study. Upon agreement with supervisors, I changed the eligibility criteria to that of Polish parents of children of primary school age. The revised sampling strategy was maximal variation sampling, whereby participants were selected based on some characteristic (e.g. disability) or demographic (e.g. single parent) variable. Further, I also decided not to go ahead with the originally proposed method of focus groups with parents.

I then recruited the psychotherapist as a participant; and with her help recruited the majority of the remaining participants in the study. She acted as

a gatekeeper for the study, speaking by phone with potential participants, sharing with them the information leaflet on the study and asking for their consent to share their contact details with me. Parents were then given time to consider whether or not to participate before I made contact asking for their consent and arranging the interview date and venue.

Reliance on gatekeepers in sample recruitment does raise questions of selection bias. Besides the help of the ARD FRC in the recruitment of two mothers, I had strongly relied on the help of the psychotherapist, whose contacts were all couples who, with the exception of two, were similar in their characteristics and demographics. In an effort to counteract this, contact was made with the Polish priest to help with further recruitment, but this strategy proved unsuccessful. However, reaching an additional participant through snowball sampling as well as the ability to draw from a broader sampling pool, enabled me to recruit more parents such as the previous chair of the parent council, who I had already spoken to. She went on to invite her neighbour, who subsequently agreed to participate in the study.

Except for parents recruited through the help of the ARD Family Resource Centre and subsequent use of the centre's private office space, interviews were conducted in families' homes. Written consent was sought (and secured) from all parents before commencement of data collection, which involved the audio-recording of interviews. All study materials were provided to parents in both English and Polish. Although the presence of a translator was offered to explain the study, aid in the written consent process as well as help with English language issues during data collection, none of the parents availed of this option. The next image (Figure 14) illustrates the recruitment of parents.



Figure 14; Recruitment of Parents through Gatekeepers and Snowballing

Recruitment of and Data Collection from Service Provider Participants

As I also endeavoured to capture service providers' opinions and experiences of Polish parenting, the aims and objectives of my research were presented at an interagency meeting, which consisted of both universal as well as targeted services, inviting them to consider participating in the study and to spread the word to other support services. Information leaflets were provided, and subsequent follow ups made in person, by phone and email. Although the recruitment process was slow due to the workload of many professionals, ten service providers gave written consent to participate. To accommodate professionals' time constraint, all were given the choice of either focus group participation or being individually interviewed as well as the choice of where data collection was to take place. This resulted in data collection through an audio recording of a focus group of six participants and audio recordings of four individual semi-structured interviews, all of which were conducted at service providers' workplace.

The following image (Figure 15) illustrates the process of recruiting of the service providers.

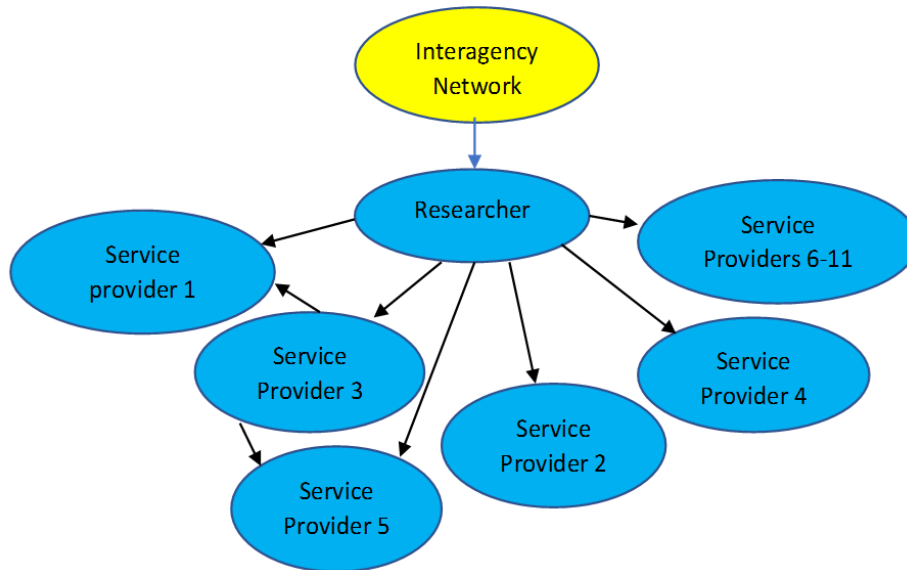


Figure 15; Recruitment of Service Providers through Gatekeeper and Snowballing

4.7 Data Analysis

Having provided an overview of the time- consuming nature and complexity to implement this study, I will now address the data analysis process.

Data analysis is a critical stage in scientific knowledge building as it examines a phenomenon closely to understand it better or discover something new about it. It involves breaking data into its constituents, combining and recombining the constituents to discover patterns, assess, describe or explain a phenomenon after careful consideration or investigation in line with the research questions or hypotheses. Research ethics extend to data analysis, meaning the researcher has the moral obligation to analyse data to his /her best ability following rigorous, appropriate techniques and procedures (Akinyoade, 2012).

Bryman and Burgess (2002) as well as Creswell (2012) identified multiple approaches to qualitative data analysis: grounded theory, language-based approaches (discourse analysis, symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology), descriptive or interpretative approaches (classic ethnography and life history studies), phenomenology and case study. Each of these strategies differ in focus, the primary objectives of the study and what they are trying to achieve. However, detailed description of each is outside the remit of this study. This study neither sought to focus on the issue of individual cases (case study), generate theory (grounded theory) nor describe the 'essence' of participants' experiences (phenomenology) but instead tried to understand the parenting experience of a cultural group, highlight differences in perspective and inform policy, which in my opinion form the basis of applied research in the social policy field.

4.7.1 Framework Analysis

Generating themes from data is a common feature of qualitative methods and is a widely used analytical method. Thematic analysis is an interpretative process, whereby data is systematically searched to identify patterns within the data in order to provide a detailed description of the phenomenon. The process results in the development of meaningful themes, without explicit intention to generate theory (Tesch, 1990). According to Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches and aid in the expansion as well as testing of existing theories by providing rich and insightful understandings of complex phenomena. However, thematic analysis has frequently been criticised for lacking depth, fragmenting the phenomena being studied, being subjective and further, lacking transparency in terms of the development of themes, which can result in difficulties when judging the rigour and validity of the findings (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

The framework approach, which will now be discussed in more detail, has many similarities to thematic analysis, particularly in the initial stages, when emerging themes are identified. However, the framework approach appears to have greater emphasis on making the process of data analysis transparent and illustrating the linkage between the stages of the analysis (Pope et al., 2000). Central to the analytical processes within the framework approach is a series of interconnected stages that enables the researcher to move back and forth across the data, until a coherent account emerges. This results in the constant refinement of themes, until a conceptual framework is developed (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003).

Framework analysis originated in the Social and Community Planning Research Institute situated in London, England. It can be said to be quite similar to grounded theory but differs in that it is better adapted to research that has specific questions, a limited time-frame, a pre-designed sample (e.g. Polish parents and service providers) and a priori issues (e.g. lack of engagement) that need to be dealt with. Although framework analysis may generate theories, the prime concern is to describe and interpret what is happening in a particular setting (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994 in Srivastava and Thomson, 2009). According to Smith and Firth (2011), framework analysis contrasts with entirely inductive approaches, where the research design is not strictly predefined, but developmental in response to the data obtained and ongoing analysis. The principles of the framework approach can be used to undertake qualitative data analysis systematically, enabling the researcher to explore data in depth, while simultaneously maintaining an effective and transparent audit trail, enhancing the rigour of the analytical processes (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Ensuring that data analysis is explicitly described enhances the credibility of findings.

The framework analysis (Ritchie and Spencer, 1994) involves a five-step process, which is summarised in the following table, before moving on to my application of this analytical framework.

Familiarisation	Familiarisation with collected data to gain overview and become aware of key ideas and recurrent themes, which are recorded. As not all material can be reviewed due to large volume of data, selection of the data set should be made, ensuring a variety of sources and cases
Identifying a thematic framework	Recognition of emerging themes and issues in the data set. Key issues, concepts and themes expressed by participants form tentative thematic framework which is refined in subsequent stages of analysis
Indexing	Sections of data corresponding to themes are identified and applied to all textual data gathered. The use of a numerical system for indexing references, which are noted in the margin beside the text, is recommended
Charting	Indexed data from the previous stage is arranged in charts of themes. Data is lifted from its original textual context and placed in charts that consist of headings drawn during stage 2 of the analysis (Identifying a thematic framework). Despite lifting data from context, it is still clearly identifiable as to what case it came from. Cases should be kept in the same order in each chart for clarity.
Mapping and interpretation	Analysis of key characteristics as laid out in the charts. Provision of schematic diagram of the study's phenomenon with the ability to guide the researcher's interpretation of the data set. Concepts, typologies and associations are reflective of participants. Researcher's strategies and recommendations should truly reflect attitudes, beliefs and values of participants

Table 7; Adaptation from Ritchie and Spencer, 1994 (Srivastava and Thomson, 2002; 2009)

4.7.1.1 Application of Analytical Framework

Trying to counteract the potential ‘sloppiness’ associated with interpretative methodologies (see previous Section 3.1 of this Chapter), the framework approach to underpin data analysis of this study was chosen for a range of reasons. First, the framework approach is suited to the analysis of different aspects of the phenomena under investigation (e.g. Polish parenting and help seeking) to be captured. Second, it was agreed with Ritchie and Lewis (2003) that the advantage of the framework approach is the transparency of the researcher’s interpretations of participants’ experiences. Last, there was appeal in the proposition that the interconnected stages within the framework approach outline the processes that guide the systematic analysis of data, thus limiting the potential concern of moving from data management to developing the analysis sufficiently. However, I argue that instead of explicitly describing the procedures involved in individual stages of the framework, Ritchie and Spencer (1994; 2002) were rather vague in the provision of specific guidelines. This leads to the necessity to draw on other literature as resource, particularly for the coding and interpretation stage. Further, it appears common practice to utilise the framework approach within team projects, which are overseen by experienced qualitative researchers (ibid; Gale et al., 2013), thus ignoring that it can be a useful tool for individual researcher’s data analysis despite being time consuming. Demonstrating that with the guidance of a supervisory team, the framework approach could successfully be implemented by a single researcher as well as the proposition and demonstration of specific strategies involved to systematically analyse data successfully, the study has arguably contributed to knowledge generation. The next table (Table 8) outlines the step-by-step application of the framework approach to data collected from parents and service providers for this study, before providing a more detailed description. The same procedures were followed for the service providers’ data set.

Step	Process
1	Familiarisation First cycle coding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-vivo coding • Descriptive/Open coding
2	Identifying thematic framework Second Cycle Coding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused Coding
3	Indexing and Charting Indexing data by applying framework to all interview transcripts Summarising indexed data and display in chart form
4	Mapping and Interpretation Analytical memos

Table 8: Framework Analysis: Parenting in Ireland- Polish Perspectives on Child-Rearing and Help-Seeking in a Culturally Diverse Neighbourhood (adopted from Ritchie and Spencer, 1994)

STEP 1: Familiarisation

To become familiar with the entire data set, I thoroughly read and re-read each transcript, listened back to the audio-recorded interviews and reviewed field notes. To further assist in the familiarisation process after transcription and for subsequent coding, individual interviews were labelled with topic headings derived from the interview schedules (Appendix D) for ease of reading.

In order to appropriately code the study's data set, coding literature by Saldana (2009), Gale et al. (2013) and Hedlund-de Witt (2013) was consulted and ideas discussed with the supervisory team before developing my coding strategy which is now being presented.

First Cycle Coding methods were employed upon agreement to organise the raw data. Although the goal of this study was to construct an analysis that directly focusses on the research questions, I engaged in a more open-ended,

exploratory inquiry to capture issues voiced by participants which had not been specifically addressed in the interview schedule.

In-vivo coding

After familiarization, I carefully read three parent transcripts line by line, applying 'in- vivo' codes to illustrate what participants were describing. 'In-vivo' codes refer to 'a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the data set, prioritising and honouring the participants' voice' (Saldana, 2009, p.74).

Descriptive coding /Open Coding

Upon review and approval from the supervisory team, 'In-vivo' coding was followed by descriptive coding as well as open coding to a) summarise the basic information of a passage of the qualitative data and b) to code for first impression, breaking the contents of data into discrete parts and examining them for similarities and difference (Saldana, 2009).

I used the bottom page of the three interviews to record more detailed notes and ideas, for example questions to bear in mind as the analysis proceeded, and ideas for explanations in the data.

STEP 2: Identifying a Thematic Framework

My next step was to present the supervisory team with a set of codes derived from three interviews, which formed the initial coding framework. Upon approval it was agreed to continue coding the remaining interviews in the same manner, however taking care to note any new codes and impressions of individual transcripts inclusive of field notes taken by me which did not fit the existing set.

After completing the first cycle coding of all parent transcripts, a revised code book was created that incorporated new and refined codes and was presented to the supervisory team.

At this point it was found necessary both within literature but also by the supervisory team and myself to employ a second cycle coding method to reorganise the data coded through the first cycle coding methods (Hedlund-de Witt, 2013). It is suggested that the second cycle of recoding further manages, filters, highlights, and focuses on the most noticeable features of the qualitative data record for generating categories, which in turn lead to themes and concepts (Saldana, 2009). This involved the exploration of interrelationships between multiple codes to develop basic categories and coherence in the data (Hedlund-de Witt, 2013).

Focused coding

Focused coding, which was utilised as the second cycle coding method, searches for the most frequent or significant initial codes to develop the categories that are deemed most salient (ibid). Upon agreement, I explored search terms relating to the research question (e.g. family, tradition, and neighbourhood) as well as the reflective notes (e.g. money, health) to group codes together and form basic categories. The goal was to build a descriptive, multi-dimensional preliminary framework for later analysis. The derived framework consisted of 78 codes clustered into 19 categories (Appendix J).

STEP 3: Indexing and Charting

The purpose of indexing is to organise the transcripts into the framework categories by systematically applying the framework to each interview transcript.

Charting aims to organise the data into a more manageable format to facilitate data analysis for the next stage. It involves summarising indexed data for each category and display summaries in chart form (Ritchie and Spencer, 2002).

For this study, it was agreed that I index and chart simultaneously by working through each transcript text, deciding which constructed category and code from the framework to assign initial in-vivo codes to. In-vivo codes were useful in terms of creating a summary of each source which aided the process of charting. Further, in-vivo codes kept the research close to the language respondents were using and mitigates my potential tendency to impose own

discourse and meaning onto the text. Charts for each category and relevant codes were created and selected in-vivo codes were dragged and dropped into the relevant category. This was done for all parent transcripts.

As I found that some in-vivo codes fitted into multiple categories, the supervisory team and I decided that I would multi code as the summary would be distinct and could indicate something important about the study's research questions.

STEP 4: Mapping and Interpretation

The aim of this final stage in the framework analysis is to move beyond data management to understanding the data.

Themes were generated from the data set by reviewing the charts and making connections within and between participant and categories. This process was influenced both by the original research objectives, relevant research literature relating to the research questions and by new concepts generated inductively from the data, as suggested by Gale et al. (2013).

To aid the interpretation stage, I tried to go beyond descriptions of individual cases towards developing themes which offer possible explanations for what was happening within the data. Ideas were generated, explored and elaborated using analytical memos (Appendix B). Memos were structured with sub-headings, including a definition of the category, specific codes that related to it, a summary of the raw data, discussion of any deviant cases, and further points for consideration and comparison. Gale et al. (2013) suggested the use of bullet points, bold and italic fonts as well as underlining words or phrases to look for patterns within the data. Further, illustrative quotations in bold with references to the original transcripts were included to keep me close to the participants. Points for consideration included field notes but also reference to research literature.

Personal reflexivity as described in 4.1.4 of this chapter as well as discussion with the supervisory team was crucial at this stage as both literature that confirmed and contracted my interpretations needed to be considered. Interpretations were justified by relating them to findings of previous studies

and indicate whether they aligned or not. Explanations as to why interpretations corroborated or contradicted previous research was then offered and backed with data from participants.

Already stated at the beginning of this section, literature by and large lacks both specific guidelines for individual stages in the framework analysis as well as suggestions on how to utilise it as a single researcher. My application of the framework approach to analysis has demonstrated that transparency and rigour can be maintained by drawing on appropriate literature, continuously communicating both coding and interpretation of the data set to experienced researchers and receiving regular feedback from them.

As previously mentioned, the same step-by-step procedure was followed for the data collected from service-providers. The overall analysis of both data sets resulted in generating twenty-seven analytical memos which led to four overarching themes, all of which are presented in Chapter 5 and subsequently discussed in Chapter 6 of this study.

4.8 Limitations

As with any research study, there are limitations, and these are linked to the methodological approach adopted. Results from the sampling technique employed were considered a limitation as it generated a sample profile of participants who were in similar positions with regards to economic status and good English language proficiency. This contrasted with my initial intention which sought to recruit a diverse group of participants who could provide an in-depth insight to their unique perspectives of being a Polish parent in a culturally diverse neighbourhood. However, given what became known through interviews with parents, for the majority of cases, the study examined the perspectives of a specific cohort such as those who live off income from low- pay employment and possess good English language skills. Despite lacking the input from welfare-dependent and non-English speaking parents, the sampling resulted in generating a diverse, organic and in-depth knowledge about Polish parents' perspectives on child rearing and help-seeking, being, as a result of migration, situated at the lower end of the economic stratum and all that this positioning in society entails.

Similarly, it could be argued that the use of a small sample size cannot produce findings that are generalisable to the Polish population as a whole and thus not meet the gold standard of measuring research success associated with the quantitative research paradigm. However, as this was a qualitative study, it did not aim for representativeness. Instead, the gained insight to an area that lacks research in the Republic of Ireland can be used as pathway for future research and stimulate both qualitative and quantitative inquiry.

In order to be most useful to social policy, policy makers could argue that the study would have benefitted from a mixed methods approach. This means that by utilisation of both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools and a strict criteria and control of research participants, generated findings could have been compared to the national data set of the Growing up in Ireland study and present a more general picture of Polish migrant parents. However, as a result of problems with recruitment and the complexity as well as the novelty of the research problem under investigation, the pragmatic approach of this study was to inform and encourage future research by identifying and highlighting key aspects Polish parents voiced in relation to child rearing and help-seeking, which it has achieved.

A considered limitation to this study was the reliance on gatekeepers and the potential selection bias this could have introduced to the study. While one gatekeeper played a role in informing the changes made to this study as well the recruitment process, strategies such as snowball sampling and additional gatekeepers were utilised to aid the process of achieving non-bias, resulting in the generation of rich data of diverse perspectives on Polish parenting and help-seeking.

Last, I acknowledge that being a migrant parent myself and sharing many experiences with my participants is a limitation to this study. Having been reflective throughout the research process, it was evident that neutrality on the subject matter was problematic and needed attention. In order to counteract any personal bias, transparency throughout and continuous external review as well as in-depth discussions with supervisors were pivotal in deriving empirically supported findings.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach adopted to investigate the study's research questions and associated objectives, which overall sought to explore Polish perspectives of child rearing and help-seeking in a culturally diverse neighbourhood. A discussion on the research paradigm as well as the researcher's theoretical position provided an explanation but also justification for the application of a qualitative methodological approach to this study. The utilisation of semi-structured interviews and focus groups, and the framework method of analysis have all been presented as the most appropriate methods to explore the core research questions outlined previously. However, it was also illustrated that research on stakeholders who are defined as hard-to-reach does not only raise ethical issues but also methodological problems, calling for flexibility in research design.

Given the nature of parenting in an unfamiliar culture, a methodology that supports research into the diverse perspectives of migrants and minorities facilitates understanding of the multiple dimensions and processes of their parenting, giving voice to those whose views are rarely heard (Ashby, 2011). Their contribution is required to fill the gaps in existing knowledge in this area. A focus on how individuals themselves describe their perspectives, which is presented in an integrated and contextual way is warranted due to limited Irish research in this area to date.

The next chapter presents the study's findings derived from the accounts of parents and service providers through the utilisation of the framework approach to analysis previously described.

Chapter Five

Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings which derived from the accounts of parent and support service provider participants in this study. It is divided into four sections, reflecting the thematic findings which were generated through the use of analytical memos: language/culture, family, schooling and work. In each section, findings are presented under sub-headings based on the research questions of the thesis, as outlined below:

1. Parenting: The cultural norms shaping how Polish parents perceive their role as parents in the Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska (ARD) neighbourhood
2. Parental Experiences: The Polish parenting experience in the ARD neighbourhood
3. Help-seeking: Attitudes toward help seeking among Polish parents in the ARD neighbourhood

In order to protect the anonymity of the study's participants, potentially identifying information provided by parents (Table 9) was rearranged and professionals' specific roles within their organisations omitted. Further, both parents and service providers were randomly assigned pseudonyms to disguise their identity throughout this chapter.

5.2 Participants' Profiles

The sample of parent participants (see Table 9) included both male and female caregivers of children aged 3 months to 11 years who reside in the Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska neighbourhood and came to Ireland at some point between 7 and 14 years ago. Parent participants originated from diverse locations across Poland and their ages ranged from 30-40 years. More than half of all parent participants were employed, had no extended family in close proximity and further, did not engage with targeted support services.

Polish Parents: N=15

No.	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Employment Status	Residence Galway	Residence Poland	Years in Ireland	No. of Children/Age	Other family members in household	Current or previous formal support access in relation to child/ren
P1	32	F	Married	Carer's Allowance	Lower Doughiska ¹	Poznan	11 yrs	9 ½ (Autism), 4	none	yes
P2	36	F	Married	Employed (shift work)	Lower Doughiska	Krakow	12 yrs	9, 5	Grandmother permanently	no
P3 ²	34	M	Married	Self Employed	Lower Doughiska	Krakow	13 yrs	3, 3 months	Sister and mother living close by	no
P4	32	F	Married	Maternity Leave	Lower Doughiska	West of Poland	11 yrs	3, 3 months	In -laws living close by	no
P5	32	F	Separated	Self Employed	Lower Doughiska	Krakow	12 yrs	9, 1 ½	Cousin in Craughwell	no
P6	36	F	Married	Employed (shift work)	Lower Doughiska	Krakow	11 yrs	9, 2	Grandmother temporally	no
P7	36	F	Cohabiting	Unemployed after	Upper Doughiska ³	Wroclaw	11 yrs	3 ½, 10 months	House sharing with lodger	no

¹ Affluent, well-maintained neighbourhood

² No. 3+4, 8+9 and 11+12 are couples who were interviewed together

³ Poorer neighbourhood, low SES, neglected maintenance

				maternity leave				(different fathers)		
P8	35	M	Married	Employed	Lower Doughiska	Gdansk	11 yrs	11, 7	none	no
P9	32	F	Married	Working from home	Lower Doughiska	Poznan	11 yrs	11,7	none	no
P10	35	F	Single mother	Single Mother Payment	Lower Doughiska now Oranmore	Poznan	12 yrs	3 (mixed race)	none	yes
P11	39	M	Married	Employed (shift work)	Roscam	Gdansk	14 yrs	7 (Autism), 1	none	yes
P12	40	F	Married	Maternity Leave	Roscam	Gdansk	14 yrs	7 (Autism), 1	none	yes
P13	39	F	Married	Employed (shift work)	Roscam	Wroclaw West	13 yrs	7	none	no
P14	30	F	Cohabiting (Iraqi partner)	Disability Allowance	Roscam	West of Poland	7 yrs	10	none, frequent visiting	no
P15	34	F	Married (Portuguese husband)	Employed	Roscam	West of Poland/German border	12 yrs	7	none	no

Table 9: Parent Participants' Profile

The sample of support service provider participants (see Table 10) was mainly female (n=10) and included professionals from universal as well as targeted support services that are available to Polish parents in the Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska neighbourhood. As the table below outlines, universal services in this study included the local school, while more targeted services were represented by services such as Family Support.

No.	Gender	Organisation
SP I	Female	Parent-Toddler Group in Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska (ARD)
SP II	Female	Family Resource Centre (FRC) in Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska (ARD)
SP III	Male	Family Resource Centre (FRC) in Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska (ARD)
SP IV	Female	Merlin Woods Primary School in Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska (ARD)
SP V	Female	COPE Waterside House
FG I	Female	Ballybane City East Family Support Services
FG II	Female	City East Family Support Services
FG III	Female	Ballybane City East Family Support Services
FG IV	Female	Ballybane City East Family Support Services
FG V	Female	Ballybane City East Family Support Services
FG VI	Female	Ballybane City East Family Support Services

Table 10: Parenting Support Service Provider Participants' Profile (N=11)

5.3 Language and Culture

In this first section, findings on Language and Culture are presented. Accounts of Language and Culture permeated themes of Family, Schooling and Work in one form or other and were articulated by the majority of participants in relation to my three research questions presented under the headings of parenting, experience and help seeking. Language was a term used to describe the tool applied to communicate in the form of spoken and written words, referring to both the Polish and English language. Culture referred to the customs and norms as well as the behaviour of Polish people. This section explores participants' attitudes towards and experiences of Language and Culture in relation to our three research questions.

5.3.1 Language and Parenting: Remaining Connected and Inhibitors to English Language Use

I begin with the findings on Language and Culture that relate to my first research question. This section presents cultural norms shaping how parents perceive their role as parents. Issues I address relate to cultural values connected with language and the first issue concerns the norm that parents ought to include their wider family in raising their children and do so by visiting Poland. Thus, language appears relevant as otherwise the involvement of the wider family becomes more difficult. Most parents described in some form or other the significance they place on relatives and their role in child-rearing. In order to establish or keep connections between children and family in Poland, some parents perceived the transmission of the Polish language as essential. Hania, for instance, explained that her persistent use of the Polish language at home serves the purpose of boosting her daughter's ability to communicate fluently when in Poland.

"That's why we speak Polish at home ... I want my daughter to speak fluent Polish ... that they have no problem, when we go to Poland. You know ... enjoy each other ... even talking" (Hania).

The next section explores findings on what may be considered stereotypical Polish character traits which appear to manifest themselves through Polish language use and likely influence how Polish parents parent. This exploration was found necessary in order to understand the environment within which Polish parents rear their children as well as what perceived expectations are placed upon them by the wider Polish community.

An issue raised concerned the unwillingness to use the English language which may shape how Polish parents perceive their role as parents by suggesting it is acceptable to refrain from English language use. In a minority of cases parents revealed that besides trying to keep up the Polish language, many Polish migrants are seemingly unwilling to converse in English due to feeling more comfortable in their own language and so as to preserve cultural boundaries. Petr, for example, described that despite varying levels of proficiency, Polish migrants prefer the convenience of their own language and are unlikely to communicate in English.

“People talking English ... Lots of people can talk ... even if your English isn't perfect, you still can communicate. But people don't, really don't want to talk. They feel quite comfortable” (Petr).

In addition, Estera's narrative illustrated that because of the influence of a large Polish community and a Polish presence in various establishments, migrants, including parents, may not feel the need to utilise the English language, or can get by with only basic English language skills, and as a result continue to communicate in their own language.

“I know people who lives here now many years and they have really basic English ... They manage themselves around ... because of the community. Polish community so big that you can find person in a bank ... in the shops. You don't even have to ... you don't really need to if you manage yourself with all this. So, it's the willingness of doing that ... It is obviously ... kind of natural that you feel that way. When you can speak your own language, it's convenient. Easier” (Estera).

The next issue raised related to the suggestion that parents are very likely influenced by perceived Polish cultural characteristics of pride, censoriousness, and privacy as well as feelings of fear, which seemingly manifest themselves and are transmitted through the use of Polish language and also in turn impede English language use. In terms of pride, Barbara, for instance, explained that when dealing with Irish authorities, Polish migrants in general are unlikely to be persistent in seeking clarification if they don't understand something.

"They don't want to ask third time because they feel silly"
(Barbara).

Relating to censoriousness, Aleksander highlighted Polish migrants' tendency to relentlessly complain about everything when communicating with each other.

"Quite of Polish nature ... there is ... this complaining part on the Polish psyche... Everything is just not right and that's it. Even for the sake of it. It's not right" (Aleksander).

Concerning privacy, Estera, for example, described that Polish migrants are reserved in their interaction with others so as to prevent personal information being used without their knowledge.

"We are not that open ... we can ... sense 'Ok, someone is going to use it and we don't know what's gonna happen with this information'" (Estera).

Regarding feelings of fear, Petr revealed Polish migrants' reluctance to communicate openly as they fear this to have a negative impact on their lives.

"They don't even want to talk too much because they are afraid, maybe if we talk too much, something happen after" (Petr).

While with reference to so called Polish characteristics, parent participants tended to speak about Polish migrants in general, service providers noted evidence of what they considered stereotypical Polish character traits

specifically in Polish parents' behaviour although using different terminologies. Perceiving them as reserved, Anita described the difficulty of establishing initial rapport with Polish parents but also an emergence of warmth, once 'the ice is broken'.

"They are not as friendly, you know. There is a closeness, reservedness ... and I've tried to say 'Hello' to one or two of them before and I have given up, because, you know.... I have gotten to know some people who have come here (support service), you know, and once that ice is broken, they are lovely; there is lovely warmth, you know, but ... I say to myself maybe it's just a cultural thing" (Anita).

Similarly, Siobhan reported what appeared to be children adopting their parents' reticence when referring to their involvement in school activities.

"They could have more of a sense of getting involved themselves. It's very much, they are picking up from the parents. 'No, no, we don't get, we don't do that. We don't join the clubs and my Mummy won't let me', you know. Things like that. So, there is, it can have a negative impact on that way" (Siobhan).

Concerning the quality of censoriousness, Maria implied having experienced Polish parents' expression of discontent, when describing immigrants' criticism of their host country.

"It just drives me mad if somebody sits down in front of me and complains about this country and tells me how much things are better in the Czech Republic or somewhere. And I go 'Ok, if you come here, don't lecture, just f... off'" (Maria).

It has to be acknowledged the parents referred to in all service providers' accounts were different to those parents participating in the study.

In the majority of cases, service providers used terms such as 'pride' and 'reservedness' to describe what they considered to be attitudes of Polish parents; further, there was consensus that by means of displaying perceived Polish character traits, parents may try to hang on to their cultural values and protect them.

"They are very ... closed off. I think it's part of trying to hang on, you know, to their own culture and protect it" (Anita).

The last issue raised related to types of behaviour considered typical within Polish communities. Behaviours serve the purpose of strengthening the closeness of ties within the Polish community through Polish language use and also essentially inhibit English language use. This suggests that Polish norms are more likely to be influential on Polish parents than Irish norms. By employing terms such as 'keep together' and 'close-knit', many parents as well as service providers identified behaviours that are reinforced within the Polish community, which Polish parents are part of.

Basia, for instance, explained that generally, Polish workers associate with Polish co-workers only.

"In the work ... in the factory, workers, people from Polish only keep together with Polish people" (Basia).

Similarly, Polish social networks were described by Aleksander as closed in nature, nearly impossible to join and further have the function to control their members from within.

"Polish people have the tendency that once you are in a group of friends; they create certain ... group that is almost like you cannot really join the group ... They came together, they are willing to talk to each other only and that's it ... In Poland ... people tend to create those ... groups and they ... operate you in them ..." (Aleksander).

Adding to the account her husband provided on Polish social networks, Emilia contradicted service provider Maria's previous statement by describing Polish people's courage to disclose dissatisfaction within these networks but a reluctance to speak up in front of outsiders.

"You have to speak loudly if you are not happy with something. That's the actual Polish people. They are very brave with the closed groups but ..." (Emilia).

Closeness was also mentioned by Estera, when she described the recreation of Poland in some homes as a result of homogeneous marriages and on-going intra-familial support through grandmothers.

"There are some people that ... are married to each other, and they just really closed ... They bring granny and they just living together; and have Poland, little Poland" (Estera).

Similarly, some service providers suggested that due to being an integral part of Polish culture, many Polish families feel obliged to stick together and work together within their families and the wider Polish community. Maria, for example, described Polish mothers' tendency to move towards women from their own cultural background when attending the parent and toddler group.

"I find them, mmmh, in the group I find them people will tend to gravitate to their own" (Maria).

Correspondingly, Siobhan reported Polish families to rely on each other, and within the boundaries of their own Polish community rather than the neighbourhood at large.

"I think there is a reliance on each other ... a little bit of a sense of... 'We are our own community as opposed to integrated to the wider community'" (Siobhan).

Steven suggested that the closeness enforced by the community and adopted by Polish parents stems from feelings of fear around integration into the wider society resulting in the potential dilution of Polish cultural values.

"They have a little bit more fear of mixing because it might dilute cultural values" (Steven).

Mother Krysia spoke directly about the impact of the Polish community's closeness on English language use. She said that Polish migrants are unlikely to give priority to the enhancement of their English language skills due to the Polish nature of staying close to their own communities. As a result, she believed them to miss out on the experience of Irish culture.

"Language ... I think; that's the problem ... with Polish people. Just the fact that we ... tend to stay in closed communities; and Polish media as well. Plenty of people don't really learn English; I think ... that's our characteristic as a Polish community. We ... tend to stay very close and surround ourselves with the Polish which is great; ... but then ... I think we lose something very important there" (Kryisia).

5.3.2 Language and Parenting Experiences: Management of Language, Children's Identity and the Restrictive Nature of the Polish Community

The first issue identified related to the management of language at home once children have entered learning environments outside the family boundaries. Further, the local school's reinforcement of the English language and its impact on Polish families as well as the wider Polish community was identified. Having previously established language to be essential for the upkeep of connections in Poland, problems in the transmission of the Polish language were described by Bartek. He explained that as a result of his son's disability, the family was advised to focus on the child's mastery of one language only. He went on to reveal that the family initially chose the use of the English language due to the local school's environment, but that they have since the birth of their second child readjusted the management of language at home. Mixing both English and Polish, Bartek and his wife are trying to transmit the Polish language to their younger child as well as accommodate their autistic son.

"Our therapist said (in) the beginning, we have to choose ... one language because it's gonna be too complicated for him using both; so we chose ... English because at school he has English and at home we just manage as well; but now we know it's gonna be kind of difficult with him because we speaking Polish to ... P. But he understands ... several sentence in Polish as well. So, now we just try to mix a little bit ..." (Bartek).

Some participants described the impact of the local school's reinforcement of the English language on families' use of the Polish language at home. This frequently necessitates children's negotiation of appropriate language use.

Celina, for instance, described her daughter's increased use of the English language at home but explained that she does not pressure her into speaking Polish as she prefers communication of thoughts in the language her daughter feels most comfortable with.

"She is speaking more in English ... to me than in Polish. It's fine. There is no pressure on her. If she feels like she can say something better or explain something ... I prefer her to speak in English" (Celina).

Hania tried to reinforce the Polish language by reminding her daughter of the difference between communicating at home and in school. Indicating that teachers advise the children to practice English language skills, she outlined her daughter's potential confusion about appropriate language use.

"... When she came back home ... we were talking ... and she starts to speak in English. I said 'N., we are at home ... we are not speaking English'. She said 'My teacher said I have to practice English' ... I'd say, she forgets ... when she stops talking to us, walking to school, you know. She ... thinks what way she is supposed to speak, you know. The teacher said in English and Mammy said in Polish" (Hania).

A perceived conflict around language use was not only observed in the home but could also be found on school grounds. Emilia, for example, explained that Polish parents complain about the 'English only' rule on school premises which is enforced to allow for parental communication among a variety of nationalities who all speak English.

"P. (principal), she is writing letters; 'Please speak only English'; without any Russian, or Polish or whatever other language, because the other English-speaking people ... cannot make friends. But ... these Polish parents, they start complaining like 'Oh I cannot speak with Polish'" (Emilia).

The extract suggests that Polish parents feel restricted when engaging with other Polish parents, indicating that such engagement is something Polish parents want.

In contrast, parents' commitment to their children's homework but also effective communication with school staff appeared less significant for Polish parents.

Service Provider Siobhan felt that Polish parents' unwillingness as well as some parents' genuine inability to communicate in English poses a challenge for professionals trying to work with families in the school context.

"They don't spend an awful lot of time on the homework and they also might not have the level of English ... Sometimes you have meetings with parents and it's 'I don't speak English' and that's, that can be a challenge. And sometimes, their understanding is a lot better than they might be inclined to say. And then other time it's a, it is a genuine need" (Siobhan).

The next issue raised related to children's identity formation; what parents expect the identity of their children should be as well as the role of Polish language in identity formation. Being persistent in their transmission of Polish culture, particularly language, a minority of parents reported that children identified as Irish despite parental efforts to communicate in Polish. This finding suggests that Polish language use may be less important in children's formation of a Polish identity than parents perceive. Aurelia, for instance, described that despite her son's Polish language ability, he differentiates between her and his own identity.

"They are funny because they both see themselves as Irish. Even my son; when he says 'Mum, you and Dad are Polish, but I'm Irish, right?' He knows; he's able to speak Polish; he knows he has Polish family, but he doesn't" (Aurelia).

Similarly, Celina referred to her daughter's preference for Irish identity which she exemplified by her daughter's support of Irish contestants in sports.

"She doesn't like Poland. She is really like 'I like Ireland' ... when we watch some sport in English TV, she said 'Oh, no, where is the Irish guy. Where is that?' And I say 'They are not taking part'. 'Oh my God, I want Irish to win, not Polish guy to win'" (Celina).

While Polish children appear to negotiate between Irish and Polish identity, Estera described her son's negotiation of multiple identities due to her ex-partner being neither Irish nor Polish.

"I think, because my child is mixed; his father is not Polish. So, it might be still different, you know. In a typical Polish family. So, my son, he doesn't really feel Polish ... He feels Irish. Or more to his father's side, I think. But the least Polish, you know" (Estera).

However, she explained that as a result of classroom dynamics (her son attends an alternative educational establishment that does not reinforce the English language) he feels pride in his ability to speak Polish despite his occasional expression of dislike for the language.

"He would express that he ... doesn't like to speak Polish; but then, in a different situation, he would be proud of being able to. Speak Polish; it's just some dynamic in the class, for some reason" (Estera).

The next issue raised concerned the conflict parents seemingly experience by being members of the Polish community to uphold Polish culture on the one hand and having the desire to break away from a perceived restraint that is imposed by the Polish community on the other hand. While being an integral part of Polish communities, which they reiterated are characterised by closeness and upholding of Polish culture through means of Polish language, retail, media but also social networks, the majority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with, and even steered clear of, fellow community members. Aleksander, for instance, said that Polish families frequently create ghettos voluntarily but that he disapproved of this as it can lead to isolation.

"I think that some Polish people, maybe it's language barrier; they would ... tend to actually ... create those kind of ghettos ... So, we found it ... like; I think on purpose, we didn't ... we never had, because ... this is another element that ... isolates you in a way; because you ... stick so much to it that you do not see the outside world ... You create little Poland ... in a house which ... doesn't make sense ... So, it's, yeah, it's complicated" (Aleksander).

Celina noted that due to holding her own opinions on public as well as private matters she tends to avoid communication with the larger Polish community.

"I am not in touch with many, to be honest. I have my close friends and that's it. I don't even talk ... Even when I am collecting H. from school; I'm always there just on ... time. Not before. I don't want to listen too much. It's better for ... me when I don't listen; ... I have my own opinion for everything" (Celina).

Krysia's narrative suggests that the disapproval of closeness and a tendency to avoid interaction with the wider Polish community may stem from participants' wish to distance themselves from the Polish reputation of intolerance. By using the example of experiencing young Polish children's unwillingness to associate with children of colour, she suggested that Polish community members are immigrants and that Polish parents need to impart tolerance.

"Polish people are not known for being ... very tolerant ... Yeah, I think we tend to not be tolerant. Unfortunately, towards other cultures and it's just sad. We kind of ... "

"I will tell you one thing, right; ... few years ago ... it was International Children's Day and ... I prepare the class about the children and different cultures ... So, they were like 7-year olds at the time ... they did colouring books, ... little cut outs of children; and it was Asian child, was Afro-American ... Nobody wanted that Afro American child, nobody. Nobody wanted to have that cut out ... They were like really really upset to have it. So, I was thinking that it's not really great ... not teaching your children about tolerance; especially when you come here as an immigrant" (Krysia).

The last issue identified related to what service providers perceived as the negative consequences of a tight knit Polish community and its members' lack of English language skills. Many support workers described Polish families' difficulties in relation to engagement, integration but also employment opportunities.

Ciara for instance described Polish families' initial barrier of language when immigrating.

“Obviously the big one is the language, you know, so the Nigerian communities would have English coming here, where as the Polish wouldn’t, so that’s another struggle.”

She went on to say how her service tried to run activities that cater for Polish language use but recognises this to be a barrier to their integration.

“We have the exercise classes with M. through Polish ... but we have also asked her to do one through English because the one in Polish is obviously just welcoming Polish people and the whole idea is that they should integrate” (Ciara).

Problems of integration and English language use for both parents and children were described by Steven when he explained the continuous arrival of new Polish migrants to the neighbourhood due to its large Polish community.

“We still have a lot of Polish people arriving because there is a big Polish community here; so, cousins or nephews, or people coming here; so, we still got people arriving at schools; children arriving at schools; they can’t speak English, you know, so it’s just; it’s something that we have to nurture” (Steven).

In terms of employment opportunities for parents, Ciara recognised language to be a key barrier despite parents’ frequently being highly skilled.

“Particularly around the language I think is a big one because that’s a struggle to employment, you know, and a lot of people just can’t get in. There is so many people with massive skills, really, really highly skilled workforce, but they can’t access work. Just the frustration” (Ciara).

Again, parents referred to in service providers’ accounts differ from those that participated in this study.

5.3.3 Language and Help-seeking: Polish Speaking Support, Informal Support Provision and the Access of Online Resources

The first point raised on Help seeking concerned Polish community members’ preference for seeking formal as well as informal support from Polish

language users. While all participants' level of spoken English was proficient during interviews, some parents described their own but also fellow Polish community members' feelings of discomfort around the use of English language, particularly when dealing with government agencies and paperwork.

"Maybe some parents will tell about ... social welfare ... What people struggle with. Social welfare, the systems and the offices, because they don't understand the language. Many times, they don't understand; sometimes someone repeats twice; they don't understand..." (Barbara).

Aurelia reported that at present, people often have the possibility to request a Polish speaking staff member in most financial institutions as well as in the Revenue Services.

"I know at the moment, if somebody has a really big problem in the bank or even in tax office... Polish people, sometimes we can ask for Polish, yeah" (Aurelia).

In relation to information provision concerning finances and official bodies, Bartek expressed his hope for information in the Polish language. He explained that although he speaks English, help is currently sought from a translator to support him in understanding and completing paperwork.

"In this kind of thing, we are really looking for somebody who is speaking Polish, because we can explain everything. If there would be an option; it would be brilliant, if we have ... much more information in Polish because ... sometimes we ... get some letters or something; ... I know that English, but I have to have support from a translator because there is a lot of difficult words which I'm trying to see first and then" (Bartek).

The next issue raised related to the preference for seeking informal support. The majority of parent participants described seeking support from their partners.

"We are trying to do by ourselves I think" (Aleksander)

"Oh, first of all it's my partner, definitely" (Jagna).

Support was also sought from extended family, where present.

"We have family here and ... when we need help, always ... O.'s mum can help us; like sister, brother-in law ... We are working together ... If we don't know something, we always can ask A." (Basia).

Where no (extended) family was in close proximity, parents described relying on support provided by friends but also neighbours.

"If we have some appointment or something, we have to ask neighbours for help or our, some friends or something like that so" (Bartek).

"We have a lot of friends, so there is always support around ... My friends are living here in Doughiska as well, so if I have any troubles and ... my partner, he is not around, it's 2 minutes and they arrive ... So, I'm lucky ... My neighbours; if car broken, whatever ... I'm shouting to my neighbour" (Jagna).

The next issue identified concerned the use of online support which may arise as a consequence of the belief that family matters are private, the Polish quality of self-containment as well as an inclination to look for advice among Polish language users, if necessary. In a minority of cases parents spoke about the availability and likelihood of accessing online information but also online support through membership of Polish social media groups.

Celina, for instance, spoke about the usefulness of the World Wide Web, when asked where Polish community members go to seek advice.

"If you don't know and you having problem, you can find it on the internet" (Celina).

Aurelia described many community members joining a closed Polish social media group to gain information or receive support if necessary.

"On Facebook, there is a closed Polish group as well ... It's like group of just Polish living in Galway and you can ask any questions that you have. If you are looking for something... if you need ... advice, if you want to ask opinions about GP or other places ... So, you can ask there. Its good support as well ... Many Polish will ask for it" (Aurelia).

The last issue raised related to how service providers perceived Polish parents' help-seeking in light of Polish character traits and seemingly typical behaviours which are reinforced by the Polish community. By using terms such as 'stubbornness' and 'pride', as well as 'fear of judgement', 'breaches of confidentiality' and 'trust', the majority of accounts portrayed Polish help-seeking impeded. Steven, for example, believed that due to Polish parents being stubborn, they are reluctant to seek support and instead try to cope without aid for as long as possible.

"I believe there is a need, but there is a, almost a stubbornness to seek help." "They are not good for asking for support. So, the longer they go without support, the better" (Steven).

Similarly, Ciara described pride and the fear of displaying weakness to be a potential barrier for Polish parents' help-seeking.

"But perhaps with the Polish, it might be sense of pride, ... maybe ... they don't really want to share as much; they might feel that they are showing weakness, if they are coming and asking" (Ciara).

Referring to judgment and breaches of confidentiality, Anita believed the very nature of belonging to small ethnic minority groups to be a barrier.

"The problem with ethnic minorities being such a small group is that there is always that fear of being judged; the fear of breaches of confidentiality; and ... I'm not really sure, there is ways around that" (Anita).

Lastly, concerning the issue of trust, Steven suggested that because of being immigrants and new to their surroundings, Polish migrants do not only have to adapt to the language, but also need to develop trusting relationships.

Thus, it is important for service providers to be aware and adjust their support provision accordingly.

"Everybody is new here. So, aside from language being a difficulty ... you can't just put a class on and say XYZ. You've got to gain the parent's trust; you gotta gain it before the children did something; you've got to spend a lot longer; a lot longer trying to gain the trust, yeah, gain the trust of people because they're new" (Steven).

5.3.4 Summary of Findings on Language and Culture

Regarding the first research question, findings suggested that the transmission of the Polish language is essential in order to connect children with family in Poland. It was found that many Polish people's unwillingness to converse in English derived from feeling more comfortable in their own language. In addition, it was suggested that Polish migrants may not feel the need to utilise the English language as a result of a large Polish community and Polish presence in various establishments. Further inhibitors to English language use were said to derive from distinct Polish characteristics. By employing terms such as 'keep together', 'close-knit' and 'private' to illustrate characteristics that appear typical within the Polish community, many participants believed these characteristics to likely reinforce inhibition to English language use.

Findings relating to the second research question revealed a perceived conflict in the management of Polish language at home and communication among Polish community members on school premises due to English language reinforcement in the school setting. From service providers' point of view, engagement with Polish parents was considered problematic due to their unwillingness to communicate in English. Parents tried to strengthen their children's Polish language skills but encountered barriers in their transmission of Polish culture as despite their efforts, their children identify as Irish. Polish characteristics of closeness and the upholding of 'Polishness' were generally met with disapproval by parents, who tended to steer away from the wider Polish community. Avoidance of the wider Polish community was suggested to stem from Polish communities holding a reputation of intolerance towards other cultures.

And finally, with regard to the Help-seeking research question, findings suggested Polish community members' preference for seeking formal as well as informal support through the medium of the Polish language. This preference was said to derive from feelings of discomfort around the use of English, particularly in official matters and paperwork. Informal support was primarily sought from the partner/spouse and from extended family. Where no (extended) family was in close proximity, there was a strong reliance on support provided by friends but also neighbours. Alternatively, the use of online resources to find information or seek advice was suggested. Lastly, service providers believed Polish characteristics and the typical behaviours of Polish community members hindered help-seeking.

5.4 Family

In this second section, findings on the theme of Family are presented. Family refers to the parent - child unit but was frequently extended to grandparents, aunts and uncles. This section explores participants' perceptions of Family in relation to our three research questions.

5.4.1 Family and Parenting: Family Time, Extended Family and the Transmission of Culture

I begin with the findings on Family that relate to my first research question. This section presents findings on cultural norms shaping how parents perceive their role as parents. Issues I address relate to cultural values connected with family and the first issue concerns the value of providing care for both children as well as grandparents.

In the majority of cases, parents described a desire, but also one's obligation, to care for family. Barbara, for example, highlighted her need to be with her children and the discomfort she felt in being apart when on a holiday with her husband.

"We had a ... situation when we went for the trip for 9 days. My daughter stayed with granny ... After 3 days, it was so difficult for us... From that time, we said no more. All family" (Barbara).

While Barbara's narrative exemplifies parents' wish to be united with their children, some parents also pointed to the consensus among Polish people that one is obliged to take care of one's own parents. This is illustrated by Bogdana's statement:

"A lot of Polish people return to Poland now because their parents are getting older and need help" (Bogdana).

She went on to state that as the youngest family member, the provision of care to her parents is her responsibility.

"I am the youngest in the family and need to take care of my parents" (Bogdana).

Hania offered a more detailed explanation as to why she feels obliged to take care of her mother by indicating that the perceived sense of duty stems from a feeling of appreciation and wish to reciprocate for all that was done for her, despite her mother's lack of time for her as well as her siblings.

"Well, you have to appreciate that your parents raised you ... You have to take care of them, because they spent so much time; making sure you were happy, and you are growing, and you have everything you could have ... They are taking care of you as much as they can and even if they don't have the time. My mother didn't really have the time, but she really cares ... Whenever we were sick or ... have a problem with health, she was ... making sure that we be better and better, seeing doctors. So, I'd say we need to pay back. All this matters ... that she ... took care of us" (Hania).

According to a small number of service providers, the provision of care by Polish parents towards their children manifests itself in form of attention and protection.

"I would see that they are very hands on, very caring, very very attentive ... that's what I have noticed" (Ciara).

"They are all always wrapped up in hats and scarfs. They are very protected; they are very minded" (Siobhan).

The next issue raised by participants concerned Polish people spending quality time with their families, and the importance such a commitment has in shaping their role as parents. In the majority of cases parents emphasised the need to invest time in their children. Some participants also spoke about trying to spend time with extended family. All participants enjoyed spending time with their children which frequently involves fun activities. Aurelia, for instance, described using her free time over the weekend to take her children on trips around Ireland.

"We love trips; so usually on Sunday, or Saturday, we are going around Ireland and we like to go and see places; so, we are trying to do like something fun" (Aurelia).

While Celina added that 'being together' and 'happy' are the most important elements for the facilitation of a close family bond, Krysia described time spent with her daughter as a means to get to know her better. Furthermore, Aleksander pointed out the need to spend time away from everyday responsibilities so as to strengthen ties.

"We notice that whenever we go for holidays or go for trip, that ... family life is coming back. Some binding ..." (Aleksander).

All parent participants expressed the need for commitment to spend time with their children and in a minority of cases, support service provider participants spoke about having observed a close bond between parents and their offspring. Siobhan, for instance, used the term 'molly-coddled' when referring to the strong bond within Polish families which arises from parental love towards children. While acknowledging the value of a strong bond, the following is nonetheless a critique of the parenting style adopted.

"They are very, they are generally close to their parents, so, you know, it's yeah, they are just very, I suppose the Irish term would be molly-coddled, you know. And we know that's coming from the best place in the world and it's out of love for them" (Siobhan).

In addition to the commitment towards their children, Bartek reported that scheduling meetups with extended family helps to remain connected, as was the case with his brother-in-law prior to his return to Poland.

"I.'s brother was here as well several years ... We were just going for some trips ... just having an occasion to make contact ... spoke about what's happening in your life in the last week, because we didn't see each other" (Bartek).

Another issue raised related to the important role extended family plays for Polish parents and how relatives may influence how parents perceive their role as parents. Many parent participants indicated a close bond with their extended family and try to stay close to their relatives. Only a minority reported a weak connection. Basia, for example, talked of a positive atmosphere because of a close relationship with her mother and her sister in law who reside nearby.

"We have family here and when we need help ... O.'s mum can help us ... like sister ... is better atmosphere because we are keeping so close and because we have family here" (Basia).

The same sentiment of closeness was expressed by Celina, when she described her mother's decision to temporarily live with the family since the birth of her youngest child.

"I have my Mum here actually. Like he was born, and she decided to stay with us for a little while, so that's a big help" (Celina).

However, she went on to explain that this contrasts with her husband's experience as his ties to his family in Poland are weaker and that this is the reason for his preference to remain in Ireland.

"... I'm more romantic. I would like to go back, and I meet my family often. He doesn't like to. He has only parents in Poland, not really more than parents. His family is small and he's ok when he rings them once a month. That's fine. He doesn't really miss them at all. But I'm different. That's why he would like to; he prefers to stay in Ireland" (Celina).

Many parents described visits and the use of technology as useful ways to remain in touch with family in Poland. Nonetheless, the difficulty of preserving strong ties despite regular communication was illustrated in Hania's narrative where she highlights the impact of living apart.

"We living here; this is our house and they are living there; we can't see, so the relationship is not very close. We are living separately; different countries. But we have; we talk; we have that relationship anyway, you know. We know what is going on; on with each" (Hania).

A further issue raised by participants concerned Polish attitudes towards family problems and related assumptions of how to deal with these problems. When referring to cultural norms around problem solving that relate to family, some parents explained that family matters are considered private and that parents attempt to resolve issues within the family unit. Hania, for instance, revealed that she sometimes shares problems with a close friend, who she regards as family; yet, she describes herself as an individual who is not that open to talk about problems.

"I'm not going to share my family struggle. Maybe, sometimes my friend, which is very close to me, but we treat each other as families; but it's not a 100% ... It's not exactly 100%, I would say. I wouldn't be that open. It's a private matter ... I'm not a person that ... speaks about problems" (Hania).

The tendency to resolve problems within the family unit was also recognised by some support service providers as was evident in a service provider's response to my questioning Polish problem management.

"Keep it within the family" (Martina).

Frequently describing themselves as 'not so open', several parents attributed their viewpoint of family being private to the perceived Polish character trait of guardedness. Using terms such as 'personal' and 'protective', Estera's narrative tried to summarise what she considers to be key beliefs of Polish people on family matters.

“ ‘Oh, it’s very personal’. ‘Oh, they talk about my family’. ‘This is my house; this is my rules; you don’t really have to get involved and tell me what I should do’. ‘This is my thing, my kingdom’. A little protective, yes” (Estera).

An additional issue raised in terms of Family concerned the endeavour to impart values to children. In the majority of cases parents spoke about specific values relating to ‘self’ as well as ‘others’. Relating to ‘self’, many parents foregrounded features of independence. Accounts of autonomy permeated not only the narratives of participants with older children but also those with young children and children with a disability.

Properties of independence were illustrated by Basia’s description of her young daughter’s behaviour which she believes to be acceptable.

“If she (doesn’t) like something, she can say ‘I don’t like’. When she not want do something, she can say ‘I not want it’” (Basia).

Aleksander, whose son is 11 years old, reported his efforts to teach independence through means of engagement with household tasks to prepare his son for an environment outside the family home.

“We are trying to ... prepare him for. That world, once he is out of home. That will be different. There will be nobody to do these things for him” (Aleksander).

Autonomy was also highlighted in Bartek’s narrative about his son with autism, stressing the importance of advancing capabilities towards self-reliance.

“For us, the most important is now to move G.to that stage, where he’s will do everything by himself. And will be independent” (Bartek).

Furthermore, some parent participants tried to convey a sense of purpose in life, inner trust, mental strength, academic mastery as well as the ability to complete things.

In the discussion of moral responsibilities towards ‘others’, politeness, tolerance and kindness were found important. Aurelia, for example, illuminated what she considers to be the difference between Irish and Polish individuals in terms of attitudes towards the more needy on public transport. Having been met with surprise and embarrassment as a result of offering her seat to pregnant women or the elderly, she intends to transmit her view on moral responsibilities to her children.

“Here, I’m actually surprised ... Young people, not only teenagers and kids. Even young females my age and Irish people don’t do that. Kids especially; if elderly person enters the bus or pregnant woman, or someone I see that needs seat more than me. We, in Poland, raise kids very strongly that they have to stand up and give that seat to other person. And here, nobody does this, to be honest. I always see people so surprised when I do it in the bus; when I allow some elderly person my seat or a pregnant woman. I’m actually surprised here; and they are so surprised ... A few times ... When I did it, some Irish man was so embarrassed. Yeah, so that’s what I teach my kids, coz I want them to have that” (Aurelia).

Jagna, who has a non-Polish partner and many non-Polish friends, spoke about her aspiration to communicate tolerance, or as she termed it ‘to be very tolerant’, for different cultures.

“And to be very tolerant, that’s what I’m trying to show her. Every single culture ... I wish for my daughter that she will be a good person and tolerant for everybody around the world. Hopefully” (Jagna).

While using different terminology to describe their intentions, Jagna’s goal to instil tolerance resonated with Estera and Krysia who share similar backgrounds in terms of having given birth to children of non-Polish nationals.

“... That’s quite important for me. That he will go out there to the world and see that even though we are all different, we are still the same ... Yeah that he feels that he is important, but also value other people and his surrounding” (Estera).

In addition, Krysia used the word 'kind' to describe her own position as well as the philosophy she seeks her daughter to adopt towards all living creatures.

"I want her to be a good person. That's my main goal. I want her to be kind to people coz the way I would describe myself like. We just, you just have to be kind to other people and not only people. Just to be kind. It's nice to be nice; that's the motto" (Krysia).

A further issue raised by participants concerned parents' perceived value of health and related presumptions of how to preserve health. All parents time and again outlined a strong focus on the physical well-being of their children as well as themselves by means of healthy food intake and exercise. This is exemplified by Aleksander and Emilia's narrative, where they reported problems with their children's diet due to influences from outside their home environment. Further, children's lack of exercise was argued to stem from reduced time and insufficient emphasis on physical activities in the school environment, with teachers spending too much time on English language teaching.

"Controlling their diet is ... a problem. Because of the habits they get. For years we were trying to get them good ideas of what to eat and how to eat ... it is mostly homemade stuff. We knew that at some point they would be exposed to whatever is out there. But now it actually just goes too far. We are now trying to kick them out to do some activities" (Aleksander).

"Sports. They have 45 minutes for English. They are supposed to have 45 minutes for activities, and they are actually playing football or do jumping in the breaks; it's nothing. And later on, ... they are lazier at home because they are not used to (physical activities)" (Emilia).

Describing herself as physically active, which is a practice also narrated by many other parents, Daria described what she believed to be the benefits of physical activities. Moreover, she revealed the negative impact of children's technology use on her attempts to engage her son in sports.

"I wanted to force him to do some sports, but he is not really ... I love sport and I think it makes life nicer and you feel better. Everything is better, when you do something ... He can go ... swimming with me for cycling or anything. But it's hard. For him, the best is games and that drives me crazy sometimes because it's TV or phone or table or Nintendo and all that stuff around and he always finds something" (Daria).

Another issue raised concerned the transmission of Polish customs. Many parents spoke about religious customs and in a minority of cases also about the transmission of personal traditions. About half of all parents interviewed described in detail how they pass on Christian customs of Christmas and Easter festivities which emphasise shared meals and family time. Aurelia, for instance, talked about Poland-specific routines on Holy Saturday and Christmas Eve.

"For Easter, we always go on Saturday to church with Polish basket. In the basket, we always have things we are going to eat for breakfast the next day; like eggs, bread and sausage. Those are the symbols of new life. Same for Christmas time; we do that on 24th and we don't eat ... turkey or meat; we eat fish that evening and it's our tradition that we have 12 meals on the table on that day" (Aurelia).

Having highlighted 'New Life' as the symbolic meaning of the Easter basket, Barbara pointed out the symbolism of the 12 meals on Christmas Eve.

"We have big supper with 12 meals ... but not really big 12 meals ... It's like 12 different things ... and each one is symbolic in some way ... give something nice for the year ... old traditions, very old tradition" (Barbara).

Polish traditions of Christmas and Easter were also preserved by mothers with non-Polish partners.

The importance of being with family on Christmas Eve was described by Bogdana, when she reported competition among Polish migrants for time off as well as her feeling upset at previously having to work.

“Here, one year I had to work on Christmas Eve while in Poland we would have Christmas dinner at 6 pm. I cried while working at the till and a customer asked me what was wrong. Polish people are very competitive when it comes to getting Christmas Eve off work” (Bogdana).

She went on to reveal that she misses Catholic traditions relating to family.

“I miss Catholic traditions; especially the atmosphere; but that may be due to lack of family. Sunday for example, is the day of family and one shouldn’t shop or work” (Bogdana).

Celina explained that her family celebrates many Christian holidays throughout the year and that she intends to pass this tradition on to her daughter.

Family being a pivotal element in Christian celebrations was evident when Aleksander defined Christmas and Easter as family-centred rather than religious.

“I see it more ... things like Easter, Christmas as ... family centred rather than religious, strictly... I always think of the family thing. Rather than religious. Now we go, for Easter, we go to the church and do the blessing; so, we do it. But still, I think more of a family tradition than the strict ... it’s like that” (Aleksander).

Only two parents talked about trying to transmit what may be considered ‘personal’ traditions. Trying to impart his passion for music, Aleksander, for instance, revealed his frustration of being unable to introduce his children to live concerts due to age restrictions. Similarly, Celina described her love for watching Polish sports to stem from her mother and explained feeling Polish when listening to the Polish anthem. She believes her daughter will experience the same emotion and share this passion when older.

Most parent participants did not speak about personal customs or traditions that were unique within their family unit, and reasons are unknown. According to Estera, lack of personal customs was likely the result of time constraints which hinder the development of such within the family.

She further suggested that personal customs may already be an integral but subconscious part of everyday life, but without families realising this.

"... I'm not sure, if we do something very special. I think it is the hectic type of life now. It seems there is no relaxing moment that we could develop something. I would like that; it would be very good. Apart from typical things, I don't think there is something extra special. I am, mmhh, I'm conked, really; there is something that other people do but for me so normal that" (Estera).

An additional issue raised by participants related to the adoption of age-appropriate discipline strategies in order to instil values and enforce rules. To achieve desired behaviours, most parents of older children agreed on two child discipline strategies. Participants described the use of explanations and conversations with their children to clarify behavioural expectations. Further, removing electronics as form of discipline is regularly employed. Estera, for example, whose son is 10 years old, described communication as the approach to help change behaviour instead of immediately rushing to punishment.

"I try not to go straight to punishment, but there is certain steps ... when he misbehave then he will be warned and maybe warned again. I try not to punish him ... I would try to change behaviour in a different way; by conversation" (Estera).

While the removal of electronics from his children aged 11 and 7 was the punitive strategy employed by Aleksander, Aurelia, whose children are 9 and 4 years of age, utilised electronic devices as a form of reward for good behaviour.

"Yeah, I think, if it comes down to that punishment, it's typically no electronics" (Aleksander).

"They know the rules. In our house, they don't get electronics all the time and as much as they like. My son, if he wants to get his tablet, he can only have it for one hour a day, but he has to be good at school. And for the younger one, it's the same with like cartoons and watching telly" (Aurelia).

Some parents, and in particular those with younger children up to the age of five, used outdoor activities, time out, grounding or extra chores to enforce rules. An illustration of time out was offered by Jagna, who, although highlighting that her daughter does not behave badly, implements a five-minute ‘calm down’ phase in the child’s room to regulate behaviour.

“She is getting some punishment obviously. She knows when she is being bold. She has to go to her room and calm down ... maximum five minutes ... and then she is coming. She is saying sorry straight away and that’s the only punishment. I don’t need to use anything. She knows, and she is not behaving badly” (Jagna).

Hania, whose daughter is 7 years of age, described the usage of grounding, negative punishment as well as extra chores when her child does not respond to repeated requests from her.

“I’m patient enough ... to wait. But if I’m waiting ... 10 minutes and keep asking her and ... she is still not doing ... what I would like her to do, I’m saying ‘Listen, if you are not doing this ... you are not going out for example. Playground. You are not going out. We are going to stay all day at home. Or you are not going to have your treat, or you have to do something extra, as normally she wouldn’t do. Cleaning she doesn’t ... she hate it. Cleaning, the worst punishment ever” (Hania).

A further issue raised concerned Polish parents’ aspirations for their children’s’ future. Some parents reported not having particular career aspirations for their children but disclosed their endeavour to provide opportunities which were not available to them in their own childhoods. Daria, for instance, confessed how her efforts to engage her son in piano lessons stem from her own childhood dream of learning to play the piano but which had remained unfulfilled due to her parent’s financial problems.

“Everyone has their own dreams ... The same old story with the piano. I really wanted but my parents never had enough money to send me for lessons so now I’m trying to do” (Daria).

Similarly, Jagna described the difference between her parents' and her own financial ability to provide opportunities by illustrating her capability to do more for her daughter.

"My father and my mother, they couldn't afford what I can afford for my daughter. So, I'm just doing a bit more with her; I'm sending her for lessons, which I wasn't, you know" (Jagna).

The last issue raised in terms of my first research question concerned the aspects parents perceive as positive in their role as parents. In the majority of cases there were a variety of features parents enjoy about parenting. There was a consensus among participants that the ability to teach children, spend time with children as well as feelings of love and affection stand in the forefront. The pleasure of teaching children was illuminated by Celina.

"I love to teach them new things and explaining the words" (Celina).

Kryisia enjoyed spending time with her daughter in order to get to know her.

"... I like spending time with her... And get to know her like" (Kryisia).

Feelings of love were illustrated by Estera, when she communicated her emotions after giving birth to her son.

"Well the love I think ... just that unconditional love; that you are bringing the child to the world and you are suddenly overwhelmed with that emotion and you feel. It is meaningful ... just by the fact that there is that little person to look after" (Estera).

Further, Bartek admitted a hug from his son as symbol of affection to be the most gratifying aspect of parenting.

"The moment when there is a huge hug from the kid, you know ... Maybe because I am getting older ... but when he's ... cranky ... and when he just take a hug with me ... that's the most beautiful moment for me like" (Bartek).

In a minority of cases parents also discussed how they appreciate discovering the absence of fear and openness as well as happiness and health in their children. Expressing relief that his children do not fear him as well as the perceived benefits of his parenting approach, Petr described his children's openness to talk.

"Is good to see that our way of be parent is good for them ... They are not scared; they are open to talk about everything. They are not afraid to talk; even if she dropped something ... we try to tell her 'Oh, nothing happened'" (Petr).

Moreover, health and happiness were highlighted in Celina's narrative, when she spoke about the pleasure of witnessing her children's development.

"The nice thing is just watching them growing and I don't know, watch them be happy with us. Everything actually. As long, I love, as long as they are healthy with us" (Celina).

5.4.2 Family and Parenting Experiences: Work and Family Balance, Gender and Generational Differences, Lack of Informal Support

The first issue raised by participants related to the struggle of Polish parents balancing work and family life. To uphold a strong family unit, most parents reported time spent with children to be important. However, most participants repeatedly struggled to strike a balance between work and family life. Having opted to change her weekday shifts to weekends, Celina, for instance, described having more time for her children during the week but sacrificing weekends together.

"Since I ... work weekends, it's not too bad, because I'm here for kids ... during the week ... I focus on the kids now; ... it's tough as well because we not together during weekend; but I'm here for them and I can pick up H. from school. I can do homework with her; I can do many things ... Since I changed the shift, I think it was the best I could do ... For the kids actually; so, it is not too bad" (Celina).

Hania described rotating shifts with her partner, which results in spending little time with each other.

"You see, all this red one, it's my shift. The rest is his shift. But we have some time together; but it's just ... one day. We have no weekend; seriously like" (Hania).

The next issue raised related to the support, or lack thereof, provided by grandparents and its impact on Polish parents in their role as parents. In a small number of cases, service provider participants believed that Polish parents don't experience any more pressure than other families but may lack extended family to ask for support.

"I suppose I couldn't say that the Polish parents I've worked with are under any more stresses than the other families except for the fact that they may not have family close by" (Patricia).

In order to assist parents engaging in employment as well as helping in the upkeep of the household and responsibilities towards their children, all parents described that extended family is frequently called upon for support. While some parents have access to this type of support by family, and described the benefits of this, others miss extended family and lack grandparents' support. Barbara, for example, revealed that parents in Poland would rely on grandmothers to help. She used the terminology of an emotional 'loss' to describe the lack of family support due to migration.

"You know, in Poland you have support from the family side. You have grannies ... So, parents struggle between, you know ... They are working ... They don't have family to even. It's like people miss ... it's like, it's loss, you know. When you lose someone; the loss, when you move from one country to another..." (Barbara).

Emotional loss and questioning the decision to migrate were evident in Aleksander's narrative, when he reported feelings of detachment from family as well as his children not understanding the concept of extended family.

"It can be challenging ... It's kind of more that you lack support of family effectively. That would make it easier potentially ... The biggest problem is that we are here. We are detached ... from our families. So, they (the children) don't have a concept of uncle and grandparents and stuff like that ... I think that's ... the biggest loss effectively ... This is, where I ask the question of the whole idea of coming abroad, the value of it" (Aleksander).

Bartek described the benefit of support from family, how his parents were supported by his grandparents in the past, but also how he had come to terms with lacking support from family due to his decision to migrate.

"... We are here alone. I know my parents had the support for the grandmothers, grandparents ... in Poland. We can't complain because we choose to move to Ireland. So, we are not complaining ... I think, it is a huge help ... for families. We just have to" (Bartek).

A quite different perspective was offered by Kryisia, when she outlined the negative impact of migration and lack of family on Polish children. Portraying Polish children as pampered, she argued that parents use material goods to replace perceived losses.

"... I think Polish children are spoilt rotten ... I'm not saying that they are bad kids. It's just they have less responsibilities and definitely, they appreciate things less. Maybe it's just because ... as an immigrant ... you don't really have family; you try to make up for things. And very often it happens with the material things..." (Kryisia).

The study also identified parents' perceived lack of personal time in addition to the struggle to balance work and family life. In a minority of cases parent participants revealed the challenge of finding time for themselves. Aurelia, for instance, who parents alone and is a stay-at-home-mum, illustrated the problem of meeting up with her employed friends as they are only available in the evenings or on weekends.

"... I am a full-time carer for my son. I've stopped my full-time work a few years ago, when I separated. I had to stay home with them ... I am able to have some time during the day, but of course all of my friends ... are at work. And then in the evening time or at the weekends, when they can meet for coffee or drink ... then I can't. So, getting the break in the evening or weekend." (Aurelia).

Similarly, Celina spoke of the difficulty parents encounter when having to make sacrifices to their own wishes so as to keep children happy.

" We have to stretch our life for them ... Everything that we do is for them and them to be happy. Sometimes you have to sacrifice; and we don't do what we would like to do at this time; and it's the hardest part" (Celina).

Additionally, the transition and adjustment to motherhood was described by Jagna, who had a very different lifestyle before her daughter was born.

"When I was single, I had a totally different routine and everything ... everything went upside down so. In the beginning, it was hard but now I have no troubles at all ..." (Jagna).

Another finding which related to my second research question concerned gender differences in both discipline strategies, which were previously presented, as well as consistency in the enforcement of rules. Some parents spoke about mothers adopting a 'softer' approach. In several cases participants described agreeing with their partners, but some parents mentioned arguing about appropriate measures of discipline.

Mothers displaying a 'softer' approach to the enforcement of rules than their male partners were exemplified by Hania's narrative, concerning the difference between herself and her husband in terms of control and enforcement of discipline. Having previously outlined her usage of grounding and negative punishment as well as extra chores, she described her husband to be rather authoritarian in his approach.

"He is more of a discipline than me. I'd say he is more ... I kinda take back a little bit" (Hania).

While some participants pointed out that they agree with their partners in terms of the manner they raise their children, others described disputes with their partners in relation to discipline. Barbara, for instance, described struggling to set boundaries for her children and instead using communication as an approach to explain the consequences of behaviour, which is also the method adopted by her husband.

"I'm very bad with that. I sometimes put boundaries very ... yeah, just try explain and you know. And my husband is the same way"
(Barbara).

Correspondingly, Bogdana described agreeing with her partner on discipline strategies due to their similar personalities. Jagna also reported her partner's satisfaction with the manner she raises their daughter.

"My husband has a very similar personality to mine, so I don't need to explain most of the time" (Bogdana).

" [My partner] is very happy, he is very happy" (Jagna).

In contrast, accounts provided by Celina, Daria and Krysia highlighted mother's exposure to criticism from their partners, who appeared authoritarian in their approach, when mothers were not using the right strategies or lacked persistence in disciplining their children. Celina, for instance, spoke about how her husband believes she is 'too nice' to their children, thus giving her instructions on how to discipline them.

"I'm not a strict parent, but my husband is more. He shouts... He is talking to me ... like 'Oh, you ... too nice to them and you have to be more ... strict ... and have to go ... listen to me sometimes. That works. Sometimes we have to punish her'. Like sometimes. Not him ... he's too young, but he's tried to explain him"
(Celina).

Daria was given similar instructions by her partner due to her apparent lack of authority.

"Sometimes we have conversation with my boyfriend and he's saying, 'And you see how it looks if you' say ... He needs like hard, harder, like push' or ... you know" (Daria).

Kryisia, who described her partner as strict, pointed out that her adoption of different discipline strategies due to her own childhood experience lead to arguments with her partner because of not seeing eye to eye on the use of punishment.

"He is more strict than I am; let's say that he tells her that she is not getting something ... That's another argument ... I kind of don't have his back and I just ... and I do differently. It's just because my parents were very very strict and I'm very much different. So, it sometimes causes argument between me and my husband" (Kryisia).

Disapproval of discipline strategies appeared to not only provided by male partners. Bartek, for example, explained that although generally in agreement with his wife, she disapproved of him raising his voice to his children.

"I. say to me from time to time ... I just raise my voice too high or something like that. But I know, it's not for G.; especially for P. ... We even had that today; in the morning as well, too loud. But generally, ... we are agreeing with everything like" (Bartek).

A slightly different account on discipline strategies was provided by Aleksander, who reported frequently swapping roles with his wife as he believes approaches depend on one's personal position on a specific matter rather than being strictly divided into 'soft' female and 'firm' male tactics.

"We change, I think. Often, we take; actually, what happens, we swap the roles. So sometimes E. can be a good cop, sometimes I can be good cop. And usually ... doing opposite thing. Typically, we try to figure out, what is your position on that and ... what do we do" (Aleksander).

In a minority of cases participants who parent alone agreed that they attempt to strike a balance between a 'soft' and 'firm' approach to discipline. Aurelia, for example, highlighted the need to be firm, but described in detail enjoying the affection she receives from her children.

"Especially because I'm raising them all by myself, I have to be strict. When it's finally evening time ... When you put them to bed and give them kiss and they have like short stories with you before you leave the bedroom. Yeah, they are so cute because they keep telling me, they love me; like 1000 times a day. They give me kisses. Bedtime is nice" (Aurelia).

The struggle to attune her 'soft' nature with 'firm' tactics was described by Estera.

"I think I'm a little bit too soft after all ... I just can't balance this very well. Toughness I can't. It's very hard to balance ... I find it really difficult. But well, I'm trying" (Estera).

While never referring to Polish discipline styles, issues associated with gender norms in Polish child rearing were raised by support service providers. In a minority of cases, participants described Polish mothers as possessing a strong drive with regards to their children doing well in the education system in order to avail of opportunities that were out of reach for themselves. Patricia from the support service provider focus group spoke about how the drive by mothers for their children to succeed often leads to the sacrifice of necessary playtime but also potentially pushes children beyond their academic abilities.

"Sometimes the boundary of what's too much, what's relaxed playtime ... I kind of think sometimes, they could relax it a little bit, because they are so focused on 'You will do well at school; you will do well, because I don't want you to end up in the situation, I'm in'. I see that the kids then might be ... even channelled into something that might not particularly suit their academic level ... but I suppose that's just one observation" (Patricia).

In addition to mothers' drive for their children's success, a service provider participant noted that Polish mothers set high standards for themselves, are competing with other women and consider it important how their families are perceived by the outside world. Feelings of anxiety and failure are experienced when Polish mothers don't meet their own expectations.

"I sometimes feel that the standards Polish women ... set for themselves are, the bar is really high ... and so therefore, if they feel that they are not reaching that, their anxiety levels ... mirror that."

"I think that ... they may sometimes be in competition with each other ... The importance of what it looks like to the rest of the world, on the outside ... I would notice very much about Polish mothers with their children, they are nearly always immaculate; like they are always, ... the children are always spotlessly clean; they have the best of clothes regardless of their class. It would be ... appearance is really important to them ... And I think that maybe there is a feeling of failure if somehow they didn't" (Anita).

There appears to be an existing cultural belief about the proper role of Polish fathers. In a small number of cases service providers spoke about how Polish fathers perceive themselves to be responsible for providing materialistically but lack emotional affection towards their children. Using the example of a Polish family she worked with in the past, Maura from the focus group described the lack of affection as well as a lack of connection between father and son due to the fathers' work commitments and personal anger issues.

"There was a thing of; there was more incidents with dad and the child ... not really connecting with the little boy ... Dad is working nights, very lack of sleep, you know ... the services were involved and ... trying to learn how to ... deal with his own (anger) was very hard for him as well ... The child wasn't necessarily the bold child who wanted to play football, wanted to do, you know. What we've seen is things that were comfortable for dad. This child was probably more, needed more emotional affection" (Maura).

A further issue identified related to parents encountering children's challenging behaviours and the difficulty of dealing with such behaviours. Some parents spoke about parenting being a learning process and others pointed out that they battle with challenging behaviours of their child/ren. Daria, for example, described her son's behavioural issues since the birth of her younger child and the difficulty she faces in disciplining him due to time management issues stemming from additional responsibilities.

"He is jealous ... was like from the beginning. He is eight, so he used to be alone. Single everything for him. So now everything changed and he's getting worse and worse actually. I have to be very strict ... and it's hard sometimes because I'm busy. I have to mind the little one" (Daria).

Estera reported the experience of 'bad days' because of her son's conduct, leading her to struggle with fulfilling her responsibilities.

"Well, my son is a challenging boy; so, he has, I suppose, this challenging behaviour... You have different days ... bad days and you still have to deliver you know. So, the challenges coming sometimes. It's hard to balance it. The juggling ... different tasks" (Estera).

In a few cases parents expressed the view that parenting is a learning process. Participants said that despite not being perfect parents, they are trying their best. This idea of learning and trying is exemplified by the accounts of Petr and Basia.

"But everyone, as a parent, you do mistakes. You have to learn yourself and then you can be perfect parent" (Petr).

"We try be the best parents ... It's never perfect parents" (Basia).

A more detailed synopsis on the idea of parenting being a learning process is presented by Celina. She spoke about the impact of her lack of knowledge on her daughter's speech development and the adjustment of her approach since the birth of her son.

"... I've changed now, because when H. was like him, housework, my housework was just in silent. Actually, I didn't talk to her that much ... She had some problems with the talking. She didn't talk until she was 2 and a half and I think that's my fault actually. I didn't do that proper actually. I didn't know, how to do it actually. Maybe I thought, she'd start to talk just like that. Now I know with him that we have to talk to him. That was my mistake with her, so I have changed with him now. I know how to. I wasn't really young; I was 26, but I didn't know how to do that" (Celina).

Further, she went on to compare her parenting approach to Irish parents, praising and expressing the wish to adopt some of their strategies with regards to rules and the way they communicate with their children.

"I think, Irish parents are good parents, because they have rules. I heard that many times. Kids usually sleep good. I don't know, how they do it. Maybe ... the way they talk to their kids. Explaining or ... how nice they are to them. That's what I like. I would like that more, like myself" (Celina).

Another finding in this study relates to generational differences in Polish child rearing. As previously discussed in the context of the first research question, extended family plays an important role. In the majority of cases participants discussed the impact their parents' child rearing methods have on their own approach. Some parents revealed how parenting has changed over time, with a move towards an emphasis on safety, communication and the expression of affection towards children. Most participants illustrated their attempt to depart from their parents' methods of parenting, while a small number described following their own parents' approach. Aurelia, for instance, spoke in detail of the freedom she experienced in her childhood in Poland, where her parents adopted a relaxed attitude towards supervision. Signifying a more protective approach towards her own children, she explained that freedom has been replaced by the prominence of safety because of changing times.

"I was raised in 80's and 90's in Poland and it was totally different time ... I remember my childhood and my parents. They've been so relaxed ... me and my friends and other kids from apartment buildings ... We were playing outside like whole day. We had a key on our neck. Our parents ... if we went for half a day, they didn't know, where we are ... Here today, it's like no way ... It's like totally different time. It's not safe ..." (Aurelia).

Accentuating her parents' emphasis on work, its impact on child rearing and the lack of parent-child communication during childhood, Basia stressed that she now adopts a more child-centred, media informed approach. Pointing out that times have changed, she foregrounded the importance of communication as well as spending time with her daughter.

"It is different, because ... when my parents; there was so important the work. Food for kids ... My parents was not talking to me too much. Not talking with me about problems ... More, I go with problems to my sister. Now, is little different time; show in the television as well; we can read about that. Is more important the mental (state of) the kids. We can ... talking more. And sometimes ... I leave all dishes and I do that at the end of the day ... It's more important to colour with L., do something with her. My parents, it was most important to cleaning everything. Was different times" (Basia).

Celina spoke about a general change in parenting approaches since her own childhood. She illustrated that 'modern' parents demonstrate emotions more freely and express endearment and warmth more openly than in the past.

"I think it's different now because ... parents show ... love... more than in the past, when we were young ... My parents were not talking to me the same way I'm talking to my kids. So nice and I never had so many nice words ... I wasn't on my father's knees so often like H. is on R.'s. It's different; we are hugging, we are affectionate. We are talking about feelings, love. I had no such conversation with my parents in the past. That's much much different now ... I think that wasn't only them. It was the time, changing like, is. Even in TV, they are talking about how to show love to your kids and how important it is and everything; so, everything 's changed ... since I was little" (Celina).

While the narratives provided display most participants' inclination to deviate from their parent's ways of child rearing, some interviewees expressed the wish to follow their parents' approach as is exemplified by Jagna's statement.

"My parents were very good parents, you know. My father is still alive, so I wish to be like them. As a mother, I wish to be like my Mum; definitely you know" (Jagna).

For a small number of mothers, narratives on generational differences in child rearing also touched on the intergenerational transmission of values. The accounts provided position themselves on different ends of the spectrum. One description aligns with her mother's values and the intent to instil them in her own children. The other is more critical of her mother's approach to implementing values. Barbara, for instance, described how her mother

provided her with choice while growing up and how significant it is for her to maintain some of the values that were transmitted to her.

"I think quite similar. It's very important for me. I remember my mother told me; every time, she gave me choice ... Of course, she look after everything, but the main decision, she gave me the choice. So, it was so important for me, so I continued the same ... Yes, it's a lot of values which I would like to continue" (Barbara).

In contrast, Kryisia spoke about how her mother neglected the implementation of values during her childhood due to time constraints. Using 'focus' and 'endurance' as examples, she explained her determination to instil in her daughter what her own mother failed to accomplish.

"...I had many interest when I was little but my parents ... couldn't really like focus to help me with developing my career and I'm still struggling. I'm still kind of searching what I wanna be coz ... I was like all over the place and I was never ... focused. So, I'm trying to teach K., when she starts something ... I ... encourage her to actually stick to it. Because ... my Mum was ...I was kind of lacking the, somebody who would tell me 'OK, it's worth doing now. Maybe you don't see the bigger picture now, but you know you will see it in the future'. So that's what I'm trying to teach her. Just to focus and ... stick to it, you know and eventually it will show results in the future, so that's" (Kryisia).

The last issue identified concerned the perceived lack of informal support networks. While some parents described their access to support in the form of family, friends or neighbours, others reported difficulties in building rapport. As previously stated by many participants, extended family plays an important part in providing support with child rearing and household responsibilities. Due to the lack of extended family in Ireland, most participants relied on close friends and neighbours for support.

Many parents described having good relations with their neighbours which are facilitated by child play. Bartek, for example, outlined the operation of contact within his neighbourhood.

"We have ... almost every day or every second day ... meetings with the rest of the neighbours here ...Just making conversation, just for an hour or two. Kids are playing together, so they have a contact, yeah" (Bartek).

Additionally, Jagna highlighted the freedom that arises from establishing a good rapport with neighbours. Describing a reciprocal relationship with nearby residents in terms of supervision, she gained the ability to engage in tasks while her daughter is unrestrained to play outdoors.

"We have a chat with all neighbours ... so our daughter is free to go outside and it's always somebody ... We have neighbours with the same age ... so she is really happy ... Sometimes I'm sitting with them. Sometimes my neighbours are. So, I'm free to do something" (Jagna).

Some parents spoke of a lack of engagement with their neighbours and ascribed this shortfall to privacy, weather dependent interaction and lack of children in the same age group. Referring to privacy, Celina described her self-containment as reason for the lack of engagement with nearby residents. Although highlighting the availability of same age children to facilitate interaction, she pointed out that the development of neighbourly interaction between Polish and Irish parents may need time.

"I'm not saying I'm not open, because I am. I would like to have contact with my neighbours, Irish neighbours, and I don't have it yet. I will sometime. The neighbours have two boys with similar age. So, one day we meet. But I don't know. Maybe ... it's too early. ... Ten, twelve years since Polish came to Ireland. Maybe that needs time" (Celina).

Comparably, Hania described her aspiration to get to know her neighbour but revealed having stopped her attempt as she had been ignored.

"I would like to know my neighbour, but he is not even saying 'Hello' to me.... So, if he doesn't want ... to say 'Hello', why I should, you know" (Hania).

As previously mentioned, parental neighbourhood interaction is frequently facilitated by child play, but there were also barriers to this as the following

illustrates. Bad weather was referred to by Aleksander as reason for the lack of interaction between children in the neighbourhood, confining them to the home and use of electronic toys.

"I think that's the biggest pain ... we found ... this winter. Kids got stuck at home for 6 months. They didn't want to go out. Even ... all the kids on the street disappeared, because they all sitting at home playing tablet, whatever" (Aleksander).

In addition, he pointed out the difficulty of child play facilitation in the neighbourhood due to their locality lacking children of the same age.

"Our daughter is smaller, so friends are more difficult ... The ones she considers best friends are somewhere else and ... she cannot go on her own ... It's lack of ... kids in the same neighbourhood" (Aleksander).

Likewise, Hania described the absence of same age children as an obstacle to her daughter's outdoor play.

"... Have a problem because. Ok, there is downstairs Polish ... has a daughter, which she is 3 and half years old. Another ... is Romanian and have as well very young boy. But to be honest, there is nobody in her age ... here round, so she doesn't have ... She can't go and play just here on the grass, because there is no kids" (Hania).

In addition, Aleksander spoke about isolation by outlining in detail the negative impact of the frequently transient nature of Polish migration on stable support networks but also the difficulty of building friendships in Ireland.

"Most of our friends actually left Galway... Lots of people that we met and ... we consider our friends ... are now leaving one by one. It's another problem ... I think everybody isn't, doesn't have this idea of being for long ... Yes, people come and go, come and go, come and go ... From my perspective ... there is no grandparents. Nobody else to leave the kids with or ... have any interaction with ... I find isolating myself ... You don't always build the same relationships here. I find it almost impossible. They never end up; I don't know what it is. I just found it much harder here" (Aleksander).

Problems relating to the lack of informal support networks were also raised by support service providers. While parents described the benefits of support provision through extended family in Ireland as well as the issues that arise when lacking extended family to call upon, parental accounts did not refer to problems encountered by extended family members who reside in Ireland. Some service providers reported feelings of isolation experienced by grandparents as a result of trying to support their children and grandchildren. Using the example of a Polish family she had previously worked with, Anna, for instance, described a grandmother's isolation and lack of integration because of her confinement to the house and childcare responsibilities.

"I think granny was very isolated though because whatever integration you know the parents had and the children had English etc., granny had none, you know. So, she was walking the children to school, collecting them from school and that's it" (Anna).

Similarly, but emphasising the older Polish generation's language barrier and associated difficulty of learning a new language, Ciara, spoke about grandparents not 'getting out' due to relentlessly looking after their grandchildren.

"We have a lot of grandmothers ... Polish women coming in ... They more or less moved here to look after grandchildren and so a lot of them are staying at home. They are not really getting out ... Now, they are starting to come to English classes, but at that age, it's a lot harder ... to learn a language" (Ciara).

Having outlined extended family members' frequent lack of access to the world outside the home, many service provider participants were aware that Polish mothers in particular face isolation due to traditional gender roles in Polish households, the private nature of Polish family life and associated reliance on partners and extended family for support. Martina from the service provider focus group, for instance, described how she observed isolation arising from the lack of both extended familial support as well as partner support because of marital conflict.

“The families that I was working with there ... they were very isolated. Their family was in Poland. There was one woman who was on the verge of breaking up with her husband and if she did, she had nobody. So, in that sense ... isolation maybe” (Martina).

In addition, isolation may be furthered by so called ‘hidden lone parenting’, as service provider Steven described mothers that can’t rely on their absent partners to share responsibilities and concerns due to work commitments elsewhere.

“We’ve got, we’ve also got the hidden lone parents because a lot of the husbands in Polish families have gone away to find work and left the mother here. They are not classed as lone parents, but they are parenting alone, you know, so there is, that’s another issue” (Steven).

As previously acknowledged, parents referred to by professionals are different to those who participated in the study.

5.4.3 Family and Help-seeking

I conclude my section on the theme Family with findings that related to my third research question on Help-seeking.

The first point raised by participants concerned parents’ first port of call when problems arise. As already discussed previously, many parent participants described seeking initial support and resolving problems within their relationship with their partner.

Where access is available, support is also sought and provided by extended family. Basia, for instance, mentioned teamwork and described asking her in-laws for advice.

“We have family here and ... when we need help, always ... O.’s mum can help us. Like sister, brother-in law ... We are working together ... If we don’t know something, we always can ask A.” (Basia).

Similarly, Celina described receiving help from her mother, who decided to temporarily reside with the family since the birth of the youngest child.

The next point raised related to accessing informal support provided by friends and neighbours, when no (extended) family is in close proximity. This channel of support was exemplified by Bartek's narrative, when he described calling upon friends and neighbours to attend appointments.

"If we have some appointment or something, we have to ask neighbours for help or our, some friends or something like that so" (Bartek).

Likewise, Jagna described her reliance on friends and neighbours when problems arise, and her partner is unavailable.

"We have a lot of friends, so there is always support around ... My friends are living here in Doughiska as well, so if I have any troubles and ... my partner, he is not around, it's 2 minutes and they arrive ... So, I'm lucky ... My neighbours. If car broken, whatever ... I'm shouting to my neighbour" (Jagna).

Interestingly, one female participant expressed her preference for support provision from neighbours and friends, despite having extended family live nearby.

"I currently have a cousin living in C. ... but my neighbours and friends are more important" (Bogdana).

Informal support provision through neighbours and friends appears to be furthered by regular engagement, and parental interaction is frequently facilitated by means of children playing together. Examples of how child play is enabled were provided by Aurelia and Bogdana.

"So, we are visiting friends in the house. Taking turns in neighbours house or my house, and the kids play together" (Aurelia).

"There are 13 kids, aged 1-5 and 9-10 in the neighbourhood ... Playing together outside from 5 o'clock" (Bogdana).

The seeking of informal support provision was also recognised by service provider participants. Speaking from a personal rather than professional point of view, Pauline from the service provider focus group, for example, believed that parents, regardless of their place of origin, are unlikely to access formal parenting support due to the private nature of family matters.

"My own personal opinion is ... we don't really access support on this (formal) level. It's, I just think we are all very much alike in that; yeah, you know. It's private" (Pauline).

Comparably, when asked what type of services Polish parents access, Ciara listed several available activities and stated Polish families' tendency to access more 'fun type' services. Further, she suggested that Polish nationals feel ashamed to seek support and would likely prefer to remain anonymous when asking for help.

"(Polish) people have a lot of shame; or they want to keep it more anonymous perhaps" (Ciara).

In many cases, service provider participants spoke about the characteristics of Polish mothers and reasons for their reluctance to seek support.

Anita, for instance, compared Polish mothers to Irish mothers 50 years ago, stating the stigma attached to help-seeking, the general expectation of mothers to cope on their own as well as mothers' high tolerance of conflict in order to preserve the family unit.

"... Young Polish mothers remind me of Irish mothers maybe 50 years ago; in the sense that there is such stigma attached to asking for help; that they should be able to do this by themselves; that they are very strong ... They can have a higher, high tolerance, because of the importance of keeping the family together" (Anita).

Being aware that it is unlikely for Polish mothers to access support but also considering the problems mothers encounter with regards to childcare, Steven described how his service has adopted an informal approach in the form of a parent and toddler group with integrated information provision to engage with Polish mothers.

“Parenting support which we know the Polish mother’s situation ... We are trying to bring in another parenting support group with needs very much with Polish parents in mind; because it means they can have the children with them and it’s more like a parent and toddler group; but there is information there, they might need. So instead of saying ‘Come to a parenting support class’, which to them is taboo, it’s ... ‘Come we have a cup of tea; bring your child with you; and by the way, this is here in the background’” (Steven).

Following findings on informal support seeking, the next point raised concerned parents accessing formal supports. The likelihood of a Polish parent accessing formal support seems to derive from the recommendation by a friend who had previously used a specific service. From a support provider point of view, Anita, for example, explained that many Polish women she worked with had friends accessing her service previously and referred women to her.

“It’s often I find with Polish women ... It’s often a friend that’s used the service ... Quite a few Polish women that I have worked with over the years have definitely said to me ‘Oh, a friend of mine used your service and recommended, I speak to you’, you know” (Anita).

Having previously discussed the value of health and related assumptions of how to preserve it, most parent participants reported accessing health care. Hania, for example, described GP visits as means to deal with personal struggle or her daughter’s health.

“I go to GP ... When I struggle with something ... I go to GP ... She might have her health problems ... but again, I’m going to GP” (Hania).

Some parents recounted their experiences of the Irish health care services. Encounters were described as both positive and negative. By making comparison to Polish standards, Barbara, for instance, recalled childbirth in Ireland as a positive experience due to the staff's friendly manner.

"I have very good experience with my deliveries in Ireland. Very, very nice people, midwives ... When I compare ... in Poland, it is much more official. Not really friendly. It's professional, it's very professional, but it's uhh, yeah. Here, it's very friendly. Very important yeah. So, I found well, yeah" (Barbara).

In contrast, Aurelia described being unhappy with the lack of interest shown by the public health nurse when she raised concerns about her daughter's development.

"When she had the 2-year-old health check-up, she was no help ... and to be honest, the health check-up looked like she was not interested with the child. She didn't even listen, like my concerns" (Aurelia).

Under the umbrella term 'Formal Supports', a minority of participants, who parent children with special needs, also revealed their involvement with targeted services. Describing specialist services as well as the liaison of schools and social work, parents reported their encounters to be positive. Participant 1, for instance, spoke about support provision through CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services), continued contact with her son's previous school as well as his close bond with the social worker.

"See my son, since he was ... diagnosed and during the whole process of diagnosis, he is under CAMHS. So, he gets help from them ... He has a social worker ... He was in special school and we met ... lovely staff. We are still in touch, even he is not going to that school anymore. And social worker is visiting every Thursday at home. J. has like a bond with her. So, there are people I can always call and ask" (Aurelia).

Similarly, Bartek described his son's advancement as a result of targeted support service provision.

“We have a conversation with the therapist here. You have a meeting with the officer which one looking for place for schools. Senior officer it is, and she find ... the place for G. here in the Merlin Woods ... And he is already in the 1. Class ... We see ...huge difference when he is walking to school” (Bartek).

The next point raised concerned the disappointment with public support services in Ireland, frequently leading to parents accessing private services or services in Poland. Some participants voiced frustration over the waiting times to avail of public support services. While previously stating her satisfaction with the assistance her son receives, Aurelia, for example, outlined the difficulty of initially accessing support.

“It was very hard to get them. It is very hard in this country to get diagnosis and it takes so much time, especially waste of time, because the faster you have diagnosis the better the chances. Here it’s horrible situation. But when you are finally there, then you have support. But to get there, that is hard” (Aurelia).

Comparably, Barbara described the public health services to be friendly and supportive but lacking effective planning and time management.

“We went to the HSE, to the public. They said you need to wait one year. The public system, everybody is so nice, so kind and so supportive, but waiting list, yeah” (Barbara).

Frustration over being put on a waiting list was also expressed by Bartek, when he described his son’s recent struggle to schedule appointments with both occupational as well as speech and language therapists.

To combat waiting times, a minority of parents reported their involvement with private health care providers as exemplified by Aurelia’s narrative. Having previously accessed private psychological support for her daughter, she believed access of private support services was easier and described already being on the lookout for private support to help with her daughter’s sensory processing issues.

"I was looking myself, especially like with my daughter. After we got separated and I could see that she is not coping well, and she needs some help and support ... But when I was looking, it was easier to find it privately. So, I took her to some psychologist appointments, but it was privately ... Or now, I actually have a problem with her because I think she has some sensory processing issues. I was speaking with her teachers in preschool and I can see some things myself. And I'm already looking for someone privately" (Aurelia).

Some parent participants spoke about accessing healthcare in Poland to tackle the problem of not receiving support in Ireland in a timely manner. Barbara, for instance, compared and described healthcare in Poland as more effective.

"Yeah, the difference ...in Poland. If your child is sick, you can find doctor on call every moment. You can find pharmacy during the middle of the night ... I was surprised at the beginning, when we were looking for support. It's hard to find help, when you really, yeah. So, it was something. Many people just go to Poland for the medical things ... We go to Poland and yeah, I just call and few days later, we were in Poland and straight to the dentist and everything was done" (Barbara).

Another issue raised by participants was the apparent lack of knowledge regarding the definition of parenting support. When asked to define parenting support, only four parent participants responded and none of those who did respond were able to provide a definition. Barbara, for instance, listed several services that she believes help children, but concluded by highlighting that parents are the problem and the ones in need of support, as children are impacted by parental issues.

"Yes, there is Tusla ... and in the Family Resource Centre, you can find some information. You have Rainbow for kids, who lose their parents; or parents are divorced. You can find support in the HSE as well. You can find many different groups that support kids yeah. In the family system, children need support. But the main issue is with parents. And if you support parents, children change straight, coz children pick up issues" (Barbara).

Other parents, who tried to define parenting support, were unsure of the meaning and tended to associate it with correction of parental behaviour.

Bartek, for example, mentioned a professional stepping in to help families with domestic problems.

"Probably ... there is some person who was training for help the family. If they have a problem at home. It's like I do not agree or something ... or that I fighting every day or something. Maybe not the fighting but the. I think like that so" (Bartek).

Similarly, Aleksander initially talked about parenting support provider's knowledge of how to deal with parents in trouble. He then went on to suggest how parenting support, by provision of family activities, could be interpreted in a positive way.

"In a positive way, I think it's ... like creating more opportunities ... for activities. Maybe for kids and for families. Somehow. I cannot name what exactly, what it is but ... around physical activity or maybe around other things that could be done" (Aleksander).

Only two parents offered an opinion when asked if they found parenting support provision useful. Petr, for instance, described welcoming the idea by providing an example of what he considers 'bad parenting'

"Of course, it's very good thing. ... I see sometimes parents ... I don't know, they have 1 kid. They are pregnant and then drinking Redbull and smoking cigarette or whatever. They don't care about kids too much. Even, you can see in the shop ... they shout for the kids. Kids have nothing to say actually" (Petr).

Likewise, Estera was a proponent of parenting support provision; however, when speaking about a more formal approach through parenting programmes, she raised the concern that these may potentially be too 'invasive' for Polish parents.

"I think it's a very good thing ... I think, it's needed, if people were more open. That would be beneficial for the parents and for the kids. Generally. But I think ... it might be something invasive. Somebody might propose them all 'Would you like to go enter to the programme', parenting support. Something like that. And they might feel 'Get out of my place', you know. 'I'm just minding my own business' ... and I think, maybe Polish people might have a little bit of that" (Estera).

The last point raised in terms of Help- seeking concerned support provision through the Polish language.

All parent participants emphasised Polish people's tendency to seek support from Polish language users. This is not only the case for help-seeking in matters of finance, information and health, but also in matters of the family. Krysia, for instance, gave two instances to illustrate that, despite the availability of adequate Irish support services, members from the Polish community continue to look for equivalent Polish services when seeking help, i.e. services through the medium of Polish and delivered by the Polish community.

"There is few children ... They do have problems at home ... We were talking with our principal and ... were trying to find help and ... she suggested ...to just phone the guards and send them to Foroige, because it's a good organisation. And they were like 'Yeah, let's maybe ... try to find Polish organisation' ...

Another friend of mine has ... experienced problem with her husband and she speaks English, so I don't really ... I know working with the therapist ... is more challenging ... She ... prefer ... somebody that has to be Polish" (Krysia).

Additionally, Petr pointed out that it was easy for Polish people to access support if found necessary.

"If (Polish) people need help, they will find it ... If you really need help and you know that you need it, you will move everything to find it. I think for people, who want to get help, it's nothing. Few phone calls and you have it" (Petr).

An understanding for the preference for Polish speaking support was also offered by a support provider, who was unsure yet assumed that Polish people need support. She believed that Polish parents ought to speak up about their parental needs in order to receive appropriate support.

"I think it would need to come from them and if they, if the need is there. But I do feel that the need should be there because there are major struggles, and perhaps would they feel more comfortable going in and speaking to a Polish" (Ciara).

5.4.4 Summary of Findings on Family

With regard to the first research question, findings suggested a parental belief in the significance of family through features of caregiving, bonding and remaining connected. Family matters were regarded as private and attempts were made to resolve issues within the family unit. Emphasis was placed on the transmission of values such as independence and respect as well as a continuation of Christian traditions within the home. Findings suggested the use of discipline strategies in order to instil values and enforce rules with most parents using conversation and the removal of electronic toys as approaches to achieve expected behaviour. There were no specific expectations placed on children with parents instead expressing the need to provide opportunities for them. Affection, spending time as well as teaching their children were all emphasised as enjoyable features of parenting.

Findings relating to the second research question showed concerns about time management, i.e. the balance between work and family time and the struggle to find time for oneself. In addition, parental issues relating to gender and generational differences in childrearing styles were identified. Findings suggested parental struggles with children's challenging behaviours but also the perception of parenting being a learning process. The importance of extended family in parenting support was repeatedly emphasised with a small number of parents having access to this type of help, but the majority being reliant on friends and neighbours. Last, barriers to the establishment of support networks as well as feelings of isolation experienced by mothers and extended family members were highlighted.

Regarding the research question on Help-seeking, findings revealed that parents initially seek support from their partner, then extended family where available, and in many cases from friends but also neighbours. Findings suggested an awareness among service providers of Polish parents' preference for informal support and thus attempts to adjust their service accordingly. Referrals by friends were identified as the most likely avenue for parental engagement with formal services. Findings suggested Polish parents accessing health care and in the case of children's special needs,

involvement with targeted services. The study also found parental frustration over the waiting times to avail of support services. Parents frequently engaged with private health care providers to combat waiting times or alternatively accessed healthcare in Poland. In terms of defining parenting support, findings suggested this to pose a difficulty for parents. Only a minority voiced their opinion on the usefulness of parenting support provision and there was an overall emphasis on Polish people's tendency to seek support from Polish language users.

5.5 Schooling

In this section, findings in relation to Schooling are presented. The umbrella term Schooling was used to describe education that children receive in an institution designed to provide learning spaces and learning environments under the direction of teachers. This section explores participants' attitudes and experiences of Schooling, discussing both the Irish as well as the Polish education system at primary level, in relation to our three research questions.

5.5.1 Schooling and Parenting: Cultural Norms relating to Schooling

This section presents findings on cultural norms shaping how parents perceive their role as parents. The first issue concerns the part education plays in the transmission of culture and how this transmission shapes Polish parents' role as parents. Many parents expressed the view that the Irish as well as the Polish education system are transmitters of values and traditions. Although the primary transmission of culture occurs in the home, as previously explored in the section on Family, accounts described the role of the school environment in the communication of values and customs as exemplified by Aurelia.

"See, with kids being in the school, they are learning Irish way of traditions" (Aurelia).

Likewise, Hania reported that respect for culture and history are transmitted through education in school.

"... I think ... this is in schools as well. So, kids ... learn a lot of culture sides ... and the culture sides have that respectful for. Yeah, respectful for other people and history" (Hania).

While Polish parents appear to adapt to their children's exposure to Irish customs through a compulsory education system, in the majority of cases participants tried to preserve Polish traditions through their children's enrolment at the Polish School.

Estera, for instance, speaks about the need for adjustment to the Irish education system as a result of living and raising children in Ireland.

"I think, many Polish people ... adjusted ... because it is a school system also. So, people follow that ... It's just the nature of ... people ... living here and raising their children here ... There are some things that ... you need to adopt, you know" (Estera).

However, the desire to conserve Polish customs and patriarchal elements by means of bringing children into contact with Polish education was communicated by Celina.

"But I would like her to go (Polish school), because they learn a lot of things ... traditional and patriarchies. Things like that" (Celina).

The next issue raised by participants concerned school norms. Many parent participants drew a comparison between Irish and Polish school norms and standards, and in particular, the school enrolment policy in Ireland, which sees children enter the education system at a young age. Furthermore, some participants indicated disappointment with regard to the local school's lack of facility provision, lack of free extracurricular opportunities and the general high cost of schooling in Ireland.

Concerning early school enrolment, Celina, for example, explained that parents voiced concerns when the enrolment policy in Poland changed to admit children at a younger age. By narrating that her neighbour's daughter could start formal education, but will remain at home for another year, she highlighted that many Polish parents tend to keep their children away from the school environment as long as possible.

"There was a big deal in Poland because they changed that 5. And now they are going back to 6 again. So, parents were not happy, sending kids, when they were too young. They are prepared to keep them home for as long. My neighbour, she could send her daughter now to school, but she prefers to keep her another year in preschool" (Celina).

Regarding the expression of disappointment that relate to the local school's lack of facility provision, Aleksander, for instance, described his childhood experience of having unlimited access to school amenities throughout the year. Reporting that schools in Poland were public facilities that could be used by everyone at any time, he expressed the wish for children in Ireland to have this type of access. However, he indicated an understanding of Irish regulations.

"... I remember as kids, we ... often ... played sports in school after school ... That would be natural thing to do ... I know where they do now the summer camp, ok. I understand to pay, because there are people for it. But again, I remember as kids, we had access to school during summer. It was just open, because it was considered public facility ... Kids could play... inside. They could play soccer, basketball, whatever they wanted ... I know, and again, I understand the reality. There has to be insurance. There has to be all those things, but at the same time, it's great to have that, I think ... Maybe open school in that sense or provide more things, where kids can do something after" (Aleksander).

In respect of conveying dissatisfaction with the lack of free extracurricular opportunities, Hania, for example, found it difficult to advance her daughter's musical skills. Indicating that in Poland, she would send her daughter for music lessons as they are free of charge, the financial aspects of accessing extracurricular activities in Ireland were considered as barrier to providing opportunities.

"... She probably would go to musical school and learn whatever instrument she would like to because ... she has that ability and voice. ... She is very good with that ... Here, there is not really that possibility. And if it is, you have to pay a lot of money. (In Poland), it's not that expensive because they have schools ... So, it's free. You pay for instruments, but not for teaching. Here ... playing on guitar is very expensive, piano is ridiculous ... It's a lot of money that you have to put into that" (Hania).

With reference to communicating discontent of the general high cost of schooling in Ireland, Celina was, like many Polish parents, inclined to compare Irish schooling with the free provision of services by the Polish education system. Speaking about repeatedly having to pay for Irish schooling, she conveyed that free resources would be helpful.

"... What's different and people (are) saying (it, is) that 'Oh, now, in Poland we have this for free' ... The afterschool is for free in Poland ... so you can keep your child in school ... till 3 o'clock at least. And they do the homework with ... people ... working in school ... Sometimes things like that are different and difficult. ... You have to money, money, money into everything ... (and it) could be helpful, having something from school ... for free. Here you have to pay for nearly everything in school now" (Celina).

The last issue raised related to the appreciation of the Irish school climate and mode of instruction. Some parents spoke about the quality and good character of school life and instructional strategies in Ireland. As a result of their own negative experiences of education in Poland, a minority of parents suggested Irish schooling to be a determining factor in their migration decision making process. Aleksander, for instance, believed that the local school's positive atmosphere had an impact on his family's decision to remain in Ireland. Moreover, he indicated that other Polish parents potentially feel the same in terms of the school's climate being a determinative factor when considering a return to Poland.

"For us ... (we) always had (the) plan to go back. We came over for three years ... For us, what kept us was school because actually it was very good. Almost too good in a way. I would say, probably lots of Polish parents would have that kind of attitude ... And being honest, I think, in many ways because the school is good, it's ... a positive atmosphere" (Aleksander).

Additionally, he explained that Irish schools were advanced in terms of children's voluntary engagement. He spoke about his children being fearless and that they think of school in a positive way due to families being treated well by teachers. He went on to reveal that his children's attitude contrasts

with his own upbringing where school was regarded as an authority and carried a negative connotation.

"They think about school in a very positive way. So ... they do not have ... a negative context for school. They want to go there, and they are willing to spend time there, to do whatever they want ... They don't have this kind of fear ... to the building. Actually, the opposite way. So, I think ... school has a huge potential in that way ... I think ... it can be how we were probably brought up, if you think about it ... If there is any kind of authority. School is school. There can be people who have (this), kind of, you know ... When I came to Ireland, I was shocked how parents and kids are treated ... They are treated well" (Aleksander).

One father reported Polish schooling to be perceived as superior to the Irish education system's Junior Infant level, when he described other parents' opinions. However, he lacked the ability to compare on a personal level due to his son's disability.

"... There is a differen (ce) between the Polish school and English. I don't know, maybe. I heard from the restaurant. The parents ... there is a ... in Poland. Is a ... higher level of knowledge ... in the youngest classes. That's what I heard but we can't say nothing because he is in special class" (Bartek).

In a number of cases parent participants critiqued the education system in Poland by explaining that it causes stress for children and bad memories from themselves. Bogdana's narrative illustrates children's experience of stress, when she revealed that Polish schools are stricter and have the primary purpose of curriculum instruction.

"Schools are stricter in Poland. In Ireland, children have less homework. Kids need to read books and are stressed all the time in Poland. A programme needs to be taught and that's it" (Bogdana).

Narratives that associated Polish education with bad memories were provided by Aurelia and Aleksander. Both accounts portrayed a negative experience of Polish schooling and highlighted what they believe to be the benefits of an Irish approach to imparting knowledge.

Remembering her own stressful experience of education in Poland, Participant 1, for instance, described the playful Irish approach to teaching by use of play and observation. Moreover, she suggested that the Irish way of education enabled her disabled son to gain the skill of reading.

"Here, it's more like ... learning through fun way. They have ... loads of toys, treats and stories and they are observing everything. And that's how they learn. Even ... learning how to read here. Even for my son, he didn't realise, he's learning how to read, and he did it. And I remember myself in Poland, it was just stress experience. Stressing, stressing, stressing" (Aurelia).

Similarly, Aleksander described having had an adverse experience with the Polish education system and is now trying to spare his children from what he described as 'being just a number' in the system. He went on to convey his amazement at how, by simply attending school, his son acquires knowledge despite limited or no homework.

"... I have this memory in Polish education ... You were a number at some point ... There were certain variations but ... the ... education system in Poland had certain goals and here you go. I think we all had dramatic experience (in schools in Poland), I suppose ... Here ... we ... see something different and ... think: 'Ok, maybe ... we should spare our kids from'. One thing I notice, our son. Let's say, they have some homework but ... he wouldn't have much homework ... or none. But he would ... learn, just by being in school, which I found was amazing ... He didn't have to do anything ... but he was still getting knowledge" (Aleksander).

Appreciation of the Irish approach to teaching was also expressed by Hania, when she described her daughter's delight in a teacher of the Polish school Galway adopting local teacher's methods of instruction.

"Oh ... she has a good teacher. That's why she loves it, you know ... She (Polish teacher) kind of follows rules the same as in this school because she has ... kids in the school. So, she knows how they teach ... She (my daughter) doesn't see ... such a difference ... She is very good teacher, I have to say ... And she (daughter) picked up so much" (Hania).

5.5.2 Schooling and Parenting Experiences: Parental Challenges arising through Schooling

The first issue raised related to concerns over school enrolment and English language ability. In a minority of cases parents described being in the process of determining whether to enrol their children at school. They revealed children's English language ability to be a crucial factor in the decision. Aurelia, for instance, explained that perceiving her daughter's impeded speech development to arise from bilingualism, she is more likely to delay her taking up formal schooling until the child feels more comfortable.

"... She is supposed to start school in September ... I actually think I send her to preschool one more year. I'm in the process of deciding. I was waiting for her to develop speech before I send her, so now ... she is finally verbal. She just started actually a few months ago ... It took her like long time, because of two languages ... They need more time, especially when they are bilingual ... And I want her to feel comfortable before she starts school"
(Aurelia).

The issue of English language proficiency was also raised by parents with children of preschool age. Basia, for example, described that due to English language potentially eliciting stress from her daughter, she is already fearful of her child's prospective admission to school.

"L. go this year to crèche; but another year is the school. And still, we are afraid about English; will be so stress for her"
(Basia).

Another issue raised by participants related to children's maturity level when contemplating the transition from the home to learning environments outside family boundaries. Petr, for instance, spoke about deferring his daughter's entry to preschool. Craving attention due to changes in the home environment, he feels that she is not ready to engage.

"... Because (there) was too many new things. New baby. And she might be feeling a little bit undecided, when we send her to the preschool. So, we decided to leave her at home. I think we did a really good choice because she crying sometimes. She wants to be hugged as well ... She needs more attention and ... she still prefers Mummy" (Petr).

A few participants who had already experienced some of their children's transition to primary school by the age of 5, revealed that the adjustment had been smooth. Further, their initial English language fear was unfounded. Celina, for example, described that as a result of crèche attendance from a young age, her daughter had been exposed to the English language as well as outsiders quite early and experienced no problems in adapting.

"... She started in September, nearly 5. She had English because she was in crèche since she was 2. I think that was the perfect time. She was well able, because she had got the crèche and that was easy transfer ... It's not big, no different. Just a place, more kids, different kids. She was happy to go" (Celina).

Similarly, Hania talked about her daughter's school readiness at the age of 4 and half, adding that she had no concerns over her child's attendance due to the fun nature of instruction in the first two years of primary school.

"She was 4. Yeah, 4 and a half, yeah. She was ready, yeah, she was ready, absolutely ... I didn't worry it ... It's not ... the first two years of school, it's just only having fun and just ... it's like, it's nothing, you know..." (Hania).

A further issue identified related to perceived dysfunctional relationships with the Polish school. As previously explored, parents believe schools to be transmitters of values and traditions and enrol children at the Polish School in order to preserve their Polish heritage. Children's attendance serves the purpose of strengthening Polish language and culture; however, many parents talked of children's experiences of exclusion, discomfort, or lack of belonging as well as children's reluctance to attend the Polish school as they get older. In addition, concerns were raised in a minority of cases over the engagement with the Polish school not being sufficient to uphold Polish culture.

With regards to children's experience of exclusion, Bartek and Gloria who parent a child with autism, expressed disappointment with the Polish school's exclusion of special needs students. They believe that the school would be able to accommodate them if the staff were willing. Bartek described that their son was denied a place in the Polish school despite his full participation at their local school.

"... G. now at school. He is working to the normal class. In the class, what is like 20 kids, like in Polish school or group. But when we asking about it, it was 2 years ago, yeah, so we heard 'Sorry, but we can't'" (Bartek).

Gloria went on to explain that having spoken to the school's principal, their son was denied attendance due to the Polish school's apparent lack of resources for children with special needs.

"Yeah, I hope(d). I tr(ied). I rang ... Polish school but they say, because he have autism, they don't have the person, who can spend all the time ... I'm sure, if they really want, they can ... I spoke with principal" (Gloria).

In terms of feeling discomfort during engagement with the Polish school, Celina described her daughter's dislike due to experiencing rejection from fellow pupils who had been enrolled before her. Further, Celina revealed that her daughter displayed signs of upset on days prior to Polish school attendance, which lead to their decision to stop engagement for the time being.

"She started, and she didn't really like it ... She didn't get well with the ... other kids because they know each other from before. She started last year only and she ... couldn't ... She felt that they didn't like her something ... She cried on Friday before she goes, (and) I said 'Ok, we leave it'. There is no point. Maybe after another year or two ... I don't know. I don't wanna push her into it" (Celina).

With reference to experiencing a lack of belonging, Estera explained that her son doesn't want to engage with the Polish school due to his mixed heritage.

"No, because he doesn't want to. I think because my child is mixed; his father is not Polish, so it might be still different, you know" (Estera).

In relation to children's reluctance to Polish school attendance as they get older, Aleksander reported his son's frequent opposition as a result of not wanting to sacrifice his free time.

"... Saturdays is struggle; every single Saturday now, yes ... N. is ... is younger, so she isn't opposing as often. But our son is very much aware that 'this is my time and why am I doing this'" (Aleksander).

Regarding the concern over Polish school engagement not being sufficient to uphold Polish culture, Hania indicated that Polish children living in Ireland will not remember history and traditions as a lived experience due to their physical absence from Poland and despite their exposure to the Polish curriculum and teaching methods utilised in Poland.

"It's different ... They teach the same thing, the same way. But I don't know, will she ever remember that the same ... as kids in Poland. See she doesn't follow that because we are not in Poland ... I know kids in Poland, and they have days off. Or the teachers are teaching definitely ... about the days ... They make sure they know all this, traditional days in Poland, history, tradition" (Hania).

The next issue raised concerned children's exposure to peer pressure and what was perceived as related difficulty in the preservation of culture. In a minority of cases participants spoke about peer influence on their children, exemplified by Aleksander who stated that children's actions are determined by their group membership.

"It's part of being a group, or certain friend or most people, yeah ... They want to do it because everyone else does it" (Aleksander).

In addition, culturally diverse peer influence was said to impact on parents' efforts to preserve families' heritage. Having previously spoken about the dilemma of getting his son to attend the Polish school, Aleksander, for

instance, illustrated that encouraging Polish school attendance could be regarded as a punitive action due to his son drawing a comparison to cross-cultural peers.

" (Son says) ' When I look at other nationalities, they don't have to. Maybe some other Polish kids don't have to'. So ... he can see it almost like a punishment of some sort. He is very good at it, but he doesn't like it anymore" (Aleksander).

The last issue identified related to potential sources that create feelings of exclusion experienced by the culturally diverse, non-Polish student and parent body of the local school. The first potential source was the school's Catholic ethos and it is assumed that children of different faith felt excluded. As previously explored, parents adjust to the Irish school system which includes the adoption of the school's ethos. While the local school is culturally diverse in nature, some participants described its Catholic ethos to reflect Polish faith and to accommodate the school's pupils, most of whom have a Polish background. However, in a minority of cases parents were aware that pupils from different faith communities are likely to experience exclusion. The issue of exclusion was described by Barbara. While much in favour of the school's involvement in religious activities, she explained the potential rejection of children whose religion differ.

"I really like that, for example, the First Communion, ... how all schools support everything ... School is so engaged ... So, it's kind of celebration for all. But from the other side, probably some children can feel rejected, if they are not Catholic. So, positives and negatives" (Barbara).

The other potential source creating feelings of exclusion was the use of diverse languages on school grounds and was highlighted by a support service provider. Siobhan, for instance, described how parents from culturally diverse backgrounds have reported feeling isolated. This was as a result of some parents remaining within their own linguistic boundaries thus excluding others in their communications. 'Leaving people out' was said to make integration a challenging task.

"We have other parents ... saying 'I'm feeling really isolated. I stand at the door every morning and nobody says Hello to my child. They are all talking Polish. They are all talking Russian'. Several groups that they are standing beside. And we've had families from India, Pakistan, Ireland that have said 'You know, I just think ... it's rude; it leaves people out'. Like that's a challenge" (Siobhan).

5.5.3 Schooling and Help-seeking

I conclude my section on Schooling with findings that related to my third research question on Help-seeking.

With regards to Schooling and Help seeking, parent but also service provider accounts are limited. None of the parent participants reported seeking informal support. However, dealing with the majority of Polish parents in the neighbourhood, one support service provider described many parents having built a relationship with and utilising school staff as their first port of call when seeking basic information or advice on where and how to seek more targeted supports.

"They come to us and ask about ... dentists; and they are having trouble with ... if there is a relationship problem, break-down and where to go for supports. So, you know, we would have, yeah, yeah, and it is good to know that we have a relationship build up with parents that sometimes we are the first port of call, when they need something, you know" (Siobhan).

In a minority of cases parents revealed engagement with formal support services, which had already been explored in the data on Family and Help seeking. Parents described receiving help for their children with special needs in order to gain entry to educational institutions as well as ensure continuous progression.

"... Senior officer it is and she (found) ... the place for G. here in the Merlin Woods ..." (Bartek).

"See my son, since he was ... diagnosed and during the whole process of diagnosis, he is under CAHMS. So, he gets help from them ... He has a social worker ... And social worker is visiting every Thursday at home. J. has like a bond with her. So, there are people I can always call and ask" (Aurelia).

In contrast, a service provider shed light on Polish parents' potential barrier to formal support access. Siobhan described that it is difficult to keep up Polish parents' engagement with formal support services relating to schooling due to their lack of trust but also parents' disbelief in the judgment of Irish professionals.

"Sometimes with the formal supports, like ... speech and language therapy ... They might engage, but then not turn up for appointments ... It might be very difficult with that level of trust ... Different cases we had ... The parents would say to the speech and language therapist 'Oh, but ... she is fine in Polish' and that's not the case, you know. The child is not like. They are not actually willing to kind of engage and see the professional judgement" (Siobhan).

Again, parents referred to here differ from the parent participants of this study.

5.5.4 Summary of Findings on Schooling

In regard to the first research question, findings revealed that many parents believe the Irish as well as the Polish education system to be transmitters of values and traditions. While adapting to their children's exposure to Irish customs, the majority of parents enrolled their children at the Polish school to preserve Polish culture. By comparison to Polish school norms, findings suggested dissatisfaction with Irish schooling i.e. early school enrolment, lack of facilities and free extracurricular service provision as well as the general high cost of education. However, despite discontentment, positives of Irish education such as the high quality of schools' climate were highlighted. Findings showed a critique of the education system in Poland due to eliciting stress for children and bad memories from parents, and the benefits and an appreciation for Irish education due to the utilisation of a playful approach to instruction.

Findings relating to the second research question showed in the first instance concerns about children's English language proficiency not being sufficient for their transition into the school environment. It was found that in order to preserve their heritage, children were also enrolled at the Polish school. Findings however suggested experiences of exclusion, discomfort and lack of belonging as well as resistance from children to engage with the Polish school as they got older. Additionally, attendance at the Polish school was described as not being enough for the continuation of Polish history and traditions. The study identified the impact of peer influence on parental efforts to preserve Polish culture. At the same time, findings suggested that parents acknowledged feelings of exclusion experienced by the culturally diverse, non-Polish student and parent body of the local primary school as a result of the school's Catholic ethos as well as the diversity of languages used on school grounds.

And finally, with regards to Help seeking, findings revealed that no informal support was accessed; however, parents were found to utilise school staff as first port of call when seeking information or advice. Findings suggested the use of formal services in relation to children's special needs as aid in gaining entry to educational institutions as well as ensuring continuous progression. Last, the difficulty of keeping up parents' engagement with formal support services relating to schooling was identified with findings suggesting their lack of trust and disbelief in the judgement of Irish professionals to be responsible.

5.6 Work

In this last section, findings on Work are presented. Work was an umbrella term used to describe paid labour and unpaid domestic labour. This section explores participants' attitudes and experiences of Work in relation to my three research questions.

5.6.1 Parenting and Work: Gender Expectations in the Balance of Work and Home, Work Ethic and Financial Security

I begin with the findings on Work that relate to my first research question, namely the cultural norms shaping how parents perceive their role as parents. The first issue concerns mothers' and fathers' involvement in paid employment to financially support their families but also the related assumptions about the time both parents may or should spend at work rather than in directly providing care to their children.

When talking about their own childhoods, some parents recalled the importance of persistent paid labour as a cultural norm relating to parenting, in order to financially provide for the family. Further, they described families' concern to keep a 'clean', respectable and functioning home. In order to lighten their own parents' burden, and in particular their mothers', who were commonly employed as well as responsible for the home, parent participants spoke about frequently having taken up household responsibilities from a young age as well as the care for younger siblings. Lack of quality time with family and the feeling of having lost out on one's childhood were common narratives, best illustrated by Krysia.

"My childhood suffered through that ... I had to be responsible very quickly, because of the younger brothers ... I just lost something that like. My Mum was working always, she had her own business. My Dad was always working, so obviously my sister and myself were the oldest ones. So, had to (help with household chores)" (Krysia).

Although expressing that her childhood suffered as a result of her parents' work commitments, she described herself as a workaholic with two jobs and

went on to acknowledge that financial gain requires people to engage in persistent labour.

"You know, I obviously think that there is plenty of work involved. Polish people have to make their money, so they work a lot" (Krysia).

A further issue raised concerned Polish people's work ethic, and the importance such a commitment has in shaping their role as parents. Some parents spoke about the importance of maintaining a good reputation regarding work ethic and contrast that with what they perceive as unjustified welfare dependency.

"Not all Polish people who are nice. So many people are trying to use Irish ... laws or social welfare. It's a shame for us. It puts us in the wrong light. It's not right, shouldn't be like that" (Daria).

Krysia pointed out the financial struggle experienced by the majority of Polish migrants prior to leaving Poland which frequently leads to reliance on state supports in Ireland. Using the example of stay-at-home mums who she believed are capable of paid employment but choose to live off benefits, the negative impact of Polish welfare dependency on the good reputation of a Polish work ethic was indicated.

The importance for parents to uphold a good reputation regarding their work ethic was also recognised by support service providers. Exemplified here by a Grace from the support service provider focus group, many spoke about Polish parents 'working hard'.

"They tend to work a lot as well ... They would value their work a lot" (Grace).

Another point raised by participants related to Polish people's aspiration for upward social mobility and how this effort shapes their role as parents. The majority of parents told stories about money, better employment opportunities as well as improving lifestyles being key motivators for

migration to Ireland. This was particularly well explained by Petr who runs his own business in Galway and described the lack of similar opportunities in Poland.

"Here I, I'm going very well with my business ... In Poland, probably I won't be able to live with my business ... In Poland, you have no choice; especially (in) our cities. It's quiet, it's not a Warsaw, not a Krakow, not bigger cities ... In Warsaw, where there is 2 Million people, you can. You have lots of opportunities ..." (Petr).

Above mentioned key motivators for Polish migration to Ireland were also identified by many support service providers. While in many cases participants emphasised money to be the primary reason for migrating, Steven spoke about Polish parents' aspiration to 'better themselves'.

"They are here to make a living, to better themselves and it's that, that's an ethos that they come with" (Steven).

In order to achieve maximum financial gain, some parents described that particularly workers without children frequently seized opportunities for overtime. This was anticipated as they did not need to concern themselves with childcare provision or family time. However, a small number of parents also reported parents of young children seeking such opportunities.

Referring to childless workers, Celina had the following to say about Polish migrants at her workplace.

"... Most the people came in, just to earn the money. That's why they want to have as much as they can actually earn. Especially, they don't have kids and they can work, and they don't mind having overtime" (Celina).

With reference to parents of children seeking opportunities for overtime, Daria stated the difficulty she experienced in terms of her partner engaging in overtime. This may stem from an assumption that Polish people, in their role as parents, should balance their time between work commitments and family.

"He is really hard-working person and he is like addicted from work, so hard to keep him at home" (Daria).

A further issue raised concerned the poor financial situation and the difficulty of upward social mobility in Poland despite a strong Polish work ethic. This issue alongside the lack of public welfare security in Poland potentially shaped how Polish people perceive their role as parents, namely giving priority to striving for financial security and being in a position to financially provide for their families.

A couple of parent participants elaborated on their previous financial situation in Poland, referring to it variously as 'hard', a 'bad situation' and a 'struggle'. Daria, for example, explained that she has no intentions of returning to the 'hard life' in Poland as despite her ability to save money, salaries in Poland are not sufficient to improve one's lifestyle. She described the financial situation in Poland by referring to her friend's financial struggle despite educational qualifications.

"... My friend she was here in Ireland 10 years ago ... and she came back to Poland. She finished school there and she was working in pharmacy and she came back again here. After 8 years, she couldn't collect (i.e. save) any money, working in pharmacy. Good education yeah, very responsible job and..." (Daria).

Hania revealed that her financial struggle and inability to establish financial security in Poland led to her unhappiness as she was always concerned about meeting financial demands such as food and rent.

In addition to the already highlighted poor financial situation in Poland, Jagna, who lives with a disability and receives social welfare benefits in Ireland, described her potentially encountering issues around government support if she was to return to Poland. A lack of public welfare security in Poland would impact her ability to establish financial security as well as financially provide for her daughter.

"I'm on a disability allowance so I'm not working at the moment ... In Poland there would be more issues to get disability allowance first of all and you know probably money issues as well" (Jagna).

Another finding in this study was the striving for financial gain not only for the purpose of establishing financial security and providing for their families, but also to compete within the Polish community. This illustrated a possibly Polish characteristic of a perceived need for material goods. Employing the word 'jealousy', many participants spoke about Polish people's frequent competition in relation to material possessions. Krysia suggested that assets validate one's status.

"We tend to be very jealous of each other; our possessions especially ... Polish people have the best cars like, you know. They do, is kind of like showing off and showing your status" (Krysia).

Financial gain appeared to be linked with the desire to feel secure and although some mothers discussed their financial problems in Ireland, the majority of participants highlighted that life here is 'easier' despite the high cost of childcare and rented accommodation. This suggests that despite their migrant status and generally low income, participants' current socio-economic status was perceived better than in Poland. Two mothers illustrated having made financial investments in Ireland to achieve a sense of security. Basia, for example, mentioned the benefit of her husband leaving factory work and instead investing in his own business.

"Now is little easier because, when we are just working in the factory. Now, it's very expensive in Ireland and it's very hard, but when my husband opened like business himself, it's better for all families" (Basia).

Celina spoke about life being easier since her families' investment in property, as her mortgage rate is lower than rental costs in the neighbourhood.

"I think Ireland pushed us to buying because the renting is so expensive, and you don't wanna pay like a thousand, fourteen hundred for a house like. So, we decided to buy house and like pay a thousand for mortgage. So, it was good" (Celina).

In addition to making investments as portrayed above, Hania emphasised the importance of saving so as to be prepared for the unexpected. However, by adopting a frugal lifestyle as a result of longing for financial security, she admitted that her family could potentially miss out on lifestyle improvements.

5.6.2 Work and Parenting Experience: Financial Demands, Work and Life Imbalance, and Mothers' Need to Negotiate Employment

The first issue raised related to mothers' concerns over expenses and meeting financial demands. Below, Aurelia described her financial worry as a single mother. She wishes to return to employment but believes it to be financially unfeasible.

"I would like to go back to work myself. Just when you calculate. I actually calculated myself I would be able to pay for childcare for A. and after school for J. and the rent, but I don't know what else" (Aurelia).

Worries about the high cost of rented accommodation were expressed by a small number of parents and exemplified by Daria's narrative. She is affected by a rent increase, feels obliged to pay and does not claim any benefits.

"Rent is 1100 for this house. Yeah, the price has increased like in the last two years, gone crazy, crazy, yeah. We paid 800 but they increased one time. Like in a letter, to 1100. So, 300 Euro. We have to pay this. We don't claim benefits" (Daria).

She went on to explain that her family took in lodgers to meet the cost of the rental accommodation.

"We have also house mates. I'm not complaining about that; we are in good relations ... It would be impossible to pay on your own, no" (Daria).

While housing issues were only addressed by a small number of parents, the majority of support service providers raised concerns over housing in the neighbourhood. Problems they recounted relate to rent increases, eviction of tenants as well as parts of the neighbourhood being inappropriate environments for families. Ciara, for instance, described the negative impact of sudden rent increases on the entire community with many residents in the neighbourhood relying on welfare payments and tied to certain budgets for housing.

"Many people are not working ... They are on ... social welfare assistance ... They have to look for a house within a certain budget. I know that that was affecting ... Polish people at the time. That was last year, when they increased the rents because the rent freeze that the government brought in. So, prior to that, lots of landlords suddenly increased their rent. So that affects everyone, that affects the Polish" (Ciara).

She provided an example of the impact of rent increases by speaking about a Polish mother who sought assistance as a result of financial hardship. Further, she raised the issue of neighbourhood residents experiencing evictions.

"So, I've had a single Polish mother coming in for example, who is working in three different cleaning jobs, running around, then her rent is brought up, so we brought her to the PRETB, we tried to, you know, issue a dispute there on her behalf."

"We do have a growing number of people coming in who receiving eviction letters at the moment and that's, you know, shocking and horrifying and difficult for us to deal with because there is nothing out there. There are houses down the road in Roscam for 1600 and who can afford that?" (Ciara).

Relating to some parts of the neighbourhood being inappropriate environments for families, Pauline from the Support Service Provider focus group, for instance, reported on accommodations' unsuitability for families, lack of properties' maintenance as well as lack of family friendly facilities in the environment.

"... Sometimes, there isn't even thought put into the actual physical building. The way that it's built and laid out for families etc. And then I think, the problem is that they are not matching families with the environment or facilities in the environment. Or lack of facilities so. It's just a really bad mix ... A lot of the houses are rented, owned privately on paper. But then rented out to families and not taken care of. Yeah. Just gives a really bad message to the families living there" (Pauline).

Another finding of this study suggested the lack of family time arising from parents' involvement in paid employment and its impact on children. With some participants having previously discussed their own parents' emphasis on work with little time for family during their childhood in Poland, many expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of family time they experience now and the impact this has on their children.

Pointing out a work-life imbalance, Aleksander, for instance, described the emotional impact work induced lack of family time has on his conscience.

"I hate myself that we don't get enough time with them. Work consumes, that's problems" (Aleksander).

The emotional impact was also spoken about in Krysia's account where she illustrated the sharing of responsibilities with her partner who works nights and her missing out on activities with their daughter due to work responsibilities.

"I get her ready for school, then her Dad kind of takes over, kind of kills me sometimes because he does all the activities with her because I'm at work" (Krysia).

Similarly, Bogdana mentioned the difficulty of finding family time due to working alternating hours with her husband.

"I'm job sharing with husband, so we have little time together. It's hard to know how to spend time together" (Bogdana).

When referring to the impact that work induced lack of family time has on children, two mothers reported on the unhappiness expressed by their daughters.

"She complains a lot I work too much" (Kryzia).

"My daughter she started cry when he was leaving yesterday. She was like 'Daddy, don't go, like we wanna, I wanna be together'. My daughter was kind of distressed" (Hania).

While both examples illustrate children's reactions to the lack of family time, Daria stressed the importance of being with children and her attempts to get her partner to spend more time with their son.

"Sometimes I have to force him to like do the evening time with him to go to put him to sleep or at least that, because he's growing so fast. I'm trying to convince him to some more time for him. It is important" (Daria).

I already addressed the cultural norms related to parents' involvement in paid employment and the related assumptions about the amount of time parents may spend at work rather than in directly providing care to their children. Another common feature of Polish couples' lives is the negotiation of work arrangements so as to balance work commitments with childcare provision.

A further issue raised concerned gender division in household labour. The majority of parents were aware that women tend to engage in more domestic duties than their partners. This is particularly true for stay-at-home mums as Jagna illustrated. While emphasising that responsibilities are shared, she pointed out her partner's work commitment.

"It's sharing definitely but you know, I'm at home and my partner, he is working all day, so he is coming back around 6, 7 o'clock so it's usually bedtime for my daughter" (Jagna).

The notion of women being predominately responsible for the home however seems to be somewhat negotiable as some mothers interviewed were equally in paid employment and expected their partners to share parenting duties.

Celina, for instance, revealed that prior to her opting for weekend shifts, she was solely responsible for household chores; however, she now hopes for her husband to share these with her.

"When we worked together ... I did everything during the weekend. I had to clean the house, cook the dinner and everything. Now is (time) for him ... to do some more, to show initiative" (Celina).

Krysia explained that due to her long working hours, her husband is a big support in terms of duties around the house as well as taking care of their daughter.

"I work ... from 9 till 6. It's a very long day. So, when I come back home, we normally have our dinner and yeah, we spend some time with her, and she goes to bed. I help her with the homework, if it's not done yet, yeah. So normally her Dad does all. He participates a lot" (Krysia).

As previously mentioned, when discussing time both mothers and fathers may or should spend at work, about one third of participants engaged in shift work with their partners to avoid the need for formal childcare. This arrangement helps to maximise financial gain, establish security and combat financial constraints which are heightened by the cost of childcare. A typical example was provided by Hania, who best illustrated the 'how' and 'why' her husband and she entered into rotating shift work.

"My husband is sleeping upstairs; he had night shift. He is doing night shift now and I finished my night shift last night. Before, I was doing day shifts, which is the same thing. We have to work. There is no way other way. I have to say that it is not too bad. I'm lucky coz I don't have to hire any childcare or anything. There is no ... way that I put my child to childcare, paying 12 hours" (Hania).

Polish parent's engagement in shift work to avoid childcare was also recognised by some support service providers. In a minority of cases,

participants described being aware of parents' management of work and family life.

"I think parents are very busy. I know a lot of our parents work in factory jobs, so one person does days. Shift work; it's tag team. One on and one off; so, if one is gone to work, and someone is at home minding the children" (Siobhan).

Raising again the issue of gender, and in particular the problems experienced by Polish mothers, many parents repeatedly spoke about the women's need to negotiate between joining the workforce while spending the salary on childcare and staying at home to look after the children. By using the example of her friend's dilemma of full-time employment and cost of childcare, Daria highlighted the problem of negotiation for mothers.

"My friend, she has three kids and she sends them all to the play(school) ... Everything she is getting is paying for ... so they live off her husband's salary. That's crazy. And the children are all day in playschool" (Daria).

She went on to emphasize that on a personal level she would not be able to be away from her children all day.

"She is not seeing the kids all day. I, it's not for me. I couldn't" (Daria).

Aleksander and Emilia who are a married couple with two children explained that she works from home to meet financial demands. Illuminating that mothers want to work, they added that families always have to judge whether it is financially feasible for mothers to be employed outside the home. Negotiation is necessary as one of the two salaries is required to cover childcare costs.

"E. is working from home. We try to pay the costs ... It's almost discouraging ... the cost of the children. Mother wants to work. You always have to judge" (Aleksander).

"One parent has to be at work just to cover the after school" (Emilia).

Knowledge of Polish parents encountering problems around employment and childcare was also evident in a support service provider's narrative. Grace from the focus group, for example, spoke about the stress Polish parents experience when trying to manage work schedules and parent alone while their partner is at work. Further, informal arrangements around childcare with other families can add to families' pressures.

"They tend to juggle each other's schedules ... do shift work. So, there is only one parent, and that adds to a lot of stress to the family because they are not even seeing each other ... The family that M. is working with, they had, you know, shared the childcare with other Polish families, which ... has added to the stresses ... because they've got another child that they are trying to. And then, it's an informal arrangement that they are making. So, they are trying to help out their friends, but of course it's just not working with another child on top of their child, and they are having difficulty with the times" (Grace).

The need to negotiate caregiving and employment may be minimised by live-in relatives. This was evident in the case of a parent, Barbara, who has her mother permanently residing with her. Omitting the discussion of a caregiving and employment dilemma in her account, it is likely that the dilemma was resolved by means of familial support.

The last problem I address relates to mothers' well-being which is necessary to fulfil maternal responsibilities in employment as well as in their caregiver roles. A small number of female parent participants spoke about the impact of work on their well-being, using expressions like 'stressed', 'always tired' and 'using all your energy'. Hania reported on the negative impact of shift work on her thyroid condition which leads to her feeling depressed and anxious.

"My thyroid. I tend to be depressed and I get anxious, so I'm on pills ... See my shift work, it's not very good for my thyroid. I'm struggle" (Hania).

Issues around health were also recognised by a support service provider. Ciara described that low income may affect Polish community members' health.

"I suppose others would be I think health issues would affect the Polish community like anyone else, you know, if you are on low income" (Ciara).

5.6.3 Work and Help-Seeking: Informal Monetary Support, the Question of Welfare Entitlements and Polish Speaking Support

I conclude my findings on Work with issues that relate to my third research question on Help-seeking.

Only a few participants shared their experiences of help seeking in relation to the theme of Work, referring to both informal and formal support access.

The first point raised on Help- seeking related to monetary support. Two mothers suggested that monetary support is an informal affair and that Polish parents both provide as well as receive support.

In terms of providing support, Krysia explained that many Polish people are likely to financially support their families in Poland, although previously stating that the majority of Polish migrants experienced financial struggle prior to leaving Poland and oftentimes rely on state supports in Ireland.

"They do sometimes two shifts ... Two ... jobs and trying to ... supporting ... family in Poland as well and stuff like that" (Krysia).

In relation to receiving support, Celina described the advantage of having her mother reside with her as she provides financial assistance by engaging in two casual part-time jobs.

"My Mum is a big help. She is here fulltime. She works in XXX on Saturday ... She sometimes goes for a few hours to mind other kids. It ... suits her. Money. Extra money. Yes, I can't really complain. I'm really lucky ..." (Celina).

A further point raised by participants on Help-seeking related to public welfare support. Having previously illustrated what some parents perceive as unjustified welfare dependency as well as the importance of maintaining a

good reputation regarding work ethic, opinions on seeking formal financial support diverged as illustrated below and appear to depend on the participant's own beliefs about entitlements to support.

Being unable to engage in paid employment due to her disability, Jagna, for instance, described feeling free and secure as a result of receiving formal financial support, which allows her to spend more time on providing care to her daughter.

"I'm on a disability allowance, so I'm not working at the moment. I'm free to do more ... with my daughter ... I am secure so I'm really happy" (Jagna).

Daria on the other hand expressed reluctance in terms of seeking formal assistance as she feels uncomfortable asking for support and unable to discuss financial matters with strangers.

"I don't think so. No, no, no, I wouldn't be able to ask ... strange people. If I go to any ... places like social ... I feel like they look at me like they don't want to take out the money ... I don't want to (say) 'Give me the money, I need money'. No, I never get anything. Even tax. I never apply for tax back for ten years" (Daria).

Her reluctance to access formal financial support seemed to stem from an assumption or fear that others may judge her as undeserving of support. Further, lacking knowledge about entitlements, she expressed a wish for more information, particularly around rent supplements.

"Like more information ... Maybe I'm entitled to get some help. I know that some people getting fees or something to help pay the rent for house" (Daria).

The request for more information as well as assistance when dealing with officials such as the revenue or the legal system was illustrated by Bartek. Describing his wife's confusion when trying to access information in the tax office, he explained their ability to master basic administrative tasks but that they would appreciate support in more complex bureaucratic matters.

"She just wanted to check how much PRSI rates were paid when she was working ... So, she went to the tax office and she was surprised because she had to log in somewhere, and then use a phone, ring in a different place. The simple things like the post office ... we manage. Some things ... very important things like tax office or if somebody has a problem with the law, the lawyers ... I think ... huge things are very important ... would be brilliant if that would be supported like" (Bartek).

Another finding of this study related to formal healthcare access. In order to combat negative effects of work on well-being, a small number of parent participants reported accessing health care, when discussing the use of formal support services. Hania, for instance, who had previously explained that shift work exacerbates her thyroid problems, described visiting her General Practitioner when she struggles.

"I go to GP. So yeah, when I struggle with something yeah, I go to GP. So, he just ... because you see I'm sick. My thyroid ... And I'm struggle(ing)" (Hania).

Engagement with health-related services can also serve as gateway for Polish parents to access other support services. Ciara, for instance, described many Polish community members previously participating in wellness-courses, which then led to a small number availing of other supports.

"There would be a lot of Polish coming in for that, then for the health and wellness course, we ran that a few years ago and that was well attended by a number of Polish and then through that I suppose I got to know a few Polish members I would have been assisting them with advocacy, but they would have been low"(Ciara).

A further issue raised came from support service providers. It related to recognising parents' problems around time management in order to access formal supports and reported on ways, in which service providers try to engage with parents. Some participants, who had worked with Polish families, expressed the need to be creative in making initial contact as well scheduling appointments due to parents' varying work schedules.

“They tend to work a lot as well. And so obviously it’s difficult to, you know you have to be quite creative in just making contact with them. So, working outside of the regular office hours and even try to do parenting work with them that way. I found it most difficult really” (Grace).

Having recognised the difficulty of engaging with parents due to their work commitments, Steven described providing indirect support to parents by offering children’s activities such as the homework club.

“Many of the parents who, many parents come in here, often they work in two or three jobs, people that we have on the CE (Community Employment) scheme and TUS (Community Work Placement Initiative) scheme. A lot of those live that side and there, they are on a CE scheme, TUS, but you’ve got, you’ve got people that, you know and families where they are trying to study, they are trying to work and so to get them here is hard. Now what we do is provide activities for their children. Now the homework club predominately” (Steven).

The last point raised on Help- seeking related to Polish speaking support. All parent participants emphasised Polish people’s tendency to seek Polish speaking support, which was evident in matters around healthcare and support in finances but also information provision.

In matters of health, Celina, for instance, stated that it was unlikely for people to seek support from Irish specialists.

“I wouldn’t say they go for help ... to Irish specialist. Sometimes they go to the Polish GP. That’s what I know ... if they have problems...” (Celina).

5.6.4 Summary of Findings on Work

In regard to the first research question, findings revealed that parents had been raised in environments that place a strong emphasis on the importance of paid as well as domestic labour. This led to some parents feeling obliged to uphold a good reputation with respect to the work ethic of Polish parents, which was also recognised by many support service providers. The need for financial gain was identified as a key motivator for migration to Ireland in the first

place, and in addition, paid employment was seen as important for achieving financial security, improving one's lifestyle and also for social status within the Polish community.

Findings relating to the second research question showed that in the majority of cases parents have concerns about expenses and meeting financial demands. Findings suggested parental problems in terms of rent increases, evictions of tenants as well as some parts of the neighbourhood being inappropriate environments for families. The study identified concerns about finding a balance between work and family life but also the dilemma mothers encounter when trying to fulfil the role of primary caregiver as well as being part of the paid work force. A further issue concerned health related problems linked to employment.

And finally, with regard to the research question on Help seeking, findings revealed parental seeking of informal monetary support and a preference for formal supports in connection with information on entitlements around social welfare and revenue. The study identified a preference for accessing support in financial matters through the medium of Polish as well as a preference for health care through the medium of Polish. Problems around work schedules impacting parents' time management and thus hinders access supports were highlighted by support service providers, who are trying to be creative in their attempts to engage with parents.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the study's findings derived from the accounts of parents and service providers through the utilisation of the framework approach to analysis as described in Chapter 4. Findings were presented under the identified themes of Language and Culture, Family, Schooling and Work, and were linked to the study's research questions of parenting, parental experiences and help-seeking.

The next chapter discusses these findings in light of the reviewed literature of Chapter 2.

Chapter Six

Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The discussion chapter is derived from the thorough literature review undertaken for this research in conjunction with the participants' perspectives obtained through empirical data analysis. While the limitations of this study, including the small sample size, are recognised, the combination of these components has allowed for the study to develop a new theoretical framework and present considered conclusions as well as recommendations.

Prior to the discussion of the key findings, the three research questions of this study are reiterated below:

1. What are the cultural norms shaping how Polish parents perceive their role as parents in the Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska (ARD) neighbourhood?
2. What is the Polish parenting experience in the ARD neighbourhood?
3. What are the attitudes toward help seeking among Polish parents in the ARD neighbourhood?

Section two to four of this chapter present the key arguments as they relate to the study's research questions before proposing a new theoretical framework in Section five. The chapter is then concluded with a summary in Section six.

6.2 The Cultural Norms shaping how Polish Parents perceive their Role as Parents in the Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska (ARD) Neighbourhood

The following section presents the key findings relating to the first research question of this study under the following headings:

1. Initial shaping of parenting norms and culture as proximal
2. Negotiation of norms
3. Ingroup differences in adaptation management

6.2.1 Initial Shaping of Parenting Norms and Culture as Proximal

This study concludes that parenting norms seem to initially be shaped by childhood experiences and that culture should be viewed as proximal to parenting.

Corresponding with the literature on childhood in Poland (see Chapter 2, Section 9), findings from this study revealed that parents considered the limited responsibility of official Polish institutions for families to have led to people's strong reliance on and obligations towards the family as provider of security and guarantor of survival.

Family being central to Polish life, the findings also suggested that the family unit is considered private and needs to be protected from the outside world. Similar to Schoeman's (1980; see Chapter 2, Section 2.2) notion that family intimacy requires non-interference, parents described family matters as personal and frequently applied the concept of "my house, my rules" to set boundaries between the family unit and outsiders.

While privacy arguably enhances families' sense of security as well as intimacy which is necessary to have one's interests fused with those of others, the parent-child relationship is universally governed by stringent and nondiscretionary moral norms (Brighouse and Swift, 2006; see Chapter 2, Section 3.2). Parents' fiduciary obligations to guarantee children's wellbeing as well as development were suggested by literature to be tied to expectations relating to the accomplishment of psychosocial functions (Brighouse and Swift, 2006; see Chapter 2, Section 3.2). Historically, cultural norms of child

rearing customs in Poland centred around the ideal “Polish mother”, a strict and unavailable father and a strong work ethic, while also maintaining a functioning family life (see Chapter 2, Section 9). Findings showed that in the majority of cases this was also the experience of childhood for parents in this study. Suggesting a traditional division of labour (see Chapter 2, Section 9), fathers rarely featured in parents’ accounts of caregiving. Mothers on the other hand were frequently described to have been torn between child rearing, running the household, but also engaging in employment where possible. Children were often called upon to help with chores and aid in caring for siblings.

It was evident in this study that parenting is not only governed by cultural norms relating to the parent-child relationship and family, but also by cultural norms shaping the context in which parenting occurs (see Chapter 2, Section 3).

The Polish state’s limited responsibility towards the family, coupled with an internalised need for upward social mobility, competition and eroded solidarity, as well as the distinction between those who have employment and those who do not, in terms of social status (outlined in Chapter 2, Section 9) historically led to the emergence of a Polish “work ethic”. The findings suggested that Polish parents in this study were reared in environments that reinforced the culture of a strong work ethic while also being concerned with a functioning family life.

As in previous work on the topic of education (see Chapter 2, Section 9.1), Polish parents in this study perceived the education system as an essential tool for upward social mobility, playing an important role in life opportunities, such as wage-earning ability and increased social status. Besides having the responsibility of academic instruction, education was also considered to play an important role in the transmission of culture. According to educational policy in Poland (Siemienska et al., 2010, p.2), education serves ‘the development of respect for Polish cultural heritage and should back up the educational role of the family’. By drawing on and comparing findings with previous literature (see Chapter 2, Section 9.1), it was found that within the

Polish education system, the school's transmission of culture was inclusive of all families; however, access to educational resources was dependent on higher socioeconomic status and thus not available to all. Parents in this study consistently described the availability of affordable extracurricular activities in Poland, while participants in Mc Taggart and Mc Taggart's study (2016) argued that only economically affluent children were able to progress and do well in Poland as their families were able to afford learning support outside the formal education system. Conflicting accounts arguably stem from ingroup differences relating to social status, which existed prior to migration. Evidence thus suggested that Polish education is based on an unequal distribution of resources, which negatively affects both educational success and economic opportunity. An educational policy based on cultural heritage rather than providing equal opportunities for all to enhance economic growth indicates a tension between Polish culture and Polish economy. Further, elements of inequality which are arguably part of Polish cultural heritage can cause ingroup frictions, which will be discussed in more detail in Section 6.3 of this chapter.

The study found that in the first instance ideas about the nature of parenting appear to stem from childhood experiences of the relationship between family and the Polish state, which in turn informed how parents perceived the role and responsibilities of parents towards family. In this study, the caretaker thesis rather than a children's rights approach to parenting was evident (see Chapter 2, Section 3.2), with the onus on the adult to 'choose what the child would choose if competent to make choices and choose with regard to the interests of the adult the child will become' (Archard, 1993, p.58). Further, by parents describing the importance of maintaining the household and fulfilling roles, family was viewed from a functional perspective stressing the institutional aspects of family in the performance of necessary societal functions (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2004; Weigel, 2008). This in turn was coupled with contextual factors' impact on and influence of cultural norms such as work and education, each playing a significant role in how parents perceived their role as parents.

Evidence of the interplay between family, the Polish state, education and employment, all of which impacted child-rearing, suggested that parenting did not solely occur within the parent-child relationship but also within a broader context (see also Jack, 2000). Thus, the findings support Bronfenbrenner's ecological model and the notion that childhood and parenting dimensions do not stand alone but interact, are interrelated as well as interdependent with other dimensions of the ecological system (see Chapter 2, Section 3.4). Further, by finding that parents repeatedly referred to their own upbringing when describing their approach to child rearing, the study supports Belsky's argument that one's own childhood has an impact on parenting (see Chapter 2, Section 3.4).

In terms of how culture shapes parenting norms, the evidence supports Mistry et al.'s (2003) critique of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model for its 'tendency to treat culture and context as synonymous and to have culture situated in the macrosystem' (p.236). The study found that cultural norms governed both the parent-child relationship as well as contextual factors, which impacted on child rearing. Evidence of norms such as the privacy of family life, familial obligations and work ethic, but also the responsibility of the education system for academic instruction and transmission of values strongly suggests that cultural norms permeate multiple layers of the parenting context. Thus, instead of considering culture as a separate system in the ecological model, culture should be viewed as more proximal to parenting (see Chapter 2, Section 3.4).

6.2.2 Negotiation of Norms

A further conclusion of this study's examination is that cultural norms should be considered as complex and fluid.

In terms of familial reliance and obligations in the post migration context, findings were consistent with previous research which argued that this feature was a 'long-lasting element of the Polish normative system, which is strengthened by the weakness of the institutional support' (Krzyzowski and Mucha, 2014, p.22). Evidence from this study suggested that Polish migrants not only employ transnational care strategies (see Chapter 2, Section 9.1) to

maintain this cultural norm, but that the norm is reinforced by structures of both home and the host country of parents (see Research questions 2 and 3 of this Chapter). For example, elderly parents lack access to strong institutional support in Poland, while parents as migrants are constrained by both low income and high childcare costs.

Findings from this study showed that for many parents the endeavour to uphold connections and establish as well as strengthen intergenerational ties with extended family did not only serve the purpose of transnational caregiving but also that of cultural heritage and Christian values transmission. As in previous work on Polish migrant families (see Chapter 2, Section 9.1), children spending time with grandparents was believed to facilitate a first-hand transmission of shared family history as well as communication of Polish values and traditions, which many parents believed to be the essence of Polish ethnic identity.

Post migration, service providers perceived Polish families as still traditional in terms of structure and function (see Chapter 2, Section 3.3), but parents in this study reported a shift in the division of labour. While it was evident that the performance of home duties is still mainly assigned to mothers, nonetheless fathers took a more active role in dual-income families. With few exceptions, both mothers and fathers considered themselves caregivers with the responsibility of ensuring both physical and emotional wellbeing of their children. In many cases, this was conjoined with a desire of both parents to provide financial security and gain access to opportunities and environments that enhance their children's development and future success. This finding suggested that most parents in this study were proponents of equality when it concerned the division of labour. However, the interplay of migration status, labour market opportunities as well as high childcare costs (see in more detail in Section 3.2 of this Chapter), frequently led to difficulty in implementing this commitment to equality. This resulted in parents' maintaining traditional roles in their division of labour. Thus, the study supports the argument that traditional gender roles in their parenting reflect an adaptation to their post-migration environment rather than Polish culture on its own (see Ryndyk and

Johannessen, 2015) as well as the proposition that cultural norms are both complex and fluid.

Adaptions to more Western norms (see Chapter 2, Section 4) and their post migration environment were also notable in parents describing the value of independence for children as well as how parents in this study defined a good parent-child relationship. Findings suggested that while many parents instil interdependence by means of Christian traditions that highlight the centrality of the family unit and collectivism (see Chapter 2, Section 4), which are reinforced by structures of the home country as well as parents' migration status (see Research questions 2 and 3 of this Chapter), all parents emphasised the importance of the cultivation of independence as well as respect for the autonomy of others. Further, a change to maintaining Polish norms instilled during childhood related to the quality of the parent-child relationship. Children in Poland were previously argued to serve as instruments to their parents' needs and plans rather than being viewed as individuals with their own rights (see Chapter 2, Section 9). Findings from this study showed that Polish parents valued and strived to nurture a close and intimate bond with their children, which, according to many, best flourishes through open communication and emotional affection, but requires sustained time investment. Being described from the outside as attentive and protective by many service providers, the majority of parents placed emphasis on caregiving through secure attachment to their children and parental adoption of authoritative discipline strategies. Their approach and perspective differed from that of their own parents as many described that their childhood was marked by a close family bond but lack of parental affection, communication and time commitment. Findings suggested that Polish parents follow the Western trend towards greater intimacy and communication (Dill, 2014), but that it serves the purpose of reinforcing the value of family as well as protecting identity development (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2).

In terms of work ethic, it was evident that most parents upheld this norm by emphasising their employment prior to migration. However, they reported that life was hard and financial security difficult to obtain as wage-earning ability in Poland was low despite educational qualifications. Searching for a

“better life” led parents to migrate for financial reasons, seeking employment to gain financial security and improve their social status. Emphasis on employment and thus upholding a good reputation with respect to the work ethic of Polish parents was most notable in the strong criticism voiced towards “unjustified” welfare dependency.

In the post migration context, education remained an essential tool for upward social mobility. Parents’ educational aspirations for their children were high, supporting literature that argued parents’ migration to frequently stem from a desire for a better future for their offspring (Barglowki et al., 2015; see Chapter 2, Section 9). In this study, parents primarily focused on what they believed to be the differences between Polish and Irish education. Being described by one parent as “superior” to the Irish system and “authoritarian” by another, findings in this study showed that many parents believe Polish education to place higher academic demands on children to progress. Claiming the Polish system to elicit bad memories and to cause stress for children, parents embraced the benefits of a play-based pedagogical approach to primary education but criticised what they saw as an age-inappropriate school enrolment policy, a lack of adequate physical activity provision in the school curriculum as well as insufficient supply of affordable extracurricular activities.

In the post migration context, socio-economic background was reported to be less important for children’s academic advancement due to Ireland’s meritocratic approach to education. Instead, the importance of maintaining Polish culture strongly featured, reflecting past experiences and parental expectations from the education system. Findings from this study suggested that while in most cases parents believed themselves to be their children’s primary educator, being both accountable for and overseeing the transmission of cultural norms and values, many appreciated the access to Galway’s Polish Saturday school. Access to this resource was identified as trying to prevent a potential loss of Polish heritage resulting from the compulsory Irish education system and help them in their maintenance of both Polish language as well as the transmission of Polish history and norms.

It was evident that parents in this study experienced an upbringing where the proximity of culture and associated norms was not only felt in the immediate but also wider context of parenting. This in turn shaped how parents now perceive their role as parents. However, findings from this study suggested that these cultural norms were not stable. Child rearing in the post migration context consisted of Polish parents negotiating between cultural ideas about parenting, which stem from their own childhood ecologies, and competing belief systems in their immediate environment as well as wider context. It was for example found that Polish norms such as familial obligation, privacy, work ethic and the importance of the transmission of culture were strongly retained, but that parents tried to abolish the traditional division of labour. Further, parents cultivated affection, communication and independence as well as respect for autonomy, all of which are cultural norms arguably more prominent in Western parenting (see Chapter 2, Section 4).

As a result of these findings, the study supports Harkness and Super's concept of 'ethnotheories' (see Chapter 2, Section 4). Focusing more specifically on cultural context to understand parenting, 'ethnotheories' stipulate that actual parenting practices arise as a result of implicit ideas of parenting which are mediated by factors such as situational variables and competing cultural models. Findings from this study contribute to the model by supporting the argument that implicit ideas stem from own childhood experiences of parenting and the cultural context within which it occurs. Further, by application of the model in the migration context, the study adds to literature which previously criticised 'ethnotheories' as predominately exploring stable cultural contexts (Bose, 2016) and supports the notion that parental belief systems can change.

6.2.3 In-group Differences in Adaptation Management

A final conclusion with regards to the first research question is that strategies of adaptation and management of cultural norms vary among cultural group members.

Although findings revealed that Polish parents share many similarities, variations (i.e. parents referred to by service providers, and individual parent accounts) were nevertheless evident in how the adjustment to the post migration environment was managed.

The cultural norm of relying on and having obligations towards family for instance was upheld by many parents, but to different degrees and, with exceptions, prioritised by mothers. The sense of obligation, for example, led to one family permanently returning to Poland in order to care for their elderly parents, while in the majority of cases parents reported the use of communication technology and frequent visits to Poland. Only for a small number, family contact was described as limited. In terms of reliance, particularly mothers described making use of grandparents travelling to Ireland for short or longer periods of time in order to receive support with childcare and in some cases, additional income.

Maintaining a good Polish work ethic was important for the majority of parents but posed challenges, particularly for women who were torn between childcare and financially contributing to the family (see in more detail in Section 3 of this chapter). With the exception of a lone parent, a mother receiving disability allowance as well as a mother in receipt of a carer's allowance for her disabled son, findings suggested that parents in this study would rather engage in low pay employment than claim state benefits.

In relation to education, findings indicated parental variations relating to the engagement with the Polish school in terms of cultural heritage transmission, which will be discussed in Section 3 of this chapter, but also criticism of the Irish school enrolment policy and inadequate physical activity provision. Overall agreement was evident in terms of the benefits of the play-based pedagogical approach adopted by the Irish education system, and further on the insufficient supply of affordable extra-curricular activities for their

children in Ireland. These findings contrast with evidence presented by Mc Taggart and Mc Taggart (2016), where Polish participants found a play-based approach at odds with what they considered a good education, but that children's academic advancement was attainable due to Ireland's meritocratic approach to education. These contrasting findings suggest the potential presence of in-group differences among Polish migrants in terms of educational expectations.

While only some examples were chosen to illustrate variations among Polish community members in terms of adaptation and management strategies that relate to cultural norms, overall findings from this study showed neither parents referred to by service providers nor participants' familial circumstances and hence strategies to be identical and that in-group differences were present both prior to as well as post migration (see previous Section 6.2 as well as subsequent Sections 6.3 and 6.4).

Differing accounts of maintenance and adjustment to norms showed that parents did not all share the same experience post migration. While parenting in the Polish context may have appeared to be similar, personal circumstances (e.g. lone parenting, parenting with a disability, partnership with or marriage to a non-Polish national as well as caring for a child with a disability) among Polish parents varied, impacting on how parents perceived their role as parents. Further, the study's contrasting findings in relation to previous work that explored Polish education suggested the potential presence of social status differences among Polish migrant parents before migration (see Chapter 2, Section 9 on employed versus unemployed). These prior differences potentially continue to impact on attitudes and expectations despite now sharing a migrant and minority status. Evidence of within-group variations pre- as well as post-migration supports research which argued for the existence of heterogeneity within groups (Garcia Coll and Pachter, 2002; Le et al., 2008).

Findings from this study showed that parenting for Polish parents is a process of adaptation to their post-migration environment, which appears to be strongly influenced by structures of both home and host country. Thus, the

study supports literature suggesting that minority parenting is an adaptive process to context (see Chapter 2, Section 4.1). Cultivating ‘Western’ parenting and autonomy as a value to promote for children, which contrasts with their own parents’ approach, and a strong emphasis on the transactional perspective of family (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2004; see Chapter 2, Section 3.3), Polish parents find themselves governed by structures of their home country continuing to reinforce Polish norms while simultaneously trying to adjust to their new home and migrant/minority status without losing their Polish identity. The challenges encountered during this process will be discussed shortly, in Section 3 of this chapter.

6.2.4 Summary of Key Findings relating to First Research Question on Parenting

Overall, findings from this study strongly suggested that parenting is culturally constructed and rather than assuming that “standards” of parenting are universal the evidence suggests the construction of parenting is an adaptation to the environment within which it occurs.

Cultural norms that shape how Polish parents perceive their role as parents initially stem from their own childhood ecologies in Poland. Post migration, practices were found to be mediated by competing belief systems both within the family as well as those of their host country. Norms are not stable, suggesting that parents negotiated norms, while bound to structures of both home and host country. Intra-group differences are believed to be the result of different circumstances which determine the adaptation to the post migration environment as well as differences prior to migration.

6.3 The Polish Parenting Experience in the ARD Neighbourhood

This section outlines the key findings in relation to the second research question of this study and arguments are discussed under the following headings:

1. Cultural dissonance within the family
2. Work-family conflict
3. The interplay of migration, culture and parenting style
4. Cultural dissonance among the local school and Polish parents
5. The challenge of language maintenance and children's integration
6. Network closure and community as restrictive

6.3.1 Cultural Dissonance Within the Family

The section begins with the conclusion that in the process of adaptation to a new environment and competing beliefs about what constitutes a good parent lead to intra-familial dissonance.

In the most proximal context of child rearing evidence suggested challenges for authoritative parenting. Parents in this study appeared to be strong proponents of authoritative parenting, but challenges were observed in terms of parental gender and assigned parenting roles as well as parenting styles among Polish parents. Most parents fulfilled their traditional functions as assigned by gender, but in some cases took a more gender-neutral approach by sharing or swapping roles if necessary. Tensions were observed, where parents failed to execute their agreed role adequately. Single mothers described performing both maternal as well as paternal functions, often finding it difficult to maintain the right balance due to motherly agreeability and nurture coming more naturally to women (see also Brody and Hall, 2000). Overall, findings suggest that Polish parenting is complex as many parents want to adopt authoritative parenting and do so; some wish to be authoritative but become authoritarian because of pressures such as lone parenting. Others continue to be authoritarian, while also dealing with work stress. In addition, findings have shown that the adoption of authoritative parenting marked a generational shift in what constitutes optimal child rearing techniques.

This new knowledge was described by parents to have been gained through media or advice from siblings rather than grandparents, which in some cases lead to tensions with grandparents, who tried to provide parenting advice. Findings support the argument that culture plays an important part in setting up family dynamics which in turn affect parenting styles (Kail et al., 2006). Evidence suggested that while in the migration context, dynamics as well as discipline strategies are often negotiated, parents adapt to them differently. Bound by structures of both home and host country, adaptations frequently lead to cultural dissonance within the immediate family unit as well as at an intergenerational level.

Within the family, challenges were evident for both the parent-parent relationship and intergenerational relationships. They occurred as a result of a shift from solely focusing on familial functioning to an emphasis on familial transaction. Previous research defined the transactional perspective of family as intimates who through emotional ties generate family identity, sharing history as well as future (Koerner and Fitzpatrick, 2004). In addition, many parents tried to replace the authoritarian and permissive parenting styles of their own childhoods by adopting authoritative parenting and a positive emotional climate of child rearing (Darling and Steinberg, 1993; Baumrind, 1967; 1978; 1991), which parents believed was the norm in their host country. This often led to a sense of disharmony or “cultural dissonance” in the midst of change in their cultural environment (see also Macdonald, 1998). Cultural dissonance was evident where parental adaption to the parenting styles of their new environment did not match that of their partner as well as at an intergenerational level where grandparents continued to reinforce previously held Polish norms. While overall findings support the idea that one’s own childhood plays a part in shaping parenting, the study for the most part disagrees with Belsky’s (1994) suggestion that both harsh and supportive parenting are transmitted intergenerationally.

As was outlined, Polish parenting styles in this study were rather complex with parents adopting both authoritative and authoritarian strategies. While findings themselves did not specifically show the reasons for the continuance of authoritarian parenting within some Polish families of this study, literature

repeatedly links failure to apply authoritative parenting styles and conflict to experiencing stressors, which are discussed now.

6.3.2 Work and Family Conflict

Findings from this study showed that parents tried to foster a strong and positive parent-child relationship to transmit the value of family as a source of security while at the same time having opted for a shared responsibility for providing childcare and income. Parental challenges arose in the attempt to balance both family time to maintain a close bond, and employment. Parents seemed to experience the impact of Irish macro and exo level systems in their endeavour. Because of their migration status, frequently lacking both recognition of their previous education and sufficient English language proficiency to excel in their previous careers, many parents found themselves struggling financially, despite Ireland's economic opportunities and the parental perception that life was easier in Ireland than in Poland. This was coupled with the high cost of rented housing, which in many cases made it necessary for both parents to engage in fulltime employment. The provision of childcare was considered insufficient for their needs but also costly, leading in most cases to parents engaging in shift work to maximise income. While the struggle between financially supporting the family as well as providing sufficient care towards their children was likely affecting both parents, it was most frequently expressed by mothers, who mentioned a negative impact on their mental health. Findings from this study suggested that Polish parents consider themselves to share egalitarian values, but that mothers may suffer a heavier burden of duty. Findings support previous literature on migrant parents' employment and lower wages (see Chapter 2, Section 6.1.1), work-family conflict (Roman and Cortina, 2016; see Chapter 2, Section 6.1) and the argument that employment arrangements have a negative effect on family time and individual well-being (Presser, 2003). By having explored the experience of Polish parents in Ireland, the study contributes to research that sought to identify the ways in which different ethnic groups are affected by strains associated with conflicting demands of work and family (Roehling et al., 2005).

Conflict was observed in the balance of employment, familial responsibilities and what constitutes a “good parent”, which was particularly evident in the data collected from mothers. Recent decades have seen a dramatic change in family organisation as it has become more common for both fathers and mothers to be employed, which makes it necessary to reorganise tasks and the allocation of time between both parents (Roman and Cortina, 2016; Gershuny, 2000). Findings from this study support this notion as in the majority of cases parents were part of dual-earner couples. The study further supports previous research (Roxburgh, 2011) on work-family conflict where parents perceived good parenting as spending significant amounts of quality time with children, while the bad parent was defined as failing to prioritise quality time. In this study, higher rates of stress were evident in mothers, who, despite egalitarian gender-role attitudes, felt responsible for the home and, with employment, experienced role overload and thus higher levels of work-family conflict. This finding adds to literature, which previously argued that migrant women from traditional cultures, where men are the primary breadwinners, are more likely to experience role overload (Roehling et al., 2005). Interestingly, parents from this study were reared in a culture that places strong emphasis on a good work ethic maintained by all, with evidence showing that Polish mothers always struggled with dual responsibilities (see Chapter 2, Section 9). However, the female admission of experiencing stress and depression in this study suggests that Polish mothers in the migration context may be extremely concerned about the negative impact of their employment on their children’s emotional well-being and the importance to adapt to normative standards of what constitutes “a good parent”.

6.3.3 The Interplay of Migration, Culture and Parenting Style

A further conclusion of this study is the importance to consider the interplay of migration status, culture and parenting style.

This study showed that despite often high educational attainment in Poland, Polish families perceived themselves to struggle financially. Parents in the migration context found themselves in low-pay employment and more

specifically in shift-work arrangements to meet the high cost of living in the host country and at the same time save on expenses such as childcare.

This study suggested that despite Polish parents seemingly finding themselves on low income due to their migration status, this did not necessarily result in negative, authoritarian parenting as was proposed in previous research (see Chapter 2, Section 4.1). Parents were found to strive for the provision of a “positive” home environment and possessed high aspirations for their children, which they instilled accordingly. Desired discipline strategies were generally based on reciprocal communication, responsiveness and support, all of which are associated with authoritative parenting (see Chapter 2, Section 3.1). However, there were challenges in the implementation which came from a variety of sources but lay behind what some parents said or indeed believed themselves. Relationship conflict and unsettled family life as a result of financial concerns, intergenerational dissonance, work-family conflict, neighbourhood characteristics but also the failure of authoritative parenting strategies to achieve desired outcomes appeared to ultimately reinforce authoritarian parenting in some or lead to others resorting to authoritarian parenting strategies, which Polish parents were familiar with from their own childhood (see Section 6.3.1.1 of this Chapter).

It can be argued that work-family conflict is a phenomenon of modern society and particularly prevalent in developed countries. However, migrants face additional challenges in terms of securing employment. Findings support the argument that because of lower returns on foreign education, immigrant families are not treated equally in the labour market (Dell’Arima et al., 2015). While parents in this study were found to have had a good command of the English language, service providers, who had previously worked with Polish families, confirmed that poor labour market integration was also coupled with often low levels of English language proficiency. This finding supports Christl et al. (2016) who argued that to achieve full economic productivity, migrants are encouraged to acquire skills of speaking, listening and reading as well as writing in the host country’s official language.

Literature suggested that, by definition, employment is linked to familial socioeconomic status (SES) as the latter is associated with families' access to material resources (Duncan and Magusson, 2002) and impacts families' ability to acquire quality nutrition, leisure activities as well as choice of neighbourhood (Luster and Okagaki, 2006). Research repeatedly argued that socioeconomic status influences parents' views on child development and parenting practices and that parental occupation impacts important values that should be instilled in children (Hoffman, 2002). Research findings of negative, or authoritarian parenting are consistently related to families with lower SES as well as ethnic minority groups, arguably lacking economic as well as cultural means to adapt middle class values (see Chapter 2, Section 5.1). This perspective ignores that SES indicators may not mean the same for migrant families as they do for host country families (Fuligni and Yoshikawa, 2003; see also Chapter 2 Section 9 and 9.1 for Polish nationals). While maybe lacking traditional measures of economic resources in the host country (see Chapter 2, Section 5), families may have other assets, often making use of protective factors and compensating with support from families, neighbours and their community, which will be discussed in Section 6.4 of this chapter.

It was evident that despite low income, Polish parents did not necessarily adopt authoritarian or permissive discipline strategies but for the most part rather fell back on them when experiencing stressors and failing to achieve desired behaviour. Findings thus suggested that no conclusions should be made in terms 'negative' parenting being intrinsically linked to low SES or one's own childhood experiences. Instead, low income and migration factors were found to be potential stressors which can subsequently lead to negative parenting. Hence, the interplay of culture and economy should be considered (see Chapter 2, Section 5.1).

6.3.4 Cultural Dissonance Among the Local School and Polish Parents

The study also concludes that what was sometimes perceived as the local school's inappropriate approaches to facilitating migrant student integration can lead to disharmony with parents and competing cultural expectations.

In terms of education, we saw in Section 2.2 of this Chapter that despite some criticism, parents were overall satisfied with the Irish education system's performance in academic instruction. However, challenges were evident in terms of the school's policy regarding language use and the Polish community's adaption to this policy. Prohibition of Polish language on school premises and the reinforcement of English language to facilitate communication among the diverse student and parent body, was met with discontent from the Polish community but not openly discussed with school staff. Second, tension was not only evident from the parents' point of view, but also from the schools' perspective, although limited to one respondent. Polish families were described as traditional, private and seemingly overprotective of their children as well as frequently reluctant to mix and engage with the wider school community. Polish parents had been observed as likely reluctant to accept advice on parenting, particularly around language adjustment, and were said to frequently refrain from reciprocal relationships with the school due to apparent work commitments, unwillingness but also self-perceived inability to positively contribute to the school as well as their children's learning. The parent-child relationship was noted to be close and somewhat overprotective, potentially resulting in children's lack of independence and disinclination to become involved. Findings support literature that argued the strong influence of pre-migration experiences on parents' approach to schools and a clash in expectations between parents and schools (see Chapter 2, Section 7.1).

Despite primarily low socio-economic status, migrant parents value children's education due to its perceived importance for their advancement in the post-migration country (Luster and Okagaki, 2006). This was also evident in this study. Parents were engaged in their children's schooling and followed Lareau's logic of concerted cultivation, generally associated with middle

class parents, instead of accomplishment of natural growth, linked to working class parents (see Chapter 2, Section 7). While it can be argued that this was a sign of parental adaptation to their post migration environment, it was found that this largely occurred as a result of parents' own upbringing in Poland, which was marked by educational ambition and investment for future success. It is suggested that differing reports (see Mc Taggart and Mc Taggart, 2016; Chapter 2, Section 9.1) potentially stem from parents' social position prior migration which can help explain intra-group differences, both in terms of parental expectations as well as investment in children's opportunities. By having identified both high parental expectations in the education system and parents providing "positive" home environments for their children's learning, the study contributes to literature by opposing the previously held view that migrants do not possess cultural capital as a result of lacking economic and cultural resources (see Chapter 2, Section 7.1). The assumption that all migrants have deficiencies first of all ignores in and inter-group differences by viewing migrants as homogenous group. Further, it ignores the histories and cultural values of migrants' home countries, which are essential to understanding how parents perceive their role as parents as well as the resources they have access to. A limitation of this study is that the parent sample primarily consisted of at least one parent engaging in employment, and findings on families solely depending on social welfare payments is missing. Any information provided on their experience of parenting comes second-hand from either parent participants of this study or was given by service providers (see also Research question 3 in this Chapter).

Research repeatedly demonstrated parenting as a multidimensional and dynamic construct (see Chapter 2, Section 3.4) and identified parenting differences not only between ethnic minority and majority groups but also within groups (Chapter 2, Section 4.1). In this study, the school was faced with the challenge of dealing with, establishing and integrating a large and culturally diverse student and parent body into the school community. Being responsible for the execution of this difficult task as well as the fact that Polish families made up a large proportion of the local school's population, it appears that Polish parents were classed together rather than considered

individually. Resulting from Polish families' perceived lack of integration, thus hindering the establishment of a strong school community, there was a subtle tension in the characterisation of Polish parenting, primarily referring to attributes associated with lower socio-economic status rather than culture (see Chapter 2, Section 4.1). Aspects that were recognised as cultural differences were viewed as potentially inhibiting children's development of autonomy as well as integration into Irish society. Findings suggested these likely tensions as in the endeavour of building a strong school community, considerations were rather limited in terms of the challenges Polish parents face in their adaptation to their post migration context. The tendency to generalise Polish parents' attitudes, as was found in the narrative of the school's respondent, somewhat failed to account for intra-group differences relating to class and by making claims about class-related values and practices, which are expected from the setting, migrants' cultural resources such as high educational attainment and an ethos of working professionally, appeared largely ignored.

In addition, the study identified a perceived conflict and cultural dissonance between school and the home in terms of Polish language maintenance. Children were repeatedly reported to converse in English, sometimes as a result of confusion and more often by choice, which elicited differing responses by parents, ranging from acceptance to emotional upsets in the home. English language use was strongly related to the school's single language policy which was reinforced to facilitate the integration of culturally diverse families and create a community based on sharing a common ground instead of being marked by differences. However, this attempt did not only appear to negatively affect Polish children and the parent-child relationship but also parental interaction with other Polish parents. Findings suggest that as a result of focusing on integration rather than appreciation of cultural diversity, the school environment in this study seemingly hindered expressions of difference. The study thus supports literature that argued that external pressure from the socio-political environment can frequently harm instead of support ethnic minority's endeavour to transmit their cultural heritage (see also Cummins, 2001; Fassetta, 2014; Röder et al., 2015).

6.3.5 The Challenge of Language Maintenance and Children's Integration

The next section presents the conclusion that Polish identity is language-based and that as a result of children needing to integrate into the Irish education system, parents struggle to maintain the upkeep of their mother tongue.

While satisfied with the academic instruction component, findings from this study showed that parents had fears and experienced challenges relating to language, which were twofold. Parents of younger children were concerned about English language proficiency on school entry and parents with older children spoke about the difficulty of maintaining the Polish language. Although English language competency was perceived important to provide children with opportunities for learning, the preservation of the Polish language appeared more significant as it was found to have been affected by the demands of Irish education. Generally placing great importance on the upkeep of the mother tongue at home, many parents stated that their children's ability as well as willingness to communicate in Polish was affected by the pressure of the Irish school system to adhere to the curriculum and teachers' expectations. While some parents met this challenge by reinforcing mother-tongue competency, others were more lenient when recognising their children's struggle to negotiate language use. Parents of children with disabilities described having by and large given up on the maintenance of Polish communication within the parent-child relationship. This decision was made in order to ensure their children's continued progression in the Irish education system but impacted their children's perception of identity. Although experiencing challenges in their endeavour, findings support literature that suggested Polish culture to be language centred (Drzdzewski, 2011) as well as Polish language to be an important part of Polish identity (Temple, 2010). Further, evidence supports work that emphasised the importance of teaching children the Polish language in order to be able to re-integrate with Poland as well as to be able to connect with the familial network on a cultural level (O'Connor et al., 2017).

Language is an important tool for the sharing of culture and in relation to education vital for children's school readiness and academic achievement (Moskal and Sime, 2016). Previous literature proposed that children from low-income and minority backgrounds are more likely to demonstrate delays in speech and language at school entry, calling for additional research to be conducted in order to understand these differences (Tamis-LeMonda and Rodriguez, 2008). Findings from this study showed that as a result of Polish language (see Chapter 2, Section 9.1) being central to Polish identity, Polish language was reinforced in the home by parents as well as extended family and enhanced by exposure to a primarily Polish network. However, being aware of the importance of English language in order for their children to do well in the Irish education system, many parents had concerns about their children's English language proficiency on school entry. This concern, coupled with the fact that Poland's school start age is later than in Ireland, led to a tendency to delay school enrolment until parents believed their children to have the ability to converse in both languages. It was found that with regards to preparation for school entry, many parents considered English language skills to be enhanced by children's exposure to English speaking playschools and creches. However, this was not utilised by all parents due to financial cost and availability. While this suggests that exposure to English language prior to school entry varied, all parents reported that the play-based approach of primary school in the infant cycle enhanced children's English language confidence, subsequently leading to academic success. The findings support research that emphasised the need to focus on how in-and out-of-home language experiences contribute to both proficiency in host country and native language proficiency (Tamis-LeMonda and Rodriguez, 2008).

6.3.6 Network Closure and Community as Restrictive

The study also found that community does not always provide social capital and that it can restrict its members.

Parents in this study considered education to play a pivotal role in identity formation, transmitted through language. Fearing a potentially negative effect of Irish schooling on their children's identity, many families joined the Polish

Saturday school to support parents in their endeavours of Polish culture transmission. Findings from this study however showed that these parental efforts frequently encountered barriers. In some cases, parents described their children's reluctance to give up their free time, while others spoke about their children's experiences of rejection from other children or feeling they do not belong in the setting. Parents of children with a disability described encountering exclusion due to insufficient institutional resources to accommodate their needs. Overall, these barriers towards engagement with a Polish institution, supposedly supporting parents, impacted on parental endeavours to uphold Polish culture, thus adding additional pressure to parenting in the migrant context. Findings support the notion that Polish parents are motivated to engage with institutions whose members share similar views or experiences in addition to shared language (Sobkow, 2014). However, it was evident that this motivation does not always bear fruit. Speaking about the Polish community as an entity, parents' descriptions were primarily negative. Accounts included reporting initial reluctance to move into an entirely Polish neighbourhood, avoiding Polish community members but also criticising Polish community members' intolerance towards outsiders and their cultural norms and values. Trying to adapt to their host country, it was found that while parents were members of the Polish community and wanted to uphold Polish culture, the majority of parents in this study oftentimes felt the desire to break away from a perceived restraint that was imposed by the Polish community.

It was evident that both school staff and parents not only valued academic advancement but also knew of the role they played in moral education and character formation which was found strongly related to the transmission of cultural values. Nevertheless, clashes in expectations between both parties frequently saw Polish parents try to compensate elements they believed were missing, by engagement with the Polish school to acquire cultural resources. However, this was sometimes equally problematic. Using the concept of social capital (see Chapter 2, Section 8.1) which explains the sustainability of cultural norms as a result of social ties, the study found that despite parents being members of the Polish community and part of social networks within,

access to the resource of Polish education was not equal for all members. This finding contributes to literature of network closure. While it was previously argued that closure is an advantage of social capital as it facilitates maintenance and enhancement of trust, as well as norms and authority (Coleman, 1990; Lin, 1999, p.34; 2017), this study found that closure through discriminatory practices by the school as well as intra-group exclusion resulted in negative outcomes for some members who wanted communal involvement, thus suggesting that community is not always a source of social capital. Referring to research that argued bonding to occur among homogeneous communities, to be of parochial nature and to provide limited benefits, the study found that Polish child-rearing was strongly reliant on bonding social capital, based on strong bonds of trust and solidarity within the family and among close friends (see Chapter 2, Section 8.2). Speaking about the Polish community context however, social capital was perceived by many parents as entailing control of its members, and findings support research that argued community's excessive demands on group members as well as restriction of freedom (Portes, 1998; Villalonga-Olives and Kawachi, 2017) to hinder the fostering of cooperative relationships with non-Polish nationals. Literature (see Chapter 2, Section 8.4) repeatedly suggests strong communities to promote and provide opportunities for families' positive outcomes and well-being as they broaden networks and facilitate interaction with other members of society. However strong social ties in this study did not equate to but instead appeared to frequently replace and as such fragment a strong Polish community which was perceived as imposing barriers and obstacles in one's endeavour to get ahead.

6.3.7 Summary of Key Findings relating to Second Research Question on Parental Experiences

Critiquing past research which considered variations in ethnic minority and migrant parenting as deficiencies, findings from this study support the argument that parenting is an adaptive process to specific contexts families find themselves in and is frequently met with challenges.

Challenges generally related to parents' adaptation process, dealing with competing belief systems of what constitutes a good parent. These challenges were experienced both within the family as well as other spheres of the ecological system, particularly education. It was found that the latter continued to view variations in authoritative parenting as deficiencies and made generalised assumptions about migrants, thus ignoring in-and intergroup differences. The Polish community was perceived as restrictive, thus not always considered a source of social capital, and migrant status intensified work- family conflict.

6.4 The Attitudes toward Help Seeking among Polish Parents in the ARD Neighbourhood

This section presents the key findings relating to the final research question under the following headings:

1. Privacy
2. Informal support
3. Social ties
4. Poverty as deficiency
5. Supports for Polish migrant parents
6. Cultural dissonance in the professional-parent relationship

6.4.1 Privacy

This section presents the study's conclusion that parenting is governed by the cultural norm of privacy and formal support is regarded as intrusive.

Help-seeking behaviour reflected Polish parents' notion that the parent-child relationship is intimate and private. Formal support access was generally related to health issues and sought in the Polish community or Poland, but also privately from Irish services as parents reported access to public support as not provided in a timely manner. When we asked how parents would define parenting support, parental responses referred to formal and professional support as interference to negative aspects such as marriage conflict and 'bad

parenting', all of which parents in this study did not associate with. Formal parenting support was perceived as intrusive to the parent-child relationship. With each space carrying its own norms and values, Lofland (2009) argued that the private sphere consists of contacts between intimates, while the public sphere is characterised by a world of strangers. There is a frequent assumption that giving and receiving support only occurs in intimate relationships. This was also evident in the current study, where parents perceived the parent-child relationship to belong in the private sphere while parenting support was placed in the public sphere.

By having outlined in detail how privacy is a cultural norm that informs how Polish parents perceive their role as parents, the study supports the argument that culture plays an important role in help seeking as previous experiences of exchange in parents' home countries determine the sense of responsibility and duty individuals hold towards family care (Funk et al., 2010; Mytton et al., 2013). In addition, findings of a preference for support from Polish language users supports the notion that the quality and extent of cultural infrastructure affects people's natural tendency to access support outside their own communities (Gilchrist and Kyprianou, 2011).

6.4.2 Informal Support

The study also suggests that parents primarily seek informal support from family and friends.

Parents described that their help-seeking in relation to parenting was first and foremost informal and sought primarily within the family unit from partners as well as extended family where possible. Support was provided in terms of discipline strategies, household duties, childcare and finance. Some parents reported that financial support was both received and provided intergenerationally. Beyond the family unit, findings suggested that parents valued support networks consisting of close friends, as help to 'get by' (Dominguez and Watkins, 2003), which were sometimes impacted by the transient nature of Polish migration. According to Christakis and Fowler (2010), social networks support extensive, complex and dynamic systems of exchange and interaction, thereby affecting life chances and outcomes. This

is due to informal relationships linking individuals not only to others in their immediate social realm but reaching beyond this via the contacts of friends and acquaintances. In this study, such networks were not referred to.

It was found that despite today's mobile society (Keller and Mc Quade, 2000), Polish parents continue to rely on informal support of extended family and friends to help with their parental responsibilities. Thus, the study supports Broadhurst's (2008) finding that family is of central and normative relevance for parenting support but also that although family provides a safety net in the migration context, locally based friends are actively involved in parental support (Bojarczuk and Mühlau, 2018).

6.4.3 Social Ties

The study found that Polish parents possess strong social ties despite residing in a diverse and "disadvantaged" neighbourhood.

In the majority of cases, parents' support networks in this study consisted of Polish friends, who shared similar values, experiences and commonalities. These networks served the purpose of parental as well as child interaction with others and provided emotional and practical support (see Chapter 2, Section 8.3). In some instances, parents described also having established friendships with non-Polish colleagues at work. These facilitated better integration in the diverse settings and supported English language development. Findings support the notion that patterns of connections reflect a multitude of factors. While some operate at the level of the individual, others are arguably associated with cultural dimensions of society (Wetherell, 2009; Gilchrist et al., 2010b).

Contributing to literature that investigated the ways that individuals encounter, access and are affected by societal arrangements within their lives (Fram, 2003; see Chapter 2, Section 8.3), findings from this study suggested that the majority of Polish parents possessed strong bonding social capital, which refers to close family members and friends, and is based on shared social identity. In some cases, parents also spoke about weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) with neighbours and colleagues, in literature referred to as 'bridging' social capital (see Chapter 2, Section 8.2).

As a result of bonding capital not always being available in the post migration context, many parents tried to make use of bridging social capital by establishing ties with neighbours and work colleagues to connect to wider society and gain access to necessary resources (see Chapter 2, Section 8.2). In terms of neighbourhood interaction, reports of rejection as well as describing a rather slow establishment of connections was either linked to parents' own attitudes or those of their diverse neighbours. Findings support Crisp and Robinson's (2010) notion that neighbourhood interaction is determined by mutual willingness to engage in positive relations. In the culturally diverse ARD neighbourhood interaction was frequently selective. Bonds were more likely formed where neighbours shared identity or identified a common ground (i.e. children of same age). Findings support research that argued residents in mixed communities often experience feelings of ambivalence towards their neighbours of different cultural backgrounds and, coupled with lack of time, as well as crime rates and transience in the neighbourhood, this disrupts the establishment of neighbourhood ties (Warr, 2005; Crisp and Robinson, 2010) and establishment of social support (see Chapter 2, Section 8.3).

It was established in earlier sections of this chapter that as a result of migration, families in this study lived on low income and additionally resided in an area frequently classified as disadvantaged due to high levels of unemployment (see Chapter 3, Section 3). Literature repeatedly argued the negative effects of those environments on social networks and resource provision (see Chapter 2, Section 8.4; Turney and Harknett, 2010). Findings from this study however showed that although neighbourhood ties were not always strong or present and the Polish community was considered restrictive and demanding, all parents possessed social ties with friends to replace or complement support provision of extended family. In addition, employment was found to be a protective factor as engagement with work colleagues allowed for a connection to wider society and additional resources, such as language learning.

6.4.4 Poverty as Deficiency

Service providers assume poverty or low SES as deficiency in need of intervention.

Support service providers in this study reported limited engagement with Polish families despite believing that they needed support as a consequence of residing in a disadvantaged neighbourhood. Proposing, for instance, that low income coupled with high rental cost, eviction notices and health issues affected most residents, a service provider suggested this to be also relevant for Polish families, but that little or no support was sought. Where support to Polish families had been provided it was targeted and related to intra-family conflict arising due to adaptation problems as well as neighbourhood hostility because of cultural diversity.

Research in the past (see Chapter 2, Section 8.5) suggested that parenting is a demanding responsibility and argued for the importance of providing support for all parents. However, in reviewing current literature on help seeking and formal service provision it was identified that some work focused on the interplay of poverty, disadvantaged neighbourhood and need for state intervention as poor families residing in areas with ‘territorial stigma’ (Wacquant, 2008) were referred to as underclass with low education and no aspiration, thus needing regulation (Morris et al., 2018; Chapter 2, Section 8.5). Findings from such research suggest that service providers continue to equate poverty with deficiency (Roubinov and Boyce, 2017) instead of giving consideration to the interplay of culture and economy as well as the resources poor families actually possess.

To some extent, this was also evident in this study as findings suggested an assumption of need made by service provision due to families’ social status as well as neighbourhood characteristics instead of placing more emphasis on cultural aspects such as migration challenges, but also resources families actually possess and the functionality of specific child rearing practices. An interesting finding in this context related to Polish attitudes towards poverty. There was a strong distinction being made between positionality in the low socioeconomic strata but engaging in employment and relying on what was

considered unjustified welfare dependency. Evidence of a preference for being classified as “working poor” reflects Polish norms of a good work ethic and calls for sensitivity among service providers when dealing with cultural diversity.

6.4.5 Supports for Polish Migrant Parents

The study concludes that variables such as migration status require specific services that parents can access.

Support which parents required most frequently in terms of parenting related to childcare, and in most cases necessitated the use of formal support in the form of preschool/creches and after school care, as informal support and alternative arrangements were not always possible. However, cost and availability of these formal services were perceived as not meeting parental needs adequately, causing pressure rather than easing parental work family-conflict. While targeted and free service provision such as afterschool care was available for particularly disadvantaged families in the neighbourhood, these services neglected parents like the participants in this study who were employed but with low income. Having no alternative affordable option for their children resulted in parents working alternate shifts and sharing childcare duties with their partners. Findings suggest that unequal distribution of childcare provision as a resource along the lines of social class widens the segregation of neighbourhood already impacted by cultural diversity.

By having identified and outlined the pathways of Polish support access in Section 6.4, the study supports Featherstone and Broadhurst’s (2003) argument that help seeking is a socially organised activity, and primarily an informal one, as Polish parents rely on family and friends. However, findings also suggested that support provision needs to move beyond its focus on poverty and assumed associated negative impact. Variables such as migrant status call for the provision of specific services which help parents in their challenges to adapt to their post-migration environment. Parental reports of their request for affordable childcare and extra-curricular activities as well as information provision and low-cost family centred projects, proposed that families do benefit from formal support provision but that an understanding

of what types of assistance are most useful is necessary (Ferguson et al., 2016).

6.4.6 Cultural Dissonance in the Professional-Parent Relationship

A final conclusion with regard to the final research question of this study is the existence of cultural dissonance in the service provider-Polish migrant relationship which leads to lack of, discontinuation and involuntary service use.

By comparing both the findings from parents and service providers, it was evident that there was a disconnect between what Polish parents in this study considered they needed and how service providers perceived Polish families. As previously pointed out, parents referred to by service providers were different to those participating in the study, clearly demonstrating intra-group differences.

Having previously listed a variety of services, such as childcare, which was considered to aid the adaptation process, parents additionally voiced the request for more information provision as well as timely engagement with targeted services, particularly health care. Many of their expectations were the result of experiences in their home country and it was found that when Irish services did not meet expectations, parents sought support privately, within their own community or in Poland. From the service providers' perspective, Polish parents were described as stubborn and difficult to engage. It was for instance reported that a family discontinued their visits to an Irish speech and language therapist as they disapproved of his professional judgement. In a different case, a father defended his paternal attitude as stereo-typical Polish and was found reluctant to engage with a targeted service to deal with his parenting supposedly affecting family life negatively. Overall, it was evident that service providers had a limited knowledge of what Polish parents need, frequently assuming a natural integration into the system.

Parenting is a complex multiply determined construct with variability not only across the SES gradient but also in terms of culture, which necessitates service providers to deal with and meet a complexity of needs as well as be culturally competent. Supporting research that previously investigated

professionals' experience of working with culturally diverse service users (Phillimore, 2015; Lindenmeyer et al., 2016), the study found that while trying to meet the needs of Polish migrants that did engage with formal Irish support services (i.e. schedule appointments around shift work), there was an expectation of parents to adapt to the nature of service practice in Ireland rather quickly. This was found problematic as families defined and appraised problems differently resulting in either discontinuation of service use or involuntary engagement (see in earlier Section 6.4). In order to counteract this disharmony between services and families, the study proposes a framework found applicable to Polish parents' perspectives on parenting, thus supporting effective service provision.

6.4.7 Summary of Key Findings relating to Third Research Question on Help-Seeking

Critiquing the assumption of poverty or low SES as deficiency, findings revealed that Polish parents have a variety of resources which compensate traditional SES indicators. However, migrant status requires consideration both in terms of service providers' cultural competence as well as the provision of specific services to help combat migrations challenges.

Findings on help-seeking suggested that parenting in the Polish context is a private matter and that formal supports were considered intrusive. Help seeking was primarily informal and sought from the family as well as friends. It was identified that despite low SES and neighbourhood characteristics of disadvantage parents possessed strong bonding social capital (family and friends) as well as moderate bridging social capital (work colleagues and neighbours) but found that Polish community, as a collective, placed excessive demands on its members and restricted their freedom. The section further presented the continued perception of professionals that poverty equates with deficiency and needs state intervention. The study found that this notion ignores both the various dimensions of poverty, needs associated with other variables such as migration as well as the resources parents possess to tackle low SES problems. In terms of culturally diverse service users, it was found that professionals' apparent lack of cultural competence as well as

the expectation on service users to quickly adapt to the service practice of the host country impacts service use. Thus, the study emphasises the necessity to construct a framework which explains the complexity of ethnic minority and migrant parenting and make service provision more effective.

6.5 Developing a Framework for Polish Migrant Parenting

After careful consideration of the findings, it was concluded that no single theoretical framework used in previous research was sufficient for the investigation of Polish migrant parenting, which is arguably a multidisciplinary phenomenon linked to different bodies of knowledge. As effective service provision requires recommendations, the study proposes the construction of a new conceptual lens by interlinking concepts which were found most important and relevant. Thus, the new framework will provide a tool for support providers and policy makers to help them understand Polish parenting and can be applied to other situations as well as add to the theoretical knowledge base.

6.5.1 Previous Theoretical Frameworks

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model is useful in the consideration of parenting in different contexts but lacks the acknowledgement of culture as more proximal to the parenting experience (see Chapter 2, Section 3.4). By focusing specifically on the cultural context to understand parenting, Harkness et al. (2007) proposed 'ethnotheories' which form an indirectly linked hierarchy of beliefs (see Chapter 2, Section 4). However, in agreement with Bose (2016), 'ethnotheories' focus on discreet and stable cultural contexts, ignoring how social transformations such as migration, impact parental belief systems. Further, ethnotheories provide no insight on the origin of implicit ideas, which form the top of the hierarchy. Findings support Belsky's model 'Determinants of Parenting' (see Chapter 2, Section 3.4) which proposed three core factors, drawing attention to the role one's own childhood in shaping parenting. While individually, the above theories fail to address the complexity of Polish parenting adequately, it is suggested that an integrative model can provide a new conceptual lens and aid to understanding the phenomenon at hand.

6.5.2 Integrated Model of Polish Migrant Parenting

In order to conceptualise Polish parenting, it was found pivotal to consider the emergence of parenting on an individual level in the first instance. Thus, and by drawing on Harkness et al. (2007) and Belsky (2014) in combination with the findings of this study, I propose that universally, parents' initial ideas and subsequent behaviours of parenting stem from own childhood experiences. These lay the foundation for parenting by informing specifics such as discipline strategies as well as values and norms. As one becomes a parent, these ideas and behaviours are then mediated by competing belief systems and practices of others, e.g. spouse/partner, resulting in parents' actual child rearing practices (see Figure 16).

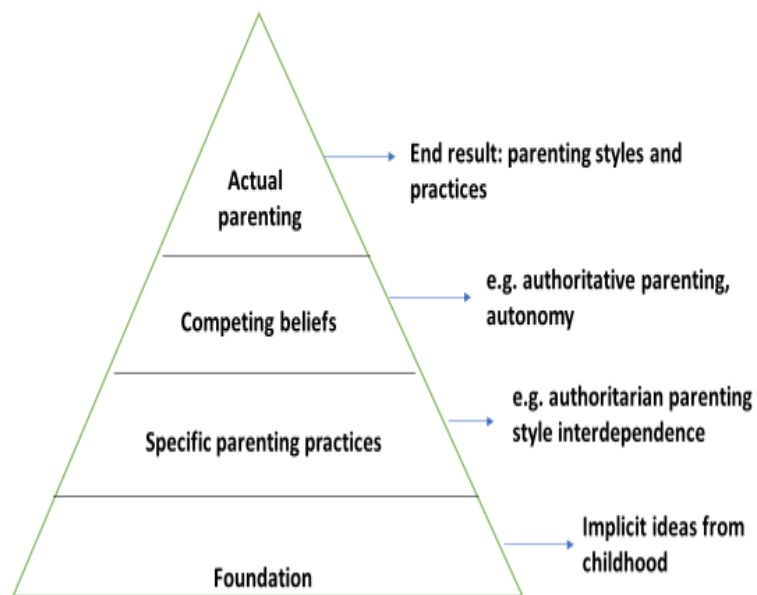


Figure 16; Model of the Emergence of Parenting

As findings from this study support previous arguments that parenting does not occur in isolation, I next propose that the above modelled construct of parenting be situated in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model where it interacts, is interrelated and interdependent with all layers of the system. Bronfenbrenner stated that

‘Whether parents can perform effectively in their child-rearing roles ... are related to such external factors as flexibility of job schedules, adequacy of childcare arrangements, the presence of friends and neighbours ... the quality of health and social services ... public policies and practices (1979, p.7).

Bronfenbrenner has repeatedly been criticised for operationalising culture as separate to the individual (Mistry et al., 2003). This study also supports this critique. I thus argue that any conceptualisation needs to consider culture as more proximal to parenting, permeating all systems of the ecological model (see Figure 17).

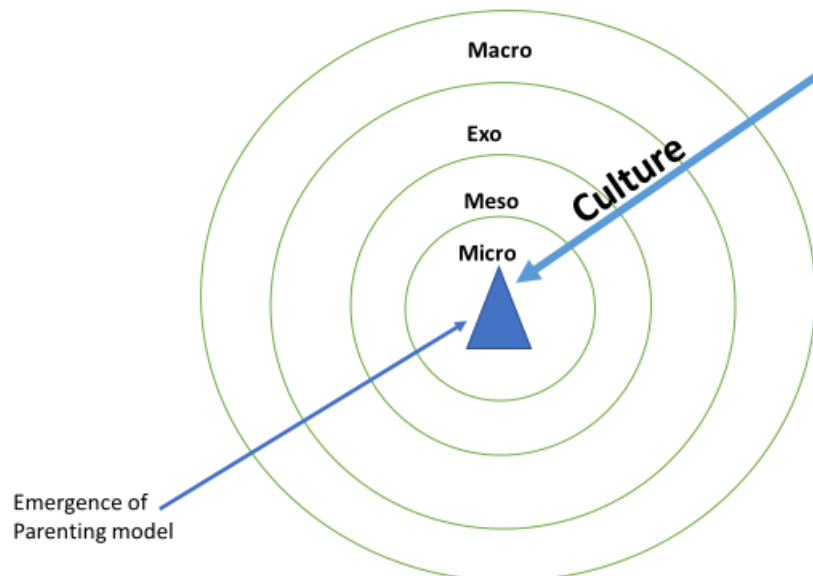


Figure 17; Model of Parenting in Context

By combining key ideas of Harkness et. al (2007), Belsky (2014) and Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1986; 1994; 2006), the above model arguably provides a more detailed and comprehensive framework of parenting as it accounts for the complexity of the individual parent and context but also the importance of culture as proximal to the parenting experience. However, the model as it stands assumes a relatively stable cultural context, which ignores social transformations such as migration.

In this study evidence suggested that Polish migrant parenting does not only take place in a host country's context but continues to be tied to Poland, making it necessary for parents to negotiate and interact with potentially competing contexts. The end result is a partial adaptation to their new environment while at the same time maintaining some of their previously held beliefs.

The next construct (Figure 18), the *Integrated Model of Polish Migrant Parenting*, is one of the study's contributions to knowledge and draws not only but expands on existing key ideas previously presented.

The model illustrates that at the centre, own childhood experiences build the foundation for Polish parents' initial parenting ideas and behaviours which, as they become parents, are mediated by competing belief systems and practices, resulting in their actual child rearing practices (see previous Figure 16, *Model of the Emergence of Parenting*). Under ordinary circumstances, this parenting construct is embedded and interacts with the relatively stable ecological system in Poland, where culture permeates all layers of the system and is proximal to parenting (see previous Figure 17, *Model of Parenting in Context*). This idea was evident in parental narratives of e.g. a Polish work ethic, interdependence, authoritarian parenting, a parentocratic education system but also lack of institutional support.

However, migration, which in the Polish case is frequently transient in nature, impacts this embeddedness in and interaction with a relatively stable system. While previously positioned in Polish contexts alone, the parenting construct is now also embedded and expected to interact with the ecological system and interrelated cultural proximity of the host country, which can contrast

previous environments and beliefs significantly (e.g. autonomy, authoritative parenting, meritocratic education system, institutional support). To mitigate the consequences of migration, parents consolidate the two ecological systems influencing the parenting construct, through both partial adaptation as well as maintenance of previously held beliefs, e.g. authoritative parenting, transnational caregiving, Polish language maintenance, Polish work ethic.

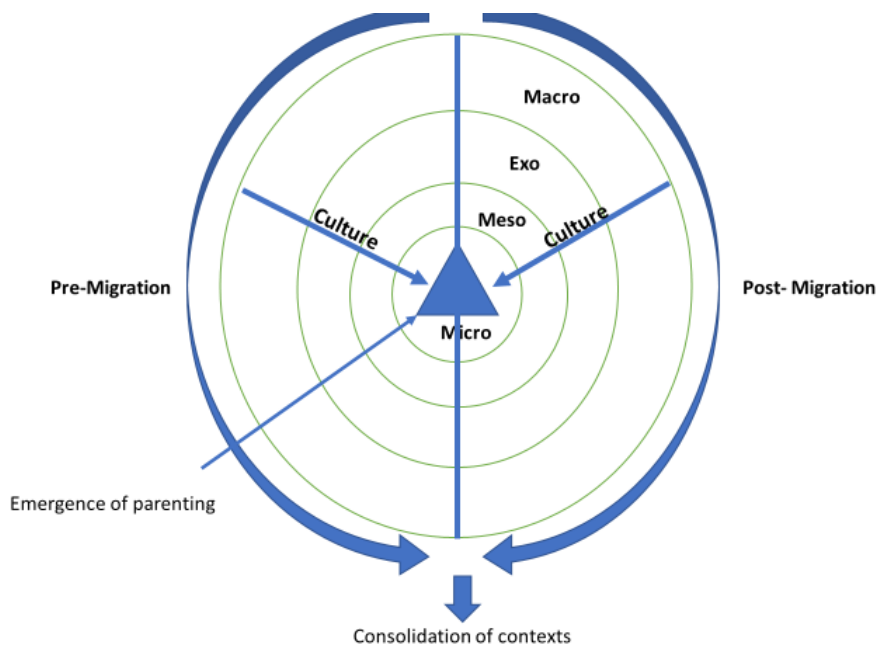


Figure 18; Integrated Model of Polish Migrant Parenting

This model is applicable to other parenting scenarios, including but not restricted to other migrant parenting scenarios, emphasising the need for service provision to become familiar with other cultural contexts and belief systems in order to effectively support migrant parents.

The model is useful for policy, practice and academia as it not only highlights and demonstrates the complexity of the individual parent, but also that context and culture are not clear-cut or stable. As such it can be used as an investigative tool to better understand parenting practices by combination of the individual parent's belief system in addition to both the home and host country context.

6.6 Conclusion

The research highlights that Polish migrant parenting is a complex, multi-dimensional and dynamic phenomenon, which requires insight to both Polish childhood experiences as well as specific cultural norms and values to better understand parental challenges in the adaptation to their post migration environment. Variations in parenting should not be viewed as deficiency but instead independent effects of, and the complex interaction between, culture, social class and minority status need to be recognised. This highlights the importance of cultural competence in service provision, the recognition of resources parents possesses but also a sensitivity to the specific needs of migrant parents. By sharing findings which resulted in the construction of a new framework, the study hopes to have shed light on Polish specificities, provide a conceptual lens for future research and aid in the provision of more effective services.

This chapter has discussed the study's findings in light of the reviewed literature presented in Chapter 2. The following chapter concludes this study by outlining the contribution to knowledge as well as discussing the implications and making recommendations for policy, service provision and future research.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief summary of the thesis as a whole as well as a discussion on implications and recommendations for policy and service provision aimed at Polish migrant parents in Ireland. The chapter also outlines recommendations for future research.

7.2 Aims and Objectives

This study examined Polish parents' perspectives on child rearing and help-seeking in a culturally diverse neighbourhood.

The central research questions were:

1. What are the cultural norms shaping how Polish parents perceive their role as parents in the Ardaun-Roscam-Doughiska (ARD) neighbourhood?
2. What is the Polish parenting experience in the ARD neighbourhood?
3. What are the attitudes toward help seeking among Polish parents in the ARD neighbourhood?

A further objective of this study was to make policy and practice recommendations concerning parenting support for Polish parents in the Republic of Ireland.

7.3 Contribution of Reflexivity

Reflexivity in this study was a valuable tool as it helped to a) examine the impact of my position, perspective but also presence, b) evaluate the entire research process, including the choice of methodology and study outcomes, and c) enable scrutiny in terms of research integrity by presenting an account of research decisions. Reflexivity involved ongoing discussion and disagreements with the supervisory team and the continuous negotiation of personal thoughts and feelings to achieve an adequate sense of balance. During data analysis, reflexivity called for the consideration of both literature that confirmed and contradicted my interpretations. Interpretations were justified by relating them to findings of previous studies and indicate their alignment. Explanations as to why interpretations corroborated or

contradicted previous research was then offered and backed with participants' data. Efforts to remain conscious and transparent in utilising the voices of study participants as authentically as possible during the analysis phase supported the trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

7.4 Contribution and Summary

This study has contributed to a number of research areas that traverse parenting. The intention of this research was to gain first-hand expressions of Polish perspectives on childrearing and help-seeking. Underlying this aim was the identified need to familiarise the Irish State with its culturally diverse population as well as with the specific challenges that diversity brings for ethnic minorities/migrants and the majority population.

This study has shown that parenting is a multidimensional and dynamic construct, meaning that the various dimensions of parenting interact in a complex system. Culture is particularly important to our understanding of parenting. However, in terms of conceptual orientation, the ecological model requires revision so as to better account for migrant groups. What must be recognised and acknowledged when understanding parenting among migrant groups is the independent effects of, and the complex interaction between, culture, social class and minority status. Hence, there are significant cross-cultural differences, not least with respect to the sometimes-conflicting parenting goals of interdependence and independence. At the same time, many Polish migrant parents are committed to parenting practices (along with gender roles) very much at odds with those of their own parents, although some experience difficulties acting on those commitments in the migration scenario. This has important implications for how we should think of authoritative parenting. Although it is associated with the most successful outcomes for children, it is arguably a construct of Western societies. Migrant parents also can face significant challenges adapting to such cultural norms both because of stressors in their post migration environment but also the demands of and commitment to their home country.

7.5 Implications and Recommendations

The findings and answers to the research questions have a number of implications for policy, service delivery and research, which reflect recommendations being made.

7.5.1 Implications and Recommendations for Policy

Firstly, as identified through the course of this research, culture-specific norms and values have a significant impact on both how parents perceive their role as parents as well as their attitudes towards help-seeking, which arguably vary cross-culturally. While Irish policy recognises the importance of parents and the need to prioritise better parental supports, which stems from the ‘whole child’ perspective in the government’s commitment to children and young people, it has not considered the cultural variability in terms of specific beliefs that guide parenting as well as culturally appropriate supports. There needs to be a change in attitudes which acknowledges culture as being proximal rather than separate from children’s development and the parenting experience.

Secondly, while adopting an ecological perspective, which highlights that parenting not only occurs within the unique context that is specific to individual parent-child relationships but also within a broader context of family, community and society, policy aimed at Polish families ought to consider that their parenting occurs both within the context of their host as well as home countries. This means that Polish parents continuously negotiate norms and values while adapting to their post-migration environment.

Thirdly, existing policy aimed at migrants largely focuses on their integration into Irish society as well as on attributes associated with low socio-economic status. While it was evident that Polish families are frequently in low-income jobs and some indeed rely on governmental support, there is a Polish cultural stigma around welfare dependency and formal assistance which needs to be acknowledged as it will often disguise actual needs for support. Findings showing that parents in employment lack appropriate childcare, have difficulty in balancing work/life and meeting high rental costs but also enjoy strong social networks and often academic as well as professional

qualifications suggest that policy should consider the resources Polish parents actually possess and tailor supports accordingly.

In terms of integration, existing policies aim to enable migrants to participate on an equal basis with those of Irish heritage and ensure that barriers to full participation in Irish society are identified and addressed. Findings from this study outlined issues with this endeavour. Insistence, for example, on English language use in the school setting and subsequent parental fears of children losing their Polish identity linked to Polish language, highlights the need for policies that address the successful integration of culturally diverse groups in the Republic of Ireland without threatening their cultural identities.

7.5.2 Implications and Recommendations for Service Providers

Findings from this study identified a number of areas where services were either not culturally appropriate for Polish parents or deficient in meeting their needs. It was evident that research such as this, which focused on participants' perspectives, can highlight problems and issues in support systems.

The adaption process to a post-migration environment arguably leads to cultural dissonance within the Polish family as well as with service providers. Higher levels of service provider cultural competence with respect to culture-specific norms and values would enable them to better support Polish parents in this process. However, as the process of adaptation is complex and fluid, a one-size-fits-all approach will not suffice, highlighting the need for individual needs assessment.

Services in the ARD neighbourhood were identified as specifically focusing on the integration of its culturally diverse population as well as on welfare-dependent residents. Findings from this study revealed that while Polish parents considered formal parenting support as invasive to families' privacy, more general supports such as free homework clubs and afterschool care targeted welfare recipients and were described as ignoring Polish migrants in full time employment. While strategies of integration and extensive support for the most vulnerable is warranted, currently services do not meet the needs of all residents.

Insufficient information provision on the availability of services, difficulty in accessing services as a result of waiting times as well as the lack of affordable places/spaces to accommodate limited quality family time were identified as the main deficiencies in service delivery. The preference expressed for Polish services for more targeted support highlights the importance of culture-specific norms and values in targeted service provision. Overall, findings from this study suggested that consultation with Polish parents is pivotal in the design and delivery of Irish services in order to ensure they are accessed by parents and are effective for them and their children.

7.5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Although this research focused specifically on the perspectives of Polish migrant parents concerning childrearing and help-seeking in Ireland, there is a need for similar research to be conducted for other migrant groups. Analysing similarities and differences between groups would assist in developing appropriate policies and services that better support migrant parents.

In addition, because of its small sample size, this study cannot claim generalisability or representativeness of the broader Polish parent population in Ireland. Hence, further research encompassing the broader population would be necessary in order to gain a better understanding of variations within this population.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the study's contribution to knowledge alongside discussing the implications and making recommendations for policy, service provision and future research.

The study highlighted the significant role culture plays in terms of parenting alongside the independent effects of, and complex interaction between culture, social class and minority status. Based on the perspectives of Polish parents, the study described the actual life experiences of Polish migrant parents and was thus able to highlight problems and issues in parenting and support systems. Overall, findings call for a revision of the ecological model and by developing an *Integrated Model of Polish Migrant Parenting*, the

study has not only provided a useful tool for policy and service provision but has also contributed to the emerging field of research on migrant parents in Ireland.

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Appendix A-Field Notes Extract

8.June 2017

Meeting with Fr (name of Polish clergy) in Galway

Polish family life private. This stems from the experiences of parents 30 years ago in the communist era. The state was not friendly towards people and they had the impression that the state would harm them, so family life was kept private. Further, most Polish don't integrate as their migration is seen as temporary.

Fr (name of Polish clergy) will announce study in Doughiska mass on 17th June 2017

.....

15.June 2017

Interview with P8 and P9 in Roscam. Husband calm and friendly but dominant, doing all the talking (confidence, language?). P9 at some point emotional and left to get a glass of water for herself (interview question on support from family). When asked about rent price, couple avoidant. Employment also vague (some work done at/ from home)

.....

16.June 2017

Interview with P11 and P12. English ok with P11 but P12 a little embarrassed to speak English? Ironing most of the time and little interaction.

P11 comments that Polish often seen as 2nd class citizens when accessing services (i.e. garage) but can't complain because?

P11 seemed to want to go unnoticed as doesn't want to make a fuss (works in Mc Donald's). Wife had previously been working. Polish different mentality.

P11 emphasises listening to all parents (worried.... not only Poles have problems). Mentioning of gypsies in playground: "Had to mind our stuff"

P11 appreciative of my accent.... concerned Irish accent person come to conduct interview

P11 and P12 constantly looking out the window and door was locked....

Appendix B-Analytical Memo

MEMO: **Work**

Definition: Umbrella term used by participants to describe paid labour and unpaid domestic labour.

Codes: Importance of work; Parent's work ethic in own childhood; Impact of work on family time; Impact of work on children; Work and gender; Work and childcare; Work and health

Summary of data

• **Importance of work now /then and the division of labour**

Participants generally describe money and better opportunities as main motivation for immigration and further mention people's frequent engagement in extensive paid labour to improve lifestyles: **"They, most the people, came in just to earn the money. That's why they want to have as much as they can, actually earn. Especially they don't have kids and they can work, and they don't mind having overtime."** (Participant 6, 381-384). **"He is really hard-working person and he is like addicted from work, so hard to keep him at home."** (Participant 7, 52-54).

Participants recall their own parents' emphasis on paid labour as well as unpaid domestic labour during childhood, resulting in lack of time for family life but also the need for children to take up household responsibilities from a young age: **"Is different because when we were, when my parents, there was so important the work, food for kids. My parents was like most important was cleaning everything."** (Participant 4, 68-69, 82). **"I have two younger sisters, so I'm the oldest, yeah. So I have to say, when I was 10, my youngest sister she came to world and so I actually took my mother's part to care for her because, because she was working you know."**(Participant 13, 34-35). **"My childhood suffered through that as well because I had to be responsible very quickly, because of the younger brothers and you know like I just lost something that like. My Mum was working always, she had her own business. She was running her own business; my Dad was always working so obviously my sister and myself were the oldest ones so had to."** (Participant 15, 24-31).

Female participants tend to engage in more domestic labour than their partners while generally having to negotiate paid employment to suit childcare arrangements: **"I. is focus on the cleaning stuff at home or like you see ironing or something. My duty is from time to time make the dinner for the family or simple things like hoovering from time to time. I'm not doing that so often, yeah, so simple things like for a man."**

(Participant 11, 47-49). “When we worked together on one shift, because I did everything during the weekend. I had to clean the house, cook the dinner and everything. Now is a little bout for him like to do some more to show initiative.” (Participant 6,102-104).” I have to mind the little one and trying to be the best and do the, all food and everything, I’m trying to do on my own. Not easy. Actually, my maternity leave is finished. Yeah, I have to think about, I can’t leave kids, too small, and I don’t even want to leave them with someone else, so I have to wait few months. I don’t know what I will do. I don’t wanna go for social. Maybe I will find some part-time or something. When my boyfriend is off or something. No, I have to think and talk to him.” (Participant 7, 73-77, 203-214).

•Mediating childcare and the impact of work on family and health

Female participants and some of their partners were frequently employed on shift work basis to avoid the need for childcare: “Since I decide working weekends, I think it’s not too bad because I’m here for kids actually during the week.” (Participant 6, 51-53) “My husband is sleeping upstairs, he had night shift, so we swap. So, he is doing night shift now and I finished my night shift last night and I’m just. Before I was doing day shifts, which is the same thing because. So yeah, we have to work. There is no way other way. I have to say not too bad I’m lucky coz I don’t have to hire any childcare or anything you know. There is no other way that I put my child to childcare, paying 12 hours” (Participant 13, 83-84, 90-91,107).

Participants expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of time with family and the impact this has on their children: “Now it’s I spend more time at work or away or whatever so, you know, we see. Now, it will be a big challenge. We needs to organise our self again, you know. It’s 2 kids now.” (Participant 3,104-107).” I’m job sharing with husband, so we have little time together. It’s hard to know how to spend time together.” (Participant 5, 9-11).” I still miss the weekend together.” (Participant 6, 109).” Another thing that I hate myself is that we don’t get enough time with them. Work consumes, that’s problems.” (Participant 8, 129-131).” Problem is because I work very different shifts, so the problem is with my work, because sometimes I. is there alone. On evenings sometimes I’m sleeping in morning because I have nightshift so that’s difficult.” (Participant 11, 44). “I get her ready for school, then her Dad kind of takes over, kind of kills me sometimes because he does all the activities with her because I’m at work.” (Participant 15, 51-54). “Sometimes I have to force him to like do the evening time with him to go to put him to sleep or at least that because he’s growing so fast. I’m trying to convince him to some more time for him. It is important.” (Participant 7, 55-59). “She complains a lot I work too much.” (Participant 15, 75). “My daughter she started cry when he was leaving yesterday. It’s just so, you know. She was like ‘Daddy, don’t go, like we wanna, I wanna be together’. My daughter was kind of distressed.” (Participant 13, 85-86,104).

Work also seemed to have an impact on some participants' (mental) health: **“I am stressed when my children are ill as I have to take sick leave from work.....Polish women are always tired.....I was a little depressed when I had my first child but there is no time to be depressed now.”(Participant 5, 7-8, 32, 55).** **“Is the worse job you ever had. You can find it in the hotel. This uses all your energy.” (Participant 7, 195-196).** **“My thyroid. I tend to be depressed and I get anxious, so I’m on the pills, yeah. But it depends on the I don’t know. See my shift work, it’s not very good for my thyroid, because. And I’m struggle.” (Participant 13, 256-260).**

Deviant cases:

Not all participants spoke about work on a personal level.

A single mother of one made no personal work-related comments during the interview. One married participant who is self-employed omitted the discussion of her work experience, but this may be due to her mother permanently residing in her home, potentially minimising the issues voiced by other participants. A very quiet stay-at-home-mum of two who is caregiver of a child with autism and whose husband is employed on shift work basis, simply responded “ME” without elaborating when asked who was responsible for domestic duties. A single mother of two who is caregiver to a child with autism verbalised her desire to return to work but believes this not to be financially feasible: **“I would like to go back to work myself. Just when you calculate. I actually calculated myself I would be able to pay for childcare for A. and after school for J. and the rent, but I don’t know what else. But I have no idea what we would eat.” (Participant 1, 183-185).**

A young mother of one who is cohabiting and receiving disability allowance has more time to spend with her daughter and accepts her domestic responsibilities due to her partner’s work:” **I’m on a disability allowance so I’m not working at the moment, so I’m free to do more than I would be with my daughter in Poland probably. In Poland there would be more issues to get disability allowance first of all and you know probably money issues as well. Here I am secure.... It’s sharing definitely but you know, I’m at home and my partner, he is working all day, so he is coming back around 6, 7 o’clock so it’s usually bedtime for my daughter.” (Participant 14, 10-17, 32-33)**

Points for further consideration

- In what type of paid labour force do Polish nationals participate? Are Polish nationals generally found in low pay employment? Are Irish standards of living met? Do Polish nationals expectations in the standard of living differ? (Language as barrier to employment; Low pay employment requires two people’s income and therefore some type of childcare arrangement to meet living costs; Low pay and impact on health

literature; Lack of information on income supports?)

- Census of Population 2016 – Profile 11 Employment, Occupations and Industry, Labour Force, Nationality, Migration, Foreign Languages
<http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp11eoi/cp11eoi/lfnmfl/>

Memos that could be linked to current memo of WORK:

Childcare; Formal support; Housing; Language; Money and Finances; Parents' health)

Transmission of work ethic: Is work ethic symbolic and essential to maintaining Polish culture or simply a necessity to meet financial needs? (Consider memos on Polish mentality and Traditions/Values)

Preserving and discarding patriarchal values and gender roles (Consider memos on Polish mentality Traditions/Values, Parenting Styles)

Research objectives:

What role does work play for Polish parents and what is their experience? (Important; work ethic; negative experience as lack of family time)

Is the emphasis on work and the mother's negotiation between joining the workforce and staying at home a cultural norm of parenting for the Polish community? (Preserving and discarding patriarchal values and gender roles; necessity on financial grounds)

Appendix C-Distressed Persons Protocol



DISTRESSED PERSONS PROTOCOL

PARENTING IN IRELAND: POLISH PERSPECTIVES ON CHILD REARING AND HELP SEEKING IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

Research that elicits stories of personal experience is by its very nature probing, particularly where emotive issues are discussed (e.g. parenting; child-rearing; division of responsibilities; immigration). The possible occurrence of feelings of distress or of a participant becoming uncomfortable with the topics depends on the person, their characteristics and personality, and their individual experience. Distress is therefore difficult to predict.

The method of data collection from parents in this study is individual semi-structured interviews. In the event of a participant indicating distress during interviews, the researcher will immediately follow the Distressed Persons Protocol.

If a participant indicates that they are uncomfortable or experiencing emotional distress, or if they exhibit behaviours suggestive of such, the following course of action will be taken:

1. The participant will be immediately asked whether they want to continue the interview, discontinue at this time or withdraw from the study.
2. If the participant decides to discontinue at this time, they will be asked if they would like to continue at another time using a different venue and different method to speak about the problems or issues they are facing (e.g. face to face, phone call).
3. The participant can withdraw if they choose to withdraw and the researcher will reassure them that existing data will not be used if they so wish.
4. Researcher and participant can decide if another person (practitioner or partner) should be informed of the situation to ensure participant safety and well-being.
5. The participant can decide to seek further help from their local general practitioner or any other services as suggested on the Adult Contact Information Sheet.
6. Time will be given to ensure that the participant's distress or upset has diminished sufficiently by asking the participant how they feel prior to concluding the meeting.
7. If the participant wishes to return to the interview, they are free to do so after distress has diminished sufficiently, and they have been reassured that they can discontinue or withdraw from the study at any point if they so wish.

Appendix D-Interview Schedule Parents

Protocol for interviews with Polish parents (English Version)

Individual semi-structured interviews will be carried out with (approximately 10-20) Polish mothers and fathers, who are caregivers of primary school children and reside in Doughiska, Galway.

Rationale

Individual semi-structured interviews with Polish parents offer the opportunity of a more in-depth perspective on parenting, parental experiences and help seeking behaviour.

Recruitment

Service Providers will be supplied with recruitment letters for Polish parents whom they feel would be interested and could benefit from participation in the study. The recruitment letter for parents outlines the study and invites parents to an information session. Merlin Woods Primary School has already agreed to the circulation of study invitations.

As stated in the recruitment letter for parents, a participant information session has been scheduled to take place in the Merlin Woods Primary School on Thursday, 27th of April 2017 @ 12:30 where the researcher will explain the scope and procedure of the study to all potential participants. An interpreter will be present to ensure that the content of this information session has been understood by all potential participants.

In order to accommodate limited English language skills of some Polish parents recruited, a second information session and signing session is planned to be held on the same premises on Thursday, 11th of May, 2017 @ 12:45. Participants, who have had time to formulate questions, will be facilitated by an interpreter in asking the researcher for additional information and addressing any concerns or queries they may have. The researcher and interpreter will also be available to provide support in signing consent forms for participants who wish to complete and return forms. Additional forms will be available at this stage for participants who have misplaced these, and participants not present at the previous session. A Sign-In-Form, which will capture contact details of attendees at both information sessions will enable the researcher to make two follow- ups on potential participation. Parents who attended the first information session, but not the follow up session will be able to return consent forms via post through the distribution of self-addressed envelopes. The same arrangement applies to participants only attending the follow up session to ensure that all participants are given two weeks to decide if they would like to take part in the study.

Methodology

Interviews will take place on an agreed date and time in the parents' home or the Merlin Woods Primary School, as appropriate, in order to facilitate participants to the greatest degree possible. In order to ensure that the interview retains a focus on the main research questions while allowing participants an opportunity to provide in-depth and valuable information, interviews will be conducted in a semi-structured format. The interview schedule (below) will act as a guideline for interview discussions; however, participants will be encouraged to elaborate on particular topics and issues to the extent that they wish. If found necessary during the recruitment process, an interpreter will be present during the interview to assist both the participant and the researcher so that interview material will be documented accurately. In the event of a participant becoming distressed during the interview, the Distressed Persons Protocol will be followed, and the researcher will provide individuals with any information or support that may be of benefit.

In the event of a disclosure of child abuse and domestic abuse to the researcher, the Child Protection Protocol has been put in place.

Use of Translators/Interpreters in Research Study:

The services of a Translator/Interpreter will be required at particular stages of this study, providing differing services (see below) as the project develops. The decision has been made to enlist Iwona O'Donoghue who is employed with the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre and holds a Master's degree in English Language Studies and Translation. Iwona has research experience and is committed to the professional code of ethics which entails confidentiality, impartiality and professionalism. These ethical standards will assist the researcher to ensure the role played by the translator will meet the highest ethical standards possible.

Prior to initiating field work, the researcher will schedule a formal meeting with the translator/interpreter. The meeting will provide an opportunity to outline the study, the role of the translator/interpreter, to review the ethical considerations that are relevant to this study and the field work plans. The engagement of the Translator/Interpreter in this project will include:

- Translation of Recruitment Material, Participant Information Sheets, Participant Consent forms, Interview Schedule and the Adult Contact Information Sheet.
- Attendance of Interpreter at Information Sessions to act as interpreter for questions that arise, and to meet with and interpret on behalf of potential participants, communicating as necessary to the researcher.

•Attendance of Interpreter at Individual Interviews to acting as interpreter if found necessary.

At the start of the interview, the researcher will record basic information including marital status, number, gender and ages of children, relationship to child (biological child, child by marriage etc.), and years married, divorced or remarried.

Interview schedule

A. Views on Parenting

1. Tell me a little about your family
2. Describe your knowledge or experiences with children prior to becoming a parent. Did you prepare for parenting? If so, how did you prepare?
3. Is there anything different about bringing up your child here in Ireland versus Poland? Elaborate
4. How would you describe a typical day in your house?
5. How do you and your partner share parenting duties? How similar or different are your roles?
6. What has been the most meaningful part of parenting for you? Most difficult?
7. What family traditions or rituals have you passed on to your child/children or want to pass on? (e.g. celebrations, meal times)
8. What values have you tried to teach your child, or will you try to teach your child as s/he grows up? (e.g. moral, religious, cultural)
9. How would you describe your approach to parenting?
10. Would you say your approach is similar to the way your parents were parenting?
11. What expectations do you have for your child?
12. How do you discipline your child when s/he misbehaves?
13. Is there agreement between you and your partner about methods of discipline? Do you and your partner have the same expectations for your child's behaviour?
14. Do you feel that as a Polish parent you employ different parenting strategies than your neighbours or other local parents? Explain
15. Describe your overall experience of parenting in Doughiska.

B. Help-seeking

Parents sometimes need help, when problems arise:

16. How challenging do you find parenting?
17. Are there any particular problems you encounter while parenting your child in Doughiska?
18. How do you deal with these problems?
19. What type of problems do you seek support advice for and from whom?
20. What does 'parenting support' mean to you?
21. Are you aware of any parenting support services in Doughiska?
22. How much contact have you had with parenting support services?
23. Are there any changes you would make to existing support services to enhance their suitability for Polish services users in the Doughiska area?
24. What additional services do you think would be useful for Polish families in Doughiska?
25. Are there any other issues or topics that you would like to discuss?

Appendix E-Study Information Sheet Parents



Information leaflet for parents

You are being invited to take part in a research study carried out as part of a PhD degree at NUI Galway. The title of the research study is PARENTING IN IRELAND: POLISH PERSPECTIVES ON CHILD REARING AND HELP SEEKING IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

This is an information sheet that aims to answer any questions you may have about the study and your involvement.



Who am I?

Carmen Kealy is a PhD candidate from the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, at the National University Ireland, Galway. Our research centre works with children, young people and the people involved in their lives to reveal the things that matter to children, and what can be done to improve their childhood

What is the project about?

In this project we are trying to find out what parenting for Polish mothers and fathers in Doughiska is like and what Polish parents do when problems arise. We all want the best for children, but this isn't always easy if we all have different ideas about what is best. Listening to your experiences as parents, the problems you may encounter when parenting, but also how you go about seeking advice or other help will assist people and organisations that support parents to get a better understanding of what it is like to be a Polish parent. Therefore, your participation in this research is very important to the success of this study. I believe that asking you what you think is worthwhile. This is why you are being invited to take part in this study.

If you decide to take part what does this involve?

If you decide to take part, you will be expected to:

- ◇ Take part in an interview (very similar to a conversation) that may last between 45 minutes to an hour. I will ask you some questions about your experience as a parent and what you do when problems arise. I will audio record your answers to help me remember what has been said. If, however you are uncomfortable with audio recording the interview I will take notes of what is being said instead.
- ◇ Sign a consent form indicating that you understand what is expected of you and that you agree to take part.

Will the information be kept confidential and will anyone know what I have said?

Along with an interpreter, if you so choose, I will be the only person who conduct the interview and analyse the collected information for this study. The findings will be published as a thesis and may also appear in research journals or in other publications. It will also be available to any interested person or organisation. In order to ensure anonymity your real name and statements which could potentially be traced back to you will not be used in published material. Anyone involved in the study will be assigned an identification number and a false name to be used when reporting what they have said in the research. The only exception in relation to confidentiality will occur if any child protection concerns arise. I will be obliged to pass this information onto TUSLA as part of my responsibility for child protection under Children First 2011 Guidelines.

The information collected as part of this study may be stored in an archive in the future. Should an archive be established then the information collected in this study will be stored there under the following conditions: every effort will be made to ensure information is anonymous. This means that the identity of participants will not be known to anyone who views the information. Access to the collected information will be restricted to researchers and information will be analysed only for academic purposes.

Do you have to take part?

Taking part is voluntary. You can decide to take part or not. You can say ‘No’ at any time and opt out during the process if you wish. Your rights will not be affected in any way. By taking part you have an opportunity to give your opinion on what Polish parenting in Ireland is like. This may inform practices in the area that might help Polish parents, and potentially inform government policy regarding parenting support.

What you have to say is extremely important. If you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. You will also receive a copy of this information sheet and a signed consent form to keep for your records. Please remember that if you agree to take part in this study you can change your mind about participating at any point without needing to give a reason.

What if you have more questions or want to talk to someone about this?
I will gladly answer any of your questions or talk you through the study. If you would like me to do so, please contact me.

Carmen Kealy
Doctoral Fellow
UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre
School of Political Science and Sociology
ILAS Building, Dangan
National University of Ireland, Galway
Email: c.kealy1@nuigalway.ie
MOB: 087 7428457

If you have any reservations or complaints about this study and/or wish to contact someone independent and in confidence, you may contact the Chairperson of the NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee.

Chairperson,
Research Ethics Committee
C/o Office of the Vice President for Research
National University Ireland, Galway
Email: ethics@nuigalway.ie

Appendix F- Study Information Sheet Service Providers



Information leaflet for Parenting Support Providers

You are being invited to take part in a research study carried out as part of a PhD degree at NUI Galway. The title of the research study is PARENTING IN IRELAND: POLISH PERSPECTIVES ON CHILD REARING AND HELP SEEKING IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

This is an information sheet that aims to answer any questions you may have about the study and your involvement.



Who am I?

Carmen Kealy is a PhD candidate from the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, at the National University Ireland, Galway. Our research centre works with children, young people and the people involved in their lives to reveal the things that matter to children, and what can be done to improve their childhood

What is the project about?

In this project we are trying to find out what parenting for Polish mothers and fathers in Doughiska is like, and further investigate their help-seeking behaviour. Listening to Polish parents' experiences when parenting, the problems they face and where they seek advice and other help, but also speaking to support providers about their encounters with Polish parents will help in the development of a holistic picture aiming to provide a better understanding of Polish parenting and help seeking behaviour. Therefore, your participation in this research is very important to the success of this study. I believe that asking you what you think is worthwhile. This is why you are being invited to take part in this study.

If you decide to take part what does this involve?

If you decide to take part, you will be expected to:

◇ Take part in a focus group (very similar to a group discussion) that may last between an hour and an hour and 30 minutes. Participants in the focus group will be able to give their opinions on Polish help-seeking behaviour and share their experiences as service provider. I will audio record the groups' answers to help her remember what has been said. If, however you are uncomfortable with audio recording I will take notes of what you share with the group instead.

Or

◇ Take part in an interview (very similar to a conversation) that may last between 30-45 minutes. I will ask you some questions about your experience as a service provider and your opinion on Polish help-seeking behaviour. I will audio record your answers to help me remember what has been said. If, however you are uncomfortable with audio recording the interview I will take notes of what is being said instead.

◇ Sign a consent form indicating that you understand what is expected of you and that you agree to take part.

Will the information be kept confidential and will anyone know what I have said?

I will be the only person who will facilitate the focus group or conduct the interview and analyse the information for this study. The findings will be published as a thesis and may also appear in research journals or in other publications. It will also be available to any interested person or organisation. In order to ensure anonymity your real name and statements which could potentially be traced back to you will not be used in published material. Anyone involved in the study will be assigned an identification number and a false name to be used when reporting what they have said in the research. All participants in the focus group will be asked to agree to protect confidentiality and anonymity.

The information collected as part of this study may be stored in an archive in the future. Should an archive be established then the information collected in this study will be stored there under the following conditions: every effort will be made to ensure information is anonymous. This means that the identity of participants will not be known to anyone who views the information. Access to the collected information will be restricted to researchers and information will be analysed only for academic purposes.

Do you have to take part?

Taking part is voluntary. You can decide to take part or not. You can say 'No' at any time and opt out during the process if you wish. Your rights will not be affected in any way. By taking part you have an opportunity to give your opinion and share your experiences about Polish help seeking behaviour, which may potentially inform government policy regarding parenting support provision for Polish parents.

What you have to say is extremely important. If you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. You will also receive a copy of this information sheet and a signed consent form to keep for your records. Please remember that if you agree to take part in this study you can change your mind about participating at any point without needing to give a reason.

What if you have more questions or want to talk to someone about this?

I will gladly answer any of your questions or talk you through the study. If you would like me to do so, please contact me.

Carmen Kealy

Doctoral Fellow

UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre

School of Political Science and Sociology

ILAS Building, Dangan

National University of Ireland, Galway

Email: c.kealy1@nuigalway.ie

MOB: 087 7428457

If you have any reservations or complaints about this study and/or wish to contact someone independent and in confidence, you may contact the

Chairperson of the NUI Galway Research Ethics Committee.

Chairperson

Research Ethics Committee

C/o Office of the Vice President for Research

National University Ireland, Galway

Email: ethics@nuigalway.ie

Appendix G- Interview Consent Form Parents



Consent Form for Parents

Title of Study:

PARENTING IN IRELAND: POLISH PERSPECTIVES ON CHILD REARING AND HELP SEEKING IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

Name of Researcher: Carmen Kealy

Your Name/Address/Phone:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read the Information Sheet provided to me regarding the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I am satisfied that I understand the information provided and have had enough time to consider the information.
3. I agree to take part in an interview with the researcher and I agree to the interview being recorded.
4. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving reasons and without my legal rights being affected.
5. I understand that my input will be anonymous and that the findings will be published as a thesis by the researcher and may also appear in research journals or in other publications.

Your Signature:

Date:

For researcher's use only

Participant Identity Number: _____

Appendix H- Interview Consent Form Service Providers



Consent Form for Service Providers

Title of Study:

PARENTING IN IRELAND: POLISH PERSPECTIVES ON CHILD REARING AND HELP SEEKING IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

Name of Researcher: Carmen Kealy

Your Name/Address/Phone/Type of Parenting Support provided:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read the Information Sheet provided to me regarding the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I am satisfied that I understand the information provided and have had enough time to consider the information.
3. I agree to take part in an interview with the researcher and I agree to the interview being recorded.
4. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving reasons and without my legal rights being affected.
5. I understand that my input will be anonymous and that the findings will be published as a thesis by the researcher and may also appear in research journals or in other publications.

Your Signature:

Date:

For researcher's use only

Participant Identity Number: _____

Appendix I-Focus Group Consent Form Service Providers



Consent Form for Parenting Support Providers (Focus Group)

Title of Study:

PARENTING IN IRELAND: POLISH PERSPECTIVES ON CHILD
REARING AND HELP SEEKING IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE
NEIGHBOURHOOD

Name of Researcher: Carmen Kealy

Your Name, Address, Phone and Type of Parenting Support provided:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read the Information Sheet provided to me regarding the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions
2. I am satisfied that I understand the information provided and have had enough time to consider the information
3. I agree to take part in a focus group with other Parenting Support Providers and the researcher and I agree to the focus group session being recorded
4. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving reasons and without my legal rights being affected
5. I agree to respect the confidentiality and anonymity of other participants
6. I understand that every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality and anonymity

Your Signature:

Date:

For researcher's use only

Participant Identity Number: _____

Appendix J-Preliminary Framework (Parents)

Work	Childcare	Family	Perception of neighbourhood	Neighbour	Housing	Formal support	Informal support	Language	Tradition
Importance of work	Cost of childcare	Time with family	Satisfaction versus dissatisfaction with neighbourhood	Interacting versus non-interaction with neighbours	Cost of rent	Accessing Irish medical support	Support through family	Language barrier	Personal traditions
Parent's work ethic in own childhood	Negotiating work and childcare	Lack of family	Lack of age appropriate children in neighbourhood	Support from neighbours	Perception of landlord	Accessing Polish medical support	Support through friends and neighbours	Children and language	Religious traditions
Impact of work on family time	Lack of flexibility in childcare	Close bond with family versus no connection	Scepticisms about Polish neighbourhood		Importance of child appropriate accommodation	Searching for Polish speaking support	Online support	Negotiating language	Difference in Irish and Polish traditions
Impact of work on children		Work-family balance	Mistrust in neighbourhood			Waiting times and availability of public formal support			Mixing traditions
Work and gender		Looking after family	Division of neighbourhood			Private formal support			Transmitting traditions
Work and childcare		Own childhood memories of family	Safety			Ability to find support			
Work and health		Privacy of family life	Lack of / availability of facilities						

Values and expectations	Parenting styles	Discussing Schooling	Struggles and the meaningful part of parenting	Money and finances	Polish mentality	Parents' Health	Identity	Suggesting services to help Polish community
Values relating to self	Gender differences in parenting style	Comparing Irish/ Polish education systems	Financial struggles	Money as motive for immigration	Ascribing characteristics	Mental health	Children negotiating identity	Activities
Values relating towards others	Generational differences in parenting style	Transition to school	Parenting struggles	Financial security	Polish cultural norm?	Physical health	Transient versus permanent	Facilities
Aspirations for children's future	Forms of discipline	School's role in transmission of traditions and values	Personal struggles	Saving				Information
Remembering own childhood	Focus on physical well-being	School and language	Positive aspect of parenting	Finances during childhood				
	Agreement versus disagreement among parents	Polish school Galway		Support in financial matters				