Ireland, from boom to bust: to what extent has the downfall in the Irish economy impacted on Polish migrants living and working in Ireland?

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Ireland, from boom to bust: to what extent has the downfall in the Irish economy impacted on Polish migrants living and working in Ireland?

John Simon

Abstract
The need for workers during Ireland’s so-called ‘Celtic Tiger’ era attracted migrants from many countries. In 2004 Ireland opened its borders to the New Member States (NMS) favouring migrant workers from the accession countries. This resulted in migrants from the NMS entering the country seeking employment, the largest group being from Poland.

When the Irish economy started to decline in the late 2000s both nationals and migrants started to leave the country. However, many Polish migrants have continued to remain in the country. This thesis explores the reasons why Polish migrants came to Ireland and why they continue to remain in the country despite its economic decline post 2010 when austerity became a reality

This thesis argues that most of those Polish migrants who took part in this study are well educated. Most claim that they have not been discriminated against in terms of their social needs, conditions of employment, salary, or promotion in their place of work. Although they originally migrated to Ireland for economic reasons the recent measurers of austerity introduced since 2010 has not had any major impact on their standard of living. This thesis argues that despite high unemployment and measurers of austerity introduced by the Irish government since 2010, most Polish migrants wish to remain in Ireland because of their quality of life, better job opportunities and personal commitments.

It concludes that leaving Ireland is not that simple, their domestic circumstances have now changed, and some have got married, have families and enjoy a better quality of life in Ireland than in Poland. Their decision whether to remain or leave Ireland no longer rests solely with them. They now have to consider their domestic situation, their family’s opinions, and their future. Most are of the opinion that even if they became unemployed while in Ireland they could survive financially and returning to Poland is an option that they do not wish to contemplate.
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This research has been a challenging project for me trying to meet the demands of work and the necessary criteria for the development of this thesis. I would like to take this opportunity to thank a few people without whose help this study would not have materialised. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Henrietta O'Connor, University of Leicester for all her time and help in advising and encouraging me during the development of this thesis. Dr. O'Connor was always on hand to give advice whenever I requested it and always replied to my requests for assistance in a professional manner. In addition, I would like to thank each and every one of those Polish nationals who participated in the process of data collection for this research. I am extremely grateful for their time, commitment and assistance. Last but not least a special word of thanks to Agnieszka Herod, Dawid Pawlicki, Karolina Jabczuga and Rafal Plucinski for their assistance.

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<td>CAQDAS</td>
<td>Computer-assisted Qualitative Data Analysis</td>
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<td>CLMS</td>
<td>Centre for Labour Market Studies</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Central Statistics Office</td>
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<td>CV</td>
<td>Curriculum Vita</td>
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<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
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<td>EMS</td>
<td>European Monitory System</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>EMEA</td>
<td>Europe the Middle East and Africa</td>
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<td>EURESIS</td>
<td>European Studies on Religion and State Intervention</td>
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<td>ECB</td>
<td>European Central Bank</td>
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<td>FAS</td>
<td>Industrial Training and Employment Authority</td>
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<td>FDI</td>
<td>Foreign Direct Investment</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
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<td>GUS</td>
<td>Polish Central Statistics Office</td>
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<td>IBEC</td>
<td>Irish Business and Employers Confederation</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Office</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monitory Fund</td>
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<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>MCA</td>
<td>Migrant Careers and Aspirations</td>
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<td>NCCRI</td>
<td>National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism</td>
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<td>NMS</td>
<td>New Member States</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>PPSN</td>
<td>Personal Public Service Numbers</td>
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<td>QNHS</td>
<td>Quarterly National Household Survey</td>
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<td>SME</td>
<td>Small to Medium Enterprise</td>
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<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Educational and Training</td>
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Chapter 1
Introduction
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Background to this Research Problem

Ireland’s rapid economic growth did not happen by accident, government policies introduced during the 1960s regarding economic and educational change were instrumental in creating the ‘Celtic Tiger’ (Dorgan, 2006). In order to understand the magnitude of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ and the migration of Polish migrant workers to Ireland, it is necessary to review the circumstances that led to the development of this economic phenomenon.

In the 1920s the Irish Free State now referred to as Republic of Ireland, emerged as a result of the country being partitioned by the UK. This fledgling state, having broken its links with Britain, had little to offer in terms of economic policies that could stimulate economic growth (O’Grada, 1997). He argues that the southern Irish economy during the early part of its existence performed so badly that its political and economic independence from Britain seem of little consequence. Ireland’s standard of living was considered no better in the 1950s than it had been during the 1920s. It is therefore not surprising that long periods of recession followed with little hope of economic growth (O’Grada, 2008). Figure 1.0 shows the level of Ireland’s GDP Growth Rates, from 1939-1958, among those countries that remained neutral during the Second World War.

![GDP Growth Rates 1939-58](image)

**Fig. 1.0 GDP Growth Rates 1939-58**

During the 1960s the Irish government moved away from its protectionist trade policies and focused on creating an environment that would encourage export-
oriented foreign investment. It also implemented a more progressive strategy in its educational policies (Whelan, 2011). These decisions by the Irish government would prove in later years to be major milestones in the development of Ireland’s economic, education and training philosophy, thus providing the conditions which would stimulate economic growth (Dorgan, 2006). The publication of the First Programme for Economic Expansion Whitaker (1958) proposed that the only way forward was the modernisation of the country’s economy and the introduction of new policies, which would attract foreign investment, industrialisation, and the development of an export-driven economy. This was considered to be an important time for economic change, since the 1960s were witnessing a boom period for other established economies.

However, during the 1970s Ireland reacted to the global slowdown by running large fiscal deficits. This resulted in the country becoming embroiled in a national debt crisis during the 1980s. Income tax rates introduced in order to stabilise the country’s deficit had reached unsustainable levels. At the time, net emigration from Ireland was running at over 40,000 people a year. When compared with the rest of Europe, the average income per head of an Irish worker was only two-thirds of the European average (Ronayne, 1994). The Irish government viewed this situation as a major drain of its principle asset, i.e. its younger highly skilled workforce. From 1987 onwards, policies introduced by the Irish government to restrain fiscal spending were beginning to show results and by 1989 Ireland’s debt problems had become more sustainable. In addition, the introduction of new policies within the EMS set about establishing the ground rules for monetary stability. With the restoration of macroeconomic stability and sound economic policies, Ireland’s economy began to grow (Whelan, 2011).

1.1 Ireland’s Economic Growth
The results of joining the EEC as it was known in 1973, contributed significantly to the Ireland’s economic growth. The European Commission (Aug 2012) argues that Ireland, as a result of being a member of the EU, has qualified for over €20 billion in Structural and Cohesion funding, which has assisted in the development of the country’s modern infrastructure. The benefits of Ireland’s EU membership, a modern infrastructure and a qualified and skilled workforce attracted Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). It is estimated that over 700,000 jobs have been created in Ireland since joining the EU and over €30 billion in foreign direct investment. It argues that
Ireland’s traditional agricultural based economy has moved on to a hi-tech manufacturing sector exporting its products to global markets. As Ireland’s export markets developed, it became attractive for investment by US multi-nationals wishing to obtain a foothold into Europe (European Commission Paper, 2012).

Since the 1970s multinationals have continued to be attracted to Ireland. Many sources claim that this attraction is built on Ireland’s low rate of corporate tax, the fact that the country lies on the periphery of Europe, operates through the medium of English and has at its disposal an educated workforce coupled with a flexible and open economy (Mac Éinri, 2001). These multinationals, many of which are of US origin, operate in the financial, chemical, IT and pharmaceutical sectors. They provide excellent employment and contribute significantly to both the local and national economy of the country. These multinationals are also a major recruiting vehicle for graduates emerging from the country’s universities. There are a number of key findings that explain the attraction of FDI in Ireland. The Economist Intelligence Unit (2012) surveyed 315 senior executives from a number of international companies across the United States, Europe the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) and Asia Pacific engaged in the financial, IT and pharmaceutical sectors in order to ascertain why these organisations selected Ireland. In addition, they surveyed senior executives from some of the largest FDI operations in Ireland. The results concluded that these organisations selected Ireland because of the following, one, access to EU internal markets, two, taxation infrastructure, three, the availability of a skilled labour force and four a stable legal and fiscal framework.

From 1994 until the mid 2000s Ireland’s economy was booming with employment opportunities for workers in most of the industrial sectors at a record high and GDP almost 8%. Never since the inception of the state had the country experienced economic growth of this magnitude (OECD, 1999). Unemployment was at a rate of 4% which was the lowest level ever recorded in the history of the state (FAS Unemployment Trends in Ireland, 1997-2002). This period of economic growth has been referred to as the ‘Celtic Tiger’ era, a phrase alleged to have been coined by the UK economist Kevin Gardiner when comparing Ireland’s rapid economic growth to that of the Asian tiger economies (Gardiner, 1994). The rapid economic growth of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ era orchestrated a demand for additional workers to fill the vacancies in
the various industrial sectors (Murphy, 2000). Figure 1.1 shows Ireland’s average annual rate of real GDP during the years 1970-2004.

Fig. 1.1 Ireland’s Economic Growth 1970-2004

1.2 Ireland’s Migrant Workforce

The combination of government policies regarding VET and economic growth, its membership of the EU and FDI were instrumental in the birth of the ‘Celtic Tiger’. This phenomenon resulted in a skills shortage with Irish nationals becoming selective about the types of jobs they were prepared to accept (National Skills Conference, Oct 2006). In order to address this skills shortage the Irish government pursued a policy of permitting migrant workers from those countries outside the EU encouraging them to take up employment opportunities in Ireland under the ‘Work Permit System’ (Ruhs, 2005). Many migrants found employment in areas classified as low-skilled sectors, some of which had been vacated by Irish nationals (Moriarty, E. et al 2012). The majority of migrant workers found employment in the construction, manufacturing and hospitality sectors, Beggs, J. and Pollock, J. (2006) see figure 1.2.
This practice of employing migrant workers began to address the skills gap. Many companies argued that migrant workers were an essential ingredient for continued economic expansion and without them the economy would not have grown in the manner it did (IBEC, 2000). It could be argued that government agencies considered these migrant workers as bridging the skills gap within the country’s industrial sectors for as long as they were required (FÁS, Labour Market Reviews, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006) and (Casey, 2006). Some media sources claim that Ireland squandered part of its potential economic growth by not availing of the true potential of these migrant workers. Many of these migrants were highly skilled and would have made a greater contribution to the skill shortage, the saying being ‘… too many graduates waiting on tables’ (Barrett et al, 2006).

1.3 Polish Migrant Workers

In 2004 Ireland opened its borders to workers from the New Member States (NMS) (Barrell et al 2006). This resulted in the Irish Government implementing a policy of favouring those migrant workers from the accession countries rather than migrant workers from outside the EU (Ruhs, 2009). Workers from the accession states were now in a position to apply for their own Personal Public Service Numbers (PPSN). Figure 1.3 shows the number in 1000s of PPSN issued by Ireland to EU10 nationals during the years 2004 to 2006.
The change in government policy by the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment (2003) favouring migrant workers from the accession countries resulted in a large number of Polish migrants migrating to Ireland. However, few Poles resided in Ireland prior to Poland gaining membership of the EU in 2004 (Roeder, 2011). Since 2004 there has been an ever-increasing number of Polish migrants entering Ireland peaking in 2006 (Krings, 2010). Figure 1.4 shows the numbers of Polish migrant workers to arrive in Ireland in comparison to other NMS nationals (Krings et al, 2009).

![Inflow NMS Nationals](image)

Fig. 1.4 Inflow NMS Nationals

Various researchers have studied Polish migration and have cited a number of factors, which they argue motivated these migrants to migrate to Ireland. Sources such as Kropiwiec (2006) argue that, the principle motivation factor or ‘push’ factor was their need to earn money in order to create a better lifestyle for them and their families back in Poland. According to Grabowska (2003) Polish migrants were attracted to Ireland because it was one of the first nations to allow immediate access to its labour market after Poland’s entry into the EU. There were other ‘pull’ factors, Ireland was an English speaking country, and it offered better wages, better working conditions and the availability of work. These push/pull factors stem from a process of economic and political transition in Poland coupled with a decline in living standards and rising unemployment. She goes on to argue that, it was not only for economic reasons that Polish people decided to leave Poland, many university graduates saw little or no opportunity in their home country for professional development within their area of expertise. Because so many Polish migrant workers migrated to Ireland, they now
form one of the largest ethnic groups residing and working in Ireland Kropiwiec (2006). Figure 1.5 illustrates the migrant flows from the main origin countries since 2004 based on PPS numbers issued by the Department of Social Protection.

![Immigration flows by main countries of origin](image)

**Fig. 1.5 Immigration flows by main countries of Origin**

The National Census of (2006) recorded over 63,000 Polish migrants living in Ireland, but this figure can be challenged since it is understood that not all non-Irish nationals took part in the Census of (2006). However, the National Census of (2011), reports that there are now over 120,000 Polish nationals living in Ireland. The impact of Polish migrants has been so dramatic that a report in the Irish Times Newspaper (Oct 2007) referred to the editor of the magazine Sofa, a paper directed towards the interests of young Poles living in Ireland and the UK calling for the Polish language to become recognised as the third spoken language in Ireland. These comments were not very well received by both Irish nationals and Polish nationals. However, it could be argued that the influx of Polish workers has impacted on Irish society and has contributed significantly to the development of the Irish economy (Titley, 2009).

### 1.4 Ireland’s Economic Decline and Unemployment

In 2008 Ireland started to experience a downturn in its economy, the construction industry where a substantial number of nationals and migrant workers were employed went into decline leaving most of them unemployed as outlined to in MCA Newsletter No. 2: (July 2009), IBEC (July 2009) and IBEC (October 2010). Unemployment figures have gone from 4% during the boom period to 14.4% in Sept 2012 (CSO Live Register, Sept 2012). Figure 1.6 illustrates the unemployment rates from 2001-2010.
It shows that up until 2007 the average rate of unemployment in Ireland was quite stable at around 4.5%, but has risen dramatically since 2008 when the economic downturn first started (IMF, 2011).

Fig. 1.6 Rise in Ireland’s Unemployment Figures 2001-2010

Ireland as a nation is now facing into years of austerity (Honohan, May 2009). This economic predicament differs from the days of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ when Ireland was experiencing GDP growth rates on average of 6% per year. Ireland’s domestic economy is experiencing one of its worst periods within the past 15 years and according to IBEC (Jan 2013) Ireland’s retail sector is still fragile. Figure 1.7 shows Ireland’s GDP and GNP growth rates from 2007 to 2011 with 2009 being one of its worst.

Fig. 1.7 Ireland’s GDP and GNP Rates 2007-2011
Figure 1.8 illustrates the effects of economic growth and economic decline on Ireland’s unemployment figures. It shows that in 1985 when Ireland’s economy was in decline it had an unemployment rate of over 17% when seasonally adjusted. This rate was reduced to less than 4% by the year 2001. However, by the end of 2008 when the economy went back into recession, unemployment was on the increase and by 2012 unemployment stood at 14.5%, CSO (2010) and (Eurostat, 13/10/12).

![Unemployment 1985-2012](image)

Fig. 1.8 Ireland’s Unemployment Rates 1985-2012

According to Ruhs (2009) many people comprising of both Irish nationals and non-Irish nationals are leaving the country in search of a better lifestyle. However, up until 2009 only 30,000 Central and Eastern Europeans decided to leave Ireland and return to their home country with the majority deciding to remain in Ireland (Steen, 2010). Although many migrant workers have left the country since the downturn in the economy, it can be argued that there are still a substantial number of Polish migrants remaining, as the Census of (2011) reports. Polish migrants who are living and working in Ireland continue to impact on Irish society, both from a social and political perspective (Kropiwiec, 2006).

According to Iglicka et al (2010) almost 90% of Polish migrants arrived in Ireland after EU admission in 2004. The average age of a Polish migrant is 27.5 yrs, 85% have finished full-time education and 84% are employed. They go on to argue that regarding Polish females, 50% are employed in the retail and hospitality sectors. As referred to previously, one of the principle push/pull factors that attracted Polish migrants to Ireland was their goal to earn enough money, which they could send home.
to their dependents. Figure 1.9 illustrates the level remittance from Polish workers by their host country for the years 2004, 2007 and 2009. What is significant about this figure is that since the economic downturn in both Ireland and the UK, Germany’s share of remittance from Polish workers has risen, whereas the amount from Polish workers residing in Ireland and the UK has declined.

Fig. 1.9 Remittances from Polish Workers by Country of Residence; 2004-2009

1.5 Research Question

Since Polish nationals form the largest proportion of migrant workers from the accession countries to remain in Ireland the central question that this study seeks to investigate is:

‘If Polish migrant workers came to Ireland during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ era solely for economic reasons, why have they decided to remain in the country now that Ireland is in recession and facing years of austerity’?

1.6 Objectives of this Research

The objectives of this study can be summarised as follows:

1 Identify the ‘push/pull’ factors which drove Polish migrant workers to migrate to Ireland post accession?
2 Examine the experiences of Polish migrant workers while living and working in Ireland with special emphases on the period post 2010 when the Irish economy went into decline?
3 Explore the experiences of Polish migrants living and working in other destinations?
4 Consider as to what extent Polish migrants have integrated into the Irish workplace and Irish society?

5 Discuss the views of Polish migrants as to how the economic decline and uncertainty post 2010 has impacted on their lives, the lives of their families, and to what extent do these circumstances influence their decision whether to remain in Ireland or return to Poland?

Listed below are four research themes or issues that represent the critical path, by which this research question can be answered:

(1) The migration factor, to address the rationale for Polish migration in order to understand their reasons for remaining in Ireland.

(2) The experience factor, analyse their experience of living and working in Ireland in order to determine whether the findings of researchers still hold true, post 2010 when austerity became a reality.

(3) The decision factor, because most Polish participants have been living in Ireland for almost 10 yrs, their circumstances have changed, determine whether these circumstances have influenced their decision as to whether to remain in Ireland or move elsewhere.

(4) The comparison factor, examine the migration patterns of Polish migrants to countries other than Ireland.

1.7 The Significance of this Research

The significance of this research is that those Polish migrants who migrated to Ireland post accession (2004) in order to improve their quality of life are now experiencing the austerity and uncertainty of a country in the midst of a major recession with massive debts and an unemployment rate in excess of 14% (CSO Live Register, Sept 2012). This study examines the diverse experiences of a group of young Polish migrants who migrated to Ireland post accession, exploring their background, rationale for selecting Ireland as a destination and their reasons for remaining in Ireland despite its economic decline. It highlights the diversity of migration by firstly exploring Ireland’s need for a migrant workforce and the driving force that prompted Polish migrants to leave their homeland seeking employment in Ireland during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ period. Secondly, these Polish migrants originally came for economic reasons and have been living and working in Ireland since 2004,
this study examines the effects of the recent measurers of austerity introduced post 2010 and how they have impacted on their quality of life. Thirdly, since their circumstances have now changed, this study focuses on the reasons why Polish migrants continue to remain in Ireland despite its economic decline, their opinions regarding future employment, quality of life, family opinions regarding Ireland, their links with Poland, the challenges/opportunities facing both them and their children by remaining in Ireland. Four, this study examines the experiences of Polish migrants who migrated to other destinations other than Ireland. It explores their quality of life and the issues that impact on the migration process and their families.

This thesis will argue that, one, most of those Polish migrants who took part in this study are well educated and are not discriminated against in terms of their social needs, employment opportunities, wage structure, or opportunities for advancement in their place of work. Two, despite high unemployment and measurers of austerity post 2010, most Polish migrants wish to remain in Ireland, since they have experienced a better quality of life, better job opportunities and see a brighter future for both themselves and their families in Ireland. Three, most Polish migrants are of the opinion that even if they became unemployed while in Ireland they could still survive financially and returning to Poland is an option most do not wish to contemplate. Four, the experiences of Polish migrants living and working in other countries have certain similarities to those experienced by those migrants living and working in Ireland.

1.8 Justification for this Research
This research was initiated by the fact that few Poles resided in Ireland prior to their country gaining membership of the EU in 2004 and have now become one of the largest ethnic communities living in the country. However, it is not clear as to why so many Polish migrants selected Ireland as a destination and why they remain now that the country is facing economic uncertainty.

It should be noted, that a substantial amount of the literature is pre 2010 and does not address the real effects of economic decline and austerity experienced by those living in Ireland post 2010. The studies carried out by researchers such as Grabowska (2003), Kropiwiec, et al (2006), Krings et al (2009) and Nolka and Nowosielski
(2009), regarding the rationale for Polish migration and their experiences of living and working in Ireland are somewhat dated. Since then significant changes have occurred regarding the direction of the Irish economy and the quality of life in Ireland. Whereas, those carried out by Krings (2010), Steen (2010), (Iglicka, et al. 2010), Mühlau et al (2011), the OECD (May 2012) and Krings et al (2011), Krings et al (2012) and Wickham (2013) are more recent and provide a better understanding of Polish migration and their quality of life in Ireland. The purpose of this study could be classified as twofold, one, are the conclusions reached by researchers still valid in today’s economic uncertainty and two, if Polish migrant workers came to Ireland solely for economic reasons, why have they decided to remain in the country now that Ireland is in recession and facing years of austerity?

There are mixed views regarding the lifestyle of Polish migrants while they were living in Poland, their employment opportunities and their future prospects should they continue to live in Poland. However, it could be argued that their quality of life while living in Poland was so poor that the austerity which Irish nationals are now experiencing is of little significance to those Polish migrants living in Ireland. In other words it could be argued that, coming from a country recently released from the grip of a communist past they are conditioned to austerity and consider their quality of life in Ireland superior to that in Poland despite the Irish recession. Kropiwiec (2006) argues that the motivation factor for Polish migrants selecting Ireland was their need to earn money in order to create a better lifestyle for them and their families back in Poland. But, if that was only reason why they came to Ireland why did they not return to Poland when the recession started to bite? Whereas, Grabowska (2003) argues that Polish migrants were attracted to Ireland because Ireland was one of the first nations to allow immediate access to NMS after their entry into the EU. There were also the other attractions of better wages, better working conditions and the availability of work which made Ireland a popular choice for these young migrant workers (Okolski, 2010). Even if this analogy is correct, why were there not similar numbers from the other accession countries entering Ireland seeking employment and why do these Polish migrants remain in Ireland now that the country is in recession?

In the past, countries such as the UK and the US were frequented by Irish migrant workers seeking employment (Walters, 1999) and (Gayle, 1993). Because Britain was
close to Ireland and there were no restrictions for Irish entry, it became a popular
destination for those Irish migrants seeking employment. Over the centuries many
Irish nationals migrated to the UK and there are now a sizable number of UK citizens
who are of Irish extraction. Most immigrated in order to improve their quality of life
and choose to remain for a variety of reasons, the principle one being that their
domestic circumstances had changed, some married, had children, purchased houses
and they found that their quality of life was better in their adopted land than it was in
their homeland (http://www.movinghere.org.uk/galleries/histories/irish). Since these
circumstances can be argued as grounds for migrants remaining in their host country,
it follows therefore that similar reasons exist as to why Polish migrants decide to
remain in Ireland.

Like all EU citizens, Polish nationals have the right to come and work in Ireland.
Ireland as a nation has seen a shift from a predominantly indigenous to a more
cosmopolitan workforce. It appears that Polish nationals are no longer migrant
workers who might move on when recession bites, but a people who have now put
down roots in Ireland and intend to stay. In addition, their ability to claim EU
citizenship rights could encourage prolonged residence in their adopted country (Ryan
et al, 2009). This diversity has many dimensions consisting of race, language,
customs, values and beliefs. On the other hand, is it reasonable to argue that they, like
so many Irish nationals, may have lost their jobs and have chosen to remain in the
country for domestic reasons? There are obviously sound reasons for Polish migrants
deciding to remain in Ireland, and it is for that reason that I am proposing to carry out
this study.

My hypothesis is that, most of these young Polish migrants had decided to migrate to
Ireland for a couple of years in order to earn money and then return home. Their
reasons for selecting Ireland were based on information they had received from
friends already working in Ireland, the Internet and advertisements by Irish employers
in national newspapers. However, they have now been residing in Ireland for almost
10 years and their circumstances have changed. However, some are now married with
children, others are employed in good jobs, have set up businesses and enjoy a
favourable quality of life. Others have purchased homes and despite the recession
most consider their future in Ireland much better than if they were to return to Poland.
1.9 Research Methodology

The research methodology for this study is based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. The data is collected using a research instrument incorporating closed and open-ended questions issued to each participant and conducted using a process of in-depth interviews as described in (Bryman, 2012). The research sample comprises of a cross section of young male and female Polish migrant workers living in the Dublin region for at least 5 years and working in a variety of jobs. Using the same questionnaire, additional Polish migrants were contacted and asked to complete the document. On completion an analysis of the findings was carried out, drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

The methodology used in the analysis of the data collected for this study is based on the recommended systems of data analysis for the combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques as outlined in (Bryman, 2012). Before the Research Instrument was finalised a ‘Pilot Test’ of the instrument took place in order to determine its validity, all of which will be addressed in greater depth in Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Data Collection.

1.10 Structure of this Thesis

This thesis consists of 7 chapters:
Chapter 1: Introduction.
Chapter 2: Migration, Culture and a Polish Perspective of Life Abroad.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Data Collection.
Chapter 4: Life in Poland and Rationale for Migrating.
Chapter 5: Experiences of Poles Living and Working in Ireland.
Chapter 6: Staying in Ireland or Moving Elsewhere.
Chapter 7: Conclusions.

Chapter 2 will focus on four principle issues, one, ‘the migration factor’, to address their rationale for migrating in order to understand their reasons for remaining in Ireland. Two, ‘the experience factor’, analysing their experience of living and working in Ireland in order to determine whether the findings of the researchers still held true, post 2010 when austerity became a reality. Three, ‘the decision factor’, because most
Polish participants have been living in Ireland for almost 10 yrs, their circumstances have changed, influencing their decision as to whether to remain in Ireland or move elsewhere. Four, ‘the comparison factor’, examine the migration patterns of Polish migrants to countries other than Ireland.

Chapter 3 discusses the various social science research methodologies, the rationale for selecting a particular methodology for this study and the process of data collection. The chapter begins with a discussion regarding the various methods of gathering information by the social scientist. This is followed by the rationale for selecting a particular methodology for this study, the design of the research instrument and the profile of the participants. The chapter goes on to describe pilot testing process, the design of the research instrument and ethical issues applicable to this study. Finally, it profiles the research sample, describes the methodology used in accessing the research sample, the fieldwork, data presentation, analysis and conclusions.

Chapter 4 the first of three results chapters explores the ‘push/pull’ factors that gave Polish migrants the impetus to migrate to Ireland in search of employment post 2004. It examines their perception of Poland in relation to their expectations for the future, their level of education, job opportunities and conditions of employment, their quality of life and their reasons for selecting Ireland as a destination. In conclusion, it compares the content of the findings with the issues raised during the literature review.

Chapter 5 the second of three results chapters focuses on their employment status, their quality of life, and coping with domestic issues in Ireland especially since 2010 when the true effects of austerity became a reality. In conclusion it compares the content of the findings with the issues raised during the literature review.

Chapter 6 the third of three results chapters focuses on the reasons why a large proportion of Polish migrants have decided to remain in Ireland now that the country is in recession. It examines their vision of the future and whether they consider themselves better off by remaining in Ireland or moving elsewhere. In conclusion it compares the content of the findings with the issues raised during the literature review.
Chapter 7 the concluding chapter presents the key findings of this study. It commences with an overview of the discussions pertaining to the original question of this research. It then moves on to focus on four themes or issues on which the findings of this research are based;

(1) The migration factor.
(2) The experience factor.
(3) The decision factor.
(4) The comparison factor.

This chapter concludes by considering the limitations of this study, suggestions for further research and the contribution of this research to existing knowledge.

1.11 Conclusions

As a sovereign nation for over 90 years, the Republic of Ireland has seen many changes. It has experienced long periods of recession and its standard of living no better in the 1950s than it had been during the 1920s (O’ Grada, 1997). It has emerged from being classified as one of the poorest countries in Europe, to having an open flexible economy with a well-educated workforce. Radical policies modernised the Irish economy and were instrumental in attracting foreign direct investment, industrialising the country and developing an export-driven economy. Continued changes in government policy regarding multinationals have attracted further FDI in Ireland by providing high quality jobs and more investment in research and development projects. As a member of the EU, Ireland has benefited from EU structural funds by building a more efficient and effective infrastructure (European Commission Paper, Aug 2012). It also benefited from the contribution made by migrant workers to its economic growth during the boom period, most notably the Polish community (Okolski, 2010).

This chapter has explored the historical events, which led to Ireland’s economic growth, its need for migrant workers and its decline post 2010. It presented an overview of the background to the research topic, the objectives and themes that form the basis of this study, the significance and justification for the research, its research methodology and the structure of the thesis.
Chapter 2
Migration, Culture and a Polish Perspective of Life Abroad.
Chapter 2: Migration, Culture and a Polish Perspective of Life Abroad.

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will focus on four principle themes or issues, one, ‘the migration factor’, to address the rationale for Polish migration in order to understand their reasons for remaining in Ireland. Two, ‘the experience factor’, analyse their experience of living and working in Ireland in order to determine whether the findings of researchers still hold true, post 2010 when austerity became a reality. Three, ‘the decision factor’, because most Polish participants have been living in Ireland for almost 10 yrs, their circumstances have changed, determine whether these circumstances have influenced their decision as to whether to remain in Ireland or move elsewhere. Four, ‘the comparison factor’, examine the migration patterns of Polish migrants to countries other than Ireland.

It should be noted that certain literature reviewed in this chapter is pre 2010 and does not address the real effects of economic decline and austerity experienced by those living in Ireland post 2010. The studies carried out by researchers such as Grabowska (2003), Kropiwiec, et al (2006), Krings et al (2009) and Nolka and Nowosielski (2009), regarding the rationale for Polish migration and their experiences of living and working in Ireland are somewhat dated. Since then significant changes have occurred regarding the direction of the Irish economy and the quality of life in Ireland. Whereas, those carried out by Krings (2010), Steen (2010), Iglicka et al, (2010), Mühlau et al (2011), the OECD (May 2012), Krings et al (2011), Krings et al (2012) and Wickham (2013) provide a more recent account of Polish migration and their quality of life in Ireland.

It should noted that the Journal of Identity and Migration Studies, the Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture, the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies and those journals and publications by the Department of Sociology Trinity College Dublin regarding European Labour Market Studies were of significance and most helpful in conducting the literature review for this study.
2.1 Concept of Migration

The concept of migration and the reasons why migrant workers decide to migrate is a subject debated by researchers such as Chiswick (1980), Barth *et al* (2004) and Dustmann and Weiss (2007). However, according to Valazquez (2000) who cites Ravensteine (1885:167-227) as having provided the first systematic principles that explain the dynamics of migration. In his work ‘The Laws of Migration’, Ravensteine (1885) argues that migration principles can be identified by five general propositions.

One, initially migration occurs over short distances from nearby villages. Two, as industry and commerce grows, migrants are attracted from more distant villages. Three, migrants from a rural background are more inclined to migrate than those from urban populations. Four, advancement in technology and modes of transport are key drivers in the migration process. Five, economic factors in the place of origin, providing the ‘push’ force, whereas, the benefits in the destination, providing the ‘pull’ force. According to Valazquez (2000) this hypotheses became the basis for further research on migration now referred to as the ‘push-pull’ theory of migration.

Appleyard (1989:486-499) takes the argument of Ravensteine (1885) a stage further and argues that the origins of international migration can be found in the economic limitations of developing countries where conditions provide the ‘push’ force for legal and illegal migration. Conditions such as low wages, unemployment and economic stagnation such as those prevailing in Ireland during the 1950s referred to by O’Grada (1997) and in Poland post accession Grabowska (2003), contribute to the ‘push’ factor. In contrast to this, the ‘pull’ factors from the receiving nations are the prospect of higher wages, employment opportunities and better welfare system were the principle attractions during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ era. Both of these factors can be considered as variables, which explain how and why international migration flows originate. This analogy is significant since it forms the basis for Polish migration to Ireland post accession and their reasons for remaining in Ireland.

According to Valazquez (2000) central to the economic model for migration is wage and income differential between the sending country and the receiving country. However, Gregory (1991:52) disagrees and cites the case where Colombian migrants migrated to neighbouring Venezuela rather than the U.S. where a more substantial
income differential existed. Another example is that of Portes (1983:76) who argues that if monitory gain is the principle ingredient then the main migration flow into the established economies of the US and Western Europe should emanate from countries within Equatorial Africa, or Haiti. It does not follow that migrants are all impoverished people, although it is recognised that monitory gain was one of the principle factors which motivated Polish migrants to migrate to Ireland. However, Gurak and Caces (1992:150-176) cite the example of the bilateral agreement of the early 1960s between Turkey and West Germany where those migrants from Turkey who came to Germany were highly skilled and not from impoverished backgrounds.

Another set of studies regarding the ‘push-pull’ factors is the focus on unemployment and underemployment. According to Gregory (1991) unemployment normally results from high rates of population in developing nations resulting in a situation where the population is growing at a greater rate than the employment. This results in a depressing of wages and promotes the practice of pushing workers to low-wage jobs, which has the propensity to emigrate. However, according to Valazquez (2000) there is no evidence to suggest that unemployment is the principle reason for emigration and suggests that unemployment is low among migrants before leaving their home country using the case of the Turks who migrated to Germany, most of whom were employed back in Turkey. Gregory (1991:53) argues that emigration in most cases originates from specific socio-economic groups and only a limited number of people leave which is not an accurate description of the level of unemployment in any particular region. Jenkins (1977:178-189) tests this hypothesis by making a comparison between the ‘push-pull’ factors pertaining to the migration of Mexican workers to the U.S. agricultural sector during the period 1948-1972. The ‘push’ factor determined by the levels of wages and employment in Mexican agricultural and the ‘pull’ factor determined by the level of wages and employment opportunities in the U.S. The results suggest that the ‘push’ factors in Mexico played a greater role than the ‘pull’ factors in the U.S.

Valazquez (2000) argues that an economy, which is almost stagnant will not provide employment for a growing population, hence, it is difficult to provide a better quality of life. However, migration also takes place during periods of economic growth in developing countries. Economic growth is shaped by capital investment in a particular
region and not necessarily in the entire country. This can create an economic boom for some locations and economic depression in other parts resulting in internal migration. Emigration can take place despite economic growth as in the case of the Tiger economies of Southeast Asia (Sassen-Koob, 1988:107-110). An alternative viewpoint held by Piore, (1979:24) which describes the origins of migration flows and is based on employers recruiting workers from other locations in order to supply their labour needs. Instead of focusing of wage differentials as a ‘pull’ factor, Piore (1979) examines the employer’s role in the recruitment process, whether it is employers acting without government involvement or both parties acting together. According to Valazquez (2000) there is support for Piore (1979) and cites the examples of foreign labour recruitment after the Second World War and the labour shortage in European countries during the European boom of the 1950s and 1960s. Most of this took place as a result of bilateral agreements between sending and receiving countries, an example of which is the case of the Turkish labour movement to Germany in 1961. However, there are alternatives to the recruitment of foreign labour when expanding economies are suffering labour shortages. Employers can opt for more automation in their production process, they can encourage other sources of labour such as retired people, married women, outsource their product development, or relocate their organisation and he cites the Swiss case of the 1940s as an example of coping with labour shortage. In a study by Krings et al (2012) regarding the recruitment strategies by Irish employers during the Celtic Tiger era, there were a number of significant factors. During this boom period Irish employers with the agreement of the then government, turned towards migrant workers in order to fill job vacancies rather than raising productivity or mobilising alternative sources of labour. Migrant workers became the employer’s choice, not because they were cheap labour, but they brought with them new skills such as a better attitude, work ethic and potential.

Another significant factor to arise regarding other sources of labour was that referred to in (Krings et al, 2011). When analysing labour migration and the attitudes of the Irish employers in the construction sector towards recruitment, their study found that both employers and migrants took advantage of Ireland’s open labour market policy of 2004. Because employers were desperate to fill the labour shortage during the construction boom migrant workers found it easy to gain employment often through
means of subcontracting and informal recruitment techniques. However, since the
collapse of the construction sector the bargaining position of employers has increased.
Portes (1983) argues that the descriptions as outlined above regarding the origins of
immigration are not necessarily incorrect or theoretically incomplete. Whereas,
Valazquez (2000) claims that recent research attempts to integrate a number of
approaches such as ‘push-pull theory’, labour recruitment and historical-structural
approaches into one single unit. Kritz and Zlotnic (1992:1-3) argue that the concept of
‘Migration Systems’ focuses on both component parts of the system, i.e. the sending
and the receiving components and should be analysed separately. Fawcett (1989:673-
675) and Fawcett and Arnold (1987:457) argue that they are interrelated by a complex
set of criteria and migration should be seen as a social process rather than a process
rather than individual actions. According to Valazquez (2000) economic and social
differences at both ends of the migration flow are necessary in order to create the
environmental conditions for labour movement across international borders. It is
fundamental that workers are prepared to migrate, employers and countries are
prepared to accept them and that income gaps exist. However, according to Bohning
(1984:35) although these conditions are necessary they do not provide an accurate
answer to migration movements. Valazquez (2000) argues that migration as a social
process takes into account the role of individuals and families and their relationships
with migration networks in the community as a means to explain international
migration.

Once the movement of people begins a social infrastructure is developed which
creates an environment for further migration as described by Massey, et al (1987:5)
similar to the Polish migration to Ireland. This process plays an important role in
international migration, because it forms the bases for a network system that allows
channels of information to form, providing assistance for future migrants. This
networking was very evident during the migration of Polish migrants to Ireland.
Friends and relations of migrant workers made their decision to migrate to Ireland
based on information they had received from the Internet, Irish employers recruiting
workers and those Polish migrants already working in Ireland. This process may
explain why individuals in regions where similar economic and social conditions exist
show different patterns of migration. Valazquez (2000) argues that these networks can
determine to a degree what regions are most likely to migrate, the individuals who
will be involved in the migration process, the destination most likely to receive these migrants and in certain cases the type of job they will occupy.

Regarding families and households, Boyd (1989:642) views the family as a central unit where individuals play a specific role in the decision making process. According to Pessar (1982:343-362) the decision to migrate is not just taken by individuals alone, but as a result of the conditions and structure of the household unit. This unit determines the motivation factor to migrate depending on the resources and age cycle of the family. The household plays a pivotal role in the decision making process as whether to migrate or not, when it will take place and who will migrate. In communities where the male is considered the provider, he normally migrates first, leaving the wife to supervise the remainder of the family unit Massey, et al (1987:200), which also concurs with (Ryan, 2011).

Valazquez (2000) argues that there is no general theory to explain all types of migration movement, or their origins, or how they are sustained, or how they evolved. Evidence shows that economic backwardness, unemployment, or limited economic growth are poor predictors of international migration. Neither the ‘push-pull’ factors nor social networks address the political factors regarding immigration policies and state-to-state relationships as variables in international migration. These conclusions are very similar to those of (Grabowska, 2003) and (Kropiwiec et al, 2006). However, it can be argued that migrant workers have always played an important role in the development of most economies throughout the western world (ILO, 2004). Examples such as the migration of Europeans to the US in the 1800s Simkin (2013) and the migration of the Irish to Britain over the centuries are typical of people striving for a better quality of life (Hogan, 2002). However, according to Dustmann and Weiss (2007) just because migrant workers move to buoyant economies, it does not follow that their move is permanent. They argue that most migrations are temporary rather than permanent. They go on to argue that, the decision for migrant workers to return to their home country will not only be based on the present and future circumstances of their host country, but also on the future prospects within their country of origin. Although most Polish migrants who migrated to Ireland saw little or no future for them or their families by remaining in Poland, this particular viewpoint could be argued as grounds for deciding to remain in Ireland.
Between 1999 and 2005 the number of migrants working in Ireland had risen to about 8% or 160,000 of the total workforce (Mac Éinrí, 2001). It can be argued that in certain cases migration can be permanent as outlined by researchers such as (Chiswick, 1980) and (Barth et al, 2004). However, Dustmann and Weiss (2007) disagree and argue that in the case of Britain, the population of immigrants who are still present in the country one year after their arrival, 50% will have left the country within the next 5 years. They argue that those who remain are normally better educated and have more skills at their disposal, which are in demand by the host country. When Ireland’s economy declined, many migrant workers left the country, especially those employed in the construction sector MCA Newsletter No.2 (2009), but those who remained were still in employment concurring with (Dustmann and Weiss, 2007).

2.1.1 The effects of Migration on Migrants and Irish Society

Migration has a major effect on the social fabric of the host country, the migrant’s country of origin and the migrants (Doyle et al, 2006). It could be argued that this is very much the case since Ireland has never had any experience of dealing with migrant workers. Ruhs (2009) argues that the demand for labour during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ period led to an inflow of migrant workers using the ‘work permit’ system. However, this system had its problems and according to McGinnity et al (2006) asylum seekers were more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace than work permit holders. According to Conroy and Brennan (2002), issues raised by these migrants centred on the provision of equal pay, the prevention of illegal deductions from pay by employers, poor working conditions and dismissal without recourse to procedures. They also complained that information regarding jobs supplied by some employers was very limited, although they found better support from larger employers, making their lives less frustrating. They found that most migrant manual workers worked with their own nationalities in non-union jobs and were unaware of their legal rights regarding pay and working conditions which have certain similarities with the conclusions reached by (Quinn and Williams, 2006). However, in its defence, Ireland has some of the most liberal labour laws, (Employment Equality Act, 2004) and the (Equal Status Act, 2000).
Regarding the social and economic fabric of the sending country, Iglicka et al, (2010) argues that the migration of so many Poles in favour of employment in western states has created a skills shortage in Poland. In order to address this skills gap the Polish government has introduced a system, which allows workers from the Ukraine, Belarus and Russia to work in Poland for a period of three months without work permits. This has met with some degree of success and Poland continues to attract migrants from outside the EU with the Ukrainians being the largest group. However, the Polish government has had little success in their efforts to attract Polish migrants back to Poland. This begs the question as to why workers from the Ukraine, Belarus and Russia are prepared to work in Poland and not Polish migrants. It could be argued that this phenomenon is based on the premise that these young Polish migrants came initially to Ireland for economic reasons. However, since residing in the country for almost 10 yrs, their domestic circumstances have changed and they now consider life in Ireland better than what they could expect by returning to Poland (Iglicka et al, 2010).

In 2004 Ireland was one of the first countries to open its borders to migrants from the NMS, which resulted in negative comments from some media sources referring to these workers abusing the country’s social welfare system. According to Doyle et al (2006), Sweden who is reputed to have a better social welfare system than Ireland, received only 10,000 migrant workers by the end of 2005 from the accession states, whereas Ireland received 60,000. Doyle et al (2006) went on to argue that in terms of wages, economic theory suggests that this increase in labour could prompt a fall in salaries. However, since 2010 the downturn in the Irish economy has resulted in high unemployment, substantial reductions in the salaries for both private and public sector workers. It could be argued that the fall in salaries and working conditions has more to do with the decline in the country’s economy rather than the impact of migrant workers on the Irish labour market. The downturn in the Irish economy has affected most people living in Ireland, which may have resulted in a considerable number of migrants not being in a position to leave the country due to their domestic circumstances. It is also possible that their quality of life, despite their domestic circumstances, is still better in Ireland than it would be in their homeland (Iglicka et al, 2010).
2.1.2 Culture and Identity.

To begin with, it should be noted that the context of the word ‘culture’ in this section refers to an individual’s culture and not organisational culture. However, it could be argued that most people are similar, having the same social values, outlook on life, ethical considerations and hopes for the future. Studies carried out by Hofstede (2001), Kluckhohn (1951), Rokeach (1968), Rubenstein (2001) and Baldwin et al (2006) have shown that there is substantial evidence to prove that this is not the case. Equally it could be argued that people in general are not aware of other people’s culture, their beliefs, or their customs. Situations of this nature can sometimes lead to misunderstandings, which in turn can turn to conflict as referred to by the BBC when reporting on the rise in UK inter-ethnic conflict (BBC News 2/5/2006).

Because ‘culture’ is such a vast subject, it is not the intention of this section to address this topic in any great detail, only to place it in the context of Polish migrants, their expectations of Irish society and their host country. The Oxford Dictionary defines the word ‘culture’ as; ‘…the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarding collectively’. According to Kluckhohn (1951:86) the following quotation is a consensus of definitions based on the viewpoints of a number of authors, ‘…culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reacting, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts, the essential core of culture consists of traditional i.e. (historically derived and selected) and especially their attached values’.

Hofstede (1984) argues that the reason why social systems exist is because all humans behave differently. He defines culture as ‘…the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another’ and goes on to say that culture is basically a ‘…system of collectively held values’. As an example, it could be argued that given a particular situation, most people tend to react in a certain way depending on their environment, their thinking, their values and their experience of similar situations. He claims that, a person’s mental programming is partly unique, partly shared and can be distinguished by three levels of uniqueness, ‘universal’ which is shared by all, ‘collective’, which is shared by some and ‘individual’ which is unique to that person. However, he also argues that, these three
levels of mental programming can be inherited, transferred or learned after birth and this process continues throughout the person’s life. This process of mental programming leads to the establishment of values and culture within the individual. He borrows Rokeach’s (1968:159-600) definition of the term ‘value’ which can be defined as; ‘…to say that a person has a value is to say that he/she has an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct, or end-state of existence is personally and socially preferable to alternative modes of conduct, or end-states of existence’. He argues that our values are established in early life which determine our ‘subjective definition of rationality’ thus forming a ‘value hierarchy’. As individuals we all hold conflicting values which in turn can contribute to uncertainty when faced with a decision making process. There can also be contradictions among individuals regarding their values, what some individuals may consider as good or bad, others might consider the direct opposite. He goes on to argue that these values may change when a change of environment is experienced. Our emotions and behaviour are very much dominated by our surroundings and our responses to that environment determines who we are, from a cultural point of view, rather than what we inherited, ‘…environmental determinism – the principle that the physical world is responsible for the make-up of each existing culture’, Rubenstein (2001). According to Rubenstein (2001), because there are so many definitions of culture there is general agreement among most writers that, ‘…culture is the science of observable and unobservable behaviours’.

In the modern world, the word ‘culture’ is often used to describe people of various backgrounds, descriptions such as, nations and their culture, ethnic groups and their culture, rural/city groups and their culture, family culture are in everyday use. Other factors that tend to identify people of different cultures are the colour of their skin, their language and their country of origin. All of these issues have a bearing on the process of establishing a system of cultural integration. Whereas, Baldwin et al (2006) suggests, culture changes over time and is influenced by economic change, political policies and environmental change. However, the study of culture is a very complex subject and is forever changing as history has shown where some cultures have lost their identity completely and others are as strong as ever. However, as Hofstede (1984) argues, values may change when a change of environment is experienced.
To place this in a Polish context the analogies of economic change, political policies and environmental change referred to above could be argued as the basis for the ‘push/pull’ factors associated with Polish migration to Ireland and the reasons why some Polish migrants have decided to remain in Ireland. There is also possibility that the environment experienced by Polish migrants while living and working in Ireland has been instrumental in their decision to remain in the country for the foreseeable future. If this were true then their experience of Irish culture and identity could factor into their decision-making process as whether to remain in Ireland or migrate elsewhere.

2.1.3 Irish Culture and Identity
Since this study seeks to address the question as to why Polish migrants remain in Ireland it is necessary to understand some of the attributes that form the basis of Irish culture and identity and their relationship with migrants. According to Davis (2003), nationalism has been a principle ingredient in the development of the Irish culture. Bromage (1968) argues that language, religion and land ownership are traditional Irish characteristics. Whereas, White (1996) argues that Catholicism, Gaelic origin and the ownership of land and property are fundamental characteristics of Irish identity. However, according to O’Mahony and Delanty (1998) Irish characteristics can be described as backward looking, by wanting to return to traditional beliefs and values, but also forward looking by adapting and embracing ongoing social change. Garvin (1993) argues that Ireland as a nation has now moved on from what was traditionally referred to as ‘Civil War politics’ leaving the fundamentalist rhetoric behind.

O’Donovan (2009) looks at the Irish identity from a different perspective. She analyses the construction of Irish identity through two diverging strands of globalisation theory, ‘regressive nationalism’ and ‘glocalization’ and applies them to recent changes in Irish society. She cites Gibbons (1996) who argues that the traditional Irish culture of being Catholic, steeped in agriculture, easy going and always game for a ‘session’ has changed as a result of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ influence. Since the inception of the ‘Celtic Tiger’, Ireland as a nation has opened its borders to nationals from many countries, sought international investment and revised its labour laws (Share et al, 2007). However, it has done little regarding the cultural integration
of immigrants, focusing on anti-racism through a process of publications/campaigns rather than addressing the inequalities that exist (Keohane and Kuhling, 2007). Regressive nationalism is also evident among the Irish Diaspora, although not resident in Ireland, continue to associate themselves with Ireland and long to return (Gray, 2006).

According to Miles (2001) globalisation theories based on cultural homogenisation have been rejected by many analysts who insist that they should be analysed based on the reactions of local societies where the interaction takes place. This has led to the development of the theory of ‘glocalization’, whereby the local societies negotiate the interaction between the local and global forces of globalisation (Featherstone et al, 1995). Keohane and Kuhling (2007) argue that the migration policies of the Irish government could be considered as examples of ‘glocalization’, when as a nation permit refugees entry, but restrict their cultural interaction. Whereas, Corcoran (2003) states that returning Irish emigrants classified as well educated, middle class, who originally decided to emigrate in order to further their careers and experience, show a different trend in glocalization. Although identifying themselves as Irish, they are more inclined to interact with other nationalities and adapt a ‘fast-pace’ work ethic culture and a de-territorialised concept of being Irish.

2.1.4 Polish Culture and Identity
Polish migrants remain one of the largest ethnic groups to remain in Ireland since the decline in the Irish economy, it is therefore necessary to understand some of the attributes, which form the basis of the Polish culture and identity and their ability to integrate into other societies. According to Dyczewski (2009) Polish culture is unique because of its geographical position within the European region. While some Poles define their Polishness in relation to their country, others consider that their religion is an integral part of their cultural identity (Ryan, 2010). Polish nationals are seen to follow cultural and artistic trends deemed popular in other countries, the focus of which has often been placed above economic activity. Dyczewski (2009) argues that the principle characteristics of Polish culture could be described as being open to accepting cultural elements from other nations and closed to those elements that could threaten their environment. He goes on to argue that Poles do not place a major significance on the ‘national state’ unlike other nationalities such as the Germans,
French or English. Germans would consider their order of preference as, state, nation and culture, whereas Poles would consider their preference as culture, nation and state. In comparison the Irish place national identity, national pride and identifying themselves more with their nation as being significant (Davis, 2003).

As a nation, Dyczewski (2009) argues that Poles enter other cultures with a certain amount of ease, but compared with other nationalities take a longer period of time to integrate into new societies and are inclined to remain in their own cultural system. It could be argued that there are certain similarities between this and the process of Irish integration into UK society during the 1950s and 1960s. When making comparisons between Irish and Polish culture, Polish nationals are seen to follow cultural and artistic trends deemed popular in other countries. In keeping with this issue, Irish nationals demonstrate their affiliation with English soccer clubs, music, entertainment and fashion. Most Polish nationals subscribe to the Christian faith with 89.9% Catholic which is similar to Ireland with 60% of Irish nationals subscribing to the Catholic religion (Davis, 2003). It could be argued that a religious bond exists between the two nations i.e. the catholic religion. However, Poles are more inclined to live in a type of social isolation, which may be due to a common language and similar interests.

2.2 Life in Poland and Rationale for Migrating
The purpose of this study is to address the reasons why Polish migrants remain in Ireland. In order to address this issue it is necessary to understand the quality of life experienced by Polish migrants while living in Poland. It could be argued that before a person decides to migrate they will review their quality of life and their country’s economic potential for the future (Baldwin et al, 2006).

The Polish Central Statistics Office (GUS, 2011) states that from 1995 to 2010 the average growth in terms of GDP in Poland was 4.4%, with an all-time high of 8.1% in Dec 1996 and an all-time low of 0.3% in Dec 2001 making Poland’s economic growth among at that particular time the highest in Europe. The principle driver behind Poland’s economic growth had been the privatisation of small to medium enterprises, (SMEs) which were originally state owned. In terms of the country’s economy, the Polish government has since 1990 pursued a policy of ‘economic liberalisation’,
which is considered a success among transition economies. Resulting from a rise in private consumption, corporate investment and EU structural funds, Poland’s GDP in 2008 grew by 4.8% (www.tradingeconomics.com 2012). Figure 2.0 illustrates Poland’s GDP growth rate 1995-2010.

According to Somaskanda (2012) the Polish economy continues to grow. However, despite economic turmoil in some Western European states, Central Europe’s largest economy is performing well and has been doing so since joining the EU in 2004. She claims that Poland’s deputy finance minister Marian Moszoro is reported to have said ‘…when you look at GDP in Europe in 2009 all the countries were in the red… that is, all but Poland’. Poland’s EU membership has attracted investment from multinational companies, but experts attribute the country’s growth to a ‘…healthy banking sector, low levels of debt and cheap labour costs’. In addition, Poland has a population of almost 40 million, which provides a market for domestic goods and has been instrumental in the growth of Poland’s private industrial sector. However, if this is the case why have so many Poles left Poland in search of employment? Is it because they have become more mobile, better educated, are searching for a better quality of life, monetary gain, or is it the case that benefits of Poland’s economic growth has not filtered down to those employed or seeking employment in the industrial sectors?

Few experts predicted Poland’s economic growth 20 years ago. This was at a time when the country was considered by economists to have an unstable banking sector,
an outdated industrial sector and a poorly developed infrastructure. Critics say that despite its GDP of 4.4% in 2011 the majority of Poles have not benefited from this economic growth. Polish wages have not risen to compensate for rising prices and to quote a freelance photographer ‘…money is not really good here in Poland’ ‘…loads of my friends are working in England and Germany because it’s better there’ (Somaskanda, 2012). Many Poles complain that they are unable to survive on their salary, or in the case of the elderly, their pension. GDP growth has already slowed down and experts are predicting a growth rate of just 2.6% for the year 2012. It could be argued that reports of this nature regarding the economic conditions in Poland would not entice Polish migrants to return to their homeland. These conditions contribute to the ‘push’ factor regarding Polish migration in favour of employment in western states, the results of which are now creating a skills shortage in Poland.

### 2.2.1 Polish Migration to Ireland

Ireland has never been considered a significant destination for migrants. However, one of the fundamental stones on which the EU was founded was the free movement of goods and workers across EU borders and the legal right of EU citizens to work and live in member states (Treaty of the European Union, 1992). Many member states have different interpretations of this provision, as there are various opinions regarding the development of EU immigration policy. According to Callovi (1992) and Geddes (1995), EU immigration policy evolved out of the need to harmonise border controls. However, despite the fact that free movement of labour has been in existence since 1993, the enlargement of the EU still conjures up fears among member states. There is this ongoing fear that migrant workers from the accession countries of Eastern Europe will flood the jobs market putting nationals out of work by driving down wages and working conditions, Grabowska (2003). Similar fears were expressed when Greece, Spain and Portugal applied for membership of the EU and even as far back as the 1960s when free labour movement was being discussed, there were fears that Italian workers would flood the labour markets of Northern Europe (Penninx and Muus, 1989). Although there were some reported incidences of migrants putting nationals out of work in Ireland, there has never been any major conflict regarding this issue.

The decision to migrate will always present difficulties and fear of the unknown among individuals. It follows therefore that before an individual decides to migrate
there must be a ‘push/pull’ factor. According to Grabowska (2003) the decision taken by people to migrate rather than remain at home is a complex subject. She argues that the decision can only be made based on the opportunities which are on offer in the host country. She cites Bohning (1984) who argues that migration is a social issue and the decision to migrate is largely based on the socio-economic factors in existence in their home country.

Grabowska (2003) argues that the migration of Polish workers to Ireland during the late 1990s and early 2000s was two-folded. First, there was the outsourcing of highly skilled Polish workers from Polish branches of multinationals, followed by semi, or low-skilled workers who were employed in the construction, service, agricultural and the catering sectors. In terms of numbers, this was quite small when one considers the flow of migrant workers into Ireland during the years 2004-2007 (Krings, 2010). According to Kropiwiec, et al (2006), the decision to migrate is very complex and particular to the individual, but concludes that micro as well as macro factors play a significant role in the decision making process. Nolka and Nowosielski (2009) suggest economic gain is the principle factor which influences their decision to migrate. They argue that those who had jobs in Poland took unpaid leave in order to work in Ireland. Almost all of those interviewed in their ‘snowball’ survey experienced difficulties when it came to obtaining employment in Poland regardless of their qualifications. In some cases the wages on offer were so low that people could not survive on them which concur with a later study conducted by (Somaskanda, 2012). This issue is also covered by Wickham, et al (2013), who argues that the establishment of a particular lifestyle was one of the principle goals for Polish migrants. They wished to reinvent themselves by searching for a different quality of life, adapting to labour market circumstances and saw migration as the means of achieving this goal. While this was prevalent among young educated Poles, others considered that a career strategy was important. This was achieved by being adaptable and open to retraining, in order to meet the needs of a changing labour market.

The vast majority of Polish migrants work in Ireland for financial benefit only, allowing them to support their families in Poland, or to afford holidays and hobbies (Nolka and Nowosielski, 2009). According to Wickham et al (2013) there is a history of movement among Polish migrants to other destinations and the migration inspired
by accession 2004 is an additional factor to this phenomenon. Regarding the migration post 2004, their study found that social and family networks which had already been established in Ireland were instrumental in the decision to choose Ireland as a destination. In addition, the study found that mobility among third-level graduates was very evident and many of these graduates had already spent time in other destinations prior to arriving in Ireland.

Kropiwiec, et al (2006) argue that in the mid 2000s the unemployment rate in Poland was around 16% and the jobs market employer driven, meaning that the employer made all the decisions regarding wages and conditions of employment, which was in stark contrast to the conditions of employment in Ireland creating the ‘push’ factor. When contrasting this situation with the Irish economy where there was a demand for labour that offered higher wages by Polish standards and the facility of continuing one’s education while living in Ireland made Ireland an attractive destination. When viewing what Ireland was offering from a macro perspective it can be argued that these conditions were instrumental in the migration process to Ireland, i.e. the ‘pull’ factor. In addition, easy access to Ireland post 2004 meant better freedom of movement without the need for visas or work permits. From a personal point of view, Polish migrants saw many advantages in coming to Ireland. They go on to argue that Polish migrants had set themselves goals in terms of accumulating money in order to return to Poland with the expectation of a comfortable lifestyle. In addition to earning money, they also wished to improve their English language skills and professional expertise. Their determination to accomplish these goals was driven by their belief that the better their CV appeared, the better their chances of obtaining worthwhile employment when they returned to Poland. However, Poland’s unemployment rate is high, wages are low and its standard of living average (Sobczyk and Wasilewski, 2012). The exodus of highly educated qualified workers from Poland has had a negative effect on retaining its skilled labour force. According to Iglicka et al (2010) the outflow of skilled labour from Poland has jeopardised the country’s future economic development. They claim that the Polish government is trying to entice Polish migrants back to Poland with little success.

In a study conducted by Krings et al (2013) regarding the popularity of Ireland as a destination for Polish migrants since EU enlargement in 2004, certain features come
to prominence. They argue that this migration is characterised by new mobility patterns. Since accession Polish migrants have become more mobile across national borders and their labour markets allowing them to experience new opportunities other than employment. Those Polish migrants who are young and well educated form part of this new generation of mobile Europeans. Migration is not restricted to employment opportunities alone, but also involves lifestyle choices and self-development. The new mobility is still visible even in a declining economy such as Ireland, which has been hit by unprecedented recession.

Going back to the earlier studies, the migration of Polish workers to Ireland did not really start in earnest until 2004 (Iglicka et al, 2010). This was at a time when Poland had just gained membership of the EU, the Irish economy was booming and government policy favoured migrants from the accession states. This migration peaked in around 2006, although Poles still migrate to Ireland, their numbers are smaller (Krings, 2010). The National Census of 2011 reported that there are now over 120,000 Polish nationals living in Ireland despite the economic downturn. Ireland is now experiencing a major decline in its economy with high unemployment affecting both highly skilled graduates and low-skilled workers alike. It could be argued these conditions are similar to the conditions experienced by Polish migrants while living in Poland. If they migrated to build a better life for themselves, why do they remain in Ireland facing the possibility of unemployment, reductions in wages, years of austerity and a decline in their quality of life?

2.3 Experiences of Poles Working in Ireland

In order to understand the reasons why Polish migrants remain in Ireland it is first necessary to explore their experiences of working in Ireland. Most Poles, particularly graduates consider that in terms of their quality of work, they are able to perform to the highest standard. They are also of the opinion that they work for less pay than their Irish counterparts and are discriminated against when it comes to promotion in the workplace (Grabowska, 2003). Some graduates considered that they were often working below their level of qualification and view this as a process of de-skilling which can affect their self-esteem (Grabowska, 2003) also (Kropiwiec et al, 2006). When addressing issues such as self-development, self-realisation and work, Nolka and Nowosielski (2009) found that there was a 50-50 response as to whether
participants worked in positions pertaining to their qualifications. Their perception being that, their educational achievements had been reduced in value since coming to Ireland. According to Bushin (2009) Polish migrants have a higher level of education than the greater Polish population, they are young, likely to be male although the gender side is becoming more balanced with more women joining their partners, particularly women with children. When analysing Polish impressions of working in Ireland, their outlook regarding their future was unclear. Kropiwiec et al (2006) argues that Polish migrants impressions of Ireland were positive and they considered Irish people as friendly. Nolka and Nowosielski (2009) found Irish attitudes towards Polish migrants very positive. However, only 25% of Polish migrants surveyed admitted having regular contact with Irish people.

Mühlau et al (2011) argue that more Polish males left Ireland since 2006 than Polish females and more Polish women have migrated to Ireland since 2006. They suggest that the reason for this phenomenon may be due to the job structure in Dublin, which seems to favour women. As a city, Dublin is considered to be attractive to young, well-educated Polish women. They study found that most participants were working, while only 10% were looking for work. Because this is a later study, it could be argued that those Polish migrants who have decided to remain in Ireland are well educated with good jobs and see a better future and quality of life for themselves and their families. However, Polish migrants are also of the opinion that Irish people considered them as backward, because they are prepared to work longer hours, earn less money and tolerate poorer working conditions (Kropiwiec, et al, 2006). These findings could be challenged. Polish migrants working in Ireland are still classified as EU citizens and as such, are entitled under EU law to the same rights and conditions as their Irish counterparts (Treaty of the European Union, 1992).

Regarding the issue of migrant representative groups, a number of Polish ethnic institutions catering for Polish needs have evolved in Ireland over the past number of years. Organisations such as the Polish Social and Cultural Association, the Polish Society and the Polish House claim to play an important role in the cultural affairs of Polish people. According to Kropiwiec et al (2006) although it is relatively easy for Polish migrants to settle and work in Ireland, one of the principle problems that they encounter is their level of English. Most Poles consider that being able to converse
through English is the most crucial skill required for migrants and attribute the lack of English to their demise regarding their ability to defend their rights under Irish law. This begs the question as to whether these so-called Polish ethnic institutions are of benefit to these Polish migrants in terms of assisting them with their difficulties.

2.3.1 Living in Ireland from a Polish Perspective

When migrant workers first arrive in a host country they are presented with many challenges which they have to address during their initial stay. One of the most difficult problems they encounter is the change in language. There are also difficulties which become more apparent due to poor language skills, such as socialising, and the day-to-day problems in communicating while at work (Kropiwiec et al., 2006). Other challenges which arise the longer they live in their host country are stress, financial difficulties, seeking accommodation, marital relationships, family problems, homesickness and the question of whether migrating was the right decision.

According to Nolka and Nowosielski (2009) most Polish migrants decide to live with family relations or acquaintances, normally in rented property situated in cities or large towns which is considered normal for migrant workers.

Another significant factor in the process of migration is the marital relationship and their relationship with family and friends. This is a vital factor especially when it comes to considering the risks associated with such breakdowns. The relationship between those who migrated to Ireland and those family members and friends who remained in Poland deteriorated the longer the migration period. On a more positive note, those who migrated to Ireland formed new social ties with other ethnic groups. Most migrants taking part in their study, who were married, came to Ireland with their spouse, which could be argued that, they intended to stay for a longer period and loneliness did not enter into the equation, although there may have been elements of homesickness. However, it did emerge that only 50% had their children living with them in Ireland. One of the most harrowing experiences for a migrant is loneliness and homesickness which can have a catastrophic effect, especially those who experience long periods away from their families. They found that 24.5% of those participating in their study admitted to being lonely while living in Ireland. Whereas, 35% were hoping to return to Poland claiming that loneliness and homesickness were the principle driving force behind this decision.
There is evidence to support the fact that a better quality of life exists in Ireland for Polish migrants than that in Poland. However, some Polish migrants were critical of Ireland’s health care system, public transport, the ability to seek help from social organisations and the possibility of gaining promotion in their job. While most Poles experienced little or no discrimination, 51% of Polish migrants claimed that Poles ranked high among their circle of friends and 14.7% stated that the only friends they had were Polish, which they considered was due to their lack of English. There is also a level of segregation between Irish and Polish people. It could be argued that this social isolation is self-inflicted, because they feel more comfortable being able to network and problem solve with those of their own background, culture and having the use of a common language (Nolka and Nowosielski, 2009).

According to Steen (2010) most Polish migrants living and working in Ireland feel that their quality of life is better than in Poland and had not experienced any negativity towards them since the downturn in the Irish economy. The findings suggest that although preferring to be employed, Polish migrants find that the social welfare system in Ireland is better than that in Poland. When responding to the question as to why they remained in Ireland one Polish national commented ‘…it is not easy to up and go especially since you are here for a number of years, have partners, cars and apartments, in other words our lives are here’, (Steen, 2010). These findings have certain similarities with O’Clery (2009) who argues that most of these migrants are now faced with stark choices since the downturn in the Irish economy.

2.3.2 Experiences of Poles Living and Working in other Destinations

It is estimated that there are in excess of 20 million people of Polish origin living outside Poland making them one of the largest ethnic groups in the world. There are many reasons for this phenomenon stemming from forced migration, border changes, economic decline and political dominance. Polish links can be found in the USA, Germany, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, France, UK and Ireland, (Urban-Klaehn, 2003). By 1914 it was estimated that 3.5 million Poles had migrated from Poland, (Iglicka, 2001:13). Much of this migration proved to be permanent with the USA becoming one of the largest settlements where a strong infrastructure still exists especially in Chicago (Znaniecka and Erdmans, 1994). Although most Polish
Americans have integrated into American society there still remains a vital ethnic community (Pacyga, 1991). This outflow continued and by the mid 1930s Polish nationals had built up a multi-trajectory of mobility establishing migratory links and a tradition of emigration (Burrell, 2009).

In 1989 the fall of communism brought about a major change in Polish society. Gone were the restrictive measurers and oppressive regime and a new era had dawned, allowing Polish nationals to travel freely. According to Wallace (2002) Polish migrants concentrated on moving for short periods to countries such as Germany, the UK, Italy and Greece. When Poland became part of the EU in 2004, Polish migration increased seeking a better quality of life (Nolka and Nowosielski, 2009).

A study by Debaene (2008) comparing migration patterns between the French and Irish Polish Communities, examines two migration patterns, one, migration for settlement and two, mobility within the EU. The principle areas under scrutiny were the circumstances under which both groups decided to migrate and their experiences during their stay in the host country. This study examines the experiences of a Polish community living in France since the 1980s with the view to establishing a better understanding of Polish migrants who migrated to Ireland after 2004. The rationale for this exercise was to obtain a greater insight into the process of integration in France and compare these results with data compiled from a similar study of Polish migrants living in Ireland.

Regarding the French policy on immigration, Debaene (2008) refers to the ‘assimilation’ policy in France, designed for the integration of non-French nationals into French society. Kastroyano (2002) argues that the French model, based on republican individualism, implies and entails the ‘assimilation’ of individuals who have become citizens by choice. According to Debaene (2008) migrants residing in France are expected to internalise and integrate into French society, which Schnapper et al (2003) refers to as ‘Frenchification’. France as a nation has been experiencing difficulties with suburban ghettos (banlieus). These so-called ghettos normally found in inner-city enclaves are inhabited by foreigners who are steeped in poverty and outside the ‘assimilation’ process. The ghettos are considered as centres of conflict between the French establishment and the local communities (Kastroyano, 2002).
However, this stigma would not be typical of Polish migrants, who are considered by the French establishment as ‘exemplary model migrants’. In terms of general conduct, it could be argued that there are certain similarities between the Poles living in France with those living in Ireland, since there has been very little media criticism regarding Polish bad behaviour while living and working in Ireland.

However, there are significant differences between those Polish migrants who migrated to France during the 1980s and those Polish migrants who migrated to Ireland after Poland’s accession into the EU. She argues that, since the circumstances under which each of the migrant groups decided to migrate differ, different models for integration have been adapted. With this in mind the focus of the Irish study concentrated on the following issues, demographics, length of residence, and contact with the mother country, Polish culture and attitudes of the host country towards these Polish migrants (Debaene, 2008).

According to the Polish Central Statistics Office (GUS, 2007) it was estimated that there were 1.9 million Poles living outside Poland in other EU countries. Whereas, Grabowska-Lusinska (2008) argue that Ireland is the third most popular country for Polish migration within the EU and according to Nolka and Nowosielski (2009) most Polish migrants living in Ireland tend to settle around large towns and cities with the city of Dublin having the largest concentration.

In terms of length of residence and whether they considered contact with mother country as important, a Warsaw-based agency ‘Kinoulty Research’ having interviewed 109 Poles living in Ireland, 50% said that they would like to live in Ireland for as long as possible, while 18% wished to stay permanently and less than 33% consider their stay as short-term (Monaghan, 2007). This trend was compounded by the results of an interview-based survey of Polish people living in Britain and Ireland on behalf of the Gazeta Wyborcza Newspaper (July 2007). The results of this study showed that 50% of the Poles living in Ireland did not wish to return to their homeland while 49% wished to stay in Ireland for at least 5 to 10 years (Scally, 2007). According to Kropiwiec, et al (2006) over 75% of those taking part in their study considered contact with the homeland important and made a point of returning home at least twice a year to visit family and friends.
The Polish community in Ireland is much different from those who migrated to France in the early 1980s. Regardless of the fact that French society displayed a positive attitude towards the Polish migrants they did not consider the Polish language, or culture important under the ‘assimilation’ policy. Whereas, in Ireland it is estimated that there are more people speaking Polish than native Irish speakers. This phenomenon of a strong Polish culture present in Ireland has brought the matter to the attention of the public. It can be argued that since 2004 the Polish community has established a strong presence within Irish society and has contributed to the cultural enhancement of the country. The establishment of Polish shops and small Polish businesses have sprung up around the country catering for Polish needs. Since the downturn in the economy, there has been an increase in the number of these shops closing down. However, the Polish language has continued to flourish throughout the country, resulting in the establishment of a wide range of linguistic initiatives, such as Polish language publications, websites and the fact that some state exams can now be conducted through Polish (Debaene, 2008).

When debating the subject of integration in Ireland, Debaene (2008) states that the word ‘interculturalism’ is used. The use of this term basically means to avoid the mistakes of the past. Integration in the Irish context is often regarded as a two-way process, between ethnic groups and the greater population (NCCRI, 1999).

The process of trying to integrate into an environment where different cultures exist presents major problems for the migrants. Ryan (2010) explores how Polish migrants living in London have dealt with this problem. Her paper focuses on how they position themselves in relation to English people, and other ethnic groups residing in Britain. Her study examined how ethnic identity is linked by language, gender, whiteness and by being European. This process for migrants can be very complex, she refers to some Poles wishing to interact with certain Poles while avoiding others. One interesting point to emerge was that Polish migrants placed a high level of importance on their attachment to Poland through their friends and family which concurs with Dyczewski (2009), but they also commented that, although they missed their friends and family back in Poland, there was nothing to keep them in Poland and expressed no desire to return to Poland, which concurs with the study conducted by (Gazeta Wyborcza Newspaper, 2007).
Another interesting point to emerge was the reaction of Polish migrants to meeting their own kind when abroad. According to Ryan (2010) not alone do migrants entering a new society have to encounter different ethnic groups, but also have to deal with stereotypes of their own ethnicity. Labelling certain ethnic groups as being violent, aggressive and stupid, drink too much, or dangerous, are normally the results of a minority giving the entire ethnic group a bad name. This type of bad press has certain similarities with the reports in Ryan (2007) regarding the stereotyping of the Irish in the UK.

Having to distance oneself from this element culminates in the person having to adopt the middle ground (Ryan, 2007). This means that the individual has to draw back from the main group and seek out others who are of the same mindset, which may involve establishing relationships with other ethnic groups. She suggests that the majority of Polish migrants are most likely to negotiate and define their own identity in relation to others in their own group. They wish to distance themselves from certain Poles who they consider to be objectionable and resent being stereotyped like those who are noted for bad behaviour. This has certain similarities with Irish migrants trying to distance themselves from the traditional stereotyping as referred to in (Jensen, 2002).

In addressing Polish relationship with other ethnic groups, Ryan (2010) argues that most Poles taking part in her study had no English friends and found it difficult to get acquainted with English people. However, they did find some ethnic groups such as the Irish, Australians and migrants from Sri Lanka less problematic. They found the Irish easy to talk to and always got a positive reaction. However, not all Poles are disposed to multiculturalism and a small minority demonstrate levels of racism towards certain minorities, ‘…they are taking up an intolerant position, which is for example racist towards black, or towards groups such as Hindus or Jews’. This problem of racism among certain Poles, often displays as one Polish participant commented ‘…an ignorant attitude towards other nationalities, other people who dress differently, who have different colour skin, or who are simply different’ (Ryan, 2010). However, the number of recorded racist attacks against Poles living in Ireland has been limited, although some have reported instances of verbal abuse in the workplace and on public transport. However, there are problems with other minorities.
where racist’s attacks on a greater scale have occurred, mainly directed at African and Asian people (Rogers, 2013).

2.3.3 Family, Networks, Connections and Obligations

When migrants migrate to new destinations, they require some structure by which they can access information regarding jobs, accommodation, contacts, and a sense of security, hence the need for a networking system. According to Ryan (2011) the networks which migrants encounter when they arrive in a host country are unlikely to continue, especially if those migrants are determined to remain mobile. She suggests that in terms of bonding, most Poles when they first arrived in Britain were inclined to rely heavily on Polish acquaintances. This was mainly due to the deficiency in their English language skills, which has certain similarities with Irish migrants moving to the UK, see Bowden (2009) or Polish migrants moving to Ireland (Nolka and Nowosielski 2009). However, as time passed and as their confidence grew they began to move away from the Polish enclaves, which they considered as limiting their potential. Some of those taking part in the study referred to some of their Polish counterparts as staying in a ghetto with little interest in learning English and their reluctance to become engaged in the cultural opportunities available in London. Those taking part in the study by Ryan (2011) were of the opinion that they must reach out beyond the Polish enclave in order to advance in their career and for personal satisfaction. Based on the earlier studies, such as Kropiwiec, et al (2006), there is evidence to show that they prefer to remain within their own community and very few venture outside the Polish enclaves. However, there is a tendency for the children of Polish migrants to integrate with Irish nationals, normally their school friends.

Moving beyond the Polish enclave requires a strategy. Some develop clear strategies for extending their networks, an example Ryan (2011) cites is that of one participant moving away from his Polish acquaintances in order to share accommodation with English speaking people with the intention of improving his English. Others have sought out friendships from other ethnic groups and purposely avoiding Polish contacts. Although moving beyond the Polish enclave can advance one’s career opportunities and personal satisfaction, there is a downside. She refers to a participant moving in with English speaking people, his relationship with them was mainly social and not people with whom he could discuss his problems. She also refers to obstacles
encountered by migrants while trying to seek out new friendships, one female reported that while she made some new friends she found it difficult to make friends with English people.

Regardless of the mechanism used by migrants in order to establish new social networks among their friends and other ethnic groups, one network which comes to the forefront is that of the family. Because many migrants arrive alone they can be involved in complex family relationships. In some cases they prefer to relocate the entire family in order to be together, others prefer to earn money so that they can send it home to their family in Poland. Those who leave their families to work abroad see it as a form of sacrifice for a number of years. However, not all spouses see the separation of the family for monitory gain as an investment in the family’s future and so decide to join the migration process in order to maintain the family unit (Ryan et al, 2009).

The influence of family bonding in the migration process is demonstrated in a study of Polish migrants conducted by (Pietka, 2011). She focused on the structures and dynamics of the Polish co-ethnic networks, which are being created within the Glasgow area. She refers to the term ‘community’ as ‘…a body of resemblance and ties that people have between each other that binds them together and creates their sense of belonging’. She describes the community as ‘…constructed around aggregate relations that its members can feel, identify and describe’.

Polish migrants can maintain a diverse range of social contacts including friendships and community ties. Most of those ties centre on their family relations, who are defined through blood relations, marriage or partnerships. As Polish migrants settle in their host country they often bring their family, which replaces the need to rely on the broader ethnic relationship. The presence of the family provides emotional and practical support such as arranging accommodation and employment information. These trusted relationships were not fostered in the host country, but originated and transferred from their home country relinquishing the need to create new ones (Pietka, 2011). This is of significance to those Polish migrants who originally came to Ireland seeking employment in order to earn money. Some of these migrants are now married.
with families of their own, maintaining the security of the family bond, thus deciding to remain in Ireland for the foreseeable future.

There are also certain similarities with Ryan et al (2009) who argue that some families preferred to have the family unite present especially when there are children involved. In most situations the male member of the family migrates first. Normally the wife plays a major role in the decision making process to migrate. She would agree that the husband should go first, obtain employment, organise accommodation and set up a family type structure before she would join with the children. This strategy is normally well planned by both partners prior to migration process. The wife has specific objectives in mind regarding her decision to migrate, quoting one female as saying ‘... we came here to work and we intend to stay. I am going to educate my son here. I think it will be a better future for all of us’. Another female commented that it was because she could become a full-time mother while living in London that attracted her to the UK, something she could never contemplate in Poland. However, the study did show that when both spouses decided to have their own separate careers, the situation became more complicated.

The key facilitators in the migration strategy are the younger ones, or siblings. The attraction of having relations already living in a particular location is one of the principle factors in the decision to migrate. This facilitates the process of either spouse joining the family unit, or been joined by their adult children. In addition to family members uniting as part of the migration strategy, migration allowed migrants the facility of escaping difficult family situations such as marriage breakups, or family disagreements. Migration by its nature can be advantageous in reuniting families, but it also leaves family members behind creating divisions, which can develop into a deep source of regret (Ryan et al, 2009).

Parents are often very cautious regarding their children’s future, their education, their interaction with different cultures and their ability to integrate with other ethnic groups. The issue of children and their age is a major factor in the decision to migrate. Having achieved financial stability, the more likely it is for the family to reunite. One strategy to emerge is that one parent migrates in order to establish a financial platform while the other parent remains in Poland, the plan being to accumulate enough money,
so they can build a better future for themselves in Poland. The second strategy is to relocate the entire family in the host country. They found that most of those who joined their partners were women with children. The reasons why these women migrated to join their husbands were varied, some stating that their children missed their father, while others reluctantly decided to remain with their husbands and family. Cases of this nature demonstrate the ways in which wives place the needs of their children and their husbands above their own. It does not follow that wives are tied to their husbands, or just follow where their husbands take them. Their study found that wives were of the opinion that they were in control of the situation and that the rationale for making these decisions was based on practical considerations, i.e. they were considering the benefits to the family and the long-term prospects for their children (Ryan and Sales, 2011).

The age of the child and the stage in the child’s education were factors considered when deciding whether to leave the child to continue its education in Poland, or to join the family? Leaving the children with their grandparents in Poland presented its own set of problems, such as difficulties with grandparents bringing up teenagers. However, although problems exist, many Polish parents considered that it was better for the children to complete their education in Poland rather than entering a new school system, a different culture, a different language and a different methodology of education. In addition, migrant parents often arrived in their host country with little language skills and a limited knowledge of the educational system of the host country. There are also the problems of constant moving due to changing jobs, language problems, migrants obtaining school places for their children and the fact that those children in the UK start school earlier than in Poland, all of these issues can lead to anxiety and confusion (Ryan and Sales, 2011).

The age factor of Polish children clearly impacts on the parent’s decision as to whether or not they should migrate as a family unit. Those children in the process of completing their secondary, or college education tend to remain in Poland with relations. Those parents who migrated with younger children may not have analysed the effects on their children of leaving family and familiar surroundings behind. Most were of the opinion that when they would arrive in their host country their children
would adjust quickly to their new environment, new location, new schools, new language and new culture (Ryan and Sales, 2011).

This process of migrating can present certain difficulties regarding identity, but if children are part of the migration package the problems become more apparent. According to D’Angelo and Ryan (2011) one of the ways in which Polish migrants construct notions of Polishness is through the context of their children’s education. They suggest that schools are one of the principle venues for children to socialise. The school situation provides a platform on which children can make contact with other children from the host country. Equally this venue can provide an environment where the parents can interact with parents from the host country in a social manner rather than the business like approach encountered in the work situation. However, this interaction may result in both parents and children experiencing acts of racism and discrimination which they did not expect and the possibility of having to rethink their identity (D’Angelo and Ryan, 2011).

Migration can be confusing and often frightening. Children of migrants can become confused with one set of cultural values being experienced in the home situation and another set of values being experienced in the classroom. This predicament can result in children rebelling against their family culture in order to socialise within a new culture (Ryan et al 2010). Other migrant parents measure their success in their host country by how well their children are performing at school (Adams and Shambleau, 2006). Whereas, language proficiency among migrant children is important, it is not the sole requirement in order to integrate into a new society. There are other issues such as finding new friends, dealing with loss and loneliness, adjusting to a new cultural environment, trauma which may have occurred as a result of migration and racism (Reynolds, 2008).

Most Polish parents were of the opinion that Polish schools were better than British schools. While parents have their opinion of British schools D’Angelo and Ryan (2011) sought to explore the experiences of those Polish children attending British schools. Their study comprised of three participants aged between 13 and 14 years and attending secondary schools. The first participant, although not wishing to leave Poland, found the hostility he encountered from British people when arriving in
London very difficult to understand. He was critical of the British educational system, but was aware that by improving his level of English it would benefit him. Although he could speak English he could not understand English people and found this a barrier inhibiting him from being himself. Although recognising that other Polish children made friends with English children he was of the opinion that they achieved this process by denying their Polishness. The second participant, a girl, saw her stay in London as short-term and was looking forward to returning to Poland. She, like the previous participant, was critical of the British educational system, but recognised that the system of teaching in British schools can make learning more interesting than the Polish system. However, she missed her friends in Poland and finds it difficult to make friends with English children, although she did say that she found it less difficult to make friends with children of other ethnic groups. The third participant, another girl, was the most positive. Although she struggled with the English language when she first arrived, she soon adapted to the school system. She was of the opinion that the Polish standard of education was much higher, but she preferred the British system, because it suited her way of learning. In addition, she also had no problem in making friends with British children and expressed no wish to return to Poland.

However, despite their different predicaments they demonstrated an ability to establish a form of social networking, whether with Polish friends, other migrants, or English pupils (D’Angelo and Ryan, 2011). As Goldstein (2003) argues migrant children can establish a twin track approach to befriending by forming links with people who speak their native language and those who speak the host country’s language. It could be argued that the experiences encountered by Poles living and working in other destinations have certain similarities with those experiences of Polish migrants living in Ireland. Irrespective of their host country issues such as coping with stress, language learning and the retention of their own language and culture will always emerge. There are also the problems associated with integration, forming new social networks, family ties and their children’s education, constructing a new identity and having to deal with stereotypes of their own ethnicity. All of these experiences play a major part in the decision making process as to whether they decide to remain in their host country, or move elsewhere.
2.4 Remaining in Ireland or Moving Elsewhere

In the case of Ireland and the UK, migration has been an east-west migration especially since the opening of Irish and UK borders to the accession countries in 2004. According to Krings et al (2009) the decision by Polish workers to return to their home country may not be an option, this finding also concurs with (Castles, 2009). There are three basic reasons why Polish people are remaining in Ireland, one, there are still a large number in employment, two, welfare entitlements offer assistance against poverty, three, moving on is not always for economic reasons as outlined in (Ryan et al, 2009). Since this study was initiated the Irish economy has declined, both high and low skilled workers have lost their jobs and the austerity budgets of 2010, 2011 and 2012 have impacted on both nationals and migrant workers.

However, when looking at the broader issues in relation to Polish migrants and the Irish labour market of 2004, Krings et al (2013:36) explores the impact of large-scale migration flows from Poland and elsewhere and their effect on the local Irish workforce. The study found that in the context of labour market regulation, there were incidents of migrant worker underpayment which became an issue of concern. When the country went into economic decline in 2008 resulting in a situation where unemployment rose to 14% by 2011, the exodus of migrants was not as dramatic as some media reports and despite this change in economic circumstances, Ireland is still host to a substantial foreign population. Another article by Krings et al (2013) which examines how Polish migrants assess their time while living in Ireland, found evidence to show that some advanced in their place of employment, while others felt that they were reduced to working in low-paid jobs. However, even for those working in low-paid jobs, they were of the opinion that the move to Ireland was positive. They claimed that since migrating to Ireland during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ era they had acquired new skills. However, the majority of those surveyed stated that the economic downturn in Ireland’s economy affected them, some returning home or moving to other locations. Those who remained in Ireland sought to adapt to the recession and pursue work opportunities which are not conditioned by economic circumstances.

According to Krings et al (2009) having experienced phenomenal growth during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ period, the Irish economy is now suffering the effects of a major
downturn in its housing market, its finances, its economic growth projections and unemployment is set to rise. They state that there were 203,000 migrant workers over the age of 15 yrs living in Ireland at the end of 2007 and by the end of 2008 the figure had dropped to 199,000, which is marginal. Based on these figures it can be concluded that, while fewer migrant workers arrived in Ireland during the recession, those already living in the country are less likely to leave. Only a minority of Poles were considering leaving Ireland because of the economic downturn. They go on to argue that there are a number of reasons for this situation, such as better employment opportunities, better social welfare arrangements and the Polish social networks.

There are also other reasons, such as those referred to in (Ryan et al, 2009). Krings, et al (2009) state that 76% of NMS migrants are still in employment, QNHS (2009), and should a migrant loose their job it does not follow that they must leave the country, most NMS migrants who arrived in Ireland post-enlargement are now entitled to social welfare assistance.

As the migration stage progresses the economic factor is replaced by the network factor (Massey et al, 1987) and (Waldinger and Lichter, 2003). In other words, the longer migrants remain away from the home country the more likely they become involved in the social aspects of the host country. Another issue that Krings et al (2009) refers to is the search by migrants for a better quality of life. According to the EU Commission (2008) the principle reason why NMS nationals migrate, is for higher income, whereas, migrants from the old member states consider a better quality of life as the principle driver of migration. They found that certain migrants who view their employment as short term with money being the principle driver, are more inclined to move to other locations as referred to in MCA Newsletter No. 1: (Dec 2008), MCA Newsletter No. 2: (July 2009) and MCA Newsletter No. 4: (April 2010). However, inward migration of Polish migrants into Ireland has slowed down and evidence of a mass exodus is limited, especially among those who have been in the country for some time (Krings et al, 2009). They argue that the decision to ‘stay or go’ is complex. Lots of Polish migrants are still in employment and going home may be worse than remaining in Ireland. Furthermore, if they loose their job there is always the option of social welfare. In addition, the longer migrants remain in the country the more involved they become in the social network, which concurs with (D’Angelo and Ryan, 2011) also (Pietka, 2011).
2.4.1 Life in Poland 2012

The OECD (2012) published a paper regarding the living standards in various countries within the EU. They measured each country’s standard of living based on the following criteria; housing, income, jobs, community, education, environment, civic engagement, health, life satisfaction, safety and work-life balance. Without going into too much detail it is significant to compare the outcomes of the Polish study with those of the Irish study in order to establish a comparison of lifestyles between the two countries. The ratings are based on the OECD findings for each country and compared to an OECD average, (it should be noted that the monetary values are in U.S. Dollars). According to the OECD (2012) the cost of housing in Poland is the largest single expenditure for many Polish people representing an average spend of 24% of their net income, whereas, the average OECD figure is 22% and in Ireland it is 18%, see fig. 2.1. Housing is a major social issue in Poland due to a shortage of dwellings and the quality of existing dwellings a concern. This shortage in housing has led to higher costs and between 1995 and 2005 the cost of housing when compared to disposable income went from 16% in 1995 to 22% in 2005. However, it could be argued that a similar situation existed during the same period in Ireland when house prices reached a record high and ultimately led to the property crash of 2008 when many people find themselves in negative equity.

![Fig. 2.1 Average spend of net income on Housing](image)

The average net disposal income in Poland is $14,508 per year compared to an average OECD figure of $22,387, whereas in Ireland it is $24,150, see fig. 2.2. In terms of household wealth, the average in Poland is $8101, compared to an OECD figure of $36,238 and in Ireland it is $21,487, see fig. 2.3.
The annual net income of the top 20% of the population in Poland is $28,024, in Ireland it is $45,487, whereas, those 20% at the bottom have an annual net income of $5,814, in Poland and $10,348 in Ireland. Regarding employment, over 59% of the working population of Poland are in paid employment, which is lower than the average OECD figure of 66%, whereas in Ireland it is 60%. It appears that those considered as affluent are more inclined to be employed, with 84% of the top 20% in Poland employed, whereas in Ireland it is 84%. Those at the bottom 20%, only 26% are employed in Poland, whereas in Ireland 47% are employed with women less likely than men to be employed.

Regarding youth unemployment, young people aged between 15yrs and 24 yrs are more at risk of being unemployed with a 23.7% unemployment rate in Poland compared to an OECD average of 16.7%, whereas in Ireland it is 28.7%, see fig. 2.4.
Fig. 2.4 Youth Unemployment

Polish workers earn an average of $18,172 per year, compared with an OECD average of $34,033 and Irish workers earn $48,217, see fig. 2.5 below, with the top 20% of Polish workers earning an average of $36,096 and the top 20% of Irish workers earning $93,956. Those Polish workers in the bottom 20% earn an average of $8,331, whereas those in Ireland earn $20,094 per year. There is also the issue of job security, 9% of Polish workers operate on a contract basis of 6 months or less and are more vulnerable than those with open-ended contracts which is lower than the OECD average of 10%.

Fig. 2.5 Average Earnings per Year

When addressing education, the report claimed that 88% of adults living in Poland and 72%, of adults living in Ireland, both male and female between the age of 25 yrs and 64 yrs, have the equivalent of a high-school degree. Regarding its younger generation, 25 yrs to 34 yrs, 93% of Polish youths have the equivalent of a high school degree, which is higher than the OECD average of 81%, in Ireland it is 86%. The life expectancy in Poland stands at 76 yrs, which is below the OECD average of 80 yrs, in Ireland it is 81 yrs. Health spending per person in Poland has grown by
7.4% per year since the year 2000 making it well above the OECD average. The report claims that on a scale of 1-10 people in Poland rate their quality of life at 5.6, whereas Irish people rate theirs at 6.9. Men spend more hours at paid work, 1939 hrs per year as compared to the OECD average of 1749 hrs and in Ireland 1664 hrs, with 11% of Polish men working more than 50 hrs per week as compared with 3% of women, in Ireland 6% men as opposed to 1% of women.

Based on the figures presented in the report it can be argued that everything is relevant. However, many Poles complain that they are unable to survive on their salary, or in the case of the elderly, their pension. Critics say that despite its GDP of 4.4% in 2011 the majority of Poles have not benefited from this economic growth. Economists are warning that the Euro crisis may affect Poland’s GDP rate, 40% of which is generated through exports and experts are predicting a growth rate of just 2.6% for the year 2012 (Somaskanda, 2012).

When comparing the figures it could also be argued that the quality of life in Ireland is better than what can be expected in Poland and those Polish migrants who have decided to remain in Ireland have done so based on a comparison of living standards between the two countries. On a positive note, Marshall (2012) argues that foreign companies investing in Poland are on the increase and everyone wishes to employ Polish engineering university graduates. He refers to ‘General Electric’ officials who claim that they have not regretted establishing one of their global design centres in Poland. Polish policy makers developed their economic strategy by revising their VET system, the results of which have seen university attendance quintupled since the 1990s. According to Eurostat, (not dated) Poles aged 25-34 years with college degrees have increased from 15% to 37.4%. This has helped Poland in the global demand by multinationals in their search for engineering graduates. But this is only one sector, and the paper does not elaborate on whether other industrial sectors are recruiting workers at a similar rate.

However Poland has its challenges, as Marshall (2012) argues, birth rates are down since the 1980s and although Poland’s growth rate was 4.3% in 2011, almost all of its trading partners are in recession. He goes on to argue that unemployment is almost 13% and many investors complain of Poland’s bureaucratic system. Sobczyk, and
Wasilewski (2012) agrees that Poland remains challenged regarding its economic outlook. Its economy is now at its lowest level since 2009, creating fears that it could be heading into recession. Its GDP rate is now 1.4% and although better than most western EU economies it is below the posted rate of 4% for each quarter of 2011. This downturn in economic growth has been attributed to Poland’s government having to cut spending on infrastructure and a decline in its domestic market due to rising unemployment, which is not good news for those Poles wishing to return home and possibly one of the reasons why they remain in Ireland.

Regarding Poland’s unemployment rate, fig. 2.6 shows that in Dec 2012 unemployment stood at 13.4% which is close to Ireland at 14.5% and from 1990 to 2012 unemployment averaged around 13.66% with an all time high of 20.7% in 2003 and an all time low of 0.3% in 1990 (www.tradingeconomics.com 2012).

![Fig. 2.6 Poland’s Unemployment Figures 2000-2012](source; Central Statistical Office (GUS))

**2.5 Conclusions**

There is no general theory to explain all types of migration movement, or their origins, or how they are sustained, or how they evolved. Evidence shows that economic backwardness, unemployment or limited economic growth, are poor predictors of international migration. Neither the ‘push-pull’ factors, nor social networks address the political factors regarding immigration policies and state-to-state relationships as variables in international migration (Valazquez, 2000). However, migrant workers have contributed to the development of the Irish economy especially during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ period. Irrespective of whether migration is long or short-term, those classified as EU migrants have the legal right to remain in their EU host
country, with the same entitlement as nationals and Ireland is no different. Growth in the Irish economy, the demand for labour, higher wages by Polish standards made Ireland an attractive destination for Polish migrants during the boom years. According to Krings et al (2009) there are three basic reasons why Polish people are remaining in Ireland, one, there are still a large number on NMS migrants in employment, two, welfare entitlements offer assistance against poverty, three, moving on is not always for economic reasons. In addition, they have to consider their domestic situation, their quality of life and their future prospects, as Kropiwiec et al (2006) points out, the longer Polish migrants remain in their host country the less likely they are inclined to return to Poland.

This literature review demonstrates a certain need for caution regarding the conclusions reached by some of the earlier studies. Where these conclusions may have been correct at the time of publication, the economic and living conditions in Ireland have changed dramatically since then. It can be argued that, most people living in Ireland have experienced price rises in their day-to-day spending, coupled with the burden of higher taxes and in some cases negative equity. Many Irish nationals are migrating, especially graduates in search of better employment opportunities. Those on social welfare are finding it extremely difficult to make ends meet, coupled with government departments continually seeking new ways of reducing welfare payments. Ireland’s future could be described as rather bleak in terms of economic recovery, with measures of austerity remaining in force for many years to come. The question that this study wishes to address is, do the conclusions of the various studies still apply in 2013 and do Polish migrants who originally came to Ireland in order to earn money and improve their quality of life, wish to remain in the country despite its austerity and economic cutbacks?

In order to focus on the research question it is necessary to highlight the key issues that arose as a result of this literature review.

(1) Are there still grounds to support the argument that most Polish nationals migrated in order to improve their quality of life and work experience?

(2) Does it follow that, the longer Polish migrants remain in Ireland the less likely they are inclined to return to Poland?
(3) Are there grounds to support the argument that Polish migrants can be subjected to acts of inequality and discrimination in the Irish workplace?

(4) How have the measurers of austerity introduces post 2010 impacted on Polish migrants, are they still experiencing a better quality of life in Ireland and what role do their spouses and children play in the migration process?

(5) Have the conditions of employment improved for Polish migrants and do they consider that their working conditions are on a par with their Irish counterparts?

(6) Do Polish migrants consider their quality of life in Ireland more favourable than what they might experience if they returned to Poland?

(7) Do Polish migrants wish to move to countries with more buoyant economies, or, are they unable to leave the Ireland because of their domestic situation?

These issues will be discussed and analysed in the results chapters 4, 5, and 6. The next chapter will focus on the research methodology and data collection for this study.
3.0 Introduction
The previous chapter focused on the four principle issues associated with this study, one, ‘the migration factor’, two, ‘the experience factor’, three, ‘the decision factor’, and four, ‘the comparison factor’, all of which formed the basis of the literature review. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the various research methodologies and data collection procedures associated with social science in order to select the most appropriate one for this study. This chapter begins with an overview of the key issues raised by the literature review which will form the basis of this study. It then moves on to a discussion regarding the epistemological positions of positivism as opposed to phenomenology. This is followed with a rational for selecting a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodology for this study, the design of the research instrument, the profile of the participants and ethical issues. The chapter goes on to describe the pilot testing process, a description of the research sample, the methodology employed in accessing the research sample, the fieldwork, data presentation, analysis and conclusions.

3.1 Issues that arose from the Literature Review
It is generally accepted that social research does not happen by accident, there are research methodologies on which the structure of social research is based. According to Bryman, (2012) theories are employed by the social scientist in order to understand the findings of a piece of research and that these theories will have a profound influence on the outcomes. Social research is influenced by theory and that theory contributes to existing theory because the findings of the research will feed into the existing knowledge. The existence of knowledge about any subject in which the researcher is interested is of crucial importance to the outcomes of the study. This means that the researcher must make him or herself aware of the existing knowledge surrounding the particular subject under study. In other words, one needs to be aware of the existing knowledge/literature before one can build on it, hence the development of a literature review chapter for this study.

It can be argued that migrant workers have contributed to the success of the Irish economy especially during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ period. However, irrespective of whether migration is long or short-term, Polish migrants have under EU law the legal right to live and work in Ireland with the same entitlement as their Irish counterparts. The
findings of the literature review regarding this study showed that there is no single theory to explain the rationale behind Polish migration to Ireland. Evidence shows that economic backwardness, unemployment and limited economic growth in Poland formed part of the ‘push’ factor. Whereas, growth in the Irish economy, the demand for labour, higher wages by Polish standards made Ireland an attractive destination for Polish migrants during the boom years and contributed to the ‘pull’ factor. According to Krings et al (2009) there are three basic reasons why Polish people are remaining in Ireland, one, there are still a large number on NMS migrants in employment, two, welfare entitlements offer assistance against poverty, three, moving on is not always for economic reasons. In addition, they have to consider their domestic situation, their quality of life and their future prospects, as Kropiwiec et al (2006) points out, the longer Polish migrants remain in their host country the less likely they are inclined to return to Poland.

Some of the findings in the literature review demonstrate a certain need for caution especially those prior to 2010. Whereas, these conclusions may have been correct at the time of publication, the economic and quality of life in Ireland have changed dramatically since then. It can be argued that, since 2010 most people living in Ireland have experienced price rises in their day-to-day spending, coupled with the burden of higher taxes and in most cases reduced income. Many Irish nationals are migrating, especially graduates in search of better employment opportunities. Those on social welfare assistance are finding it extremely difficult to make ends meet, coupled with government departments continually seeking new ways of reducing welfare payments. Ireland’s future could be described as rather bleak in terms of economic recovery, with measures of austerity remaining in force for many years to come. The question that this study wishes to address is, do the conclusions of the various studies still apply in 2013 and do Polish migrants who originally came to Ireland in order to earn money and improve their quality of life, wish to remain in the country despite its austerity and economic cutbacks?

In order to focus on the research question for this study it is necessary to highlight the key issues that arose from the literature review that comprise the focus of this research.
(1) Are there still grounds to support the argument that most Polish nationals migrated in order to improve their quality of life and work experience?
(2) Does it follow that, the longer Polish migrants remain in Ireland the less likely they are inclined to return to Poland?
(3) Are there grounds to support the argument that Polish migrants can be subjected to acts of inequality and discrimination in the Irish workplace?
(4) How have the measurers of austerity introduces post 2010 impacted on Polish migrants, are they still experiencing a better quality of life in Ireland and what role do their spouses and children play in the migration process?
(5) Have the conditions of employment improved for Polish migrants and do they consider that their working conditions are on a par with their Irish counterparts?
(6) Do Polish migrants consider their quality of life in Ireland more favourable than what they might experience if they returned to Poland?
(7) Do Polish migrants wish to move to countries with more buoyant economies, or, are they unable to leave the Ireland because of their domestic situation?

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a framework and a justification for the methodology that will address the key issues raised above. There are a number of recognised research and data collection methodologies pertaining to social science. Research methodology and data collection applicable to social science can be classified as either quantitative or qualitative techniques, or in certain situations a combination of both. Quantitative, qualitative and the combination of both have their strengths and weaknesses and it is worth considering the advantages and disadvantages of all three as they apply to the key issues raised above before deciding the most appropriate one to select for this study.

3.2 Social Science Research
As already stated social science is very much built on theories and that these theories have a major influence on the findings of any piece of research. This formulates a relationship between the theory and the research. The positivist researcher might form a hypothesis at the beginning of the study and subsequently test it, i.e. ‘Polish migrant workers migrated to Ireland solely for economic gain’. Whereas, the phenomenologist researcher might form a theory at the end of the study process, i.e. ‘Polish migrants originally migrated to Ireland for economic reasons, but because they are now
experiencing a better quality of life have decided to remain in Ireland and have no intention of returning to Poland’. Both of these statements have creditability. In the first case the theory drives the data collection process and analysis, whereas the second displays a more open-ended approach where the theory emerges from the data collected. The positivist researcher will argue that in order for a hypothesis to be tested it should be formulated and then tested using a precise measurement technique.

The positivist researcher will always base his/her findings on facts unlike the phenomenologist researcher who will base his/her findings on values. Positivists believe that the phenomenologist researcher has no way of verifying their statements and that facts are the only legitimate tool for testing theory. They consider that when people’s opinions and values are brought into the equation they create instability in the foundations of the positivist’s hypothesis resulting in the possibility of them having to change their original hypothesis. The phenomenologist researcher considers the opinions and values of those people participating in the survey as paramount to the outcome of any piece of research. This process of theory building allows the phenomenologist the latitude of being in the position to build on, or revise his or her hypothesis especially if they discover new issues not previously encountered (Denzin and Lincoln 2008:11).

3.2.1 Positivism as opposed to Phenomenology

The natural scientist can make a judgement that a machine manufacturing bolts will produce each in the same time and to the same standard. However, the social scientist cannot make a similar judgement regarding people’s opinion on migration. This opens the core debates referred to as the ‘epistemological debates’ which revolve around the central question: ‘…what constitutes valid knowledge and how can we obtain it”? CLMS, 2004:M1U2:13). Epistemology highlights some of the fundamental questions about knowledge that have implications on how research should proceed and what can be counted as research. There are many competing epistemological positions, but the two, which stand at extremes from one another, are ‘positivism’ and ‘phenomenology’ (CLMS, 2004:M1U2:10). Positivism, which relates to the application of natural science methodologies in the study of social science and phenomenology, which addresses the manner in which people view the world in which they live. Even though they stand at polar extremes from each another, both positivism and phenomenology
as different approaches can be adopted when carrying out the process of data collection for this study.

The approach used by the natural scientists in ‘knowledge creation’ is similar to that used by the social scientist. In other words the positivist researcher will make a judgement on facts and not values. Positivists believe that opinions and values distort the situation and judge them to be subjective, unlike facts, which can be tested or verified by observation. They refer to the qualitative researcher as writing fiction and not science (Denzin and Lincoln 2008:11). As far as the positivist researcher is concerned, in order to obtain valid knowledge one needs to be in a position to test one’s ideas using a structured methodology in order to obtain what is deemed as ‘objective’ knowledge. Positivist researchers are continuously looking for ways of measuring, or quantifying their research in order to reduce or eliminate the possibility of distorting the facts through the introduction of values (Bryman, 2012).

The positivist researcher formulates most of the developmental work at the beginning of the research. There are a number of advantages in using this process, i.e. economical collection of a large amount of data, clear theoretical focus for the research from the outset, being able to control the research process and easily comparable data. However, it could be argued that the positivist’s approach to research is very rigid. Should new issues arise that place doubts on the researcher’s hypothesis it is difficult to change the research instrument in order to take account of new developments. It is also weak at understanding social processes and often does not discover the true values people attach to social phenomena (Saunders et al, 1997).

Qualitative research, which relies on a process of theory building rather than theory testing, tends to be more concerned with words rather than figures. Qualitative researchers, or phenomenologists are more concerned with the ‘how’ and ‘why’ rather than the ‘how many’ and view events and happenings through the eyes of those participating in the research (Cheswell, 2003). They consider that the influence of the environment and the events experienced by those participating as having an impact on social behaviour. The qualitative researcher seeks answers as to how the social experience is formed and given a sense of meaning (Denzin and Lincoln 2008:14). In other words, a question such as ‘how would Polish migrant workers describe their
experiences of living and working in Ireland’ would be answered based on the person’s experiences of events.

Phenomenologists challenge the view held by positivists, CLMS (2004) state that ‘… research should be modelled on the natural sciences’. Humans are fundamentally different in-so-far as each will respond to any given situation or question in a different manner, i.e. ‘what made you decide to migrate’? The implications of this difference extend beyond simply determining which methods social researchers can use. For phenomenologists, this difference has implications for ‘…what counts as knowledge and how we can obtain it’. They believe that every researcher has to make a valued judgement on every piece of research being undertaken and the positivist’s distinction between facts and values is untrue. This position is summed up by Lincoln and Guba (1985:186) who state that ‘…at a minimum, we should be prepared to admit that values play a significant part in inquiry, to do our best in each case to expose and explicate them…and finally, to take them into account to whatever extent we can’.

This philosophy of the phenomenologist suggests that all knowledge is value-laden, we should seek to identify and declare such values, reflect upon their significance, perhaps even use them as an integral part of the research. They believe that it is not possible to replicate a natural experiment on humans using a set of observations. This is because humans will all act differently depending on their culture, background and values. It can be argued that research carried out in this manner can be labelled subjective, so is it also true to say that: ‘…what constitutes valid knowledge and how can we obtain it’, subjective? Phenomenology holds that the most valid kind of knowledge is subjective knowledge, and that we come to know things by viewing the world through the eyes of the people we study (CLMS, 2004:M1U2:13).

Phenomenologists identify a specific area for research in its broadest terms and revise their hypothesis in the event of discovering an area not previously considered, unlike positivists who may have to rethink their hypothesis. Other advantages in using this approach are that it facilitates understanding of the how’s and why’s as well as understanding the social processes. However, regarding its disadvantages, data collection can be time-consuming and its analysis difficult, the researcher has to live with the uncertainty that clear patterns may not emerge and is perceived as less credible by non-researchers (Saunders et al, 1997).
3.2.2 Triangulation

There are fewer problems associated with the quantitative method considering a well-designed questionnaire has been used. The researcher can carry out the analysis using the most appropriate statistical software package available for analysing the data collected. Regarding the qualitative approach, one would have to be mindful of the amount of data collected, what might have got lost, were all the participants asked the same questions, or did some interviews go off on a tangent. One method would be to adapt the triangulation approach. According to Fielding and Schreier (2001, p 2) triangulation creates a greater picture of the issues under study. This approach involves looking at the problem from three different standpoints i.e. a quantitative survey, participant observation, and a set of focus groups. It could be argued that if the researcher were to split the research field into a number of specific parts and allocate either a quantitative or qualitative approach to each of the designated areas, this could be considered as a legitimate strategy. The data can then be analysed, numerical data by means of statistical procedures, verbal data using some kind of interpretive, or hermeneutic method as referred to in (Erzberger & Prein, 1997).

However, Kopinak (1999) states that analysing data from questionnaires is a straightforward task, whereas transcribing and analysing data collected from interviews is time-consuming and requires the researcher’s full emotional involvement and attention. In addition, the researcher requires specific skills such as the ability to formally begin and terminate interviews, establish a rapport, focus a discussion, probe and repeat, as well as having a working knowledge of the subject. It follows therefore that the researcher must have the ability to carry out the interviews, or otherwise engage people with the required skills and interviewing techniques. However, general rules for triangulation strategies cannot be established. Researchers dealing with empirical questions may develop very different applications of triangulation strategies if their research is based on different theoretical backgrounds.

According to Erzberger & Prein (1997), in certain cases it makes sense to develop hypotheses using qualitative methods and test them by using quantitative methods. In other cases, qualitative material might be useful to obtain a more differentiated picture of the results developed from quantitative research.
3.2.3 Quantitative Research

Many researchers favour the quantitative approach because they believe that social science research should be based on facts and not values. This approach is routed in positivism and relies solely on theory testing as opposed to theory building. However, it should not be taken as read that the quantification of aspects of social life is all that separates quantitative research methodology from qualitative research. Because it has an epistemological and ontological position, it can be argued that there is more to quantitative research than compiling numbers. Figure 3.0 illustrates the various stages of quantitative research as set out in (Bryman, 2012:161)

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<th>1 Theory</th>
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<td>2 Hypothesis</td>
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<td>3 Research Design</td>
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<td>4 Devise measures of concepts</td>
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<td>5 Select research sites</td>
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<td>6 Select research subjects/respondents</td>
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<td>7 Administer research instrument instruments/collect data</td>
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<td>8 Process data</td>
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<td>9 Analyse data</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Findings/conclusions</td>
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<td>11 Write up findings/conclusions</td>
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Fig. 3.0 Process of Quantitative Research

3.2.4 Qualitative Research

There are a number of ways in which qualitative research differs from quantitative research. Apart from the obvious use of numbers pertaining to quantitative research there are according to Bryman (2012:380) three features that require mentioning. One, ‘…an inductive view of the relationship between theory and research, whereby the former is generated out of the latter’. Two, ‘…an epistemological position described as interpretivist, meaning that, in contrast to the adoption of a natural scientific model in quantitative research, the stress is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of that world by its participants’. Three, ‘…an ontological position
described as constructionist, which implies that social properties are outcomes of the interactions between individuals, rather than phenomena ‘out there’ and separate from those involved in its construction’.

The use of qualitative research methodology is not that straightforward and as Bryman (2012) suggests there are three reasons for this dilemma. One, the use of a qualitative methodology sometimes conjures up the fear among researchers that quantitative data is not collected or generated. Two, there have been a variety of different traditions in the makeup of qualitative research over the years. Three, the use of qualitative methodology is sometimes discussed as a methodology that differs from quantitative research rather than its attributes. Still there are social scientists that find it a useful research methodology and there are specialist journals such as Qualitative Sociology, also Goodwin, and Horowitz, (2002) addressing this process of research. Figure 3.1 illustrates the various steps in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012:384).

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>General research question</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Selection of relevant site and subject</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Collection of relevant data</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Interpretation of data</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Conceptual and theoretical work</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Writing up findings and conclusions</td>
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Fig.3.1 Main Steps of Qualitative Research

The underlining basis of qualitative research, which practitioners refer to, is the preference of treating theory as something that emerges from the collection and analysis of data, or grounded theory. Grounded theory has been defined as ‘… theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through a research process. In this method, data collection, analysis and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another’ (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:12).

3.2.5 Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Research

Even though quantitative and qualitative approaches to research stand at polar extremes it is possible to use a combination of these methods for gathering data. Since
the early 1980s a great deal of research draws upon the combination of approach. By
taking the middle ground one can have the best of both approaches. However,
epistemological debates show not only just how different perspectives on ‘…what
counts as valid knowledge and how we can obtain it’, have implications for the
methods we use, they also show converse in that, ‘…how we use these methods has
implications for the kind of knowledge we can generate’ (CLMS, 2004: M1U2:22-23).
Issues arise such as, who is asking the question and what is their agenda, who is
being asked the question and what is their agenda. It can be argued that depending on
to whom the question is addressed, the answer will be different (Cheswell, 2003).
Regarding the training and personal values of the researcher, Bryman (2012) argues
that these components can influence the study and the methodology employed in the
research process. He claims that the researcher’s interests and experiences can impact
on the research process and the area under study. He also suggests that social science
researchers based on their training, can become attached to certain research
methodologies, either pro-quantitative, or pro-qualitative. The problem with this
comfort zone is that the social researcher can become blinded to other methods and
approaches. It is therefore imperative that the researcher considers all research
methodologies, their advantages and disadvantages before deciding on the most
appropriate one for their study.

The principle issue at the forefront of undertaking any piece of research is ‘…what
constitutes valid knowledge and how can we obtain it”? It can be argued that in order
to obtain ‘valid knowledge’ and to understand the social phenomenon in question, the
use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods can be used. This
approach has prominence especially when the hypothesis brings into question the
opinions of people, i.e. unstructured textual material as well as numerical data. As
with most research, the methodology used for collecting the data can reside in the
quantitative or qualitative domain. According to Bryman (2012) the arguments against
the use of this approach are twofold, one, that research carries epistemological
commitments and two, quantitative and qualitative research are two separate
paradigms. Regarding the first argument, this viewpoint implies that research methods
are rooted in and can not escape from their epistemological and ontological
commitment. This view has led to arguments which dismiss the use of mixed
methodology, saying that it is neither feasible nor desirable. He cites Smith and
Heshusius (1986:8) who criticise the use of combining both methodologies because this approach ignores the assumptions underlining research methodology by ‘… transforming qualitative inquiry into procedural variation of quantitative inquiry’. The second argument considers quantitative and qualitative as paradigms where epistemological assumptions are incompatible between paradigms. This means that when researchers combine questionnaires with participant observation they are not combining the two methodologies because the paradigms are incommensurable. However, there is an alternative position i.e. a technical version taken by researchers that gives greater prominence to the advantages of using a combination approach in the collection of data and data analysis. There is the view that quantitative and qualitative research are both connected by distinctive epistemological and ontological assumptions, but that these connections are not necessarily viewed as fixed. This means that a research method from a quantitative domain can be placed into the services of one from a qualitative domain. The technical version considers that both strategies are compatible and as a result mixed methods become more feasible and desirable (Bryman, 2012:632). Figure 3.2 illustrates the process of classifying mixed methods research in terms of priority and sequence, priority decision in terms of how far a qualitative or a quantitative methodology are the principle data collectors and sequence decision in terms of which method proceeds which.

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Note Capitals and lower case indicate priority, + indicates concurrent

Figure 3.2 Mixed Method Research

3.2.6 Rationale for a Combination of Quantitative and Qualitative Methodology
Having reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of the various research methodologies the researcher decided that the most appropriate one which would
address the key issues raised in the literature review was a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodology. The benefits and drawbacks of using either a quantitative or qualitative methodology for this study were considered. However, there were drawbacks in singling out any one of these methodologies as a separate entity for the collection of data for this study. If a quantitative approach were used it would not address the views and opinions of the Polish participants participating in this study. Equally if a qualitative methodology were used it may not address the theoretical issues of the study.

Consideration was also given to the use of triangulation. Having reviewed the constraints of organising a quantitative survey, creating an environment for participant observation, and the setting up of focus groups, the idea was abandoned. In addition, the researcher did not have at his disposal the resources or the numbers required in order to implement this process of data collection, nor the facilities to set up focus groups.

Although not specifically referred to, the key issues raised by the literature review contain a degree of theory. This section of the study is more reliant on a quantitative methodology rather than a qualitative approach. However, there is also the issue as to the ‘how’ and ‘why’ Polish migrants migrated to Ireland and why some Polish migrants have decided to remain in Ireland despite its economic decline. This part of the study suggests a qualitative approach. Because this study contains elements of theory testing and theory building it was appropriate that it should lend itself more to a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. By using this approach it allows the researcher the opportunity to view the research question and the key issues raised by the literature review from a number of different angles. In other words, if the researcher wishes to find out whether the participant’s quality of life in Poland was ‘good’, ‘satisfactory’, or ‘poor’, it can be measured through a quantitative process of allocating a scoring mechanism such as a Likert scale. If the researcher wishes to establish the reasons why Polish migrants have decided to remain in Ireland, a qualitative approach would be better suited.

The benefit of using this open-ended approach is that the responses to each of the questions are based on the migrant’s interaction with the world in which they live, i.e.
by interpreting and making judgements on their surroundings and quality of life while living and working in both Poland and Ireland. Because questions of this nature form the basis of this study it was necessary to adopt a combination approach. However, regardless of what methodology is used for data collection, they all have their drawbacks, but as Erzberger and Prein (1997) argue, any weakness should be overcome by combining qualitative and quantitative data sources and methods of analysis within the same research project.

3.3 Design of a Quantitative and Qualitative Research Instrument

As already stated the key issues raised by the literature review would form the basis of this research and with that in mind the research instrument had to take account of these issues. The research instrument was designed and developed over a period of time and there have been numerous drafts, each of which has been revised based on feedback from various quarters, see Appendices 1, 2 and 3 for examples.

An analysis of the quality of life and working conditions experiences by Poles while living in Poland was an essential part of this research. As Somaskanda (2012) argues, the quality of life may have been the driving force behind their migration. It was equally important to examine their experiences of living and working in Ireland. An analysis of their experiences in both locations would act as a barometer for comparing the quality of life in both countries and establishing the rationale for their reluctance to return to Poland. In order to gather the data for this study it was decided to use a ‘snowball sampling procedure’. The reason for this decision was that the researcher knew very few Polish migrants prior to the commencement of this study. Bryman (2012:716) defines a ‘snowball sampling procedure’ as ‘...a non-probability sample in which the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish contact with others’. This methodology is quite popular among researchers and he has used this type of approach when creating a research sample of British visitors to the Disney Theme Parks. He also cites Schepers-Hughes (2004:31) as another practitioner of this approach referring to her study on the global trade in human organs as an example.

Another practitioner of the ‘snowball sampling procedure’ is Nolka and Nowosielski (2009) who used this procedure to explore the quality of life for Polish migrants living
in Ireland. In their study they concentrated on data collected as a result of a primary survey conducted in 2006 using a ‘snowball sampling procedure’. The basic premise of their study was to determine whether or not the standard of living and the quality of life for Polish migrants had improved since migrating to Ireland. In another study Krings et al (2009) undertook a ‘Qualitative Panel Study’ on the experiences of Polish migrants working in the Irish labour market. The panel consisted of 22 Polish migrants, 10 female and 12 male between the ages of 22 and 38 years employed in a variety of industrial sectors. Almost all of those participating in the study arrived in Ireland post 2004.

In terms of participant numbers, Debaene (2008) undertook a study of the Polish community living in Ireland, which was conducted between 2005 and 2007 comprising of 30 Poles between the ages of 20 and 45 years who had settled in Dublin between 2004 and 2005. Kropiwiec et al (2006) explored the effects of the social, economic and political changes in Ireland since the demise of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ has had on Polish and Chinese people living in Ireland. The study was conducted using 45 participants made up of 23 Polish, 22 Chinese. The age groups were between 18 and 30 years of age and the interviews were conducted in the Dublin area where most Polish and Chinese people live. Grabowska’s (2003) study comprising of 20 Polish migrants is very similar to the profile of those participating in this study. Although dated, all of these studies have certain similarities with this study in terms of methodology, profile, participant numbers and location.

3.4 Profile of the Research Sample

In order to address the key issues raised by the literature review it was decided that the data collected for this study should emanate from a cross section of young Polish migrants living in the Dublin area and working in a variety of different jobs. The rationale for this decision was to obtain the widest possible viewpoints from a diversity of Polish migrant workers. It was hoped that a group of this calibre would offer an insight into the topic under study. Having reviewed similar studies of Polish migrant workers it was decided by the researcher that the profile of the research sample for this study should be as follows:

(1) The sample should comprise of both male and female Polish migrant workers.
(2) There should be a combination of single and married participants.
They should be residing in the Dublin area, (mainly for logistic reasons)
They should be working in a variety of different jobs in Ireland for at least 5 yrs.
They must be prepared to express their viewpoint.
Their age group should be around 25 yrs of age, or older.

3.5 Pilot Testing the Research Instrument
It is always desirable to test the research instrument in order to ensure that the instrument performs for the purpose for which it was intended. The design mechanisms for this research instrument needed to be flexible, hence, the combination approach, see Appendix 2. The advantage of the pilot test was to test the research instrument before going into the field, as argued by (Mason, 2007). There was also the advantage of using the instrument in a live situation and the learning from this experience. Prior to testing the instrument the following procedures were implemented. One, covering notes, including ethical issues were attached to the research instrument, explaining the background, purpose and content of the study. Two, participants were asked to read the covering notes along with the questions before participating in the survey. Three, regarding ethical issues, each participant was informed that if they found any of the questions difficult to answer in terms of personal or sensitive information, they could withdraw from the study. Four, they were informed that if they had any difficulty with the manner in which the data was being collected, stored, or those who would have access to the data, they could withdraw from the study.

The pilot test of the research instrument took place using a number of Polish migrants who were employed by FAS the Training and Employment Authority of Ireland. In order to implement this process the researcher first contacted the Personnel Department of FAS to enquire as to whether there were Polish migrants employed by the organisation and if so, seeking their permission to interview them as part of the pilot tests. When permission was granted, each of the Polish employees were contacted by the researcher through their supervisors and asked to participate. Both the FAS Personnel Department and the participant’s supervisors were shown a copy of the research instrument before contacting the Polish participants. When the Polish participants agreed to participate in this study, each was given a copy of the research instrument and informed that if they had any difficulty with any of the questions or
any part of the interview process they could withdraw immediately. They were also informed that they were under no obligation either to FAS or the researcher to participate in any part of the study. The pilot test was carried out during the month of October 2012. Regarding ethical issues pertaining to the pilot test, both management representatives from FAS and those who agreed to participate in the study were reliably informed about all aspects pertaining to the study before the test took place.

As a result of testing the research instrument the following issues were recorded, there was no difficulty experienced by any of the participants regarding their understanding of the covering notes or the content of the questionnaire. However, when carrying out the interviews a number of issues arose. The heading titles along with some of the phraseology of the questions had to be changed. These changes were initiated in order to allow the researcher the opportunity to obtain greater detail regarding the content of the answers from the participants. Having completed the pilot test all revisions were made by the researcher and incorporated into the revised version of the research instrument, see Appendix 3.

Because qualitative research relies predominantly on interviews or observations for data collection, Denzin and Lincoln (2008), it is important that the researcher has developed some basic skills in the process of interviewing or being a facilitator (Goodwin and Horowitz, 2002). As Kopinak (1999) argues, the researcher must have some training as a facilitator, have a vision as to what he/she wishes to get from the exercise, have a definitive method of gathering the responses of the participants and a recognised method of analysing the data collected. Regarding these issues it is important to note that the researcher has had in excess of 15 yrs conducting interviews with FAS the Training and Employment Authority in Ireland, chairing meetings on their behalf and acting as a facilitator on numerous training programmes.

3.6 Ethical Issues
According to Bryman (2012) ethical issues have now become a major responsibility for researchers in recent years. He draws attention to the fact that there are now elaborate frameworks designed by institutions in order to scrutinise research proposals. The purpose of this exercise is to determine if ethical issues have been breached. Some studies, especially involving children and vulnerable adults require
special permission before the study can begin. This ethical caution can be brought to bear on the proposed methodology employed during the study and who can be researched, resulting in certain forms of research being discarded. However, although this issue is of significance, no ethical issues of this nature arose during this study.

It goes without saying that all social research must have creditability and integrity. Social research can carry the risk of stress to those individuals that are participating in the study (CLMS, 2004). With this in mind ethical considerations remained at the forefront by the researcher during the data collection process for this research, see Appendix 4 Letter of Ethics. While this study could be considered straightforward, all participation was of a voluntary nature and every care and consideration was taken by the researcher in order to prevent any harm, or embarrassment to any person participating in this study. As Diener and Crandall (1978) argue, the researcher should be aware of the possibility of harm to the participants such as the lack of informed consent, an invasion of privacy, or whether deception is involved. The British Sociological Association (2003) in their statement on Ethical Practice remind researchers to anticipate and to guard against consequences which can be predicted as harmful to participants and to consider carefully that the research experience may be a disturbing one for those participating.

With this in mind and prior to any contact with participants the researcher sought ethical approval from the University of Leicester which was granted on the 15/10/2012. All participants were reliably informed about all aspects pertaining to the study as per the University of Leicester’s ethical guidelines. Before participating in the study, the researcher ensured that each participant understood what they were agreeing to and that they were fully informed regarding the purpose of the research, the procedures regarding data collection, how the data would be stored and who would have access to the data. In addition, each participant was informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time, or for whatever reason, as the British Social Research Association (2003) Ethical Guidelines suggest. Regarding the methodology of data collection, participants were made aware of the methods employed by the researcher for data collection and should a recording device be used, the researcher would seek the participant’s permission to use this device. However, the use of a recording device did not materialise during this study.
It was considered that the ethical issues pertaining to this research would mainly apply to the content of the discussion between the researcher and the participant. With this in mind, the researcher was conscious of issues arising, such as personal information that might be considered sensitive, or statements expressed by participants that may be considered as having no foundations (CLMS, 2004). All of these issues were addressed with due care and attention by the researcher.

During this study the researcher was at all times open and transparent with those participating in the exercise and established a contract of trust. Before any data was collected the researcher sought permission from each participant. This process involved going through a number of ‘gatekeepers’. In addition, the researcher had at his disposal credentials and documentation to support his identity and a letter of introduction from the University of Leicester, see Appendix 5. The researcher was also aware that while conducting this study, other ethical issues might arise, such as confidential materials, personal, or libellous statements (CLMS, 2004).

The process of data collection on a one-to-one basis can generate its own ethical issues. The researcher may bring to the table certain attitudes, or preconceived ideas about the subject under study, which could distort the findings, i.e. the researcher could have formed the opinion that migrant workers are taking jobs from Irish nationals. Participants can also distort the findings by going off on tangents, i.e. some migrants could be of the opinion that all Polish migrants are discriminated against by Irish employers. There is also the possibility of participants having hidden agendas and since the data collected is largely based on people’s experience it may not be completely objective. With this in mind the researcher assured each participant that the interview would be carried in the strictest confidence. He explained to each participant that it would not deviate from the agreed questions set out at the beginning of the interview unless to seek clarification regarding certain responses. In addition, the researcher did not become too familiar with any of the interviewees, but carried out each interview in a business-like approach. When ethical issues relating to gender, ethnic groups and age differences come into the domain, the interview can become more problematic and the researcher has to rely on his/her interviewing techniques in
order to address any ethical dilemmas that might arise. However, this issue did not arise during the interview process.

Regardless of what approach is used by the researcher the issue of ethical dilemmas will always arise especially in the manner in which questions are phrased, or presented, or where there are issues of language and interpretation. With this in mind, the use of a translator was considered by the researcher in order to overcome this difficulty. However, since the level of English among those participating in this study was quite good, the need for a translator did not arise.

3.7 The Research Sample

It was intended that the research sample should comprise of male and female participants. In addition, it was hoped that the sample would include married migrants, migrants with children, single people and employed in a variety of jobs. The rationale for this decision was to obtain the widest possible viewpoints from a diversity of Polish migrants. However, although the research was a ‘snowball sample’, it does not follow that the views and comments by the various participants are representative of the entire Polish community living in Ireland.

In addition to the research sample used for this study, the researcher also made contact with Professor James Wickham Department of Sociology, Trinity College Dublin and Dr Rebecca Chiyoko King-O'Riain of the National University Maynooth regarding recent work on Polish migration, both were most helpful. Professor Wickham replied that certain projects were in progress but not available at the time of contact when the data was being compiled for this study.

Contact was also made with the Polish Embassy in Dublin in order to obtain the names of Polish societies representing Polish migrants in Ireland. The reason for this approach was to obtain the views of these representative groups regarding issues which could be of concern to Polish migrants, such as, conditions of employment, accommodation, language problems and their social needs. In reply, the Polish Embassy suggested making contact with the following representative groups, the Polish Social and Cultural Association, the Polish Society and the Polish House. After making contact on a number of occasions and having received no response from any
of the representative groups, it was decided to abandon this part of the exercise. In retrospect, it is the opinion of the researcher that the views expressed by many representative groups can have their limitations, they could be agenda driven or based on organisational policy. The objective of this study was to focus on the individual’s rationale for migrating, their experience and expectations of living and working in Ireland and their vision of the future. The inclusion of an organisational contribution, although useful as a comparison of viewpoints, may have distorted the final outcome of the study.

3.7.1 Accessing the Research Sample
Despite the fact that there are thousands of Polish migrants living and working in Ireland, only a couple of Polish migrants were known to the researcher at the beginning of this study. In order to address this problem it was necessary to locate Polish migrants who have been living and working in Ireland for a number of years. With this in mind, a couple of Polish migrants who were acquaintances of the researcher and fitted the participant profile (see, section 3.4) were contacted and asked if they would participate in the study. Having agreed, they were then asked if they knew other Polish migrants who would fit the participant profile and might be prepared to participate. As a result of this request, additional Polish migrants were identified who expressed their willingness to participate. This method of procuring participants continued to expand over a period of time. It was then extended to relations of the researcher who were acquainted with and worked with Polish migrants. The results of these endeavours brought about a research sample of some 40 Polish migrants who fitted the profile of the research sample and were prepared to participate in the study, hence the ‘snowball sample’ approach.

In early November 2012, initial contact was made with those prepared to take part in this study. The purpose of this procedure was to establish a rapport between the researcher and the participants as described by Kopinak (1999) in order to explain the purpose and details of the study. A convenient location was then agreed by both the participant and the researcher in order to carry out the interviews. Some of the interviews took place at the participant’s place of employment while others took place in coffee shops. Prior to the interview taking place, details of the study including
ethical issues and a copy of the research instrument was forwarded to each participant by email.

It was originally intended that all of the data for this study would be collected through a series of in-depth interviews. This was an arduous process having to make contact with so many people who were unknown to the researcher and having little success in establishing venues and times. However, this process soon became even more problematic, some participants were prepared to be interviewed, but had difficulties with their domestic situation, working long hours, or their children attending school, or their children too young to have present during an interview process. Whereas, others claimed they could not attend due to personal commitments, working shifts, transport difficulties and the non-availability of childminders. After numerous attempts in trying to get people to attend for interview it was decided to change to an alternative approach. As a compromise, a number of participants suggested that they were prepared to take the research instrument with them, fill it out in their own time and return it to the researcher. On foot of this, copies of the research instrument were distributed to the 35 Polish participants, either by email, or through a gatekeeper.

There were other difficulties encountered by the researcher while trying to obtain participants for this study. One of which occurred having made contact with an acquaintance of the researcher who operates a restaurant in the Dublin area and employs a number of Polish migrant workers. These migrant workers were principally employed as part-time workers, but when contacted were not prepared under any circumstances to participate in this study. They were uncertain as to who would have access to the information that they supplied. When assured that any information given by them would be treated in the strictest confidence, they replied that they would be reluctant to disclose personal information in Poland, so why should they disclose it in Ireland. The acquaintance of the researcher who employed these Polish migrant workers declared that he had experienced difficulty in getting them to disclose information, or fill out forms, his comment was that ‘…regarding anything of an official nature they have a major difficulty in disclosing information’ he went on to say ‘…I find it very difficult to get them to fill out forms, even those which apply to their work’. Similar difficulties as expressed above were also experienced by Nolka
and Nowosielski (2009:32) when carrying out their study stating that, ‘…respondents are hard to reach, reluctant to participate and sometimes distrustful’.

### 3.7.2 Fieldwork

The fieldwork for this study commenced at the beginning of November 2012 and continued until the end of February 2013. All 5 of the interviews were conducted at a location selected by the participant. Prior to the interview taking place each participant was requested to read the preamble to the research instrument before reading the questionnaire. This section included details of how the interview would proceed with special reference to ethical issues. Having read the entire research instrument they were then asked if they had any problems with its content, or if they wished to withdraw from the study for whatever reason. Only when they were entirely satisfied with all aspects of the process did the interview commence. All agreed to participate and each interview took between 1 hour and 1.5 hours to complete.

The questionnaire formed part of the research instrument and acted as the basis for each of the interviews, during which each participant was asked the same questions and their answers recorded on paper. Occasionally participants were asked to elaborate on their answers to certain questions. The reason for this request was for the researcher to obtain additional information, which was deemed important to the study. As each interview concluded, the answers to the questions were checked with the participant in order to obtain further clarification, if required. Following this, the content of each completed document was typed up by the researcher for analysis at a later stage.

The questionnaire consisted of 9 sections. Each section had a number of questions, some designed using a quantitative methodology and others using a qualitative methodology. The list below illustrates the various sections, which made up the research instrument:

- Part 1: Life in Poland before Migrating
- Part 2: Experience of Working in Ireland
- Part 3: Experience of Living in Ireland
- Part 4: Social Needs
- Part 5: Polish/Irish Culture and Identity
Part 6: Leaving Ireland and returning to Poland
Part 7: Polish Origin
Part 8: Polish Level of Education
Part 9: Any other Comments
(For further details regarding the research instrument see Appendix 3)

Those taking part in the interview process consisted of 2 males and 3 females. The first male to take part was 27 yrs of age, living in Ireland since 2004 and working as a clerical assistant. The second male was 29 yrs of age, living in Ireland since 2006 and working in an accounts department. Regarding the 3 females, one was married with two daughters. She was 31 yrs of age, working in the hospitality sector and had been living in Ireland since 2007. The second female was married with two children. She was 31 yrs of age, and had been living in Ireland since 2004, currently unemployed and in receipt of social welfare benefit. The third female was also married with one small child. She was 26 yrs of age, living in Ireland since 2006 and employed as a health care worker.

Those who could not attend the interview process, a copy of the research instrument was distributed to each of the 35 Polish participants, either by email, or through a gatekeeper. Some gatekeepers were prepared to act as a go-between the researcher and the participants. They suggested that should difficulties arise regarding the participant’s interpretation of the questions, mainly from a language perspective, they were prepared to assist. However, the language skills of the participants sufficed in completing the documentation and the gatekeepers were not required to assist with this task.

As with the interview process each participant was advised to read the research instrument carefully before completing the questionnaire. In addition, they were also advised of their right to withdraw from the study at any time if they wished to do so, or if they had any difficulty with the content of any part of the research instrument. However, whilst there was no difficulty regarding people wishing to withdraw from the study, the process of gathering the completed copies was somewhat haphazard. Some returned the completed questionnaires promptly while others took a considerable length of time in completing the documentation. Others were contacted...
on numerous occasions requesting the completed documentation. The entire process began in November 2012 and was not complete until the end of February 2013. There were 25 completed documents returned from the original 35, some were returned via email, while others were returned through a gatekeeper, or by post. On return, each of the hand written documents was typed up by the researcher for analysis at a later stage.

Of the 25 who completed the questionnaire 14 were female, 8 married and 6 single. Their ages ranged from 24 yrs to 32 yrs and had been living in Ireland for between 5 yrs and 9 yrs. With regards to the male participants, 11 in total, 4 were married and 7 were single. Their ages ranged from 25 yrs to 35 yrs and had been living in Ireland for between 5 yrs and 9 yrs. Of the 25 participants, 8 had children residing with them in Ireland, whereas, only 1 had his family living in Poland.

3.8 Data Presentation and Analysis
This study comprises of quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data is presented in a statistical format using frequency tables. The qualitative data is presented as a narrative combined with quotations from the various participants regarding their views on different aspects of the study, see Appendix 6 for the list of qualitative questions. Their comments were compared with each another and the issues referred to in the literature review in order to determine whether or not trends or patterns emerged. This process was carried out using a system of coding as outlined in (Mason, 2007:150). The coding process used in this study is as follows, first, each of the qualitative questions was extracted from the questionnaire and each given a coding sequence, example, ‘Why did you decide to migrate’? In this case the answer from each of the participants was coded under the following headings, i.e. were they ‘employed’, ‘unemployed’, in ‘full time education’ or ‘other’. The rationale for this coding was that their employment status in Poland might have an impact on the migration decision-making process. In other words, the employed person could have migrated in order to improve his or her work experience, or get a better job, or develop a more impressive CV, or have a better quality of life. The unemployed person might have migrated in order to gain worthwhile employment regardless of their qualifications, or the type of work on offer in Ireland. The person who was in full-time education may not have been able to secure worthwhile employment, or they
may have seen little or no future for themselves by remaining in Poland, or they may have wished to travel to other countries. Those that came under the heading of ‘other’ applied to persons such as those joining their spouse or reuniting with their family. Another example is the question, ‘Are you considering staying in Ireland for the foreseeable future’? In this case the answers from the participants were coded under the following headings, ‘single person’, ‘married person’ and ‘married with children’. Like in the previous example, the rationale for remaining in Ireland could differ depending on the marital status of the participant, or the implications imposed by their children, see Appendix 8 Coding Sheet. When the data collection was completed each participant was sent a letter of thanks for their participation by the researcher, see Appendix 7.

The researcher was aware that there are computer-assisted data analysis systems such as (CAQDAS). These packages have been in existence for some time and have been recognised as a significant development in data analysis since the 1990s. One of the more popular packages to arrive on the market is NVivo (Mason, 2007:160). However, regardless of their significance none of the packages were available to the researcher.

3.9 Conclusions
This chapter has explored the various methodologies used for the purpose of social science research and data analysis. It has reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of each and their theoretical basis. This chapter has provided a rationale for selecting a combination of quantitative and qualitative method approach for this study. It has addressed the manner in which the research instrument was developed and designed, the ethical issues and the pilot test process. It has highlighted the issue of confidentiality and ethics as paramount to this study. This chapter has also provided a detailed account of the selection process for the research sample, the methodology employed in accessing the research sample, the manner in which the fieldwork was undertaken and the analysis and presentation of the data.

It pointed out that the selection process was not without its difficulties. It is the opinion of the researcher that a number of the participants may have had some concerns regarding their participation, hence, their reluctance in some cases to be
interviewed. Because the researcher was unknown to the participants, there were difficulties in terms of making contact and agreeing locations for the interview. This is understandable, since most people when contacted by unknown persons are reluctant to divulge information especially when it is of a personal nature.

Although their English language skills were quite good, there were at times language difficulties, especially when asked to elaborate on a particular issue. In a number of cases the researcher had to pursue the issue for some time in order to receive clarification. It is not known whether this problem arose in cases where the participant filled out the questionnaire in their own time. Finally, it should be noted that the help and assistance given by the gatekeepers, played a pivotal role in the data collection process for this study.

The original intention was to gather all of the data through a process of interviews. Since the interview process was limited to 5 participants, the researcher compared the documentation completed by these participants with the documentation completed by those who were not interviewed in order to see if there were any major discrepancies. Apart from trying to decipher the written answers to some of the questions there was no major difference between the two. Another issue was the honesty of some of the participants. Because the participants were not required to give their names, the answers given by some were very direct and to the point.

The next chapter, the first of three results chapters will focus on the driving force, which gave Polish migrants the impetus to migrate to Ireland in search of employment post 2004.
Chapter 4
Life in Poland and Rationale for Migrating
Chapter 4: Life in Poland and Rationale for Migrating

4.0 Introduction.

This chapter the first of three results chapters explores the circumstances, which gave Polish migrants the impetus to migrate to Ireland in search of employment post 2004. It will argue that, while the findings of researchers such as Nolka and Nowosielski (2009), Iglicka (2010), Krings et al (2011), Krings et al (2012), Somaskanda, (2012), the OECD (2012) and Wickham et al (2013) regarding the rationale for Polish migration to Ireland are correct, this study found that there were additional issues, which influenced their decision to migrate. This chapter will argue that the ‘push/pull’ factors behind Polish migration derived from a situation where the benefits of economic growth were not filtering down to the ordinary worker. It will argue that migration was very much the choice of the individual and most Poles saw little advantage by remaining in Poland. In terms of the ‘pull’ factors, it will argue that Ireland had plenty of jobs to offer, paying high salaries and easy to access by those migrants coming from the accession countries. It will argue that most of those who migrated to Ireland were young and well educated seeking out better jobs, broadening their CVs and improving their quality of life. Regarding those in full-time education, this chapter will argue that most had little or no experience of working in Poland and their principle reason for migrating was to gain full-time employment and improve their English language skills.

4.0.1 Employment Opportunities in Poland

In order to understand the driving force behind Polish migration it is important to explore their quality of life while living in Poland. It can be argued that before a person decides to migrate, they will first look at the environment in which they live and consider what life might hold in store for them should they remained in that particular location. The work status of an individual is an important aspect of their identity. Most people who are employed feel that they are contributing to society in terms of providing for both themselves and their family. Whereas, those who are unemployed can feel rejected by society which depletes their hopes of providing for both themselves and their families. Those in full-time education normally expect to find employment when they qualify. However, should circumstances prevail where they are finding it difficult to secure employment they can feel that their qualifications
have little value? It is therefore important to establish the work status of those migrants taking part in this study in order to understand their rationale for migrating.

The results of this study showed that while living in Poland, 16 were employed, 4 were unemployed and 10 were in full-time education, see figure 4.0.

When reviewing the unemployment figures for Poland for the years 1990 to 2012 the rate of unemployment averaged around 13.66%, with an all time high of 20.7% in 2003. Most of the group participating in this study migrated post 2004 during a period when Poland was experiencing a high unemployment rate. However, only 13.3% of the group were unemployed at that time, which was considerably lower than the national unemployment rate of 20%. If those who were in full-time education are removed from the equation the figure amounts to 16 employed and 4 unemployed, resulting in a total of 80% employed and 20% unemployed, which is more in keeping with the unemployment figures at the time, see figure 4.1.

Fig 4.0 Employment Status in Poland

Fig 4.1 Poland’s Unemployment Figures 2000-2012
Since 17 of the group were in full-time employment while in Poland, it was important to review their working conditions. The purpose of this exercise was to explore the opportunities available within the workplace should they decided to remain in Poland. Those who were in full-time employment were asked to rate their opinion on their working conditions as, ‘very good’ ‘good’, ‘fair’, ‘poor’ or ‘non-applicable’ which applied to those either in full-time education, or unemployed. The analysis showed that only 1, considered their conditions of employment as being ‘good’. Whereas, 11, considered their conditions of employment as ‘fair’ and 5, considered them as ‘poor’ see figure 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
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Fig 4.2 Conditions of Employment in Poland

It should be noted that 13 of the group classified themselves as unemployed, or in full-time education and their opinion regarding their future employment prospects is of the upmost importance. This is significant, especially since the unemployment figures in Poland post 2004 were quite high. Each participant in this category was asked to comment on their prospects of gaining employment should they remain in Poland. They were asked to rate whether their chances of obtaining employment were ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘fair’, or ‘poor’ or ‘non-applicable’ which applied to those who were employed. The analysis showed that of the 13 surveyed, 100% claimed that their prospect of gaining employment in Poland was ‘poor’, see figure 4.3. This challenges the claim made by Somaskanda (2012) who argues that the Polish economy has been performing well since joining the EU, but on the other hand found that the benefits of Poland’s economic growth did not filter down to the majority of workers. This concurs with Appleyard (1989) who argues that the origins of international migration can be found in the economic limitations of developing countries where conditions provide the ‘push’ factor for legal and illegal migration.
According to Valazquez (2000) an economy, which is almost stagnant will not provide employment for a growing population, hence, it is difficult to provide a better quality of life. Because we now live in an age of multi-media, people can appreciate the quality of life in various destinations throughout Europe and the rest of the world through TV and the Internet. It can be argued that the quality of life, or lack of it, can influence the person’s decision to question their future. In order to determine the quality of life experienced by the 30 Polish migrants participating in this study, each one was asked to comment as to whether their standard of living in Poland was either, ‘very good’ ‘good’, ‘fair’, ‘poor’ and ‘very poor’. On analysing the data, 3, said that their standard of living in Poland was ‘very good’, 12, said that it was ‘good’ and 8, said that it was ‘fair’. Whereas, only 7 said that it was ‘poor’, see figure 4.4.

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<th>Frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
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<td>Fair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Fig 4.4 Standard of living while in Poland

However, these figures require further analysis since those who were asked to comment were either in full-time employment, unemployed, or in full-time education. Because their circumstances varied it was decided to analyse the data by category. As one male participant in full-time education commented;

‘I was living with my parents at the time, if I were working and living on my
own my income, it would be about €300 per month and with prices in Poland similar to Ireland, I would be in the ‘poor’ category.

When studying the data by category, the following results were recorded. Those who classified their standard of living as ‘very good’ amounted to 1, who was employed and 2 in full-time education. Those who considered their standard of living as ‘good’ amounted to 5 employed, 2 unemployed and 5 who were in full-time education. Regarding those who considered their standard of living as ‘fair’ amounted to 4 who were employed, 2 unemployed and 3 in full-time education. Those who considered their standard of living as ‘poor’ amounted to 5 employed and 1 in full-time education. However, it should be noted that those who were in full-time education were living with their parents.

The standard of living experienced by those who were in full-time education and living with their parents could influence the outcome of this data, insofar as these participants were living in accommodation provided by their parents and their outgoings in terms of financial commitments to the home limited. It was therefore decided to remove them from this part of the equation in order to determine the quality of life experienced by those who classified themselves as employed or unemployed. Based on the results of this exercise, only marginal differences were discovered when compared to the previous results.

It was also decided to break down each of the categories by sex in order to see if there were discrepancies emerging. The data showed that of the 30 participants 1 male and 2 females considered their standard of living in Poland as ‘very good’, 6 males and 6 females considered their standard of living as ‘good’. Those who considered their standard of living as ‘fair’ amounted to 4 males and 5 females and those who considered their standard of living as ‘poor’ amounted to 2 males and 4 females.

What was interesting about these figures is that only 8 of the group classified their standard of living as being ‘poor’ whereas, 22 considered it as ‘fair’ to ‘very good’ which challenges the conclusions by researchers such as Somaskanda (2012) insofar as Polish migrants were reported to have migrated in order to achieve a better standard of living. However, even this view can also be challenged insofar as the
quality of life they were experiencing while living in Poland was by Polish standards and not necessarily based on a comparison between Ireland and Poland.

4.0.3 Decision to Migrate
As already referred to in chapter 3, the decision to migrate is multi-faceted and there is no single framework that fits all as outlined by Valazquez (2000). Whereas, Grabowska (2003) argues that the reasons for migration are complicated. Each person will have their own rationale for migrating, whether it is to improve their lifestyle, get a better job, or family considerations. Wickham et al (2013) argues that there has always been a history of movement among Polish migrants to other destinations and the migration which took place post accession in 2004 is just an additional factor.

Regarding the collection of data for this study each participant was asked why they decided to migrate. In order to get a true response it was decided to break down the responses by category, those who were in full-time employment, unemployed, or in full-time education. Each of their stories revealed a complex rationale for their decision. A 24 year old single female who was working in Poland as a technician was requested by her employer to relocate in Ireland, a country she knew nothing about and would not have chosen were she in control of the decision making process;

‘I was sent to Ireland by the company I worked for in Poland, I would not have chosen Ireland as a place where I would have migrated to because I knew nothing about Ireland or its people’.

Emigration can take place despite economic growth as referred to by (Sassen-Koob, 1988). However, Poland’s unemployment rate is high, wages low and its standard of living average (Sobczyk and Wasilewski, 2012). The 24 year old female referred to above did not make the choice herself, many did, such as a 31 year old married male who left Poland in order to get a better job. He was of the opinion that there was no future for him or his family by remaining in Poland. He was getting older, was married with a family and saw migration as the basis for a better quality of life for both himself and his family. Based on his network of friends living and working in Ireland he succeeded in securing a job in the service sector;

‘I was getting on and I have a family. I saw little future for my family and myself by staying in Poland. So I left Poland to get a better job, I had heard about jobs
According to Valazquez (2000) it is fundamental that workers are prepared to migrate, employers and countries are prepared to accept them and that income gaps exist. There is also the question of the families and households, Boyd (1989) views the family as a central unit where individuals play a specific role in the decision making process. Ryan (2011) also expresses the importance of family in the migration process. According to Pessar (1982) the decision to migrate is not just taken by individuals alone, but as a result of the conditions and structure of the household unit.

However, not all migrated just to get a better job. Some like a 35 year old married female with a 3rd level education wished to travel, experience a different type of life, broaden her CV, experience different cultures and seek a change from the drudgery of Polish life as outlined by (Kropiwiec, et al 2006):

‘I needed some change, adventure, wanted to gain more experience at work, see more of other countries because life in Poland was very dull with little to do and very few prospects. I now have a good job in Ireland as a technician’.

Others migrated because they did not like the quality of life they were experiencing while living in Poland. Wickham et al (2013) argues that a better life style and a career strategy was part of the driving force behind Polish migration. A 24 year old single female who had graduated as a music teacher in Poland found Poland very difficult. While living and working there she found the attitude of Polish people unpleasant and rude, attributing it to the lifestyle of the people where there exists an environment of poor working conditions, bad pay and an employer driven work situation. This viewpoint has certain similarities to those experiences by Polish workers in the findings of (Somaskanda 2012). The 24 year old music teacher was of the opinion that most of the Baltic States suffer from the same problems. This attitude could be the result of the recent breakup of the communist system and the fact that most of these countries are in the process of building up their economy;

‘I left Poland to get a better job, I did not like it when I lived in Poland, people are rude and unpleasant. It’s like that in most of the Baltic States where there is bad pay and poor working conditions. People have little or no money, so when I heard about Ireland from friends I jumped at the chance of going’.
It could be argued that when a person is unemployed they are always seeking out opportunities in order to get back into the jobs market. Those who were unemployed in Poland found that they were unable to secure meaningful employment. They were of the opinion that few employment opportunities existed in Poland. Any positions, which did exist, paid very little in terms of salary and the working conditions were very poor. Those who were unemployed felt that there was little or no future for them in Poland, or their families, irrespective of their qualifications (Grabowska, 2003).

There was also the issue where both Irish employers and migrant workers took full advantage of Ireland’s open labour market policy as referred to in (Krings et al, 2011). Others migrated in order to be with members of their family who had already left Poland to seek meaningful employment and to improve their English;

‘I found that there were better job opportunities in Ireland than in Poland, I could not get a job in Poland despite my qualifications, so I decided to come to Ireland where jobs are plentiful and the money was good’.

(Age 29 single male technician)

‘I came to Ireland because my family had been living here, to practice my English and to try something new’.

(Age 23 single female clerical officer)

‘I came to Ireland because my boyfriend was working in Ireland and so were his friends. I knew nothing about Ireland I just wanted to be with my boyfriend. I then got a job and got married. I have one child and I love being in Ireland, it is so much better than Poland’.

(Age 31 married female)

It appears from the data collected that those who were in full-time education never actually worked in full-time employment while living in Poland. All of them were living with their parents and had decided to migrate after they had finished their education. Their rationale for migrating was to improve their level of English, obtain work experience, earn money and have a better quality of life. They were of the opinion that by remaining in Poland it would be difficult to obtain meaningful employment with reasonable pay and conditions despite their qualifications;

‘I never applied for a job while in Poland, I decided to migrate after finishing my education in order to gain work experience and to improve my level of
English, most of the jobs available in Poland were unsuitable, they had low pay and poor working conditions’.

(A 27 year old single male working as a clerical officer)

'I had just finished my education in Poland and I decided to leave the country in order to make some money for my family, gain work experience and improve my English language skills, it was difficult to get a job in Poland and if you did the money was bad, as were the working conditions and your employer controlled you’.

(Age 29 married female administrator)

4.0.4 Level of Education

Most Poles claimed that job opportunities were limited in Poland despite the growth in its economy. Those who graduated found it difficult to gain employment irrespective of their qualifications and those who were employed criticised the level of pay on offer by Polish employers and the absence of proper working conditions. The table below shows that when asked to describe their level of education, 8 males and 11 females had a 3rd level qualification making them the highest in the overall group, whereas 5 males and 6 females had 2nd level qualifications see figure 4.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 4.5 Level of Education of Polish Migrant Workers

4.1 Selecting Ireland and as a Destination

When asked why they selected Ireland as a destination most commented that they heard about Ireland from friends or relations, the internet, local papers, or from Irish companies advertising for Polish workers to come and work in Ireland. This concurs with Piore (1979) who argues that one of the contributing factors to the migrating process is the actions of employers from the receiving country recruiting workers from other locations in order to supply their labour needs. Ireland was an attractive destination because it was an English speaking country where there were plenty of
jobs on offer with good pay and it was easy to enter since it was one of the first EU countries to open its borders to the accession states;

‘I did not want to go to the UK because there were too many migrant workers there already. I chose Ireland since it was an English speaking country and the job opportunities were very good, also the pay. I had received good reports about the country from friends and the Internet’.

(Age 27 year old single male)

‘I heard about Ireland from my friend. He introduced me to this country and I found it very attractive. Since we joined the EU in 2004 I thought that this must be my opportunity to visit it. After a while I loved it so much that I decided to stay here for the rest of my life’.

(A 29 year old married female)

What was interesting about these comments is that some Polish migrants selected Ireland for a variety of reasons in addition to financial gain, which concurs with (Portes, 1983) and (Gregory, 1991). Many of these migrant workers were quite young when they first migrated, 7 male participants and 13 female participants were between 18-23 years of age. The remainder were between 24-29 years of age when they first migrated, none were over the age of 30, figure 4.6. Figure 4.7 shows the marital status of participants in 2012.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<tr>
<td>24-29 Yrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>17</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Fig 4.6 Age Groupings of Polish Migrants before Migrating

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<th>Single</th>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 4.7 Marital Status of Male/Female Participants

4.2 Conclusions
Having analysed the data collected for this part of the study, it is reasonable to say that the arguments put forward by researchers such as Kropiwiec et al, (2006),
O’Clery (2009) and Nolka and Nowosielski (2009) are correct insofar as there are still grounds to support the argument that most Polish nationals migrated for economic gain in order to improve their quality of life, gain work experience and improve their English language skills. The push/pull factors which were the driving force behind Polish migration post 2004 were based on the fact that the benefits of Poland’s economic growth were not filtering down to most workers. Migration was very much down to an individual’s choice and most Poles saw that their future in Poland was uncertain, with little hope for advancement, particularly by those individuals who were unemployed or in full-time education. They claimed that, were they to remain in Poland there was little hope for a better quality of life for either them or their families. However, although most of the participants in this study said that they had a reasonable quality of life in Poland, there was no evidence to support the claim that they wished to return to Poland. In fact most of those participating did not wish to return to Poland under any circumstances. In terms of the ‘pull’ factors, Ireland at the time was experiencing full employment with plenty of jobs available and paying high salaries. Ireland was easy to access and those migrants coming from the accession countries were favoured by the Irish government over those from countries outside the EU. However, migration post 2004 has affected the social and economic fabric of Poland due to the exodus of its highly skilled and educated workforce, prompting the Polish government to implement a strategy enticing Polish migrants back to Poland. However, this strategy has met with little success.

Chapter 5, the second of three results chapters will focus on the Polish experience of living and working in Ireland
Chapter 5
Experiences of Poles Living and Working in Ireland.
Chapter 5: Experiences of Poles Living and Working in Ireland.

5.0 Introduction

This chapter, the second of three results chapters will examine the experiences of Polish migrants while living and working in Ireland. Because they came originally for economic reasons this chapter will review their quality of life in Ireland especially since 2010 when the impact of austerity and economic decline became a reality.

This chapter will argue that, although Polish migrants migrated to Ireland for economic reasons the recent measurers of austerity introduced by government since 2010 has not had any major impact on their quality of life. It will argue that most Polish migrants who took part in this study are well educated and not discriminated against in terms of their social needs, employment opportunities, wage structure, or opportunities for advancement in their place of work. In terms of integration, it will
argue that, despite having experienced just a working relationship, most Polish migrants claimed to have no difficulty in integrating with Irish nationals. Finally, it will argue that Polish migrants still experience a better quality of life in Ireland. they regard their present income as adequate and are of the opinion that if they became unemployed they would still survive financially with a better quality of life in Ireland than in Poland.

According to Valazquez (2000) central to the economic model for migration is wage and income differential between the sending country and the receiving country. The majority of Polish migrants who have taken part in this study migrated to Ireland in the early 2000s. It can be argued that during this period of living and working in Ireland they experienced the boom times, when jobs were in abundance, salaries high and most people enjoying a superior quality of life. Now they are experiencing the country’s economic decline, with high unemployment, reductions in wages, price rises and higher taxes, especially those implemented in the budgets of 2010, 2011 and 2012. It is also reasonable to argue that their circumstances have changed since originally arriving in Ireland. Some have married, have children, purchased houses and have become accustomed to a particular lifestyle in Ireland. As Hofstede (1984) argues, values may change when a change of environment is experienced. Or as Massey et al (1993) and Waldinger and Lichter (2003) argue, as the migration stage progresses the economic factor is replaced by the network factor. This study found that most Polish migrants initially came to Ireland with the intention of staying for a number of years before returning home which concurs with the argument made by Dustmann and Weiss (2007) that most migrations are temporary rather than permanent. Figure 5.0 illustrates in terms of duration their initial intension to stay.

![Fig 5.0 Polish Migrants Initial Intension to Stay](image)
While this may have been the case when they first arrived, the situation has now changed. Most of those who took part in this study have been living in Ireland for at least 6 years to 10 years, which is more in keeping with the arguments of Chiswick (1980) and Barth et al (2004) who assume migrations as permanent.

5.0.1 Working in Ireland

According to Grabowska (2003) most Poles intended to work in Ireland for a number of years and then return home. These Polish migrants, particularly graduates argue that in terms of work output and its quality, they can perform to the highest standard. They are also of the opinion that they work for less pay than their Irish counterparts and are discriminated against when it comes to promotion. Some graduates considered that they are often working below their level of qualification and view this as a process of de-skilling, which can affect their self-esteem. Of those who took part in her study, only 2 wished to remain in Ireland for the foreseeable future, whereas, the majority had a willingness to return to Poland. She goes on to argue that the decision can only be made based on the opportunities on offer in the host country.

When those taking part in this study were asked to comment on whether their experience of the Irish workplace was ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘fair’, ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ there were a number of interesting comments. The data showed that 8 participants found that the Irish workplace was ‘very good’, 18 considered it ‘good’, 2 found it to be ‘fair’ and only 1 classified it as ‘poor’, see figure 5.1.

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Fig 5.1 Polish Migrants Opinion of the Irish Workplace

Regarding their qualifications to do the job, 10 of those with 3rd level qualification said that they required a qualification to perform their job, whereas 2 of those with a
2\textsuperscript{nd} level education required a qualification for their job which is in keeping with (Grabowska, 2003) and (Bushin, 2009). The remainder of those with 3\textsuperscript{rd} level qualifications and those with 2\textsuperscript{nd} level education were working in jobs, which required no qualification, see figure 5.4. Regarding employment, 8 were employed in the technical sector where a 3\textsuperscript{rd} level qualification was required, 3 were employed in administration where 2 required a qualification. Those employed in the clerical sector amounted to 6, none of whom required a qualification and neither did the 2 employed in the hospitality sector, see figure 5.2 and figure 5.3.

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Those classified as unemployed, 1 female in total, did not feature in this exercise

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Note, N/A signifies did not feature in this exercise

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In relation to Grabowska (2003) findings that some Polish graduates considered that they were often working below their level of qualification. The data relating to this study showed that when asked whether they were working below their level of qualification, 24 replied that they were not. When asked to elaborate on their answer, the majority replied that they were qualified to do the job and that their qualifications were recognised by their employers, the remainder said that they did not require a qualification to perform their job. However, 4 considered that they were working below their level of qualification.

‘At present there are no positions available since the ban on recruitment by the government. However, I think that since I have higher qualifications I might be able to get a promotion when the ban is lifted, or I might be able to get a better job in a different organisation’.

(Age 29 male clerical worker)

In order to place the comment above in its proper context, this 29 year old was referring to the situation where there is a government ban on promotions and recruitment within the Irish Public Sector. Although he had a 3rd lever qualification he did not require it to do his present job. However, if he were promoted, he was of the opinion that he might be able to use his qualifications in his new position. This individual completed his education in Poland and his qualifications were of Polish origin. Since coming to Ireland he had undertaken further studies and was in the process of completing them when this study was carried out. Other Polish migrants had completed further studies while in Ireland and were hoping to use their Irish qualifications in order to secure better positions;

‘I have just completed my degree in Ireland and hoping to get a better job’.

Note, N/A signifies did not feature in this exercise
However, not all were satisfied with their employment. Some expressed that they were being held back from advancing in their place of employment, or that they were restricted in terms of further development;

‘I have a BA degree in logistics and transport management and a Hon BA in Applied IT. Over 7 yrs experience in planning, scheduling and people management, my boss has no qualification and I am still at the lowest technical level in the company’.

(Age 32 male technician)

‘I cannot develop myself in my job even with my qualifications. Even though I have a 3rd level qualification, which qualifies me to do my job, I feel restricted in this job and find it difficult to get proper development, but I can’t find anything that meets my needs’.

(Age 35 married female technician)

However, not all participants required a qualification to do their job and even those with qualifications some were not recognised in Ireland;

‘The job I am doing at present does not require a qualification, but I do have a 3rd level qualification, which is not recognised in Ireland, I feel that I am working at a level lower than what I am qualified to do, I may have to undertake further education in Ireland in order for my qualifications to be recognised.

(Age 32 male administrator)

5.0.2 Discrimination

In relation to discrimination, Grabowska (2003) findings showed that some Polish graduates were of the opinion that they work for less pay than their Irish counterparts.

However, 25 of participants in this study said that their salary was the same as their Irish colleagues while only 1 said that his salary was below that of his Irish counterparts. When asked to comment as to why his salary was lower, the 32 year old working as a technician replied,

‘Some people started in my company a few years before me and they got bigger rises back then’
When asked to clarify why he felt this way, his response was not very clear. It appeared that when the company was performing well, during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ era, which was prior to him joining the organisation, employees received lucrative rises in their salary. However, since the downturn in the economy pay rises have been put on hold, or drastically reduced. The remaining 2 of this study said that they did not know whether their salary was higher, or lower than their Irish counterparts. Both of these individuals were working in the hospitality sector where it can be difficult to determine wage rates.

Grabowska (2003) found that most Poles are of the opinion that they are discriminated against when it came to promotion in the workplace, although Nolka and Nowosielski (2009) found Irish attitudes towards Polish migrants very positive. Kropiwiec et al (2006) argue that, although it is relatively easy for Polish migrants to settle and work in Ireland, they encounter problems with their English language skills. According to Kropiwiec et al (2006), Irish employers demand a high level of ability in terms of employee’s communication skills and since English is the operating language, Polish workers feel that their limitations in, or lack of English can militate against them when applying for jobs, or seeking promotion, especially in the higher skill occupations. When asked to comment on whether there were barriers to their advancement in the workplace, one 29 year old married female technician replied,

‘The only barrier I can see is my level of English, if you cannot speak English well you cannot study, or go further in the job’

Nolka and Nowosielski (2009) argued that 75% of the participants in their study claimed that they experienced no discrimination, whereas, the remaining 25% experienced some form of discrimination, mainly at work, or in public places. The findings of this study were similar with 80% of the group having experienced no discrimination either at work, or in public. However, 20% of the group did claim to have experienced discrimination, some saying that it occurs quite often, while others said it happens, but not very often;

‘I have often found that because I am Polish I find that I am given extra work to do in my place of work. My previous boss expected me to do more work than those Irish people working with me. If something happens when my Irish workmate and
I am working together my boss always shouts at me for some reason. I would be happy to be treated with respect.

(Age 26 female)

‘When I was working in a nursing home I had some problems with discrimination, but I did not feel that it was because I was Polish and in Ireland just that some people are bad’.

(Age 29 married female)

‘I have experienced a lot of discrimination mainly name calling in city centre and on public transport’.

(Age 33 married male)

These findings also concur with those of McGinnity et al (2006) who argue that East-Europeans experienced very little racial abuse in Ireland, while most of it is directed towards African migrants. However, they found that Polish migrants could be subjected to acts of inequality and discrimination in the Irish workplace. Although this particular problem emerged only once in this study it could be argued that there are certain similarities between Polish migrants who have migrated to Ireland and the negative stereotyping of the Irish who migrated to Britain, see (Bronwen, 1999). Most migrants who are of the same skin colour, look and act in a similar fashion to those of the host country are inclined to blend in with the natural surroundings, it is only when they speak with an accent which is different that they can be stigmatised, stereotyped, or subjected to racial abuse.

Based on these responses it can be argued that most Polish migrants participating in this study are well educated and are not discriminated against in terms of their employment opportunities, wage structure, or opportunities for advancement in their place of work. However, Krings et al (2009) did argue that while NMS migrants came to Ireland during a booming economy and were well received, the situation may change since the downturn in the economy with fewer jobs available and greater competition, especially among nationals. This does not appear to have happened, since most of those participating in this study are satisfied with their conditions of employment.

5.1 Living in Ireland
Those Polish migrants taking part in this study have been living and working in Ireland for a considerable number of years. It could be argued that they have become accustomed to the Irish way of life. However, according to Debaene (2008) there are significant differences between those Polish migrants who migrated to France during the 1980s and those who came to Ireland after Poland’s accession into the EU. She argues that, since the circumstances under which each of the migrant groups decided to migrate have changed, different models for integration have been adapted. In order to determine the success factor of their integration into Irish society it is necessary to focuses on their experience of living in Ireland.

According to Nolka and Nowosielski (2009) the majority of those interviewed during their study found Irish attitudes towards Polish migrants very positive. However, only 25% of the group had regular contact with Irish nationals. Those taking part in this study were asked to rate their opinion of the Irish people as either ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘fair’, ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ the results of which produced a number of interesting comments. Those who considered their opinion as ‘very good’ amounted to 3. Those who considered their opinion as ‘good’ amounted to 9. Over 28 of the group considered their opinion of Irish people as either ‘good’ or ‘very good’. Whereas, only 2 considered their opinion of Irish people as ‘fair’, see figure 5.5. However, like Nolka and Nowosielski (2009) almost all of those taking part in this study had only a working relationship with Irish nationals.

5.1.1 Integration

Regarding integration, the data showed that 24 Polish migrants claimed that they had no difficulty in integrating with Irish nationals. Whereas, 6 considered that they had a difficulty. Comments such as those listed below were typical of the responses.

‘I sometimes have difficulty, but I think it is because of my level of English’.

(Age 31 married female working in hospitality)

‘I have a difficulty in trying to understand people because they talk too quick and their accent can be difficult to understand’.

(Age 31 married female)

Based on these comments it would appear that their English language skills, or lack of, prevent them from integrating with Irish nationals rather than anything sinister. However, they did prefer the company of other Polish people, figure 5.5 and 5.6
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**Fig 5.5 Polish Migrants Opinion of the Irish People**

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**Fig 5.6 Polish Experience of Integrating with Irish People**

Since 24 of the participants claimed that they had no difficulty in integrating with Irish nationals, it was necessary to determine why they preferred to remain in the company of Polish people. According to Nolka and Nowosielski (2009), 51% claimed that Poles ranked high among their friends and 14.7% stated that the only friends they had were Polish, which they considered was due to their lack of English language skills. On analysing the data for this study 23 claimed that they did not seek out the company of Polish nationals. However, 7 did prefer the company of Polish people. This was mainly due to cultural differences, as Ryan (2011) suggests most Poles when they first arrived in Britain were inclined to rely heavily on Polish acquaintances mainly due to the deficiency in their English language skills. However, as time passed and as their confidence grew they began to move away from the Polish enclaves, which they considered as limiting their potential.

However, moving away from their Polish comfort zone did not feature in this study. Most of those who took part in this study found that they were more relaxed when in the company of Polish people, because of common interests, concerns and their children’s future. Even though 23 gave the impression that they did not seek out Polish nationals, the study showed that most preferred the company of Polish people to other nationalities.
‘I like to be in the company of other Polish people because of the culture that we share and experience we had from Poland. It’s just easier to talk to people that come from the same background. This however doesn’t mean that we avoid people from other countries’.

(Age 29 married female)

‘When I am in the company of other Poles I find common subjects to talk about in my own language, such as jobs, money, children, the cost of living and the cost of sending them to school’.

(Age 31 married female)

‘Most of my time I spend with Polish friends both in work and after work. We meet after work and socialise together, maybe this is due to similarities in interests and a common language’.

(Age 27 single female)

Based on these comments there appears to be a reliance on their Polish counterparts and concern regarding their lack of English language skills, which they say, prevents them from seeking out Irish acquaintances. However, there are also other issues, such as their concern with childcare, financial problems and the cost of living;

‘I have cut back on my outgoings, but manage well. Childcare in Ireland is very expensive also the cost of living is rising. It is good to talk to my friends about these things because we look at life in a different way to Irish people. You must remember that back in Poland life is much more difficult and we have less money to survive on much less than we have in Ireland’.

(A married female with a family)

‘There is only one thing crossing my mind now. Crèches... They are very expensive and because grandparents are not living in Ireland it’s very difficult when it comes to childcare’.

Age 29 married female

This study found that most Polish migrants especially married females with children, preferred to discuss these issues with other Polish migrants who are of the same cultural background and communicate through a common language. As Dyczewski (2009) argues, Poles have a strong relationship with their values. They have a special regard for their national language, their identity, the family, their history and customs.
which may account for the fact that they have decided to reside in a type of social exclusion.

5.1.2 Quality of Life in Ireland

As referred to in chapter 2, one of the principle ‘push/pull’ factors in the migration process was to improve their quality of life and escape the drudgery of everyday life in Poland. Since 2010, the measures of austerity introduced by the Irish government, coupled with high unemployment and rising costs have impacted on the quality of life for most people living in Ireland. When asked how they were coping with the recession especially since 2010, 7 of the group claimed to have no difficulty and 23 claimed they were coping with some difficulty. They were of the opinion that in Poland they had to deal with austerity on a daily basis and most commented that they are normally careful with their money making it stretch as far as possible by cutting down on non-essentials. Almost all of the group were employed and even if they lost their job they were of the opinion that they could still survive on social welfare. However, 53.3% of the group said that they have experiences some deterioration in their standard of living since 2010 when the recession started to take hold. When asked can they survive financially while living and working in Ireland, the entire group said that they could. Regarding their quality of life in Ireland, 27 of the group said that they considered their quality of life as ‘good’.

‘It’s ok at the moment. However, if I lost my job it would be difficult, but the social welfare system in Ireland is much better than in Poland and I could survive, not that I want to be on welfare’.

(Age 27 single male)

‘It’s not as easy as when I first arrived to Ireland, but the government is still helping a lot. I wouldn’t imagine getting that level of support from Polish welfare system’.

(Age 29 married female)

‘It is fine at the moment although some of my benefits in work have been removed from employees and we all earn less than at the beginning. I could say that my earnings were the same 5 years ago when I started working, but overall there is little change’.

(Age 27 single female)
'I do not want to be unemployed but if I was unfortunate to lose my job I could avail of the social welfare which is far better in Ireland than in Poland. If I lost my job in Poland it would be almost impossible to survive on the social welfare there'.

(Age 29 single male)

5.1.3 Social Needs
It could be argued that one of the most basic needs for a person is accommodation. However, there is a cost factor in selecting the type and location of accommodation, which meets the individual’s requirements. According to the OECD (2012), the cost of housing in Poland is the largest single expenditure for many Polish people representing an average spend of 24% of their net income. Housing is a major social issue in Poland due to a shortage of dwellings and the quality of existing dwellings (OECD, 2012).

However, since the downturn in the Irish economy, accommodation in Ireland has come down in price and there are many vacant apartments available for rent. Recent media reports claim that this is changing with rents beginning to climb especially in the Dublin region. When asked to rate their opinion regarding the standard of accommodation available in Ireland in terms of it being ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘fair’, ‘poor’, or ‘very poor’, 7 considered it as ‘very good’, 11 rated it as ‘good’, 10 considered it as ‘fair’ and 2 considered it to be ‘poor’, see figure 5.7. Regarding their access to accommodation in terms of renting, sourcing or purchasing, 6 considered it as ‘very good’, 19 rated it as ‘good’, and 3 considered it as ‘fair’, see figure 5.8

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Fig 5.7 Polish Migrants Opinion of Accommodation in Ireland
Fig 5.8 Polish Migrants Opinion of their access to Accommodation

Regardless of whether one is a migrant worker or not, people do require the assistance of state organisations. Issues such as income tax, education, and social welfare assistance do require a degree of interaction between the individual and the particular government department. When asked had they ever sought assistance from Irish state bodies, 8 replied that they had and 22 said that they never sought assistance from any Irish state body. The 8 who sought assistance were asked to rate their experience of dealing with Irish state bodies as ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘fair’, ‘poor’, or ‘very poor’, 7 stated that their experience of dealing with Irish State Bodies was ‘good’, only 1 considered it as ‘fair’, see figure 5.9

Another aspect of one’s social need is access to VET which is a basic requirement available to all Irish and EU nationals residing in Ireland. When asked to rate their opinion of the VET they received as being ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘fair’, ‘poor’, or ‘very poor’. The combined total of male and female participants who undertook VET since coming to Ireland amounted to 18, the remainder did not participate in any further training and education. Of the 18 participants, 3 considered it as being ‘very good’, 12 considered it to be ‘good’, 2 considered it to be ‘fair’ and only 1, considered it as ‘poor’, see figure 5.10.

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Another social need is health care. According to the OECD (2012) health spending per person in Poland has grown by 7.4% per year since the year 2000 making it well above the OECD average. The Health Service Executive (HSE) who manage Ireland’s health service are continuously being criticised regarding their ability to management their front line services. Media sources in Ireland regularly refer to Ireland’s health care system as being one of the worst in Europe. However, when asked to rate Ireland’s health service as being ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘fair’, ‘poor’, or ‘very poor’, 6 of the total group of Polish migrants considered it as ‘good’, 13 considered it to be ‘fair’, 9 considered it ‘poor’ and 2 considered it as ‘very poor’, which is surprising given the amount of bad publicity it receives on a regular basis, see figure 5.11
It has been reported that most of the younger generation of Polish migrants have high levels of education. Mühlau et al (2011) found that only 0.7% were at a level of primary education, while 50.1% had second level education, 31.5% had a third level degree, with 58.6% of the 31.5% having a qualification equivalent to a Masters degree and women more likely to have a third level qualification than men. According to the OECD (2012), 88% of Polish adults between the age of 25 yrs and 64 yrs, have the equivalent of a high-school degree, its younger generation, 25 yrs to 34 yrs, 93% of which have the equivalent of a high school degree. So when asked to rate Ireland’s educational system as being ‘very good’, ‘good’, ‘fair’, ‘poor’, or ‘very poor’, 15 considered it as ‘good’, and 15 considered it as ‘fair’, see figure 5.12.

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Fig. 5.12 Polish Migrants Opinion of Ireland’s Education System

5.2 Irish Culture and Identity
It could be argued that the culture into which one enters can influence one’s decision as to whether they remain in that particular environment. Polish migrants have been residing in Ireland for a number of years and it is important to explore their opinion of the Irish culture. According to Davis (2003) nationalism has been a principle ingredient in the development of the Irish culture, whereas Bromage (1968) argues that language, religion and land ownership are traditional Irish characteristics. However, O’Mahony and Delanty (1998) claim that Irish characteristics can be
described as backward looking, by wanting to return to traditional beliefs and values, but also forward looking by adapting and embracing ongoing social change. According to Garvin (1993), Ireland as a nation has moved on from what was traditionally referred to as ‘Civil War politics’ leaving the fundamentalist rhetoric behind. Whereas, Share et al (2007) argue that the traditional Irish culture has changed since the ‘Celtic Tiger’ era, with the country becoming more open to accepting change and more cosmopolitan in its approach to migrants. With this in mind Polish migrants were asked to comment on their perception of Irish culture:

‘They are cheerful, friendly, like to socialise and very hospitable. On the negative side, some are lazy, dirty, litter everywhere and pay little attention to their environment and are always complaining’.

(Age 29 male)

‘Irish people can be a little laid back about life, they say that everything will be all right anyway. Whereas Polish people need to see that everything is alright, they tend to be concerned about daily down to earth matters’.

(Age 27 female)

These comments differ from the findings of the researchers referred to above. But if these comments seem harsh, it should be remembered that they are based on how Polish migrants see Irish people acting.

5.2.1 Polish Culture and Identity

Most Poles enter other cultures with a certain amount of ease, but are inclined to take a longer period of time to integrate into new societies and prefer to remain within their own cultural environment Dyczewski (2009), so when asked to comment on their perception of their own culture, one replied;

‘Polish people are prepared to work long hours, have difficulty in integrating with other nationalities, inclined to keep to themselves and are like the Irish, they are inclined to drink too much’.

(Age 29 male)

Another interesting aspect to arise was their connection with Polish cultural organisations. According to Kropiwiec, et al, (2006) a number of Polish ethnic institutions have evolved in Ireland over the past number of years and play an important role in the cultural affairs of Polish people. However, only two of the group said that they were members of a Polish institution which turned out to be their local
Polish Catholic church. Most of them were not aware of these institutions and were not certain as to the benefits of such organisations. Regarding whether Polish culture is recognised in Ireland, 33% felt it was recognised and 67% did not know. Equally it did not seem to concern them as to whether or not Polish culture was recognised.

5.2.2 Social Networking
Once the movement of people begins a social infrastructure is developed (Massey et al, 1987). This process forms the bases for a network system, which allows channels of information for future migrants. While living in a foreign environment it is comforting to know that there are others from a similar culture and background. When those taking part in this study were asked if they networked with other Poles living in Ireland, 27 said that they did, only 3 said that they did not. Most of those who are in regular contact with other Poles said that they did so because they have a common language, common interests and felt more comfortable discussing their problems with their people. Those with families commented that their children were less inclined to network with other Poles and more inclined to converse with their school friends. However, 100% of those taking part in this study said that they keep in regular contact with their family and friends back in Poland. These comments are very much in keeping with Ryan et al (2009), D’Angelo and Ryan (2011) and Ryan and Sales (2011);

‘Because we speak the same language, have similar interests and the same problems, cost of the home, children, we like to get other Polish people’s opinion. I also phone my parents in Poland to see what things are like and my mother misses the grandchildren’.

(Age 31 married female)

5.3 Conclusions
Although Polish migrants migrated to Ireland for economic reasons, the recent measurers of austerity introduced by government since 2010 has not had any major impact on their quality of life and Ireland is still host to many migrants (Krings et al, 2013). Most of those Polish migrants who took part in this study are well educated and are not discriminated against in terms of their social needs, employment opportunities, wage structure, or opportunities for advancement in their place of work. However, there were instances of racism reported, mainly attributed to their fellow workers in the workplace, or on public transport. In terms of integration and despite
only having experienced a working relationship with Irish nationals, most Polish migrants claimed that they had no difficulty in integrating. However, they are inclined to remain in a type of social exclusion mainly due to language problems and their preference of discussing their problems with other Polish people. Finally, in terms of social needs, Polish migrants see no difficulty in living in Ireland. The majority of their social needs are addressed, in terms of housing, income and education and they are of the opinion that even if they became unemployed they would still survive with their quality of life better in Ireland than in Poland.

Chapter 6, the last of three results chapters will focus on the opinions of Polish migrants regarding their future and their family’s future whether in Ireland or in another location.
Chapter 6: Staying in Ireland or Moving Elsewhere

6.0 Introduction.

This chapter the third and final chapter of three results chapters will examine the reasons why some Polish migrants have decided to remain in Ireland despite higher taxes, cutbacks in wages especially post 2010. It will focus on issues such as their rationale for remaining in Ireland, the influence of family on the migration process, family networks, constructing new social networks, and expected quality of life should they return to Poland.
This chapter will argue that those Polish migrants who took part in this study have become accustomed to living and working in Ireland. It will argue that while most are convinced that their decision to remain in Ireland is correct, others claim that their decision to remain, or leave the country no longer rests solely with them. It will argue that Polish migrants have their own circle of friends and acquaintances present in Ireland and no longer depend on family and friends back in Poland. It will also argue that they continue to network with their friends and relations back in Poland and for that reason they are aware of the quality of life that they would experience should they return to their homeland. Finally it will argue that based on this information and their domestic circumstances they have decided to remain in Ireland for the foreseeable future.

6.0.1 Rationale for Remaining in Ireland
The longer Polish migrants remain in Ireland the less likely they are inclined to return to Poland (Kropiwiec et al, 2006). Some Poles are of the opinion that their relationships with friends back in Poland deteriorates the longer they remain away from their homeland, as do their qualifications. They refer to issues such as, making new friends, new social networks, stronger links within Ireland, sending their children to Irish schools. These issues have been addressed in studies carried out by Ryan, (2010) Ryan and Sales (2011) also Pietka (2011) regarding Poles living in the UK. All of these concerns have an influence on their decision making process, as to whether or not they return to Poland. There is also the issue as to whether returning to Poland is a viable option for Polish migrants as outlined in (Krings et al, 2009) i.e. returning home may not be the best decision. However, moving may not always be for economic reasons as Ryan et al, (2009) argues and those who have remained in Ireland seem to have adapted to recession (Krings et al, 2013).

On analysing the data for this study, 23 participants comprising of both married and single Polish migrants wished to remain in Ireland for the foreseeable future which concurs with the findings of Kropiwiec et al (2006). Regarding the remainder, only 4 said that they did not wish to remain in Ireland and 3 said that they did not know, see figure 6.0. Those who had decided to remain in Ireland based their decision on their financial situation, quality of life and their domestic circumstances, as outlined in (Ryan and Sales, 2011).
They claimed that their standard of living and quality of life was far superior in Ireland than they could imagine if they were to return to Poland, which concurs with the findings in (OECD, 2012). Most were of the opinion that since they left Poland their standard of living had improved despite the recession and that they saw Ireland as a place where they could build a future for both themselves and their families. A 27 year old single female commented,

*I intend to stay in Ireland for the foreseeable future. I am comfortable with my living conditions in Ireland, but all of my family are living in Poland. Now both places seem like home*.

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Fig 6.0 Decision to Remain in Ireland

**6.0.2 The Influence of Family on the Migration Process**

Of the 30 participants taking part in this study, 13 were married with families residing in Ireland and 17 were single. It can be argued that being married and having a family can influence one’s decision whether or not to remain in Ireland as referred to in (Ryan and Sales, 2011) also (Nolka and Nowosielski, 2009). For this reason it was decided to divide the comments into those who were of single status and those of married status. The reason for this approach was that the domestic circumstances of both groups can differ. On analysing the data, those married with families amounted to 13 in total, 9 of which had decided to remain in Ireland for the foreseeable future, see figure 6.1 They claimed that the decision to leave or remain in the country did not rest with them alone, as there were other issues which had to be considered before any decision could be made. They referred to their children going to school, having friends and being involved in local leisure activities, which is in keeping with the findings of (D’Angelo and Ryan, 2011). Polish migrants referred to their spouse’s and children’s opinions, which had to be taken into consideration. They had now settled in Ireland, had put down roots and were in the process of mapping out a future for
themselves and their children. They also referred to their own opinion as to whether they wished to remain in Ireland.

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Fig 6.1 Families who would remain in Ireland

The findings showed that those who were married with children, almost all did not wish to return to Poland. The principle reason being that they were experiencing a better quality of life in Ireland, which Wickham et al (2013) refers to as being one of their principle goals for migrating. They made reference to having their family around them, their spouse’s having their own business, sending their children to school, a new network of friends and some having purchased their own homes. Most of the wives participating in this study were thinking more of their family’s future rather than their own, they were of the opinion that a better future existed in Ireland for their family than if they were all to return to Poland, placing the family needs above their own.

‘I am better off in Ireland with no job than living in Poland with a job. The job in Poland, if I was lucky to get one, would be very basic with poor wages, I see a better future for my family by staying in Ireland’.

(Age 31 married female)

‘Yes, my heart belongs here. I have started a family, we have a girl and expecting two more to come. My children will grow up in Ireland with a better future than in Poland. The thought of going back to Poland has never crossed our minds’.

(Age 29 married female)

However, 1 married female who had decided to leave Ireland sometime in the future and return to Poland, commented,

‘We have other plans in Poland, we own our own house there and my husband’s family have a business there which he hopes to take over when they retire’.

6.0.3 Migration Process and the Single Male/Female
Those in the single domain were asked to comment as to the reason why they wished to remain in Ireland. Although not in the same context as those with families, there were similarities between the two sets of replies. Most single migrants had no ties or commitments and were free to move if and when they wished. However, most were of the opinion that since they had been living in Ireland for some time, their quality of life had improved immensely since leaving Poland and wished to remain in Ireland for the foreseeable future;

‘Since I have been in Ireland for a number of years and have not taken any action to move back to Poland, or to another country, I am simply getting used to the country and the people, I like it and intend to stay’.

(Age 27 single female)

‘When I look back on what my quality of life was like in Poland I never wish to experience that hardship again with poor wages not being able to pay rent and forever worrying about my future. In Ireland I have a good social life, good job prospects and I am furthering my education’.

(Age 29 single male)

Comments of this nature from Polish migrants are not surprising. In Poland the average net disposal income is $14,508 per year compared to an average in Ireland of $24,150. In terms of household wealth, the average in Poland is $8101 compared an average in Ireland of $21,487. In terms of salary, Polish workers earn an average of $18,172 per year, compared with Irish workers who earn $48,217 (OECD, 2012).

6.0.4 Family Networks, Connections and Obligations

Another reason why they did not wish to leave Ireland was their family connections and obligations. The influence of family bonding in the migration process is demonstrated in a study of Polish migrants conducted by (Pietka, 2011). Because both parents and family were residing in Ireland meant certain obligations were placed on the parents. Issues such as their children going to school with their own network of friends, impacted on their rationale for remaining in Ireland. Parents were reluctant to move, as they saw it jeopardising their children’s future. There was also the issue that some parents referred to regarding the fact that some of their children were born in Ireland and that these children had no conception of what life would be like should they return to Poland. Their entire life had been spent in Ireland and except for
immediate relations they had no connection with Poland nor did they really know anyone in Poland.

‘At present I am married with children who are going to school, they have their own friends, they are members of sports clubs, they do not know anyone in Poland, so it would be difficult to leave the Ireland. We live here now and I wish to make our life here’.

(Age 29 married female)

‘My family is here and so is my future. I have also bought a house I do not want to go back to Poland and even if I did, how can I sell my house, also my children do not know anyone in Poland’.

(Age 31 married female)

‘I do not want to go back to Poland, I hope to stay in Ireland permanently, my wife and family are also here and wish to stay’.

(Age 30 married male)

6.0.5 Constructing New Social Networks

Many Polish migrants who have been living and working in Ireland for a number of years have made new friends and established relationships with Irish nationals. They are of the opinion that the longer they remain in Ireland the less contact they have with their Polish friends back in Poland. Others wish to integrate and form new identities and are less inclined to rely of their Polish friends and relations. They are more inclined to socialise with those they have encountered while in Ireland;

‘I like Ireland much better than Poland. I have a very good job here and I am going to get married soon to an Irish man ‘I want to start a family and spend my life here, I have no intentions of going back to Poland’.

(Age 24 single female)

‘We are living here, I have my own company, and my friends are here. My wife is working and she has her friends. We also have a baby girl so even if we wished to leave Ireland it would be difficult’.

(Age 31 married male)

6.1 Returning to Poland

Those wishing to return to Poland, 7 in total said that they would like to return to their home country, mainly for business and personal reasons. They expressed a variety of
reasons as to why they wished to return to Poland, but were unclear as to when they would make their decision;

‘The IT market is better in Poland, but so is competition. I am constantly in touch with my friends in Poland and examining the market in order to make a decision as to the best time to return’.

(Age 34 single male)

‘I would like to go back to Poland some day and continue my parents business and expand my own, but according to my friends in Poland things are not that good so I will have to wait till things improve in Poland’.

(Age 31 married male)

‘We have other plans in Poland, we own a house there and my husband’s family have a business there which is doing ok, but for the moment I am remaining in Ireland’.

(Age 32 married female)

When asked if they would be better off in Poland, 23 participants said that they would not be better off in Poland, whereas, 5 said that they did not know. Only 2 were of the opinion that they would be better off back in Poland, mainly for personal and domestic reasons, but their quality of life would suffer.

‘I am much better off in Ireland than in Poland, I have a good job and I own my own house something I could never achieved back in Poland’.

(Age 25 single male)

‘I would have a lower standard of living if I was back in Poland, my wages would be a lot lower assuming I got a job and even if I were employed there is a lot of corruption in jobs back in Poland’.

(Age 29 single male)

‘It depends on what you want to do, if I did not want to work and enjoy myself I would be better off remaining in Ireland, but I want to develop myself, so I think that I might be better off in Poland’.

(Age 29 married female)

‘I don’t believe that the quality of life in Poland could even reach a similar level in Ireland. Because of my qualifications I might get a good salary in Poland by Polish standards, but the expenses are much higher. Living in Poland our outgoings are much higher than in Ireland and we struggle to live on what we
earn. We also have to pay rent and other household expenses which eats into your income. While living in Ireland we still have money left over at the end of the week. Life in Ireland is easier compare to Poland. Also I believe that people in the social welfare offices are willing to help while in Poland they think they are doing you a favour by giving you information. Another reason would be the Polish mentality, Polish people are frustrated because of the type of life they have and they very often throw their negative emotions on each other, this may happen in the shop, in the bus, anywhere where you don’t really expect’.

(Age 29 married female)

6.1.1 Expected Quality of Life in Poland

The quality of life in Ireland surpasses that of Poland (Nolka and Nowosielski, 2009). These findings concur with the figures presented in OECD (2012) report which demonstrates that the standard of living in Ireland is much better than what Polish migrants could expect should they decide to return to Poland. Because Polish migrants continue to network with their family and friends back in Poland, it could be argued that most Polish migrants are aware of the living standards and the quality of life they could expect should they return to Poland. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that those who have decided to remain in Ireland have done so based on family commitments, lifestyle and a comparison of living standards between the two countries.

In order to understand the quality of life facing Polish migrants on their return to Poland it is important to revisit the OECD (2012) report. It states that Polish workers in the bottom 20% earn an average of $8,331, whereas those in Ireland earn $20,094 per year. The report states that over 59% of the working population of Poland are in paid employment. The figures show that 84% of the top 20% in Poland are employed, whereas, those in the bottom 20%, only 26% are employed. The report also states that men are more likely to be employed than women. Regarding youth unemployment, young people aged between 15yrs and 24 yrs are more at risk of being unemployed.

6.1.2 Other Options
Those who claimed that they did not wish to remain in Ireland amounted to 4. However, they were certain that they did not want to return to Poland, but expressed a wish to migrate elsewhere. The following is a résumé of their comments.

‘I would like to move to somewhere else like the UK, Canada or Florida’.
(Age 28 single female)

‘At the moment I am not certain I think that I will go to Canada’.
(Age 32 married male)

‘I am planning to move to Australia’.
(Age 24 single female)

6.2 Conclusions
Despite higher taxes, cutbacks in wages especially post 2010 most of the Polish migrants taking part in this study do not wish to return to Poland. Their rationale for remaining in Ireland is based on a number of factors, they have become accustomed to living and working in Ireland and are convinced that their lifestyle would deteriorate if they were to return to Poland. The influence of the family regarding the migration process is a major factor. Those with families are of the opinion that their decision to remain or leave the country no longer rests solely with them. They now have to consider their spouses and family member’s opinions. They have also constructed a new social network which continues to grow the longer they remain in Ireland. There is the issue of networking with their friends and family back in Poland. Because of this, they are aware of the quality of life that they would experience should they return to their homeland and based on this information they have decided to remain in Ireland for the foreseeable future. However, a small number did state that they would like to return to Poland someday, while others wished to migrate elsewhere.

These findings concur with Massey et al (1993) and Waldinger and Lichter (2003), who argue that as the migration stage progresses the economic factor is replaced by the network factor, i.e. the longer migrants stay away from their home country the more likely they are to become involved in the social aspects of their host country. It also concurs with Kropiwiec et al (2006) who argue that the longer Polish migrants remain in Ireland the less likely they are to return to Poland. They refer to issues, such as making new friends, new social networks, stronger links with Ireland, sending their
children to Irish schools, all of which influence their decision as to whether they return to their home country.
Chapter 7 Conclusions

7.0 Introduction

The objective of this concluding chapter is to present the key findings regarding the study of Polish migrant workers who migrated to Ireland in the early 2000s. The central question, which this study sought to investigate, was:

‘If Polish migrant workers came to Ireland during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ era solely for economic reasons, why have they decided to remain in the country now that Ireland is in recession and facing years of austerity’?

In order to address the question above a list of objectives was developed on which this study was based and can be summarised as follows:

1 Identify the ‘push/pull’ factors which drove Polish migrant workers to migrate to Ireland post accession?
2 Examine the experiences of Polish migrant workers while living and working in Ireland with special emphases on the period post 2010 when the Irish economy went into decline?
3 Explore the experiences of Polish migrants living and working in other destinations?
4 Consider as to what extent Polish migrants have integrated into the Irish workplace and Irish society?
5 Discuss the views of Polish migrants as to how the economic decline and uncertainty post 2010 has impacted on their lives, the lives of their families, and to what extent do these circumstances influence their decision whether to remain in Ireland or return to Poland?

In addition to the objectives outlined above, listed below are four research themes or issues that represent the critical path, by which this research question was answered:
(1) The migration factor, to address the rationale for Polish migration in order to understand their reasons for remaining in Ireland.
(2) The experience factor, analyse their experience of living and working in Ireland in order to determine whether the findings of researchers still hold true, post 2010 when austerity became a reality.
(3) The decision factor, because most Polish participants have been living in Ireland for almost 10 yrs, their circumstances have changed, determine whether these circumstances have influenced their decision as to whether to remain in Ireland or move elsewhere.
(4) The comparison factor, examine the migration patterns of Polish migrants to countries other than Ireland.

This chapter opens with a brief overview of the historical events, which transformed Ireland from being one of the poorest countries in Europe to the creation of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ era, which is now in decline. This is followed by a discussion on each of the four research themes listed above. It then describes the conclusions of this research, its contribution to existing knowledge, its limitations and suggestions for further research.

7.1 Ireland’s Economic Growth and Polish Migrant Workforce
It has been argued by Mac Einri (1997) that Ireland’s economic growth stemmed from radical economic and educational policies implemented during the 1960s. The implementation of these new initiatives was one of the instigators in attracting foreign direct investment, industrialising the country and developing an export-driven economy (Whelan, 2011). In addition, Ireland as a member of the EU, coupled with EU structural funds, was instrumental in building a more efficient and effective infrastructure (Mac Einri, 1997). As Dorgan (2006) argues, the combination of these factors resulted in the birth of Ireland’s so-called ‘Celtic Tiger’ era of the late 1990s and its need for a migrant workforce, in order to meet the country’s labour demands.

A large portion of Ireland’s manufacturing sector was embedded into the global chain of multinationals, which resulted in rapid growth within its indigenous industrial sectors. This growth required additional workers and since the country was close to full employment a new source of labour was required (Mac Einri, 2001). This demand for workers prompted the then government to revise its labour policies resulting in thousands of migrant workers entering the country in order to avail of the employment opportunities.

Ireland opened its borders to migrant workers from the NMS of the EU in 2004. Government policy regarding the entry of migrant workers changed, favouring those from the accession countries rather than those from outside the EU (Krings, 2010). This change in government policy resulted in large numbers of migrant workers from the NMS entering the country, the largest of these groups being from Poland. Although few Poles resided in Ireland prior to Poland gaining membership of the EU, this change in government policy resulted in Polish migrants becoming one of the largest ethnic groups to reside in Ireland.

By 2008 Ireland started to experience a downturn in its economy. Since 2010 many workers have become unemployed and their standard of living reduced by the introduction of austere policies to reduce government spending and raise additional taxes. Unemployment figures have gone from 4% during the ‘Celtic Tiger’ era to 14.4% in Sept 2012 (CSO Live Register, Sept 2012). However, according to Honohan (2009) Ireland’s booming economy of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ era was always open to exposure from any global recession. The downturn in world trade, the slide in
Sterling, the banking crisis, the lack of wage competitiveness and a tax structure which depended on the continuation of economic growth, contributed to the decline in Ireland’s economy.

7.1.1 The Migration Factor
According to Valazquez (2000) central to the economic model for migration is wage and income differential between the sending country and the receiving country. Most Poles taking part in this study migrated to Ireland around 2004 because job opportunities in Poland were limited despite its economic growth. Those who were employed criticised the level of pay on offer by Polish employers, their working conditions and claimed that there was little scope for advancement in their place of employment despite their level of qualification. When Poland joined the EU in 2004, Polish migrants were free to travel to other EU destinations and saw this as an opportunity to leave Poland.

Those who were unemployed found it difficult to gain employment. They claimed that despite their best efforts in trying to gain suitable employment they remained unemployed and decided that their only option was migration. They also claimed that even if they were successful in obtaining employment they would have found it difficult to survive, they cited poor wages, bad working conditions, not being able to afford proper housing and an employer dominated labour market as their reasons for migrating.

Regarding those who were in full-time education, they were of the opinion that they had little hope of gaining suitable employment based on their qualifications and saw migration as their only opportunity. A substantial number claimed that they never actually worked in a full-time occupation while living in Poland, in fact some said that they never actually applied for a job. Their rationale for migrating was that they wished to gain work experience, earn money, have a better lifestyle and improve their level of English.

In terms of selecting Ireland as a destination, most commented that they heard about Ireland from their friends, or relations, the Internet, local papers, or Irish companies advertising for Polish workers to come and work in Ireland. They also made the point
that because Ireland was one of the first countries to open its borders to the NMS it was easy to access and it was an English speaking country.

7.1.2 The Experience Factor
Most Poles are satisfied with the terms and conditions of their employment and claim that they are earning the same salary as their Irish counterparts. The majority of participants claimed that they were not working below their level of qualification, since some of the jobs required a qualification while others did not. They claimed that they were not discriminated against in the workplace, nor were there barriers preventing them from advancing in their place of employment. Most Poles considered that their only barrier to promotion was the limitations of their English language skills. However, while the vast majority commented that they were not discriminated against in the workplace by their employers, some had experienced acts of racism directed towards them mainly by their fellow workers, or on public transport.

Despite price rises, tax increases and in certain cases reductions in wages, the results showed that a sizable majority of Polish migrants are still convinced that they can survive financially while living in Ireland. They stated that they were used to austerity and could not understand what Irish nationals were complaining about, saying that if the Irish wished to experience austerity they should live in Poland for a period of time. They are also of the opinion that even if they became unemployed they could still survive financially and as far as they are concerned their quality of life in Ireland supersedes that of Poland, even if they were on social welfare. Most found that their experience of dealing with Irish people was favourable, but admitted that while their children socialised with their school friends, they were not inclined to socialise with Irish nationals and preferred to be in the company of other Poles. A common theme which emerged was their reference to their lack of English language skills which they believe restricts them from seeking out Irish acquaintances, or promotion in their place of employment.

Most of those participating in the study expressed their satisfaction with the quality of housing, training and education and their quality of life. However, some were critical of the Irish health system and the country’s public transport. They considered Ireland
to be a good location to bring up a family, especially those Polish migrants with young children.

Regarding their relationship with other Poles, most of the group claimed that they kept in regular contact with their Polish friends, both in Ireland and in Poland mainly because they had a common language, common interests and common culture. They found that it was easier to discuss their problems and concerns with their own people rather than with other nationalities. However, those with families said that their children were less inclined to network with other Poles and more inclined to converse with their school friends and integrate into Irish society. Another interesting aspect to emerge was their connection with Polish cultural organisations. Only 2 of the participants claimed to be part of a Polish cultural organisation, whereas, most of them were not aware of the existence of these institutions and were not certain as to the benefits of being a member of such organisations.

7.1.3 The Decision Factor

In terms of leaving Ireland and returning to Poland, most were of the opinion that they did not wish to return to Poland, mainly because the quality of life that they had become accustomed to would deteriorate. The vast majority wished to remain in Ireland, especially those with families, although a small number did say that they would like to return to Poland someday, while others wished to migrate elsewhere. Since arriving in Ireland some of the participants have married and now have families. They stated that being married with a family can impact on one’s domestic situation and the decision to remain in Ireland no longer rests with any one individual. Those that have families referred to their children going to school, having their own friends and being involved in leisure activities. There was also their spouse’s opinion, which had to be taken into consideration, some of their partners had set themselves up in business enterprises and were happy with their success. In addition to their family commitments there were other issues which needed consideration, the fact that they had put down roots in Ireland by purchasing their own homes. Their families had become involved in Irish society and even when they felt homesick and wished to return home, they recognised that a better future existed for both themselves and their families by remaining in Ireland. All of these issues were instrumental in their decision to remain in Ireland. Those who were single cited their standard of living,
their social life, job opportunities, their salaries and having friends as being instrumental in their decision to remain in Ireland for the foreseeable future.

Those who had decided to remain in Ireland based their decision on their quality of life, their financial situation and their domestic circumstances. Most were of the opinion that since they left Poland their standard of living had improved immensely and saw Ireland as a place where they could build a future for both themselves and their families. Only 5 of the participants expressed a wish to return to Poland, mainly for personal reasons, but had no definite date.

Since most Polish migrants network with their family and friends in Poland, it could be argued that they are aware of the living standards and quality of life they could expect should they return to Poland. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that those who have decided to remain in Ireland have done so based on family commitments, lifestyle and a comparison of living standards between the two countries.

7.1.4 The Comparison Factor

It is estimated that there are in excess of 20 million people of Polish origin living outside Poland. There are many reasons for this phenomenon stemming from forced migration, border changes, economic decline and political dominance. Polish links can be found in the USA, Germany, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, France, UK and Ireland. The fall of communism brought about a major change in Polish society, gone were the restrictive measurers and oppressive regime allowing Poles to travel freely.

In terms of comparing migration patterns, Debaene (2008) explored the migration patterns between the French and Irish Polish Communities. The study examined the experiences of a Polish community living in France since the 1980s with the view to establishing a better understanding of Polish migrants who migrated to Ireland after 2004. The French policy on immigration known as the ‘assimilation’ policy is designed to cater for the integration of non-French nationals into French society. Migrants residing in France are expected to internalise and integrate into French society, which Schnapper et al (2003) refers to as ‘Frenchification’.
However, there are significant differences between those Polish migrants who migrated to France during the 1980s and those Polish migrants who migrated to Ireland after Poland’s accession into the EU. French society displayed a positive attitude towards the Polish migrants, but they did not consider the Polish language, or culture important under the ‘assimilation’ policy. Whereas, in Ireland it is estimated that there are more people speaking Polish than native Irish speakers with some state exams conducted through Polish. It can be argued that since 2004 the Polish community has established a strong presence within Irish society and has contributed to the cultural enhancement of the country.

However, integrating into a society of mixed cultures presents its own problems for the migrants. Ryan (2010) explores how Polish migrants living in London have dealt with this issue and refers to some Poles wishing to interact with certain individuals of their own nationality while avoiding others. Not alone do migrants entering a new society have to encounter different ethnic groups, but also have to deal with stereotypes of their own ethnicity, labelling them as aggressive, stupid, or drink too much. This type of bad press has certain similarities with the reports in Ryan (2007) regarding the stereotyping of the Irish in the UK. Having to distance oneself from this element means having to draw back from the main group and seek out others who are of the same mindset, which may involve establishing relationships with other ethnic groups.

In terms of establishing relationships, migrant children can form a twin track approach to befriending by forming links with people who speak their native language and those who speak the host country’s language (Goldstein, 2003). It could be argued that the experiences encountered by Poles living and working in other destinations have certain similarities with those experiences of Polish migrants living in Ireland. Irrespective of their host country, they encounter problems such as, coping with stress and learning a new language while retaining their own language and culture. There are also the problems associated with integration, forming new social networks, family ties and their children’s education, constructing a new identity and having to deal with stereotypes of their own ethnicity. All of these experiences play a pivotal role in the decision making process as to whether to remain in their host country, or move elsewhere.
There are also the issues of lifestyles and quality of life experiences by Polish migrants. The OECD (2012) published a paper regarding the living standards in various countries within the EU. They measured each country’s standard of living based on the following criteria; housing, income, jobs, community, education, environment, civic engagement, health, life satisfaction, safety and work-life balance. Their findings showed that a better quality of life existed in Ireland than in Poland for Polish migrants.

7.2 Conclusions of this Thesis
The use of a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative techniques has provided an in-depth insight into the perceptions held by Polish migrants regarding their prospects in Poland, their rationale for migrating, their experience of living and working in Ireland and the reasons why they have decided to remain in Ireland despite the country’s economic decline.

The conclusions of this research are as follows;
(1) Although Polish migrants migrated to Ireland for economic reasons the recent measures of austerity introduced since 2010 has not had any major impact on their standard of living.
(2) Their domestic circumstances have changed since originally migrating to Ireland, some have got married, have children, set up businesses and enjoy a better quality of life than what they experienced while living in Poland.
(3) Their decision to remain, or leave Ireland no longer rests solely with them, now they have to consider their family’s opinions and their domestic circumstances.
(4) Most Polish migrants have not been discriminated against in terms of their social needs, employment opportunities, wage structure, or opportunities for advancement in their place of work.
(5) Despite high unemployment and austerity measures introduced by government, most Polish migrants especially mothers see a brighter future for their families by remaining in Ireland.
(6) Most Poles were not aware of Polish institutions catering to the needs of Polish migrants in Ireland and were not certain as to the benefits of such organisations.
(7) In terms of integration most Polish migrants taking part in this study preferred to socialise with other Poles mainly due to common interests. However, they claimed that their children were more inclined to interface with Irish nationals than their parents.

(8) Most of those taking part in this study were of the opinion that if they became unemployed they can survive financially and had no intention of returning to Poland. However, a small percentage did wish to return to Poland at some future date, while some others wished to migrate elsewhere.

7.3 Contribution of this Research to Existing Knowledge
While completing this study the researcher was conscious of the gaps in the literature review and decided to concentrate on the four research themes that represent this study;

One, ‘the migration factor’, although most researchers argued that the principle driving force behind Polish migration was economic reasons, this research found that most Polish migrants who took part in this study saw little future for them in terms of a quality lifestyle by remaining in Poland. However, despite the downturn in the Irish economy and the recent measurers of austerity introduced since 2010, this research found that most Poles were upbeat about their future in Ireland and were of the opinion that the Irish recession has had little impact on their quality of life.

Two, ‘the experience factor’, certain findings in the literature review pointed to Poles being discriminated against in their place of employment. This research found that most Polish migrants have not been discriminated against in terms of their social needs, employment opportunities, wage structure, or opportunities for advancement in their place of work. Most Polish migrants having experienced the boom times of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ era and now facing economic uncertainty with high unemployment and austerity, however, this research found that these Polish migrants especially mothers still see a brighter future for their families by remaining in Ireland.

Three, ‘the decision factor’, this research found that most Polish migrants had no intention of returning to Poland and expressed a strong preference for remaining in Ireland. The research found that they were experiencing a better quality of life, had what they considered good jobs and a reasonable disposable income. It also found that those with families considered that there were better opportunities for their children
by remaining in Ireland. Polish migrants were of the opinion that the decision to return to Poland was very complicated and because they had to deal with their domestic situation, the decision to stay or return to Poland no longer rested with them alone. In terms of integration, those who participated claimed to have no difficulty integrating with Irish nationals. However, having analysed the data from this research the evidence pointed towards supporting the argument that most Polish migrants wished to remain within their own cultural environment, although their children who were born in Ireland were more inclined to interface with Irish nationals and integrate into Irish society.

Four, ‘the comparison factor’, having compared the migration patterns of Polish migrants in other destinations such as the UK and France with those in Ireland, this research found that there were certain similarities between the two, especially regarding the importance of the family network, the family bond, connections with their friends and relations back in Poland, their Polish identity and their expectations for their future and their family’s future.

7.4 Limitations of the Research
The findings of this research are based on the responses of 30 participants. Each participant’s comments are based on their own personal experiences having resided in Ireland for a considerable number of years. The majority appeared to be comfortable in terms of their lifestyle. However, the research sample did not take into account those Polish migrants who are not so fortunate, such as those on low incomes, unemployed, or relying on social welfare. Had these migrants been included, the findings of this study may have been altered. A study of these migrants in a future survey may shed more light on the living conditions and quality of life experienced by Polish migrants. For example, many Polish migrants originally came to Ireland to work in the construction sector and the low-skill sectors, which have suffered the greatest in terms of redundancies and reduced income.

7.5 Further Research
Whereas, this research addressed the issues raised by the research question for this study, it did not explore government policy regarding the integration of Polish migrants into Irish society. Little has been done to address the needs of these migrant
workers other than the usual rhetoric from state sources saying that they have the same rights and entitlements as all EU citizens. Further research into this topic could help establish a framework, which would assist in the integration process of Polish migrants. There is also the issue of migrant’s children and their integration into Irish society. Many of these children have been born to Polish parents while in Ireland, they are now in Irish schools, with their own circle of acquaintances, further research could be initiated regarding the impact of migration on these children and whether they now refer to themselves as Polish or Irish. There is also the possibility of comparing migration patterns between those Irish who migrated to the UK in the 1960s and the Polish workers who migrated to Ireland post 2004.

Another issue which could be explored is the impact of migration on the social and economic fabric of the sending country. The Polish government has implemented a strategy in order to entice Polish migrants back to Poland with little success. Further study of this phenomenon would provide a greater insight into the effects of a ‘skills drain’ on the social and economic fabric of developing economies.

Appendix 1
Proposed Sample Questions for Interviewing Polish Migrants
1st Draft
Proposed Sample Questions for Interviewing Polish Migrants.

Sample questions
1. Country of origin: What part of Poland do you come from?
2. Gender: Male or Female?
3. Age group:
4. Employment: Are you employed Yes No?
5. Qualifications: What are your qualifications?
6. Do you need a qualification to do your job at present?
7. Does your qualification relate to your job?
8. Do you require a qualification to advance in your job?
9. What do you consider the barriers to your advancement?
10. Why did you select Ireland?
11. Do you have a family and are they resident in Ireland?
12. Are you considering staying in Ireland and if so for what reason?
13. Have you experienced racism since the downturn in the Irish economy?
14. What have your experiences been like of Irish society?
15. What have your experiences been like regarding the Irish workplace?
16. What help have you received from Irish state bodies?
17. What types of services do Irish state bodies offer Polish nationals?
18. What are your thoughts on accommodation, education and Irish society?
19. Have you receive any training since coming to Ireland?
20. Do you see a future for yourself and your family in Ireland?
21. On a line of 1-10 how would you rate living in Ireland?
22. On a line of 1-10 how would you rate Ireland’s educational system?
23. On a line of 1-10 how would you rate Ireland’s medical system?
24. On a line of 1-10 how would you rate your access to accommodation?
25. On a line of 1-10 how do you rate your advancement within your place of employment?

Appendix 2
Research Questionnaire for Polish Migrant Workers
Pilot Test
Research Questionnaire for Polish Migrant Workers
Pilot Test

Part 1: Origin
1. Which of the following describes your place of origin?
City                  Town                  Rural area

2. Gender: Male or Female?

3. Age:        Years

4. Marital Status, Married or Single

Part 2: Level of Education
1. How would you describe your level of education?
1st level  2nd level  3rd level

2. Do you hold a 3rd Level Qualification, Yes or No?
Part 3: Life in Poland
1. What was your work status back in Poland?  
Employed                Unemployed              Full-time Education

2. Why did you decide to migrate?

3. How old were you when you migrated?                  Years of age

4. Why did you select Ireland as a destination?

5. How did you hear about Ireland?

6. How long did you intend to stay in Ireland?           Years

7. How would you rate your quality of life in Poland?  
Very Good                Good               Fair          Poor         Very Poor

Part 4: Employment Details in Ireland
1. Are you employed at present, Yes or No?

2. How would you describe your job?

3. Do you need a qualification to do your job, Yes or No?

4. Are your Polish qualifications recognised by your employer, Yes or No, if No why?

5. Do you feel that you are working below your level of qualification, if so why?

6. Is your salary similar to that of Irish nationals doing the same job, if No please state why?

7. How long did you initially intend to stay in Ireland?             Years

8. Are there barriers to your advancement within your place of employment? Yes or No, if Yes please state why?

9. How would you rate your experience of the Irish workplace?  
Very Good                Good               Fair          Poor         Very Poor

Part 5: Experience of Living in Ireland
1. How would you rate your experience of Irish people?  
Very Good                Good               Fair          Poor         Very Poor

2. Do you have difficulty in trying to integrate into Irish society, if Yes please explain?

3. Have you experienced discrimination or racism towards you while in Ireland, if Yes please explain?

4. Do you prefer to remain in the company of Polish people, Yes or No, if Yes please explain?
5. Do you intent to return to Poland, if Yes or No please explain why?

6. Do you have a family resident with you in Ireland, Yes or No?

7. Are you considering staying in Ireland, if Yes or No please explain?

8. How are you coping with the recession?

9. Have you seen your standard of living deteriorate since 2010, Yes or No?

10. Would you be better off back in Poland?

11. Do you see a future for yourself and your family in Ireland, if so why?

12. Can you survive financially while living in Ireland?

13. How would you rate your present quality of life in Ireland?
   Very Good  Good  Fair  Poor  Very Poor

14. Is your standard of living better or worse in Ireland than in Poland, please give reasons?

15. If you became unemployed, could you survive financially in Ireland? Yes or No

16. What do you find difficult about living in Ireland?

17. Do you own your place of residence? Yes or No

18. Would you prefer to own or rent your place of residence? Yes or No

19. Where do you prefer to reside in Ireland?
   City centre  Suburbia  Rural area

20. How would you rate raising a family in Ireland?
   Very Good  Good  Fair  Poor  Very Poor

**Part 6: Social Needs**

1. How would you rate the standard of accommodation in Ireland?
   Very Good  Good  Fair  Poor  Very Poor

2. Have you ever sought assistance from Irish state bodies? Yes or No

3. How would you rate your experience of dealing with Irish state bodies?
   Very Good  Good  Fair  Poor  Very Poor

4. How would you rate Ireland’s education system?
   Very Good  Good  Fair  Poor  Very Poor

5. Have you undertaking any further training or education since coming to Ireland? Yes or No
6. How would you rate its usefulness?
   - Very Good
   - Good
   - Fair
   - Poor
   - Very Poor

7. How would you rate Ireland’s health service?
   - Very Good
   - Good
   - Fair
   - Poor
   - Very Poor

8. How would you rate your access to accommodation?
   - Very Good
   - Good
   - Fair
   - Poor
   - Very Poor

9. Do you network with other Poles, Yes or No?

10. Do you keep in contact with your home country, Yes or No?

11. How would you rate the services provided by Irish state bodies?
    - Very Good
    - Good
    - Fair
    - Poor
    - Very Poor

**Part 7: Polish/Irish Culture and Identity**

1. How would you describe Irish people?

2. How would you describe Polish people?

3. Are there similarities between Irish and Polish people? If Yes please explain

4. How would you rate your level of English?
   - Very Good
   - Good
   - Fair
   - Poor
   - Very Poor

5. Do you think that English is important to you, If Yes why?

6. Are you belonging to a Polish cultural organisation? Yes or No

7. Are the benefits in being a member of a Polish cultural organisation?

8. Do you think that Polish culture is recognised in Ireland?

**Part 8: Any other Comments**

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this study
Appendix 3
Revised Research Questionnaire for Polish Migrant Workers
Final Draft
Questionnaire for Polish Migrant Workers

Participant Number?

Part 1: Life in Poland before Migrating

1.1. What was your work status in Poland?
Employed                Unemployed              Full Time Education

1.2. If unemployed, describe your employment prospects before leaving Poland?
Very Good                Good               Fair          Poor         Very Poor

1.3. If employed, describe your conditions of employment before leaving Poland?
Very Good                Good               Fair          Poor         Very Poor

1.4. How would you describe your standard of living while in Poland?
Very Good                Good               Fair          Poor         Very Poor

1.5. Why did you decide to migrate?
Comment;

1.6. How old were you when you migrated?       Years of age
1.7. Why did you select Ireland as a destination?
Comment;

1.8. How did you hear about Ireland?
Comment;

1.9. How long did you initially intend to stay in Ireland?
1 Yr        2 Yrs       3 Yrs       4 Yrs         5 yrs or More

Part 2: Experience of Working in Ireland
2.1. Are you employed at present?
Yes        No

2.2. If yes, how would you describe your job?
Technical            Admin        Services      Clerical    Hospitality

2.3. Do you need a qualification to do your job?
Yes            No

2.4. Do you feel that you are working below your level of education/qualification?
Yes           No

2.5. If the answer to question 4 is yes please explain?
Comment;

2.6. Is your salary similar to that of Irish nationals who are doing the same job?
Yes        No        Don’t No

2.7. Are there barriers to your advancement within your place of employment?
Yes        No        Don’t No

2.8. If yes to question 7, what do you consider as barriers to your advancement within your place of employment?
Comment;

2.9. How would you rate your experience of the Irish workplace?
Very Good                Good               Fair          Poor         Very Poor

Part 3: Experience of Living in Ireland
3.1. How would you rate your experience of Irish people?
Very Good                Good               Fair          Poor         Very Poor

3.2. Do you experience difficulty integrating with Irish people?
Yes             No
Comment;

3.3. Have you experienced discrimination/racism in Ireland?
Often                      Very Little                           None

3.4. Do you prefer to remain in the company of Polish people?
Yes            No
3.5. Do you have a family resident with you in Ireland?
Yes            No

3.6. Are you considering staying in Ireland for the foreseeable future?
Yes No Not Certain

3.7. If yes to question 6, why are you considering staying in Ireland?
Comment;

3.8. How would you describe your ability to cope with the recession?
No difficulty Coping with some difficulty Unable to cope
Comment;

3.9. Have you seen your standard of living deteriorate since 2010?
Yes No

3.10. What are your views regarding your future in Ireland?
Comment;

3.11. Can you survive financially while living in Ireland?
Yes No

3.12. How would you rate your present quality of life in Ireland?
Very Good Good Fair Poor Very Poor

3.13. If you became unemployed, could you survive financially in Ireland?
Yes No

3.14. What do you find difficult about living in Ireland?
Comment;

3.15. Do you own your place of residence?
Yes No

3.16. Would you prefer to own or rent your place of residence?
Yes No Rent

3.17. Where do you prefer to reside in Ireland?
City centre Suburbia Rural area

3.18. How would you rate raising a family in Ireland?
Very Good Good Fair Poor Don’t No

3.19. How would you rate your leisure time in Ireland?
Very Good Good Fair Poor Very Poor

**Part 4: Social Needs**

4.1. How would you rate the standard of accommodation in Ireland?
Very Good Good Fair Poor Very Poor
4.2. Have you ever sought assistance from Irish state bodies?
Yes            No

4.3. How would you rate your experience of dealing with Irish state bodies?
Very Good                Good             Fair          Poor        N/A

4.4. Have you undertaking any further training or education since coming to Ireland?
Yes            No
Comment;

4.5. How would you describe your level of satisfaction regarding the training and education you received?
Very Good                Good             Fair          Poor        N/A

4.6. How would you describe Ireland’s health service?
Very Good                Good             Fair          Poor         Very Poor

4.7. How would you rate Ireland’s education system?
Very Good                Good             Fair          Poor         Very Poor

4.8. How would you rate your access to accommodation?
Very Good                Good             Fair          Poor         Very Poor

4.9. Do you network with other Poles?
Yes           No

4.10. Do you keep in contact with your home country?
Yes            No

Part 5: Polish/Irish Culture and Identity

5.1. What are your views on Irish people?
Comment;

5.2. How would you describe Polish people?
Comment;

5.3. What are your views regarding similarities between Irish and Polish people?
Comment;

5.4. How would you rate your level of English?
Very Good                Good             Fair          Poor         Very Poor

5.5. Do you think that English is important to you?
Yes            No
Comment;

5.6. Are you belonging to a Polish cultural organisation?
Yes            No
5.7. Do you think that Polish culture is recognised in Ireland?
Yes        No        Don’t No

**Part 6: Leaving Ireland and returning to Poland**

6.1. Would you prefer to leave Ireland?
Yes        No

6.2. Do your present circumstances prevent you from leaving Ireland?
Yes        No

6.3. If the answer to question 2 is yes, please explain why?

6.4. Do you intend to return to Poland?
Yes        No        Don’t No

6.5. Would you be better off in Poland?
Yes        No        Don’t No

Comment;

**Part 7: Polish Origin**

7.1. Which of the following describes your place of origin?
City        Town        Rural area

7.2. Gender: Male or Female?

7.3. Age:    Years

7.4. Marital Status,
Married     Single

**Part 8: Polish Level of Education**

8.1. How would you describe your level of education?
1st level    2nd level    3rd Level

8.2. Do you hold a 2nd or 3rd Level Qualification?
2nd level    3rd Level

8.3. Are your Polish qualifications recognised in Ireland?
Yes        No

Comment;

**Part 9: Any other Comments**
Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in this study

Appendix 4
Letter of Ethics
Letter of Ethics

This survey questionnaire will form part of a research project by John Simon. The purpose of the research is to determine the extent of which the downfall in the Irish economy has impacted on Polish migrants living and working in Ireland. The data collected from this study will form the basis of a thesis which will be submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Social Science to the University of Leicester UK.

The purpose of this research instrument is to document the various responses from Polish migrants regarding the reasons why they have decided to remain in Ireland despite the current recession. The instrument addresses the following issues, Origin, Level of Education, Life in Poland, Employment Details in Ireland, Experience of
Living in Ireland, Social Needs, Polish/Irish Culture and Identity and Any other Comments.

This exercise will take approximately 1 hour and it is important that the responses to the various questions are based on the participant’s own experiences while working and living in Ireland and not influenced by media other reports.

Each participant should read the questionnaire carefully before agreeing to participate in this study. If the participant has a difficulty with any part of this survey instrument they can withdraw from the exercise at any time. Equally, if the participant does not wish to participate in this exercise they have the right to withdraw.

Should any participant experience difficulty in understanding or answering any question or part of a question please ask the researcher for clarification.

A recording device maybe used as an aid in the process of gathering information for this study. Your consent to participate while using this device will be requested.

All information gathered by this study will be completely anonymous and treated in strictest confidence.

Appendix 5

Letter of Introduction from the University of Leicester
REF: Letter of Introduction

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

This letter is to confirm that John Simon is a currently studying towards a Doctorate in Social Sciences with the Centre for Labour Market Studies, University of Leicester.

John is currently at the Revised Thesis Proposal stage of his work. Any assistance you can give with enabling his research in aid of his thesis will be appreciated.

Kindest regards,

[Signature]

Dr Henrietta O’Connor
Centre Director
Appendix 6
List of Qualitative Questions
List of Qualitative Questions

**Life in Poland before Migrating**
Why did you decide to migrate?
Why did you select Ireland as a destination?
How did you hear about Ireland?

**Experience of Working in Ireland**
Do you feel that you are working below your level of education/qualification?
Are there barriers to your advancement within your place of employment?

**Experience of Living in Ireland**
Do you experience difficulty integrating with Irish people?
Do you prefer to remain in the company of Polish people?
Are you considering staying in Ireland for the foreseeable future?
How would you describe your ability to cope with the recession?
What are your views regarding your future in Ireland?
What do you find difficult about living in Ireland?

**Social Needs**
Have you undertaking any further training or education since coming to Ireland?

**Polish/Irish Culture and Identity**
What are your views on Irish people?
How would you describe Polish people?
What are your views regarding similarities between Irish and Polish people?
Do you think that English is important to you?

**Leaving Ireland and returning to Poland**
Do your present circumstances prevent you from leaving Ireland?
Would you be better off in Poland?

**Polish Level of Education**
Are your Polish qualifications recognised in Ireland?
Appendix 7
Letter of Thanks to Participants
Letter of Thanks to Participants

30/4/2013

Dear

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation in my research programme with the University of Leicester. Your views and opinions were most helpful and I am extremely grateful for your time and commitment to the project.

I would like to state that all of the information you provided will be kept strictly confidential and will not be used for any other purpose other than this project.

Finally, thank you for your assistance without which this project would never have been completed.

Regards

John Simon
Appendix 8
Coding Sheet
## Coding Sheet

### Life in Poland and Migrating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Full-time Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decision to migrate</td>
<td>Decision to migrate</td>
<td>Decision to migrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Ireland</td>
<td>Why Ireland</td>
<td>Why Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Ireland</td>
<td>Knowledge of Ireland</td>
<td>Knowledge of Ireland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Working in Ireland

**Male/Female**
- Job satisfaction
- Pay and conditions
- Barriers to advancement
- Recognition of qualifications

### Living in Ireland

**Single Male/ Female**
- Integration
- Networking
- Coping with recession
- Future in Ireland
- Difficulties living in Ireland
- Cultural issues
- Importance of English
- Social needs
- Training and Education

**Married with Children**
- Integration
- Networking
- Family coping with recession
- Family future in Ireland
- Difficulties living in Ireland
- Cultural issues
- Importance of English
- Social needs
- Family issues
- Family unit
- Training and Education
Options

**Single Male/ Female**
- Remaining in Ireland
- Returning to Poland
- Quality of life in Poland
- Other options

**Married with Children**
- Family remaining in Ireland
- Family returning to Poland
- Quality of life in Poland
- Family commitments
- Decision making process
- Other options

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