

**Migration, Mothering and Schooling:
A Case Study of Baltic Mothers in Ireland**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been previously submitted as an exercise for a degree, wholly or partially for any other academic award at this or any other university.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the parental involvement of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian mothers within and outside of formal schooling in Ireland. The number of Baltic families has significantly increased in Ireland in the last decade as a result of the post-2004 migration from new EU member states. Considering that many Baltic parents might be confronted with totally different parental practices in Irish schools, this thesis aims to explore the meanings Baltic mothers attribute to their experiences.

To guide the research, the study uses Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* by emphasising the importance of dispositions that represent beliefs, ideas and practices in the understanding of capacity and limits of individual decisions. The case study methodology was chosen as the most appropriate way to explore the experiences of Baltic women as mothers and migrants in Ireland.

The three main findings of this thesis are: first, culturally and historically specific dispositions play an important role in the ways Baltic migrant women perceive their maternal ideals and negotiate their everyday reality. Second, Baltic mothers utilise the resources available to them by simultaneously adopting strategies of 'fitting in' and 'standing out'. Finally, despite some differences based on their social class background, Baltic migrant mothers of both middle-class and working-class backgrounds expressed very similar approaches to their children's education and the way they envision their children's future trajectories in Ireland.

Overall, this thesis adds new knowledge across several subfields of sociology, such as the sociology of education, migration studies and the sociology of family, both within the context of Ireland and the Baltic States. By combining different subfields of sociology, this research provides a more complete understanding of the meanings that Baltic mothers assign to their own practices in Ireland – matters that have never been explored before.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

The aim of this study is to explore the parental involvement of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian mothers in Ireland. By examining a variety of ways in which Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian mothers become involved in their children's educational and leisure activities, the research contributes to a greater understanding of how gender, social class, ethnicity and experiences of migration shape practices of parental involvement in education, a topic which has hitherto received insufficient attention in the academic literature, especially within the Irish context.

Although the concept of parental involvement has been widely used in sociological research on education, parental involvement is usually presented as genderless and unproblematic. However, it is mothers who are usually involved in primary care and parental involvement. Dorothy Smith (1988), who has been one of the first theorists to conceptualise maternal involvement in education as mothering work, argued that women's mothering work is often taken for granted both by the women themselves and the academics who write about parental involvement in education. Smith (1988:19) asserted that this happens because "our forms of thought put together a view of the world from a place women do not occupy", by making invisible the enormous amount of time and effort mothers put into their children's education.

With the increase of the migrant population in Ireland, such issues as experiences of migrant children (Devine et al., 2008; Darmody et al., 2011; Ni Laoire, 2009; Faas et al., 2015) and the distribution of migrant children across schools (Byrne et al., 2010; Ledwith & Reilly, 2013) began to draw some attention in both the media and policy research, yet little is known about migrant parents themselves, especially migrant mothers. As the transition to a new country is accompanied by learning and negotiating new roles, practices and responsibilities through the various spheres of social life including parenting, this study emphasises the importance of understanding how individual biographies, pre-migration histories and migratory experiences are intertwined with parental involvement of Baltic mothers in Ireland. This is because not all parents "operate within the same structural, cultural and discursive conditions" (Standing, 1999:57).

1.1. Baltic States

Despite the ambiguity of the term (Baltic States), I group Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania together not only because of their geographical closeness, but also “ever since Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania appeared on the map as independent countries a hundred years ago, the Baltic States have shared similar socio-political challenges and demographic development” (Krumins, 2014:1).

Whereas some important cultural differences emerged in the 17th Century with the division between the Protestant and Catholic domains¹ in the Baltic region (Katus et al., 2007), during the 20th Century Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were occupied by the Soviet Union for nearly 60 years. The Soviet occupation had far-reaching consequences on the Baltic societies. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were integrated into the larger Soviet structure as Soviet republics through the abolition of private ownership, collectivisation of the agrarian sector and industrialisation.

As a result of the Soviet centralised system, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have developed very similar profiles with respect to the functioning of economy, educational and employment systems, organisation of health care, social protection, pension system and gender regimes. Furthermore, during the post-Soviet transition, already as independent states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania followed a neoliberal prescription by adopting low controls on capital, open markets and reduced provisions for social welfare (Bohle & Greskovits, 2007), which had very similar effects on social inequality and in particular childcare.

The Baltic nations are linguistically diverse. The Soviet occupation also had a significant impact on the demographic and linguistic composition of the Baltic States. The Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian languages belong to two distinct language families. The Latvian and Lithuanian languages belong to the group of Baltic languages within the Indo-European language family, whereas Estonia is a non-Indo-European language and belongs to the Baltic-Finnic subgroup of the Finno-Ugric languages, sharing close cultural and historical ties with the Finnish language and culture (Stafecka, 2014).

¹ In terms of religion, the people of the Baltic countries also belong to different Christian denominations, although today a growing percentage of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians claim not to follow a religion, with a very low church attendance. Believers in Estonia are mostly Lutheran, but 49% of the Estonian population declared that they do not believe in God. In Latvia, only 62.6% declared themselves as belonging to a Christian denomination, this divided into 19.7% Russian Orthodox, 18.5% Roman Catholic and 17.8% Lutheran. In the case of Lithuania, 77% declared belonging to the Catholic Church (ISSP, 2015).

However, between 1945 and 1990, over one million Russian-speakers moved from different parts of the Soviet Union to the Baltic States. Most people who came did not speak the local languages and did not have knowledge about the local history and culture. As a result, today there are nearly 30 percent of Russian-speakers in Estonia, 40 percent in Latvia and eight percent in Lithuania (Census Data, 2010).

Before 1991, Soviet policies and institutions strongly supported the usage of the Russian language in all spheres of life (Lindermann & Saar, 2012). Russification through language instruction, starting from primary schooling, was implemented throughout the Baltic States. As a result, for example in the case of Latvia, most Latvians were bilingual, whereas most of the Russian-speakers who arrived during the Soviet period to the Baltic States predominantly used Russian for everyday communication (Karklins, 1986). A recent study on everyday language use in the Baltic States showed that only 69 percent of ethnic Latvians use only the Latvian language in their home, which is much less than for ethnic Estonians in Estonia – 90 percent, and ethnic Lithuanians in Lithuania – 80 percent (Ehala, 2013). When it comes to communication with friends, 50 percent use only Lithuanian, which means that the other half uses some Russian while communication with their Russian-speaking friends. And in Estonia, Estonians reported using more Russian to strangers than Russian-speakers reported using Estonian, which “is a remnant of the Soviet pattern, where Estonians were actively bilingual while Russian-speakers were not” (Ehala, 2013:96).

1.2. Gender Regimes in Ireland and Baltic States

Researching parental involvement of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian migrant women within the Irish context is a particularly interesting case as the Baltic States and Ireland have very different histories of gender regimes. By the 1970s, when Irish women were only entering the labour market, women in the Soviet Union had reached the highest labour force participation rate in the world (Ofer & Vinokur, 1985). Historically, the role of women in Ireland was clearly defined by the State and Church as that of homemakers and primary careers (Considine & Dukelow, 2009: 28). Drawing on the 1966 Census, Walsh (1971) showed that only 34 percent of women were employed full-time in Ireland, of which only six percent were married women. In the Baltic States, however, legal equality between men and women in the labour market was introduced in the early years

of the Soviet Occupation. During the 1960s, the centralised Soviet system promoted equal access to education, liberalised laws on family and marriage and created maternity and child protection institutions. By 1970, there was no difference in the percentage of women and men working outside the home (Vishnevsky, 1996).

Even if full-time female employment was indeed supported by the availability of childcare services outside the family in the Soviet Union, care work within the family was still regarded as a solely female responsibility. Parental roles were viewed in traditional terms: domestic tasks were viewed as a responsibility of a mother, whereas a father fulfilled the role of the main economic provider (Narusk & Hansson, 1999). Having officially acknowledged “the aggravation of the demographic situation”, the USSR’s Family Law (1968) confirmed the central role of women in the family, defining it as “providing the necessary social conditions for a happy combination of motherhood with increased active and creative involvement in industrial and socio-political life” (Pahria, 2012:1). As Einhorn has argued (1993: 40), “the maternal role ascribed to women in the dominant discourse was constructed as a social duty to bear and rear the socialist citizens of the future ... all social ills are laid at the door of state socialism which it is argued undermined the family and women’s role within it”. According to Einhorn (1993: 39), “the state socialists renamed the nuclear family as ‘socialists’ while continuing to regard it as the basic cell of society and failing to interrogate the gendered division of labour within it”. Women were loaded with the notorious ‘double burden’: “worker-mothers who had a duty to work as well as to oversee the running of the household” (Ashwin, 2002: 119).

Soviet working mothers were integrated into the labour force as ‘second-class workers’ (Filtzer, 1992), as women were most likely to be employed not only in certain occupations but also in certain branches of the economy, in areas considered to be ‘female work’ (Voorman, 2005). For example, in the case of Estonia, by the end of the 1980s, female representation differed greatly across industries, ranging from 20-25 percent in construction and transport to 80-90 percent in education and trade, and women were most likely to be over-represented in occupations where the wages were below the average (Voorman, 2005).

In the late Soviet period, the official policy discourse began to focus on ‘a cult of maternity’ (Kay, 2006:154) with an emphasis on the links between mother, state and

child, where the relationship between father and child were pronounced only at the level of financial obligation (Municio, 2013: 38). However, the discourse of men's roles as providers implied that women return to "primarily domestic and family-oriented roles" (Kay, 2006: 77). By the late 1980s, the state strengthened its provision of nurseries and kindergartens, increased maternity leave and child benefits (Issouпова, 2000: 39). According to Ashwin (2012: 38), the state alliance with the mother created the virtual exclusion of father from childcare: "the role of fathers in raising children was mentioned very rarely. When fathers featured in the journal it was usually in a negative capacity, in connection with abandonment of children or alimony".

The consequences of these policies were evidently observed by the end of the 1980s in the family arrangement and childrearing responsibilities in the case of divorce. Thus, Municio (2013: 2) argued that "while women are expected to resume full responsibility for care and maintenance of the children, men express the right to move on to new relationships. Thus, fathers are seen as interchangeable, while mothers are permanent". A survey conducted in the early years of transition in the Baltic States also confirmed a re-traditionalisation argument with 84 percent of Estonians, 77 percent of Latvians and 86 percent of Lithuanians supporting gendered roles within families, with a man being the breadwinner and a woman taking care of home and children (Narusk & Hansson, 1999). Nevertheless, the survey demonstrated that the wish to stay at home was strongest among the working class women and weakest among women with higher education (Narusk & Hansson, 1999).

During the 1990s, both Ireland and the Baltic States experienced massive societal transformations. With the birth of the Celtic Tiger, the traditional view of the role of women in Irish society has changed to a 'dual' one – reconciling childcare and home responsibilities with formal employment. By the mid-1990s, Irish women began to overtake men in the rates of completion of third-level education (Russell et al., 2017); the female labour force participation rate grew from 35.8 percent in 1990 to 41.4 percent by 1996, and 48.8 percent by 2002 (Russell et al., 2017). This growth was also largely due to the increase in married women's employment (Callan & Farrell, 1991; Fine-Davis, 2017). While in 1990 the labour force participation rate of married women was only 31 percent, this number increased to 40.8 percent by 1996 and to 48.1 percent by 2002 (Fine-Davis, 2017). Moreover, an increasing number of Irish men and women accepted that a working mother could establish just as warm a relationship with a child as a stay-at-home

mother in families where both parents work. In 1988, 56 percent of men and 61 percent of women were in favour of working mothers, by 2012, 74 percent of men and 83 percent of women held this view (Russell et al., 2017). However, even though more women and men grew to favour working motherhood, the responsibility for childcare still fell predominantly on women in Ireland (Fine-Davis et al., 2004). Some data indicate that 93 percent of childcare responsibilities fall on women (Samman et al., 2015). Despite the increase of women in the labour market, only 22.1 percent of children in 2002 and 23.3 percent of children in 2005 were cared for in crèches or childcare centres. This would suggest that either there were not enough childcare facilities available or their cost was too high. Also, in 2002, 30.5 percent of women in employment worked part-time, in comparison to just over six percent of men (CSO, 2004).

From the 1990s, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania went through a post-Soviet transition, which has led to a widespread transformation of social rights and a redefinition of gender identities. By continuing to engage in nostalgia for a pre-socialist gender order (Novikova, 2006), female employment began to be seen as an expression of a personal choice rather than an obligation of the citizen. As in the case of Estonia, Kaskla (2003:298) argued that “nationalism may have played a vital part in regaining independence from the Soviet Union, but the liberation of a nation did not necessarily liberate women from a society that remains patriarchal”. The withdrawal of the state from the social sphere and the institutional changes in welfare provision had a negative impact on families and on women in particular (Ferge, 1998: 222): “rather than ushering in a return to the so-called traditional family, the post-Soviet era has seen a reproduction of the Soviet-style family in which women share the burden of breadwinning, yet play the primary role within the domestic sphere” (Ashwin, 2002: 12). Regardless of re-traditionalisation discourse, the percentage of female labour force participation continued to be relatively high in the Baltic States. However, Rastrigina (2015) has argued that the lack of flexible employment arrangements and childcare facilities put a double burden of work and care on women (who are still seen as the main care providers) compared to men in Latvia. Similarly, Jankauskaite (2013) insisted that working mothers experience higher stress and conflicts than fathers in reconciling family and work in Lithuania.

1.3. Baltic Migration to Ireland

Until the mid-1990s, Ireland was considered as a country of emigration, whereas the Baltic States, during the Soviet period had a high rate of immigration (Hazans, 2013). Rapid economic growth during the 1990s brought not only unprecedented levels of prosperity to Ireland, but also consequently transformed it to a country of immigration. With the birth of the Celtic Tiger, migration reached its ‘turning point’ with a sharp increase in the migration population, which initially was composed of returning Irish citizens and asylum seeking applicants (Ruhs & Quinn, 2009). From the early 2000s, especially with the accession of new EU member states in 2004, migrants from new EU accession countries began to represent the biggest share of all migrants arriving to Ireland. Between 2002 and 2006, the number of non-Irish people residing in Ireland increased from 5.8 to 10.1 percent (CSO, 2012a). In 2006, migrants from new EU member states accounted for 46.3 percent of the total number of migrants in Ireland and 56.5 percent by 2007 (CSO, 2012a).

In the Baltic States, with post-Soviet transition, social and economic changes significantly influenced migration behaviour. While in Latvia and Lithuania, migration to ‘old Europe’ was minimal during the 1990s due to migration costs and difficulty in obtaining work permits abroad, in the case of Estonia, the neighbouring country, Finland became the main destination. However, from 2004 onwards, other EU countries, especially Ireland and the UK became major destinations for migrants from the Baltic States, especially Latvia and Lithuania (Engbersen & Jansen, 2013). According to the World Bank (2006), Lithuania and Latvia had the largest emigration rate among the new EU member states between May 2004 and December 2005. Nearly 3.3 percent of the population in Lithuania and 2.4 percent of the population in Latvia emigrated during this period (Kahanec & Zimmermann, 2008). In the case of Ireland, social insurance numbers issued to Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian nationals jumped dramatically during the first years of the accession, from 546 in 2003 to 1,788 by 2004 and 2,011 by 2005 for Estonians, from 1,230 in 2003 to 6,266 by 2004 and 9,328 by 2005 for Latvians and 2,379 in 2003 to 12,817 by 2004 and 1871 by 2005 for Lithuanians. Overall, based on different estimates, Hazans (2013) concluded that a total of 10.1 percent of economically active Lithuanians moved to the UK and Ireland between 2004 and 2008; for Latvia it was 6.7 percent and for Estonia it was 2.3 percent.

The labour market integration of migrants from new EU member states has been well researched in Ireland (Ní Chonail, 2009; Barrett, 2009; Glynn, 2014; Mühlau, 2012; Wickham et al., 2011). Many scholars (see Barrett & McCarthy, 2006; O'Connell & McGinnity, 2008) came to the conclusion that the majority of migrants from new EU member states were not only employed in occupations that did not fully reflect their educational level and qualifications, but also suffered a wage penalty. For example, Barrett & McCarthy (2007) found that non-Irish immigrants earned 19 percent less than native Irish. In the case of Baltic migrants, Parker and Halpin (2011) found that Latvian migrants in Ireland suffered the most severe immigrant wage penalty of nearly 50 percent. However, these differences were due to gender, third level education and most importantly, lower level of English language fluency and not mainly due to their nationality (Parker & Halpin, 2011).

Unlike Polish migrants in Ireland, the majority of Baltic migrants who arrived in the early 2000s held secondary and vocational education and only 15.4 percent of Lithuanians and 10.8 percent of Latvians had third-level education. In terms of socio-economic status, only 15 percent of Estonians, 8.8 percent of Latvians and 10 percent of Lithuanians were found in a top socio-economic group, based on CSO data (CSO, 2012a). Nearly one third of Latvians and Lithuanians did not have good command of the English language. Furthermore, Baltic migrants were mostly employed in specific industries, such as wholesale, food services, administrative and support services and construction (CSO, 2012b).

In 2008, Ireland fell into a recession (Honohan, 2009). Between 2008 and 2010, real GDP fell by ten percent (Barrett et al., 2012) and the deepening economic crisis had a particularly negative effect on migrants from new EU member states. While the national unemployment rate increased from four percent in 2007 to 15 percent by 2012, the unemployment rate of nationals from new EU member states reached 20 percent in 2012 (O'Connell, 2018). As a result, the total migration to Ireland declined sharply and Ireland experienced a return to net emigration in 2009 (Gilmartin, 2012). If migrants from new EU member states accounted for 48.2 percent in 2008, this number decreased from 2009 onwards: 28.7 percent in 2009, 22.2 percent in 2010 and 18.9 percent in 2011 (CSO, 2012b).

However, significant changes were recorded in the household composition headed by non-Irish nationals by 2011, which overall reminds us that migration is a far more complex process and it is seldom the product of an individual's rational economic decision to migrate for better opportunities abroad. Decisions to migrate or settle can relate to family life cycle and children (Nauck & Settles, 2001). The CSO (2012) showed that the number of non-Irish families with children increased from 41 percent of all migrant households in 2006 to 50 percent by 2011. The number of births to non-Irish mothers in Ireland was also steadily increasing: 16 percent in 2004, 23 percent by 2008 and 24 percent by 2012, with nearly half of these births being by mothers from new EU member states (Healthcare Pricing Office, 2014).

While educational authorities in Ireland do not collect data concerning the 'age of arrival' of migrant children or whether children are first or second generation, some estimates indicated the number of children with migrant backgrounds in Irish schools has also increased from 3.4 percent in 2003 to 8.0 percent by 2009. In 2012, there were 24,312 children born outside Ireland registered in Irish secondary schools (MRCI, 2013), whereas the total number of children with migrant backgrounds accounted for 9.6 percent (Eurostat, 2016).

Furthermore, in the case of Baltic migrants in Ireland, the number of incoming Baltic migrants continued to grow despite the economic crisis of 2008. Even if the number of Estonians increased only slightly from 2,272 in 2006 to 2,580 by 2011, the number of Latvians and Lithuanians increased from 13,319 to 20,593 for Latvians and from 24,628 to 36,683 for Lithuanians over the same timeframe (CSO, 2011). By 2011, Baltic migrants represented the third largest migrant group after UK and Polish citizens residing in Ireland (CSO, 2012a).

As most migrants from the Baltic States came to Ireland at a relatively young age, between 25 and 44 years old (CSO, 2011) and first-time mothers in the Baltic States are on average 26 years old (Eurostat, 2015), it does not come as a surprise that between 2006 and 2011 the number of families of Baltic nationals increased in Ireland. The percentage of children between 0-14 increased by 14.4 percent for Estonians, 16 percent for Latvians and 17.5 percent for Lithuanians (CSO, 2011).

Considering the decline in the number of marriages, but increase in the number of cohabiting couples and extra-marital births that has been observed in recent decades

in the Baltic States (Stankūnienė et al., 2009), a large proportion of Baltic couples were not married and many households were headed by single parents in Ireland. Thus many people lived together without being officially married: 710 Estonians were married out of 1,043; 2,754 Latvians out of 9,112; and 6,468 Lithuanians out of 17,470 (CSO, 2012a). From the total number of households of 984 for Estonians, 154 were couples, 223 were couples with children and 142 single parents with children. From the total number of households of 7,027 for Latvians, 796 were couples, 1,951 were couples with children, and 828 were single parents with children. From the total number of households of 12,548 for Lithuanians, 1,762 were for couples, 4,263 were for couples with children, and 1,164 were lone parents (CSO, 2012a).

Baltic migration to Ireland furthermore reflected the ethnic heterogeneity of the Baltic societies. According to the 2016 census data, out of 21,707 Russian-speakers in Ireland, 23 percent were Latvian nationals, 9.1 percent were Lithuanian nationals and four percent were Estonian nationals (CSO, 2017).

In 2016, with a slow economic recovery, Ireland has once again returned to net immigration for the first time since 2009 (CSO, 2017). From 11.6 percent of non-Irish nationals living in Ireland, 36,552 were Lithuanians, 19,933 were Latvians and 2,169 were Estonians (CSO, 2017).

1.4. Problematising Parental Involvement in Ireland

Over the last two decades, educational policy in Ireland moved to an official recognition of parents as equal partners in the educational process. Although the 1937 Constitution contained a considerable amount of detail on rights and duties in the sphere of education, acknowledging parents as the primary educators of their children, neither Church nor State made systematic efforts during the 1940s and 1950s to involve parents closely in policy-making, consultation or administration of schooling (Coolahan, 2000).² In practice, parental involvement began to be acknowledged only from the 1960s with a recognition that parents play a separate and less important role in education process

² Parents were acknowledged as the primary educators of their children: “The State acknowledges that the primary and natural educator of the child is the Family and guarantees to respect the inalienable right and duty of parents to provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children” (Article 42.1).

(Byrne & Smyth, 2010). However, only with the emergence of Epstein's ecological typology of parental involvement did policy move towards recognition of parents as partners (Epstein, 2001).³ By emphasising a partnership between school and family in supporting the learning process, parents are seen not only as important actors whose role is to create a home environment that encourages learning, to motivate and express expectation for their children's achievements and future careers but are also required and expected by schools to get involved in their children's education at school and in the community (Henderson & Berla, 1994).

The rights and responsibilities of parents in the educational process in Ireland were mentioned in the White Paper on Education (1995): the right to active participation in their child's education, the right to consultation and information and the right to be active participants in the education system at school, regional and national levels along with the responsibilities of parents which include the provision of nurturing a learning environment, co-operation and support of the school and other educational partners and fulfilment of their special role in the development of the child. This subsequently became the basis of the 1988 Education Act, in which the educational process was defined as one involving a partnership with the learner at the centre and parents, patrons, trustees, owners, governors, management bodies, teachers, the local community and the State as partners in education. Further recognition of parental involvement was laid down in the Department of Education and Science Statement of Strategy 2005-2007 and the Statement of Strategy 2008-2010.

Many studies on parental involvement in Ireland have demonstrated the importance of an active role of parents in the educational process by arguing that "young people, who discuss their education with their parents and those whose parents attend parent-teacher meetings tend to achieve higher Junior Certificate grades and make greater academic progress relative to their initial ability levels than parents who are less involved in their education" (Byrne & Smyth, 2010:197). Others noticed that parents are the main source of advice for young people, especially when it comes to which subjects and programmes to select, what to do after leaving school, and whether to remain in school

³ Epstein argues that there are three major contexts within which children develop and learn: the family, the school, and the community. She proposes that there are some practices that family, school and community conduct separately and that there are others that they conduct jointly in order to influence the growth and learning of the child (Epstein, 2001).

or not (Whelan & Hannan, 1999; Byrne & Smyth, 2010).

Considering that many migrant parents are confronted with totally different parental practices in Irish schools, migrant parents tend to be viewed as ‘hard-to-reach’ or less involved in their children’s schooling in Ireland (McGovern & Devine, 2016). As some studies have recently demonstrated, only 47 percent of foreign parents felt confident about assisting their children’s homework in comparison to 61 percent of Irish parents (CSO, 2014). It is evident that many migrant parents find themselves in an inherently disadvantaged position due to different linguistic and cultural barriers. Turney and Kao (2010) found that minority migrant parents identify far more barriers to becoming involved in their children’s education than non-migrant parents. For example, language barriers experienced by some migrant parents might become an obstacle to parental involvement in their children’s education, when it comes to homework or maintaining effective communication with teachers in schools (Smyth et al., 2009; Taguma et al., 2010; Huat See and Gorard, 2015).

Different international studies suggest, however, that migrants and ethnic minorities tend to employ different patterns of parental practices, which do not fit in the norms of what is considered ‘legitimate’. Lim (2012), by looking at alternative practices of parental involvement in the US, argues that “Asian families, in general and Korean parents, in particular did not usually actively engage in school activities in the same ways native-born American families did” (Lim, 2012:99). Siu (2001) shows that Chinese American parents use a variety of community resources and informal networks to support their children’s learning, while not actively engaging in schools through volunteering or parental committees (Siu, 2001). Considering a large and rapidly growing ‘second generation’ in Ireland, many policy researchers (Smyth et al., 2009; Darmody & Smyth, 2018) have emphasised the importance of education not only in providing opportunities to acquire necessary skills to enter the labour market, but also in contributing towards social and cultural integration into Irish society (OECD/European Union, 2015; Huddleston et al., 2013).

Evidence from other countries demonstrates that educational achievement remains a key indicator for labour market integration of young people with migrant backgrounds (Heath, 2009; Corluy and Verbist, 2015). Dobson (2009), discussing the importance of education for children with migrant backgrounds, argues that the school may be the only place where migrant children interact on a regular basis with adults and

children in the host community. Schooling provides the crucial opportunity to learn the language of the host community and acquire skills and qualifications, which will be essential to future life chances (Dobson, 2009).

Smyth et al. (2009) suggest that academic achievement among newcomer students is at least as good as those among their Irish peers, although a lack of language competency is seen as adversely impacting on the achievement of some newcomer students. Similarly, results from the PISA study⁴ demonstrated that educational outcomes of children with migrant background are, on average, similar to their Irish-born peers (Taguma et al., 2010). No difference has been recorded in mathematics proficiency between Irish and children with a migrant background. However, students from a non-English-speaking background scored, on average, lower than Irish students in print reading, which can be explained by the finding that from 9.6 percent of students with migrant background, just over half (5.1 percent) spoke Irish or English at home in 2012 (Curtin et al., 2016).

Even if Ireland has addressed the need to assist newcomer children with learning the language of instruction by developing relevant policies and practices at school level (Rodríguez-Izquierdo & Darmody, 2017), Darmody et al. (2016) insisted that institutional factors might shape and limit education trajectories of children with migrant backgrounds in Ireland. Children with migrant backgrounds are more likely to attend large urban schools with a more socio-economic disadvantaged intake in Ireland (Byrne et al., 2010).

In addition, some signs of emerging segregation and clustering were noticed in certain Irish schools. McGinnity et al. (2015) observed that 25 percent of children with an African background attended the most disadvantaged schools, located in areas characterised by socio-economic disadvantage and higher levels of unemployment, compared to 9.0 percent of Irish children (Smyth et al., 2009). Statistics from the Department of Education confirmed that some schools have very high proportions of migrant students while other schools have none, for example 23 per cent of Irish schools cater for four out of five migrant children in Ireland (Duncan & Humphreys, 2015).

⁴ PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) is the largest international study, examining the reading, mathematics and science achievements of students at the age of 15 and 16 years old (OECD; 2019).

1.5. Parental Involvement in the Baltic States

Since Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were integrated into the larger Soviet structure as Soviet republics until 1991, their educational systems presupposed clearly defined and separate responsibilities and roles for parents and schools. The Soviet ideology emphasised the role of the state as the sole guarantor of social protection and support with a collective Soviet identity as the basis of society. The Soviet education was perceived as an ideological tool to teach Soviet norms through a close integration of youth in the communist party organisations (Zickel, 1989). The formal network of educational institutions aimed to teach values of discipline and regimentation based on patriotism, the communist attitude towards work, collectivism, socialist humanism, foundation of Marxism-Leninism and military training (Kull & Trasberg, 2006:4). Therefore, socialisation within schools and extra-curriculum activities served main purpose in preparation of “educated, thoroughly developed, active builders of communist society” (Sheikh, 2015).

Aside from formal educational institutions, the family was seen as an essential actor in moral upbringing (Zajda, 1980: 81). The Soviet state stressed the importance of family in child-rearing and promoted the family as the most important societal unit of reproduction, socialisation and care. Even if school-parent relationships were mainly based on an authoritarian principle with teachers “being intellectual leaders in the community” (Zajda, 1980: 67), parents, according to Zickel (1989: 246), “were encouraged to create a nurturing and loving environment at home and to cooperate actively with the schools, which generally led the way in fostering in their children the personal qualities considered essential to a socialist morality”. Apart from ideological upbringing of future generations of ‘*Homo Sovieticus*’ (Zinoviev, 1986), the state expected an active involvement of parents in their children’s education, starting from pre-school, for example to provide initial instructions in reading, writing and mathematics for children of pre-school age, when they were not able to attend a state kindergarten; to advise children in career options, especially in the case of vocational education options; and to participate in regular parental meetings (Zajda, 1980).

The family was responsible for socialising, whereas schools were in charge of academic and ideological development through centralisation, standardisation and utilitarian and egalitarian goals. According to Zickel (1989: 246), “parents were encouraged

to create a nurturing and loving environment at home and to cooperate actively with the schools, which generally led the way, in fostering in their children the personal qualities considered essential to a socialist morality”.

From the first years of the Soviet Occupation, the education system was highly centralised and controlled by the state. Home-school relationships were based on one-way communication from school to home, with teachers being responsible for making contact with parents but parents remaining rather passive in this process. School curriculum and all teaching materials, including common patterns of instruction, were standardised throughout the Soviet Union. Moreover, the Soviet education system presupposed to “provide ample opportunities for working classes and at the same time secure an educated and trained labour force” (Hernes & Knudsen, 1991: 199). Within this process, policies were directed to break the traditional link between social origin and educational attainment (Hernes & Knudsen, 1991).

Regardless of the official rhetoric of ‘free and equal’ access to education in the Soviet Union, some groups were more privileged than others. Szelenyi (1982) argued that antagonism existed between the working class and intelligentsia. Although economic capital was not a central structuring principle of inequality in the same way as in capitalist societies, class divisions and distinctions were primarily drawn by mobilising educational, social, political and cultural capitals (Salmenniemi, 2013). A broad set of cultural values and practices became very important symbols of social distinction and hierarchy. Markers based on visual and symbolic values became a cultural norm. Salmenniemi (2012:6) argues that “contrary to the claims of equality between classes, in popular discourse the intelligentsia occupied the top position in the class hierarchy. Cultured behaviour was apprehended as a ‘natural’ disposition of the intelligentsia and as something that the workers and peasants were supposed to learn and achieve through enlightenment campaigns”. Therefore, Salmenniemi (2012) insists that these cultural norms in fact legitimated social inequalities by masking the unequal access to the Soviet ‘civilising project’ and by discrediting alternative values and conceptions of morality and personhood.

The intelligentsia was advantaged by their knowledge and cultural resources, knowing well how to ‘play the system’ (Szelenyi, 1982). Zajda (1980) shows that parental status played an important role in children’s chances of entering a university. Children from more affluent families tended to receive better primary and secondary education, which contributed to passing a very competitive university entrance exams. A survey

conducted during the 1960s “verified the relationship between environmental influences and a child’s educational attainment. It showed that parents’ socio-occupational status, income, educational level, family income per capita, place of residence, and so on affected the child’s performance at school” (Zajda, 1980: 8). From the 1960s to the mid-1980s, children of manual labourers were less likely to obtain high-level educational qualifications than children of non-manual labourers. Nearly four-fifths of the children of unskilled manual labourers began their work careers at the same social level as their parents (Zajda, 1980). In 1989, social mobility tended to be ‘inter-generational’ (advancement to a social position higher than the one occupied by parents), rather than ‘intra-generational’ (advancement to a higher social position during one’s own adult life). Overall, despite policies aimed at reducing the impact of social origin on attainment, children’s educational achievements were strongly associated with parental occupational achievements (Hernes & Knudsen, 1991).

Since 1991, the Baltic States have predominantly applied market-oriented approaches to achieve a greater openness of the educational system by emphasising the importance of individualism and the free market. Mainly a new type of policy has followed the principles of allowing parents to have freedom to choose a school, introducing competition between schools and increasing emphasis on parental involvement. Even though most of the schools and institutions remained public, many have adopted a very selective approach for admission based on entrance exams and interviews.

As a result, with the application of such a market-oriented approach to educational management, education has significantly transformed the relationship between parents and educational institutions. Thus, Kikas et al. (2011) observed that Estonian mothers have a tendency to trust teachers less once children transition from kindergarten to primary schools. Tulviste (2007) also showed that the child-rearing practices of Estonian mothers were transitioning towards more individualistic values with a strong promotion of a sense of ownership of their actions for their children. While some researchers argued that “the introduction of decentralisation and free choice may also serve to convey the values of democracy and the market system to the population”, decentralisation of schools has led to decreasing funding for all levels of education (Heyneman, 1997b: 335). Furthermore, “a greater choice of different types of institutions for students and an increased influence of parents on their children’s education” have not resulted in higher effectiveness of educational reforms (Ammermuller et al., 2005: 579).

The results of the educational reforms remain questionable in the Baltic States. Even though the reforms achieved a desired independence from the state, marketisation has not enhanced a desirable quality of education (Mägi et al., 2012). Since the 1990s, a growing number of private universities have emerged. In the case of Estonia, in 2005-2006, 20 per cent of students were studying in private higher education institutions, and in 2007 more than half of students paid tuition fees in public universities (HTM, 2009). Nevertheless, some authors argued that “marketisation has caused the change in students’ expectations towards universities and encouraged them for full-time employment and the consumer model and customer orientation in universities has decreased rather than enhanced the quality of education” (Mägi et al., 2012: 248).

Kogan, Gebel and Noelke (2012: 80) have argued that “stratification patterns encountered at the secondary level are also reproduced and perpetuated at the post-secondary level with students of less privileged social background being diverted to more labour-market oriented, short-term, post-secondary and lower-tertiary education”.

Titma et al. (1998) demonstrated that education has remained an important predictor of social status both in the final years of the Soviet Union and continuing into the early stages of the transition in the Baltic States. Hazans (2003) demonstrated that the educational effect remained strong in all Baltic states with higher education generally reducing the expected unemployment rate compared with basic education, employees with higher education earned on average 69 percent more than those with basic or less education in Latvia and 80 percent more in Estonia and Lithuania (Hazans, 2003). Furthermore, Saar and Aimre (2014) concluded in their research that parental social background has a strong impact on a choice of selective secondary schooling and the transition to higher education in Estonia. The latter effect “did not change during either the socialist period or in the 1990s. The increasing enrolment in higher education in the 1990s produced only minor changes in the effects of social origins on the probability of entry to higher education” (Saar & Aimre, 2014: 21). As a result, it is seen that new policies resulted in well-known patterns of social stratification, since entry into a university crucially depends on cultural and economic family resources, more students from advantaged families are admitted, while lower class students remain at a disadvantage (Kogan, Gebel & Noelke, 2012: 75).

1.6. Research Questions

The aim of this dissertation is to explore parental involvement of Baltic mothers in Ireland by emphasising the heterogeneity of their experiences. By demonstrating a variety of ways in which Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian mothers become involved in their children's educational and leisure activities, this thesis analytically goes beyond "the minority-majority disparity by putting ethnic minorities into one 'bag'" (Pasztor, 2009:203) or framing the research around a concept of "fixed ethnic identity" (Ball, Reay & David, 2002: 352). In particular, the research seeks to demonstrate "how social class intersects closely with migration regime, as migrant status works to position migrants and their families differently" (Laoire et al., 2008: 6), in relation to leisure, mobility and educational opportunities.

The questions raised in this research necessitate inquiry into the meanings Baltic mothers attribute to their parental practices. The research aims to answer the following main questions:

- 1. How do Baltic mothers understand their parental involvement in their children's education in Ireland?*
- 2. In what ways do their biographies, socio-economic background, ethnicity, gender and migration trajectories shape their everyday parental involvement practices in Ireland?*

1.7. Structure of the Thesis

Following this Introduction, Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the design of this study. To understand the ways Baltic mothers become involved in their children's education within and outside formal schooling, the concept of *habitus* developed by Pierre Bourdieu is used. The application of the concept allows us to explore how parental decisions and choices are linked to conscious and unconscious practices of social class, ethnicity and gender.

Chapter 3 discusses the research design that is used in order to explore parental involvement of Baltic mothers in Ireland. According to Dunne, Pryor and Yates (2005: 166), methodology needs to be "dynamic, contingent, dialogic and context specific",

which includes consideration of ontological, epistemological, ethical, macro-political, micro-political and practical issues. In following these tenets, I explain my methodological approach, the research methods used for data collection, and the ways primary data is analysed and interpreted.

Chapter 4 explores what it means to be a good mother for Baltic migrant women in Ireland. I demonstrate that gendered dispositions of good mothering are closely linked to the importance of work in the lives of the interviewed women and their maternal ideals of self-reliance, independence and autonomy. By looking at mothering as a socio-cultural phenomenon beyond the realm of childrearing, I examine how mothers position themselves in relation to the public sphere through their work and their involvement in their children's educational trajectories. Both stay-at-home and working mothers see their mothering and employment not as separate but rather interlinked spheres of the self, which constitutes their views of what is morally right and socially acceptable. At the same time, their understanding of good mothering is also linked to the educational aspirations and expectations that these mothers hold in relation to their children's trajectories, especially in higher education.

Chapter 5 focuses on how the interviewed women learn to navigate the Irish educational system. I explore how Baltic mothers make sense of formal schooling in Ireland by looking at the ways these migrant women navigate the educational landscape in Ireland. In particular, this chapter demonstrates the ways mothers' interactions with formal schooling in Ireland is shaped by their pre-migration histories and everyday experiences in Ireland. Initially, this chapter shows that women who move with their school-aged children to Ireland tend to be in a more disadvantaged situation in comparison to other migrant mothers, who have spent some time in Ireland prior their children start schooling. Nevertheless, parental competencies are not static and the second part of this chapter focuses on how social networks play a role in acquiring new cultural knowledge about education in Ireland. Although co-ethnic social networks are important for many Baltic mothers, especially for those who have a basic level of English, most women interviewed in this study emphasised the importance of Irish acquaintances and friends when it comes to educational decision-making process.

Chapter 6 turns to an examination of parental involvement outside schooling and the role of extra-curricular activities. I focus on children's routines outside formal schooling by emphasising the orientation of dispositions in selecting both structured and

unstructured leisure and extra-curricular activities for their children. In particular, I discuss how Baltic mothers approach their children's activities and facilitate the acquisition of cognitive skills and social competences outside of formal schooling. Contrary to previous research on parental involvement, the findings from this study show that parental engagement in their children's enrichment activities is not an exclusively middle-class phenomenon. However, migrant mothers with middle-class background tend to have a more structured approach to the leisure time of their children, based on cultural and material resources available to them.

By discussing the ways mothers develop practices for transmission of linguistic and cultural competences, Chapter 7 emphasises an active parental role in creating conditions for multilingual and multicultural environments. I emphasise the role of migrant mothers in fostering the acquisition of multilingual dispositions by providing children's socialisation mediated by the knowledge of their heritage languages. While most mothers emphasise the importance of maintaining their 'native' languages, all mothers stressed how proficiency in the English language becomes a significant tool for social integration of their children within the Irish context. Furthermore, regardless of their social class or ethnic background, linguistic and cultural competences are seen as a prerequisite for their children's future geographic mobility and social trajectories.

Chapter 8 offers a critical analysis of the findings before discussing the theoretical, empirical and policy contributions of this study. It also provides potential themes for future research.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework

2.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework of the thesis. To understand the ways in which Baltic mothers become involved in their children's education within and outside formal schooling, I primarily use the concept of *habitus*, a theoretical tool introduced and developed by Pierre Bourdieu. Along with the importance of formal education as a mechanism in the perpetuation of social inequality, Bourdieu emphasises that family is a central site for acquiring a “first definitive framework for the systematic inculcation of the group's values and ideologies” (Espinoza, 2012: 19). In the application of the concept of *habitus*, I specifically emphasise the role of dispositions that represent beliefs, ideas and practices. This allows me to explore the capacity and limits of individual decisions of Baltic migrant mothers in Ireland without privileging the theoretical model over the empirical data as “all sociological theories must be subject to continual revalidation in response to changing contexts and circumstances to which they are applicable” (Bourne, 2015: 15).

The chapter starts with a definition of parental involvement used in this thesis. Secondly, it focuses on explaining mothering and social class. In doing this, mothering is seen not only as an act of childrearing but also as an activity that is tightly linked to paid work in the public sphere, as most women maintain both social roles of mothers and workers. The practice of mothering is constructed by women and men in specific historical circumstances, organised by gender and consistent with prevailing cultural beliefs about gender, although it varies based on different cultural and material resources and constraints. As this research is influenced by the ‘cultural turn’ (Nash, 2001) in sociology, social class is conceptualised as a process of acquisition of cultural and material resources rather than a merely socio-economic location. This specifically becomes relevant for the analysis of the parental involvement of migrant women in a new cultural context. Finally, I define the logic of *habitus* and how it is relevant for the analysis of parental involvement, especially in the context of migration. I further explain other concepts relevant to the analysis, such as field and forms of capital.

2.2. Parental Involvement

The concept of parental involvement has been widely used in sociological research on education, although there has been a lack of consistency about how parental involvement can be defined, especially when it comes to understanding the variety of parental practices. Crozier (1999: 219) noted that “parental involvement is presented as a unified concept but in fact has a range of interpretations, which are variously acceptable or unacceptable by different constituents”.

In exploring gendered, classed and cultural practices of migrant parenting, the concept of parental involvement is seen as a multidimensional phenomenon in this research. By giving priority to the empirical data to explore the variety of ways migrant mothers become involved in their children’s education, the research adopts a very broad definition of parental involvement proposed by Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994), who define it as any allocation of resources by parents to their child’s educational endeavours. Therefore, the research does not rely on any educational typology, which presupposes what sort of things parents should and could do to support their children; parental involvement is not seen as a value free social activity. Instead, parental involvement is emphasised as a set of group-specific actions, beliefs, and attitudes that serves as an operational factor in defining categorical differences among children (and their parents) from different racial-ethnic and economic backgrounds (Desimone, 1999).

Within this context, Baltic migrant parents are not seen as a homogenous group based on their migrant or ethnic background, but they are also differentiated by their ethnicity, familial situation and social class background. As Reay (1996: 581) argues, parental involvement in education “cannot be adequately conceptualised in isolation from localised issues of history and geography, understandings of the psychological impact of social class, and the influences of differential access to social power and material resources”. In addition, following Smith’s conceptualisation of mothering work, this research not only emphasises the centrality of mothers in educational engagement of their children, but also uses parental involvement and mothering interchangeably (Gillies, 2007).

2.3. Mothering

This study looks at mothering as a historically and culturally variable practice of nurturing and caring for dependent children (Bell, 2004). It emphasises how both mothering and paid work outside the private sphere are closely intertwined. By defining mothering as a process of doing rather than being, this part focuses on dilemmas of choice and action not only in relation to child-rearing activities, but also maternal employment, as most women maintain both social roles simultaneously, negotiating the boundaries of each every day.

For several decades, feminist research has been problematising mothering as mental, manual and emotional work done on an unremunerated basis within the private sphere. By focusing on the private sphere, feminist critique identified the family and responsibility for unpaid domestic labour as a major source of female oppression (Glenn, 1994; Rich, 1976). According to Glenn (1994: 11):

mothers are romanticised as life-giving, self-sacrificing and forgiving and demonised as mothering, overly involved and destructive. They are seen as all-powerful holding the fate of their children and ultimately the future of society in their hands and as powerless – subordinated to the dictates of nature, instinct and social forces beyond their ken.

The Industrial Revolution resulted not only in a re-organisation of economic domains but also a redefinition of gendered division of paid and unpaid labour within the public and private spheres. By defining work as only those activities undertaken for money within the domain of the public sphere, unpaid household labour became invisible. The private sphere of family began to be linked to emotions, altruism, compassion and care; qualities considered ‘natural’ for women (Donath, 2017: 31). As a result, not only did the work predominantly done by women come to be regarded as private domain, standing outside the realm of the economy, but also childcare as exclusively a mother’s responsibility (Craig, 2007: 3). Since unpaid work is not seen as a productive activity, it is identified as a dimension of femininity based on love and altruism, which do need financial recognition or reward.

2.3.1. Mothering and motherhood

The discussion on mothering starts with making an analytical distinction between mothering and motherhood. The distinction between these two terms was proposed by

Rich (1986) in her ground-breaking book *Of Woman Born*. Rich (1986: 13) makes an analytical distinction between experience and institution, “the potential relationship of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children; and the institution, which aims at ensuring that that potential – and all women – shall remain under male control”. The term ‘motherhood’ here refers to the patriarchal institution of motherhood that is male-defined and controlled and is deeply oppressive to women, while the term ‘mothering’ refers to women’s experiences of mothering that are female-defined, central and potentially empowering to women. In other words, mothering refers to care work, often taking place within motherhood, although not restricted to the institution.

In virtually all societies, motherhood is an institution with social recognition, rules and legal status (Silva & Smart, 1999: 12). As Oakley argued, it is based on a false belief that “all women need to be mothers, all mothers need their children, all children need their mothers”. According to Phoenix and Woollett (1991: 6), motherhood not only establishes a woman’s credentials as a woman, it also binds its nature, biology and responsibility together by defining all women in relation to motherhood. For example, “even childless women are positioned by these discourses, viewed as either potential mothers, failed child-bearers or as just plain selfish” (Gilies, 2007: 10).

It is logical that this imposed ideology has a dramatic impact on reproduction of masculinity and sexual inequalities, and gendered division of labour (Chadorrow, 1979:11). Even if womanhood and mothering should not be treated as synonymous categories, gender and mothering are closely interlinked. As Chadorrow (1979: 3) further argues:

Women mother. In our society, as in most societies, women not only bear children. They also take primary responsibility for infant care, spend more time with infants and children than do men, and sustain primary emotional ties with infants. When biological mothers do not parent, other women, rather than men, virtually always take their place.

While mothering is associated with women because it is women who do nearly all mothering work, not all women mother, and mothering, as nurturing and caring work, is not inevitably the exclusive domain of women (Arendell, 1999: 4). Gender and mothering are not only linked in relation to unpaid labour performed in the private sphere, mothering as a practice is also intertwined with paid work performed in the public sphere. Most women maintain both social roles as mothers and workers simultaneously. Even though

mothers with male partners still perform about twice as much child care and housework as their partners (Bianchi, Wight & Raley, 2005), approximately two-thirds of North American mothers with young children worked outside home by 2010 (Christopher, 2012: 73).

The average maternal employment constitutes 66.2 percent across the OECD countries. And in most European countries, mothers are more likely to be in work when their children reach the age of compulsory schooling. Vincent et al. (2004: 581) noted that women who have children occupy a position based on competing discourses. One is related to viewing mothering as a natural ability of women and their responsibility for a child's successful development. The other one is related to paid work in the public sphere, which "de-genders a woman (officially at least), portraying her as a skilled and valued worker, contributing to the economy and capable of professional fulfilment and satisfaction". As a result, most mothers negotiate boundaries of being a mother and a worker between their own and children's needs, which might contradict dominant ideologies of mothering (Duncan et al., 2003).

2.3.2. Intensive mothering

According to Hays (1996), intensive mothering has become a dominant ideology in most Western societies (regardless of races and classes) as "an essentialist ideology of domesticity that assigns domestic responsibilities and self-sacrificing motherhood to women" (Crompton, 2006: 139). Hays (1996) argues that this ideology is based on three key tenets. First, women are expected to be the primary and central care-providers of children. "There is an underlying assumption that the child absolutely requires consistent nurture by a single primary caretaker and that the mother is the best person for the job. When the mother is unavailable, it is other women who should serve as temporary substitutes" (Hays, 1996: 8). Second, mothers are expected to dedicate time and energy on their children by sacrificing their own needs, which for Hays (1996: 8), is "construed as child-centred, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labour-intensive, and financially expensive". Third, mothers are expected to sacrifice their own interests in order to provide intensive care for their children, which poses serious challenges for those who want to combine caring responsibilities with paid work. Hence, based on the intensive mothering tenets, motherhood and employment are conflicting notions and mothers are always forced to choose between family and participation in the labour market. As Bell

(2004: 101) argued:

the ideology of intensive mothering obscures power and inequality in the practice of mothering. Its depiction of mothers as self-sacrificing, devoted to the care of others, and inspired by love romanticizes the work that mothers do. It obscures the extent to which mothering is 'an arena of political struggle' that includes multiple, shifting, and intersecting dimensions of power relations.

It should not be forgotten that mothering is not a classless practice (Duncan, 1995). The way women negotiate mothering and full-time work indeed intersects with their material realities. Middle-class and working-class women position themselves differently to the 'intensive mothering' tenets based on resources available to them. Middle-class intensive mothering (especially in the case of middle class mothers who combine employment and mothering) largely depends on the labour of working class and poor mothers, who take care for their children in their absence (Glenn, 1994: 7). This allows middle-class women to redefine intensive mothering ideology as professional mothering or 'extensive' one (Christopher, 2012). However, working-class mothers, especially mostly low-income mothers cannot opt out of the labour market or reduce their working hours (Lavee & Benjamin, 2014).

Furthermore, Walkerdine and Lucey (1989) argued that working-class motherhood has been consistently judged against middle-class motherhood. Gillies (2007: 1) insists that:

over the last few decades, attention and concern has focused on a particular sort of mother. She is portrayed as irresponsible, immature, immoral, and a potential threat to the security and stability of society as a whole. While this type of mother is accused of bad parenting, it is her status as poor and marginalised that sees her located at the centre of society's ills.

This, in particular, has an implication on the way mothering is seen in relation to children's schooling for both working and middle-class women, as middle-class women are presented as the only ones who care and do the best in their 'school work' for their children (Goodwin & Huppatz, 2010).

2.3.3. Mothering and culture

Mothering is not universal or identical. There are multiple meanings of mothering, mothering relationships with children and others, and the experiences and activities of

mothers (Arendell, 2000). As Collins (1994: 72) has noted, “their theories may appear to be universal and objective, but they actually are only partial perspectives reflecting the white middle-class context in which their creators live. Large segments of experiences, those of women who are not white and middle-class have been excluded”. Feminist critique on motherhood should not fall into a trap by considering only standpoint of white middle-class feminists. Mothering practices always vary across cultures (Gillies, 2007: 145) and the way different ethnic minority women negotiate employment and mothering is different from white middle-class ideals. Glenn (1994:5) notes that:

historically African-American, Latina and Asian-American women were excluded from the dominant cult of domesticity. Because they were incorporated into the United States largely to take advantage of their labour, there was little interest in preserving family life or encouraging the cultural and economic development of people of colour; people of colour were treated as individual units of labour, rather than a members of family units.

Unlike for white middle-class women, paid work in the public sphere was always present in Black women’s lives throughout history (Reynolds, 2001). For most Black women (regardless of their social class background), mothering and full-time employment are not exclusive categories, but they are mutually-supportive ones (Garey, 1999). Black mothers, regardless of their social class, see themselves primarily as paid workers and overall, full-time employment as an essential component for good mothering. In contradiction to intensive mothering tenets, most Black women see their needs as just as important as their children’s when thinking about childcare provision (Duncan et al., 2003). Similarly, Asian American women are more likely to prioritise their employment over the time spent with their children as full-time mothers. For many Asian women, it is not only a personal strategy to ensure financial security and higher quality of life, but also a fulfilment of expected cultural gendered behaviour (regardless of their social class) to contribute to their family income (Park, 2008).

The role of extended family members in childcare provision has been vital for many migrant and ethnic minority women. According to Glenn (1994: 6), “shared mothering has been a characteristic of African American communities since slavery. This tradition continues in many contemporary African American communities”. For most African American women raising children is not seen as solely individual mother’s responsibility. Mothers usually rely on extensive support from grandmothers, aunts,

friends and fathers (Blum & Deussen, 1996: 207). Although reliance on shared mothering might be viewed as a survival strategy, which enables women to manage full-time employment (Moon, 2003), for many mothers, shared mothering has also non-economic values of shared child rearing and the benefits to children of close kin relationships (Blum & Deussen, 1996). Mothering is associated with motherhood, although in contradiction to intensive mothering that normalises individual women's sole responsibility, mothering for many women is seen not only as the exclusive activity of biological mothers. "Motherhood can be given up. Mothering can either be attached to motherhood, shared between the mother and other persons, or done in the place of the mother" (Silva, 1999: 12).

The ways women define themselves and negotiate boundaries of being a mother and a worker are also not static. As with any social process, mothering might evolve and change due to different material and cultural circumstances. This becomes particularly relevant in the context of migration, because women are important economic actors in family migration as mothers and workers (Zlotnik, 1995). Furthermore, migrant mothers not only negotiate their own cultural gendered norms through everyday practices, but might also be confronted, contested and influenced by new mothering ideologies. Migrant mothers may struggle with the significant emotional stress that derives from raising children in a new cultural context (Nukaga, 2014: 69). Liamputtong (2006) shows that migrant women bear double identities as a mother and a migrant, and must embody the gap between ideologies of motherhood and actual mothering practices (Nekuga, 2014: 69). However, migration is also a fluid process that involves a constant negotiation of mothering practices. Thus, Segura (1994) shows that meanings attached to paid work among first and second generations of Mexicans differ significantly. Women who were raised in the US are more likely to view their employment as an obstacle to their motherwork, whereas mothers who migrated recently see their employment as a natural extension of their mothering.

2.4. Social Class

Social class is another important concept which requires further clarification regarding its use in this research. Social class is not merely a socio-economic position in this research. In order to consider the problematic position of women as mothers and workers in relation to social class and conflictual experiences of migration, I draw on Bourdieu's theories to reveal the ways class emerges and manifests in everyday lives through processes such as identification, consumption, and boundary making (Skeggs, 1997). Considering the absence of clear divisions of labour but growing social inequalities in post-industrial societies, the understanding of social class moves from analysis of collective class identities to classed individual identities, where social class is formed on the subjective level. Families of different social classes (as well as ethnic or migrant groups) tend to socialise differently. According to Bourdieu (1977: 164) "every established order tends to produce the naturalisation of its own arbitrariness". Values and habits incline the individual to have a 'second sense' or 'feel for the game'. For example, a child brought up in an art-loving family is far more likely to develop her own "love of art and will acquire the dispositions and knowhow for 'true' appreciation and criticism" (Bourdieu & Darbel, 1991). Therefore, parental choices represent a complex matrix of rational and unconscious actions, which are influenced by "salient properties of social class and networks of social relationships" (Bosetti, 2004: 388). As Ball (2003: 33) put it:

it is neither the case that middle-class families are cynical individualists who recognise that they contribute to and indeed are motivated by, the creation of social inequalities; nor that they are merely trying to do the best for their own children and have no real sense that their individual actions might have larger social consequences. Rather, that we all act within unclear and contradictory values systems which are complexly and unevenly related to our social practice.

Family not only transmits unconsciously but also unconsciously reinforces social and cultural distinctions (classed and gendered) through different socialisation practices, situations and lived experiences.

2.4.1. Defining social class

Some authors have argued that the use of Bourdieu's theories in understanding the classed nature of social and cultural practices has brought "a new sense of coherence" (Nash,

1990: 431), as social class can be seen as a filter or mechanism which individuals utilise in placing themselves and others (Reay, 1997). Bourdieu's version of class analysis takes the system of market exchange as the whole, omitting Marxist notion of class antagonism and capitalist monopoly over the property ownership and means of production. As the result, there is no theoretical dilemma of the middle classes, who occupy an intermediate position between the capitalists and the workers. Even if the focus remains on the economically-defined settings in which different social classes operate, the analysis is directed towards the understanding of subjective perspectives and meanings of individual trajectories and actions.

According to Bourdieu, social class represents a social space characterised by access and accumulation of social, cultural and material resources through various forms of capital (cultural, economic, social and symbolic). These forms of capital are mobilised differently through lived experiences of socialisation and recognised differently within the wider society.

Firstly, economic capital refers to material properties that are "immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights" (Bourdieu 1986: 242). For example, economic capital includes financial resources, property or land. Secondly, social capital represents a type of resource based on networks and defined as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu 1986: 247). Thirdly, cultural capital represents familiarity with the dominant culture in a society and "consists mainly of linguistic and cultural competence and that relationship of familiarity with culture which can only be produced by family upbringing when it transmits the dominant culture" (Bourdieu, 1977: 494). Finally, symbolic capital is "the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognised as legitimate" (Bourdieu, 1989: 17).

For Bourdieu any type of capital can become recognised as legitimate thus becoming a legitimate currency or asset in a society. Overall, Bourdieu (1997) sees the forms of capital as mutually constitutive. Economic capital can have an impact on the time and resources available for investment, especially in developing children's cultural capital, which is associated with future educational and occupational success. In return,

cultural capital contributes to the accumulation of economic resources and therefore, economic capital.

In an attempt to unveil the sense of collectivities defined by a uniformity of lifestyle rather than employment relations, many researchers emphasised that “despite this implicit tendency to behave in ways that are expected of ‘people like us’, for Bourdieu there are no explicit rules or principles which dictate behaviour” (Reay, 1995: 355). The emphasis is not on self-conscious claims to class identity, but rather the classed nature of social and cultural practices (Bottero, 2004). Social class here is seen as a lived experience based on a web of social relationships which include production, exchange, distribution and consumption of material and non-material resources and is viewed as a mode of differentiation rather as a type of collectivity, where ‘class’ processes operate through individualised distinction rather than in social groupings (Savage, 2000: 102).

2.4.2. Social class, gender and migration

For a long time, especially in European sociology, the understanding of social inequalities was mainly based on a materialist understanding of social class, which sees social class as a cluster of occupational groupings whose members appear to be comparable in terms of their “sources and levels of income, their degree of economic security and chances of economic advancements; and ... in their location within the system of authority and control governing the process of production in which they are engaged” (Goldthorpe et al., 1980: 39).

Even if the approach provides a good picture of intergenerational mobility and social stratification in general, this approach suffers from several limitations. First, the analysis is restricted to economic resources only. The importance of social and cultural dimensions of class is limited to individual employment relations (Devine, 1998: 23). Second, the approach is caught in economic determinism wherein advantages are generated through position in the class hierarchy and the advantaged middle classes always win (Crompton, 2006b: 663). Finally, migrants are often considered with reference to their location within the labour market of a ‘receiving’ society, without looking at the importance of educational background and location within the labour market of a ‘sending society’.

Furthermore, analytically women's experience of social class has been systematically excluded from conventional class analysis. As Boterro (2005: 109) notes, "married women were typically given the class position of their husbands, with women's employment seen as secondary to family commitments". Such class theorists as Goldthorpe (1983) argued that the class location of women is derived from their relationship to the family and the class location of men. Thus, Goldthorpe (1984: 494) insisted that a husband's occupation was a better predictor of his wife's voting and health behaviour than her own job. Nevertheless, since the 1960s, this assumption has been problematised by the increasing numbers of women in the labour market, especially those with dependent children. Increasing numbers of women in professional and managerial jobs challenge the convention that the male earner is paramount in defining the social position of the household. The growth of 'cross-class families' means that some women are in more privileged occupational positions than their male partners (MacRae, 1990). The rise of 'non-conventional' households is also important, especially with increasing numbers of single-person households, or multi-adult households not defined by a male-female couple (Silva & Smart, 1999).

Ferguson (1994) argues that there are at least three different variables – an individual's work, family of origin, and present household economic unit – which relate an individual to a specific socio-economic class. For example, a woman may work on two levels: as a day care worker (working class), but also as a member of a household where she does the housework and mothering/child care, while her husband is a wealthy contractor (*petit bourgeois*, small capitalist class). If, in addition, her family of origin is professional middle class (because, say, her parents were college educated academics), the woman may be seen and see herself as either working class or middle class, depending on whether she and others emphasise her present relations of wage work (her individual economic class, which in this case is working class), her household income (middle class) or her family of origin (middle class). What is seen is that class experience is deeply rooted, retained and carried through life rather than left behind (or below), as some individuals find themselves in a different social class from that into which they were born (Mahony & Zmroczek, 1997: 4).

Social class formation is at the heart of gendered mothering practices and at the same time "classes are not only divided by gender: they are 'gendered' in the sense that gender is integral to processes of class formation, action and identification" (Bradley,

1996: 74). McRobbie (2009: 132f.) insists that

middle-class women have played a key role in the production of class society not just through their exemplary role as wives and mothers, but also as standard bearers for middle-class family values [...]safeguarding the valuable capital accruing to them and their families through access to education, refinement, and other privileges.

Similarly, Griffith and Smith (2005: 9) argued that “differences in the unpaid time that women had available for their mothering work contributed directly or indirectly to the functioning of public schools as an engine of inequality”. Over time, middle-class women have come to play a distinctive part in reproducing their own middle-class status for their children through the public school systems (Griffith & Smith, 2005: 13). This can be explained in that parents who are of working-class background, racial and ethnic minorities or speakers of English as their second language tend to be constrained in active ownership within schools due to their lack of knowledge about the ‘legitimate’ forms of parent involvement (Lim, 2012: 90). Hence, this culturalist approach is particularly relevant to the analysis of social class, gender and migration, where a uniformity of lifestyle rather than of employment relations can provide a basis for analysis and discussion.

The culturalist approach implies an understanding of symbolic relations and everyday practices, which go beyond just economic variables. By focusing on social class as a process, class can be seen as determined not simply by men’s occupational status but produced by women in their work as mothers. The acknowledgement of gender in relation to social class transforms the way social inequalities are perceived and analysed, including the migration context. It allows us to focus on gendered and classed individual identities, where formation of social class on the subjective level is “bound up how with feelings of inferiority and superiority and how the drawing of symbolic boundaries operate in an individualised fashion” (Le Grand, 2008: 7). This becomes particularly relevant in the case of migration, as the way social class is perceived by migrants may also not be based on their current economic position. For example, migrants can experience ‘contradictory class mobility’ by achieving a higher income abroad and at the same time doing low social status work while being highly educated (Parrenas, 2015). Downward social mobility might be seen as temporary or a stepping-stone towards their or their children’s future upward mobility (Eade et al., 2006).

2.5. Habitus, its Durable, Transposable Dispositions and Migration

To explore how Baltic mothers understand their own capacity of involvement in their children's education in Ireland, I use the concept of habitus with a specific focus on exploring theoretical potential of dispositions, which Bourdieu calls a 'feel for the game', 'a sense of placement' or 'art of anticipation' (Bourdieu, 1980). Habitus is defined by Bourdieu (1990: 53) as:

systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.

Based on this definition, habitus represents a cognitive or mental system of internalised representation of external structures. It develops based on the individual experiences throughout time and only exists 'inside the heads' as a system of dispositions of seeing, being and doing.

As habitus is rooted in social agents' socialisation and conditioned by the positioning within the social structure, people can share the same dispositions, such as norms and values. The logic of habitus implies that the behaviour of individuals can be predicted in a certain way and in certain circumstances as the individual habitus tends to exhibit many group specific characteristics (Bourdieu, 1990). However, there are no two individual habitus that are the same. Therefore, the role of dispositions is central for the understanding of habitus as dispositions form 'unconscious' behaviour of individuals to act and react in different situations. In other words, "[t]he dispositions of habitus represent master patterns of behavioural style that cut across cognitive, normative, and corporal dimensions of human action. They find expression in human language, nonverbal communication, tastes, values, perceptions, and modes of reasoning" (Swartz, 1997: 108).

Considering that individual dispositions to act in certain ways are acquired initially through lived experiences within family settings, "the mothers' habitus, their beliefs, their dispositions, which prefigure everything they may choose to do are a key to reproduction because they are what actually generates the regular practices that make up social life" (Rodriguez, 2010: 342). This is particularly important not only in the understanding of the process of transmission and reproduction of social and cultural norms, but also in capturing a multidimensionality of mothering as a gendered, classed and cultural

practice in the context of migration. Baltic migrant women who were socialised in earlier life in their homeland come to encounter a new set of cultural practices in Ireland, which can generate dislocation of some dispositions or activation of other dispositions depending on their circumstances in Ireland (Lahire, 2010). To understand how these individuals can hold capacity to act and change within particular social settings, I further explain the logic of habitus by focusing on the importance of past experiences, interactions between structure and agency, capacity for transformation and change, necessary conditions for change and reflexivity of social agents.

2.5.1. Past experiences and individual biographies

For Bourdieu, cultural and historical circumstances rooted in the biographies of the individuals, play an important role in shaping individuals' behaviour, even if individual actions are not always conscious and rational. Bourdieu (1977) suggests that habitus "by integrating past experiences functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks, thanks to analogical transfers of schemes" (Bourdieu, 1977: 83). Therefore, individuals and collective histories can unconsciously generate social experiences of everyday life through family upbringing, schooling and peer socialisation. Habitus provides the schemes according to which subjects perceive and recognise the new situations and orientate themselves in them. While incorporating elements of past experience, habitus operates like an internal self-stirring mechanism that guides the social practice of individuals. In this sense, habitus is a system with an objective basis, which regulates the behaviour of individuals and their practices and habitus is both a structured and a structuring structure (Bourdieu, 1977: 82).

By emphasising the role of 'habitus as history' in this research, I focus on exploring how women's own experiences in education within and outside of formal schooling in the Baltic States can have an effect upon maternal ideals and actions when it comes to the educational decisions and choices for their children in Ireland. Internalised dispositions acquired through early childhood socialisation predispose social agents to generate new forms of action that reflect the original socialisation experiences (Swartz, 2002). Both positive and negative experiences for middle class and working class women can play out differently and therefore can have a profound impact on their children's schooling, preferences in structured and unstructured leisure activities, and the role of extra-

curricular activities in developing learning potential as well as a general perception of education in achieving their children's academic potential. As Swartz (2002: 63) notes, "habitus generates perceptions and practices that correspond to the structuring properties of earlier socialisation. An individual's habitus is an active residue of his or her past that functions within the present to shape his or her past that functions within the present to shape his or her perceptions, thought, and bodily comportment".

2.5.2. Interaction between structure and agency

Habitus is not only a product of the structure (a specific environment), it is the producer of practice (action or behaviour) and the reproducer of structure (environment). Bourdieu (1977, cited in Sullivan, 2002: 150) points out that:

our object becomes the production of the habitus, that system of dispositions which acts as mediation between structures and practice; more specifically, it becomes necessary to study the laws that determine the tendency of structures to reproduce themselves by producing agents endowed with the system of predispositions which is capable of engendering practices adapted to the structures and thereby contributing to the reproduction of the structures.

In other words, habitus can be seen as an interaction between structure and agency, where internalised social structures can govern the behaviour of the individual, although there is a space for the action too. Similarly, Painter (2000:242) describes habitus as:

the mediating link between objective social structures and individual action and refers to the embodiment in individual actors of systems of social norms, understandings and patterns of behaviour, which, while not wholly determining action do ensure that individuals are more disposed to act in some way than others.

The dynamics of agency and structure becomes particularly important for the analysis of the decision-making process of migrant mothers as it allows me to capture both objective social structure and subjective personal experiences and the process when the objective becomes subjective, and at the same time, when personal or subjective dispositions which govern the actions of individual in turn contribute to social structures (Maton, 2010: 53). Baltic migrants in Ireland like any social agents are involved in the reproduction of their social class not only through their role as workers, but also within their families (Kofman & Raghuram, 2015). Regardless of economic positioning in the labour market in the new

context, social class can be expressed and reinforced through cultural consumption within migrant families (Oliver & O'Reilly, 2010), especially through parenting practices and their attitude towards their children's formal and informal education and socialisation in general. However, their experiences can still be undermined by their sense of dislocation, and even marginalisation both as classed and as racialised subjects (Byrne & Tona, 2012: 22).

Specifically, habitus does not determine the behaviour of individuals, although some dispositions can imply certain constraints and demands on the individual action. As Reay (1995: 355) argues, habitus is a space where an individualised reason-based action coexists with social determination. Even if the choice remains a central feature of habitus, choices which are inscribed in habitus may be limited based on past socialisation that orients individuals towards taken-for-granted ways of thinking or acting (Swartz, 2002). Overall, the analytical potential of habitus can demonstrate how the continuity of social structures that shape individuals can coexist with ongoing innovative and improvised actions of individuals.

2.5.3. Transformation and change

Even if habitus favours stability over change, Bourdieu claims that individuals are actively engaged in the structuring of their positions by stressing that habitus is not merely reproductive and that it "is something powerfully generative" (Bourdieu, 1993: 87). As transformation and change are implicit components of the habitus logic, habitus is never static and dispositions can evolve by degree in response to changing experiences and circumstances (Lizardo, 2004). With migration, specific actions and practices can strengthen or weaken dispositions of habitus. Even if Baltic migrants improve their socio-economic position in Ireland, they may not be able to transfer their social or educational resources to the Irish educational context or generate strategies for action. Nevertheless, the analytical potential of habitus lies in its ability to demonstrate how social agents employ practices produced by habitus that are "strategy-generating principles enabling agents to cope" with unforeseen circumstances of migration (Dianteill, 2003: 529f.). Dispositions require resources to enact practices. Bourdieu calls these resources – forms of capital that can be manifested as economic, cultural, social or symbolic forms of capital and inevitably linked to social class.

Discussing social reproduction and inequalities in education it is necessary to look at cultural and social forms of capital, in particular. Cultural capital is composed of tacit knowledge of the dominant culture, which is gained through family upbringing and cultural socialisation and transmitted through formal education. However, the possession of cultural capital is unequally distributed as it varies depending on a social class. The education system, however, by maintaining status quo assumes the universal possession of cultural capital, which makes it very difficult for lower-class pupils to succeed in the education (Bourdieu 1977: 494). As Mills explains, “while the rules of the game are accepted and it appears as if everyone is free to play and everything is negotiable, more often it is a game in which the rules are determined by the dominant” (2008: 87). In other words, the education system enables higher-class pupils to reproduce and legitimate their dominant class positions.

In the case of migrants, who are socially vulnerable and economically marginalised, the discussion on social capital is important since the social networks might be limited and consist of “persons who themselves have a rather weak position in the immigration country” (Heckmann, 2008: 31). Furthermore, due to this fact, migrant parents are not able to support their children in the ways, which are relevant for success in the education system.

However, the field of education must be seen as an arena for a social struggle, in which a hierarchy between domination and subordination is challenged and even can be transformed if the individuals are able and willing to “feel for the game” (Bourdieu, 1990: 66). For example, Devine (2009: 533) explains:

the children were not mere receptors of their family’s capitals, however, but were active generators of such capital through their positioning and work orientation in home and school. They played an active contribution to their families’ coping strategies, caring for younger siblings, extending their parents social networks, as well as teaching their parents English when this was required.

2.5.4. Conditions for change

Individuals do not socialise in one single universe. Depending on circumstances or social contexts, which Bourdieu calls (social) *fields*, individuals have several repertoires of dispositions that they activate (Lahire, 2010). Fields contain principles of dynamics by itself

and forms of capital which exist and function in relation to field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2002). Bourdieu (1998: 40) defines field as:

a structured social space, a field of forces, and a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies.

Each social field can be seen as “a competitive game or ‘field of struggles’ in which social agents strategically improvise in their quest to maximise their positions” (Maton, 2010: 54). As with any social formation, the relation between habitus and social fields represents multiple hierarchies with their own logic, laws of practice and power relations between agents and their positions within each field. Unlike in rational choice theory, which argues about conscious choice and rational calculations as the basis of individual action, Bourdieu suggests that a ‘feel for the game’ is “never perfect and that takes prolonged immersion to develop” (Maton, 2010: 54).

Even if the notion of habitus underlines the generative principles for individuals to act according to specific contexts and settings, the mismatch between field’s and individuals’ dispositions to act creates the hysteresis effect that may lead to the change of individuals’ dispositions (Stand & Lizardo, 2016). Bourdieu introduces a term of hysteresis to signify a cultural lag or mismatch between habitus and embedded dispositions of a field.

The change or transformation of an individual’s dispositions is not merely the product of habitus, “but as the product of the relation between the habitus, on the one hand, and the specific social contexts or fields within which individuals act, on the other” (Thompson, 1991: 13). The norms in education and the wider society in Ireland, for example, may provide a structure that shapes parental dispositions that in return can generate their capacity for action. Even if individuals are constrained by surrounding structures and positioned by power within the educational field in Ireland, migrant parents may still exercise their agency. Migrant parents may not only reproduce but also contest existing beliefs and norms by generating diverging perceptions and actions.

2.5.5. Reflexivity

The issue of transformation and change of an individual's dispositions, which depends on that individual's own capacity as well as imposed conditions of the field, is particularly important for the analysis of parental involvement of migrant parents. Even if individuals are not consciously aware of their own habitus, conscious reflection of their position in unfamiliar settings may allow these individuals to become reflexive social agents. As Mouzelis (2008) notes, reflexivity does not appear naturally or consciously, but it becomes evident when there is a mismatch or a contradiction between dispositions and positions within a given field. Even though the system of dispositions might not change at any new life event, migrant parents who encounter a new set of cultural practices in the educational field in a new cultural context, may experience a dislocation of their habitus as well as reflexive realisation of their own social practices and learn unwritten rules of the game through time and experience (Maton, 2010: 54).

Nevertheless, Bourdieu's account on reflexivity significantly differs from the postmodern view on selfhood expressed by Giddens (1991) or Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002). For example, Giddens (1991: 14) claims that "each of us not only has, but lives a biography reflexively organised in terms of flows of social and psychological information about possible ways of life. Modernity is a post-traditional order, in which the question 'How shall I live?' has to be answered in day-to-day decisions." While the view of the increasing reflexivity in the lives of individuals who actively shape their own destiny regardless of social constraints has become very popular in mainstream research, Savage, Bagnall and Longhurst (2001) noted that none of the postmodern theorists is able to provide a convincing account of how material social inequalities relate to identity formation. Furthermore, Rogaly and Taylor (2009: 11), by discussing specifically social class in relation to migration, have argued that:

the concept of class remains vital to the critique of the production and reproduction of inequalities. Empirical evidence and people's experiences internationally show that class structures continue to be central in terms of positioning within social and economic spaces and the concomitant differences between people in terms of access to material, cultural and social resources.

Even if reflexivity is part of the logic of habitus, in practice a full reflexive awareness of production process is rare. As Bourdieu (1997: 94) notices, principles embodied in reflexive 'awakening' are "placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot

be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation”.

2.6. Conclusion

This chapter explained the theoretical framework adopted to understand the ways Baltic mothers become involved in their children’s education within and outside formal schooling in Ireland. In particular, I drew attention to the importance of dispositions as a central feature of habitus that enables me to explore behaviour of individuals by privileging the empirical data over the theoretical model. The advantage of Bourdieu’s theory lies in its theoretical potential to capture the interplay between structure and agency and the dynamics of change that is implicit in the logic of habitus. This particularly enables me to explore parental involvement as a gendered, classed and culturally specific practice and to examine how cultural and material properties of social class manifest in the educational decisions of Baltic migrant mothers in Ireland. The next chapter provides an overview of how these theoretical presuppositions were put into practice.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology that is used in this research. To answer the main research questions, qualitative methodology was chosen as the most appropriate to explore experiences of Baltic women as mothers and migrants in Ireland. According to Dunne, Pryor and Yates (2005: 166), methodology needs to be “dynamic, contingent, dialogic and context specific”, which includes consideration of ontological, epistemological, ethical, macro-political, micro-political and practical issues. In following these tenets, this chapter explains the rationale for choosing qualitative research methodology specifically paying attention to reflexivity as a process of making “the relationship between and the influence of the researcher and the participants explicit” (Jootun, McGhee & Marland, 2009: 45). The chapter is divided into five parts. In the first part, I discuss how qualitative methodology and case study as a scientific method are the most appropriate and effective tools in researching the heterogeneity of Baltic mothers in Ireland. The second part focuses on access and sampling by paying particular attention to the stratified sampling strategy. In the third part, I provide a description of the qualitative methods of data collection used in this study. The fourth part deals with thematic analysis as the main data analysis technique and the importance of reflexivity within qualitative research. The final part looks at the ethical issues which were taken into consideration in designing, conducting and writing up of this thesis.

3.2. Research Design

To answer the main research questions of this study, which are concerned primarily with the understanding of social processes rather than outcomes, methodology in this study captures the meaning-making process through which social agents come to perceive, construct and make sense of themselves and others (Bhaskar, 1989). With the aim of digging beneath the surface in order to reveal the underlying practices of parental involvement of migrant mothers in Ireland, this project is designed as a case study.

The epistemological departure for this study lies in understanding “social reality as historically constituted and that it is produced and reproduced by people. Although people can consciously act to change their social and economic circumstances, their

ability to do so is constrained by various forms of social and cultural dominations” (Myers and Avison, 2002: 7). This view is also in line with Bourdieu’s analytical presuppositions on conducting a research enquiry. As Bourdieu writes in *The Weight of the World* (1993: 613):

one cannot grasp the most profound logic of the social world, unless one becomes immersed in the specificity of an empirical reality ... attempting to situate oneself in the place the interviewees occupy in the social world in order to understand them as necessarily what they are ... is not to effect the phenomenologists ‘projection of oneself into the other’. Rather it is to give oneself a generic and genetic comprehension of who these individuals are based on a (theoretical and practical) grasp of the social conditions of which they are product: this means a grasp of the circumstances of life and the social mechanisms that effect the entire category to which any individual belongs ... and a grasp of the conditions, inseparably psychological and social, associated with a given position and trajectory in social space.

Thus, in developing a research design for this study, I acknowledge that the social reality does not only exist independently from our knowledge, but also that it is stratified. As Iosifides (2011: 9) notes:

reality is not exhausted in what people (and researchers) can experience or perceive but it also comprises layers and strata that are not directly observable or comprehensible. Those strata are the ‘deep’ domain of social reality and refer to ‘structures, mechanisms, powers and relations’ of social entities and objects which, through their interplay, produce events, a fraction of which are experienced and conceptualised in various ways.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 3), qualitative methodology is:

a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field-notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to self ... qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

The initial task for me as a social researcher is to interpret the meanings from the point of view of Baltic migrant mothers in Ireland, although another task is to place these subjective meanings within the context of their whole biographical trajectories to be able “to explain causally certain outcomes that are world-views, social relations and/or action chains which are directly or indirectly derived from biographies” (Iosifides, 2013: 52). Therefore, only qualitative methodology allows me to grasp these material and

psychological conditions that shape the parental experiences of Baltic women, which in turn make them think and speak from a specific point of view. As Harvey (1989: 48) notes, “all groups have a right to speak for themselves, in their own voice, and have that voice accepted as authentic and legitimate”.

An understanding of subjective experiences is important for this research, although the data is not independent of their socio-historic context. The emphasis here is on cultural meanings and experiences situated in a particular socio-historical context, which can be captured only with qualitative methodology. As Bhaskar argues (1989: 46), “meanings cannot be measured, only understood. Hypotheses about them must be expressed in language, and confirmed in dialogue”. Conducting this research with a small group of Baltic migrant women allows me not only to be more open and engage in a deeper and fruitful relationship with the research subjects of the study but to develop a “sensitivity to meanings and values and an ability to represent and interpret symbolic articulations, practices and forms of cultural production” (Willis, 2003: 51).

Even if qualitative research design is more appropriate for investigating ‘quality’ aspects of the social world, there are also challenges and limitations. In developing methodology for this research, I had to address the issue of generalisation. Generalisation can be described as “an act of reasoning that involves drawing broad conclusions from particular instances – that is, making an inference about the unobserved based on the observed” (Polit & Beck, 2010: 1451). As the goal of most qualitative studies, including this one, is to provide a rich, contextualised understanding of some aspect of human experience through the intensive study of particular cases, generalisation in its classic definition cannot be achieved. Statistical generalisation requires extrapolation that can never be fully justified because findings from qualitative research are always embedded within a context. To overcome this issue, the research relies on exploratory case study that allows comparison of the results of a case study to a previously developed theory by engaging in analytic generalisation. According to Polit and Beck (2010: 1456), because qualitative researchers are expected to be immersed in their data, “immersion in and strong reflection about one’s data can promote effective generalisation, particularly for the analytic generalisation”. In this research, analytical generalisation involves the extraction of abstract concepts from each unit of analysis (Yin, 2013). These abstract concepts link the theoretical foundations and may be applied in other case studies or considered internally and externally valid. The use of diverse indicators for representing

theoretical concepts secures the internal validity of causal interferences and theoretical interpretation for these cases.

3.2.1. Exploratory case study

The research relies on a case-study as the scientific method, which allows us to study complex phenomena within their contexts by answering questions as to ‘how’ and ‘why’. According to Yin (2003: 13-14.), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Case study methodology permits an in-depth understanding of the research subjects by focusing on the processes rather than on results. The scientific benefit of the case study method lies in its ability to open the way for discoveries (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1990). Yin (2003: 13-14.) further defines case study as a social inquiry that “(1) copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result; (2) relies on multiple sources of evidence and (3) benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis”.

Yin (1981) proposes three types of case studies: explanatory, descriptive and exploratory. Explanatory case study focuses on facts and the ways these facts can be explained within a given context. A descriptive case study aims to provide an in-depth description. An exploratory case study examines a question that has not been clearly examined; it can add a new theory to explain an event or a phenomenon. Considering that this research examines questions which have not been examined before and aims to add a new theory to an explanation of migrant parental involvement using Bourdieu’s theory of habitus, this case study uses the exploratory approach.

The exploratory case study methodology provides the researcher ‘the story’ which lies behind, giving deep insight into the processes, causally related issues, creating solid background for drawing valid conclusions and recommendations. The case study is not actually a data-gathering technique, but rather a methodological approach that incorporates a number of data-gathering measures (Hamel, Dufom & Fortin, 1993). With the aim

of exploring the complexities of a social phenomenon, different methods of data collection “can unpick fluid issues ... and to focus on lived experiences, whereas quantitative methods lend themselves to identifying causal relationships between variables rather than processes or meanings” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 13).

Case study method has a number of advantages in comparison to large number studies: (1) case studies have been the major source of theoretical innovation in social science; (2) case studies are often concerned with pinning down the specific mechanisms and pathways between causes and effects rather than revealing the average strength of a factor that causes an effect; and (3) case studies have a strong comparative advantage with respect to the ‘depth’ of the analysis, where depth can be understood as empirical completeness and natural wholeness or as conceptual richness and theoretical consistency. Hence, this research provides an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by holistically learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories by emphasising the multi-level reality, where individuals are subjects of as well as the products of the social reality.

In this research, I focus on a single case study of Baltic mothers in Ireland. As was already mentioned in the Introduction, due to geographical closeness and socio-historical development in the 20th Century, I group Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania together. I define further sub-cases or units of analysis by treating each participant as an individual case for further analysis with overall 33 sub-units of analysis. While case study methodology may include both single- and multiple-case studies, Dyer and Wilkins (1991) argue that single case studies tend to focus more on developing theory by questioning old theoretical assumptions and exploring new ones. Apart from theory building, Yin (2009) suggests four further reasons for a single case design, namely that the case is critical, unique or atypical, that it is revelatory (previously inaccessible to researchers) or that the study is longitudinal, comparing the case at different points in time. By investigating a single-case and interpreting and refining the meanings of this case, my aim is to get insights into various factors, attitudes and meanings which enable me not only to explore how parental involvement is understood and practiced by Baltic mothers in Ireland, but also to develop theoretically innovative conclusions based on the intertwined relation of gender, ethnicity, class and migration.

3.3. Access and Sampling

Choosing a sample requires careful forethought and planning. Considering that Baltic migrants do not constitute a homogeneous unit of analysis, the respondents were selected according to a number of criteria that reflect the specific purposes and areas of interest of this study. I use purposive sampling by identifying and selecting individuals based on specifically assigned criteria, which according to Suri (2011) need to be conceptually aligned with the synthesis purpose. Purposive sampling is generally associated with small, in-depth studies with research designs that are based on the gathering of qualitative data and focused on the exploration and interpretation of experiences and perceptions. Patton (2002: 30) argues that:

the logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalisations.

The selection of participants was based on characteristics that were specified in advance. The selection of the sample derived from the main research questions and the research context itself based on the following criteria. First, I focused on Baltic families which, at the time of my fieldwork, were settled in Ireland, so did not have plans to leave Ireland in the near future and had at least one child attending an Irish school. Considering the novelty of my research topic – parental involvement of Baltic migrant mothers in Ireland – no emphasis was placed on the age of the children or whether children were born outside Ireland. Rather than focusing on how a certain type or intensity of parental involvement produces positive results on educational attainment of their children in Ireland, this research seeks to explore maternal ideals of Baltic migrant women in the efforts to support their children within and outside formal schooling.

While different studies suggest that parental involvement largely varies based on the children's age and there is a substantial difference between generation cohorts, *e.g.* the “1.5” generation and second generation, in this research I explicitly focus on migrant mothers and their experiences of dealing with the educational landscapes of both primary and secondary schooling in Ireland. Nevertheless, later in my analysis I acknowledge the difference, which emerged from the interviews between mothers who migrated with

school-age children and those who spent some time in Ireland before their children started schooling.

Second, as mentioned in Chapter 1, Baltic families can vary based on their familial relationships. To reflect the cultural heterogeneity of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian families, I did not focus exclusively on nuclear families and included single-parent families, families based on cohabitation or those who live with extended family members in Ireland. The inclusion of different types of families has proved to be a successful strategy, as some interesting differences and similarities have emerged from the data between single-parent and two-parent families.

Third, For example, regardless of a family type, fathers were absent in the discourse of care and involvement, although usually maternal grandmothers were seen as active participants. This overall supports the claim discussed in Chapter 2, that in analysing parental involvement, it is important to go beyond a gender neutral definition of a 'parent' by exploring cultural notions of motherhood and mothering.

From the beginning of my research, I aimed at interviewing both fathers and mothers in the case of nuclear families. I was aware that recruiting and interviewing fathers can present a different set of challenges to involving just mothers in my research. However, I noticed that all "educational spaces" were occupied predominantly by mothers rather than fathers. Nearly all organisers of extra-curricular activities were women, with an exception of few classes of gymnastics and boxing that were predominantly targeting boys and were taught by men too. Furthermore, the majority of parents who were dropping their children off at the weekend/Sunday schools and picking them up, were also mothers. Even if this observation was very useful for my research, I experienced a real difficulty to recruit fathers for the interviews.

I talked to several fathers while they were waiting for their children from extra-curricular activities. I introduced myself, explained the nature of my research and asked if they were interested to be interviewed. While the majority of men immediately said no, some asked me to talk their wives about the interviewing, rationalising that women know better about the topic of childcare and schooling. Moreover, in comparison to mothers,

Baltic fathers were very reluctant to have a small talk. All men immediately tried to question presumably hidden purposes of my research referring to the political discourse of migration from the Baltic States. This reaction was, of course understandable as the lives of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians in the UK and Ireland usually make the headlines in the Baltic press by depicting co-ethnics living abroad as a problematic category.

Fourth, I kept a balance based on country of origin and ethnicity/linguistic belonging. The Lithuanians represent the biggest group of Baltic migrants in Ireland, followed by the Latvians and then the Estonians. Furthermore, as there is a big proportion of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians, who are native Russian-speakers in the Baltic States and among Baltic migrants in Ireland, this research has taken into account ethnic/linguistic representation within the sampling. Therefore, three out of seven Estonian participants were Russian-speaking, three out of 12 in the case of Latvia and three out of 14 in the case of Lithuania (as seen in Table 1).

The majority of extra-curricular activities for children are organised by parents along linguistic lines in their native languages, rather than by country of origin, thus in Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian. So, the inclusion of the Russian-speakers was inevitable in this research, although the analysis revealed that the way mothers approach formal and informal involvement is not significantly different, not only in terms of the language between Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian-speakers but also in terms of their country of origin.

Table 1: Overview of the sample

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Country of Origin</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Year of moving to Ireland</i>	<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Children</i>
1	Kadri	38	Estonia	Estonian	2003	Divorced	2 children (20 and 16 years old)
2	Ellu	28	Estonia	Estonian	2007	Married	1 child (4 years old)
3	Johanna	34	Estonia	Estonian	2006	Married	2 children (12 and 6 years old)
4	Laura	38	Estonia	Estonian	2006	Divorced	2 children (17 and 8 years old)
5	Klavdija	33	Estonia	Russian	2004	Married	2 children (10 and 6 years old)
6	Darja	29	Estonia	Russian	2006	Married	2 children (5 and 2 years old)
7	Elina	44	Estonia	Russian	1999	Divorced	3 children (18, 12 and 8 years old)
8	Sandra	48	Latvia	Latvian	2006	Married	6 children (26, 25, 19, 15, 15 and 4 years old)
9	Olita	32	Latvia	Latvian	2004	Married	1 child (6 years old)
10	Liliana	42	Latvia	Latvian	2007	Married	1 child (15 years old)
11	Inese	32	Latvia	Latvian	2006	Divorced	1 child (6 years old)
12	Maja	49	Latvia	Latvian	2006	Married	3 children (26, 21 and 18 years old)
13	Solvita	35	Latvia	Latvian	2008	Married	2 children (6 and 4 years old)
14	Kristina	36	Latvia	Russian	2006	Divorced	2 children (12 and 6 years old)
15	Natalija	38	Latvian	Russian	2000	Divorced	2 children (12 and 10 years old)
16	Liza	38	Latvia	Russian	2000	Married	2 children (18 and 12 years old)
17	Vera	37	Latvia	Russian	2009	Married	3 children (12, 10 and 1 years old)
18	Paulina	40	Latvia	Russian	2001	Married	3 children (17, 12 and 8 years old)
19	Karina	34	Latvia	Russian	2005	Married	2 children (12 and 6 years old)
20	Aurelija	37	Lithuania	Lithuanian	2002	Divorced	1 child (6 years old)
21	Ingeborga	41	Lithuania	Lithuanian	2006	Married	1 child(16 years old)
22	Audra	37	Lithuania	Lithuanian	2003	Partner	2 children (12 and 6 years old)
23	Dominika	40	Lithuania	Lithuanian	2004	Married	1 child (10 years old)
24	Vita	40	Lithuania	Lithuanian	2007	Married	2 children (18 and 12 years old)
25	Simona	35	Lithuania	Lithuanian	2003	Married	1 child (9 years old)
26	Jurga	37	Lithuania	Lithuanian	2004	Married	2 children (14 and 10 years old)
27	Agne	32	Lithuania	Lithuanian	2000	Divorced	1 child (16 years old)
28	Ieva	37	Lithuania	Lithuanian	2009	Married	2 children (10 and 7 years old)
29	Emilija	32	Lithuania	Lithuanian	2005	Married	1 child (10 years old)
30	Ana	35	Lithuania	Lithuanian	2006	Divorced	1 child (14 years old)
31	Marina	34	Lithuania	Russian	2004	Married	1 child (4 years old)
32	Tamara	43	Lithuania	Russian	2004	Married	2 children (10 and 2 years old)
33	Danuta	37	Lithuania	Russian	2005	Divorced	2 children (13 and 10 years old)

Fourth, I selected participants also based on their social class background. In considering social class characteristics, I followed the strategy of Reay (1998), Tomanovic (2004) and Lareau (2003) who selected their participants based on the assumption that parents from different social classes behave differently. Crompton has argued that “class is a multifaceted concept with a variety of different meanings. There is no ‘correct’ definition of the concept, nor any single ‘correct’ way of measuring it” (Crompton, 2006: 658).

As I conceptualise social class from a culturalist perspective influenced by the theories of Bourdieu, I reconstructed social class based on participants’ education and professional work experience. In most of the cases, social class position was based on the education and professional characteristics before the relocation to Ireland. This particularity becomes important in the case of de-skilling. Overall, from 17 middle class women, ten had the same social class position in Ireland as prior to their migration to Ireland. Two women experienced de-skilling and five women never worked in Ireland. So all of the women who were identified as of middle-class background had completed higher education, at least a Bachelor’s degree, and had experience of working in professional occupations. The remaining 16 women had the same social class position in Ireland as prior to migration and were employed in skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled occupations before and after their relocation to Ireland (as seen in Table 2). These women were identified as being of working-class background. Most had completed secondary school or specialist professional colleges.

Table 2: Biographical Details

	Name	Education in country of origin	Occupation in country of origin	Education in Ireland	Occupation in Ireland	Partner's occupation in Ireland
1	Laura	University	Worked in a bank	none	Works in a bank	n/a
2	Jurga	University	Office Assistant (public sector)	none	Office Assistant (private sector)	n/a
3	Liliana	University	Teacher	none	Office manager	Manual job
4	Simona	University	Teacher	Additional courses	Office Assistant (Admin)	Works in construction
5	Paulina	University	Accountant	Additional courses	Graphic designer/ Self-employed	Works in construction
6	Natalija	University	Never worked in Latvia	none	Manager (hospitality)	n/a
7	Agne	School (unfinished)	Sales Assistant at a small shop	School/ University	Manager (Property/Estate)	Student/university
8	Klavdija	School/University (unfinished)	Never worked in Estonia	none	Owns company (shared with her husband)	Owns company
9	Emilija	University	Never worked in Lithuania	University	HR (private sector)	Works in construction
10	Inese	University	Office Manager (private sector)	Additional courses	Regional Manager (private sector)	n/a
11	Aurelija	University	Pharmacist	none	Manual job	n/a
12	Elina	University	Never worked in Estonia	none	Manual job	a/a
13	Vera	University	Accountant (private sector)	none	Not employed	Works on a farm
14	Solvita	University	Never worked in Latvia	none	Not employed	Works in construction
15	Karina	University	Accountant (private sector)	none	Not employed	Works in construction
16	Ieva	University	Psychologist (public sector)	University	Not employed	Sales Assistant
17	Tamara	University	Nurse (private/public sector)	University	Not employed	Chief in restaurant/canteen
18	Anna	University	Never worked in Lithuania	none	Not employed	n/a
19	Ellu	School	Sales Assistant	Additional courses	Not employed	n/a
20	Darja	School/College	Never worked in Estonia	none	Not employed	Works in construction
21	Sandra	School	Different manual/admin jobs	none	Not employed	Manual job
22	Liza	School/College	Never worked in Latvia	none	Not employed	Not employed
23	Johanna	School/College	Never worked in Estonia	Additional courses	Childcare Assistant	Works in construction
24	Audra	School/College	Never worked in Lithuania	none	Receptionist (hospitality)	Manual job
25	Maja	School/College	Beautician	none	Beautician	Self-employed Works on a farm
26	Dominika	School/College	Hairdresser	none	Hairdresser	Bus driver
27	Vita	School/College	Chef in a hotel	none	Chef in a hotel	Manual job
28	Kadri	School	Shop Assistant	none	Shop Assistant	n/a
29	Marina	School/University (unfinished)	Gym instructor	none	Nanny	Works in construction
30	Danuta	School	Shop Assistant	none	Shop Assistant	n/a
31	Ingeborga	School	Waitress/cleaner	none	Cleaner	Manual job
32	Olita	School/University (unfinished)	Office Assistant	none	Manual job (factory)	Manual jobs (factory)
33	Kristina	School/College	Manual job	none	Manual job (factory)	n/a

Mapping exercises and observations conducted prior to interviewing provided me with initial access for recruiting participants. Thus, some mothers were recruited from Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian weekend schools and community meeting spaces. Nevertheless, I wanted to recruit Baltic mothers from different rural and urban locations in Ireland using different recruitment techniques. Therefore, more than half of my research participants were recruited using such means as small advertisements in local/ethnic newspapers or online forums, including LinkedIn and Facebook. Facebook, the largest social networking website, was particularly useful for locating potential participants. I used several Facebook pages/groups specifically dedicated to Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian-speaking migrants and mothers residing in Ireland. Considering that the site is more associated with non-formal communication with friends, relatives and acquaintances, the response rate to taking part in this research was higher and viewed more positively than small advertisements in local ethnolinguistic forums or newspapers. Recruiting participants outside of ethnolinguistic communities was also important as not all mothers are involved in their ethnic/linguistic communities in Ireland and in some cases even reject any association with them.

3.4. Data Collection Tools

Case study methodology involves a systematic gathering of enough information about a social setting to permit the researcher to effectively understand how the research subjects operate or function (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1990). Case studies usually rely on multiple research tools of data collection. In qualitative research, the researcher is an essential part of the data collection, because the quality of information or data obtained is dependent on the researcher and the nature of the relationship and interaction between the participants and researchers (Bhugun, 2016).

In this research, I used three methods of data collection: a mapping exercise, observations and semi-structured interviews that would provide a ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) by presenting experiences and meanings of migrant mothers in Ireland. While interviewing is a central method of data collection, which allowed me to go beyond the given, mapping exercise and observations allowed me not only to get a grip of the realities of migrant parenting in Ireland, but also to prepare for the interviewing stage and guide me through the analysis of the data gained from the interviews.

3.4.1. Mapping exercise

To get closer to the reality of Baltic migrant parents living in Ireland, I began my fieldwork by reviewing different social media pages and newspapers led by the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian-speaking communities in Ireland. One of the initial observations was that there were many small adverts offering different extra-curricular activities across Ireland. To make my observations more meaningful, I conducted a mapping exercise, which consisted mainly of extensive desk research of different extra-curricular activities available for Baltic migrant children in Ireland. In conducting the mapping exercise, first I identified the main sources for information. Many advertisements for different classes were found in ‘local’ ethnolinguistic newspapers, on online fora and websites and in Facebook groups. Second, I identified a range of different extra-curricular activities, such as sports, arts and crafts activities, music lessons and language classes available for Baltic ethnolinguistic communities – Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian speakers. Third, I located these activities based on geographic locations in Ireland.

Although the predominant number of these activities were related to the ‘heritage’ language learning, overall, I collected more than 70 different activities available for children, ranging from different sports to art classes. It became evident that the most activities were offered in big cities like Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway. Unlike in other cities, in Dublin there were multiple sites mainly situated in the northern and southern suburbs of Dublin. Particularly, in the north of Dublin, many activities were offered in Navan and Swords, which are overall characterised as areas with large migrant populations. Most of these activities took place in community centres, schools, churches as well as in privately-rented venues. Based on these results, it was possible to conclude that migrants who live in urban areas have better access to these extra-curricular activities. Nevertheless, this mapping exercise showed that Baltic parents are not so ‘invisible’ and many parents are actively involved in their children’s education outside of formal schooling in Ireland.

3.4.2. Observations

After conducting the mapping exercise, I decided to make multiple visits to different ‘educational’ sites around Ireland for further observations. Observation is a qualitative

method for gathering primary data about some aspects of the social world without interacting directly with its participants. The initial aim was to get to know more about Baltic migrants and families as prior to the research I did not have any access to this group. As observations can be used at different stages of the fieldwork and for different purposes, I used observation in the early stages of my fieldwork before proceeding to a more structured phase of data collection in order to understand “the context of the phenomenon under investigation and working out what the important questions to be asked are” (Darlington & Scott, 2002: 76).

I randomly contacted several people who were organising activities for children in different locations across Ireland. I explained the aims and objectives of my research and asked for a possible visit. All the people I contacted were very welcoming, so I was able to visit different sites in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway. During my visits, I had informal chats with organisers and parents about their reasons for running and participating in these activities for Baltic migrant children. Considering that most people viewed me as an insider, I got instant access to the field.

Over the four months of my visits, I kept a diary based on my observations. There are many variations of how to take field notes. Burgess (1991 cited in Berg, 2001: 159) suggests that “note-taking is a personal activity that depends upon the research context, the objectives of the research, and the relationship with informants” (Berg, 2001: 159). Although some researchers take notes covertly while in the field and later transcribe them into complete field notes (Berg, 2001: 159), I waited until I had left the field and then immediately wrote complete records of events. Most of my observation and reflection notes followed procedures described by Spradley (1980: 78). I tried to describe the physical place where the activities took place, who the main actors involved were, what type of activities were observed, whether there were physical objects, which interaction I observed, how people interacted with each other, the sequencing that took place over time, what the actual goals of observed activities were and finally, the emotions felt and expressed.

After getting to know more migrant parents within Baltic ethnolinguistic communities, I was invited to help with the organisation of some community events on several occasions. For example, one of those events was a Christmas celebration organised by a

group of Lithuanian parents outside Dublin, which was attended by more than 100 Lithuanian families. Participation in these events proved particularly useful for my research, as I was able to directly interact with a larger number of families and observe the social interaction among different families within ethnolinguistic community settings.

The mapping exercise and observations provided me with a familiarity of the research setting. Bailey (1996: 36) insists that “familiarity with a setting or group provides a firm foundation upon which to build. Those who are familiar with a setting may already have rapport with members, understand nuances of language and behavioural expectations and have analytical insight into the working of the setting”. Hence, the mapping exercise and observations played a significant role in designing the interview guide, sampling strategy and guiding the analysis of semi-structured interviews overall, especially when mothers reflected on their relationship to the ethnolinguistic communities in Ireland.

3.4.3. *Interviewing*

The third and most important method used in this study was semi-structured interviewing. Interviewing is the most commonly used data collection approach in qualitative research in understanding “the meaning people make of their lives from their own perspective” (Darlington & Scott, 2002: 48). Although there are different types of interviewing, Mason (2002: 62) has argued that all qualitative interviews have three main features. First, all interviews represent interaction exchanges of dialogue. Second, despite the extent of flexibility in interviewing structure, all interviews focus on specific themes. Third, they entail a perspective regarding knowledge as situated and contextual, requiring the researcher to ensure that relevant contexts are brought into focus so that the situated knowledge can be produced. Meanings and understandings are created in an interaction, which is effectively a co-production, involving the construction or reconstruction of knowledge.

Although interviews may appear similar to ordinary conversations, interviewing differs in terms of how intensely the researcher listens to pick up on key words, phrases, and ideas (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). There are substantial differences in qualitative interviewing related to its open-endedness, flexibility and continuous nature (Babbie, 2013). There is indeed a difference in the degree of control the researcher holds during the interviewing process on a spectrum from conversation to self-administered questionnaires

(DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). According to Clarke and Dawson (1999) semi-structured interviews operate within a less rigid framework, which includes some standardised questions such as biographical details but many open-ended questions to encourage participants to talk. Thus, having encountered some emerging themes from the mapping exercise and observations, semi-structured interviews have allowed me to focus on specific topics, while allowing a privileged role to an interviewee.

Semi-structured interviewing allows one “to go into something in depth [...] to get a sense of how the apparently straightforward is actually more complicated, of how the ‘surface appearances’ may be quite misleading about ‘depth realities’” (Wengraf, 2001: 6). The delivery of questions during semi-structured interviewing provides the interviewees with the flexibility to give open-ended answers, which lead to two-way communication (Beardsworth & Keil, 1992: 261f.). Mothers themselves raised additional and complementary issues, which also formed an integral part of the findings for this research. The informal and flexible format of the interviews enabled mothers to talk about their experiences in their own way, highlighting their unique experiences and biographies. In addition, the informal format enabled me to be more sensitive to the needs of the participants in discussing very personal and delicate topics, which have not been used in this research for ethical reasons.

All 33 interviews were based on an interview guide, which included a list of questions grouped by several topics. The interview guide was developed taking into account the reflections from the mapping exercise, observations and two pilot interviews. During my visits to different sites across Ireland and two pilot interviews, several themes repeatedly came up, such as comparisons between mothers’ childhoods and the childhoods of their children in Ireland and the importance of learning their heritage languages in Ireland. Therefore, these themes were included in the final interview guide. The interview guide was divided into four main parts dealing with different sets of questions.

The first set of questions was focused on biographical information of participants, such as their family background, education and employment history before and after relocating to Ireland. The second set of questions concerned actual parental experiences of migrant mothers in navigating their children’s education in Ireland. Specific attention was paid to formal educational settings. The third set of questions looked at their children’s experiences outside formal schooling, specifically reasons for choosing specific

activities over the others. The fourth set of questions was concerned with commonalities and differences between their childhoods and the childhoods of their children. The final set of questions focused on exploring the attitudes towards maintaining their ‘heritage’ language(s) at home and through the interaction within ethnolinguistic communities (see Appendix 1).

Although the interview guide is an important component for conducting an interview, I paid particular attention to the opening and cooling down stage during the interview as well as to the actual physical settings where the interviews took place. According to Edwards and Holland (2013: 72), “listening and attending to what interviews are saying is a crucial skill for a qualitative interviewer as part of the social interaction of interviews”. It is indeed important not only to be alert and attentive to what the interviewee tells the interviewer, but also to be able to probe and follow up the interviewee with questions effectively and sensitively. There were many moments when my research participants shared very personal stories, which were not related to the main research questions or due to ethical reasons could not be included in the study. Even though my role was to keep the conversation going, it changed during some interviews, as from time to time mothers asked my opinion on their personal situation or emotional experiences. So, I had to respond and smoothly redirect them to the main focus on the interviewing, by asking linking questions.

As with any qualitative researcher, I aimed to gain rich data for my research and specifically paid attention to the physical settings where interviews took place. According to Elwood and Martin (2000: 649), “the interview site itself produces ‘micro-geographies’ of socio-spatial relations and meaning that reflect the relationships of the researcher with the participant, the participant with the site and the site within a broader socio-cultural and power context that affects both researcher and participant”.

From the start, I tried to be as flexible as possible, offering to conduct interviews at times and in places suitable and comfortable for my research participants. With more than half of my participants, I conducted interviews in their homes in different locations across Ireland. It was very easy to create a good interview ambience as there was no outside noise or distractions. Nevertheless, with other mothers (11 mothers) due to their work or their children’s schedule I met them in public places, in cafes or schools (for example, during the time when their children had their extra-curricular activities). In

comparison to the interviews held at home, these interviews were much shorter, lasting about one hour. Another six mothers could not meet me in person, so they suggested having an interview via Skype. At the beginning, I was a bit reluctant to have Skype interviews as I gave more priority to face to face verbal interaction. In the case of telephone interviewing, Berg (2001: 82) argued that there are a number of limitations. Telephone interviews lack face-to-face non-verbal cues that researchers use to pace their interviews and to determine the direction to move in. However, the primary reason that one might conduct a qualitative telephone interview is to reach a sample population that is in geo-graphically diverse locations.

Considering that new technologies have become an inseparable part of our daily routine, I decided to explore the potential of Skype interviewing. The same as face-to-face interviews, and unlike telephone interviews, Skype interviews were characterised by synchronous communication in time with no delay between audio and video, questions and answers. Interviewees were comfortable discussing their lives with me the same as with face to face interviewing. Furthermore, Skype interviews were about the same length as face to face interviews (up to two hours long). After each interview, I tried to record my feelings and thoughts about the process. These notes gave me a general feeling about the interview and whether anything should be changed or improved in the next one.

The interviews were conducted in Latvian, Russian and English. With Latvian and Russian-speakers I was able to communicate in their native languages. However, with ethnic Estonians and Lithuanians, I conducted interviews in English or Russian depending on which language they felt more comfortable to express themselves in, which of course can be treated as one of the limitations of this research. Qualitative research is considered valid when the distance between the meanings as experienced by the participants and the meanings as interpreted in the findings are as close as possible (van Nes et al., 2010). To capture the richness of experience in language, people commonly use narratives and metaphors, which vary from culture to culture and are language-specific. The challenge is to translate expressions and concepts in a way that their meanings would not get “lost by translation” (van Nes et al., 2010).

Even though it is usually regarded as a methodological limitation to conduct interviews in a non-native language (Murray & Wynne, 2001), all of the Lithuanian and Estonian participants were fully proficient in speaking English or Russian and therefore

were able to communicate adequately, especially when emotional or sensitive topics were discussed. Conducting interviews in multilingual settings required high flexibility and solid preparation within the field, which is not only related to the language competence, but also to historical, cultural and societal knowledge about the context to prevent communication problems and loss of information when translating and explaining specific terms and phrases (Filep, 2009). Considering my extensive knowledge of the context and familiarity with verbal and non-verbal cultural clues, translation and interpreting did not pose any specific challenges as I was able to translate concepts for which specific culturally-bound words were used by the participants.

3.5. Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis of this study had three phases: transcribing interviews, developing a coding system and analysing emerged patterns. Data analysis is the most difficult and crucial aspect of qualitative research (Basit, 2003: 143). As Delamont (1992) warns, there are no short-cuts and one must allow plenty of time and energy for the task. This part focuses on explanation of thematic analysis and the role of reflexivity in the research process.

3.5.1. Thematic analysis

Through the whole research process I collected a relatively large amount of data, comprising interview transcripts, field notes and interview notes. In making sense of a large amount of qualitative data I used thematic analysis. Thematic analysis can be described as “a process of segmentation, categorisation and relinking of aspects of the data prior to final interpretation” (Grbich, 2007:16). Since the aim of this research is to discover, unveil and dig beneath the surface, thematic analysis is particularly useful for identifying patterns and themes within the data.

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns and themes within data. While it allows us to organise the data which reflects reality, it also allows us to unravel the layers of reality. From the start, thematic analysis involves a number of explicit choices regarding how to identify relevant data. There are two ways to detect patterns; either using an inductive or ‘bottom up’ way or else a theoretical,

deductive or ‘top down’ way (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 12). In this research, I use a combination of the two ways of detecting themes and patterns, as the analysis of qualitative data involves “a constant moving back and forward between the entire data set, the coded extracts of data that you are analysing, and the analysis of the data that you are producing” (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 15). Some themes were identified from the literature review prior to fieldwork - these themes captured important information in relation to the research questions, although other themes and patterns emerged during the coding through the inductive logic of the analysis process.

After collecting raw qualitative data, all interviews were personally transcribed by me. Transcription entails a translation or transformation of sound/image from recordings to text (Davidson, 2009). Once fully transcribed, all field notes and interviews were entered into digital document format using Microsoft Word. Those interviews that were conducted in Russian and Latvian were translated into the English language before the coding. All data was manually coded and organised using the NVivo software package.

Coding is an important and even indispensable part of the qualitative process (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). According to Basit (2003: 143), “coding is one of the significant steps taken during analysis to organise and make sense of textual data. It is a dynamic, intuitive and creative process of inductive reasoning, thinking and theorizing.” Categorising the data was indeed an important step of the research as it involved subdividing the data and assigning categories in order to capture commonalities of the mothers’ experiences across researched cases. As Sandelowski (1996: 525) has argued, “looking at and through each case in a qualitative project is the basis of analytic interpretations and generalisations”. According to Miles and Huberman (1994: 56):

codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes usually are attached to ‘chunks’ of varying size – words, phrases, sentences, or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting. They can take the form of a straightforward category label.

It took a lot of time and effort to analyse the data in order to produce meaningful results and answer the research questions as satisfactorily as possible. I read and studied interview transcripts several times to segment and code the central themes, until categories and patterns started to emerge and make sense based on the theoretical presuppositions

of this research. Based on coding methods and techniques discussed by Saldana (2009), I applied two cycles of coding.

During the first cycle of coding, I tried to grasp themes related to my participants' biographies, experiences of their migration and what it means to be a parent in Ireland. These themes were identified prior to the start of coding. During the coding itself, I assigned attributes and holistic codes to capture descriptive information, such as age, family formation, migration decision and trajectories, employment and different aspects of their everyday routine and the schooling of their children. These themes include information on pre-migration experiences (including experience of their own childhood in the Baltic States), initial experiences of migration versus continuous experiences of migration, the importance of education, awareness and knowledge of educational system in Ireland, children's everyday routine, use of the 'heritage' and English languages, involvement in ethnolinguistic communities and extra-curricular activities.

These themes were used for a more detailed re-catheterisation in the second cycle of coding. In the second cycle of coding, I used affective methods by introducing emotional and values coding for mapping life-course decisions and actions (Sandana, 2009: 86). Emotional codes are used to describe subjective experiences of the research participants accompanied by emotional reactions. As Corbin and Strauss (2008) note, "one cannot separate emotion from action; they are part of the same flow of events, one leading into the other". On the contrary, values codes are used to reflect attitudes and beliefs of the research participants by aiming to explore cultural values, interpersonal relationship and behaviour. By focusing on the subjective emotions, values and judgements of social experiences I used these codes to develop theoretical assumptions about migrant mothering in Ireland.

During the initial stage of analysis I used Nvivo to organise the data and to access various aspects of the data easily, flexibly, and efficiently. For example, Nvivo organises data into categorical trees, which allows a clearer visual representation of the codes. Electronic methods of coding data are increasingly used by social researchers and offer a number of advantages (Basit, 2003). Nvivo offered me an easy way for organising and retrieving the data. However, as Iosifides (2003) noted, there is a danger of developing a misconception that using electronic methods for coding and analysing data somehow increases the validity and reliability of qualitative research and gives it credentials of

rigorous scientific research. Therefore, during the latter stage I balanced the data analysis by using a more traditional method – coding on paper, which allowed me to more closely connect to the data and link it to the conceptual framework of this research. This part of the analysis was accompanied by a stage of reflection and re-reading the coded transcripts many times. Thus, having paper text and using different coloured markers was a more productive and rewarding process rather than on the computer.

3.5.2. Reflexivity

As a qualitative researcher, I am not only the primary ‘instrument’ of data collection, I am also involved in data analysis and interpretation. “Reflexivity is an essential part within the process of qualitative inquiry” (Watt, 2007: 82), because it allows me to be aware of the limits of what I can achieve in the process of research by recognising structural forces which influence the lives of my research participants, their perception of reality and how it is different from my own understanding and explanation. However, being reflexive is more complex than being reflective and it requires acknowledgment of myself within every step of the research, critically thinking about processes, relationships, quality and richness of the data (Smith, 1999).

Reflexivity in this research is understood not as awareness of personal bias but as concerning the relationships between the researcher, the research process and its product (Jordan & Yeomans, 1995: 394). As we simultaneously occupy multiple identities, it is vital to identify those aspects of the self which influence the research process. My aim of reflexivity as a process is to objectify the researched in order to locate myself (as a researcher not as an individual) within the social structure and objectify my relationship to the subjects of the study (Bourdieu, 1990:34). Therefore, this process of reflexivity has brought me conscious awareness of my cultural, political, social, linguistic and ideological influences.

In practical terms, my initial point of understating a reflexive role started with “the explicit use of concepts and theories as a part of good research practice, in that the researcher is more in control of the direction, meaning and implications of his or her work” (Cooper, 2008: 6). The need for reflexivity has become even more apparent during my fieldwork and later stages when I tried to make sense between coded data and theoretical presuppositions. I became highly reflexive about my use of power in the research

process and those aspects of my identity which might have influenced the research process. However, reflexivity is not a straightforward processes as it is impossible to know oneself with any certainty (Parker, 1999). Furthermore, Mauthner and Doucet (2003) argue that everyone simultaneously occupies multiple identities and such social markers as race, class, sexuality and ethnicity become important in a research process in viewing the similarities and differences between the researchers and researched.

Macbeth (2001: 38) sees reflexivity as an autobiographical critical examination and articulation of a researcher's situation in the world, as she describes "positional reflexivity takes up the analysts' (uncertain) position and positioning in the world he or she studies and is often expressed with a vigilance for unseen, privileged, or, worse, exploitative relationships between analyst and the world." My interest in studying Baltic migrant mothers is based on two reasons: academic and personal. It is difficult to identify which motivation is primary because I consider both reasons intertwined with each other and inseparable parts of myself. My academic reasons, as discussed previously in Chapter 1, derived from the desire to fill the gap in current academic literature on migration and educational studies. The research topic is novel and gives me a sense of excitement and achievement as a researcher. At a personal level, the reasons for choosing Baltic migrants in Ireland as a research group are linked to my own identification with this group.

In this research, I had a dual role of an insider and outsider in relation to what and whom I studied. I could immediately spot similarities which would classify me as an insider. I was an insider based on my linguistic and ethnic identities, as well as having similar personal experiences of growing up in the Baltic States. I grew up in Latvia, but travelled to Lithuania and Estonia occasionally during my childhood. In 2011, prior to starting my PhD at Trinity College Dublin, I lived in Lithuania for several months, which provided me even more familiarity with the Lithuanian society, language and culture. Furthermore, the majority of the participants were in their 30s and 40s, which made me an insider of the generation of people who were born in the 1970s or 1980s, who had experienced the institutional and societal transformation in the Baltic States during the 1990s. The same as my participants I was a migrant and I could easily relate my experiences of othering constructed through a racialised category of 'Eastern Europeans' in Ireland.

However, 'insider' and 'outsider' are not mutually exclusive categories. Researchers have multiple identities, which operate in a fluid, flexible manner where a particular identity becomes salient according to the context and audience (Hodkinson, 2005). The same as being an insider, the perspective of being an outsider lies in my biography. Unlike all of my participants, I do not have children. Not only do I have no experience of being a mother, I have none of being a migrant mother in Ireland. Before the fieldwork, I had thought that my belonging to the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia would bring additional layers of subjectivities or tensions. However, during my fieldwork, I realised how much I was connected to both the Latvian and Russian-speaking migrants in Ireland, and how I was also viewed by both communities as an insider.

Furthermore, as a researcher, I am not immune from emotions and feelings. Hubbard, Backett-Milburn and Kemmer (2001: 121) point to the emotional danger for the researcher that is inherent in qualitative research that as a result may have an impact on the analysis of the data. This particularly becomes relevant in relation to this research, as sensitive topics came up during the research, such as unpleasant or difficult situations related to pregnancies, economic hardship, quarrels in the family or separation from a partner. Following Gray (2008: 936), I adopted a stance that researchers should not avoid emotional experiences. In fact, emotional reactions and experiences are part of human life, and therefore should never be absent from the research situation. However, emotional management is necessary as a part of a reflexive process in order "to learn how to acknowledge and utilise them effectively throughout the duration of the project" (Hubbard, Backett-Milburn & Kemmer, 2001: 133).

Since the first steps of the research process, I kept a diary as a tool for reflexive practice in order to reflect on my field of research and my own relationship to it (Finlay, 2002). I tried to adopt a detached perspective while listening to my respondents during the interviews. Re-reading notes helped me to develop a critical stance, both as part of the 'self' identity of the researcher, and the way the research subjects were seen and examined. Continuing critical reflections on the research process during the data analysis and writing up stage allowed me to see how meanings of the social world of my 'self' identity are embedded in the interpretation of results and findings. This reflexive analysis allowed me to see the research data from different angles by locating myself in the field of research, from the position as a member of the group; to analyse in the light of my

position of an outsider, and finally to analyse with the consideration for the impact of my study on the people being studied (Hamdan, 2009).

3.6. Ethics

Ethics in qualitative research is an integral aspect of all decision making in research, from problem formulation to presentation of results. Qualitative researchers produce studies intended to contribute to knowledge, improve practice, and transform the lives of participants. However, qualitative researchers must address the moral implications of their representations to those they study, to their scholarly colleagues, to policymakers, and to the media and the public (Given, 2008). In this research, I follow the ethical guidelines of the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy at Trinity College Dublin. As a researcher, I have a full responsibility to ensure that the welfare of my research participants is not adversely affected by my research activities (Given, 2008).

According to Faden and Beauchamp (1986), research participants need to understand, first, that they are authorising someone else to involve them in research and, second, what they are authorising. It is common to focus on the second issue. However, researchers need to provide potential participants with information about the purpose, methods, demands, risks, inconveniences, discomforts and possible outcomes of the research, including whether and how research might be disseminated. I was open and honest about the purpose and content of my research at all times. I conducted the research in such a way as to ensure the professional integrity of the design and analysis of data in order to exclude misleading or deception of my research participants.

From the initial stage of my PhD, I sought to maintain the highest levels of competence in my work by providing a detailed explanation of the project in the informed consent form, and the right to refuse participation whenever and for whatever reason participants wished. Before starting my fieldwork, I received ethical approval in line with College policy. All potential participants were informed of the nature and purpose of the research, and any potential benefits, as well as risks that may have influenced their decision to participate. Before each interview, I provided the information about the project in a written form in order for participants to have some time to make the decision about their participation in the research. Such consent was given voluntarily and without coercion. All participants were required to sign the form to indicate their consent or do so

verbally in the case of Skype interviews. I was responsible for ensuring that all participants were given consent prior to participating in the research. Furthermore, participants were informed of their right to withdraw their consent at any time without adverse consequences and that any data provided by them would be destroyed if they requested me to do this.

Finally, the anonymity and confidentiality of participants are central to ethical research practice in social research. Throughout the research, I used pseudonyms and any information which can be used to identify a person was changed, such as the names of some geographical places. As my research indirectly focused on children, special attention was given to confidentiality, protection from harm and agreement on dissemination.

Chapter 4 – On Good Mothering

4.1. Introduction

To answer the main research questions posed at the beginning of this dissertation, the upcoming four chapters will focus on different aspects of maternal ideals and practices Baltic mothers embrace, with regard to their parental involvement, practices within and outside formal schooling in Ireland. By presenting the results from the fieldwork, these four chapters will demonstrate how and why migrant mothers utilise old and develop new dispositions in different social and economic contexts in Ireland. While some inclinations for action strike them as very different from what they are used to, other tendencies do not draw their attention at all and remain invisible (Nowicka, 2015).

Despite ethnic heterogeneity, in most cases, ethnic Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian-speaking mothers from the Baltic States expressed nearly identical views on maternal ideas of managing childcare, employment and involvement in their children's education. However, some aspects of parental involvement are strongly linked to their social class background and intertwined with migration trajectories and experiences of settling in Ireland. While there is a consensus among transnational scholars that “migrant families orient significant aspects of their lives around their country of origin” (Haller & Landolt, 2005: 1183), this research shows that habitus of migrant mothers is not static. Even if habitus is formed by past experiences, which provide meanings to the social worlds of individuals as agents (Bourdieu, 2000), migrant parents acquire new dispositions by embodying new practices related to the cultural context of Ireland.

Chapter 4 explores what it means to be a good mother for Baltic migrant women in Ireland. By looking at mothering as a socio-cultural phenomenon beyond the realm of childrearing, I examine how mothers position themselves in relation to the public sphere through their work and involvement in their children's educational trajectories.

Regardless of social class or ethnic background, both stay-at-home and working mothers see their mothering and employment not as separate but interlinked spheres of the self, which constitute their views of what is morally right and socially acceptable. However, social class background only becomes visible when it comes to educational aspirations and the expectations mothers hold in relation to their children's educational trajectories, especially in higher education.

The chapter starts with a discussion on what it means to be a good mother for stay-at-home and working Baltic mothers in Ireland. While stay-at-home mothers emphasise full-time mothering as a choice in their biographical options, most women expect to return to employment once their children reach school age. However, in many cases their return to employment is hindered by continuously unresolved issues related to their limited employment opportunities and high childcare costs in Ireland. Employed mothers, on the contrary see themselves as good workers, who embody values of self-reliance, autonomy and independence as necessary conditions for good mothering.

The findings demonstrate that women's decisions and choices are not only rooted in their gendered moral rationalities (Duncan et al., 2003), but also intertwined with their social class, familial situation and migration trajectories in Ireland. This becomes particularly apparent in the way all interviewed women view their perspectives in supporting educational attainment and achieving better lifestyles for their children through higher education in Ireland. However, in many cases migrant mothers see higher education as normal and unquestionable for their children's future trajectory, which is not only influenced by high migrant aspirations, but also their middle-class background.

4.2. Stay-at-home Mothers

Regardless of social class or ethnic background, Baltic mothers in this study emphasised mothering and employment as not separate but interlinked spheres of the self. Nevertheless, ten Baltic mothers, both of middle-class and working-class backgrounds, were stay-at-home mothers at the time when this study was conducted. The interviews revealed that by emphasising personal choice and maternal responsibility to childcare, stay-at-home mothers positioned themselves as being constantly emotionally and physically available to their children. Even though this might initially suggest that many Baltic women have welcomed the opportunity to be full-time mothers in Ireland (Ryan et al., 2009: 68), the findings of this research suggest that almost all stay-at-home mothers have considered their full-time mothering as a short-term period of their lives and expected to return to employment once their children reach school age. However, their return to employment is hindered by unresolved issues related to their employment opportunities and childcare options in Ireland, especially for women with middle-class background, who are more likely to be deskilled because of migration.

For all women in this study, motherhood is seen as an integral part of woman's biography and mothering as their own maternal responsibility, although only one mother (Sandra, a Latvian mother of six children) has been a stay-at-home mother for a long period of time. In rationalising her biographical decisions and options, Sandra stresses not only her decision (as well as her husband's decision) to have many children, but also her natural and moral duty to be solely responsible for her children's care. Sandra sees her mothering as her personal choice, although inevitable for a woman, as "the child creates the mother, and the mother exists for the child" (Elvin-Nowak & Thomsson, 2001: 423).

SANDRA: I do believe that if you have children you need to bring them up yourself. We wanted to have a big family, so I take care of my children. I am a housewife. I've never felt a need to let them go to the kindergarten. When they were small, I didn't search for work, because I think, if you give birth to children, you need to take care of them yourself.

This passage suggests that mothering is an exclusively private experience. Sandra sees her role as mother to be constantly and physically present in her children's lives. This is comparable to the results of Johnson and Swanson (2006: 513), who noticed that stay-at-home mothers in their research tended to define a good mother as the one who is 'there' and who is always available to her child. However, Sandra also explains in more detail later in the interview that employment was never a feasible option for her because bringing up six children is hard and exhausting work in itself. Nevertheless, Sandra does not only see mothering as a woman's inevitable obligation and responsibility, but also accepts traditional patriarchal norms in the private sphere (Voronina, 1994; Pavlenko, 2002).

SANDRA: I worked at the beginning. I finished a sewing school and I started to work at a factory. Then I got married, I got my first child, then briefly worked in a dental clinic at the reception, then I got pregnant again and went on maternity leave. Then I did not manage to work really. We moved to countryside and I was just bringing up children. When my children started schooling we moved back to the city, again I did not manage to work, as some children were younger, some older. Some had to go to school, so I had to pick them up. And also cook, clean, wash. Well, again I briefly worked in a taxi company as a dispatcher. It was just for a short time, 2-3 years, but the rest it was mainly at home, I stayed with children. When some have only 2 kids, then can start working, but it did not work out for me this way.

However, unlike in the case of Sandra, who already became a stay-at-home mother in Latvia, long before her relocation to Ireland, other women in this research became stay-at-home mothers in the course of their life trajectories in Ireland. For example, Vera, a Latvian mother of three children, explains that being a stay-at-home mother is both a privilege and an opportunity for her and her family. The possibility of becoming a stay-at-home mother was one of the reasons for Vera's relocation to Ireland.

VERA: When my husband was trying to persuade me to come over here, he said that kindergarten are until lunch time here. I was a bit surprised how it would be possible, so I asked, what's about mothers. He said, well mothers are not working usually, they are taking care of children. When I came here, I had a bit of shock, in a good way. When I go out with my buggy and my kids and see other women who are also walking in the park, who are enjoying themselves in a cafe, who are just taking care of their kids. There is no such thing in Latvia. 90 percent of mothers are working, 10 percent have such opportunity. I see it positive for me, of course. Here, I feel comfortable for not working.

In this passage, Vera notes that migration has offered her an opportunity to do family care in a different way than would be possible in the Latvian context (Isaksen, 2016: 180). Furthermore, full-time mothering is seen as a sign of social distinction here as she does not need to engage in income-earning activities because family can solely rely on her husband's income. So, Vera envisions herself as having an ideal family life, where she can prioritise her children above her earning income or career advancement.

VERA: I play so much with my children. When I had my first kid, she was only one, so I was playing with her a lot. We've spent so much time together. Of course now, when they are getting a bit older, it is getting easier, as they spend more time among themselves rather than with me. Now I can have a free minute.

Similar to Sandra, Vera positions herself in relation to the needs of her children, by being constantly and physically available. However, the way Vera talks about her daily activities and routine also reflects her middle-class background (Vincent et al., 2004). Unlike Sandra, who talks about mothering as hard work in itself by pointing out domestic chores, Vera explains her mothering routine by referring to "staying at home with her children", "spending time together" "playing together", and "enjoying themselves". As Walkerdine and Lucy (1989) argue housework associated with childcare is perceived by middle-class mothers as a site of pedagogy for their children.

Nevertheless, “beneath this happy projection” of desirable, affordable and satisfying middle-class mothering (Johnston & Swanson, 2006: 515), Vera also acknowledges how mothering can be an emotionally absorbing and physically exhausting practice. Ri-day (2003) argues that experience of motherhood can be easily dichotomised into positives and negatives. Mothering can be “a font of personal fulfilment, growth, and joy, on the one hand, and one of distress, depression, and anxiety, on the other” (Arendell, 2000: 1196). Even though Vera accepts her children’s development as her sole responsibility, she also acknowledges importance of her own needs, especially when it comes to her professional life.

VERA: I have just confirmed my qualifications here. I have two degrees, one in psychology, one in finance, I would like to continue with post-graduate studies here, although not sure really, which direction to take in Ireland.

While Vera talks about enjoyment of her full-time mothering at the moment, she expects to continue with her professional life once her children get older.

Similar to Vera, Ellu, an Estonian mother of one child, acknowledges a growing importance of her own needs as mothering has become a very isolating experience for her over the years. As Bassin et al. (1994) suggest, motherhood may not only be viewed as a source of psychological development and satisfaction for mothers, it can also be seen as oppressive, devaluating and isolating.

ELLU: Hopefully, in 2-3 years, I will be working. It is sort of important for me. I am with her all the time. I never have a break. You have to do something for yourself. I am doing these courses at the moment. It is good to have some time on your own and to do something on your own.

While Ellu stays at home to provide full-time care for her daughter, she envisions herself working in the near future, once her daughter gets older. Ellu attends courses in childcare and education in order to start working in a crèche later on. Even attending courses for a couple of hours a week is seen as a positive experience for her, as most of her time is spent only with her daughter. Considering a vast body of literature on ‘intensive mothering’, many researchers (see for example Hays, 1996; Furedi, 2001) have previously argued that full-time mothers might experience anxiety for not doing enough for their children, although in the case of Baltic stay-at-home mothers in Ireland, a sense of anxiety and non-fulfilment manifests when mothers de-prioritise their own needs, especially in

relation to their employment prospects. Specifically, in the case of migration, Marczak (2011) argues that the return to the traditional role of stay-at-home mother can bring additional penalties such as social isolation, lower self-esteem or the loss of English language skills which could make a return to paid employment in the future more difficult.

Nevertheless, Gilmartin and Migge (2015) note that migrant women in Ireland are more likely to stay at home because of high childcare costs. While within the Irish context, relatives continue to be a very important source of childcare for pre- and primary school age children, migrant mothers are more likely to face difficulties in accessing affordable childcare. This becomes evident in the case of Marina, a Lithuanian mother of one child. Reflecting on her current situation, Marina talks with regret that her parents are too far away and not able to help her with taking care of her daughter in Ireland.

MARINA: I would also like to start working at the moment, but I have my child. If I start working, I will need a nanny. It is very difficult indeed. There are no grandmothers and grandfathers here. They are all there. My husband works from Monday to Saturday, he works shifts from 6 am. So being alone it is a bit difficult.

Even if Marina would like to return to work, she cannot afford childcare in Ireland. Because of the high costs and absence of her parents who could help, Marina has been forced to stay at home longer than she expected. As Roder et al. (2017: 3) have argued “if no relatives are available to help with childcare, then a return to work will typically only be possible with the use of paid childcare, which in turn is only feasible if the family can afford it”. Similarly, Solvita, a Latvian mother of two children, reflects on how her life changed with the birth of her children, especially in terms of consumption and lifestyle.

SOLVITA: I am already seven years in Ireland. I worked in a health shop before having my children. I got a manager position, although I started as a sales assistant at the beginning. My salary was very good. We could afford many things then. We always went out and travelled a lot. It was an ideal life. But then I had my first kid and everything changed. It started with the maternity leave, first, then the salary was lower, because they reduced my hours. Then I had another child, so I stopped working. So we live like this now.

Considering that her income, after her hours at work were reduced, covered only the cost of childcare, Solvita decided to stop working completely until her both children start schooling. While she talks about the importance of being closer to her children, Solvita admits that having children in Ireland is a financially demanding experience for her

family. This case supports the findings of Lange (1998) that women are more likely to become economically inactive in order to become involved in activities such as childcare. In the case of migration, Marczak (2011) also demonstrates that Polish migrant women in the UK with two or more children are more likely to stay at home for a longer period of time.

In the context of Ireland however, Roder et al. (2017: 3) argued that the decision to return to work is not only influenced by affordable childcare options, but also available employment opportunities. Over the course of the interviews, it became apparent that the stay-at-home period is especially prolonged for many middle-class professional women as they cannot find work based on their qualifications in Ireland.

These findings are reflected in a vast body of literature on migration and gender (see Parrenas, 2015; Lutz, 2015). Highly skilled migrant women tend to experience downward social mobility by occupying low-skilled occupations in a host country (OECD, 2004). As Vouyioukas and Liapi (2012: 85) argue, “in most cases, migrant women are disadvantaged in terms of income, training and participation (and therefore social integration) as the chances of their qualifications being recognised are extremely limited”. In this study most middle-class stay-at-home mothers have faced potentially deskilling in Ireland. This is clearly seen in the case of Tamara, a Lithuanian mother of two. Tamara is a certified nurse with many years of experience back in Lithuania, although she was unable to find work in the healthcare sector in Ireland. While Tamara stresses her choice to take care of her little daughter, at the same time she feels anxious as her full-time mothering has become prolonged due to bleak prospects of finding work based on her qualifications in Ireland. Rather than accepting downward mobility, she considers returning back to Lithuania.

TAMARA: A year after, we came here, I gave birth to my daughter. I decided to dedicate all my time to her, now she is 6 years old, but until now I am not sorted professionally ... I feel like one leg is already there [Tamara means Lithuania]. My husband has a very good job here. But me, well I'm with a small child, but it is also about my age. I'm pushed a bit. I need to start working. I am already 46. The last 2-3 years, I really wanted to come back to Lithuania. My husband was saying, look at our children, they are here, and they are integrated well. But I have my ego. I sacrifice myself, my education and well-paid work, which would even be available now if I come back to Lithuania now.

While Tamara emphasises the child-centrality in her decisions, by paying particular

attention to educational opportunities which might lie ahead for her daughter in the future in Ireland, she also acknowledges the importance of her own needs. Because of her age and a gap in her professional career, Tamara feels trapped in her current situation in Ireland. Continuous postponement with her professional career creates a feeling of not being settled and not really belonging in Ireland.

Similarly, Ieva, a Lithuanian mother of two, acknowledges contradictions in her experience in Ireland. The same as Tamara, Ieva migrated to Ireland because of her husband's work and she decided to be a stay-at-home mother. Ieva explains her decision based on her children's needs as her older son, apart from a school in Ireland, attends a virtual Lithuanian school, so he requires Ieva's constant supervision and support.

IEVA: He is going to school and he is also on distant learning programme from Lithuania. It is based in a Lithuanian school with online lessons. It is actually lots of work. I have to go online there. I have to look up, you know what lessons they have, and then I have to show him what he needs to do.

Even if Ieva prioritises the need of her family over own professional career, it does not mean that she completely ignores her professional development. Despite many institutional barriers in Ireland, she is continuously trying to find work as a psychologist based on her professional qualifications.

IEVA: I am trying everything since we moved here. It is very hard, because there are lots of restrictions. I am still in such trauma. I spent half a year writing applications for recognition of my qualifications, so finally now, I have received their answer, they accepted most of my experience, I am short of 25 days. I finished my degree as a health psychologist not a clinical one, but here there is almost no health psychologist and nobody knows what it is here. I need to practice of 25 days, so I need someone who can supervise me in Ireland.

The same as in the case of Tamara, Ieva has contradictory experiences, as migration to Ireland provides her an opportunity to dedicate more time to her children, but it places her in a more disadvantaged position professionally. Similar to Tamara, Ieva's sense of belonging is related to being integrated into the labour market in Ireland based on her professional qualifications. These findings are comparable with the results of Hooper et al. (2017) who argued that employment plays a central role in socio-cultural adaptation. In a similar vein, Gilmartin and Migge (2013) noted that the ways and extent to which migrants feel a sense of belonging in Ireland can be linked to their integration in the

labour market, their professional fulfilment based on their biography, aspirations.

Overall, most stay-at-home Baltic women consider their full-time mothering as a desirable and enjoyable but temporary experience. Almost all of the mothers have considered a return to work, once their children get older. However, due to an absence of affordable childcare provisions and limited employment opportunities, staying at home is significantly prolonged for Baltic migrant women in Ireland.

4.3. Working mothers

While stay-at-home Baltic mothers have acknowledged the importance of work in their life trajectories, all working mothers stressed their maternal responsibility through their employment. Regardless of their ethnic or socio-economic background and even familial situation, all working mothers emphasised that paid employment makes them better mothers (Christopher, 2012: 77). Instead of seeing work in opposition to mothering, the border of the dichotomous portrayal of women as ‘work oriented’ or ‘family oriented’ has been blurred for all working mothers in this study (Bailey, 2000; Garey, 1999).

By stressing maternal ideals in their ability to deal with any economic circumstances, working mothers emphasised their sense of worthiness, autonomy and responsibility not only as good workers, but also as good mothers. This is well reflected in the interviews with working-class mothers, who see themselves as being empowered through their work, especially in the context of migration. As Hugo (2000) argues, migration can be both a cause and consequence of female empowerment. Most working-class women through their improved material conditions in Ireland see themselves as active agents who are able to take control of themselves and of the situation they are in (Pinnawala, 2009). Their sense of empowerment is related not only to the fact that they have gained better conditions of work and wages in Ireland, but also that they made a decision to migrate in the first place.

Kadri, an Estonian mother of two children, and Ingeborga, a Lithuanian mother of one compare their current situation to their conditions before migration. These women highlight how new material conditions in Ireland allow them to be better mothers. Kadri specifies flexibility of working hours, which allows her to work only during school hours. However, Ingeborga stresses her ability to provide better consumption for her daughter without working long shifts.

KADRI: It was just because of finance. I was working there 12 hour shifts, night shifts at a petrol station. When I came here, I was working from 9 till 3. For whatever you need to pay here, it is easy to manage, it is easy to be a parent here, and over there it is just tough.

[...]

INGEBORGA: I'm happy with everything here. How I lived in Lithuania, let's say, I was just existing. I lived there, just to survive, get a bit of education for my child. I didn't know that it will happen this way, everything will change. I am satisfied with everything. I can afford much more here for my child and relationship within our family is different. In Lithuania, you were not able to do anything to be honest, to buy anything for your child, and you know, how it is in Lithuania in schools; you know, how the kids are. There is a competition always among them. All families go through this, and you cannot afford anything, because you work for 12 hours and your salary is very low.

These passages show that women see their responsibility not only to provide immediate financial support, but also to secure a better future for their children. Migration is seen as an act of their self-responsibility in itself. Situating their decisions to migrate within their biographies, these women see themselves as choosing a better life (White, 2016). As Lutz (2015: 255) argued, “for women in Eastern Europe this means that at a time when their money is needed more than ever – particularly to ensure the education and well-being of their children, working abroad looks like an alternative.”

In a similar vein, a sense of responsibility and worthiness is expressed not only by working-class women, but also by women who became single parents in Ireland. For example, Natalija, a Latvian mother of two, and Elina, an Estonian mother of three are both middle-class women, who became single parents in Ireland. Both women decided to stay in Ireland rather than go back to their home-countries after their divorces. It is important to note that not only initial migration decisions, but also decisions related to the duration of stay and possibility of return are influenced by push and pull factors (King, 2000: 15).

NATALIJA: As a mother with two kids, it is possible to live here. It is sufficient. It is not like it would be in Latvia. In Latvia, if you stayed alone with two children, it would be too difficult.

[...]

ELINA: We move here because of the family. But then, I split with my husband. My husband decided to come back to Estonia. He said that he has nothing to do here and he belongs there. In my case, it would be a mad decision to come back there with 3 kids without accommodation, without

... I would not be able to feed them. I stayed here not because of material intensives, it is also about education for my children. My older son, studies at the university now. If I was in Estonia, I do not think I would be able to afford university there.

Similar to Kadri and Ingeborga, Elina and Natalija emphasise the importance of their decisions to remain in Ireland in relation to their children's wellbeing. These women felt that they were acting in their children's best interest through the act of migration (Moscal & Tyrrell, 2016). Their statements of reassurance regarding being responsible for their own and their children's lives shows how maternal worth is inevitably linked to their working life. Personal ability or capacity not only to escape but also prevent material deprivation in the future is seen as a distinct feature of their good mothering. Migration plays an important role within this context, as through their migration experiences women become more aware of their agency. As Vera explains that through better opportunities available in Ireland, women then feel more empowered.

VERA: Well, there are so many cases, when families are breaking apart after moving here. 3-4 years and families are breaking apart. And then people remarry again. Reasons ... Some people say that women feel more independence here. There are more opportunities here. For example, you can be a single mother, live happily without stress. In Latvia, many families are together, because there is no opportunity for good work to support children, whereas in Ireland, as a woman, you feel more independent and even being alone, you can provide good childhood for your children and also develop yourself.

Even though the working women in this study have talked about their empowerment through work, not all migration trajectories are straightforward. As previously discussed in the case of stay-at-home mothers, deskilling is very common among migrant women in Ireland. Unlike in the case of middle-class stay-at-home (married) women, who can postpone their return to work until they find a suitable position, single mothers of middle-class background do not have this option. Parella et al. (2013) argue that there are different factors which may impede migration occupational mobility, such as level of education and professional experience before migrating, family responsibilities, lifecycle and child-care responsibilities in the host society, and the frequent lack of social networks or the ability to access them. This is clearly seen in the case of Elina, who explains that finding suitable employment related not only to recognition of qualifications but also financial and emotional support from a partner.

ELINA: If I was not alone, I would manage with English, I would manage! I made my choice, I sacrificed a lot because of my family, because of my children. You cannot be successful in all fields, in career and family. If you have children, of course you sacrifice with some choices, before choosing something which is good for you, you chose something, which is good for your children. I have friends here. They decided she will study and will go through the recognition of her diploma, and he will be helping her. They have two children. So now, she works at the hospital, she is a doctor, but him, he did not manage, his time has passed, he still works in 'Supermacs'.

Nevertheless, many migrants tend to be trapped in terms of occupation mobility by structural determinants (Parella et al., 2013). As Vouyioukas and Liapi (2012:85) have noted:

recognition of academic titles is not automatically coupled to a formal recognition of the professional competences associated with them. Neither does recognition mean automatically acquiring a licence to practice a profession. For regulated professions, for instance doctors, nurses, teachers, etc., in many countries, apart from formal qualifications, migrants have to obtain a professional licence in order to practice their profession.

This is evidenced in the case of Aurelija, a Lithuanian mother of one child, who was working as a pharmacist in Lithuania before migrating to Ireland. Because of various institutional barriers she decided to switch to another less-prestigious profession.

AURELIJA: I am a pharmacist. I have found it very hard, as they do not take any people who has no experience in Ireland and I had 5 years of experience in Lithuania. I was looking at loads, really loads of pharmacies and agencies, pharmaceutical agencies here, and they all were looking for people with minimum of one or two years of experience in Ireland. I was looking for experiences in pharmacies too, but it was also very hard, because they don't want to take foreigners, and usually they prefer to take students. I have found it very hard here, so I moved to another field then.

Some professional middle-class Baltic women in this study have not experienced many barriers in their transition to the labour market in Ireland, especially those who are employed in the financial sector in Ireland. Because of their stable professional career development in the Irish labour market, these women have positioned themselves as mothers, not only in relation to their work, but also in the context of welfare provisions. Although welfare support is recognised by many women in this study as a safety net, most mothers, especially professional middle-class women, have rejected the idea of being fully supported by the state as an expression of their maternal self-responsibility and worthiness. This is well seen in the case of Inese, a Latvian mother, who reflects on her life

before and after migration to Ireland, by stressing her personal ability and responsibility to maintain the same lifestyle without any welfare support, even with being a single mother in Ireland. Maternal attachment to the labour market is seen not only as a moral obligation of a good citizen, but also non-contradictory to the notion of good mothering.

INESE: When I lived in Latvia, I had a very good salary and I could afford living on my own. Well, I lived very well, I had a flat in the city centre of Riga. It was a very good time. But now, here in Ireland, I have also a very good position. I work at an international company. I am alone with my son. I do not get any social benefits. I rent a four bedroom house in the south of Dublin and I manage everything by myself.

By stressing devotion to her work life regardless of childcare obligations (Lavee & Benjamin, 2016), Inese sees her life trajectory as linear. As there is no clear orientation to work or family (Garey, 1999), both social practices are seen as equal parts of the same continuum. Similarly to Inese, Laura, an Estonian mother of two children, demonstrates her self-worthiness to face economic reality in Ireland by viewing her work “central to her identity and developing a sense of self-esteem, that one can contribute to the society” (Vincent et al., 2004: 578).

LAURA: By the way, a social welfare person told me to quit my job and stay at home, then I would be covered. I would get more in benefits than from my work. I could not. I cannot be without work. I know one Estonian girl. She is a lovely person. She is great. But she lives on benefits. I don't wanna say anything bad, but I could not connect with her because of that. Because I cannot, I cannot understand people who can live just on benefits, just like that.

Work thus becomes a signifier of a wider collective sense of moral worthiness as a mother, a migrant and a citizen. Citizenship can be defined as “a practice that takes place in a range of social sites and articulates a range of social relations across different levels of the local, the national and the transnational” (Erel, 2011: 698). Within this context, citizenship is measured not only by labour market participation, but also a specific form of morality of having expressive commitment to the job market (Hennessy, 2009; Lavee & Benjamin, 2016). To be fully supported by the state is seen contradictory to Laura's personal ethos and this also provides social distance and differentiation from other migrant mothers who decide to do so. Laura believes that to be a moral and worthy citizen, she needs to be independent from state support through participation in the labour market,

when “taking personal responsibility and struggling for self-reliance, goes beyond individual’s material survival” (Levee, 2015: 2).

This further becomes a basis of distinction and judgement as dependency on welfare is seen not only a sign of irresponsible citizenship, but also a ‘bad migrant’ and a ‘bad parent’. As Erel (2011: 703) argues, being productive in the labour market is also “underpinned by a distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ migrants. Thus, the notion of working and paying taxes, as well as the fact that they educate their children well, is a key legitimising strategy for mothers”. It is seen clearly in the next passage provided by Paulina, a Latvian mother of three children, who equates welfare dependency among some migrant families with a lack of parental care.

PAULINA: There is a big difference among them [she means co-ethnics in Ireland]. Well, I usually meet parents who care about children, who invest in their children. I take my kids to different activities and I also lead some of these activities. Of course, I know families who have been already for ten years in this country and they even have not tried to work here. They receive social benefits and they have no money left for their kids. With social benefits you have nothing left for children’s activities at the end. Of course, we know some families like this, but we try to limit communication as much as possible, because we have nothing in common with them.

By distancing herself from ‘other’ migrants, Paulina defines herself as a mother who cares and who is responsible for “the increasingly individualised production of children” through material and cultural consumption (Katz, 2008: 10). Activating categories of ‘us’ and ‘them’ contributes to boundary making processes (Wimmer, 2009) based on individualised orientation of hierarchical social distinctions. Subjectivities not only privatise gender relations but also set the standards by which women judge their success as mothers (Walls et al., 2014). As Budds et al. (2017: 338) also argue, “women’s roles in the education and socialisation of children became integral to the identity and behaviour of good mothers, shaping maternal practices and subjectivities”.

Although all the working mothers in this research defined their view on good mothering through their attachment to work, by emphasising personal qualities of self-sufficiency, autonomy and independence, in many cases women were relying on the help of their mothers in childcare. While Rutter and Evans (2012: 30) suggest that “migrant and minority ethnic groups are less likely to use relatives to provide informal childcare be-

cause migration has severed these support networks”, the findings of this study demonstrate that regardless of their socio-economic background, ethnicity and familial situation, many Baltic mothers rely on their mothers’ support for short and long time periods despite migrating to Ireland.

In some cases, grandparents have become primary and indispensable actors in childcare provisions, enabling single mothers to migrate in the first place (White, 2011). For example, in the case of Vita, a Lithuanian mother of two, her father took care of her older son, when she was temporary working in Germany, before relocating to Ireland, and in the case of Agne, a Lithuanian mother of one and Kadri, an Estonian mother of two, their parents took care of their children during the time when they were initially settling down in Ireland. Even if Agne and Kadri managed to relocate their children to Ireland after some time, they also asked their parents to join them. This is seen in the case of Kadri, who talks about her mother’s experience in Ireland.

KADRI: I’m not planning ever to live there [Estonia]. It is more likely my mother would come here than I go there. She used to live here in Ireland. My kids were young, she came over to help me out, but she was homesick, she wasn’t too happy here. Since she went back, she cannot stop talking about coming back here again.

While Kadri mentions that her mother felt out of place in Ireland at the beginning, she is still dedicated to help out Kadri with childcare, which enabled Kadri to work in Ireland in the first place.

As the case of Kadri was previously discussed in relation to her sense of empowerment through better work and living conditions in Ireland, it is important to note that her mother is an important actor not only in providing care and support for Kadri’s two daughters, but also by enabling Kadri to fulfil her role of being a good worker and therefore a good mother.

In other instances, shared mothering becomes a long-term commitment. Paulina, a Latvian mother of three children, gave birth to her first child during her first year of relocating to Ireland and during the same period she asked her mother to join her here.

PAULINA: My mum moved here straight away. My father, well they were divorced anyway, he died a long time ago. My mum didn’t have anyone there, except her sisters back in Latvia. And we had our own plans, we wanted to work. Someone has to sit with kids and my mum agreed to do this. My mother in law, she is more

independent, she said, no, straight away, she said that children should live separately. Well, my mum is not like this. And it is easier for everyone like this.

Paulina is very straightforward in emphasising her needs to work and the availability of her mother to provide childcare in Ireland. However, this passage also shows a cultural dimension of informal intergenerational care support and exchange, when children take care of their parents, and grandparents provide care to their grandchildren. As Paulina notes, her mother does not have many relatives in Latvia and if she was not living with them permanently in Ireland, nobody would be able to support her in Latvia. Therefore, rather than considering ‘flying grandparents’ (Rutter & Evans, 2011b) as short-term and long-term livelihood strategies of family migration, the data suggests that shared mothering is a culturally specific practice of Baltic families. Ochiltree (2006) argued that the involvement of grandparents in childcare is not only a response to the need for childcare so migrant parents can work in order to establish themselves in their new country, but there is also a cultural dimension to it.

This is further seen in the case of Maja, a Latvian mother of three children, who has recently become a grandmother herself in Ireland. Maja reflects on her role as a grandmother, by emphasising her support in childcare as a moral obligation to mother her granddaughter. In the way she describes her shared mothering practices, she distances herself from other Irish grandparents, who she sees as too individualistic, as they do not share the same intensity of shared-mothering.

MAJA: My children are already grown-ups and with my grandchild I start it over again. I spend time with her, for example, when she is sick, I stay with her at home. They [she means Irish] are not like this, and just give medicine and send a child to school, they are not like us, they do not care about children in the same way we do. I don't know if it is better or worse, probably they are more independent than us, I don't know, but we are like this.

Maja focuses on cultural differences in the way Latvian and Irish grandparents provide childcare for their grandchildren. She underlines how Latvian grandparents tend to be overprotective and spend more time with their grandchildren. Research on Irish grandparents shows that grandparents are regularly engaged not only in the provision of childcare but other activities that can supplement other formal childcare such as before and after school (Gray, 2005), provision during school holidays (Wheelock and Jones,

2002) and the majority of those grandparents who provide care do so on average for ten hours a week. It is hard to draw a conclusion based on fragmented findings from this research, yet Maja's story is quite common among older Latvian women (King & Lulle, 2016). For many Latvian women (and Baltic women in general) the practice of shared mothering is seen as a cultural norm and there exists the expectation not only to mother their own children, but also their grandchildren.

Nevertheless, some working women in this research expressed rejection and distancing from this cultural practice by drawing a boundary between immediate and distant family. For example, Olita, a Latvian mother of two and Emilija, a Lithuanian mother of one, emphasised the importance of having control over their own lives without being influenced by their parents. Simona, a Lithuanian mother of one, who had lived with her parents since she moved with her husband to Ireland, talked about having free space from her parents.

SIMONA: I think my parents will be going home. They were here for 11 years. It is good, we didn't have to look for a baby sitter, that's about it. You know yourself, right, you know, how to live with parents. I'm actually grateful that they are here. It is difficult to get a right person as a baby sitter, so it was good. I'm grateful, but the child is big enough now to stay on its own.

This part demonstrated that all working mothers emphasised the importance of work as a part of being a good mother. Both working-class and middle-class women talked about a maternal obligation to be responsible for their own and their children's material needs. Professional middle-class women focused on their ability to fully rely on their own rather than being supported by welfare state in Ireland. However, some working women, regardless of their social class background continued to rely on their mother's help in childcare despite migrating to Ireland.

4.4. Value of Education

Along with the importance of work as an indispensable part of their mothering, all Baltic mothers in this study expressed a positive orientation towards their involvement in their children's educational trajectories as a predisposition for achieving a better lifestyle for their children in the future in Ireland. While social class background does not play an important role in the way mothers see their own capacity to influence their children's educational trajectories, middle-class mothers expect their children to complete higher

education studies, whereas working-class mothers are more likely to aspire their children to attend higher education institutions.

Some studies on migrant parenting (Chao, 1994; Daglar et al., 2011; Fibbi & Truong, 2015) have suggested that migrant parents tend to display more controlling parenting styles and show lower levels of emotional support to children. However, parenting styles vary across countries and each culture has a predominant style of parent-child relations empathising certain values over others (Kwak, 2003). Even though all of the mothers in this study, regardless of their social class or ethnic background, emphasise the importance of guidelines and support for their children in order to attain higher education, the interviews demonstrated that mothers tend to recognise their children's expression of choice and freedom and tend to develop more horizontal relationships between themselves and their children over time. This is well demonstrated in the case of mothers with teenage children, who reflect on their parenting styles. For example, Laura, a middle-class mother from Estonia, and Ingeborga, a working-class mother from Lithuania have nearly identical views that their relationships with older children are different from the conventional norms of being a 'normal' mother.

LAURA: He is very like an adult, but we are always like we are friends. I was 17 when I got him, I never knew how to be a real mummy. I was more like a friend. It is now the stage, when it comes back to me, that I should be more mum.

[...]

INGEBORGA: I am all my life with her. She is like my tail. Until seven years old, she could not have any distance. And even now, we have a very close relationship, we are friends with her, she does not have a mother in the normal sense.

Both cases suggest that mothers have rejected authoritarian and direct parenting styles by allowing their children to make decisions independently. As Nesteruk and Marks (2011) note, migrant parents tend to place greater value on developing their children's self-esteem and assertiveness as important qualities for successful adaptation to the new context.

Furthermore, regardless of social class or ethnic background, inter-generational bonding within families is seen as a prerequisite for children's success. For example, Liza, who had experienced serious financial difficulties in the previous years and was not able to support her daughter financially, insisted that she would stay for her studies in

Galway instead of moving to Dublin as it would be only one way to support her daughter with at least free accommodation. Therefore, Liza states that her daughter studies in Galway, because she would not allow her to go anywhere else.

In another case, Vita thinks of utilising her professional networks in order to help her older son with a potential career opportunity. Vita plans ahead for her son, who is 21 years old and studies IT and Finance in a college in Dublin. She talks about how she can help him with arranging an internship in a hotel, where she works as a Head Chef.

VITA: Sometimes, I am thinking, he will finish with his classes here and he will need to do an internship before his graduation. He can do his accountancy internship in my hotel. But, of course, he needs to study three years more before that.

Regardless of their social class background, mothers tend to be emotionally and financially involved in their children's education and even in the occupational trajectories of their children. Nevertheless, Baltic mothers with middle-class backgrounds were convinced of their entitlement to higher education for their children and expect their children to study beyond secondary schooling, whereas mothers with working-class background saw their children's prospects for post-secondary studies only in aspirational terms. The way middle-class mothers do not see higher education as the final goal of their children's future trajectories is in line with findings on Irish parents by Byrne and Smyth (2010: 154), who note that:

educational aspirations are strongly related to the social mix of the school attended and parents' own educational level. The vast majority of parents with children in middle-class schools expect their child to attain a third-level degree. In contrast, parents of children in working-class schools are less likely to aspire to a third-level qualification for their child.

For example, Simona, a Lithuanian mother of middle-class background, talks about her own experience of attaining higher education as something obvious and expected not only by her parents, but also by herself, when she was a child.

SIMONA: I had very good childhood comparing to other children, I guess. I finished school, college and I went to the university.

I.S.: Did you parents influence your choice to go to the university?

SIMONA: No, it was never a question for me and my sister. We always knew that we had to do it. It was never a question whether you do it or no,

it was something, which you never question.

And in a similar way she reflects on her son's future educational trajectory although she is only 12 years old.

SIMONA: College, university, there is no other option, it does not matter if it is in Ireland, or somewhere else, he can chose of course, and he is going to go, and he knows about it already now. And he knows that not only he will finish the school in six years, but there are many years ahead of studies. He knows that he will have to do it.

Similar to the other middle-class mothers in the study (*e.g.* Inese and Vera), Simona emphasises that her son has freedom in pursuing studies of his choice, although university education is seen as a 'natural' part of his educational trajectory.

Nevertheless, for working-class mothers, education beyond secondary schooling is seen more as a matter of aspirations than expectations, which would be highly desirable to achieve for their children. It is seen as a goal in itself. Thus, Ingeborga talks about her daughter's future educational trajectory by emphasising that her daughter needs to achieve the good lifestyle that Ingeborga did not achieve herself.

IS: Why do you want your daughter to study at the university?

INGEBORGA: Why? Because, mother does not have such education. Why is it important? In order to get a good work, good life, to do something, I cannot do myself

Similarly, in another case, Darja places the emphasis on her efforts in creating a positive attitude for her children. She compares her childhood with that of her children, describing how her self-made achievements should be a source of motivation for them to attain a higher education degree in the future.

DARJA: I put a lot in them, in their future. I really want that they would be not like us (me and my husband), you know, just working. My parents lived worse if I can remember my childhood, I lived worse. I had a childhood like this: nobody was giving me education, nobody encouraged me, I was always on my own. Even coming here, you know, it was my decision. The difference is that I was everything doing on my own, but now, I want to give everything to my children. I want to give them education. I know it might be too hard for us but I want to help them.

Like other working-class mothers, Darja values education and sees higher education as a goal in itself that requires hard work. Darja specifically emphasises the role of parental

motivation that should be cultivated. As Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2011:3) found in their longitudinal research, some working-class parents set and reinforced high standards for behaviour and academic aspirations for the child:

They explicitly expressed their high esteem for education. Although these parents acknowledged limits to their social, cultural and economic resources, this did not stop them from helping their children to succeed in school. They use their own experiences as positive or negative examples for the children and their resilience and perseverance in dealing with disadvantages often provided a positive role model.

Furthermore, this parental orientation towards higher education becomes even more evident with migration. For example, the findings of Portes and Rumbaut (2001: 281) suggested that migrant parents may often possess a strong work ethic and a value system that can translate into academic success among their children despite their initial difficulties in a new country. A recent OECD study (2016) found that in the case of the UK, 58 percent of people aged 25-44 with foreign-born parents go into higher education, compared with 46 percent of those with British-born parents.

4.5. Conclusion

By emphasising personal choice in employment as their biographical option, some Baltic women became stay-at-home mothers, although the majority of women continued working in Ireland. Even though stay-at-home mothers emphasised the importance of being full-time mothers, almost all the women expected to return to work once their children get older. However, their return to work is hindered by unaffordable childcare options and limited working opportunities; especially true for Baltic professional middle-class women in Ireland. On the other hand, all working women see their work as a part of their maternal worthiness and autonomy. In many cases, working women continued to rely on their parents for childcare in Ireland. While this can be seen as a short- or long-term livelihood strategy of family migration, there is also a cultural aspect of shared mothering among Baltic families in Ireland. Furthermore, the chapter demonstrated that all women have high hopes for their children to enter third level education. In many cases, migrant mothers see higher education as normal and unquestionable for their children's future trajectory, which is not only influenced by high migrant aspirations, but also their middle-class background.

Chapter 5 – Parental Involvement and Irish Schooling

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated that Baltic migrant mothers see their involvement in the educational trajectories of their children as part of their good mothering. This is achieved by placing high expectations and aspirations for academic achievement on their children. In order to further investigate parental involvement of Baltic migrant mothers in relation to formal schooling in Ireland, this chapter explores how the interviewed women learn to navigate the Irish educational system, specifically focusing on the opportunity to exercise school choice within the Irish educational landscape. As migrant women employ a “mixture of rationalities” (Ball, 2003: 23) to make choices regarding their children’s education, it is important to understand how personal values and goals influence and are transformed by the knowledge about concerns and pressures that parents have when choosing a school for their children in Ireland (Alegre & Benito, 2012).

Even though Baltic mothers tend to have different priorities for their school choice, influenced by their pre-migratory dispositions, the way they encounter Irish schooling is also shaped by their migration trajectories and experiences of settling in Ireland. Mothers who move with their school-aged children to Ireland tend to be in a more disadvantaged situation in comparison to other migrant mothers, who have spent some time in Ireland prior their children starting school, regardless of their ethnic or social class background. However, the time spent in the country does not guarantee a full awareness of how the educational system works in Ireland.

The second part of this chapter focuses on the role of personal networks in acquiring new cultural knowledge about education in Ireland within structural and personal constraints. Co-ethnic personal networks are important for many Baltic mothers, especially for those who have a basic level of English, but most interviewees in this study emphasised the importance of Irish acquaintances and friends when it comes to the educational decision-making process. In the third part of this chapter, I turn to an examination of school preferences that mothers identify based on religious affiliation, gender and ethnicity. The final part of this chapter looks at parental participation in schools by acknowledging limits and constraints that prevent migrant women from being more active in Irish schools.

5.2. School Choice and Migration Trajectories

The importance of parental agency in school choice has been emphasised by many proponents who view education as a natural extension of child rearing preferences (Levin, 2002: 7), enabling them to provide children with better opportunities to access quality education (Goodall et al., 2011). Like in Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania, parents in Ireland have the right to choose any public school for their children. However, there are a number of limitations in Ireland as regards entry priority, especially in oversubscribed schools, where this might be given based on a catchment area, denomination or whether there is already a sibling attending the school (Spotlight, 2015).

While Gorard (1999) divided the reasons cited by parents for choosing schools into five categories (academic, situational or convenience, organisational, selective, and security), some researchers (see for example Breeman, 1991; Noreisch, 2007) have noted that parents tend to fall into two large categories: ‘active’ choosers and ‘conventional’ choosers. Active choosers are usually those who are well-informed about the educational system and possess high educational aspirations for their children’s future prospects. Conventional choosers tend to choose the school that is the closest to them. Evidence from Ireland suggests that nearly half of Irish parents choose to send their children to a school other than the one closest to them (Byrne & Smyth, 2010). Darmody et al. (2012) noticed that Irish parents rarely make their decisions based only on one factor. Thus, proximity of the school to home, a school’s reputation, previous links to the school such as older siblings attending the school play an important role in the selection process, as does religiosity or secular belief concerns (Darmody et al., 2012). Furthermore, middle-class parents in Ireland are more likely to select a school outside their immediate neighbourhood, which is consistent with research from England and the U.S. (Darmody et al., 2012).

While an increasing number of parents might take a proactive approach, many parents do not have complete information when choosing a school (Kelly, 2007). This becomes particularly evident in the case of ethnic minority and migrant parents, who might not have “the right information at the right time to enable them to make the right choices” (Kelly, 2007: 9). Even though D’Angelo and Ryan (2011) noted that the way in which migrant parents view education is strongly influenced by their pre-migration experiences, throughout the fieldwork all the Baltic mothers stressed how their school

choices had been influenced not only by their backgrounds, but were also intertwined with their migration trajectories and experiences of settling in Ireland. Regardless of social class, ethnicity or familial situation, all newly-arrived migrant mothers with school-aged children have found themselves in a more disadvantaged position than mothers who had spent some time in Ireland prior their children started schooling. However, the time spent in a new cultural context does not provide de facto knowledge and practice of the educational system in Ireland.

The difference in experiences between newly-arrived migrant mothers with school-aged children and mothers who spent some years in Ireland before their children started schooling became apparent from the early stages of the fieldwork. Klavdija, who had lived in Ireland for many years before her son started school, reflected on her experience in navigating the Irish educational system by making comparison to newly-arrived migrant mothers, who find Irish schooling difficult to understand.

KLAVDIJA: I know several mothers, who recently moved to Ireland and they get a bit confused with the system here ... because well, they do not know English, and it is also about different environment. It is a different mentality, so it is hard to get into the society, to understand it fully. You need to understand many little details. My son went to a kindergarten before going to a primary school, probably I would have been confused as well if he had to go directly to school without any preparation.

Klavdija emphasises the importance of acquiring an Irish mentality for the understanding of the educational system as a part of settling in Ireland. Wessendorf (2016: 62) writes that the word ‘mentality’, as used by the first and second generation of migrants in her research to describe the differences in ways of thinking and behaviour between themselves and people of other origin can be compared to Bourdieu’s concept of habitus. Similarly, Klavdija sees mentality as a collective term to differentiate a set of cultural values and practices, which are new to migrants. However, Klavdija points out that the process of learning new cultural and behavioural dispositions comes not only with the knowledge of the English language, but also through internalisation of cultural experiences within and outside of the educational system. This enables migrant mothers to understand how the education system works in Ireland, namely differently to their countries of origin.

This view is similar to the majority of other Baltic mothers who migrated to Ireland before their children started school. For many of these mothers, school choice

becomes a long-term strategy, which requires investment of time and personal resources. This is clearly seen in the case of Emilija, who explains the process of choosing a school for her son in Dublin.

EMILIJA: Well, it is not very easy in Ireland, to be completely honest with you. There is a preference for kids who live in a certain area, so when we applied I think it was two years before he had to start his school, we didn't have much choice. At that moment, we lived in the city centre. The school, where we wanted to place him, was a bit further, it is outside the city centre. We wanted to move to a calmer area for family reasons. But we could not get a school anywhere except our area [the city centre]. Then we moved, we applied for a place. They had the place available for my son. So finally he is in the school where I wanted him to be.

This passage demonstrates that Emilija is well aware of the formal requirements, as she signed up for a school two years in advance. While she expresses some frustration for not having enough choice based on her residential area, Emilija still managed to place her son in the school of her choice after moving closer to the catchment area. By discussing parental agency in school choice, Emilija's case demonstrates that parental experiences of choosing a school are influenced not just by the time spent in Ireland, but also by silent properties of social class, such as education, employment and income.

Emilija moved to Ireland with her fiancé just after graduating from a university in Lithuania. Having a good level of English, she continued studying at an Irish university before starting her employment in one of the leading multinational companies in Ireland. Her experiences of studying and working in Ireland helped Emilija to acquire tacit knowledge required to 'work' the educational system.

While the case of Emilija is not unique, not all of the Baltic migrant mothers are economically privileged or have the same level of confidence to navigate the educational system in Ireland. This is clearly seen in the case of Aurelija, who acknowledges her limits to comprehend all nuances of Irish education. Even if migrant mothers can invest time and personal resources in developing new cultural competences, being an outsider to Irish education puts additional limits on migrant mothers in navigating a system they had never experienced themselves. General awareness of school requirements and knowledge of the English language are not sufficient for Aurelija to understand how the education system works in practice, even after spending some years in Ireland before her

son started schooling. As Jo (2013) notes, a realisation of the different educational reality does not automatically lead to the habitus change.

AURELIJA: There are some differences in education between Lithuania and Ireland, actually I do not know how it is exactly in Lithuania now, it changed since I was a child, but I didn't have a clear idea about Irish education until my son went to school. I like the school he goes to. I am happy with everything.

Exley (2013: 79) notes that “human agency must always be considered within the boundaries of structural and economic realities” and this is particularly relevant in the case of school choices of many migrant parents. Knowledge about a new cultural context is heavily shaped by the extent to which migrant parents are not only able to deploy a range of cultural, material and economic resources, but also how they go about limited educational options resulting from structural constraints. This is seen in the case of Aurelija, who moved to a rural area based on the council housing allocating scheme once her son was born: “The choice was easy. I live in a small village and we have just one primary school. It is a tiny village, just a couple of houses”. Like many migrant and non-migrant parents residing in rural areas, Aurelija has little choice but to send her son to the local school. Different studies (McEvoy, 2003; Byrne & Smyth, 2010) have highlighted that parental school choice is practically absent in many rural areas, especially in public housing schemes established by Country Councils in Ireland, which are traditionally characterised by higher poverty rates and limited access to public services versus urban areas.

The importance of personal and structural constraints becomes even more apparent in the case of newly-arrived migrant parents with school-aged children. Strzemecka (2015: 87) argued that the psychological and social costs of overcoming barriers to integration incurred by an individual during the early phase of migration tend to be high. While migrants might have different barriers to settlement and integration, newly-arrived migrant mothers are particularly vulnerable as they might not have sufficient access to information and different types of material and cultural resources (Esses and Medianu, 2012). Regardless of their social class background, ethnicity or familial situation, all newly-arrived Baltic mothers with school aged children felt left out and lacked any social or psychological support. This is visible in the case of Maja, who followed her husband with three children to Ireland.

MAJA: We all had depression during the first year. It was hard. We were crying all the time. All of us. If I had to do the same again, I would not have come here. It was so hard, but when we managed to survive the first and then the second year.

Maja's reflection on her experience of adaptation to a new environment is not unique. Just as newly-arrived school-aged children and adolescents experience a temporary sense of loss of security and the feeling of 'otherness' in schools (Strzemecka, 2013: 97), all newly-arrived mothers with children in this study found their initial adaptation to Irish social norms and cultural practices to be very isolating and stressful experience. This sense of displacement reflects the 'hysteresis' effect of their habitus, as their dispositions lag behind objective material conditions. Nevertheless, as Adams (2006: 515) notes "reflexivity can potentially emerge anywhere in crisis situation". A mismatch between habitus and the structures of the new context in Ireland makes migrant mothers more reflective about their practices.

Similar to Polish family migration to the UK (Travena, 2009; Ryan, 2011), in the case of two parent families of the Baltic women who followed their husbands, who had migrated initially for temporary work to Ireland, the decision to migrate to Ireland in all families was taken spontaneously. Even though many mothers identified the opportunity to provide a better future for their children as one of their long-term incentives for their relocation, at the time of their actual migration to Ireland they were not aware of the nuances of Irish education, such as types of schools available in Ireland (*e.g.* DEIS schools⁵) enrolment procedures or term dates. This is seen in the case of Sandra, a Latvian mother, who followed her husband with six children to Ireland.

SANDRA: We came here in June, 2006. Our school in Latvia finished by the end of May. The boys did not speak English, just a couple of words. When they went to a new school [Sandra means their first school in Ireland], I did not know anything about education here, whether I need to bring flowers on the first day, which uniform they need to wear, which books do we need to get for them.

Sandra reflects on her initial experience of adaptation by paying attention to linguistic

⁵ DEIS stands for Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools. It is a national programme that addresses the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantage backgrounds in Ireland. All primary and post-primary schools participating in DEIS receive a range of additional resources including additional staffing, funding, access to literacy and numeracy programmes, and assistance with activities such as school planning (Department of Education and Skill, 2011).

and cultural barriers to ‘fitting in’ to the society. As all newly-arrived mothers are unaware of cultural and social norms of Irish schooling, these mothers are more likely to have limited educational options. Travena (2015: 87) in her research demonstrates that migrant families were uninformed about the school choices at secondary level, which might result in “serious implications for their children’s future educational opportunities as ‘bad’ choices lead, for example, to limiting later opportunities for taking a given academic route”. In a similar vein, some researchers have argued that structural constraints on school choices play an important role among migrant parents, especially in economically deprived areas. It is well documented in the case of Ireland that low-income neighbourhoods are associated with a persistent problem of the poor educational performance of DEIS schools and migrant families are more likely to reside in these areas.

Regardless of their social-class or ethnic background, all newly-arrived mothers had neither any school preferences nor awareness of disparities that exist between different types of schools in Ireland. For example, Ieva, a Lithuanian mother of two, who worked as a child psychologist in a Lithuanian school for many years before relocating to Ireland, was completely unaware of basic educational requirements in Irish schooling.

IEVA: My boy was five-and-a-half when we came here. When we came, it was already summer and all schools were closed. We were wondering what we should do. My husband asked his boss, because his boss’s daughter was a teacher. She said we had to write letters. So we wrote letters. We sent them again and again. You know, there was only one school who returned to us.

As in previous examples, Ieva reflects on her situation of being lost in a new cultural context without any information about schooling. Ieva comments on how new acquaintances helped her with enrolling her son to the local school. Similarly, Laura, an Estonian mother, reflects on her initial experience in Ireland with some humour, as she managed to get a place in a very selective secondary school, accidentally based on the recommendation of her landlord.

LAURA: My first experience with schooling here was actually funny. My boy was 11 at that time. So we went to different areas, but actually our landlord advised us to go this school, so we went there. We did not know anything about the school. We were asked to come for an interview. So, me and my partner went there. They were asking who we are and what we do. I worked in the bank and my partner in the hospital. We got accepted.

At the end, it came out that our landlord who recommended this school to us, he tried to get his son to study there, but he did not manage, and we did. I think, he was a bit upset because of this.

Both Ieva and Laura demonstrate well that school choice is a two-way process involving families and educational institutions. Even if the parental decision-making process is central within the school choice debates, schools are important actors who can have the final word in selecting their student intake (Darmody & Smyth, 2018).

In line with existing studies on migrant parenthood (see Byrne & De Tona, 2012; Travena et al., 2015; Strzemecka, 2015), overall findings show that migration trajectories have a significant impact on the school choice decision-making process. Those parents who enrol their children after their arrival face the biggest challenges in making their school choices (Travena, 2016). However, time spent in Ireland does not guarantee a full awareness how the system of education works in Ireland.

5.3. Role of Personal Networks

Although not all newly-arrived mothers in this study had prior knowledge about the Irish educational system, this section demonstrates that parental competences were not static and tended to evolve, especially with the help of personal social networks. In line with previous research (Meeteren & Pareira, 2016), the results presented in this chapter demonstrate that personal networks play an indispensable role in navigating the educational system for migrant families, although these networks are not exclusively based on co-ethnic ties. In order to have a greater familiarity with the educational system, most migrant mothers developed local Irish personal networks, which can provide them with the ‘insider knowledge’ on how to navigate the Irish education system.

The importance of personal networks is observed well by Solvita, who reflects on her experience of learning about the Irish educational system through personal networks.

SOLVITA: I get all information about schools through my friends. I found out that a couple of people I know, placed their children in that school, so I decided to do the same. I do not get the Irish system. If some of my friends did not explain me, how everything works here, I would not know what to do. I cannot sit myself and look for information, I prefer to talk to people.

While the case of Solvita might suggest that the way she acquires the information about Irish schooling reflects her migration background, Bosetti, 2004 has argued that most parents (not exclusively migrant parents) rely on their social and professional networks when making decisions regarding their children's education. Bosetti (2004: 395) indicates that in selecting a school, parents usually tend to speak with their friends, neighbours and other parents in order to make informed decisions.

Migration is nevertheless an important structural factor, which has a significant impact on parental involvement in formal schooling, especially when migrant parents lack cultural and linguistic capitals. Although Solvita is proficient in English and relies on her Irish and co-ethnic networks, other migrant parents might not have the same linguistic competences, so they become more dependent on co-ethnic networks in the process of adaptation and adjustment to the new society with the educational capital shared among co-ethnics being equally limited.

The use of co-ethnic networks indeed becomes immensely important not only in integration into the labour market, as was highlighted in different studies internationally (Patacchini & Zenou; Hou, 2009), but also educational system. McGrath (2010: 152) argues that without the support of co-ethnic networks, Brazilian migrant families in Ireland "can be at a particular disadvantage especially where they lack the linguistic capital to negotiate a strange new environment". In a similar vein, support from co-ethnics and other migrants becomes vital for Baltic migrant women who do not have a good level of English. For example, many Baltic migrant mothers use the Russian language as a *lingua franca* in Ireland. Given that many ethnically Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian mothers know the Russian language, they use it to connect with other migrants as a coping strategy of adaptation to the new cultural context. It is clearly seen in the case of Ingeborga, who does not have a good level of English, although she is fluent in Russian.

INGEBORGA: Some people really helped me. There was one woman from Georgia (at that time we lived in a shared house with other families), so she helped me a lot. She had very good English, but also she spoke Russian. She found a school for my daughter, she helped me with all papers. If I did not know Russian. It would be impossible to survive here.

Ingeborga explains that especially during her initial period of staying in Ireland, knowledge of the Russian language enabled her to receive basic information related to her daughter's schooling from another migrant mother, who also spoke Russian.

Considering that there are multiple coping strategies for migrant adaptation into the new society, Baltic mothers have also emphasised the importance of virtual networks as a source for mutual support among migrants in Ireland. Jurga discusses her experience by making reference to Facebook groups set up by and for co-ethnics in Ireland.

JURGA: There is a group of the Lithuanian community on Facebook. There are so many mothers, who communicate with each other there. I must say, those who opened it, they are so clever. You have so much information there, about insurances, about doctors, about education. With some mothers, I met in person. So I met people from this group in person, and we are still friends.

While the use of social networks has been well researched in the way migrants maintain transnational links to their home-countries (Ryan, 2011; Moskal & Trrell, 2016), previously-mentioned cases in this section also show that social networks play a significant role in adaptation and adjustment into a new cultural context and these networks are not exclusively co-ethnic.

Many studies on parental decisions in education have argued that “given that social networks appear to play a critical role in informing parental decision-making, this raises concerns regarding the accuracy and quality of information parents access through these networks” (Bosetti, 2004: 398). Travena (2015: 86) in the case of migrant parents, argued that Polish parents in the UK are more likely to rely on information based on co-ethnic networks, following “largely unverified opinions rather than facts”. Although it might be the case for many migrant parents, including some Baltic migrant mothers of working-class background in this research, most Baltic migrant mothers (both of middle- and working-class backgrounds) express the need for the verification when it comes to their final educational decision and choices.

Most mothers in this study rely on advice and suggestions from their Irish acquaintances, colleagues and friends, with an exception of a couple of mothers who spoke no English. Jo (2013) argued that the daily interaction with native parents in Korea provides an important mechanism for habitus transformation for migrant parents. Lareau and Calarco (2012) came up with a term ‘cultural-mentor’ demonstrating how some working-class parents learn how to manage the micro-interaction with the institutions from mid-

dle-class parents who have explicit and implicit competencies that help to transmit educational advantaged to children. For example, Karina does not have close Irish friends, yet it becomes important for her to consult Irish acquaintances for advice.

KARINA: Well, no, I do not have many friends. My friends are mostly people who moved here from the Baltics. I know many Irish, but they are more acquaintances than close friends. Let's put it this way, we do not spent free time together. We can meet for a coffee and have a chat, but no more than that.

However, when it comes to educational decisions and choices, Karina seeks the opinion of her Irish acquaintances, because the Irish are seen as local experts who possess tacit knowledge and internalised experience important to make the 'right' educational choices.

KARINA: If it is related to information about schools, I usually ask Irish, they are the ones who know the best. I ask other parents, I ask Irish acquaintances. However, I gather information first and make my own decision then. I am not simply following my friends' advices.

Similarly, Maja reflects on her educational choices, emphasising that with the time spent in Ireland she has become more informed about the Irish educational system. The following passage captures well the change in parental competences. As she spent time in Ireland, Maja managed to develop local networks that were important for the decision-making process she faced.

MAJA: For my son, we chose a school, which was closer to our home, because when we came we did not know anything about schooling here. For younger daughter, it was the same, we chose the closest. We did not know much, even if my husband was here for a year and he started to collect some information. So she studied in a primary school for a year, and then she had to go to a secondary school, and then we chose the school of course based on recommendations. There was one school, it was a bit far away from Limerick to be honest, but it was a very good school and well equipped.

IS: Who recommended it? Latvian or Irish?

MAJA: Only Irish.

Maja's experience demonstrates well how preferences and choices change for newly-arrived mothers with school-aged children after they spend some time in Ireland. The previous part of this chapter demonstrated that newly-arrived mothers are not knowledgeable about the Irish educational system when they migrate to Ireland, although

this part shows that after spending some time in the country, mothers learn how to navigate it, especially with the help of their Irish networks. This is further seen in the case of Agne, who believes that parental educational choices are immensely important for children's futures, so parents need to take them seriously. As Ball (2003: 58) sets out, "choice is not a simple one-off moment of action, it is part of the construction of a complex trajectory of achievement and advantage". Unlike other mothers, Agne does not complain about the complexity of the Irish schooling system, instead she focuses on her action within it.

AGNE: I know Irish culture. It is really about calculating all steps: where your child grows up, there she will have her future. Of course, it is about schooling, it is the main step in her life.

IS: What are your sources of information?

AGNE: I usually talk to Irish.

Even though there are many structural and personal constraints associated with relocation and settlement in Ireland, the interviews demonstrate that the educational competences of Baltic migrant mothers tend to evolve. Furthermore, many mothers with middle-class backgrounds adopt 'local' middle-class strategies when it comes to the education of their children, by pointing out not only 'high performing schools', but also strategies around how to find information from the right people. This is further demonstrated by Klavdija:

KLAVDIJA: I was choosing for long time. I worked in a restaurant as a manager at that time. It was a very good restaurant, and school principals had regular dinners there. I really understood my situation that I need to send my kids to a good school, so I was making some contacts with them, I was advised, which schools is the best in town.

This part of the chapter has demonstrated that social networks play an important role in developing parental competences in education, including for migrant mothers who arrived with school aged children to Ireland. While co-ethnic networks play an important role in adaptation and adjustment to a new cultural context, when it comes to decisions and choices in education, most mothers emphasise the importance of advice from Irish friends, acquaintances or colleagues.

5.4. Developing Priorities

As was demonstrated in the previous section, parental competences are not static and migrant mothers tend to develop their own priorities within the Irish educational landscape based on their pre-migratory histories and experiences in Ireland. It is evident that priorities are very subjective and parents, even from the same racial and economic background, adopt different strategies based on their attitude, thinking, self-efficacy and determination about their child's future and resilience (Vincent et al., 2012).

Darmody et al. (2012: 39) noted that children attending multi-denominational schools in Ireland are more likely to come from immigrant backgrounds than those in minority faith or Catholic schools. Indeed, in comparison to Ireland the school systems in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are secular and mixed-gender. Furthermore, even though nearly all mothers associated themselves with different Christian denominations, they did not attend any religious services regularly. This might initially suggest that Baltic mothers would prefer mixed schools for their children in Ireland. However, the findings of this research suggest that even though for many Baltic mothers the Irish system of schooling contradicts to their 'idealised' vision of how education should function, Baltic mothers prioritise academic performance over other school characteristics, such as denominational or single-sex schooling.

The majority of the interviewed mothers see denominational and single-sex schooling as something unavoidable in Ireland. It is a fact that the Irish educational system is unique, as 96 percent of primary schools are under denominational patronage (Spotlight, 2015), which does not leave much choice, especially for secular parents. This is well seen in the case of Darja, who reflects on her son's experience when he had to attend a Catholic primary school.

DARJA: Now he goes to another school, everything is more relaxed there. Of course, religion is not the primary reason. When we came here, there was no place. I got a place in a Catholic school with all these people, who get benefits, you know. It was horrible. So we went there, what could you do?

Although Darja initially emphasises Catholic-based schooling as a culturally different phenomenon, which is seen as an undesirable option for her son, she immediately corrects herself by pointing out other factors, which appear to be more important for her rather

than a merely religion. In particular, Darja bases her opinion on socio-economic background of families who are more likely to choose that school. Denomination appears to be more of a contributing factor than the main preference for choosing another school.

Similar to Darja, Inese had an initial preference for a non-denominational school, but she sent her son to a local Catholic school for boys. Considering that her son's school is a very high-performing school in south Dublin, the denomination of the school becomes less noticeable for her once she observes positive experience of her son's learning progress.

INESE: Methods of education are great. Children are very friendly to each other, helping each other. My child wants to go to school. When he comes back from school, he asks me immediately, when are we going to make homework. This is brilliant.

The cases of Inese and Darja demonstrate that parents do not have a real option of choosing a specifically non-denominational primary school for their children, as primary schooling in Ireland is highly denominational and mostly Roman Catholic. As Darmody and Smyth (2018: 2) noted, "parents, especially those with minority religion or secular beliefs, may not have the option of choosing a minority faith or multi-denominational school."

In a similar vein, Audra comments on her experience of changing her opinion on single-sex schools once her children started schooling in Ireland. Audra sees even now the separation between girls and boys in schooling as beneficial option for her children as it allows them to concentrate more on the learning.

AUDRA: I like that boys and girls are separated in Irish schools. At the beginning, I thought it was weird. I did not know how it might work. Now, I look at the results, they do a lot of arts and drama and Irish dancing for girls. And for boys, every break they play football. It is not just about separated activities and games they play, they concentrate better on their studies too.

The importance of children's academic achievement over other criteria is expressed by the majority of mothers. In the next passage, Vera discusses how she made her decision regarding her daughter's schooling. Having a background in educational psychology, she is a strong proponent of mixed schools. However, in selecting a school for her daughter,

Vera prioritises more academic aspects of the curriculum over other school characteristics, such as denomination or whether the school is a mixed one.

VERA: We had a mixed school nearby, but we were thinking ahead and it is not just about her primary school. She attends a school, which looks more serious. They have physics, chemistry and mathematics. But in a mixed school, there was more about arts and crafts. I don't see my daughter there. I don't know which path she will take later on, but she needs to have a choice later on. Just in case, she wants to study chemistry at the university, she needs to have an option already now.

The majority of mothers do not see denominational and single-sex schooling as a major obstacle for their children's educational progress. From all the Baltic women interviewed, only two mothers expressed a strong disagreement with single-sex schooling, arguing that the psychological development of children is equally as important as academic results, and they as parents need to make the right choices on behalf of their children. Thus, Natalija, deliberately moved closer to a mixed-gender school within the Dublin area.

NATALIJA: I am strongly against single-sex schools. I know that my opinion is different from the majority of mothers. Most of parents I know say that if boys and girls should be separated, they concentrate better on their studies then. But, I think they have to know each other, otherwise they are becoming alienated to each other later on. They need to see each other from the early age, and there should be healthy friendship between boys and girls.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, parental assumptions of actively choosing a school for their children are influenced by silent properties of social class, such as education, employment and higher income. Even though Natalija is a single mother in Ireland, she has economic and symbolic means as well as local Irish social networks that allow her to avoid the geographical limits to her school choice.

Although the majority of parents believe that a good education is extremely important for their children's future trajectories, issues of academic quality are not their main reason for choosing a school for many parents. Literature on parental involvement has showed that getting the 'right' social mix heavily influences schooling strategies for middle-class parents (Belson et al., 2014). Similarly, Byrne (2006) found that many middle-class respondents usually want a 'good mix' and like the idea of their children growing up with children from other backgrounds. Diversity and ethnic diversity, in particular, is viewed as a valuable asset. Even though middle-class parents in this study expressed

similar views and welcomed ethnic diversity of schools, experiences of being migrants themselves significantly influence their strategies of choosing schools with higher migrant intake to avoid social exclusion and racism for their children.

This is further seen in another passage provided by Agne, who moved from the north of Dublin to the south of the city in order to place her daughter in a high performing school. Although Agne underlines the long-term educational strategy for her daughter to study at Trinity College in the near future, she also places emphasis on the presence of other migrant children in the school as a positive sign of ethnic inclusion and diversity.

AGNE: I was looking at the south-side of Dublin. So we moved there. It is a very good school, at some point this school was in top five schools in rating in Dublin. They have a very good approach to foreign kids, there is a good mix. We were very lucky, the one thing which is left for us to do is to get a place at Trinity College.

With all of the interviewed mothers there was seldom explicit mention of racism as a barrier to their children's educational success or whether they or their children had experienced racist abuse. However, the emphasis on the presence of migrant children clearly points to seeing schools with higher migrant intake as safe places for their children. This is also seen in the passage provided by Simona and Ingeborga. Even though both mothers come from different social backgrounds and have different lifestyles in Ireland, for both mothers a higher intake of migrant children implies that their children will be less likely to experience any sort of discrimination.

SIMONA: He goes to a very good school. There's so much happening there. Parents are very welcomed to get involved. There are like 450 students in the school and from them there are around 90 foreign children. Everyone is involved there, there is no such thing as racism.

[...]

INGEBORGA: I wanted her to be at that school deliberately, that there are more migrant children.

Indeed, for migrant mothers, ethnic diversity is seen as a positive factor; a signifier of being safe and also avoiding bullying or discrimination. However, mothers in their responses face a dilemma. On the one hand, they like the idea of a wide social mix, because they thought it would help their children to relate to people from a range of different ethnic backgrounds and avoid experience of racism. On the other hand, they associate the 'wrong' mix especially with Irish Travellers. For example, Dominika explains how her

school choice for her son is bound to a composition of the school, particularly avoiding schools with a higher intake of Irish Travellers.

DOMINIKA: There are some schools, where you have people from Moyross, and of course I did not want to have a school with their children. One school was crossed out immediately. I even didn't enter, I just saw these parents. Even I know many parents who had their kids in this school and kids finished this school and continued studying. However, for my son, I wanted to go a bit away from this environment to minimise communication with them. You know in his current school, you have 2-3 characters like this, but in that school you would have 10-12 in one class.

Similarly, Kadri emphasises that her daughter needs to commute every day to a school in another town, instead of going to a local school, where there is a high intake of Irish Traveller children.

KADRI: I am totally happy with the school. There is no reason why I would feel different. I find her school there is better, as a lot of Travellers are in local schools here. So you know, there they don't have them, I am not going to say it is a problem, but they don't have these kids over there.

To sum up, this part demonstrates that migrant mothers tend to develop preferences within Irish educational landscape. As all Baltic mothers emphasise the importance of achieving higher education, the educational performance of the schools is the most important criterion, even though the majority of mothers disagree with denominational and single-sex schooling in Ireland. Regardless of their social class, many mothers tend to adopt 'local' middle-class strategies, although fear of racism and exclusion is implicit in their decisions and choices.

5.5. Participation in School

Parental involvement in school activities encompasses multiple layers of communication between parents and schools, which is beneficial for children's development (Gilleece & Eivers, 2018; Radu, 2012). So far, the findings have demonstrated that regardless of an array of barriers to parental involvement, such as resource constraints, cultural differences and a lack of familiarity with the school system because of migration, Baltic mothers are actively involved in choosing the best education environment for their children

based on their preferences. This part shows that when it comes to actual participation in Irish schools, opportunities are limited for most mothers regardless of their ethnicity or social class background.

Research on parental involvement in schools (Hoover-Dempsey & Sadler, 1995; Lareau, 2003; Dearing et al., 2006) usually identifies different barriers that prevent parents from participating in schools, including parents working long hours, lack of adequate transportation, lack of childcare, reduced socioeconomic resources and lack of optimism regarding their child's education. Nevertheless, according to Gilleece and Eivers (2018) formal parental involvement is much more limited in Ireland. Although parents can be represented on the Board of Management, few play an active role in either the Board or the Parent's Association. In 2015, only five percent of parents served on their Board of Management and only 25 percent had ever been a member of the Parent Association.

Even if there are presumably multiple ways that parents can become involved in schools, including acting as volunteers to support the school or in fundraising and community activities associated with schools, from all the women interviewed, only two mothers who lived in rural areas were involved in schools through parents' committee work. The rest were never asked to contribute to the school. For the mothers who are involved in schools, participation in parents' committees is seen as a strategy to gain status in their local rural communities, acting as an intermediary between parents and the school board. This is well seen in the case of Aurelija,

AURELIJA: I am in a school committee. When my son started going to this school, when I had a bit of time for my own and then we were going to meetings with other parents. I am not very communicative person, but when you are in a small community, you have find the way to meet people, you have to talk to them.

Direct engagement with teachers gives Aurelija the access to monitor her son's education progress by securing her position within the school and community. However, this case is rather an exception. The fact that only two mothers were engaged in schools at that level reinforces the claim that parents are always involved with their children's education but schools are not adept at recognising parents' important role, especially when it comes to ethnic minority or migrant parents.

For the rest of the mothers, parent-teacher conferences are the main channel for communicating with the school. Because the schools had no other communication practices for migrant women, attending teacher-parent conferences was perceived as an important event, which provides an opportunity for parents to discuss their children's educational progress. Thus, Natalija comments on how parents are expected to be involved in their children's learning routine by receiving clear instructions from teachers about what they need to do.

NATALIJA: It is important that they ask for parental involvement. It is not just putting your child to a school. There are always letters and reminders that we have to do certain things together. They also give advice during the meetings with the teachers, how to help children, how to practice some things together. During parental meetings, they always tell what the best areas are and what has to be taken into consideration.

Natalija discusses not only what is expected from parents, but also how schools can assist parents in finding the best strategies for learning. As Gilleece and Eivers (2018: 4) note, even if "home-school communication about student progress requires considerable input from the parents", homework is the main method used by Irish teachers for communicating with parents about their children's progress. Similar to Natalija, Maja mentions how Irish schools, in comparison to schools back in Latvia, have a more individualised approach in communication between teachers and parents.

MAJA: If you are good at something, they start giving you more tasks, it is about developing your potential. And parental meetings in schools, not like we had in Latvia, when all parents are together and teachers stand in front and talk about each child. Here it is different, it is more individual here, it is not like they saying nasty things in front of other parents, shaming your child in front of the others. I remember how it was, when you have an excellent kid, you feel very empowered as you hear only good things about your child, but if the situation is opposite, you try to hide somewhere at the back to avoid shaming. Here it is so different.

Some mothers emphasised the importance of informal parental networks consisting predominantly of Irish parents, which can provide a sense of emotional support and knowledge about school tracking policies. This becomes apparent especially for mothers with middle-class backgrounds who acknowledge the importance of the positive effects of these networks on their children's socialisation and wider integration into the Irish

society. This is further seen in the contribution from Jurga, who talks about the importance of parents to become more active in order for her children to have Irish friends from the early age.

JURGA: I communicate with other parents. I will tell you even more, I do it, in order my child would get into this society ... for example, he had birthday, I was inviting everyone, all parents. I understand that in order to get into the society, you need to make friends with everyone, so until now we all communicate very well for already 4 years. We are all neighbours, we celebrate birthdays together, he has already a circle of his friends. Communication is so important.

While some parents appear more strategic in developing informal parental networks to substitute for the lack of opportunities in schools, other parents express the feeling of being completely excluded from meeting other Irish parents, even when they know many Irish outside schools. Lack of English language skills is an important barrier for some Baltic mothers, but the interviews show more complex dynamics, which signal again a lack of school initiative to involve parents who actually want to be involved. Even though Darja has a very limited level of English, she reflects on her experience in two schools, her son attended.

DARJA: I do not know many Irish parents, because, they know each other already, they communicate only among themselves. Probably it is because of my level of English. I cannot communicate with them. In the previous school, before he got here, we had different courses, like design and crafts, so I was always went there. Even if I could not communicate in English well, I still managed to talk to everyone. But here, I don't know anyone.

While a good command of English is an important contributing factor for communication with Irish parents, other examples also demonstrate that it is not the issue of the language which prevents mothers of getting to know other Irish parents. For example, Ieva is fluent in English, yet she maintains that migrants and Irish have parallel lives, even if their children study together.

IEVA: Actually we are not meeting much and we are not talking. When my daughter was going to a pre-school, I just got to know a bit one mother, because we took the same road to school. But we just chatted a little bit. It was very little. Then they decided to move to Dublin. I would say I got to know more people outside the school, when I went to a course about parenting. There were Irish too. There was one woman she had her children attending the same school. Now at least we say hello to each other. But other than that, I would say we do not mix.

Overall, this demonstrates that many migrant mothers seek an opportunity to be involved in schools, although schools do not provide enough opportunities other than teacher-parent conferences. While some parents have access to local networks of Irish parents, other parents, regardless of their social class, ethnicity or knowledge of English become excluded.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter examined how Baltic mothers navigate Irish schooling within their structural and personal constraints. Similar to the findings of Tkacz and McGhee (2015), this chapter shows that some parents display a level of agency comparable to that of Irish middle-class parents, although the interviews with mothers demonstrate a complex relationship between their social background, migration trajectories and matters of access and selection of schooling. Regardless of their social class background, newly-arrived mothers with school-aged children find themselves in a more disadvantaged situation in comparison to mothers who have spent more time in Ireland before their children started schooling. With time spent in Ireland, mothers began to learn how to navigate the Irish educational landscape, especially with the help of Irish personal networks. However, time spent in Ireland does not guarantee a full awareness of the tacit rules of Irish educational system, which middle-class Irish parents tend to navigate easily. While it is observed that mothers from the Baltic States develop different preferences and strategies in selecting schooling for their children, they do not actively participate in schools and some mothers do not know many Irish parents – even though they value Irish networks as an important strategy for integration into Irish society.

Chapter 6 – Role of Extra-Curricular Activities

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated the ways Baltic mothers interact with formal schooling in Ireland. While formal parental involvement is a primary focus of educational policy, different studies have demonstrated that informal involvement has a greater influence on children's educational outcomes (Harris & Goodall, 2007). Hence, this chapter explores the dispositions of Baltic migrant mothers in Ireland, which seem 'right' and 'natural' for them when it comes to choosing and managing their children's extra-curricular and leisure activities.

During the interviews, all the Baltic women talked about their pro-active role in their children's everyday routine outside formal schooling in Ireland, highlighting similarities and differences between their own childhood experiences and experiences of their children in Ireland. In particular, most women interviewed emphasised the importance of developing such skills and competences for their children as autonomy, independence and self-reliance through a range of unstructured and structured activities. By positioning children as an investment for the future, many mothers have developed an approach which is comparable to what Vincent and Maxwell (2015: 273) have called "a neo-liberal orthodoxy of 'responsibilisation', with parents responsible for generating their children's biographies through the development of children's intellectual social, cultural, physical and emotional skills." Contrary to previous research on parental involvement (Lareau, 2000; Tomanovic, 2004), the findings from the current study show that parental involvement in children's extra-curricular and leisure activities is not an exclusively middle-class phenomenon. However, migrant mothers with middle-class backgrounds tend to have a more structured approach to the leisure time of their children from the early age, based on the cultural and material resources available to them.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part looks at family leisure by discussing how mothers view family leisure spent with their children. The second and third parts explore unstructured and structured leisure activities by looking at how Baltic mothers rationalise their pro-active role in their children's everyday routine outside formal schooling in Ireland. The fourth part focuses on material and non-material meanings

that mothers assign and attribute to extra-curricular and leisure activities their children participate in.

6.2. Family Leisure

During the interviews, all the women talked about family leisure as an important component of family life, which is vital to the growth, development and socialisation of children and to overall family cohesion. Family cohesion can be defined as an emotional bond between members of the family (Pakstis & Hsieh, 2015: 332) with family leisure playing an essential role in producing positive family experiences for both parents and children (Elliott, 2010). Regardless of their social class or ethnic background, all of the Baltic mothers highlighted their parental expectation, responsibility and commitment to be highly visible, active and involved in their children's lives by inventing domestic rituals that enhance communication and bonding and create a sense of equity (Shaw, 2008). However, migration is a multi-dimensional experience, which influences the leisure time of migrant families beyond coping and adapting by involving issues such as self-perception, daily-life organisation, self-expression and belonging (Mata-Codesal et al., 2015).

As was already mentioned in Chapter 4, mothers acknowledge that their migration to Ireland influences the development of more horizontal relationships between them and their children. Specifically in terms of leisure, Baltic mothers notice that family leisure activities become more 'private' in Ireland and as a result influence the development of a closer family bond. This is seen in the case of Kadri, who compares her family to the families of her siblings back in Estonia.

KADRI: They are teenagers, they do not want what you want them to do, but it is easier here, in Ireland. It is all about having closer relationship with your children. We spend so much time here together. Children are so independent in Estonia. Here. I drive them everywhere, so we spend extra 40 minutes together in the morning. We spend so much time talking. I see the difference as I have two sisters and three brothers in Estonia, they all have families. They do not spend so much time together as I do get here.

Kadri highlights that because of a more private nature of childrearing in Ireland, she tends to develop close, nurturing relationships with her daughters even if they are at the age when they seek to be more independent and rebellious. While the primary focus is on

children, for many mothers, including Kadri, family time is planned and organised in a way that it has a particular value and quality for the whole family rather than individual members (Shaw, 2008).

This is further reflected by other Baltic mothers, who talked about the importance of doing different activities together with their children such as playing games, going for a walk, going on a weekend trip, visiting friends. For example, Liliana reflects on her family leisure routine which includes family excursions to national parks and distinctive natural spots around Ireland.

LILIANA: We go traveling around Ireland. We love travelling, for example last summer we went to eight different places around Ireland. We discovered really breath-taking places, we went to some villages where there are no even one sign is in English, only in Irish.

By discovering new places in Ireland, Liliana emphasises the importance of shared experiences that contribute not only in gaining knowledge about local surroundings, but also the development of a sense of belonging and ownership for her family in general and the children in particular.

Another important practice of shared leisure activities is related to maintaining ties with friends who live in different locations in Ireland. During the interviews, most mothers talked about developing and maintaining friendship ties with people they met in Ireland. In most cases, their friends were also predominantly migrants, but not exclusively their co-ethnics. This is further seen in the discussion I had with Aurelija, who notices that she has many friends living in different locations in Ireland, whom she regularly visits with her son: “We are going to visit our friends. There are other families in Limerick, Kerry and Cork. We are not staying at home”. For Aurelija, visiting her friends plays an important role for her and her son’s socialisation, as he learns to develop ties with other children apart from his immediate circle of friends in his hometown. As Agonos et al. (2015: 86) argue,

mothers tend to look at family leisure as a way to inculcate in their children the importance of interpersonal communication as well as other aspects that appeal to their emotional intelligence. Mothers expect their children to acquire values from their leisure activities that would contribute to their social growth and psychological wellbeing such as being sociable, being able to negotiate effectively with other people, and building high self-esteem.

The importance of socialising with other families was also picked up by Vita, who notes that most of her free time is either spent within her family or shared with other families.

VITA: We go to the swimming pool together. We go to parks. We like walking with young one, but we like just to spend time together as a family, even just staying at home and talking. Sometimes, we put our young one to sleep and then three of us: my son, my husband and me just stay late and have a chat. We love sports. I run and my husband plays basketball. When we go somewhere we usually meet up with our friends. They all have children. I do not think that it would be possible for me to go alone, just with friends, we always meet with our families.

While Vita places the emphasis on individual preferences in sports, her main family leisure practices aim to achieve togetherness among her family. As Shaw and Dawson (2001) argue, family leisure is often purposive in nature and parents consciously and deliberately plan and facilitate leisure activities to improve family relations. In the case of Vita, togetherness is achieved through the common interactions within family and other families which are alike.

Furthermore, common activities are seen as positive for children, as they can learn new skills and competences. Some parents deliberately seek to prioritise family leisure that can bring educational benefits for their children by engaging and practicing sports, music or arts. This is further reflected by Simona, who discusses her son's interest in swimming.

SIMONA: He likes swimming because I used to swim, you know he had no choice. I brought him there, he loved and it worked out well. I do not let him see that it is my decision, but I do not try to force him. I remember myself, when I was a child. I practiced swimming for 12 years. I didn't like, but my mother pushed me all the time, I had training in the morning and another class after the school.

Simona places the emphasis on doing swimming together with her son by achieving two parental goals. On the one hand, she sees engaging in shared leisure activity as a way of enhancing the family as a cohesive unit by creating "memories of having good times together" (Shaw & Dawson, 2001: 224). On the other hand, she wants to provide her son with an opportunity to develop healthy lifestyle patterns and to learn the values that will be beneficial in the future for her son. The same as in the case of Simona, Maja describes the interest of her family in Latvian traditional dancing by emphasising that children would not engage in national dancing by themselves, but it was the role of parents to cultivate the long-term interest in dancing.

MAJA: We are all dancing in the family. When we came to Ireland, there were only classes in Dublin. So every Sunday, we went with kids to Dublin. We spent all day there. Three hours of travel there and back and four hours of dancing there. We were doing this for the first two years.

The case of Maja is very interesting as it not only demonstrates how parents see their role in cultivating certain skills or competencies for their children, but also in maintaining cultural heritage and identity. According to Ekmanis (2016: 72) folk dancing groups play an important role in cultural identity building in the Latvian diaspora as:

the ritual of rehearsal, performance and party provide individuals the opportunity to engage together in community building that not only strengthens the relationships of individuals, but also builds the social capital of the community and the ability to develop a cultural appreciation that contributes to the Latvian nation.

Although most of the women interviewed talked about the positive aspects of having more private leisure activities within their families in Ireland, some women, who had moved from Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius to places outside Dublin, noticed a lack of cultural activities available to them. For example, Simona, who moved from Vilnius to a small town in Ireland acknowledges that her son does not have a chance to be exposed to cultural activities as much as he would have been in Lithuania.

SIMONA: We used to go to theatres and opera at least once a month. I was thinking another day, how often do I do the same with my child here. It does not mean that I do not want to, it is just nowhere to go or you don't have time. Comparing his childhood to mine, he is missing a lot of things, this is the truth.

The reflection and comparisons are very interesting as they show what parents can and cannot do. For them some things are important to have like in their own childhoods and others they miss or gain something new. But overall they engage in comparisons; their childhood, children who currently grow up in the Baltic States and Irish families. They compare and they do so depending on the situation and their priorities. This will be further explored below.

6.3. Unstructured Children's Activities

While shared family leisure activities are important for children's development, all of the Baltic mothers discussed the importance of independent children's activities, especially in relation to unstructured leisure time. During the interviews, all the mothers noticed intergenerational and cultural differences between their children's experiences of childhood in Ireland and their own experiences of growing up in the Baltic States, particularly in relation to new technologies transforming children's routine. Although all the women recognised integration of new technologies as an inevitable change influencing their children's unstructured activities and experiences of childhood in general, many women, regardless of their social class background, expressed the need for their children to be more autonomous and independent in comparison to their Irish peers by providing their children with a 'suitable' environment in order to develop those skills through unstructured activities.

Unstructured children's activities can be defined simply as free time or freely chosen activity (Neulinger, 1974), with freedom of choice being the key element. According to Starling (2011), the importance of unstructured children's activities, especially outdoor play, has been linked to improvements in cognitive, behavioural, and even physical functioning. However, many studies (Holt et al., 2016; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997) on children's socialisation and parenting cultures across different cultural contexts suggests that from the last decades of the twentieth century, children have become more restricted in their outdoor play opportunities and independent use of public space than in previous generations. The results of the Lego Learning Institute survey (2002) demonstrate that there is a cross-national variations in a response to the academic and public debate over concerns that children's free time is becoming increasingly organised. For example, parents in the UK, US and France would actively encourage their children to involve themselves in organised activities during their free time and give less encouragement to free-play. Whereas the opposite attitude is expressed by most parents in Japan and Germany, with 83 per cent of Japanese and 61 per cent of Germans stating that free-play would be more commonly encouraged (Gleave, 2009).

In many instances, new forms of technology have become a cause of a decrease in children playing outdoors. Hutchby and Moran-Ellis (2013: 1) have even argued that

new technology not only influences children's time spent outdoors but also the way childhood is experienced by children themselves:

childhood, it seems, is increasingly saturated by technology. From television to the internet, video games to personal computers, camcorders to mobile phones, children engage with and exercise competence in a whole range of technologies in the home, at school, and in the wider social world. The increasing interplay between children and technologies poses critical questions for how we understand the nature of childhood in late modern society.

This intergenerational difference has immediately been recognised by all of the mothers interviewed. It is reflected on well by Ellu, who talks about her own experiences of childhood. The lesser influence of technology during her childhood is seen as more natural and advantageous experience as Ellu had an opportunity for spending more time playing outdoors in comparison to her children who grow up with digital gadgets, which as a result alters their behaviour and preferences for their leisure activities.

ELLU: Well, it is so different now, I think children were so much happier, I do not know whether happy is the right word, but back then we didn't have all these technology, they all now have iPhones and iPads, you know, I don't agree with that. I would prefer, she would have childhood like I had.

Even though most mothers express a sense of regret that their children spend less time playing outdoors, the women recognise that a constant presence of technology in the lives of their children is not simply a sign of modern consumption or lifestyle, but an inevitable and unavoidable phenomenon affecting younger generations across different cultural contexts. Considering these changing patterns of children's routine, some mothers, especially those with children in primary schooling, position themselves as being responsible for providing their children with alternative leisure activities, specifically structuring more time for outdoor play. This is further seen with Johanna, who talks about the need to exercise a greater control over her son's unstructured leisure time, not only by providing her son with a possibility to play outdoors, but also limiting time playing computer games.

JOHANNA: Well, most Irish mothers I know have a similar point of view that children need to spend less on computers and more playing outside. This summer, for example, I worked until 1pm, so I gathered a couple of kids (other parents were happy, of course) to play in our garden. I think, there is a main similarity, children want to play the same as we used do.

But it is all up to parents, if you have Xbox, of course they are going to play Xbox.

Johanna recognises that other Irish mothers face the same challenges when it comes to managing children's time in relation to new technologies. Similar to the analysis by Cole-Hamilton and Gill (2002), who argue that unstructured free play is beneficial for developing social and problem-solving skills, Johanna sees playing outdoors as an important element of children's leisure routine, which should be continuously present in the lives of children today. However, she sees it as her parental responsibility to provide her son with such opportunity.

Furthermore, many mothers with primary school age children, further stress the importance of the independent spatial mobility experienced by children themselves; she expresses strong criticism of Irish local parenting culture for being overprotective and restrictive. It is well recognised fact that outdoor play allows children to explore their local neighbourhood, learn the rules of everyday life and discover the different textures and elements in the world (Clements, 2004). However, some studies (McKendrick et al., 1999; Santos at al., 2013) have highlighted that parental fear serves as a potentially critical barrier to children's ability to travel and play independently. Parent's perception of harm from strangers and road safety are usually identified as major causes of parental anxiety (Santos at al., 2013). At the same time, studies of child development (Hillman et al., 1990; Wheway & Millward, 1997) suggest that the reduced independent mobility experienced by many children may adversely affect children's social and creative health, especially decreasing self-esteem, a sense of identity and the ability to take responsibility for oneself.

Even though most of the women did not identify 'fears' associated with neighbourhood safety, it is evident from the interviews that most Baltic children were restricted in their spatial mobility in Ireland. However, most mothers emphasised the need to create a suitable environment for their children, allowing them to exercise more control over their decisions and actions even if with limited spatial mobility. This is clear in the case of Elina, who stresses the importance of her children to become more self-reliant from the early age by learning how to make their own meal and clean up after themselves.

ELINA: Here, you cannot leave your children alone at home until they turn 12 years old. In Estonia, as far as I remember, when I was a child, I went to the school by myself, I took a tram back home and even made

some food for myself, when I was back from school. My middle boy knows how to make an omelette, he makes tea himself, and even he knows how to boil pelmeni⁶. One of this friends came over to our house another day, she is also 10 years old. She does not know even how to make a cup of tea. Her parents forbid her to do anything in the kitchen and, of course, she comes from a family with many kids.

Like many other Baltic mothers, Elina talks about the need for her children to mature earlier than it is expected in Ireland. Preparing your own meal without supervision is seen as a sign of early independence and desirable behaviour. This opinion is not unique and influenced by women's own experience of childhood in the Baltic States. Elina started her schooling at the age of seven and like most children growing up in Estonia (the same applies to Latvia and Lithuania), she was expected to demonstrate some level of independence by going to school and coming home without being accompanied by an adult, preparing a meal and spending unsupervised time after school. Considering that children are not allowed to stay unaccompanied at home until the age of 12 in Ireland, Elina talks about the introduction of small routine household tasks for her children that will allow them, in comparison to other Irish children, to exercise a greater degree of autonomy and independence. As Malone (2007) has argued, exposure to risks and challenges without adult supervision may build problem solving skills and resilience, although a lack of experience of autonomy and independence in childhood may contribute to a lack of self-confidence, self-esteem, anxiety during transitions, and reduced social competence in young adulthood.

Nevertheless, other Baltic mothers with children older than 12 years of age expressed less of a degree of managing and supervising their children's unstructured leisure activities, which overall reflects findings from previous academic research. This has suggested that the degree of parental engagement changes with the age and developmental level of the child (Hendry, 1983). For example, Pavlova and Silbereisen (2015) noted that unstructured leisure activities play an important part during the adolescence life stage. A large proportion of adolescent free time is spent in public places, such as parks, cafes, cinemas, shopping malls or at somebody else's home. Visiting, hanging out, shopping, and dating – all forms of socializing, mostly with peers – account for 1-1.5 hours of adolescents' daily leisure time in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. This is further seen in a passage provided by Olita, who welcomes the idea that her daughter has increased

⁶ Pelmeni is a type of pasta filled with meat (MacMillan Dictionary, 2019).

socialisation with her friends through unstructured leisure activities of her choice, showing a higher degree of autonomy and independence. Therefore, Olita notices, “Now she spends time with her friends. She plays football with them. She invites them here. She is opening up a bit now. I even did not know that she is so active”. For Olita and other mothers with adolescent children, achieving autonomy in leisure time preferences and decisions is seen as an important task for their children’s development and maturity, in which leisure becomes an important signifier of whether children require more or less supervision of their parents.

This section has demonstrated that Baltic mothers take a proactive approach in providing a ‘suitable’ environment through managing their children’s unstructured leisure time. Most women emphasise that unstructured activities are important for children in developing such skill as independence, autonomy and self-reliance. While the need for managing activities is emphasised with smaller children, mothers of adolescents welcome the idea that children develop more time with their peers as the way of exploring their identity.

6.4. Structured Leisure Activities

Along with managing their children’s unstructured leisure time, most women interviewed expressed the need to provide their children with a variety of extra-curricular activities by cultivating certain skills and competences in peer group settings. Although many studies show that the way parents are involved in selecting extra-curricular activities for their children reflects social class background (Lareau, 2000; Tomanovic, 2004), findings from the interviews suggest that attending extra-curricular activities is not exclusively a middle-class phenomenon for Baltic migrants in Ireland and all mothers viewed structured leisure activities as having a higher value than unstructured leisure. However, the desire to place children in these activities from an early age was expressed predominantly by mothers of middle-class background.

Structured leisure is usually defined as having regular participation schedules, adult-led activities and an emphasis on skills development (Hendry et al., 1993; Coatsworth et al., 2005). According to Hendry et al. (1993), through participation in structured leisure activities young people acquire knowledge of their social environment, practise social skills and explore a variety of family, peer and community roles. The

participants listed different activities that their children attend, ranging from academic related activities such as private tutoring in maths or English, sports, music, theatre or art classes, to activities related to ethnic communities and heritage language learning. All children participated in at least two extra-curricular activities and for many it was also balanced with weekend language classes organised by ethnolinguistic communities.

In illustrating the examples of extra-curricular activities their children are involved in, the same as in the discussion on unstructured leisure time, all the Baltic women engaged in comparative evaluation of their own experiences of attending extra-curricular activities when they were children themselves and the experiences of their children in Ireland. Regardless of their social class or ethnic background, all the women reflected on their busy schedule doing different after-school classes, which were mostly provided by the state, when they were children. Having been exposed to different options growing up in the Baltic States, most women also expressed a desire to re-create similar experiences for their children in Ireland. This is seen in the case of Paulina, who talks about the need to provide her children with an opportunity to try different activities.

PAULINA: I grew up as a very clever kid but I managed to get everything myself. I was more active. I went to all activities, I wanted. I am trying to do the same for my kids. I don't want to limit them. For example, the middle one wanted to play violin. We tried to persuade her to do piano instead, as we have piano at home. But, she insisted. We found a teacher, we paid of course. She took classes for a year and a half. When real work started, she said violin was too difficult. She had many tears of course. Now she is into ballet. At the beginning it was Irish ballet, when everything is easy, where teachers are kind. Then, she was watching some videos and she decided that she wants to have more discipline. Well, mama is active, mama found a Russian ballet studio here. The teachers are Irish there, but they were educated in Russia. There is one teacher, she was a prima ballet dancer in Perm. So now my daughter has more serious training. Of course, after the first class, she was crying but she goes there now and so far she enjoys it.

The passage demonstrates well that having a choice and different options is important for Paulina as it allows her daughter to explore different activities and exercise her agency from an early age. Children's preferences and choices are important for Baltic mothers. Although mothers take a proactive approach in managing their children's time, they also reflect and respect choices made by their children. This is further demonstrated by Aurelija, who talks about the importance of her son's choice.

AURELIJA: I'm not doing if he does not want to. He goes to taekwondo twice a week and then hurling every Sunday. What else, speech drama, that is at the school. He is busy enough, I think, he needs a bit of rest.

For Aurelija as for other Baltic mothers, parenting is expressed in the need to intervene when it is necessary, but mothers do not take over responsibilities for their children instead allowing them to develop a sense of freedom and “thereafter have access to ways to enhance his/her understanding of it”. In other words, mothers embrace the view that structured activities can shape their children and thus they allow their children “to actualise their potential” (Kotaman, 2013: 40).

However, managing their children's time involves hard work and commitment for all of the women interviewed regardless of whether they are working or stay-at-home mums. This is further reflected in two passages provided by Emilija, who is working full-time and Vera, who stays at home. Both women reflect in a nearly identical way on how they manage their children's activities.

EMILIJA: I do not sit at home, when I am free, I am not that kind of person. We do lots of things, my son goes to theatrical class, swimming, gymnastics, on Saturdays we go to the swimming pool together. On Saturday he goes to the Lithuanian school in Dublin, from 10 till 2. After 2pm we go back home and then he goes to swimming classes at 5 pm. So we only have Sunday left, shopping, cleaning, laundry, and of course if it a nice weather we would go to the park, we also have a dog.

[...]

VERA: In working days, it is all about school and then it is after-school activities and also homework. On Tuesdays and Thursdays it is taekwondo, on Wednesdays we are doing Russian lessons, Fridays it is all about drawing. Only on Mondays, there is some time left, they can visit their friends.

However, it is different for single women, especially those who have no support from their mothers with childcare. For example, some women mentioned that they live outside the city or they work during evenings or weekends, which might clash with after-school routine of their children. Thus Elina talks about living in a suburb of Galway and working during weekends.

ELINA: There is a very good dancing club. Everything based on voluntary basis there. My children want to go there, but it is all about my work. The club is on Saturdays, but I have to work and I am only one who is driving in the family. Probably later, I might find a solution to this, but at the

moment not really.

This also highlights that access to extra-curricular activities is related not only to economic and geographic factors, but also a composition of the family and whether there is an additional support from grandparents. The case of Elina highlights that single parent families who do not have any support from grandparents might find themselves in a disadvantaged situation.

Even if there is no binary class distinction between the middle and working classes, a desire to structure free time from the early age was expressed predominantly by middle-class mothers. During the interviews, they expressed a feeling of frustration and dissatisfaction when they were not able to find anything suitable for their children because of their young age. For example, Tamara wanted her daughter to start with music classes before her daughter turned six, but she could not find anything suitable, so she turned to activities organised by other Russian-speaking mothers and also became involved in organising these activities.

TAMARA: We went there, but they told us she was too small to start music classes. I can see that probably she was too small and she did not have enough words to express herself. But what I see, music schools in Ireland, they have different criteria. They told me that children start playing piano from 8 years old. So then we started to go to this Russian school. She is singing and dancing there, which we also could not find in Limerick, but found it here.

Similarly, Paulina talks about her experience, as her son was too small to join sport classes, so she turned to a Russian coach who works with small children.

PAULINA: My child was very big one when he was born. When he was 4, he looked like 6 years old. He was very active, destroying everything at home, so I tried to find a place to accommodate his energy. I went to all sports classes around here, everyone told me that in order to start you need to have insurance and it is only available from 6 or 7 years old. Then, I found this Russian Judo Coach, who worked with smaller children. So my son practices Judo from 4 years old and he is 10 now. Now this couch has his own Judo club, there are not only Russian-speaking children, there are also Irish kids.

These two examples demonstrate how middle-class mothers are driven by the desire to practice some activities from a young age in order to cultivate natural talents early. On

the other hand, findings from the current research are very similar to Lareau (2003), who found that regardless of social class background, parental decisions about children's leisure activities are highly influenced by gender expectations. All of the women interviewed highlighted how certain activities correspond to their gender expectations, for example, team sports for boys and more individual sports and music and drama activities for girls. Many mothers even expressed some frustration that their children developed 'atypical' views and preferences. This is well seen in the cases of Ieva and Kadri. For instance, Ieva talks about her son, who in her opinion does not have typical boy's behaviour as he prefers painting over sports.

IEVA: For my boy, I would like him to be similar to other children of his age, you know, like normal Irish boys who are thinking about football, going out and fighting, he is more silent, he likes painting and creating things.

On the other hand, Kadri talks about her daughter being a typical girl, by showing no interest in sports.

KADRI: Sports, she has no interest in sports, she is very girly girl, and she doesn't like dirt. That's why I was very surprised when she picked wood-work. She does not like to get dirt under her nails.

This part has demonstrated that for Baltic mothers managing structured activities play an important role. Inspired by their own experiences of childhood and being involved in different activities, they want to provide the same activities for their children in order for them to be able to exercise their agency and form preferences. In particular, mothers of middle class backgrounds tended to involve their children in activities early and in most cases, if these were not available locally, they start interacting with their ethnolinguistic communities and also get involved themselves.

6.5. Meaning and Attributes of Extra-Curricular Activities

This section focuses on a more detailed understanding of how and why Baltic mothers select some activities over others. Although mothers were eager that their children would always try something new in their free time, extra-curricular activities are not merely seen as a happy place for their children. In most of the cases, women viewed their children as 'becomings' rather than 'beings' and wanted to ensure that extra-curricular activities can bring long-term benefits for their children (Levey, 2009). The ways mothers reasoned

their children's participation in sports, arts, drama, vocational clubs and language classes "revealed an orientation towards the future and a belief in the possibility – and perhaps the obligation – to shape or influence the kind of person their child was to become" (Sjödén & Roman, 2018: 8). As Vincent and Ball (2007: 1065) write, "the child here is understood as a project – soft, malleable and able to be developed and improved, with the 'good' parent presenting a myriad of opportunities and support for the child to have a range of learning experiences".

This parental orientation expressed in high expectations and aspirations towards their children's future is comparable with findings of Berg and Pertola (2015: 37), who discovered that Finnish parents, regardless of their class or gender hierarchies, hold high hopes that their children's participation in structured activities would help their children to become 'decent citizens' who respect other people and have good manners. Similarly, Vincent and Maxwell, (2016: 275) suggested that parents tend to view long-term benefits of extra-curricular activities, which are related not only in "the identification and cultivation of talents, but also developing personal qualities, such as perseverance, resilience and team work – 'soft' skills valued in the labour market".

During the interviews, many mothers reflected on the moral dimension of extra-curricular activities their children were involved in. Some extra-curricular activities are not seen as just a form of social or academic engagement, but also as a purposeful moral occupation, which can stimulate their children's development and facilitate learning of interpersonal skills. For example, in the case of sports, parents see structured sporting activities as a self-evident part of children's everyday life, especially for boys, although they also notice moral learning that can be transferred and applied in other spheres of being. This is visible in the case of Dominika who talks about her son's experience of doing martial art classes. Similar to many other cases, Dominika emphasises not only the physical benefits of practicing sports, but also philosophy behind martial arts.

DOMINIKA: There are different activities and preferences, I have for my son. Doing sports is important for a boy. He is very active and of course, it is about general physical development. He used to go to Capoeira. It is Brazilian martial art, the fight without touching each other. This club was just near us, but then the club moved, so we stopped. So until now, we are searching something similar, which is suitable for a boy, like fighting and learning how to protect yourself. Of course, there is an opportunity for kickboxing here, but I think it is a very stupid activity. I prefer something more like Capoeira, Aikido or Kung Fu. It is not just about fighting, but

also the philosophy behind. It is all about self-protection, correct breathing and respect of course. It is more about learning how to do things and finish tasks, being disciplined.

Cultivation of such personal traits as respect, completing tasks and being disciplined is seen for Dominika as an added-value opportunity for her son that allows one to go beyond physical benefits of just doing sports. While these qualities can be taught within different settings, Dominika places the emphasis not only on the environment outside home supervised by other adults, but also the transferability of these skills and capabilities from the arena of sports to the arena of interpersonal relationships, which will allow her son to prepare for work life in the future.

On the same theme, Solvita talks about the importance for her son to learn how to communicate with other children in a group. Even though Solvita prioritises home-based activities for her children, she also realises that communication with other children is important for her son's personal and academic development.

SOLVITA: We are going to the Latvian school now. I joined this school not because my son needs the Latvian language, well for the language, he has us, his family. He speaks Latvian all the time at home. Writing and drawing he can do at home too, to be honest, this is not the main reason we are here. The main reason is that I wanted him to have more socialisation, to learn how to speak to other children.

Solvita, like other Baltic mothers, sees education occurring within a social context, where communication with peers plays an important role in developing cooperative and interactional capabilities in preparedness and getting a broader worldview (Suizzo et al., 2012). Therefore, her choice to attend Latvian weekend school is very deliberate and follows what Falbo, Lein and Amador (2001) described as a logic of three parental actions: monitoring, evaluating and intervening leading to parental intervention. Similarly, many mothers become involved in organising community activities that can potentially benefit their own children. As is seen from the data, many mothers become involved in running community activities. Most of these activities are run on a voluntary basis during weekends. In the following passage, Aurelija talks about her initiate to organise some classes for Lithuanian children.

AURELIJA: I started organising these classes in order my son would go there. I wanted my son to play with other kids. I thought it would be nice for people to meet together and kids will have music classes, they will sing and dance.

In the same vein, Natalija discusses her active role in the Russian-speaking community.

NATALIJA: I am doing this for my children. I see that they enjoy the Russian culture, so I really try hard. We invited a puppet theatre, we organised Christmas events. It is a gift to my children. I wanted her to experience Christmas morning like we had in our childhood with dressing up, singing, dancing. They do not have it here. I want to give it to my own children, but of course to other children too.

Even though most Baltic mothers see their children's participation in different extracurricular activities as a path to exercise their own agency from the early age by exploring different options, the economic component cannot be simply dismissed as these extra-curricular activities involve high costs in Ireland and sometimes also involve the purchase of specialist equipment. This is further reflected in the passage provided by Karina, who discusses the way she expects her son not only to make his decisions regarding his extra-curricular activities but also understand its consequences. Decision-making here is seen as a principle mechanism of the individual's autonomous consumption when making a certain choice that will affect him or her as an individual (Luke, 1994; Martens, 2005).

KARINA: From the early age, I have tried to teach him how to be independent. It is important for them to make decisions by themselves. For example, my son knows why he actually attends these after school activities. He understands that it is not because of me, but because he needs them and it is his choice too. I think this is the most important that parents can teach to their children. When parents make children to do things, children do without really understanding why they need them.

Like many mothers, Karina expresses how her son is aware of managing resources from an early age, showing that not only does she play a strong structuring role in her son's free time but also she lets him take the responsibility for it. Indeed, in this context, extra-curricular activities can be seen as a form of cultural consumption, when parents not only act as gatekeepers regarding "what can be culturally consumed, but also actively engage in cultivating ways of consuming" (Meuleman et al., 2004: 166).

At the same time many mothers talked about their children's activities as a conscious form of investment. Vincent and Ball (2007: 1069) noticed that "the buying-in of expertise through activities (or tutoring, or parenting classes) is one of the more obvious ways in which cultural capital is linked to economic capital". This is well

demonstrated in the following by Audra, who criticises her sister for the lack of her investment parental strategy. Although Audra and her sister have children of similar ages, the women have totally different perspectives on how to approach cultivation of talents.

AUDRA: My sister thinks of buying a house with her husband at the moment. So, she tries to save up on everything. And, I am saying, it will be too late. By the time her daughter turns 15, she will see basically nothing. Piano at 15, it is useless, she needs to start already now. Well, for my son, for example, in order for him to participate in gymnastics competitions when he is 12, I already need to do something now. You need to invest in order to have an outcome in the future.

Audra considers the long-term benefits of extra-curricular activities her son attends by projecting and focusing on the concrete results in the future. Talents are not seen as something given or natural, but rather as competences that can be developed through hard dedicated work and financial investment.

This discussion is further linked to other forms of activities, discussed by the majority of mothers, especially with older children who are preparing for the Leaving Certificate. As is seen from the data, for many mothers extra-curricular activities can be seen as a form of investment in their children's skills and competences, although private tutoring (or grinds) appeared to be an important parental strategy to enable their children to perform better in schools and prepare for exams.

The same as in the case of Audra, Agne recognises that private tutoring is expensive but necessary. Agne sees that private tutoring enables her daughter to improve her grades. Agne reflects on this strategy as being 'normal' for the school where her daughter studies. It is just seen as normal practice.

AGNE: My daughter chose Irish to study. Even if she does not like it much, already for the second year we had to hire a tutor. We also have additional classes in maths. Without grinds, you cannot go anywhere in Ireland. We are lucky at the moment, as with the crisis, the prices went down, so you can find private lessons for 25 euro per hour, otherwise it used to be like 50 euro before. Of course, when you have only one lesson you don't feel it is much, but when you do it for 2 years, paying 50 euro a week, you can feel the difference. I can imagine, when you have 2 or 3 kids, you simply cannot afford. But without grinds you cannot go anywhere. For example, she had D in Irish, it was disaster for us. I was panicking a lot, so we found a teacher. The year after, my daughter got B. It is like 80 percent. With maths, it is a bit difficult too. At the moment, it is between B and C. My daughter told me that every pupil in her school has at least two grinds. I have some friends, even those who have very

high salary and they have such attitude, why would you pay for grinds, if you have school. I disagree a lot with them, it is expensive, but it's worth it.

While the majority of mothers who have private tutors for their children emphasise the importance of grinds, especially in preparation for the Leaving Certificate, other mothers highlighted the importance of private tutors starting from primary school. For example, Simona's son is in national school, yet Simona talks about the importance of extra help, especially with the subjects she cannot assist her child.

SIMONA: I believe in a good start, for example even coming here for me, I had very good English. I pay extra for tutors to help him with his studies. With a boy, you know it is different, he believes it is important not for him but for his mother. So there is one person coming to help with his homework and we have another tutor who help him with other subjects.

Examinations have high stakes when they significantly determine the future pathways available to the students. In Ireland, for example, students take two nationally-standardised examinations: the Junior Certificate at the end of lower secondary education and the Leaving Certificate at the end of upper secondary education (Smyth, 2009: 2). However, as Smyth (2009) suggests, the take up of private tuition is significantly higher among students in upper secondary education than among those in lower secondary school. Even though 'shadow education' is common in Ireland, in the case of the Baltic States, OECD data suggest that families tend to spend staggering portions of their incomes on shadow education and have private tutoring from primary schooling on.

Even though many Baltic migrant families experience hardship in managing their resources in Ireland, they still emphasise that they have budget allocated for their children. Some mothers expressed the view that they spend a lot of time in advance planning and also save money for their children, as it is seen in the case of Marina.

IS: I am interested in your opinion. I heard that extra-curricular activities are very expensive and many parents cannot afford them in Ireland. What is your opinion about this?

MARINA: Why cannot they afford them? I cannot say about other families, we have a particular routine in our family. We have savings. For example, from the time my daughter was born, she gets her children's money every month. So from her birth, we opened a bank account, all money which are transferred to us, we transfer to her account. We understand that in a year or two, we will need to spend more money on

her, so we need to think in advance. We have savings. Of course, we will send her to different activities. I do not think that 60-70 euro a month is alright for most families.

This section looked at the different meanings Baltic mothers assign to the extra-curricular activities their children participate in. Even though most women tend to emphasise a moral dimension of extra-curricular activities that enables their children to learn how to exercise their own agency from the early age, they also acknowledge the financial investment that is necessary for cultivating their children's talents. Regardless of their social class background, mothers tended to accept the financial costs associated with extra-curricular activities as given and necessary in their efforts of providing better opportunities for their children in Ireland.

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter looked at the ways Baltic mothers choose and manage their children's free time outside formal schooling in Ireland. By highlighting similarities and differences between their own childhood and experiences of their children in Ireland, migrant women tend to emphasise the importance of unstructured leisure activities as an opportunity for their children to explore their autonomy and independence in comparison to their Irish peers. Along with the importance of unstructured leisure time, women acknowledged their pro-active role in choosing and managing their children's extra-curricular activities. Inspired by their own experiences of attending different extra-curricular activities, when they were children themselves, Baltic mothers try to re-create similar experiences for their children in Ireland. Regardless of their social class background, most mothers see these children's extra-curricular activities also as a conscious form of investment that should pay off in the educational and career achievements of their children in the future.

Chapter 7 – Managing Multilingualism

7.1. Introduction

This chapter looks at parental involvement beyond formal schooling in Ireland by discussing the ways mothers envision and manage a multilingual environment for their children. Multilingualism can be defined as “the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to have regular use of more than one language in their everyday live over space and time” (Franceschini, 2011: 346).

While many researchers (*e.g.* Cummins, 1989; Garcia, 1995) have acknowledged the positive outcomes of multilingualism, which can be linked to potential economic advantages for the second generation of migrants, it should not be forgotten that the family plays an important role in fostering the multilingual practices that have an impact on children’s language preference, use and its maintenance (García, 2003; Park, 2013, King & Fogle, 2013).

Parental involvement indeed plays a central role in the acquisition of multilingual dispositions, beliefs and values, and it is usually mothers who are primarily involved in children’s socialisation (Hammer et al., 2009, La Morgia, 2013, Nakamura, 2016), mediated by the knowledge of their heritage language (Schwartz, 2008).

Even if Bourdieu’s theories are useful in the understanding of how migrant families negotiate and reproduce linguistic practices within and outside their home environment, the analysis presented in this chapter is divergent to the rationale of the previous chapters. In particular, in explaining the ways mothers approach the heritage language learning, I have used additional concepts that helped me demonstrate the nonlinear relationship between the Baltic grassroots community organisations, heritage language learning strategies, linguistics markets and migrant cosmopolitanism. These notions are not contradictory to Bourdieu’s notion of habitus and dispositions but rather complimentary to the analysis.

Considering that habitus has the endless capacity of transformations in relation to adaptability to different conditions (Moraru, 2016), linguistic or multilingual dispositions can play an important role within this process by gradually adapting and modifying rules of individuals’ behaviour. During the interviews, all the Baltic mothers were explicitly certain that the use of two or more languages from the early age is beneficial for their

children and, in general ‘knowing many languages’ can provide their children with an additional advantage in the increasingly competitive labour market in the future. Nevertheless, the interviews also revealed that the transmission of the heritage languages is not a straightforward process and it requires constant efforts and dedication in fostering children’s multilingualism. As Spolsky (2012) noted, multilingualism is not solely a result of the influence of the linguistic environment, but largely depends on the orientations among the speakers themselves towards maintenance and transmission to the next generation.

This chapter starts with a discussion on the importance of multilingualism in the lives of Baltic mothers in Ireland and their desire to provide their children with linguistic options that might enhance their children’s careers in the future. In the absence of institutional support for migrant language education, individual family and wider ethnolinguistic communities become vital for the language transmission and maintenance (Bezcioglu-Goktolga & Yagmur, 2017). As multilingualism is a desirable option for all interviewed women, the subsequent three parts will demonstrate how mothers attempt to foster a multilingual environment by separating linguistic spheres, engaging with wider ethnolinguistic communities in Ireland and maintaining familial ties with extended family members in their counties of origin. While these practices might seem to be strategic, the interviews demonstrate that many mothers face a number of challenges in managing multilingual environments for their children, such as language switching at home, fragmented ethnolinguistic communities that do not always provide inclusive environments for their co-ethnics and weakening personal ties with their countries of origin.

7.2. Parenting and Negotiating a Multilingual Environment

In line with previous research (see for example Lee et al., 2016; Farr et al., 2018), the interviews with Baltic mothers showed that mothers’ own multilingual and language experiences play an important role in forming parental expectations regarding their children’s language skills and transmission strategies, in general. Kheirkhah (2016) has demonstrated that parents’ experiences of migration, second language learning, as well as societal and educational expectations can influence parental dispositions in fostering children’s multilingualism (2001). In particular, King and Fogle (2006) have argued that a lost opportunity to acquire an additional language in childhood, and struggles in

learning a new language in adulthood, may motivate parents to bring their children up bilingually.

Regardless of their social class or ethnic background, all Baltic mothers in this study talked about the importance of the English language in their own biographies as well as in the process of integration for their children into Irish society. As mentioned in Chapters 4 and 5, many Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian mothers arrived in Ireland with very limited levels of English and, as a result, experienced challenging times in their adaptation to the new cultural context by acquiring new set of linguistic and cultural dispositions. Thus, in rationalising their past experiences, many mothers either reflected on their advantageous positioning of knowing English when they had just arrived in Ireland or talked about a major disadvantage of being an adult language learner. Furthermore, talking about their children, all mothers were certain that mastering English from the early age is necessary for their children's integration into Irish society.

This is clear from the interview with Paulina, who feels very proud that her children speak English as their first language.

PAULINA: My older daughter speaks English as her first language. She has English from 4 years old. The little ones were born here. Before the age of three, we spoke just Russian to them, then one year in crèche to prepare them to school. I know many people who come here, put their children straight to school. And these poor kids have a cultural shock for several months as they are not able to understand what's going on. We decided to have kindergarten before schooling.

Although Paulina emphasises that learning English from a very early age was beneficial for her children's language fluency, she also acknowledges that this process should be gradual in order to minimise emotional harm for children. Language barriers experienced by migrant children can easily lead to peer rejection in school. Similar to other Baltic mothers in this study, Paulina is well aware that children might encounter difficulties in expressing their thoughts and opinions due to a language barrier. Therefore, to avoid peer rejection, Paulina emphasises the role the English language can play not only in developing strong peer relationships from an early age, but also for social and cultural integration in general (Moscal & Sime, 2015; Sime & Fox, 2015).

Similarly, other mothers with older children were especially keen on demonstrating that their children have native fluency in the English language and are perceived as Irish by their peers. This is further seen in the passages by Elina and Maja.

For example, Elina talks about her son's sense of belonging and identity by noting that he has a very strong regional accent in English.

ELINA: My son feels Irish, not Estonian anymore. When he went to Belfast, to a music festival, some guys were aggressive to him a bit. And they told him that you are from the southern Ireland, most likely you are from Galway. Well if he was from Dublin, they would beat him up.

Elina sees her son's regional accent as a signifier for belonging in the process of integration into Irish society as he is immediately spotted by other English native speakers as someone from Galway. In the same vein, Maja talks about experiences of her three children, who came to Ireland during their schooling by pointing out different integration levels into Irish society through the use of the English language.

MAJA: My son is a bit in between. The younger daughter is the most integrated from all of us. She has no friends from Latvia, they are all Irish. She has an Irish boyfriend. My older daughter also has an Irish husband. She also has no friends from Latvia. It is a pity. My son is more communicative, he has Latvian and Russian friends. Yes, he is more communicative. My younger daughter has even difficulties with the Latvian language. She was 9, when we came here. And now it is hard for her. She has no much experience with the Latvian language, when she is outside home, she speaks only in English.

While Maja is disappointed that her daughter mostly uses English as the main language for communication with her friends and romantic partners, she still emphasises that migrant integration entails the inclination towards the use of the language of the host society, with English becoming the legitimate language both for formal and informal communication.

Nevertheless, native proficiency in the English language is not only seen as a tool for integration into Irish society by Baltic mothers, but also as a competitive advantage in the international labour market. As Crystal (2003) notes, English has acquired its special status by being used and recognised worldwide as a language of international business and communication.

All the mothers interviewed were well aware that the English language is widely recognised as the language of international communication and business. Therefore, regardless of their social class or ethnic backgrounds, all the Baltic mothers were sure that being a native speaker of English can give their children an advantageous position in

the future. This is further seen in the case of Audra, who talks about her children's future trajectories, highlighting that the knowledge of English can create for her children life-changing opportunities: "Knowledge of English, it is great, of course. Wherever they go, they will have an advantage". Audra views the English language as a cosmopolitan asset that can provide her children with "a competitive edge in a transnational market, where there is fierce competition for privileged positions" (Guðmundsdóttir, 2015: 8).

When it comes to the discussion of their children's future trajectories, the majority of mothers also talked about the importance of having linguistic and cultural options. Even if mothers put a strong emphasis on mastering the English language, they also acknowledged that knowledge of other languages, including their heritage language can provide their children with more options in the future. Thus, Olita argues in the next passage that children from an early age need to be oriented towards multicultural and multilingual environments.

OLITA: When children have more languages then they have more options. It will be much easier in life, you don't know what's going to happen later on. If they know English language only, they will be oriented towards one direction only. It is always like this, when you know more languages, you have more options.

This view is also comparable with earlier research findings of Lee (2013) and Guardado (2002), who concluded that migrant parents who plan to stay in the United States hold an instrumental belief that their children are likely to find a job in the host country if they are multilingual (Lee, 2013). Similarly, Curdt-Christiansen (2009: 371) found that Chinese parents in Québec expressed strong support for their children to become trilingual in Chinese, French and English because these languages are perceived as "socio-political-linguistic capital necessary for social advancement". In other words, parents acknowledge the importance of dispositions that orient their children towards multilingualism.

Other mothers mentioned that knowledge of the heritage language can facilitate their children's geographic mobility as part of their biographical options in the future. Ana frames the knowledge of Lithuanian as an opportunity that might enable her son to maintain cultural links with Lithuania.

ANA: We speak Lithuanian at home, but to be honest I would not be too nationalistic. Of course, I want to encourage him to know the language and culture and appreciate it. Just in case, whatever happens in the future,

he will decide to go back to Lithuania. I do not want to omit this choice for him.

Similar to the majority of Baltic mothers, Ana thinks that the heritage language should be present in their children's everyday life in Ireland. As Montoya (2009: 68) finds in the case of Spanish-speaking families in the U.S., the Spanish language becomes a 'commodity' that needs to be maintained along with English (Montoya, 2009: 68). Therefore, aside from English, linguistic and cultural competences associated with the heritage languages are encouraged to be maintained as they can provide ties between Ireland and the Baltic States "at the level of emotions, ideologies and conflicting cultural codes" (Wolf, 1997: 458). Being exposed to heritage languages is seen as a value added opportunity which is 'naturally' provided within migrant families.

Overall, this part has demonstrated that the mothers' orientation towards multilingualism is diffused between national and transnational logics. While mothers prioritise integration into Irish society through the English language, they also emphasise the importance of maintaining linguistic and cultural fluency in heritage languages that potentially can be useful for their children and social and geographic mobility.

7.3. Separating Linguistic Spheres

In their effort to foster learning and maintenance of heritage languages, all the Baltic mothers in this research utilised a strategy of separating linguistic spheres by speaking primarily in their native languages at home. According to Laleko (2013), the success of language transmission depends on daily language use at home, attitudes towards language use and preservation, and efforts to create opportunities and incentives for the language use within and outside the home environment. Even if Pavlenko (2004) argued that speaking a heritage language at home is often spontaneous, rather than a conscious decision due to its emotional primacy and connection to parental identity, in practice, the interviews show that transmitting the heritage language to children becomes "a daily struggle, requiring effort to consistently speak the language and vigilance to ensure it was spoken back" (Farr et al, 2018: 3039).

La Morgia (2011: 8) noted that migrant parents tend to have a positive attitude towards transmission of their native languages to their children and "find it easy to expose them to the family language(s) before they start school". Despite the view that the heritage language learning

in the first years of life happens ‘naturally’ through the closed interaction with their families, throughout the interviews all of the mothers acknowledged that the transmission of the heritage language does not happen ‘naturally’ or ‘automatically’, but requires their continuous daily effort and dedication. This is well reflected in Klavdija’s contribution, where she talks about her decision to pay more attention to learning Russian.

KLAVDIJA: It happened like this. My husband was working a lot. I was also working full-time, so my son was going to crèche full-time too. My son was very well integrated into the Irish society. When I was coming back home after work, I was very tired, so I continued speaking English to my son. It was less stressful. So when I got pregnant with the second kid and then had maternity leave, I started to get more time for my kid’s education. So now he is 8, he manages to read and he speaks in Russian very well. I decided to do something as my son did not speak a word in Russian.

Klavdija positions herself as being responsible for providing ‘natural’ environments in fostering language learning at home. Like many other mothers, she recognises that in order to succeed in that uneasy task, parents need to make a range of different efforts such as watching children’s TV programmes, listening to songs and reading books in their heritage language. However, the most important practice is to establish rigid rules by separating languages which are used within and outside home. This practice becomes even more reinforced in three-generation households as children have an opportunity “to observe and imitate the culturally appropriate verbal behaviour of their parents as the latter are engaged in interactions with the children’s grandparents” (He, 2010: 75). Therefore, mothers emphasised the importance of making clear rules with their children by forbidding speaking in English at home. This is further seen in the case of Karina.

KARINA: I think it is important to keep the knowledge of the Russian language. I mostly forbid children speaking in English at home. If I don’t do that they will forget the Russian language completely. After spending 8 hours in school, which is in English, they spent only a couple of hours a day with their parents.

Even though all the mothers talked about their strategies to foster multilingualism, they also discussed common challenges that get in the way of their efforts to reinforce multilingual environment for their children. Mothers named –‘switching to English’ as the most common challenge. As children spend most of their time in school and for many of them, depending on the age, English becomes the main language of expression, the

'home' language becomes an unnecessary burden.

This is further seen in the passages provided by Russian, Latvian and Lithuanian-speaking mothers, who reflect on their everyday struggle of reinforcing boundaries between the language at home and the language outside home.

ELINA: The young one, she becomes lazy sometimes. It is easier for her to say everything in English, but I say, no, no, translate everything! Then, it becomes challenging for her. She tries, but she does not have enough words, then she replaces some words with English ones. But we manage somehow.

[...]

INESE: I try to teach him how to read in Latvian. I speak all the time in Latvian at home. Well, I do not make special time, when we speak Latvian, it comes naturally, and we talk about school in Latvian. Of course, he wants to talk in English, because it is easier for him. But I try to switch to Latvian, than he will have enough vocabulary.

[...]

AURELIJA: We are watching some cartoons in Lithuanian. I am trying to keep Lithuanian language by myself. Anyway he gets most of the things in English. For him English is easier, He is trying to talk in English all the time and I am trying to keep Lithuanian.

La Morgia (2011: 8) argued that switching from one language to another within the same sentence or between sentences is common among multilingual children, even if parents view it as a sign of confusion. Cantone (2007) showed that code-switching is a communicative strategy used by many multilingual children, who are immersed in an environment where two or more languages used on a daily basis. This becomes even more common if there are siblings involved. In all families where there are more than one child, children have a tendency to speak in English among themselves. It is further reflected in remarks by Simona and Aurelija.

SIMONA: There are many situations, when children are talking among themselves in English because it is much easier for them. I can see it with our Lithuanian friends. Their children speak English among themselves because I think they see Lithuanian as a child language.

[...]

AURELIJA: Kids tend to speak in English. I am very close with these two families. At home, they are speaking just in Lithuanian, there is no single word in English, but kids when they go back from school or crèche tend to speak in English between themselves.

These findings support Kheirkhah (2016) who shows that particularly younger siblings were found to use English more often than the older siblings. Furthermore, other studies also identified that children tend to rarely speak heritage languages, even though they share the same one, when playing with other friends (Guardado, 2002; Lee, 2013; Nesteruk, 2010).

Another challenge that can affect language maintenance is related to the perception of multilingualism in schools. As La Morgia (2011: 10) argued, not only the pre-school environment but also schooling can have a great impact on the child's awareness of linguistic diversity and on the perception of the status of the majority language and of the language(s) spoken at home. Educators become key players "responsible for the transition into this new phase in the child's life and they can play a major role in the development of awareness of linguistic diversity in the classroom environment".

Whereas multilingualism is becoming increasingly common in Ireland, Faas and Fionda (2019: 625) noted that "there a gap between policy documents and guidelines, and the ways in which local institutions understand and respond to diversity, when it comes to languages". In 2016, the Office of the Ministry for Children published guidelines for childcare providers, which included recommendations for the support of children's identity and sense of belonging by encouraging pedagogical strategies that would take account of linguistic diversity (La Morgia, 2011: 11). However, throughout the interviews, many mothers noticed that teachers in Irish schools were persuading them to focus more on strengthening children's knowledge of the English language by speaking English at home. This is seen in the case of Natalija, who reflects on her experience of communicating with teachers in Ireland.

NATALIJA: When we started with a pre-school (it was for two hours a day), teachers were asking me all the time to speak with my children in English at home. They said, you have very good English, why don't you speak English to them. But at home, we always had Russian babysitters, communication is always kept in Russian. Now we live with my brother and his family, our communication is in Russian. We keep it, we love Russian holidays. Of course we are adapting new ones too, if it is for Christmas, we celebrate Irish Christmas.

Gandara and Hopkins (2010) noted that educators usually hold the belief that languages other than the language of instruction can negatively affect educational success and

integration into society. This attitude is even more strongly expressed in relation to economically disadvantaged ethno-linguistic minorities, whose home languages are perceived as a barrier to educational achievements (Strobbe et al., 2016). Cummins (2001) also noted that pupils may feel uncomfortable or demotivated when their languages, which form part of their identity, are pointed out as causes of school failure. As a result, some migrant parents may be convinced that speaking a heritage language to their children can inhibit or interfere with the acquisition of English, which is viewed as superior to a heritage language. As La Morgia (2011: 11) notes, specifically in the case of Ireland:

linguistic diversity is a relatively new reality in schools, and teachers and policy makers are facing new challenges posed by multilingualism in the classroom. The two main challenges concern the English proficiency of non-native speakers and the introduction of activities that promote the awareness of multilingualism and linguistic diversity.

While multilingualism might be perceived by educators as problematic, there is much evidence that speaking English at home does not affect English fluency among migrant children. For example, Golberg, Paradis and Crago (2008) noticed that in the U.S. and Canada, migrant mothers with low English fluency spoke more English at home than fluent mothers did. However, this did not benefit their children's English vocabulary). Similarly, Canadian-born migrant children did not perform better at narrative tasks than foreign-born children even though they received more English exposure at home (Paradis & Kirova, 2014). In the United States, increased use of English by Hispanic mothers also did not enhance bilingual children's English skills in kindergarten and first grade (Hammer et al., 2009). Therefore, even if most mothers agreed that family members can help one another by practicing English, most mothers were certain that English should not supplant the native languages at home.

LILIANA: So if they stop communicating even at home with their parents, they will lose the language, they will forget it. It will disappear. They do not know where they are going to end up and which skills they will need later on.

[...]

AURELIJA: I know one family. I have a friend whose kid was actually born in Lithuania, but she speaks English to him.

[...]

KARINA: There are many families, who came here and think just about teaching English to their kids. And they even try to speak English at home.

But later on, when one or two years passed, Russian is completely forgotten. They were chasing knowledge of one language but losing another.

On the other hand, children's agency is another important factor (Leonards, 2016; Faas et al., 2018), which cannot be ignored in the discussion on the language maintenance and use at home. While mothers talk about the establishment of strict rules, these rules can be met with a reluctance from their children. Interviewed mothers with older children talked about the acceptance of their children's choice as in many circumstances the English language culturally is closer for their children than home language.

SANDRA: We also speak in Latvian at home, but these two boys sit at the table with everyone else and speak English. Sometimes, I am laughing, when we came here they did not speak even one word, but now they speak all the time in English.

Sandra recognises the choice of their children by giving the green light to speaking English at home. As her children grew up in Ireland and have had most of their communication in English, it is logically for Sandra that it is easier for her children to express their thoughts and feelings in English. Similarly, Kadri reflects on her experience by pointing out that her daughters choose English over Estonian and that the language cannot be forced as children may develop their own preferences. As some researchers (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Fogle & King, 2013) have argued, parental preferences in language use are not static or unidirectional and they may be subject to negations among family members.

KADRI: My younger daughter was over a half of her life here, she is 16 and 11 years ago we came to Ireland. She cannot even write or read Estonian. She writes and reads only in English now. The older one, she can remember the languages, she can read and write, she was in school there. But neither of them wants to. I was persuading the older one to go to a college there, but no success. She just would not go there.

Kadri accepts the language shift as a personal choice of her children, even if she would like them to be more connected to Estonia and the Estonian language. However, as Farr et al. (2018: 3049) show in their research on Spanish migrant mothers, "the shifting language use of second-generation children often reflects their efforts to negotiate the emergence of multiple identifications with host and heritage cultures rather than indicating a rejection of heritage ties". Overall, this section demonstrates that separating linguistic spheres is an important and efficient strategy implemented by most of the Baltic mothers

in this research, although the transmission of the heritage language does not happen automatically or naturally but involves a constant negotiation of the boundaries of the heritage language use and maintenance.

7.4. Involvement in Ethnolinguistic Communities

Several studies (Guardado, 2008; Brown, 2009) have suggested that the success of language transmission depends not only on the language use at home, but also a broader ethnolinguistic environment that helps children with linguistic and cultural learning. For the second generation, specifically, the wider community and grassroots organisations can play a crucial role in establishing the language use outside the home environment (Hinton, 1999). Grassroots communities can also provide migrant parents with a sense of empowerment and validation by giving them voice to affirm their own culture and languages (Pennycook, 2001). However, as Guardado and Becker (2013) have argued, ethnolinguistic minorities do not form a homogenous group and they must not be treated as such. While some research participants emphasised their positive experience either in organising or taking part in children's community events, others did not share any enthusiasm about ethnolinguistic communities in Ireland and did not associate themselves with any of these organisations.

Guardado (2008) called migrant grassroots community organisations 'safe houses' that allow newcomer parents to raise their children alongside parents with shared cultural values and to teach the heritage language through interaction. It is well documented that many migrant families in the U.S. and Canada tend to send their children to heritage language schools and programs that not only can provide socialisation for their children in the heritage languages but also to build their social networks with other parents (Liao & Larke, 2008). In the case of Ireland, Frese et al. (2015) also found that many migrant families encouraged their children to practise their heritage language outside of the family environment either by participating in a heritage language class or language playgroups organised by grassroots community organisations.

Even though migration from the Baltic States is a rather recent phenomenon in Ireland, the findings from the mapping exercise confirmed that there is an increasing number of Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian-speaking grassroots community

organisations across Ireland, which offer different types of structured activities for children. As La Morgia (2011: 12) noted, many migrant communities have started to provide independent minority language courses for children. In the last decade, there has been a rapid increase in the number of language classes and Saturday schools with the purpose of transmitting the linguistic and cultural heritage to the new generation. These classes take place in different premises, including schools, libraries and community centres and provide the opportunity to study the language and culture, learn to read and write, and in some cases to follow the curriculum of the country where the language is spoken. Even if these activities take place at the level of ethnolinguistic grassroots organisation in Ireland, these initiatives “constitute a first important step towards the promotion and maintenance of minority language, the creation of links among multilingual families and the transmission of a sense of belonging to a culture that should not be left behind”.

Nearly half of the Baltic mothers interviewed were keen on sending their children to heritage language classes or any other extra-curricular activities organised by these grassroots community organisations. Furthermore, several of the women took an active part in organising and managing these ethnolinguistic communities. In particular, these women talked about the importance of bringing different people and interests together in order to provide their children with heritage language socialisation by establishing the baseline for heritage language learning. This is well seen in Tamara’s interview, where she talks about her experience of being involved in setting up a new Russian-speaking weekend school for children.

TAMARA: Our club was organised based on people who knew each other for some time. For example, one mother appeared to be talented with scrapbooking, so she doing a course with children once week, another mother has education in music. We organise this club in order for children to maintain the language: to communicate, play and sing. Even if there is another Russian school here nearby, we are not as business oriented as they are, we are not making any money. Everything organised is on voluntary basis here.

Even though Tamara’s community organisation in practice acts as a weekend school, which provides different language and extra-curricular activities, she emphasises the non-profit character of her grassroots organisation. Therefore, she calls it a ‘club’ rather than

a 'school'. This passage also suggests that there is a heterogeneity among grassroots community organisations, which corresponds to different aims and the way migrant parents utilise the provided services.

In spite of the different objectives grassroots organisations might have, they are very visible in Ireland. Some organisations were established a long time ago, others were established recently. There is no doubt that establishing and maintaining effective educational programmes run on a voluntary basis requires a great deal of work and dedication in order to raise public awareness and cultivate broader support especially among other migrant parents. Many organisations maintain a strong presence on social media, many of them are officially promoted by the embassies in Ireland and there are regular advertisements in ethno-linguistic community newspapers about upcoming activities and events.

It is nevertheless evident that not all migrant parents participate in these community activities and events and only a half of the interviewed mothers were sending their children to heritage language classes or any other extra-curricular activities organised by these ethnolinguistic grassroots organisations. Even those mothers who decided not to engage with any community organisation acknowledged at the time of interview that they knew about the available heritage language classes and similar events relevant for children. Thus, Klavdija who is actively involved in setting up a new study group for children, explains that many mothers take a very instrumental approach to the heritage language in a wider community settings.

KLAVDIJA: There are many kids who don't attend any activities. Some do not go because of the financial reasons. Some just prefer to manage themselves. I know one mother, she has 2 sons. Both of them have such age, when you need to know the language well, they are 10 and 7 years old. They do not attend any activities, she manages everything herself. So she spends some time teaching them. Probably in 2-3 years, they will need some preparation for the Leaving Certificate, probably then, she will come for help.

Klavdija suggests that many parents only choose heritage language classes when children start preparing for the Leaving Certificate and before that they try to manage everything by themselves at home. The State Examinations Commission in Ireland provides an opportunity for young people to take a foreign language exam which does not appear as part of the Irish standardised school curriculum, these include EU and non-EU languages.

For example, in 2012, 269 young people took the Russian language, 262 took Lithuanian and 87 took Latvian (O'Mahony, 2014: 16).

Such an instrumental approach to the community-based weekend schools is also observed in the case of Agne. For her, just like for many mothers in this study, these schools are seen as service providers that correspond to current parental demands, as these grassroots community organisations can provide institutionalised language learning, which is not possible to achieve within a home setting. As a result, Agne is not interested in other community-based activities offered for children, except the heritage language courses.

AGNE: In the 5th grade we felt that she started speaking really bad, she was not really able to finish her sentences in Lithuanian, she had very basic grammar. When we came to this Lithuanian school, they put her in the 1st grade based on Lithuanian system. She was 11 and she was definitely was overgrown for the 1st grade. We also decided to take extra private lessons on Sundays. So my daughter in one year managed to finish 5 grades. Of course the problem is that it is a bit artificial. If child does not want to study there, it is very difficult, as parents make this poor child to study a language which probably he will never use or he will never go to Lithuania.

Even though Agne admits that her daughter most likely will not use the Lithuanian language in the future, she still pushes her to achieve a good level of Lithuanian, which her daughter intends to take as a foreign language exam for the Leaving Certificate. Additional points achieved in the Leaving Certificate can help her daughter to secure a place at a top Irish university, which Agne sees as the most important priority.

While other mothers might have the same instrumental approach to access the heritage language classes, my interviews showed that some families might be excluded from the participation due to personal disagreement or conflict within these grassroots communities. It is further seen in the case of Ingeborga, whose daughter had to leave the heritage language classes.

INGEBORGA: We don't go there. We went in order to keep the language alive, especially the grammar. Then, there was such a teacher there, my child could not understand her, she was constantly complaining about my daughter. I was not only one mother who was not happy with this teacher. We complained about the situation, but they told us there was no other qualified teachers of Lithuanian. We had to go. In this school we paid and we were blamed in the end. We paid like 360 euro a year. Now I don't know, Lithuanian grammar is very difficult, she finished only first grade

before moving here, it is clear that she does not know much of the grammar, she needs more individual approach.

Even if Ingeborga would like her daughter to attend heritage language classes, she is left with no alternative options to do that. Unlike Agne, Ingeborga's daughter will not be able to take Lithuanian as a foreign language for the Leaving Certificate, which might reduce her chances to achieve the required scores to enter a university in Ireland. The case of Ingeborga also highlights that as with any social formation, ethnolinguistic grassroots organisations maintain a hierarchy of power. Since many of these organisations are run on voluntary basis, many issues that might arise between organisers and parents remain unresolved. As Liza also notices, many of these grassroots organisations function without a real involvement of the communities they attempt to represent: "I would say, every community is the same, if you go against the community, they will go against you"

Solvita, who decided to participate in delivering some lessons in Latvian in one grassroots organisation, acknowledges that she became only involved because of her children. When it comes to inter-personal relationship with her co-ethnics, Solvita prefers to draw a boundary by minimising contact with other teachers and organisers.

SOLVITA: I cannot say about Latvian communities in other places, like Dublin or Cork, but here everyone is for himself. I don't like gossiping, so I try to keep a distance. I do my job here and I leave home.

Likewise, Aurelija notices that even if the language can provide a source of commonality it is not enough to overcome individualised differences or frictions.

AURELIJA: It is hard to explain. I know in some counties there are strong Lithuanian communities but not here. People are meeting and doing something together. In our area, Lithuanians are trying to keep away from each other. I tried to organise music classes for children here. Your know, I was calling people and telling that there will be classes, they are not expensive, teachers coming from Dublin and usually you will get a question, who would go down there? If she goes, I won't go.

Natalija, who is involved in organising different events for Russian-speaking children, suggests that migrant parents might be drawn to each other initially because of the language, although a clash of interests is inevitable as all of the people come from very different backgrounds and even in Ireland they continue to have parallel lives based on their individualised lifestyle choices.

NATALIJA: I would not call Russian-speaking community friendly or united. Everyone has its own interests. Everyone has its own goals. It is a bit challenging. It is not just about finding people who speak the same language but also who understand what you are trying to say. We are drawn to each other because of the language, but on the other hand, we have different life expectations, everyone wants to have different objectives in life. Everyone came here with different needs and they live here very different lives.

Overall, this part of the thesis shows that while ethnolinguistic grassroots communities can provide a valuable resource for maintaining the language, in practice many migrant mothers decide to opt out of this. Even if ethnolinguistic communities are visible and known to migrant parents, especially in larger Irish cities, not all parents participate in these activities. Those parents who decide to send their children to community-organised activities on a regular basis tend to hold an instrumental approach to language learning especially, bearing in mind the options available to young people for the Leaving Certificate in Ireland.

7.5. Home Visits and Further Travel

Home visits can play an important role for children, enabling them to develop linguistic competences by maintaining personal familial attachments across the borders from an early age. Igarashi and Sato (2014) have even argued that migrant children through home visits can acquire cultural knowledge (or cultural dispositions) that can represent a form of embodied or rooted cosmopolitanism, which might shape their career choices and trajectories in the future. As Weenink (2008: 1102) has suggested, some parents from non-established backgrounds can encourage their children to undertake a transnational career trajectory that is usually associated with “the types of cultural and social capital that are traditionally tied to the upper layers”.

Nevertheless, the length and frequency of home visits can also play a role in shaping the second generation’s sense of belonging and identity (Huang et al., 2013). With the advancement of new technologies and transportation, home visits become more affordable for migrant families, although visiting family and friends is not a static practice. Most of the Baltic mothers interviewed acknowledged that the visits become shorter and less frequent the more time is spent in Ireland, yet home visits remains an

integral part of family life, especially for Baltic families with younger children in Ireland.

All of the mothers with younger children, especially those whose grandparents did not live with them in Ireland, acknowledged the importance of regular home visits. These mothers were particularly sure that home visits could forge a closer bond between their children and grandparents, as well as provide an opportunity to practice the heritage language extensively outside of home. It is well reflected on in the case of Audra, who talks about the importance for her children to get to know their grandparents and practice Lithuanian.

AUDRA: We used to send them once a year. I did it for a couple of years, they were staying with my mum for the language. And, of course they would know their grandmother. It is important; they would not forget what a grandmother is.

For Audra, as for other Baltic mothers, spending the school holidays with grandparents is an important linguistic practice that allows children to develop idiomatic fluency in the language. As Audra's grandmother does not speak English, the children are forced to express their thoughts and feelings in Lithuanian. In addition, the time spent with grandparents provides an opportunity for children to connect to cultural aspects of Lithuanian living and culture through familial bonding. For example, Moskal and Sime (2015) show that Polish children who grow up in Scotland tended to express very positive emotions about their time spent with grandparents during their home visits in Poland and regret being separated from them. Furthermore, other studies show that home visits can help children to develop a positive association of their parents' country of origin and the children began to consider the parental homeland as their 'home' too (Huang et al., 2013). Home within this context is seen as a fluid notion not only in relation to place and space, but also within and through time (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). As Vildaite (2014) shows in her research on Lithuanian youngsters in Ireland, a transition from childhood to adulthood is interlinked with a transition from one socio-cultural environment to another that entails developing multiple senses of belonging.

While home visits have a positive effect on the children's heritage language maintenance and use, mothers expressed disappointment as their children tend to perceive their homelands through the lens of leisure, fun and holidays.

AUDRA: Going to Lithuania, it is always about holidays. It is always fun, we go to different places and attractions. But, I try to explain if you lived

there for long, it would not have been the same. It is not just about buying things and enjoyment of being a guest.

Similarly, Karina adds that she had to remind their children that their life would be different if they lived in Latvia and they are very privileged growing up in Ireland.

KARINA: Every summer we go to Latvia ... to see the difference, what they have here, only 50 percent of the families can have the same for their children in Latvia. I try to show, at least to my oldest son, as he is really mature enough to feel the difference, in order that he will appreciate what he has here. In order he will use the opportunity he has here, either in school, or sport, in order he understands that he has a very good level of life in terms of opportunities.

On the other hand, home visits are not a static practice for Baltic women and it is influenced by multiple factors, including the transformation of their personal identities and sense of belonging. All the women interviewed acknowledged that they become less attached to their homelands with more time spent in Ireland. It is seen clearly in the case of Simona, who reflects on her experience of becoming emotionally distant from her extended family and everyday reality in general in Lithuania.

SIMONA: You realise, years are going by, you go home, nobody is waiting for you, and they have their own lives now, even people you were close to, your friends. They don't reply to your email for a year, or chatting on Facebook it is not the same. It also about close family, even my aunt, we do not spend as much time as we used to, they do not know me really anymore. You grow up here in somebody else after 14 years.

As personal attachments and sense of belonging change, home visits become less frequent and more meaningless for them. They began to explore a new sense of personal expression individually and as a family together. For instance, Tamara recognises that she is less attached to physical places back in Lithuania. Even though emotional links to her family are still strong, instead of travelling to Lithuania to visit them, her parents now come to visit her in Ireland.

TAMARA: You know in the first years, we had some sort of nostalgia, but now not really. In the first four years, we went to Lithuania once a year. The last 3 years, we don't go there, because our parents come here. It is more convenient. They see their grandchildren. It is also about us, we don't really want to go there. We find it a bit boring. If we go there, it is mainly because of the medical care there, just because Lithuanian doctors are better.

In the same vein, other mothers talked about developing new habits for travelling to other destinations apart from home visits. As Ireland offers more affordable travel to other destinations in Europe, specifically to the southern European countries, women noticed that they have started to have more often holidays in Spain, Portugal or Italy. As many migrant families improve their economic situation in Ireland, Maja notices that having holidays in southern destinations becomes more affordable for her family and more enjoyable than having holidays in Latvia.

MAJA: When we have holidays, we go somewhere. We like Spain. I have my birthday soon, so we all together are going to Portugal. When we lived in Latvia, we could not afford this, we didn't go anywhere to be honest. So now, we go to Spain or any other southern country once a year. In the first years, first 3-4 years, it was only Latvia, we did not go anywhere else, but now we started to change our habits, for one week we go to Latvia, then we go somewhere else. I don't spend 2-3 weeks in Latvia, I just feel tired afterwards.

As mothers recognise the change in their habits, they also accept personal preferences of their children, who express reluctance about travelling to the country of origin. Sandra notices that even her sons who were born in Latvia have become disinterested in going there even for a short trip.

SANDRA: Well they do not really want to go there, especially the old ones. There was an interesting project, several summer camps were organised in Latvia just for Latvian children from Ireland. They refused to go there. There were so interesting excursions in Riga, Ventspils and Jurmala, they just did not go. I do not know really probably because it is also about their age, they are teenagers you know...

Similarly, Vita talks about her son's experience, who wanted to move back to Lithuania after finishing school in Ireland.

VITA: He wanted to go to Lithuania, after his school in Ireland. He even passed all exams for a Lithuanian University. He was in Kaunas, he spent like 2 weeks there and then he came back. After 2 weeks spending there he realised he does not want to be there. And he wanted it so much in the beginning. I tell everyone, once he finished school here, everything changed for him, and he started to like Ireland, even if in the beginning, when we moved here, he did not like it all.

Vita recognises that the time spent in Ireland had an impact on her son's personal identity and sense of belonging. Huang et al. (2013) note that belonging and alienation are not

binary opposites for the second generation but integral parts of the migration experience that have a profound influence on the formation of personal identity. Even her son's knowledge of the Lithuanian language allowed him to enter university in Lithuania, this fluency in the language was not enough to feel a belonging to Lithuanian society.

Vita further reflects on her son's experience after coming back to Ireland. As after returning from Lithuania, he decided to study in Ireland and invest more time in developing relationships with his peers in Ireland.

VITA: At the moment, he just likes to be here, he stopped talking about moving anywhere. At the moment, it is not about Lithuania or other countries, but studying in Ireland, having routine here, having friends here.

As has already been discussed, the Baltic mothers researched here respect the boundaries of their child's agency by recognising their personal choices. Thus Vita, the same as other Baltic mothers with older children, recognises the uniqueness of her child's experiences of growing up in Ireland by letting her son discover his options by himself.

Furthermore, the interviews revealed that mothers have even become inspired and influenced by their children's ideas and intentions of studying or travelling abroad. As their children immerse themselves in the Irish local culture, potential travelling for work and leisure to the U.K., U.S. or Australia, which is common among young Irish, was mentioned by all interviewed mothers with older children. This is well reflected in the following passages.

LILIANA: My daughter has perfect English. She goes to the US nearly every summer. When she comes back, her accent gets better, less of her Dublin accent. When she comes back to school, everyone says to her, oh I see you have been to the US again. She might go to the US for studying later on.

[...]

ELINA: The oldest wants to go to the US. He wants to go to London first, he says it is important for education to get another degree from another place.

[...]

AGNE: I said to her, you can go to Europe. I will let you go for studies to Europe but not the US. She cannot boil an egg and she will not go that far away. But yes, she wants to go to the US a lot.

According to Glynn et al. (2013) the U.K., Australia, U.S., Canada and New Zealand are

the main destinations for Irish migrants today. The vast majority Irish who decide to migrate abroad are in their twenties and, unlike in the previous waves of Irish migration, current migrants tend to be highly skilled.

7.6. Conclusion

This chapter looked at the ways Baltic migrant mothers develop strategies for fostering multilingualism for their children. Even if the analysis presented in this chapter differs from the rationale of the previous chapters, the findings demonstrate that mothers' dispositions are not static and constantly change and transform based on their multiple experiences. While all mothers express a strong desire for their children to know many languages by speaking their heritage language at home, using available opportunities in ethnolinguistic communities in Ireland and visiting extended family in their home countries, the interviews reveal that the transmission of heritage languages is not a linear process. Their ideas and values regarding what is important and relevant for their children are situational and influenced not only by the transformation of their personal identities and sense of belonging, but also their children's trajectories of integration into Irish society.

Regardless of their social class or ethnic background, all of the mothers with younger children tend to express more structure and control in providing their children with different options. On the other hand, mothers with older children tend to accept their children's choices in relation to the English language use at home, lesser attachment to the country of their origin and accepting the ideas of their children for further mobility to other English-speaking countries for study, work and leisure.

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

8.1. Introduction

This thesis aimed to explore parental involvement of Baltic migrant mothers in Ireland. The research sought specifically to address the following questions: how do Baltic mothers understand their parental involvement in their children's education and in what ways do their biographies, socio-economic background, ethnicity, gender and migration trajectories shape their everyday parental practices in Ireland? In this chapter, I review my analysis of the main findings from the fieldwork, highlighting the relevance of Bourdieu's sociological approach, which enabled me to investigate how migrant women navigate the educational landscape in Ireland based on the interaction between their maternal ideals and everyday experiences in Ireland.

This chapter is divided into four parts, presenting the most important conclusions from my fieldwork and analysis. First, I assess the dominant research themes of this thesis: how mothers perceive their maternal ideals, the way Baltic mothers view their parental involvement in their children's education in Ireland and the relevance of social class in the way Baltic mothers approach material and cultural resources to maximise the educational potential of their children. Second, I highlight how this research makes empirical and theoretical contributions to the body of knowledge. Furthermore, I provide the relevance of my findings for educational and integration policy in Ireland. Third, I reflect on research design and study limitations. Fourth, I offer suggestions for future research on migrant families in Ireland that arise from several limitations of this study.

8.2. Assessment of Key Findings

The three main findings of this thesis are: first, mothering ideologies are not identical and universal. Culturally and historically specific dispositions play an important role in the ways Baltic migrant women perceive their maternal ideals and negotiate their everyday reality. However, with their migration to Ireland, Baltic women engage in the process of self-positioning within and outside their maternal ideals based on individual everyday experiences in Ireland.

Second, in examining parental involvement within and outside of formal schooling, Baltic mothers utilise the resources available to them by adopting simultaneously strategies of ‘fitting in’ and ‘standing out’.

Finally, despite some differences based on their social class background, Baltic migrant mothers of middle-class and working-class background expressed very similar approaches to their children’s education and the way they envision their children’s future trajectories in Ireland.

8.2.1. Baltic mothering

Consistent with the literature on motherhood/mothering, this study has found that mothering for Baltic migrant women is a continuous practice shaped by different social and cultural forces and reshaped through multiple individual experiences before and after settling in Ireland. The exploration of individual dispositions of mothering has demonstrated the significance of the debates around structure and agency, in which history and change are important and integrated notions that manifest in the way women perceive and negotiate expectations about childcare, participation in the labour market and involvement in their children’s education to maximise their academic potential. Although it is important to grasp the socio-cultural beliefs and expectations on what constitutes a ‘good mother’ for Baltic women, social agents do not exist in a vacuum. Migration does not only imply a physical relocation of social agents, but also a negotiation of meanings and understandings of the social environment around them, which inevitably leads to the conscious and unconscious alteration of individually embodied dispositions.

With the focus on such personal attributes as autonomy, responsibility and self-reliance, Baltic women emphasised the importance of work in their lives before and after migrating to Ireland, along with the centrality of their role in creating necessary conditions for their children’s development and well-being. On the one hand, the participation in the labour market for them does not imply any contradiction with the tenets of good mothering. In fact, it signifies the alignment with neoliberal assumptions of a good worker and a citizen that is rooted into the socio-historical context of the Soviet development and Post-Soviet neoliberal transition of their Baltic societies.

The rhetoric of freedom and choice as a dominant repertoire of Baltic mothers signifies the essence of neoliberal rationale of their mothering ideology. In fact, Baltic mothering is neoliberal mothering based on the following two assumptions that dominate the reasoning of Baltic mothers in this research. First, the reality for them is full of risks and uncertainties, where competitiveness and self-interest are the key values for survival. Even if many Baltic mothers were economically pushed to migrate, they frame their migratory decisions as an opportunity rather than a disadvantage or an obstacle for them and their children. Second, they see themselves as holding the central role in preparing their children to manage risks and uncertainties based on the range of skills that their children develop through schooling and activities outside formal schooling.

What distinguishes them from non-Baltic mothers, Baltic women position themselves as empowered subjects, with labour market participation being unquestionable for both working-class and middle-class women. Specifically, Chapter 4 demonstrates the contradiction observed between stay-at-home middle-class mothers and working-class women employed part or full-time in Ireland. Potential de-skilling or the absence of affordable childcare, especially for middle-class women bound up with the sense of anxiety, frustration and loss of sense of belonging, whereas working-class women develop a stronger sense of self-worth and empowerment through their attachment to work in Ireland.

On the other hand, in their efforts to take responsibility for their children's education, Baltic women expressed the belief about their universal task of supporting the acquisition of skills and competences for their offspring. By viewing the needs of children through the lens of consumption and competition, Baltic women hold an instrumental belief that they can transmit values to their children that can contribute to their children's social and financial success later in life. As Komolova and Lipnistky (2017: 2) argue "parents interpret children's needs and behaviours through the lens of their culture, and further contribute to the construction of the cultural values through the socialisation of children".

In order to achieve these outcomes, Baltic women accept their primary role in making, performing and doing childhood for their children yet, in many cases, sharing their mothering work with their mothers. This feature is particularly important and becomes also a cultural signifier of Baltic mothering. Nevertheless, the shared approach to

mothering does not make Baltic mothering less individualistic in its character, as Baltic mothers continue to emphasise the importance of autonomy, responsibility and self-reliance in the lives of their children to overcome life's hardships and encourage their children to express their individual needs and realise their full potential (Komolova & Lipnitsky, 2017: 3-4). Regardless of their initial presuppositions, mothers, especially those with older children tended to accept their children's capacity to act and make decisions independently from them based on their children's immersion into Irish socio-cultural reality. In addition, the interviews demonstrated that mothers' beliefs about what is good or beneficial for their children tend to change depending on their experiences and the experiences of their children in Ireland. This is further observed in the case of the approaches they adopt in relation to their parental involvement in Ireland.

8.2.2. Parental involvement

First and foremost, Baltic mothers in this study view schools as institutions of academic learning. While the women acknowledged a difference in teaching approaches and methods in Irish schools in comparison to the Baltic States, they also tended to develop trust in the teachers and adapt to the new reality of Irish schooling by selecting schools for their children, when the choice was an option and by developing personal preferences within the Irish educational landscape. Nevertheless, their actual involvement within schools is usually limited to just parent-teacher conferences.

When it comes to parental involvement in their children's education outside formal schooling, Baltic mothers tended to view it as a valuable practice that can have a direct impact on their children's future achievements, independent of their material circumstances or the quality of formal schooling. Most women were well aware of structural inequalities as well as their own limits of personal resources, such as being cultural and linguistic outsiders, having financial constraints or a lack of local social networks in Ireland. However, most women regardless of their social class backgrounds emphasised the importance of cultivating personal qualities and competences through structured and unstructured activities.

Rephrasing the metaphoric expressions of Gillies (2005: 845) which she uses to emphasise the attributes of working-class mothers of 'fitting in' rather than 'standing

out', Baltic migrant mothers exhibit both of these attributes. However, they are manifested on different levels that largely reflect their migrant experiences of adapting to a new cultural context, which is emotionally and financially demanding, especially for working-class Baltic mothers.

On the one hand, the 'fitting in' approach corresponds to mothers' efforts to integrate their children into the mainstream Irish society by exhibiting qualities and attitudes of local middle-class parents in Ireland. In order to achieve the desirable outcomes, Baltic mothers realise that their children should not have fewer opportunities in comparison to other middle-class Irish peers. Therefore, most Baltic mothers engage in an evaluation not only by comparing their children's experiences in Ireland with their own experiences of growing up in the Baltic States, but also with the experiences of other Irish middle-class children in Ireland.

On the other hand, regardless of their social class background, Baltic mothers have high educational aspirations and expectations for their children, which they view as a mode of social differentiation and 'standing out' from working-class Irish families. Even though they are aware of cultural differences and the barriers that may reduce chances to succeed in the new environment, Baltic mothers still insist on fostering their children's academic achievements as the primary way to secure middle-class lifestyle for their children's future trajectories.

8.2.3. Relevance of social class

The difference between parents of working and middle-class backgrounds lies largely in structural conditions rather than their attitudes or behaviour towards their children's education within or outside formal schooling. Although Baltic migrants tend to improve their economic conditions with their migration to Ireland, they are largely bound to the reproduction of their social class through cultural practices and their economic position. The majority of women had similar occupations as before their migration to Ireland with an exception of mothers who experienced or were about to experience downward social mobility. One explanation of this lies in their dispositions, as both working and middle-class women experienced very similar childhoods growing up in the Baltic States. Their devotion to assisting their children in the learning process signals that not only education,

income or occupation have an influence on their involvement approaches and strategies in Ireland, but also their dispositions that lead to the maximisation of their children's development and potential.

Research literature on parental involvement and social class tends to present binary differences regarding how the behaviour of middle-class parents is different to working-class parents in what they do inside and outside of formal schooling. However, in this research there is no middle-working class dichotomy, where middle-class parents are seen as being engaged and pushy, and working-class parents as poorly informed and uninterested. As was already mentioned both working and middle-class parents tend to exhibit 'typical' middle-class qualities by valuing education and taking an active part in their children's cultivation. However, structural capacity plays out differently for parents with more cultural and material resources.

First, Baltic mothers of a middle-class background tend to have more material resources than mothers of a working-class background. However, both middle and working-class parents are ready to invest in their children's extra-curricular and leisure activities. The difference between these parents lies not in their intention to invest, but in cultural resources. As some cultivated activities are 'performed' within family settings, such as doing sports together, drawing or dancing.

Second, even if the English language can act as a barrier for both middle- and working-class parents, especially for newly arrived migrant mothers, local social networks (*e.g.* Irish neighbours, acquaintances, and colleagues) play an important role in providing information about their children's schooling. However, middle-class women are more strategic in making the 'right' connections, especially when it comes to selecting schooling for their children.

8.3. Contributions of the Study

This thesis adds new knowledge across several subfields of sociology, such as the sociology of education, migration studies and the sociology of family within the context of Ireland and the Baltic States. By combining different subfields of sociology, this research provides a more complete understanding of the meanings that Baltic mothers assign to their own practices in Ireland – matters that have never been explored before.

8.3.1. Empirical contribution

Within the subfield of sociology of education, my research examined the cultural heterogeneity of parental involvement by challenging a dominant perspective that parental involvement is genderless, classless and a culturally universal concept. This research shows that fathers are largely absent from the discourse of care in Baltic families. Even though the dispositions of good mothering may differ from the expectations of the host society, migrant mothers are not passive actors in their children's education. Baltic mothers exercise their parental choice and develop their educational priorities based on available resources that align with the practices of local mothers in Ireland. However, social class is an important category, which needs to be more widely incorporated into studies on parents with migrant or minority ethnic backgrounds by challenging a concept of "fixed ethnic identity" (Ball, Reay & David, 2002: 352).

Furthermore, the research contributes to the sociology of family within the context of Ireland and the Baltic States. The thesis provided a snapshot of the private sphere of Baltic families by focusing on mothers' ideals and beliefs about childcare, including motherhood ideology, parent-child relationships and shared mothering. The thesis also contributes to an understanding of the role of leisure in the lives of Baltic families in Ireland and how mothers manage to structure their children's time to maximise learning opportunities, especially outside of formal schooling.

Finally, within the field of migration studies, the thesis brings to light everyday practices of migrants beyond their employment experiences by demonstrating the complexity of parental decision-making process and at the same time, the normality of their everyday life experiences as parents/mothers in Ireland. Overall, the study challenges transnationalism theory as a status quo theory for the analysis of migration. The study demonstrates that despite close geographic proximity, frequent travels, the involvement in ethnolinguistic communities in Ireland and some inner family practices that can be considered as transnational ones, Baltic migrants are not transnational migrants. Their involvement in their countries of origin remains very limited and as time goes by, Baltic women become even less attached to their homelands by immersing themselves in the everyday reality in Ireland. Especially in negotiating a multilingual environment for their children, this research reveals that integration into the Irish society plays an important

role for Baltic migrant mothers even if in many cases their children lose any connection with their countries of origin.

8.3.2. Contribution to social theory

In addition to the empirical findings, the thesis makes a theoretical contribution by unpacking the ‘enigmatic’ concept of habitus. Bourdieu is one of the most influential social scientists in contemporary sociology, whose ideas and concepts have had a significant impact on the understanding of the dynamics of cultural and social reproduction at the collective and individual levels. Even though Bourdieu’s theories are often contested, there has been a growing body of literature utilising his ideas, especially the concept of habitus. Reay (2004) using a metaphoric expression from Hey (2003) even argued that habitus became an ‘intellectual hair spray’.

Considering that I have focused on the level of the individual, the array of embodied and internalised beliefs and tendencies play an important role in the understanding decision-making process of migrant mothers. Therefore, instead of habitus, I emphasise the role of dispositions that are shaped by social structures but become the basis with generative mechanisms to feel, to think or to act. By unpacking habitus, I demonstrate that dispositions have different scopes for modification or change. Some dispositions are long-lasting, some are temporary or prompt to change depending on multiple social fields, social agents interact with.

Hence, the analytical potential of habitus and dispositions in particular, enables me to capture how change happens or not at the level of individual, a topic which is relevant for contemporary sociology. As the social world is constantly in flux, some perceptions and beliefs of social agents also change, but others remain the same. In the case of migration, the issue of possible change becomes even more important. As there is an implicit expectation that social agents moving to another sociocultural context are more likely to experience change in their social practices. However, the research shows that migrant behaviour is not always rational or straightforward as social agents ground habitus and habitus grounds the agents (Bourdieu, 1992: 140). Even if in some circumstances individuals can determine their situation, habitus produces principles of perception that may determine their behaviour in return. However, there is no place for fatalism or determinism. Social agents may become reflexive of their dispositions but not their habitus.

This in turn may lead to a consciously improvised strategy for a new action and social practices, in general.

8.3.3. Contribution to policy

The findings of this thesis also signal some issues relevant to a further development of educational and integration policy in Ireland.

Firstly, since the population has become more culturally diverse, the inclusion of cultural heterogeneity within the notion of parental involvement is necessary in Ireland. It is important to develop a comprehensive model of migrant parental involvement beyond perceiving migrant parents as outsiders, hard-to-reach or invisible actors in their children's education. In doing this, there is need for a new way of categorising migrants. Such vast categories as EU-12 or EU-15 that are used, for example in the 'Growing up in Ireland' project⁷ do not reflect the diversity of experiences of migrant families but may in fact misrepresent their needs. Furthermore, when discussing the needs of migrant families, it is necessary to make a clear distinction for those families who arrived with school-aged children as they are more likely to experience disadvantage in navigating the educational landscape in Ireland.

Secondly, my research showed that Baltic mothers did not participate in schools activities like parent-teacher meetings. This happened not because of their lack of interest or commitment, but because there were simply no opportunities available for them to participate in schools in the first place. Proficiency in the English language was not the major issue as mothers who were fluent in the language and wanted to be more involved in schools did not have any opportunity to meet other parents. Therefore, more local initiatives connecting parents inside and outside schools are necessary. As an initial step, this can be done through bridging different ethnolinguistic grassroots organisations and Irish parents together at the local level through cooperative projects. However, a wider approach is needed as the findings of this research suggest that not all Baltic parents engage in their ethnolinguistic communities in Ireland.

Thirdly, Ireland has become not only a culturally diverse but also a multilingual country. This study demonstrated that all Baltic mothers are in favour of teaching their

⁷ Growing Up in Ireland is the national longitudinal study of children and young people in Ireland (ESRI, 2019).

heritage languages to their children. Even if in theory ethnolinguistic communities and home visits can enable children to use heritage language outside of their immediate home environment, in practice this language learning is mainly reinforced through intensive ‘motherwork’ at home. Therefore, to maintain multilingualism as an important asset of the new Irish society, it needs to be supported and promoted by the educational system from an early age for all children regardless of their migrant or non-migrant backgrounds. This is particularly important as children would not feel that their linguistic capital is devalued by their peers, teachers and the educational system in general.

8.4. Reflections on Research Design and Study Limitations

There are several methodological issues to be discussed, specifically reflecting on how effective the research design and methods of data collection were with regard to answering the main research questions. As I aimed to demonstrate the heterogeneity of mothers’ experiences, I sampled a diverse range of Baltic mothers across Ireland (e.g. residing in rural and urban areas in Ireland; having children of different age and belonging to Russian-speaking minorities). As a result, the experiences of my participants should not be reflective of the experiences of all members of these sub-groups.

I started fieldwork with a mapping exercise of extra-curricular activities and observations in different ethnolinguistic community sites in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway. I employed these methods because of the lack of information on Baltic migrants in Ireland. Observations were particularly useful as a first look at Baltic parents and helped me think about my sampling strategy, develop an interview guide for semi-structured interviews as well as guide me during data analysis. The use of semi-structured interviews allowed me to get more extensive responses, personalised views and diverse opinions. Even if the interview guide provided me with some guiding questions, I conducted interviews in an informal and flexible format that enabled mothers to talk about their experiences in their own way. However, quantitative data collection tools, such as questionnaires with a larger sample size could have also been useful at a later stage of the fieldwork, specifically statistically confirming the findings obtained through qualitative data collection tools.

In terms of data analysis, my approach in creating a coding system and using thematic analysis allowed me to structure, as well as to reveal, the most important aspects

of Baltic mothering in relation to parental involvement within and outside formal schooling. The coding system allowed me to compare and contrast different patterns and, in many cases, find similarities rather than differences in the way Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian mothers of middle-class and working-class backgrounds get involved in their children's education.

8.5. Areas for Future Research

Some themes indirectly covered in this thesis can form the basis for future research. Specifically, one of the areas that requires further exploration is the children's perspective. This research showed that even though Baltic mothers acted as the main decision-makers in migratory and educational decisions and choices, their children are also important and active actors in negotiating their preferences. Education plays a significant role in forming everyday practices for and by children themselves. However, the same as with adults, children with migrant backgrounds are not a homogenous group. The experiences of children and the role of their agency can vary depending on their family migration trajectories, age, gender, the socio-economic background of their parents, as well as their own capacity to interact with their peers and adapt to a school environment in Ireland. Specifically, the role of children's dispositions would be important to explore by highlighting similarities and differences between familial and children's habitus. Even if familial habitus is crucial in forming children's views on educational aspirations and achievements, children's hopes, beliefs and views, especially influenced by their experiences outside immediate home environment are also vital to examine.

Future research could also consider exploring the role of fathers in migrant families. Even though fathers were largely absent in the discourses of care among Baltic mothers, there is little known about male migrants' agency, masculinity and the dynamics of gender relationships within Baltic migrant families. Men are rarely considered as gendered subjects who experience emotional costs of migration. Due to the small sample of this study, I excluded mixed ethnic families. Therefore, future studies could expand research by paying particular attention to the negotiation of parenting practices of both fathers and mothers who come from different ethnolinguistic backgrounds.

Finally, the formation and development of Baltic ethnolinguistic grassroots communities is another potential area for further research, which was briefly touched in this

thesis in relation to the maintenance of the heritage languages in Ireland. Although some mothers become actively involved in forming these communities, the research showed that Baltic ethnolinguistic communities are very fragmented and many families can be excluded from them. Future research could particularly focus on exploring the dynamics of power relations based on economic and cultural hierarchies that form implicit and explicit mechanisms of exclusion not only for Baltic parents but also children. Therefore, children's points of views are also vital within this context as they have a potential to reveal intra-ethnic and social distance among first- and second-generation Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians in Ireland.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Interview Guide

Part 1

The first set of questions focuses on the biographical information of participants. In this part, I am interested to start the actual conversation.

What is your age?

Where do you come from?

What is your education?

What is your professional background?

What is your family situation?

How many children do you have? How old are they?

How long have you been to Ireland? When did you move?

How did you make the decision about moving to Ireland?

Have you done any studies in Ireland?

Where do you work at the moment?

How do you manage with childcare?

What did you know about Ireland before moving here?

Do you feel that you are settled here?

Did you have any friends/relatives residing in Ireland before you moved here?

Do you keep in touch with your relatives/friends who are in EE/LV/LT? How do you keep in touch?

Do you go back to EE/LV/LT often?

Who are your friends at the moment? (E.g. Irish, co-ethnics, other migrants)

Have you ever thought of going back to EE/LV/LT in the future?

Part 2

The second set of questions focuses on parental experiences in navigating their children's education in Ireland.

What did you know about the educational system in Ireland before moving here? Has your opinion changed in any way?

How did you find information about schooling here? Did you have any difficulties about findings information?

Did you talk to any of your friends/acquaintances before enrolling your child/children at school?

How did you select a school for your child? Did you have any difficulties? What are your main priorities?

Do you help your child with homework?

Do you like the school your child attends?

How do you communicate with teachers? Are you involved in any activities in school?

Do you know any other parents from your child's school? How often do you communicate with them?

What do you think about raising your children in Ireland? Is it any different from EE/LV/LT?

Did you have any expectations about schooling in Ireland?

What are similarities and differences between the system of education in Ireland and EE/LV/LT?

Does your child have many friends from school?

Part 3

The third set of questions focuses on their children's activities outside formal schooling.

Does your child attend any activities outside schooling?

How do you select activities for your child? Why these activities?

Are they expensive? Is the price an important factors in selecting activities for your child?

How do you usually spend evening and weekends? Describe me your day off.

Do you think if you were in EE/LV/LT now, your routine/free time activities (as a family together) would be the same?

How do you think Irish families are different/similar to your family? Do you know many Irish families? What's about your neighbours?

How do you think EE/LV/LT families in Ireland are different/ similar to yours? Do you know many EE/LV/LT families in Ireland?

Part 4

The fourth set of questions focuses on commonalities and differences between their childhoods in EE/LV/LT and the childhoods of their children in Ireland.

Tell me about your childhood, where did you grow up?

What type of school did you attend? Did you enjoy schooling yourself?

How did you spend your free time? What were your interests? Have you participated in any extra-curricular activities? (Paid/free of charge)

How did you spend your holidays?

Did you feel a lack of anything? (E.g. toys, books, computer, phone etc.)

What was your parents opinion on education/higher education? What is yours?

Did your parents help you in any way when you were making decision about attending your college/ university?

Part 5

The firth set of questions focuses on multilingualism.

Do you speak LV/EE/LT at home? Why?

Is it important to keep the language for you? Why?

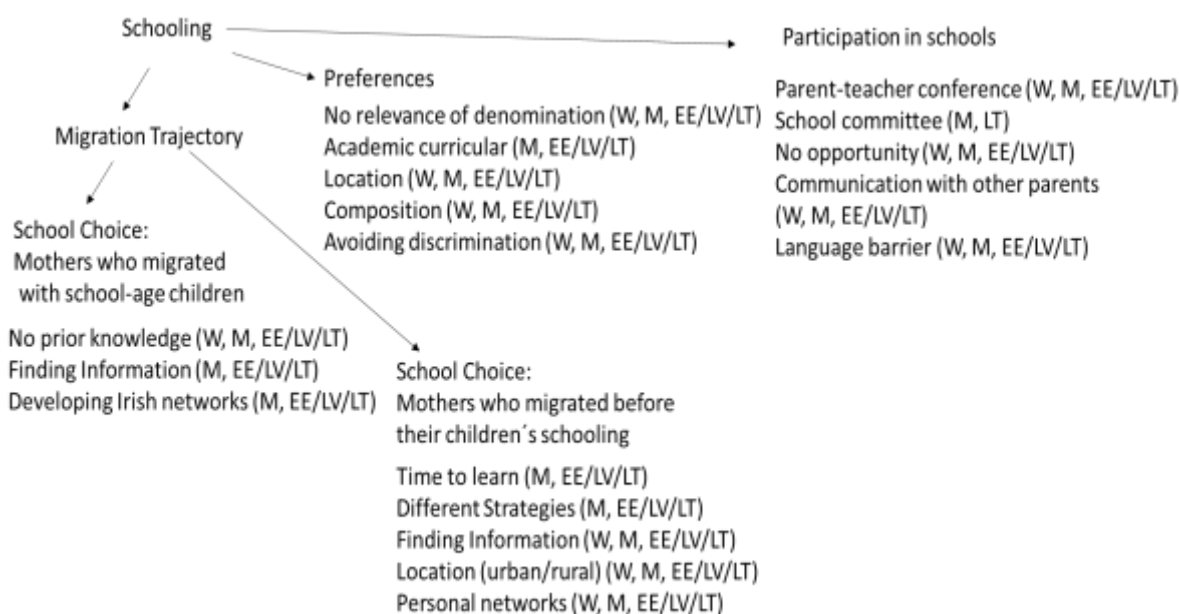
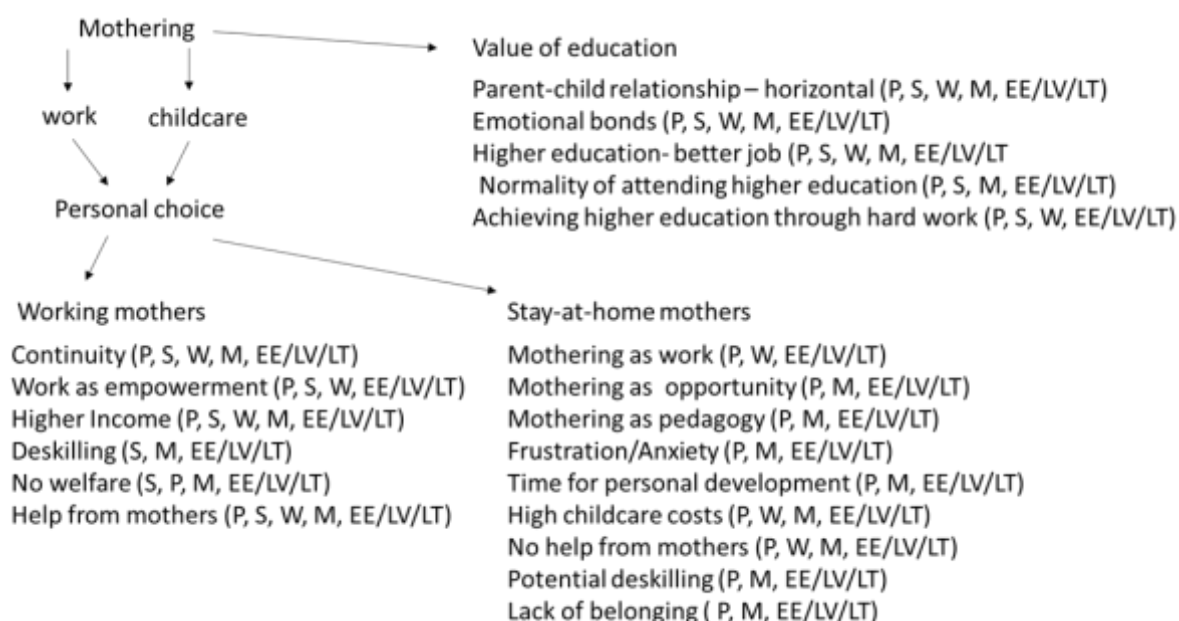
What is your experience of learning foreign languages? How many languages do you speak?

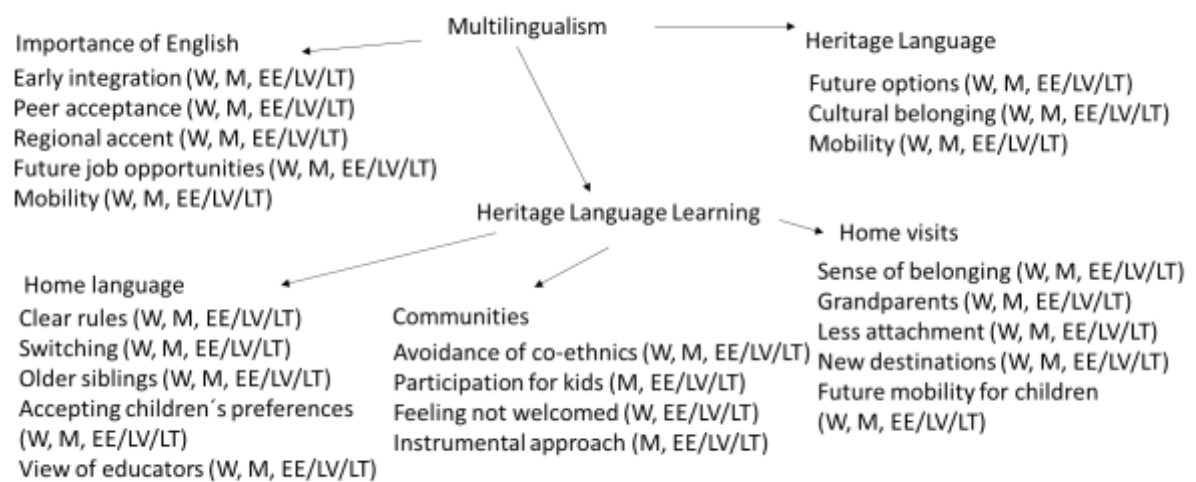
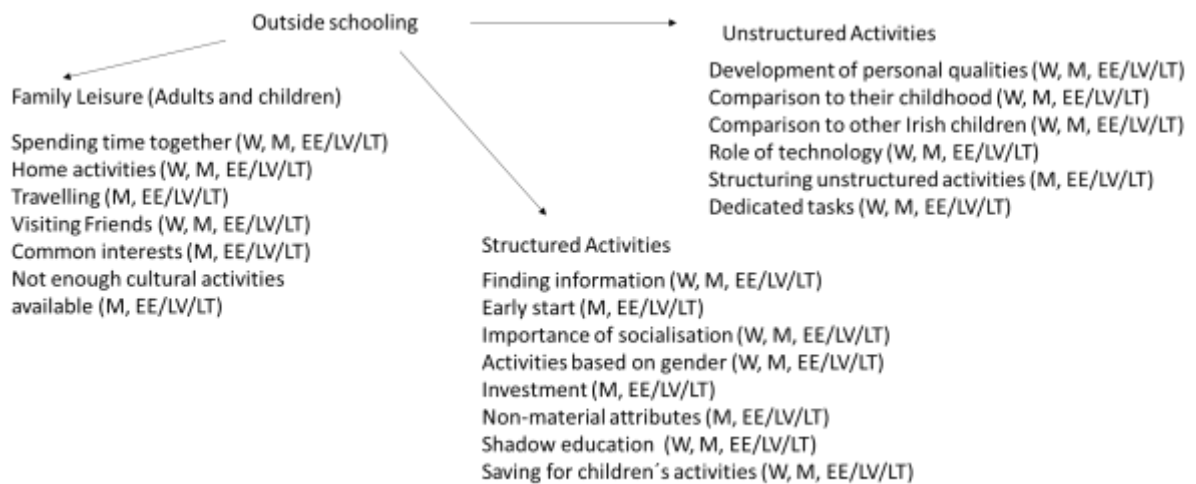
Are you involved in any activities organised by EE/LV/LT communities in Ireland?

Do you attend any activities? Does your child attend any activities?

How do you see the future of your children? Where do you see the future of your children?

Appendix 2 – Coding Matrix





S - single mothers; P- mothers with a partner/husband; W- working- class; M –middle-class; EE – Estonia; LV- Latvia; LT-Lithuania.