



Londoner-Pole-Citizen (LPC) Project.

Final report

Centre of Migration Research Foundation

ABOUT THE REPORT

This is the concluding report of the project titled 'Londoner-Pole-Citizen (LPC). National identity as a tool to stimulate civic participation of the Polish youth living abroad', carried out by the partnership led by the Centre of Migration Research Foundation, Poland, co-financed by the Senate of the Republic of Poland from the grant within the framework of delegation of public task of patronage over Polish diaspora and Poles abroad.

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Londoner-Pole-Citizen Project final report

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Introduction

The aim and the structure of the final report

This is the concluding report of the project titled 'Londoner-Pole-Citizen (LPC / POL). National identity as a tool to stimulate citizen participation of the Polish youth living abroad' implemented by the partnership consisting of: Foundation Centre of Migration Research, Poland (FCMR); Centre for Community Engagement Research, Goldsmiths College, University of London (CCER); Lewisham Borough Council (London Borough of Lewisham Authority, Young Mayor Office); and Lewisham Polish Centre (LPC).

In the course of 2016, together with our partners, we carried out numerous activities in Lewisham, both research and action-like. In this report we will share the research findings pertaining to the main problems of, firstly, how locality is experienced and what role it plays in the lives of migrants with Polish background¹. Secondly, we devote a section to migrants as parents' perspective on schools as an important site of integration. Thirdly, we analyse Lewisham Polish Centre as an institution from the point of view of class diversity, which we present as a valid perspective to talk about Polish migrants, i.e., their settlement as well as professional and educational strategies. In the following section, we give an account of the project's actions and research pertaining to young people. We conclude with a summary and recommendations.

General idea of the Project

The 'Polak-Obywatel-Londyńczyk (Londoner-Pole-Citizen LPC / POL). National identity as a tool to stimulate citizen participation of the Polish youth living abroad' project aimed at increasing the involvement of Polish youth living abroad in the civic and public life and to prepare Polish centres operating abroad to serve as places of civic education capable of stimulating and reinforcing the participation of young Poles. Enhancing civic competencies of the youth was considered of utmost importance both from the point of view of Polish citizens' interests being appropriately represented in their country of residence and their civic functioning following a potential return to Poland. The project objectives were to be attained by developing and then implementing a methodology of 'empowering participation diagnosis of Polish youth living abroad' in Lewisham, one of the more disadvantaged boroughs in London, but also one with a strong participatory tradition.

The few papers written so far on civic participation of Polish migrants show that while there is a narrow active elite (Kucharczyk [ed.] 2013), most people participate neither in political nor social

¹ In most cases, people talked about Lewisham, parts of Lewisham, sometimes about southern or south-eastern London as their space of reference, and issues such as ethnic diversity, safety, economic factors transpired.

mechanisms (Lesińska 2013). The data show that participation is particularly low in the case of young people, which is one of the factors behind the replication of these patterns and their becoming a perennial element of political culture. In the case of young people living abroad, another obstacle that interferes with their participation in public life is a greater sense of alienation from the institutional order (Doomernik et al. 2010; Koopmans et al. 2005). There are many indications that the Polish youth does not participate in the activities of Polish Diaspora organizations, nor in active citizenship initiatives which are part of the public order of their country of residence. This 'double exclusion' can be observed particularly clearly in places inhabited by a disadvantaged population (such as Lewisham in London, a borough where the poverty and crime rates are higher than in London).

In Lewisham, Poles constitute the third most numerous minority group; however, they remain rather inactive both in terms of the activities of an ethnic (national) nature and the more generic, civic initiatives. Self-exclusion of Polish youth applies both to organizations and institutions of the Polish Diaspora (Lewisham Polish Centre, the Polish language school), as well as to the extensive youth participation mechanisms initiated by the borough and the city authorities, and addressing all citizens, including the Young Mayor Programme (c.f. Kordasiewicz 2013, 2014a).

1. Description of the action research

In the course of the project various actions were undertaken, most of which had an action research edge, i.e., constituted research while at the same time inviting, informing, recruiting, and aiming to increase involvement in the operation of Lewisham Polish Centre and Young Mayor programme. The authors of the report visited Lewisham in April, May, July, October and November and spent the total of 30 days there conducting exploration and action research.

In the course of our research we collected interviews with 43 participants. All of them were recorded, except for three non-recorded interviews with research participants and non-recorded discussions with 4 project partners. Our research participants were youth with Polish background, their parents, other migrants and various experts (see Annex). Most migrant participants lived in the London Borough of Lewisham, and all the participants worked, studied or spent their free time there. There were 25 interviews, including 2 group interviews (5-7 participants), 2 small group interviews (3 participants, incl. a family group), 4 dyads and 17 individual interviews.

The aims of the research were threefold:

- To better understand the lives of Polish migrants in Lewisham;
- To better understand the operation and history of Lewisham Polish Centre;

- To better understand the world of young people with Polish background who live and work in Lewisham.

We collected accounts from 5 young people of Polish background, aged 11-20, living in the UK for various periods of time; from 28 adults of Polish origin living in the LBL (most of them were parents of the young people); 2 senior people who belonged to a group which established LPC in the 1960s, a Catholic priest from the parish of Lewisham-Brockley (not recorded), 4 accounts from experts from the neighbouring borough of Lambeth, 1 from an expert on Lewisham (not recorded). We were also in constant dialogue with our partners, themselves experts on youth and Poles in LBL.

To gain a better insight into how to attract more young Polish people we designed and distributed a survey, which was also available online in the Facebook group for any (young) people interested in the activities of Lewisham Polish Centre. 21 people took part. The Facebook group attracted 32 people and was also a means of distributing information about the project-related events at LPC and in the borough:



Screenshot of the group LPCyouth Facebook profile.

A very important role in the project, both in terms of action and research, was played by discussions and participation in the meetings with Young Advisors in the Lewisham Council. On several occasions we discussed topics such as the presence of Polish youth in their schools, the post-Brexit reality in Lewisham, the operation of Lewisham Polish Centre and the ways in which to approach young

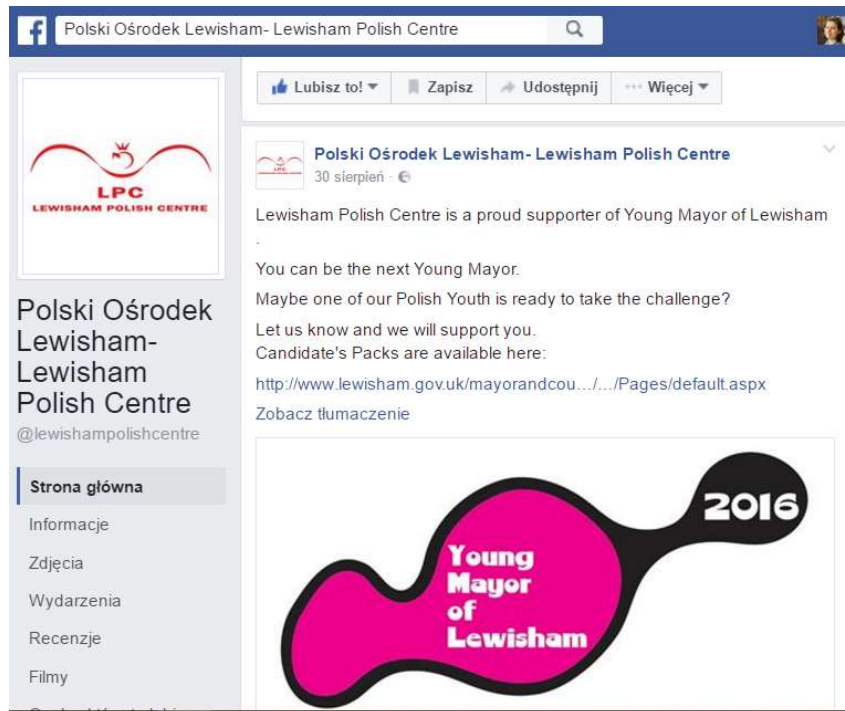
Polish people. They gave us useful information and feedback, and also became active participants in the project, attending the workshops at Lewisham Polish Centre (16.07), LPC Open day (29.05) and distributing the surveys on the operation of LPC. We met with the Young Advisors 6 times on the following dates: 23rd and 30th of May, 11th of July, 17th and 24th of October (for a short informal discussion) and on the 28th of November, when we met after the wrap-up seminar in the Civic Suite to thank them for their contribution to the project and share a pizza.



Young Advisors' meeting, photo M.Ostrowska January 2013²

We also promoted youth engagement among Polish youth through Young Mayor and Young Advisors, by communicating to our web contacts and by posting information about elections and election results on Facebook profiles:

² The visit was a part of "Youth has impact" project, carried out by Civis Polonus and Field of Dialogue Foundations (<http://poledialogu.org.pl/mlodziez-ma-wplyw/>). Unless otherwise specified, photographs have been taken by Anna Kordasiewicz.



Screenshot of the LPC Facebook profile advertising Young Mayor Programme

During the election day (19th of October) we also took part in an exit poll in two Lewisham schools, which gave us an insight into the operation of Lewisham schools as well as enabled us to access young Polish people directly and make useful contacts with some of the teachers (including one teacher of Polish origin, who subsequently coordinated the collection of surveys from Polish students at her school). Together with our partners we organized three events: a workshop at Lewisham Polish Centre on 16th of July, which attracted young people of Polish origin and participants from Young Advisors group, as well as some of the parents. The workshop involved a tour of LPC space, collecting the participants' impressions and suggestions on what changes to make in order to better reach out to young people:

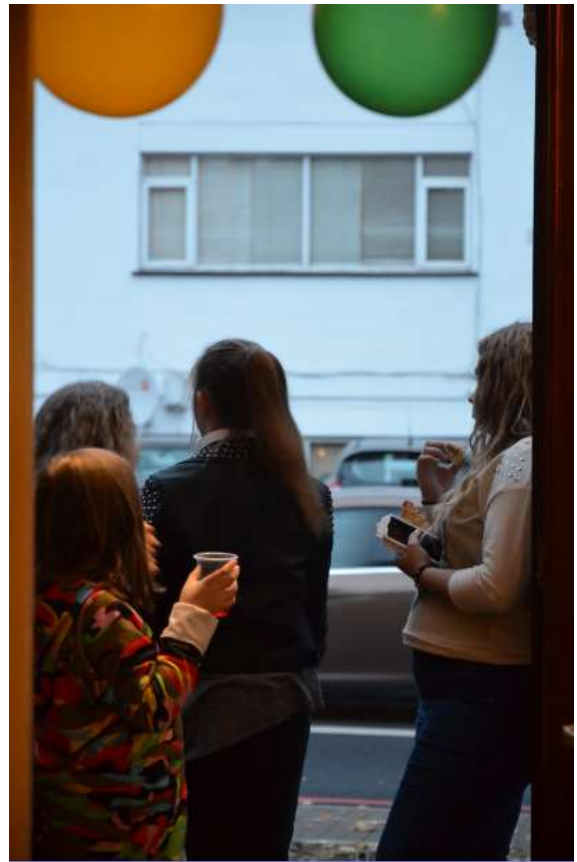


Working in sub-groups – youth workshop at the LPC, 16.07.2016

The second event (whose aim was partly to implement and partly to announce the results of the project) was a ‘Young people’s open day at Lewisham Polish Centre’ on 27th of November 2016, which attracted over 50 participants.



Young People’s Day at the LPC, 27.11.2016



On the following day, the 28th of November we shared and discussed the results of the project during the wrap-up seminar ‘The quest for youth’s involvement’ at the Civic Suite, Lewisham Council, with all partners sharing their insights and guests sharing comments.



The final seminar, Council Chamber, Civic Suite, Lewisham, 28.11.2016, photograph by Mirosław Kraszewski.

A very important part in the project was played by meetings with the partners: we held the total of 7 meetings: on the 4th of April (the meeting was arranged even before the final decision to fund the project by the Senate), for partners to get to know each other and exchange best practices; on the 30th of May to draw conclusions from the Open Day at LPC (29.05), exchange best practices and discuss ways forward; on the 9th of July during People's Day in Mountsfield Park to discuss how to approach young people during research and plan the interview guide; on the 15th of July to discuss ways forward, e.g., involvement in young mayor's elections and approaching schools in the borough; on the 17th of October to discuss the research and action progress (e.g., the interview guide) as well as involvement in the elections; on the 24th of October to discuss the research process and dissemination (the wrap-up seminar on the 28th of November), on the 28th of November to draw conclusions from the Young People's open day and conclude preparations for the seminar. Minutes of the meetings were taken and distributed amongst the participants/partners.

We designed several research and action tools that were helpful in the course of the project, such as: a guide to interviewing a young person, a guide to interviewing an adult Polish migrant (parent), an LPC activities survey as well as a workshops guide and an event plan, all of which the reader may find in the annex.

As action researchers we were trying to schedule our visits so as to be able to take part in the major local / borough events, such as the People's day (and YM elections (October). We also took part in the Walk for Peace and Walk and Talk about Janusz Korczak, organised by Forest Hill Society.



Lewisham People's Day, 9.07.2016.

One of the important aims of the project was to build bridges between the Lewisham-based partners and the project achieved these aims. Partly thanks to the contacts established in the course of the project between Lewisham Council and Lewisham Polish Centre the following things happened: there was and LPC tent for the first time on the People's day, an LPC representative took part in YA meetings, YA were present at the meetings in LPC, LPC included information about YM on LPC profile and in the group 'mlodziLPCyouth' (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mlodziLPCyouth>).



Open Day at the Lewisham Polish Centre, 29.05.2016.

In terms of participant observations, apart from discussions with Young Advisors and attending events at Lewisham Polish Centre, we managed to take part in a Polish mass at the St Mary Magdalen Church, (1 p.m., 16.10.16, <http://parishlewisham.org/>), in a meeting at the informal parish café after the mass (where we talked to 6 adult participants), in a concert of Polish performers that attracted mostly Poles inhabiting SE part of London (22.10.2016 Mixer Hit Festival <https://www.facebook.com/events/1778785435727608/>).

We kept a photographic record of all the events we participated in, safe for regular meetings of Young Advisors as we felt it could disrupt the everyday character of these quite relaxed gatherings.

In the course of the exploratory part of the project we devised an interactive google map that pin-pointed 'Polish' places in the LBL: Polish shops, restaurants, hairdressers' and beauty salons, art gallery, and the Polish Centre. The map is available here: https://drive.google.com/open?id=1uQXsWYl7khfmwTsveef_hsW4SDY&usp=sharing; more will be said on this topic in the section on 'Polish Lewisham'.

In the course of the project our research questions focused on the following topics:

- How do Poles perceive their local communities and what role does the internal diversity of the Polish group play in their integration?
- How does the institution such as Lewisham Polish Centre navigate through the diversity of both the Polish community and non-Polish dwellers of the borough?
- How do Polish youth get or not get involved and what are their motivations?

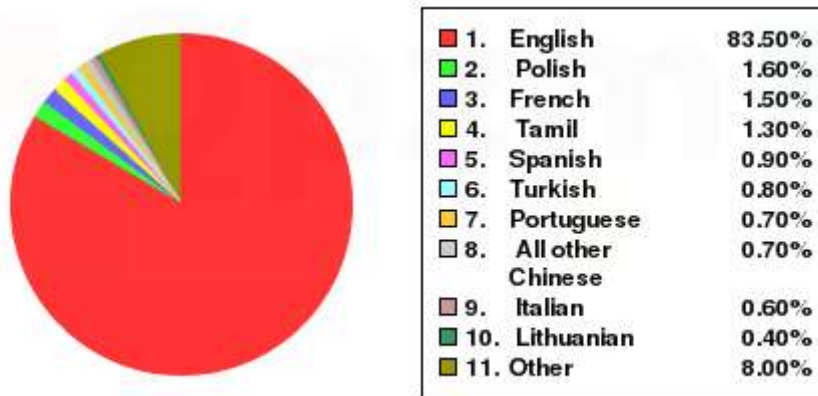
In the following sections of the report we will take a closer look at these issues.

2. Polish Lewisham – locality, migration history, diversity

Polish migration to the UK is usually seen in terms of three waves. The first wave were the Poles who found themselves in the UK as a result of the Second World War - more than 160 thousand soldiers, prisoners of war, etc. Typically, they self-organised and set up institutions such as Polish clubs or, since the 1960s, Saturday Schools. The second wave came after 1989, when the migration flow increased and it became economic and short-term in its nature. 74,000 Polish migrants lived in the UK before 2004. As for the third wave, i.e., Poles who came to the UK after Poland's accession to the UE, according to the census conducted in England in 2011, approximately 579,000 people reported Poland as their birthplace and Polish has become the second most frequently spoken language in England (Booth 2013). According to the Polish Embassy, Polish diaspora currently consists of about 850 thousand people (Irek et al. 2012). Between the first and the third wave migrants changed from 'Odyssean refugees' into the 'Rubicon refugees', using the Danièle Joly's terms (2002).

In Lewisham we have mostly been in touch with representatives of post-accession migrants, but also with some migrants from the post-war wave, who established Lewisham Polish Centre in 1963. It is also worth mentioning that, although there were hardly any migrants from the 1980s among our participants, the current president of Lewisham Polish Centre belongs to the 1980s wave.

In 2011 there were 4347 Poles living in the London Borough of Lewisham, which represents 1.6% of the borough population and means that Poles constitute the third most numerous minority group in Lewisham. Also, Polish was the second most frequently spoken language in the borough³:



There are, however, wards with a higher concentration of Polish speakers: Sydenham (2,8%), Ladywell (2,6%), Lewisham Central (2,4%) and Crofton Park (2%).⁴

London Borough of Lewisham is a very diverse borough, 15th most ethnically diverse local authority in the United Kingdom, with 40% of the population from Black and Ethnic Minority background and over 170 languages spoken⁵. In terms of broad ethnic groups, the most prominent groupings are Black Caribbean, Black African and Black Other⁶.

London Borough of Lewisham is an area where poverty and crime rates are higher than in the whole of London, a sort of less privileged borough within the 'inner London.' Wages here are low (almost a quarter of the jobs earn wages below the wage sufficient to make a living in London, the so-called London Living Wage), with a large share of school students eligible for free meals⁷. Lewisham is also a borough typically voting for the Labour; for example, in the last EU referendum, when the whole of London voted in favour of 'remain' (59,9%), Lewisham voted 69,8% to stay in, with 63,1% voter turnout⁸. There are a lot of integration initiatives (e.g., the annual People's day) and participative social projects organised in the borough, such as the Deptford regeneration plan (<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/inmyarea/regeneration/deptford/deptford-centre/Pages/default.aspx>). It is also in this very borough that we see some of the most innovative, popular and successful projects empowering young people in the UK, encouraging them to co-decide

³ <http://localstats.co.uk/census-demographics/england/london/lewisham>

⁴ <http://lewisham-central.localstats.co.uk/census-demographics/england/london/lewisham/lewisham-central>

⁵ <http://www.lewishamsna.org.uk/a-profile-of-lewisham/social-and-environmental-context/ethnicity>

⁶ <http://www.lewishamsna.org.uk/a-profile-of-lewisham/social-and-environmental-context/ethnicity>

⁷ <http://www.londonspovetryprofile.org.uk/indicators/boroughs/lewisham/>

⁸ <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/29459>

on matters of local and urban areas, mainly in the framework of the programme ‘Young Mayor’ (<http://www.b-involved.org.uk/young-mayor>), which has been operating in this borough for as long as eleven years now (the longest in the UK) (Kordasiewicz 2013, 2014a).

The existing literature about how migrants make sense of their new and old places (place-making) is often optimistic about the ability of places to offer migrants common identities and means of collective mobilisation. Gill (2010) noticed that the majority of authors dealing with this issue are very positive about the functions of place-making. Migrant place making can be an opportunity for migrants to retain a national identity in their destination countries. A minority of authors, however, have suggested that migrant place-making can become counter-productive for new migrants who can become either excluded from, or dependent upon, the established migrant communities (Ealham, 2005; Ip, 2005; Yeh, 2007, Gill 2010). In what follows we will see how migrants with Polish background make sense of their places in the UK and will try to assess whether theirs are pro-integrative or counter-productive frameworks of reference.

Polish Lewisham

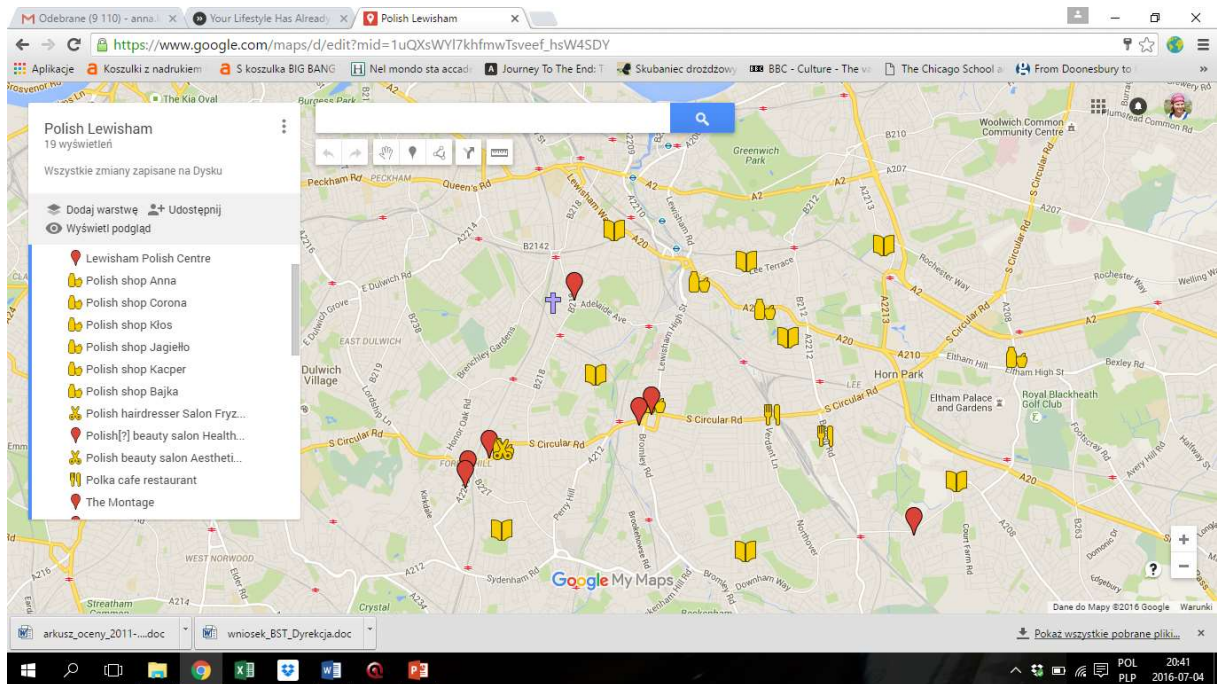
According to our best knowledge there are at least 10 Polish shops (explicitly using a label ‘Polish’ or ‘Polski’) in the Borough. Products from Poland, including typical foods, are available in all or almost all small and bigger shops in the Borough. During our visits in the shops we observed that some clients were Polish, some were not Polish; the shop keepers and owners usually assessed the share of non-Polish clients at 50%, which means Polish shops serve not only Poles but also the wider community. We noticed, however, that while non-Poles (people speaking English) do the shopping and go about their business, Polish clients tend to engage in short exchanges with the shop assistants, sometimes asking questions or making requests about everyday life (for example, asking for help in finding a job or accommodation).



Polish shop “Korona” in Catford.

In the borough there are also Polish hairdressers' and beauty salons. Some of them have Polish names, some are just owned by Polish entrepreneurs. There is a popular Polish Tavern, as well as Polka café in Hither Green.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1uQXsWYI7khfmwTsveef_hsW4SDY&usp=sharing



When asked about Polish presence in the borough, our interviewees remark that while Poles are not as numerous here as in (typically mentioned at that point) Ealing, you can nevertheless meet Polish people in the streets:

From what I know there are many. Very many. We don't know the numbers, but, honestly, when you go to the shops sometimes or even go shopping, you will keep hearing Polish... [Interviewee#6]

Researcher: Are there many Poles living here?

Interviewee: There aren't quite as many as in Ealing, Acton or Streatham, or Tooting, but there are quite a few. [Interviewee#22, male]

The participants stressed there is a diversity of Polish people living in the borough (and the UK in general), which was most clearly pronounced by the owners of one of the Polish businesses:

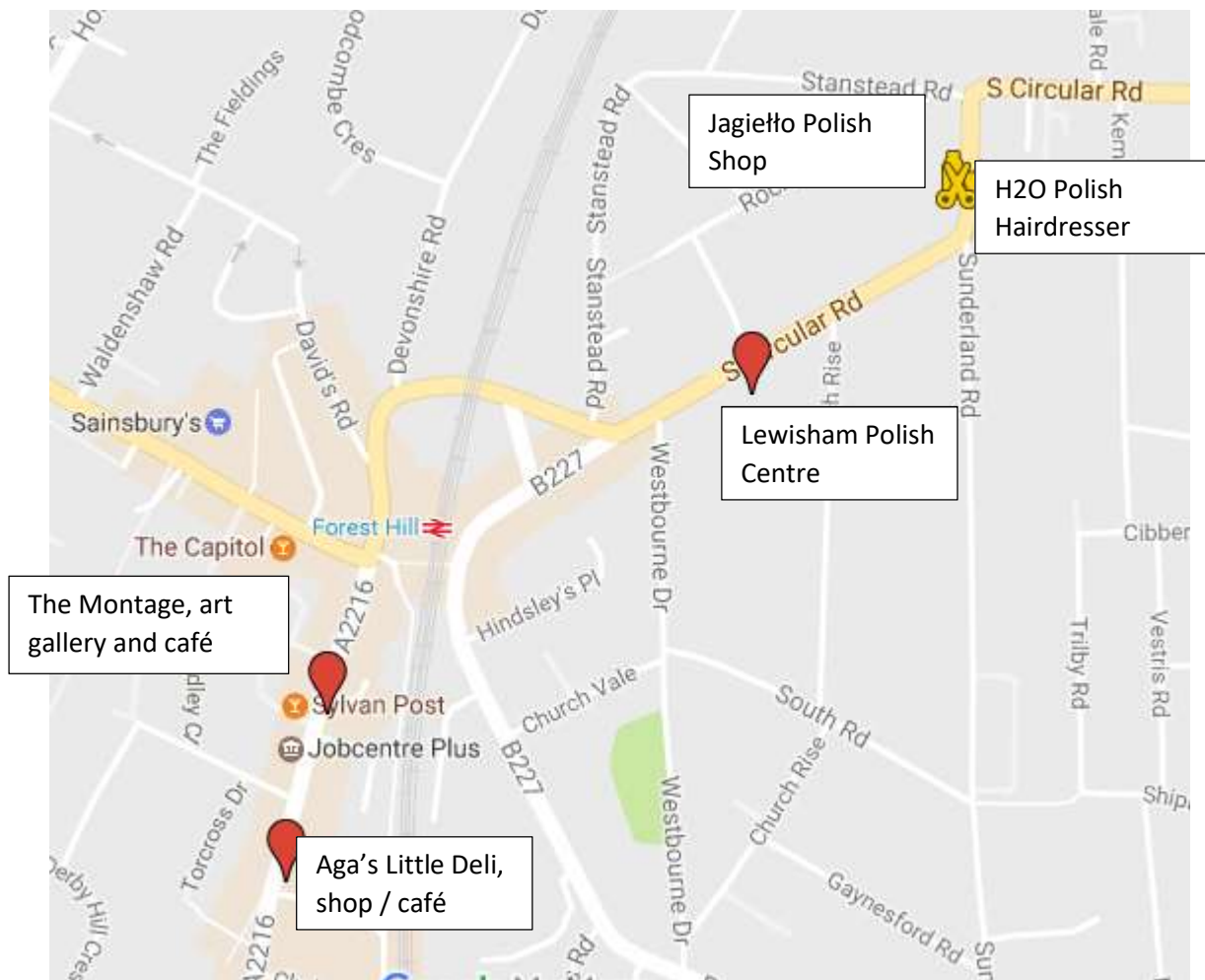
But we know from experience that the Polish are everywhere, you can find them at all levels of the ladder, you will find them everywhere. We have friends who do cleaning jobs, do construction work, work in banks, or friends who have their own businesses, who are journalists, work for the BBC, who

are art restorers, who work in the Royal Palace, who are successful photographers, who are thieves. You will find them everywhere, from the street to the highest ... [Interviewees#29 and 30]

In the next section we will 'zoom in' on one of the neighbourhoods where we find Lewisham Polish Centre and the Montage gallery as well as a Polish shop and hairdresser's, all of them located in close vicinity.

Polish corner on Forest Hill

Let us take a closer look at one of the small neighbourhoods: surroundings of the Forest Hill station. Apart from the historical connection that Forest Hill has to the Polish-Jewish pedagogist and medical doctor, Janusz Korczak, who visited it over 100 years ago (which was brought to the attention of local people by the Forest Hill Society in collaboration with Korczak Foundation from Poland⁹), it is a corner of Lewisham with a particularly dense network of Polish connections and institutions: it is here that we find Lewisham Polish Centre, a Polish shop ('Jagietto'), a Polish hairdresser's ('H2O') and, across the rail tracks, The Montage art gallery and café as well as 'Aga's little deli', shop and a café owned by Poles.



⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/events/694581464024231/>

Participants in a mini focus group arranged at the H2O hairdresser's were well aware of this proximity, but found it easy to list other Polish places in the borough:

What are some other Polish places in here? I see there's a Polish shop nearby.

- There's a Polish shop, a Polish church.

R1 I mean that chapel, that centre. There's a Polish shop.

R2 In Lewisham, there are two Catford I think, in Sydenham, in Croydon there are many shops, too.

R1 There's a hairdresser's in Lewisham, or maybe two or three now, they are Polish, too. They sure are.

And are there any places where the Polish meet, where do they meet most often?

R1 A lot of people go to that Polish tavern sometimes.

- Restaurants.

- They do coffee as well, what is it called..

- Restaurant, like I said.

R1 Yes, yes, it's a very popular place. There's Aga Deli in Forest Hill and a lot of people meet there.

- You can have a coffee.

R1 Recently I've read that ...

A sort of café, is it?

R1 Yes, it's a sort of cafe. Cafe and an art gallery, I'd say. [Interviewees#23-27, all female]



Polish hairdresser and Polish shop among other shops on Forest Hill

The participants mentioned the Polish institutions are important social venues where they can meet friends of Polish background in an 'efficient' way, while 'getting some other things done', for example, taking part in religious ceremonies or taking children to school: 'It's the centre, school, church. Other than that everyone is busy, everyone goes to work.' [Interviewee#7]. On many occasions we witnessed situations proving that Polish shops have an important social role to play, too, by means of posting advertisements and facilitating an informal exchange of information, incessantly going on. (see also Garapich 2013).

One particularly clear example was the Forest Hill, whose local atmosphere was perceived by the participants of the focus group as 'small-town-like':

Ok. What is it like to live here every day?

R1 There's a small community that has developed here...

- Sort of a small town. It's very much like living in a small town. Everyone knows everyone, everyone knows everything about everyone. It's cool in a way but there are some downsides, too. You know, it's the same way you meet people in church, or in a meeting in the centre.

-At a hairdresser's party.

R1 At a hairdresser's.

R3 Above all it's an awful lot of gossip.

But is it like, do the Polish community stick together here?

R1 Yes, yes, they do.. [Interviewees#23-27, all female]

Interestingly enough, the owners of one of the Polish businesses also mentioned a certain separateness of the Forest Hill, making reference to its past as a village:

I think that Forest Hill is a typical village, which was somehow annexed to London at some point but it operates as a separate organism, say, a small village and the people round here really know each other well, there are lots of local initiatives that they join, they have their places where they go. So, of course the transportation services to and from the centre are very good but, in fact, it is a sort of village, I'd say. [Interviewees#29 and 30]

Our informants also paid attention to the gentrification processes, the fact that this part of the borough is 'in fashion' among artists and some people were not very happy about the consultation process on the street renovation organized by the district authorities. They were also critical when it comes to council initiatives and cuts, especially when it comes to the libraries:

So for our part, we can see that the borough authorities do not cooperate. They do not give any local... Quite the contrary, recently, there has been a case: some... I don't know what's the other side of the story, 'cause we weren't interested to know, but there was quite a lot of talk, people said several tens, I think, of small libraries in the borough of Lewisham were to be closed, 'cause the budget was too tight to run them. There's a local initiative as well to save – there's a tiny little library here in Forest Hill, in a pretty building, very pretty indeed, to somehow save that library. And from what I know, the library has been saved.[Interviewees#29 and 30]

Our participants were aware of many Polish places and they were regular visitors to those. The businesses also profited from the mutual proximity – people waiting for their turn at the hairdresser's were able to do the shopping next door, and the shop was ready to welcome the many Polish parents who visit it at the time when the Polish Saturday school classes are run. The clients were Polish, but also non-Polish, which for some of the businesses was important to underline). What was particularly telling, however, was the fact that some people know about Polish places but do not necessarily visit them. For example, a shop assistant from the Polish shop confessed she had never been to Lewisham

Polish Centre (located 2 minutes away from her workplace), quoting as reasons the long and unsociable working hours as well as the need to commute (from Streatham). The same was reiterated by shop assistants in other Polish shops and this needs to be taken into consideration when thinking about the accessibility of Polish institutions to the whole Polish community. However, it seems the Forest Hill corner is really a place with the potential of developing the Polish community based on the already existing network of strong local actors. This is and could also be to a greater extent an interesting way of introducing Polishness to the wider community.

Perceptions of the borough

With some exceptions, most of our participants have lived in Lewisham (or moved within its boundaries) over the years, because they perceive it as an accommodating, convenient and relatively affordable location. There seems to be an emerging sense of belonging to the wider southern or south-eastern London, e.g., there is an FB closed group 'Mieszkamy w South East London' [We live in SE London] that brings together over 2000 members sharing information, news and advice on the practicalities of daily life. Also participants of the mini focus group at the hairdresser's identified with South London and even declared that you can meet nicer Polish people on this (i.e., southern) side of the river Thames. There are certain circles of belonging, starting from the immediate neighbourhood:

Interviewee (male): *But also we've lived in different areas in South London. So it's like: South London is our neighbourhood, we know all these backstreets, secret passages very well, so... And to expand that circle further out, I think that London is our neighbourhood. Perhaps starting with the macro level and then going down to Forest Hill. London and then going down to ...*

Interviewee (female): *Yes. We discovered that ... when our son moved to his current school, which is far beyond our closest neighbourhood, we discovered that his friends' parents were our local acquaintances, although, as far as I can remember, in Poland, the neighbourhood was classified as much smaller, so here the neighbourhood, because of the size of the city, is significantly larger.*

Interviewee (male): *Not to mention the fact that people walk on foot, covering the distance in 15 to 20 minutes and it is their local...*

Interviewee (female): *It's their local place, yes.*

Interviewee (male): *Which would be unthinkable in a place such as Lodz (a medium-sized city in Poland), because there a local place is the nearest shop and if you walk 15-20 minutes you are at the other end of the town. So it must be about the size of the city, but also maybe the way we think about urban space.*

Interviewee (female): Yes. So our neighbourhood, it's not just Forest Hill, but all the others around, too, not just the SE23, but also everything that ... wherever our clients come from is in fact our neighbourhood, you could say.. [Interviewees#29 and 30, Forest Hill]

Most of our interviewees clearly distinguished between neighbourhoods and local areas within the Borough:

to me and my children [Hither Green] is a sort of safe haven, d'you know what I mean? When we come back here we leave all the mess in London or Lewisham [central] behind. As soon as we step out of the train, we enter the peace and quiet, you know, it's very green here and we really feel very well here. [Interviewee#20, female, mother of two, 40 y.o., Hither Green]

Apart from peace and quiet, our participants cherish local activities, a sense of security, clean streets, but also diversity, towards which they were highly sensitive. Our participants were sensitive to the differences in economic, racial and ethnic composition of parts of the LBL and how they have changed over the years:

Catford has changed a lot of over the last 20 years, more in visual terms, I think, in a different way. When I first came here after Maciek was born, he was 3 months old and I saw what Cristiano had rented and where, I nearly fell over, but then I quickly got used to it. That's because, in a sense, the place is good, generally speaking, although the borough has been ranked as the worst one for many years, the most dangerous. And nothing has changed, so how's that possible? You see, the point is that most gangs are based here so they just do not rob the locals. So, it's a good place to live. There really aren't many 'extreme' incidents. Besides, everyone knows us and that makes a difference, too. [Interviewee#27, female, Catford]

While the interviewee does mention crime and gangs, the threat seems to be 'at bay', it's domesticated. Of all Lewisham neighbourhoods it is Lewisham central that is surrounded with the darkest legend according to our participants. For example, a migrant from Catford said:

(...) For sure, when you enter centre Lewisham, Africa definitely prevails, everybody knows, and I will be honest with you, I do feel safe here, but there - I don't. Recently, there have been quite a few Polish alcoholics who've taken to sitting around there, they just sit around there, I don't know if they have jobs, 'cause of course I can't be sure but I don't think they do, so they just pick on people and it's just so unpleasant. And I do feel a little bit unsafe there. [Interviewee#27, female, Catford]

She reports experiencing a sense of insecurity in that part of the borough and it is in this context that the two groups are mentioned. She says 'Africa prevails' and in this way she uses a very general impersonal term to talk about what she experiences as the overwhelming presence of black

people (who are not necessarily from Africa). What is worrying, the sense of insecurity is bound here with the black 'generalized other', echoing the crime-migration nexus so often brought up by the tabloid press, which in turn is one of the ways in which Polish migrants perceive the racial diversity in the UK. Talking in such a generalized way of ethnic groups in neighbourhoods, which our participants typically do ('Africa', 'Blacks', 'Muslims'), on the one hand shows their sensitivity to the ethnic diversity, unknown to their communities of origin in Poland, but on the other can prevent them from seeing beyond these categories (often used in a derogatory way) and hinder integration. The other group referred to in this quotation, which also contributes to the sense of insecurity, are alcoholic Polish men spending their time in the street and bothering people. The members of in-group are pictured in a concrete way and the reader can relate to the sense of insecurity people behaving this way can engender. This also shows a distance to sub-groups of own nationality, a subject addressed by other researchers, too (Ryan).

Another example of insecurity, this time related to the knife crime, is told by a mother of a 9-year-old boy. She recounts travelling to a swimming pool and being surprised by a situation in Lewisham central:

R: Mind you, it was just two weeks ago, I think, I was going to the swimming pool with my son I think and Lewisham centre was all closed because a young boy attacked another boy with a knife in the centre (...) We were on our way back home with Wincenty and he was like, 'Mum, what's happened here'. We were terribly nervous so I came home and read the news, and yes, the boy survived but he ended up in hospital. In this sense, I do feel unsafe. 'Cause let's say when I came to live in Lewisham, Kinga started to attend Trinity school and right next to that school a boy was killed, a 16-year-old and you know that sort of thing happens everywhere, it happens nearby, but when I finally get here I feel so relieved – Jesus, I'm home now [in Hither Green]. Mind you, all sorts can happen. [Interviewee#20, female, mother of two, 40 y.o., Hither Green]

Here again the interviewee finds refuge in her neighbourhood, Hither Green. While references to crime were made by several participants, an overall sense of security in the streets prevailed. Some Polish migrants were sensitive to the economic diversity of the neighbourhoods:

Well, no, Lewisham is certainly less wealthy than Bromley or Heathstone, no doubt about that. New Cross or Lewisham is like... Forrest Hill is rather wealthy, Dulwich, well, Dulwich Village is very wealthy. In Dulwich Village you will find Hollywood stars have their mansions. Well, Forrest Hill is wealthy. You can tell by comparing property prices, what the prices are in Forrest Hill in the direction of Dulwich, and the prices towards Catford, Lewisham. There's a huge difference. [Interviewee#6, male, Ladywell]

When asked about the influence of the EU referendum on their daily lives, both Young Advisors and Polish participants said they did not experience or witness any unpleasant incidents or abuse connected to the referendum (one exception being a Young Advisor of Pakistani background); on the contrary, the press, especially Polish UK media coverage, highlighted hate crimes against Poles, including in London. This may be connected to the fact that London as such (Ryan), and Lewisham in particular, is a migrant-welcoming context, and this was also a perception shared by the participants of the focus group:

Researcher: And did you get the impression that after the referendum there has been a change in the attitude of the British towards Poles?

R1 Towards Poles? No. Quite the opposite.

R2 No, no. There is no such thing where I work.

R1 Quite the opposite. After all these things, some people even apologised to us. So, no, we can't say there have been any such unpleasant incidents.

- Not in here, no.

R1 We all feel at home, so there are no such like... [Interviewees#23-27, all female]

Many participants feel at home in Lewisham; however, it is their adopted home and not as close to their hearts as the home they remember from their childhood in Poland:

It's a sort of my little [city of origin in Poland], so to speak. My old flat is at No 149. To be honest, I've put down roots here, I feel at home. But, you know, the childhood memories, early years, this is probably when you feel the most where home is. For my children, this home is here. If I came back to Poland, to them it would be going away, to me – coming back. But I'm not thinking about it. I'm fine here, I've found my place and I'm very happy about it, I'm happy I can grow here, 'cause that is what's it all about. In Poland I don't know if I would... [Interviewee#11, female]

Some, however, identify with a wider geographical area, connected to their place of living and the character of their professional activity (which may transcend the Borough), for example, a taxi driver (and a shop owner):

It's not like there is some sort of 'my neighbourhood'. I work here, in this part of London, a little further down towards Lewisham, I live in Croydon, so you could say the whole South London is my neighbourhood. I drive here, I work, say, all the way up to the Thames, including the City. I hardly ever go up north. [Interviewee#22, male]

3. Parents, classes, schools

Poland's accession to the EU in May 2004 changed the pattern of migration from Poland to the UK from short term, transient and individual into long-term or permanent stays, with family migrations and reunions (see Ryan, et al, 2009; Ryan and Sales, forthcoming; Lopez Rodriguez, 2010, White, 2010). The consequence of this new migration trend was the large numbers of Polish children arriving in British schools: according to the School Census, in 2010 there were at least 40,700 primary and secondary schools pupils in England whose first language was known or believed to be Polish and in 2015 there were 213,000 Polish nationality residents aged 0-18 in the UK¹⁰.

School age children as the key factor determining migration strategy

The authors of the study 'Polish Children in London Primary Schools' interviewed parents who had migrated with children about their experiences and expectations of London schools (Kuřakowska 2014). This study revealed that the children's age was usually a factor influencing the family's decision to migrate. There was a common expectation that younger children could easily adapt to a new school and learn English quickly. The paper by Ryan and Sales (2013) explores the variety of family migration strategies and the factors that inform migrants' decisions to bring their families (especially children) or to leave them back home.

Our research confirms the importance of the family situation and educational system in migration. Many of our interviewees said that they changed their migration strategy after children were born. *'Until you have a child you think about the stay in UK as temporary'* [interviewee#34, female, middle class, aged 30-40, notes from not recorded conversation]. When kids came the situation began to change. Even more important is the moment when the child has to go to school. *'(he or she) has friends here and feels at home. Doesn't want to return to your country'* [interviewee#34, female, middle class, aged 30-40, notes from not recorded conversation]. What is more, a longer stay in the UK affects relations with friends in Poland. They are very weakened after a longer time, e.g., a 10 years' stay in the UK. In fact, after such a long stay, arrivals to the country became limited to visiting family.

Education is an important context in which Polish migrants construct the notions of Polishness. Schools are sites of socialisation and acculturation where newly arrived migrants encounter the host

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/adhocs/006287/annualpopulationsurveyestimatesofeuandeftanationalsresidentintheukaged0to16and0to182011to2015>

society, negotiate their identity and develop relations with other ethnic groups and the adaptive strategies that are used to navigate their new surroundings and make sense of their migratory experiences (A. D'Angelo & L Ryan 2011).

Polish Parents in the British education system

Most of our interviewees comparing schools in the UK to Polish educational institutions said that British ones are worse in academic terms, but at the same time less formal and demanding than schools in Poland (similar findings in Ryan, Trevena 2014).

In the case of some Polish parents we can observe a lack of familiarity with a multicultural and multilingual education environment. This led to stereotypes and even racism. Girls in scarves or black children were not welcome as colleagues by some Polish parents (see research by Brzozowska and Fiałkowska on Polish migrants' racism). This issue is well illustrated by the following school story told by a well-integrated Polish middle-class immigrant.

Once, X was in the 3rd grade of primary school, I think, so when you picked up children from school, there was always a group of Polish mums around, 'cause there were quite a few Polish children in that school, so they were standing there and I came to pick up X, I was just standing on the side and one of these mums comes up to me... Unfortunately, what I'm going to tell you now is a true story. So she comes up to me and she goes, 'D'you know what, my friends here and I noticed that your daughter likes to spend time with black-skinned children.' You know, when you hear that sort of thing, I seriously thought it was a joke, or a hidden camera, that sort of thing. So I sort of didn't get that question. 'Cause the real question was, 'Doesn't that bother you?' So I go, 'Well, my daughter is, what, 8 or 7, she plays with... and that's perfectly natural and obvious. And she was like, 'you know, there are a lot of white, Polish children in that school.' And so I got it after a while, the fact that it was for real, she was serious, and then I really exploded and I threw down swearwords quite intensively. And after that conversation, I remember, for the next few years when X attended the school, this lady did her best to avoid me, and the other mums, too, but it was horrifying, honestly, and I'm telling you, Przemek, I know people, Polish people, who have been here for longer than I have and they are just so racist, so xenophobic. It's terrible, honestly, it's... I mean it just beats me, you know. [interviewee#1, male, aged 35, journalist, chief]

Many of our interviewees confirmed that such prejudices exist, although they tended to explain them not by racist attitudes but rather as a result of being unfamiliar with diversity and a general reaction to strangeness. There are signs that such attitude is not reproduced in the generation of children, who generally appear to embrace and promote diversity.

Poles, Classes and educational styles

One of the issues rarely addressed by the scholarship is the question of class differentiation of Polish community in the UK and different class patterns in building the relationship with the British society. In an article on formal associations and organizations in the British and Polish civil societies the issue of discrimination against Polish workers is mentioned (Dunin-Wasowicz 2013: 100). This issue is also explored in more depth in articles by Pustułka (2013). The main postulate of the article is 'to take into account heterogeneity among migrants and intersectional approach, in which individuals may have different objectives, interests and aspirations, relating inter alia to gender, age, family situation, position, class and profession, ethnic origin, length of stay outside the country, religion.' (Pustułka 2013:130). The issue of the class diversity among Poles in UK were more directly addressed in Bobek, Salamońska 2010, Ryan 2010, Pustulka 2016, Garapich 2008, D'Angelo & Ryan 2011. Yet more needs to be done in this area and our research aimed to fill this gap. Here we would like to focus on class styles of education in Polish communities in the UK.

As a comparative material we would like to use the findings concerning class educational styles of the research projects coordinated by one of the authors, Przemysław Sadura 'The cultural practices of the popular/working class' (based on 120 IDIs with manual workers, small farmers and employees of the service sector who perform mostly manual work) and 'The class diversity of cultural practices in north-eastern Poland' (based on 60 IDIs with members of popular, middle and upper class).

Class styles of education manifested themselves most clearly in answers to questions concerning the interviewees' school memories. Members of the upper middle class were ambivalent about their schools. For instance, they had good results but that was not due to hard work but rather to the knowledge acquired at home. What mattered for them was personal development: the knowledge doesn't have to be useful, but learning should be a pleasure. What is more, the main source of their motivation to study is the example set by their parents (journalists, lawyers, professionals, managers, business owners). On the other hand, the aspects of school they disliked included 'the discipline and the need to follow orders', and, the 'suppression of individuality'. Their best school memories were memories from university.

The situation looked different when it comes to lower middle class interviewees. They had very good memories of school. It was perfectly tailored to their dispositions: ethos of systematic work, competitive attitude, orientation for success. What they valued most at school are clear rules. Studying was not seen as art for art's sake. It was a result of calculation and the need to carry out a specific life plan.

Working class educational style sharply contrasts with the middle class attitude to school. The only positive school memories they have tend to center around such values as familiarity and sociability (when they mention the relations with their peers, playing games and sports etc.). Why didn't they like school? It was their first contact with institutions and discipline. A lot of them reported unequal treatment and class discrimination. What is more the school curriculum was in sharp contrast with the practical attitude of workers. That is why they appreciated vocational schools and technical subjects more.

The different attitudes to education of middle class parents and working class parents were pointed out by the authors in the UK (Ball 2003), as well as by the authors of the report on educational choices of Polish middle school students' parents (Dziemianowicz-Bąk, Dzierzgowski, Wojciuk 2015). In both cases it was found that while choosing a school, middle class parents take into account its academic performance, rank, educational added value levels, atmosphere (mostly understood as the prevalence of students from 'good families'), good location (mostly understood as a location in a 'good part of town'), and internet forum opinions. Popular class parents paid attention to logistical issues, i.e., whether the school was near their place of residence or on the way to work, or whether the school was attended by the child's siblings (making it easier to bring children to school and collect them after classes).

We had expected to obtain similar results in the research we conducted among Polish parents in Great Britain, i.e., to find class educational styles and strategies of making educational choices. However, the picture that has emerged from our research is far more complex.

The middle class and the popular class share similar views on the differences between schools in Poland and in the UK: schools in Poland offer a higher academic level, and in the UK schools there is less discipline. But the conclusions these two groups draw from these observations are different. Let us have a look at typical answers to this question given by working class parents of two girls who have started secondary school.

Ok. And if I asked you, based on what you know, to compare schools here in Great Britain and in Poland. Which ones are better, or what is better and what is worse in schools here?

Int#6: *I mean, in general, they say that the academic level is better in Poland. I don't know, it's hard to say, 'cause I haven't attended school here.*

Int#7: *The academic standards are higher in Poland, I think, but the system here is better, it seems to me. Int#5: Yes, it is.*

Int#7: *'Cause the children, they start school at 9 o'clock. Whether they are small or big kids, they spend the same amount of time at school. From 9 till half three, or, what, quarter past 3. It's much easier for the parents, 'cause parents can make some plans, go to work or... anything. Just like that. And in Poland the little ones finish at 12 and off they go home..*

Int#5: *That's one thing. And the other thing is that, for example, they do not place so much emphasis on physics, chemistry, such like, you know, these are subject I, for example, do not need to study, right? And, for example, if you want to be a chemist or a physicist, then you do the Sixth Form, where you can choose to do these subjects and you can place emphasis on them. So I think it is... Yes, you can specialise, then, right?*

Int#6: *You know, it's like they don't have to study the subjects they do not want to study, right?*

Int#5: *Let's say it's like in Poland, starting with the fourth grade, right? They make you study chemistry, physics, biology or some other, what's it called, exact subjects that only a few people need to study. So that's what's really ok here, I think. 'Cause if you like, you then have these years when you can prepare to GSCS or later, when you make it to the... the Sixth Form, don't you? [interviewee#5,6,7]*

It is clear that these parents see school time as a period you need to go through somehow, and its main role is to train students for a job (why study subjects that are useless from that point of view?). The easier the school the better for the child. As far as school is concerned it is perceived as different than in Poland. For the middle class parents, the lack of pressure to 'push for better results' raises concerns. There is less pressure, less discipline, children do not have homework etc. That is why middle class parents who took part in our research believe that 'public education in the UK is a disaster'.

The Poles with middle class background are more likely to copy strategies used by the British middle class, who send their children to Catholic schools: *Only Catholic schools provide a proper academic level and discipline, in public schools the kids can do all they want (...)*Before you choose a school you have to visit the council, have a look at the outstanding check see how the school is ranked compared to others. It must always be the top one. Otherwise, not worth it. You have to take number one and no other' [Interviewee#34, female, aged 35, notes from not recorded conversation].

Surprisingly, despite these different opinions about the quality of British schools, the strategies concerning educational choices of middle class and popular class parents who took part in our research are very similar. Both groups compare school performance indicators and try to get their children a place in schools with the best performance. Both groups know where to look for performance indicators and how to interpret them, both try to increase the chances of admission by filing special applications, etc.

Myself, to be sure my child would be admitted to that school, 'cause the distance was rather long, so I wrote a letter to the Council, to say it mattered to me and that I want her in this school. That it was that school and no other. And she got in. I don't know if they took that letter into consideration or not at all. I sent it together with all the documents. [Interviewee#7]

*(...) why did you want her to go to this particular **school**?*

Int#4: *'Cause I don't know, it is a very good school, I heard a lot, like, from a friend, she's already in the Sixth Form and that's why (...) she said the teachers were doing a good job and you can get good levels.*

And did you check how these schools perform? Is it published anywhere?

Int#5: *Yes, you can check it on the Council's website. This school was ranked as 'outstanding', which is the highest level. And you can go the website and enter different schools and the one has been ranked and the local ones haven't. So it's quite good. And the discipline is good... The discipline is there all right.*

The most frequent outcome of that strategy for both the middle class and the working class interviewees was sending their children to religious schools, mostly Catholic ones. Again, their opinions differed at that point. While for the popular class the Catholic character of the school was an advantage, the middle class saw it as a drawback, which they are nevertheless prepared to accept in view of the school's high academic standards.

How come the girls have gone to these schools rather than any of the others?

That's because we used to live here and the school, at least the primary school, had a good reputation. I mean we asked friends, asked a lot of people in the process. And besides, I really wanted them to go to that school, 'cause it's a 20-minute walk away. Also, it is a Catholic school, which was important to me personally. [Interviewee#7, woman about 40, working class]

Can we just get back to the moment when X was to go to school. Did you somehow, I don't know, did you research the school, did you consider different options?

D'you know what? It was like, near where we lived, there was a preschool, which we'd heard was a good one, a really local one and we were indeed very pleased with it. Very, very pleased. The atmosphere was great, the teachers were great. (...) So most kids who attended that preschool went on to attend the primary school. It was a Catholic school, unfortunately. [Interviewee#1, journalist, chef] Similarly interviewee#29 and 30.

When discussing the criteria of their choices, the parents with popular habitus did mention the school's convenient location as an important factor (*there are many such factors you choose the school for. With me, it was the distance, again, as the school is the same way. I take one child and the other to school at one go.*) [interviewee#7]; this consideration was not important to families with a higher cultural capital.

Polish parents from both classes go to great lengths to avoid schools with bad reputation, where, in popular opinion, violence is rife. They mention visiting local schools to collect opinions, where they saw (how badly) the children behaved, they remarked that the police frequently visited the nearby schools with a bad reputation. Both groups also mention the huge importance the British public institutions attach to the obligation to attend school and to attend regularly. There is no question, for example, of taking a child away on a holiday during the school year – it will bring about a prompt visit to your home of social care inspectors.

4. Lewisham Polish Centre: a Case Study of the Evolution of a Migrant Institution

The history of Lewisham Polish Centre

Lewisham Polish Centre (LPC) is a charity set up by Polish immigrants in south-eastern London in 1963. According to LPC's website, the main aim behind establishing LPC was to 'assist the Polish who found themselves cast onto these foreign lands by their fate and the events of the Second World War. To offer both material assistance and moral support, by helping with official matters, accommodation, or spiritual needs, such as preserving the Polish language or the possibility to worship in the Roman-Catholic tradition¹¹.' LPC's organisational issues were regulated in 1972, when the Centre's *Statut* (so-called Deed of Trust) was drawn up and adopted¹².

LPC describes itself as a 'democratic organisation', where every member has the same right to decide about the Centre's activities and its future. At the annual General Assembly everyone can elect his or her representatives to the Board of the Centre or stand as a candidate. For many years, the

¹¹ The main objectives of the Trust quoted on the LPC website are as follows: relief and assistance to the aged, sick and disabled beneficiaries; to assist Beneficiaries and their children to acquire a better education, both in the Polish and English educational systems, including learning the Polish language, and learning about Polish culture and customs; the relief of poverty amongst Beneficiaries; the advancement of the Roman Catholic faith and the Catholic Charitable Institutions.

¹² The *Statut* sets out what conditions one must meet to become an LPC member, how the Centre is managed, what the rights and obligations of the Committee and the Trustees are and how they are selected. [English original](#) and [Polish translation](#).

Trust was dominated by the representatives of the first wave of post-war generation, consisting of former Polish army officers, aristocrats and intelligentsia. Here is how this group is described by a representative of the younger generation of LPC activists:

I always have a lot of compassion for them, and they can always count on me for help. There is another very interesting lady, her name is X, I don't know if you've come across that name (...) her husband was an outstanding Polish immigrant activist. It was in her house that all the immigrant elite used to meet, including Kaczorowski. Kaczorowski, presidents, and her husband sort of created POSK. He was a most remarkable man, I didn't meet him personally, but I got his book, I've read his whole book, about his experiences when he was in Africa. And later, when they got onto the Ocean, their ship was torpedoed and how he floated for 24 hours, then he was rescued. It's this kind of stories, that's why in my home there has always been a very strong patriotic tradition. When I met these people here, they speak such a clear and beautiful Polish, to compare that to other Poles sometimes, there is another very nice guy living right on the corner. That's yet another story, he's active here in the Centre, but what's interesting, they've retained their patriotic spirit, and these people simply remind me of the good old, fine Polish intelligentsia, no rudeness, no swearing, it's pure pleasure talking to them, interacting, spending time with them. I find it extremely rewarding. [Interviewee#32, taxi driver]

To find out more about the beginnings of the Centre we turned to a lady (Interviewee#31), who was among LPC's founders. Her grandfather was a teacher, her father - an officer in the Polish Legions and Polish Army, her father-in-law was a pilot and fought in the battle of England. As a 4-year-old she and her family were deported to Siberia, which she left for Great Britain together with Ander's Army. Here's where she finished a dressmaker's school and got married at 20, as a very young woman. Her husband was an engineer and an inventor, her son is a Home Office official.

Interviewee#31: *First it was just a chapel, then they bought the first house and everybody had contributed (...) these people had high-profile jobs, they were engineers or doctors (+4-5 army officers-P.S.) they had their own lives, and in the afternoon they would just put on their wellingtons or working boots and got down to work to move things on in the Centre.*

(...)

Later on we gained this reputation here in England for being the most and the best educated minority to live in this country. And when my neighbours met me they thought that all the Polish are lords, 'cause 1% of the English went to university but all the Polish did. No, it's not that we went, we were made to go, forced to go... like it or not.

Interviewee#32: *But the idea was that the youth and the children are to be prepared for life, to get a better start than their parents did. An amazing task on a scale...*

Researcher AK: *On the scale of the whole community*

Interviewee#31: *Yes, but it was mainly for the governing sphere. The Polish government here, the government in exile, they washed the dishes, and it didn't matter if he was a doctor, an official, or a barrister or a minister, he washed the dishes and made a living that way. And my son would learn English, would go to university, and his son is an MP now, an MP of Polish origin, you have people of Polish origin, but some of them end up in prison, you have all sorts. So for me it was so very hard to understand that they have a free Poland and they bring divisions to it. (XY years ???)*

From the very beginning, LPC has been able to survive thanks to those who do unpaid work here and support it financially. Member contributions are one of the main sources of income for the Centre: since the centre receives no subsidies or grants, it is fully responsible for its own financing. LPC owns the Centre House (8, Waldram Park Road), where the Local Polish Catholic Mission of Lewisham holds holy masses on a regular basis and where Saturday school classes are held¹³ as well as meetings of organisations operating under LPC's umbrella. The website emphasises that 'The house is always open to all events in the spirit of Polishness, both joyful and sad.'



The front of the Lewisham Polish Centre House seen from the Waldram Park Road.

¹³ Polskiej Szkole Języka Ojczystego imienia Adama Mickiewicza [Adam Mickiewicz's Polish School of Mother Tongue].

The Centre was established in response to the need to have a private-public space, which would allow its members to meet 'in a homely atmosphere', foster Polishness, but also offer space to hold private celebrations (birthdays, namedays, or baptisms) which could not be conveniently organised in the tiny rented flats. It was a club-like centre (in the understanding of typology of public and private goods), where those who had contributed gained the right to use the available services and space. For a long time, the centre was dominated by the group described above from the first, post-war emigration wave from Poland, whose social status using the criteria of the sending society would have to be described as upper and/or upper middle class.



A room on the ground floor of the LPC arranged for the Catholic Holy Mess.

Lewisham Polish Center: a new opening

It was not until Poland's accession to the UE when the situation changed. With new volunteers came the new wave of LPC activity, but it is something more than a generational change. In sociological terms, the new LPC board and committee comprises people of various social and economic status, particularly young women from middle class as well as working class background. This change has redefined its core activity and the style of functioning, making this institution more open and inclusive.

The current informal leader of the Centre (the official president is Paweł Dokurno, a representative of the 1980s migration wave) is A., a Polish woman in her 30s, originally coming from the city in South-Western Poland. She came to Great Britain just after graduating from university (she finished marketing and management) when Poland entered the UE and the British labour market opened up. She works in a register office. Here's her story of how she first came into contact with the centre:

These were 'parochial' things. The centre ran the bridge club, the one that has been active for years, and, oh yes, the seniors' club. Of course, there was the Polish school, and other than that, there were

events, but only and exclusively private events when people rented the place, right? And so when I... I thought that it was a parish, and nothing but a parish, and that only masses are held... and that you could rent the centre through the priest. And this is how I contacted the centre, 'cause I needed to rent a room for a christening and a birthday party. And so then it turned out it wasn't a parish after all, and that the parish was only using the house of the Centre and I was re-directed to Paweł [the president of the Centre], the centre's president. And so that's when I started... I thought about one event, a carnival ball, and then other events followed and that's how it's been ever since. (...) there is something going on virtually every day. [Interviewee#11]



LPC: first floor meeting room.

As the first, upper and upper middle class, generation of Poles in Great Britain was growing older, the centre was gradually taken over by people from the aspiring lower middle class, who arrived in Great Britain with the post-accession migration wave. These people belong to middle class not only because of their family background, education and the chosen career path, but also due to the characteristic values and dispositions they revealed during the interviews, such as the systematic attitude and orderliness (see Gdula Sadura 2012).

The fact that the group previously controlling the centre decided to open up and form an alliance with the new middle-class migrants is a result of a set of factors. The generation of LPC founders were aware of the fact that they were ageing and needed a change if the centre was to survive. A few people from the 1980s migration wave had joined the board before. That moment, however, coincided with the influx into Great Britain of the post-accession wave of immigrants from Poland. The literature of the subject abounds in descriptions of how hostile this generation could be

to economic migrants from Poland (especially representatives of popular classes called ‘Marians’ or ‘the Polish who came on the bus’) (see White, Garapich, our research, as well as a similar phenomenon in the context of Greenpoint in New York, Sosnowska 2016). This anti-popular cultural prejudice and traditional attitudes of the first wave of Polish emigration could have made the first-wave managers of the Centre unwilling to let middle-class Poles take over. On the other hand, it’s the middle class that usually has the aspirations and cultural capital necessary to take the responsibility for organising institutions and their functioning and for generating the visions of their development. (see, for example: Mencwel 2016, Sadura 2016 in Jerzy Hausner, Igor Stokfiszewski ‘Culture and Development’). On their vision, LPC is to become a sort of a local public cultural institution (similar to cultural centres in Poland).

The new leader and her supporters offer this kind of visions, which includes welcoming new groups of users and broadening the range of available activities.



Advertisements of the activities held at the LPC, hall by the entrance.



Group of volunteers organising the LPC Open Day, 29.05.2016.

Interviewee#11 tells us about the different counselling and development-oriented activities which are to be organised in the centre, and on the other hand, about developing the Centre and that vision contains a number of actions that would lead to educational and self-development activities, as well as many others.

I expect that more and more people will want to contact the Centre, there's a professor coming to see us tomorrow, too, Paweł has been approached regarding doing research on bilingual speakers. I've just got an email, (...) more and more people are inquiring about possible cooperation, sort of doing different things, and that's good for the Centre, too, 'cause you can meet more goals if you work with different organisations. You see, my aim is to have the centre, at some point, to have the centre operate like, say, to have one full-time employee here, to take care of all the administrative work. [Interviewee#11]

The older generation, who want to Centre to survive, approves of the new developments.

There are no more, 'cause the young Polish now, they are sufficiently (...) And it is a different group of people. Those people then, they held on to their Polishness, they couldn't speak English, but their children started to speak. (...) It used to be completely different. England has changed, we had a different mentality, there were upsides and downsides, but we did stick together, I'm missing that. Now that I've met some other people who have got involved, and, for example, Agnieszka, she's brilliant, Agnieszka is a fantastic person. [Interviewee#31]

The process of power transition in LPC formally closed in 2015 together with the board changes: it was not only Agnieszka who joined, but also a big group of her colleagues (they are all in their 30s and belong to the post-accession immigration wave with diverse socio-economic status). That was the time when organisational matters were re-arranged and the *Statut* changed and amended to bring it up to date. Apart from middle class members, the board came to include people who are closer to the so-called popular classes (for example, Interviewee#5). On the one hand, this could be taken as a proof of the truly democratic and inclusive character of LPC; on the other hand, earlier research conducted in Poland suggests that organisations with a strong and charismatic leader with a higher cultural capital adopt a middle class character (in terms of their offer and target group) even if the persons with a lower socio-economic status outnumber middle class members.

LPC's inclusiveness and the barriers to participation

Observations and interviews also allowed us to notice several factors that limit participation of people from the popular classes in LPC's activities. These findings largely overlap with other research results (see Gdula, Lewicki, Sadura 2015). Taking part in this kind of events (understood as cultural in the broad

sense of the word) is not seen as reason enough to spend money by people from popular classes. This stems from the practical attitude and thrift, two important dispositions of the popular class, but also from the belief that culture is something to be offered by the state or the world of institutions. The style of participating in culture of our (male) interviewees is characterised by the typically popular class features such as conviviality, familiarity and the inclination to spend time together. Consequently, they are more likely to take part in large, open events organised outdoors or social gatherings organised at home. For the same reasons the interviewees of both groups are willing to combine participation in culture with other practices of spending their free time in the company of others: conversations in groups, eating and drinking together. Consequently, they tend to be interested in informal, picnic-like forms of cultural events.

A factor that increases distance is lack of familiarity with the interior, i.e., the physical and social space of an institution. The interviewees are very well aware of LPC's location but they rarely go there and they do not feel comfortable inside. They are more willing to take part in events organised in the open air, where guests are free to enter and leave, and also safely explore the space without having to mind the staff's reactions. Other issues raised included inconvenient timing of events (long working hours) or the narrow range of activities on offer (there used to be Zumba class, but it's gone now) etc. Unlike the well-assimilated middle-class Poles, who are discouraged by the chapel and LPC's 'religious character', these do not deter the popular class. The magnet for both groups is the Saturday school (parents' group) as well as the chance to rent the Centre for private events at a competitive price.

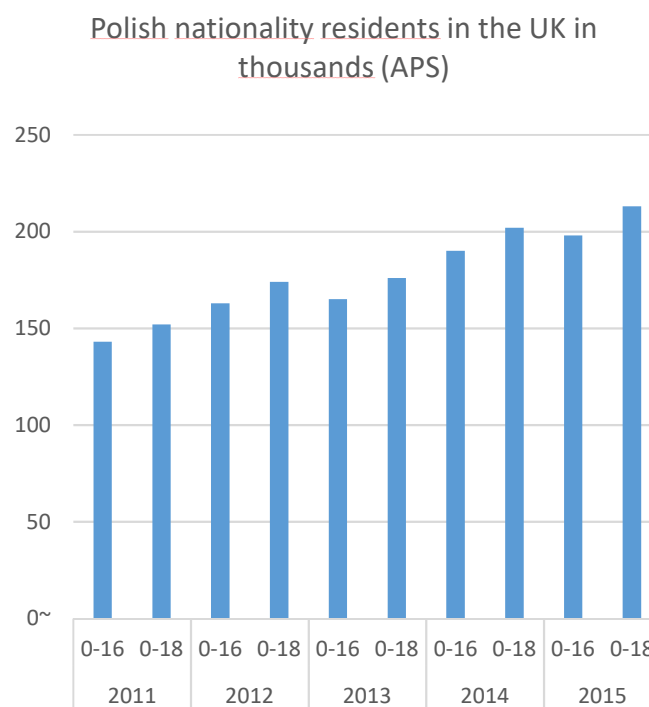
Another factor that lowers participation in LPC is a large number of other places where young people can socialise. LPC is hardly the only institution of Polish community in Lewisham, at least on the broad (ethnographical) definition of culture. The social landscape of Lewisham borough is marked by Polish shops and taverns, Polish hairdressers' and beauty salons, a church but also cafes and galleries such as the Montage cafe. All those places perform the role of cultural centres: they offer meeting space for social occasions, the opportunity for community members to gossip, build social relationships and make the social fabric more dense. The popularity of Polish hairdressers' and beauty salons is mostly due to the fact that *'People want to do some gossiping.'* [Interviewees#23-27].

However, there are clear signs of positive changes taking place. LPC seems to understand the role of all those institutions. It has developed ways of cooperating with many of them over the last few years. During Open Day in May we could observe an interesting mix of activities: official speeches, children's games and plays, sport competitions, musical concerts, cooking workshops and many, many

others. Some of these appealed to older visitors, others targeted younger audience; some were meant for the middle class while others – for the working class.

5. Young people and youth action with Poles in Lewisham

Young Polish people account for one third of the EU youth residing in the UK, according to the estimates in Annual Population Survey (2015). Their number has been growing steadily over recent years, currently amounting to 213 thousands of people aged 0-18¹⁴.

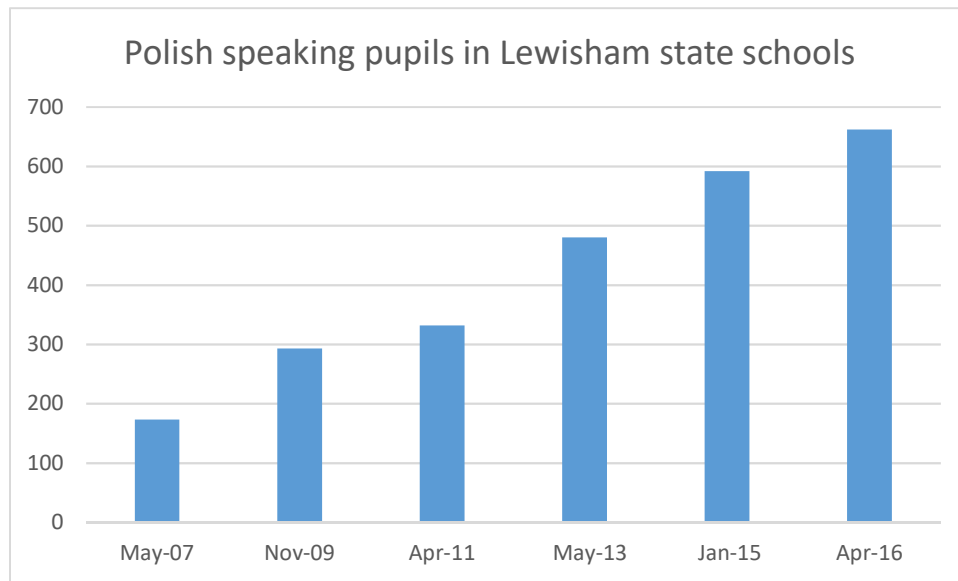


We also notice a similar rise in the number of Polish speaking pupils in Lewisham state schools - currently 662 young people¹⁵.

¹⁴

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/adhocs/006287/annualpopulationsurveyestimatesofeuandetanationalsresidentintheukaged0to16and0to182011to2015>

¹⁵ Data by the courtesy of the Southwark Borough.



According to the School Census (2012) there is a concentration of Polish speakers in Lewisham schools especially in Lewisham Central, Crofton Park and Perry Vale Ward.¹⁶

Youth engagement in Lewisham

London Borough of Lewisham is a borough where we see some of the most innovative, popular and successful projects empowering young people in the UK, encouraging them to co-decide on matters of local and urban areas, mainly in the framework of the programme 'Young Mayor' (<http://www.b-involved.org.uk/young-mayor>), which currently has been operating in this borough for as long as eleven years (the longest in the UK) (Kordasiewicz 2013).

The Young Mayor programme in Lewisham borough consists in annual elections of a youth representative, who acts in an advisory capacity with the Mayor and has a budget of 30,000 pound sterling. Every year in September the election campaign takes place and the candidates running for office receive financial funds and material support from the Lewisham Borough Authority. In October, the elections are organized, with votes cast in schools and at post offices (for those young people who do not attend any school). Every year, more than half of all young people from the borough cast their ballots. In 2014 the turnout was 53% (information from Kalbir Shukra, heading the evaluation of the project on behalf of the University of London). The person who receives the most votes becomes the Young Mayor of the borough of Lewisham, the second person in order is appointed Deputy Mayor. The two next contenders become Members of the Youth Representation from Lewisham in the UK Youth Parliament (<http://www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk>). Other candidates are invited to join a group of young counsellors (*young advisers*) in the borough of Lewisham.

¹⁶ <http://www.lewishamsna.org.uk/a-profile-of-lewisham/social-and-environmental-context/languages-spoken-in-schools/how-the-Main-Languages-are-distributed-in-lewisham-schools>

In 2016 young advisors were consulted on and dealt with such issues as knife crime campaign, youth panel, the spending of the Young Mayor's fund, pets at schools (animal welfare), or involvement in theatre activities. They also provided us with a lot of insights about their Polish colleagues, sharing stories about peers of Polish origin, their attitudes and integration, command of English, etc.

Members of the Young Advisors visited Lewisham Polish Centre on a couple of occasions. Agnieszka Łokaj from LPC was also present at the meetings of young advisors. During the research we were also disseminating knowledge about the Young Mayor programme among the Polish community, both by word of mouth and on the Facebook group. We also took part in an exit poll in two Lewisham schools, supporting Kalbir Shukra, and in announcing the election result, including in a post on the młodziLPCyouth group (photo). We sincerely hope we have contributed the building of useful bridges that will continue to get stronger.



Screenshot from the LPCyouth Facebook profile announcing the results of the Young Mayor's elections

Young Poles in Lewisham: schools, making friends, the meanings of the local area

Young participants of our study were between 10 and 20 years old and they came to live in London between the ages of 1 and 9, so they had a variety of experiences of the new country. One important part of their lives and of our conversations was friend-making, an area where there is also a wide variety of networking types depending on the ethnic composition.

When our interviewees talked about their friends, the issue of school or schools (if they also attended the Saturday Polish School) immediately emerged. Some of the Polish young people go to the Polish Saturday School and most of them have Polish peers as friends; however, most of the young people have people of different ethnic backgrounds in their close networks, including of mixed Polish background, some of them declare non-Polish people to be their best friends:

My best friend is from Portugal, but in our group of friends, there were people from Morocco, Russia, in general, in my school there's a huge mix, and people from the Polish school they are all Polish, but there are quite a few English, too. [Interviewee#26, female, aged 16, arrived in the UK aged 9] Some, however, have their best friends in Poland, where they often spend summer holidays.

New schools and diversity were mentioned as a source of excitement by some of the young participants, as recounted by one of the parents:

I mean, yes, maybe it was all weird, the amount of diversity, but in fact she was happy to get the sort of chance in her life, to be able to get to know people from Brasil, Nigeria, from Sri Lanka, from everywhere, different cultures, she even stayed the night in her friend's place, the friend's father is from Tibet, and my daughter was like, 'Mum, I went there and they have a sort of little altar at home, it's a completely different culture, too. (...) she once told me she would find it very hard to come back to Poland because she'd miss the diversity here, she really likes it, the fact that people are more friendly with each other. In Poland it's a little bit like, she says people are very racist and she hates that. [Interviewee#20 about 18 y.o. daughter]

I remember being extremely happy to go to a new school. I don't know why, but I was very very happy to go there, it was the first day and all, and it was great, everyone wanted to talk to me, 'cause I couldn't speak English. I could speak a few words, what my name is and what my favourite colour is, but it was so exciting. [Interviewee#26, female, aged 16, arrived in the UK aged 9]

A few people mentioned helpful education assistance in mastering the English language at school. Other studies, however, show that the relocation to another country and the uprooting and adaptation process can be a difficult experience as well.

Young people had mixed perceptions of the Borough – the younger ones mentioned a sense of threat more often than adults, for example:

Researcher AK: *[after talking about riding bicycles every day during summer holidays in a small town in Poland] And do you ride your bikes here?*

Interviewee: *No. I think mum is scared. (...) I would be scared, there are few cars there and I learned to ride on the right side (...) Mum worries about me, all these crowds, people, cars (...) I don't like it much, there's a bar next to this place and there are drunk people there.* [Interviewees#4 and 8, both female, aged 13 and 11]

It seems that the older ones were aware of the threats but learnt their way to avoid them:

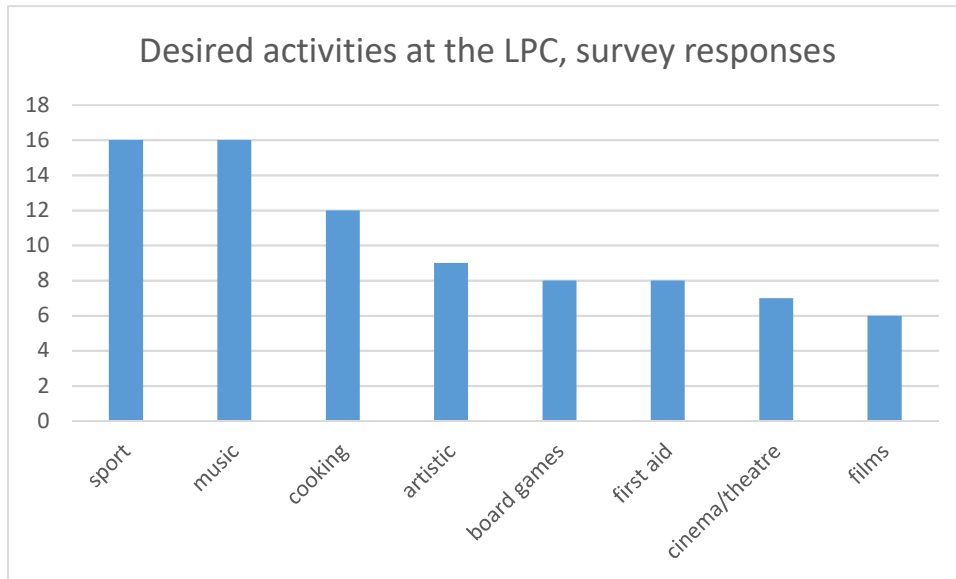
When there's a large group of boys or girls coming, it gets very loud in the car. If somebody says something to you, never just walk away, but talk to them for a while. If you are nice, they'll leave you alone. [interviewee#2, female, aged 20, Catford]

They were aware of differences between neighbourhoods in terms of security issues (where is safe, where is not), or simply perceived the threats as only apparent threats

Normally it's quiet here. There isn't much going on. There are some who look, you know, a little intimidating or something, but they'll normally just leave you alone. They look like that to keep, you know, to keep others... [Interviewee#28, male, 18 y.o., Catford]

Changing LPC for the young people

During the workshop organised in July at Lewisham Polish Centre we gathered insights about how to change LPC to reach out to the young people. People who took part were Polish young people, their parents, young advisors of different backgrounds and the project's team members. The main suggestions were to make Lewisham Polish Centre more colourful and full of music, to make it more visible from the street level, as well as make Polishness more prominent inside (e.g., display information about Poland on the walls). There were also several ideas on particular activities that we further consulted by means of paper- and web-based survey. By distributing the survey among our contacts and with the help of one of the schools in the Borough (Forest Hill Boys) we managed to document the preference for sports (mainly football) and musical activities (mainly guitar). Other popular choices included cooking workshops (baking, Polish cuisine), artistic activities (painting, photography), first aid courses and board games.



Accordingly, we bought sports and artistic equipment for LPC (including football sets, skipping ropes, sound system, board games, paints, whiteboards) and organised a final event at which we gathered some more inspirations (dancing and singing activities), which included live music, catering, a baking workshop and other fun activities.



Young People's Day at the LPC, 27.11.2016.



The event was popular among Polish community, wider Lewisham community and appreciated by officials (it was visited by Polish Consul General) and has positively contributed to the public image of the Centre.

6. Summary

Conclusions from research

There are about 5,000 Poles living in the multi-ethnic borough of Lewisham (according to the official statistics, the exact number was 4376 in 2011). While it is not a huge group, it is large enough to make Polish the second most popular language in the borough. Research has shown that the Polish community in Lewisham is not homogenous. Apart from a small group of the old (i.e., war-time and post-war) immigrants, it includes representatives of the 1980s migration wave and post-accession migrants, the latter being the largest group. Since the rents in the borough are highly competitive, it has become more popular with Poles over the recent years, which has translated into a dynamic growth in the number of Polish shops and service points. During our research project we sought to provide an ethnographic description of the whole community as well as to piece together a map of institutions important for the community under investigation. Our map contains, among other things, 10 Polish shops, Polish hairdressers' and beauty salons, restaurants, cafes, a church and Polish Centre in Lewisham (LPC).

LPC's case may be described as an evolution of a slightly ossified club-type migrant institution into a living place of culture. The driving force behind this reform is a change in the class character of the institution, which means a more democratic access to and management of LPC. The first stage of that process involved opening up to the more modern and middle class values informing the range of services offered by LPC, and the second stage entailed the inclusion of the representatives of the new post-accession wave of immigrants into the management board.

Although this version of the report does not contain a full analysis of Polish parents' attitudes towards UK's educational institutions, it is nevertheless worth mentioning the general conclusions stemming from that research. The contributions of Polish interviewees from the working class environment and middle class environment display features confirming the existence of class educational styles, but these styles are not as distinctive as in the case of research on the Polish educational system. In particular, working class Polish immigrants, unlike working class parents living in Poland, have better adjusted to the operation of the 'educational markets' and the need to select schools. They cope with the school decision-making process, based on ratings and school performance, no worse than parents with a higher cultural capital. In the life of these families, school performs a role similar to the function it performs in the case of middle class. This could be due to several reasons. First, the British educational system is organised according to the rules of 'educational market' (to a larger extent than the Polish system) and the working class parents we interviewed find themselves forced to adjust to its mechanisms. Second, the situation of migration 'annuls' the differences in competences of parents from both these classes i.e., the middle class has less of an advantage

stemming from a better awareness of the educational system in the sending country. Third, the situation of migration increases the importance of education as a tool to improve one's living standards, which also applies to the popular classes. Fourth, many parents with popular class background we talked to in Lewisham are close to LPC and they have many middle class Polish friends, which may have allowed them to copy their educational strategy. Fifth, there are the well-known migration selection mechanisms, whereby it is the more entrepreneurial individuals (on average) that decide to leave. These could have had a particularly strong impact for the popular class. This was not the case for the middle class: those who left could have been the individuals with poorer resources who had less chance of winning the desired positions in Poland.

Our activities addressing the Polish youth in the borough showed that they were not a numerous group. In view of the fact that most of the Polish in Lewisham are relatively recent newcomers, there are many more smaller children here than older teenagers we were most interested in. The local Polish teenagers, however, proved to be a group not so much prejudiced against cultural otherness (which was one of the initial hypotheses explaining the non-involvement of Poles in the borough participation programmes addressing the youth), but rather, a group that does not really identify with Polishness and tends to function in multi-cultural social networks. To conclude, young Poles do not get involved in LPC activities as 'young people'; neither do they take part in borough activities (Young Mayor itd.) as 'Poles'. LPC is not perceived as an attractive place by the youth and until that changes, young Poles will choose places that are more attractive to the members of the social networks they are part of. On the other hand, lack of interest in activities organised by the borough may stem from the lack of interest in public affairs they observed and acquired at home. That set of factors brings about a deadlock that may be hard to break. Below we offer a few recommendations that may help to further increase civic participation of the young Poles in the UK and in Lewisham.

Recommendations for practice

- If LPC democratisation process is to continue, its next stage should be to expand the range of services on offer to cater for the needs of working class Poles (more 'open' events, meetings and events of a more convivial character, more sports events, counselling and legal aid services, affordable language courses, not only of Polish, but also of English and other languages, etc.).

- On the other hand, if LPC wants to be an institution that is important to the whole of Polish youth, it must be ready to redefine its Polish character. Our research shows that the Polish youth think of themselves first of all as ‘youth’, and only later as ‘Poles’.
- LPC must be a place that is attractive for the youth; it needs to acquire a more multi-cultural character and attract the young Poles along with the whole multi-cultural social networks within which they operate (this means more sports and socialising activities, more classes run in English, courses of Polish for foreigners, etc.).
- The main suggestions to emerge from the workshop organised in July at Lewisham Polish Centre were to make LPC more colourful and full of music, to make it more visible from the street level, as well as make Polishness more prominent inside. Young people taking part in our research expressed their preference for sports (mainly football) and musical activities (mainly guitar). Other popular choices included cooking workshops (baking, Polish cuisine), artistic activities (painting, photography), first aid courses and board games.
- School and education are important elements in life strategies of the whole Polish community in Lewisham. Our interviewees admit that the place where they have met most of their Polish friends is ‘in front of the school gate’. From the point of view of encouraging Polish youth to get involved in the Young Mayor programme as well as to become a Young Advisors, the best strategy would be to use schools as a tool to reach out to the Polish parents and benefit from their help in trying to encourage Polish youth to participate. However, this method would not be fully compatible with the spirit of the above-mentioned programmes, where the emphasis is put on peer learning and recruitment through peer groups (see also Peer Outreach Team in GLA, Kordasiewicz 2014a).



Young advisors and LPC project partners farewell picture, after Young Advisors meeting, 28.11.2016, photograph by Mirosław Kraszewski.

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Annex

List of Interviewees¹⁷

Number	Gender	Age (span)	Principal role in the research
1	male	30-40	migrant, parent of a young person
2	female	20	young person with mixed Polish background
3	female	30-40	migrant, parent of young people
4	female	13	migrant, young person
5	female	30-40	migrant parent of young person
6	male	30-40	Migrant
7	female	40-50	Migrant
8	female	11	migrant, young person
9	female	30-40	migrant, parent of young person
10	female	50-60	migrant, children in Poland
11	female	30-40	migrant, activist, parent of young people
12	male	40-50	catholic priest
13-19	female	25-35	parents of preschool children
20	female	30-40	migrant, parent of young people
21	female	80-90	migrant from the post-WWII wave
22	male	30-40	migrant, businessman
23-27	female	25-40	migrants, parents
24	male	30-40	migrant, parent of a young person
25	female	30-40	migrant, parent of a young person
26	female	16	migrant, young person
27	female	40-50	migrant, parent of young people
28	male	18	migrant, young person
29	female	30-40	migrant, businesswoman, parent of a young person
30	male	30-40	migrant, businessman, parent of a young person
31	female	80-90	migrant from the post-WWII wave
32	male	40-50	migrant, activist
33	male	30-40	migrant, businessman
34	female	35	Migrant, parent of young people

¹⁷ Unless otherwise specified, the term 'migrant' refers to a migrant with Polish background from the post-2004-accession period.

List of experts and project partners

Number	Name	Role	Field
35	Donatus Anyanwu	expert	mayor, Lambeth
36	Louise Ryan	expert	Academic
37-38	Richard Parkes and an associate	expert	youth work
39	Michał Garapich	expert	academic
40	Agnieszka Łokaj	expert	Polish activist
41	Katy Brown	partner	youth work
42	Kalbir Shukra	partner	academic
43	Malcolm Ball	partner	youth work

A workshop with young people guide

MEETING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE
Saturday 16th of July, 12:00 a.m.
Lewisham Polish Centre in Forest Hill
8 Waldram Park Road, London SE23 2PN

12:00 – 12:45 GREETING AND INTRODUCTIONS (incl. YM)

MAP – WHERE DO I LIVE, WHERE DO I HANG AROUND?

YOUNG MAYOR PROGRAMME – short INFO

12:45-13:30 EXPLORING LPC

FIRST IMPRESSIONS. LIKES & DISLIKES (general discussion)

IDEAS WHAT TO DO AND HOW TO GET TO YOUNG PEOPLE (work in small groups)

SHARING THE IDEAS (general discussion)

[PIZZA]

13:30-14:00 EXPANDING THE MAP

INTERACTIVE LEWISHAM MAP

Interview with a young Polish person

INTERVIEW/TALK WITH YOUNG (POLISH) PEOPLE IN LEWISHAM: a GUIDE

INTRODUCTION & INFORMATION

- About the project – young Polish people in Lewisham, (Centre of Migration Research) University of Warsaw, **funding for activities, e.g. sport or art accessories, cinema or theatre...**
- [May – July] Information on Monday meeting – young advisors meeting in Lewisham Town Hall, Catford, London, SE6 4RU <http://www.b-involved.org/>
- [May – July] Information on Saturday workshop – meeting – pizza – noon, in 8 Waldram Park, Polish The centre Lewisham (Lewisham Polish Centre – LPC) London SE23 2PN, <https://www.facebook.com/lewishampolishcentre/>
- [October] the survey on activities in LPC and the Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mlodziLPCyouth>

INQUIRY AREAS:

1. About you: how long have you lived in the UK? In London / Lewisham? Parents, siblings (what do they do)? Where did you live in Poland (another country)? Or were you born here?
(Parents)
2. Living in the UK – likes / dislikes? (Languages – spoken at home, at school?)
 - a) EU Referendum – what do you think? Has anything changed? Talks, your experience?
3. School? Where is it? What are the people like (students, teachers)? likes / dislikes
 - a) Choosing the school? Role of Parents? Homework? What sort of contact is there between parents and teachers?
 - b) Other Polish people at school?
4. Neighbourhood (what does it mean) – what people live here, diversities? (age, economic, ethnic). Likes / dislikes – about neighbourhood, places liked / disliked, how would you describe the Lewisham Borough (or the neighbourhood you identify with) to a person that has never been here? Problems?
 - a) Young people in the borough / neighbourhood? (activities? Good or bad for you?)
 - b) Ethnic composition of the borough: Poles? Other people? Interactions? Black and minority ethnic groups (BME), people of different ethnic backgrounds? 'Black' (pl. *czarny*) people?
 - c) Safety in the borough? Unpleasant / antisocial behaviour? In general? Witnessing? Experiencing?
5. Free time (after school and weekend, additional activities)
 - a. Who do you spend your time with (ethnic background)?
 - b. Holidays – spent in the UK or in Poland?
6. Identity – do you feel Polish? How? To what extent?
7. Other Poles – many, few? Where? Diversity? How do they integrate?

Age

Gender

School

Parents – education and professional activity, Housing situation

Contact

An interview with a Polish migrant guide

INTERVIEW WITH A POLISH MIGRANT (PARENT) IN LEWISHAM: a GUIDE

I LEWISHAM AND SURROUNDINGS

- What would you describe as **'my neighborhood' today**? How would you describe the inhabitants of this place?
- How long have you **lived/worked in Lewisham**? How would you describe Lewisham and its people in comparison to other London boroughs? Are they different from other communities?
- What kind of people can you meet in Lewisham? What about the **internal diversity in the district** (race, nationality, lifestyle, rich and poor)? Are there any misunderstandings or conflicts between different categories of the inhabitants? What kind of conflicts?
- How would you describe the **Polish community in Lewisham**? How many Poles live here? Is it different than other Polish communities in London?
- How do they spend their **time after work, where do they work**? What are the most important Polish places in the district?
- **Is the Polish community diversified**? What would you say are the most important sub-groups? (age, length of stay in the UK, lifestyle, work, education)? Are there any joint actions or, on the other hand, misunderstandings or conflicts among the Polish inhabitants of Lewisham?

II MIGRATION HISTORY (if applicable)

- **When did you come to the UK**? What were you doing in Poland before the departure (where did you live, where did you work?)
- Please describe **your situation after the arrival** (briefly: where did you live, what did you do? The most important places and changes so far)
- Do you often visit Poland? Do you keep in touch with family and friends back there? Identity – do you and to what extent do you feel Polish? What are your **plans for the future**? Would you like to go back to Poland?
- Would you say that **Poles living in the UK** are different from British citizens and members of other ethnic groups?
- What do you think about the referendum and the decision to leave the UE? Would you say that British attitude towards Poles in the UK has changed after the **Brexit** referendum? Have you personally experienced any changes?

III SOCIAL, CIVIC AND CULTURAL ACTIVITY

- Who you usually spend your time with after work? Who do you stay in touch with [find out: the nature of the social circles, family, colleagues, neighbors, Poles or different ethnic groups etc.]
- Do you have good relationships with your colleagues? Do you meet outside of work? What do they/you do on such occasions?
- How do you spend your time after work (regular day, the most frequent activities?) [Find out about the shopping, sports, socializing e.g. in pubs, bars]
- Are there any cultural institutions nearby: libraries, cultural centres, cinemas, theatres, museums? Have you visited any of them? Which one, how often, when did you visit it last time? Who visits such places?
- Have you ever heard about Lewisham Polish Centre? Have you been there? How often, when did you visit it last time? What's going on there? What kind of people go there? (If you do not know, please, imagine.)
- Do you engage in any social activities/organizations? Are you interested in politics? Do you take part in elections in Poland and in the UK (local, national, etc.)? Are you a member of any trade union, political party or any other organization of this sort? Please say a few things about it.

IV EDUCATION

- Which kind of school do your children attend (public, private, Catholic or other)? What did you consider when choosing this school? How are schools in the UK different from schools in Poland (advantages / drawbacks)? What do you know about schools in your area? Which schools do Polish children go to?
- Did you like your school? Why? Are there any bad memories or good memories about the school time?
- Did you talk with your parents about school? Did parents help you to study and do homework? Did your parents press you to study hard? Do you help your children to study (how?) or are they able to study without your help?
- Did your parents talk to you about what job to choose after graduating, or what to study? Do you talk to your children about it (or you are going to do it)? Are such talks important?

Survey of desired activities at Lewisham Polish Centre

Young people from Lewisham and whereabouts!
Lewisham Polish Centre in Forest Hill
8 Waldram Park Road, London SE23 2PN wants to change for you.

PLEASE TELL US WHAT ACTIVITIES WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN AT LPC:

- sport activities (which).....**
- artistic activities (which?).....**
- cooking workshops.....**
- quiet work and chill-out room.....**
- board games (which?).....**
- music activities (which?).....**
- first aid courses**
- going to cinema or theatre together.....**
- watching films from the projector at LPC.....**

Other ideas:.....

WHEN COULD YOU COME AROUND TO LPC? PLEASE CIRCLE

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
3-5 p.m.	3-5 p.m.	3-5 p.m.	3-5 p.m.	3-5 p.m.	3-5 p.m.	10 a.m.-1 p.m.
5-7 p.m.	5-7 p.m.	5-7 p.m.	5-7 p.m.	5-7 p.m.	5-7 p.m.	1-5 p.m.

Other hours?

TELL US SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF:

- girl**
- boy**

Age

- 10 years old and below
- 11-13 years old
- 14-16 years old
- 17 years old and over

Have you ever been to Lewisham Polish Centre?

- Yes. On what occasion?.....
.....
- No

Can we contact you when organizing something with young people in mind?

- Yes
- No

Please leave us your preferred contact (use CAPITAL letters please)

.....

Contact: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mlodziLPCyouth>
a.kordasiewicz@uw.edu.pl
<https://www.facebook.com/lewishampolishcentre/?fref=ts>
http://obmf.pl/projekty/projekty_POleng.html

Under the “Londoner-Pole-Citizen (LPC)” project, the Centre of Migration Research Foundation (CMRF) working together with Lewisham Polish Centre, Goldsmiths, University of London and the London Borough of Lewisham Authority reach out to young people (13-24 years old) with Polish background in the London Borough of Lewisham.

Timing: April – December 2016

Funding: Project is co-financed by the Senate of the Republic of Poland from the grant within the framework of delegation of public task of patronage over Polish diaspora and Poles abroad. **Pass on to your Polish colleagues and anybody interested!**