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Questionable Insiders: Changing Positionalities of Interviewers throughout Stages of Migration Research

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Abstract

The article addresses methodological issues related to the consequences of researchers' range of insider identities emerging over the course of completing subsequent stages of qualitative migration research projects. Taking on a temporal approach to the insider status evolving over the course of field entry, data collection, data analysis and dissemination, the paper engages with nuanced insider positionalities. These range from apparent, to trespassing, distanced and ambassadorial insiderness. Exploring a specific case of Polish mobility, the paper assumes a methodological focus and argues that being "on the inside" of the migration research field may go beyond gender, ethnicity and social status when it is linked to a project's life-cycle.

Introduction: Insiders in Migration Research

Recognising the 'conditions of fieldwork' as inherently marked by paradoxes, ambiguities and dilemmas underscores the impossibility of conducing fieldwork from a stance of 'impersonality' and objectivism. A field-requirement to engage in personal and close contacts creates a matrix of overlapping roles and relationships that lead to challenges (Gergen and Gergen 2003:595, Reinharz 2011). While earlier contributions provided substantial knowledge on how researcher's insider status should be understood dynamically, also in migration studies (Nowicka and Ryan, 2015, Carling et al. 2015), in this paper we propose to adopt a temporal lens to insiderness in the subsequent stages of the research process.

It is argued here that lived experiences of being an insider change for the researchers as they move from preparatory stages and entering the field, to conducting research, to data analysis and dissemination of their findings. In these distinct phases of a life-cycle of a study, we have uncovered four different types of insiderness, which intersected with gender, ethnicity and social/professional status of the researchers. Specifically, we discuss four types of *apparent, trespassing, distanced* and *ambassadorial* insiderness, occurring in a sequence throughout three research projects.

We ascertain that an insider/outsider status debate is falsely framed as a dualism and engage in the critique of essentialism in the outsider versus insider normativity (e.g. Naples 1996, Ergun and Erdemir 2010, Chavez 2008, Nowicka and Ryan 2015).While the claim that being a researcher means ongoing reflexivity on the "multiple selves, our own experiences and subjective interpretations" (Sherif 2001:445), it is less commonly made explicit that these shifts in researchers' identities are also temporal in nature. Frequently, it is simply stated that a researcher benefitted from insiderness at field-entry and access, for example, yet it is not discussed whether the advantages continued and persevered during the later moments of the project (e.g. Chavez 2008). This is why we believe it crucial to incorporate time -understood as ensuing research stages- into the discussion of insider positionalities and the meaning of trust.

Starting with positionalities, these dimensions of social roles and personal characteristics come into play when our field statuses are negotiated. The existence of interwoven positionalities translates to a researcher being concurrently viewed as an 'insider' in one dimension and an 'outsider' in another. As two sides of the same coin, the inside/outside research moments must be viewed as temporal, relational and socially constructed in a

"constantly moving context that constitutes our reality and the place from which values are interpreted and constructed" (Geiger 1990:171, see also Naples 1996, Sherif 2001).

In line with what qualitative and feminist social inquiries give credence to (Reinharz 2011, Letherby 2003), the researcher's positionality remains closely related to situated knowledge and implies a dynamically subjective co-participation. Thus, studies often highlight how gender, race and ethnicity play out in the field, with the impact of marital status, occupation and social class also increasingly accounted for (e.g. Reinharz 2010, Nowicka and Cieslik 2013, Carling et al. 2014).

Furthermore, qualitative research requires field relationships to be built on trust, especially when it pertains to ethnic minorities and migrants. It is challenging to set out the causal arrow of trust in interpersonal encounters and this also relates to the stages of research. On the one hand, trust can be seen as the property of individuals, an attitude that people adopt when partaking in interactions with others (Hardin 2002) and this can be most relevant at the stage of entering the field. On the other hand, trust within migration research is also 'a result rather than a precondition of cooperation' (Gambetta 1988: 225) and may be understood as a group-related resource. Therefore, even when a researcher conducts a study with their ethnic group, trust interjects between the boundaries of ethnic solidarity and a professional researcher's role.

The notion of trust can also be helpful as means to overcome the earlier dichotomies around advantages and disadvantages of insider/outsider status (e.g. Reinharz 2011) in challenging the flawed divide (Carling et al. 2014, Nowicka and Ryan 2015, Mullings 1999). Looking at the interpersonal and in-group trust can also alleviate the pitfalls of methodological

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nationalism[1] (Nowicka and Cieslik 2013). Although nation-states are a vital social category structuring the conception of the world and social behaviour of migrants, it is important to take note of other dimensions, such as gender or social status.

Summing up our conceptual approach, it is believed that while nuances of field status have been well-explored, a temporal continuum of insiderness statuses linked to the different research process stages can better guide future fieldwork endeavours. We demonstrate that not only is the position of a 'native researcher' never automatically equated with 'insider' (Van Ginkel 1998), the types of social, gendered and ethnic challenges of the research evolve in different stages of the project. In that sense, we proceed to offer methodological observations on how and why one moves from being an 'apparent insider' (Carling et al 2014: 51) during the early stages of the project, to becoming a 'trespassing insider' during the data collection. We also examine the later stages of data analysis and publishing, arguing that exiting an ethnic/migration research field can produce first a 'distanced' and then 'ambassadorial' sense of insiderness.

Data & Methods

The empirical material used for the analyses stems from three doctoral studies, different in geographic scope and specific research objectives, but sharing similarities in regard with general thematic focus. All were focused on adult migrants as well as touched on the issues of identity and family dynamics in the context of international mobility. Specifically:

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[1] This signifies hermetically ethnic explanations of social phenomena.

1) Study 1 (S1) by Pustulka concerned research on *Polish Mothers on the Move – Gendering Migratory Experiences of Polish Women Parenting in Germany and the United Kingdom*[2] and was a small-scale feminist inquiry.

2) Study 2 (S2) by Bell was entitled *Between continuity and change- Narratives of Polish migrants in Belfast*[3] and explored the complexities of migrants' transnational social practices.

3) Study 3 (S3) by Trąbka entailed a project called - *Reconstructed Identity. The role of migration in Third Culture Kids' biographies*[4] and concerned experiences of adult TCKs.

Table 1. showcases key methodological aspects of the projects.

TABLE 1

	Interview methods	NO. of interviews &Timeframe		Sampling	Respondents	Data handling
S1	Biographic, semistructured	37	2011-2012	Convenience & Snowballing; seeking to include a vast array of experiences	Polish migrant mothers	-Meticulous interview transcripts; -Open and thematic coding; -Thematic and case-based analyses.
S2	Biographic	27	2009-2011		Polish migrants to Belfast, Northern Ireland	
S3	Biographic	53	2010-2012		Adults with experience of mobility in childhood (min. 2 moves for 3 years)	

In addition, the studies have undergone ethical verifications and received approval from relevant bodies at the respective institutions that the researchers were affiliated with[5]. Across the studies, interview participation was voluntary and respondents were ensured about the caution and care given to protecting their privacy and anonymity.

As relates to the topic of this article, the studies were all, arguably, conducted by "insiders". This clearly means a native language advantage yet must acknowledge structural and contextual differences related to the destination locale, as well as divergent personal circumstances of the researchers (see Table 2).

TABLE 2

	Similarities with interviewees (insider status)	Differences with interviewees (outsider status)
S1	Gender, Polish nationality/ethnicity, being a mother, being a migrant, age.	Foreign partner, being an academic and representing a foreign institution (university); frequently also class differences.
S2	Polish nationality/ethnicity, being a migrant Gender shared with female interviewees	Having a strong connection to the research locality through a foreign partner, being an academic and representing a foreign institution (university). Frequently age and class difference, as well as gender with male respondents.
S3	Higher education, Polish nationality/ethnicity (with some interviewees), being a migrant (foreigner) in a city (with other interviewees), age with majority of interviewees.	Not being mobile in childhood, not being a long-term migrant.

Having had the opportunity to discuss our experiences in the field, we decided to compare and analyse them jointly. Thus, the sets of records, notes and dairies have been scrutinized by the three authors in a series of juxtapositions. The cumulative approach to data

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[5]S1 passed ethical approval at Bangor University in 2009, S2 received ethics approval from Research Ethics Committee at Queen's University in 2008. S3 was approved by the committee evaluating doctoral research projects at the Jagiellonian University.

gave us access to a wider array of researchers' insider positions, allowing for a construction of a temporally nuanced perspective and increasing the validity of the approach (see also Bell and Pustulka, 2017).

Navigating insiderness throughout the research process

As already indicated, the paper proposes a continuum of insiderness with a demarcation of apparent, trespassing, distanced and ambassadorial insiderness. We follow the logic of sequential stages of the research process delineated by Chavez (2008), yet decided to distinguish field entry, data collection, field exit and data analysis, and dissemination of findings. Figure 1 below can serve as a guide to ensuing types.

Figure 1   THE PASSAGE OF TIME IN THE LIFE-CYCLE OF A RESEARCH PROCESS: PERSPECTIVES ON INSIDERNESS
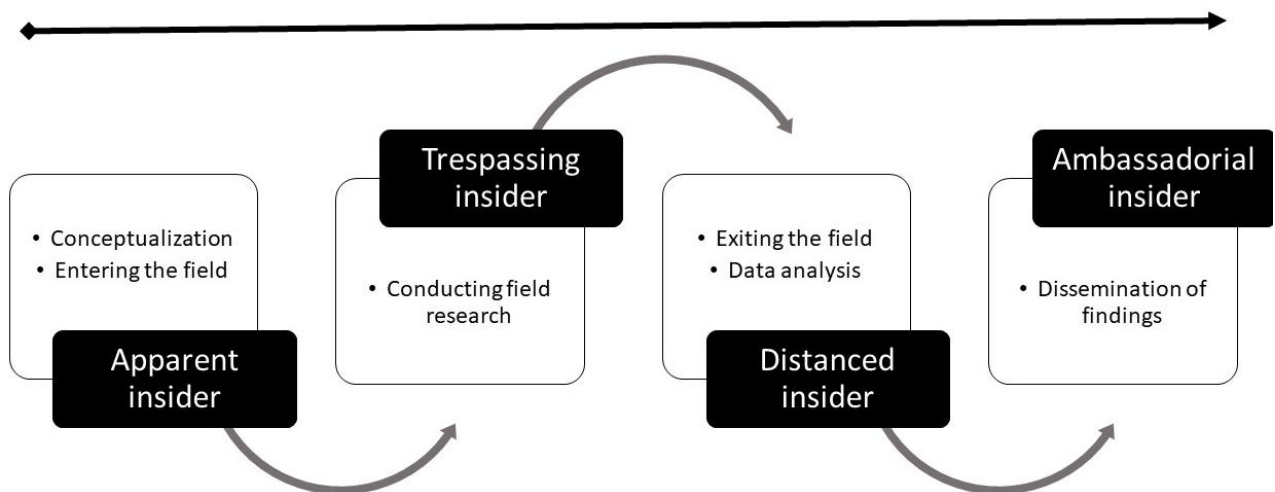
Stage 1: Apparent Insider and Immediate Gains on Field Entry and Access

Perhaps the most tangible advantage of insiderness is what Chavez (2008) calls an expediency of access. At this initial stage the 'apparent insider' status (Carling et al. 2015) typically founded on language and ethnic commonality, as well as knowing the local context of participants' everyday lives. These assets, which help to build trust-based relations, are discussed in this section.

In case of recent mobility, the boundaries of ethnic enclaves remain closed to those unable to communicate in migrants' native tongue (Piętka 2011). Regardless of local language acquisition among Poles, some recruitment channels remain informal and can be utilized solely in ethnic spaces. This was particularly visible in S1. For women who migrated with young children or became mothers abroad, opportunities for interacting with native population are often scarce, especially due to inactivity on the labour market (see also Barclay, Kent 1998). Polish women's lack of visibility and presence in the public space coincided with them congregating in secluded Polish community centres, shops and parish meeting rooms that only other Poles – like the researcher – could have known about.

As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:89) underlined, access hinges upon being perceived as a "normal, regular or decent person". For all three projects, everyday sociability in forms of mundane small-talk had perceptibly eased the task of establishing trust-based rapport with participants, as well as conditioned culturally-affine researchers to appropriately select conversation starters or gap fillers (de Andrade 2000). The shared experience of being a Polish migrant in the particular place was a sufficient vehicle for instilling a temporary sense of unity within an 'imagined community' (Anderson 2006). The concept of "emergent expertise" used by De Andrade (2000:280) is useful to describe a phenomenon in which respondents and researchers play an instant game of finding a person, place, or an event that they have in common. This facilitates a "locating process" of the interviewer as an apparent insider. Such evaluations of the researchers' 'Polishness' often took on casual forms like discussing airfare routes and prices.

However, as S3 demonstrates, locating process is not always based on ethnicity and may as well refer to being a foreigner in the city. Trąbka was paradoxically treated as an insider by other foreigners due to her membership in the '*Internations*' network and her respondents

perceived the experience of international mobility as topping ethnicity in terms of connecting with people:

You know, you have your own experiences and we can share them, we can laugh about them – we have something in common. This is "third culture" (…). In Norway my best friend was Moroccan, in Australia mainly expats and that's how it is – no matter where I am, I instinctively find myself in the same environment… international environment (S3, Mateusz)

A known sequence of: "no trust, no access; no trust, no consent; no trust, no data" (Bosk 2004: 418) underpins fieldwork and even banal initial encounters determine whether a researcher is deemed trustworthy. Thus, facilitated field access signifies chains of trust, which could be observed in introductions within snowball sampling. Pustulka recorded being presented as an 'apparent insider' during a phone conversation between Mariola, an already interviewed mother, and a prospective respondent Gabriela:

"Hi, G, how are you? […] I have this girl here, her name's Paula and she just interviewed me (…) I feel like a celebrity! She also has a baby here and (is) a student at the Uni, you know, the same campus where the Polish store is and she knows A. [shop assistant] […] So listen, maybe you could meet with her, too? She's really nice and (…) you can make it a play-date, and then we can all go to the park with the little ones" (S1)

As the quotation above illustrates, informality and shared experiences of mobility and motherhood have contributed to a quickly developed relationship of proximity and trustworthiness. It must be noted that nearly all respondents were eager to recruit friends, colleagues or family members into the study.

Willingness to be interviewed is tied to another dimension, notably the economy of acclimating to the field (Chavez 2008). For ethnic insiders, fluency in Polish reduces

preparatory costs, research effort and direct spending (travel, translations). When setting up an interview with Ela, for example, Pustulka was told via SMS to meet "at the flower-painted place" meaning a Polish café known to the local Poles. For Bell, who conducted her research in Belfast, a place marked by multiple local divisions, knowing the context of the geographical locality was additionally important.

In outline, Stage1 appeared to be least problematic during the entire research process and challenges were mitigated on the grounds of evident or even visceral insiderness.

Stage 2 Welcomed yet trespassing during data collection

After the prior access, in the data collection stage our insider status was increasingly questioned. Trespassing at this stage had two principal aspects: inquiring about issues that participants were not willing to talk about and revealing (not necessarily intentionally) characteristics that differed us from interviewees. As a consequence, the insider status we were assigned and trust we were credited have diminished. Although trespassing constitutes an inherent part of in-depth or narrative biographical interviews due to intimate and sometimes difficult questions, this is not always clear to participants.

In S3 study, participants often assumed that researching highly mobile people, Trąbka herself have had a similar life story, which was not the case. This, together with revealing that her stay abroad was only temporary, brought her closer to the "outsider" side of continuum:

> *You're from Poland and you probably look at Kraków like: this is who you are. You go back home to your family and there's this feeling in the air that you don't have to fight for it, it's just there – "I'm here and this is just fine". You have that orientation – Kraków, Poland. But that orientation that you have – I don't have that. I mean… where is that? I'm just always looking. I don't stick anywhere. (S3, Divank).*

It is worth highlighting that in this case positioning the interviewer as an outsider does not necessarily result in limited trust. On the contrary one may, like Divank, want to explain his experiences in a more detailed way as they are not taken for granted by the researcher. Nevertheless, while respondents in S3 were willing to talk about the places they lived in, about the multicultural life they led, they were very cautious when asked about intra-family dynamics or challenges of maintaining relationships whilst being a serial migrant.

In S2, there was an observable division between different profiles of interviewees in terms of the level of disclosure: while professionals and blue/collar workers were, in general, quite open about their experiences of living in Belfast, interviewing 'ethnic entrepreneurs' proved more challenging. Specifically, business-owners were noticeably reluctant towards disclosing details of their lives to fellow nationals. It can be argued that ethnic insiderness has been eradicated when the occupational status located entrepreneurs on the outside of their own ethnic group. Drawing on their professional identification, they were less prone to simply grant unquestionable access on the basis of researcher's nationality.

This new position of "trespassing" is in line with previous research portraying Polish migrants abroad as involved in relations of mutual distrust and exploitation (Piętka 2011). Going one step forward, several participants of S2 research implemented self-monitoring practices during the course of their narrations, controlling the information addressed in the interview to include only impersonal issues. One of the clearest instances of a self-monitoring resulting from struggles with locating the researcher's position was displayed by Natalia. Despite being repeatedly reassured that the interview was going to be confidential and her story was going to be anonymised, Natalia was reluctant to talk about personal issues. She explained that she was afraid of gossip about her and her family being spread within the Polish community in Belfast. Over the course of the interview Natalia switched between getting 'lost in narration'-

talking freely about her experiences of migration, including her activities of operating in the grey zones of the local labour market - and curbing her story:

> *This is what I am afraid of and… I mean I am afraid of, this is because I am trying to avoid conversation about it, here I said… maybe I said too much, because I'm careful (…) I am such a chatterbox and I have said too much, now I was thinking to myself: "oh sugar, how am I gabbing", I don't want to have any troubles because of that. (…) and a red light goes "be careful, don't gab too much!" (S2, Natalia)*

The respondent was clearly struggling to reconcile her vulnerability during the interview (the imbalance in disclosure between the interviewer and the respondent) with omnipresent stories concluding that one should not trust other Polish migrants with the very casual form of narrative interviewing. Thus, trust is also tied to the notion of an equalized relationship in the field (Reinharz 1992, Letherby 2003) and meant that the researcher was welcome yet also crossed invisible boundaries where trust became non-inherent.

In case of researching migrant women and gender aspects, the idea of "relatedness" facilitates a balanced relationship of trust rather than dominance. Quite often researchers experienced a feeling of being confided in. Intimate confessions in S1 encompassed stories around childbirth, talking about one's sexuality, discussing stereotypes of ethnicized femininity, or even reflecting on domestic violence. Coming from a place of vulnerability signalled an openness that even revealed profound gender discrimination embedded in the Polish cultural codes. Disclosed instance of gender violence placed a chip of ethical responsibility on researcher's shoulders as trespassing into this sensitive territory could have

necessitated reporting the case[6]. In this case, a new status stemmed from recognizing that a researcher has a professional status that obliges her to act beyond ethnic and gender community with the interviewee.

A pivotal argument is that group belonging (factual or perceived) elicits certain behaviour: "[w]here outsiders have the advantage of detachment from the field, an insider must learn to manage the influence of being researcher and the researched" (Chavez 2008:478). The respondents usually framed ethnic identity "from the inside" of the group rather than saw it as socially constructed (De Andrade 2000:269). Relying on the common ground of ethnicity, some respondents in S1 and S2 were expressing disapproval of the researchers having foreign partners. This new information intersected ethnicity with gender, transgressing culturally acceptable standards for inter-ethnic relationships held by some Poles. In an instant, the insiderness could be denied:

> *I know about you – you might think you know what it means to be Polish but you don't… not really, not since you live with a local – he does everything for you, the paperwork, you are not a migrant – not in my book, you are not like me*" (S1, Ewa)

Similarly, only after conducting several interviews for S2 Bell realized she avoided revealing the nationality of her Irish boyfriend during the interviews with Polish men, whereas this was not the case in her interactions with women. Moreover, as soon as female interviewees in mixed relationships found out about the researcher's personal circumstances, they told their stories of

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[6]In this case, the respondent was no longer in harm's way abroad. Her husband was said to condemn his family's abusive behaviour towards her and she opposed the idea of reporting abuse. Nonetheless, the researcher felt compelled to keep in touch and monitor her safety.

having to conceal the nationality of their partners from other Poles – especially male – because of their contempt towards "their" women going out with "foreigners":

> *They say that (…) he will never know what it was like to grow up in Poland [...] So we won't be able to connect in a real way and it makes our relationship shallower. But you know yourself… it makes the relationship more interesting and there are more universal things that are important.* (S2, Anna)

The interplay of femininity and race/ethnicity continued to affect the field in unexpected ways, which concurs with De Andrade's observation that constructed (rather than factual) ethnic identity becomes a central issue in the conversations around gender held in the field (2000: 271):

> *My co-worker said that it was likely hard for me to when this (Polish) woman comes in with a half-black child who speaks Polish. And it's not (pause). It's like if she would not do your nails because you have a German man. I mean she would definitely not let you interview her had she known* (S1, Kasia)

De Andrade wrote that "assessment of my group membership or insider status appeared to include an assumption that I shared their knowledge and experience" (2000: 275) and the challenge with constructed ethnic identity was two-fold in our projects. Specifically, while it facilitates aforementioned field access on the superficial level, it may lead to feelings of discontent once more in-depth issues are tackled. The "shallow" insiderness of ethnicity and speaking the same language may not correspond nor cover for the discrepancies linked to institutional, structural, class incompatibilities and other aspects. To conclude, the insiderness at the data collection stage is weakened by the difficulty of disclosure and sudden realization that positionalities other than ethnicity may bring the researcher and respondent very far apart.

Despite being still largely welcome, moving on to the research phase were one's status is no longer 'apparent', often means that fieldwork experiences are akin to trespassing.

Stage 3: Distancing during Analysis and Interpretation

Arriving at field exit, researchers can usually remember various situations when insiderness was both a blessing (expediency of access, trust) and a curse (emotional disclosures, exclusion from ethnic group). At that point, it is important to acknowledge that the next step – that is the process of interpretation and contextualization of the data – is by no means straightforward (Chavez 2008). On the one hand being a researcher situated within the group can have positive effect on grasping nuanced perspectives. On the other hand, however, an analytical a researcher must look at the data from a distanced perspective, taking into account a "broader picture" and scholarly knowledge.

The main challenge at this stage is to be able to make use of the insider knowledge when taking the outsider perspective of a professional researcher. For instance, Basia (S2) described her everyday struggle to raise a child with cerebral palsy in Poland as a reason for her and her family's move to Belfast. She was tired of being pointed out on the streets and having never-ending battles with the Polish national health system. Shared knowledge about Basia's pre-migratory context -including familiarity with the Polish healthcare, social services and the attitude towards disability – created an almost instant understanding between her and the researcher. In interpreting these, Bell could build on Basia's personal experience through data and scholarship on circumstances of people with disabilities in Poland. Further, across all three studies many interviewees described deep poverty they escaped in Poland and these participants mentioned difficulty in explaining their past to their local acquaintances as the perspective on poverty in both countries was beyond compare. In S3, the discrepancy between Polish childhood in the 1980s and prosperity of destination countries was understood through

shared experiences of shortages. Having grown up and studied in Poland, the researchers not only had personal experience, but could also a grasp of local social theorizing and literature available in Polish.

A key issue arises when scholarly level of analysis intersects with topics or patterns that appear obvious to insiders, as "[i]n research settings that are more familiar, it can be much more difficult to suspend one's preconceptions, whether these derive from social science or from everyday knowledge" (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995:103). The difficulty with recognizing interesting patterns that has been obscured by the familiarity with one's own community (Chavez 2008) can be exemplified by Pustulka's experience of not scrutinising research results on the role of food and ethnic cuisine for preserving cultural heritage in a migratory setting. Only outsiders – other non-Polish researchers with whom the data was shared – were able to pinpoint the scholarly significance that the stories of caring and supporting cultural transmission through food carried. In this sense, insiderness makes one paradoxically distant from the obvious data patterns and outsiderness – regained through professional status in academia – remains a key tool for being vigilant.

Stage 4. Torn between Loyalty and Discoveries during Dissemination: Towards Ambassadorial Insider?

Insider status entails tensions expanding to the phase of results' dissemination. What we believe to be an 'ambassadorial' insider is a torn yet loyal and fair representative of the data and the researched community. S/he exhibits positive commitment stemming from subject and personal knowledge, extensive time spent in the field and, possibly, the desire for their own group to be represented in a respectful manner. Here we analyse two dilemmas: representing participants' opinions or judgements that clash with the researcher's views (Letherby 2003) and, connected with that, presenting community members in a negative light.

Klatch argued that "particular problems arise where the researcher's own religious or political attitudes differ markedly from those of people being studied" (1988:79, quoted in Hammersley and Atkinson 1995:91). Such differences occurred in S1 and S2. As acquisition of heterogeneous narratives that represent various Polish migrants was explicitly sought out, it was unavoidable for some interview data to be at odds with the researchers' ideas. While professional researcher encountered during the previous stage would always stay neutral, as engaged ethnographic researchers we 'give voice' to participants. On several occasions we were presented with racist statements during the interviews:

> *We have got to move out of here: this neighbourhood is full of those Pakis (...). They should be controlled, these criminals, corrupting my children* (S1, Matylda)

In this quotation, it is exemplified that researcher's personal or professional ethics' standards may be in conflict with the community's one. Here the finding can be contextualized as the function of Matylda's precarious social position.

Moreover, "values, political impulses, conceptions of good, notions of desire and sense of our 'selves' as person" (Gergen, Gergen 2003:595) may pose a true dilemma in terms of representing data that negatively reflects on the traits of the ethnic group. Despite professional respect to the results, it might be strenuous to publish racist or sexist views of the respondents. As an invited speaker for a series of knowledge exchange seminars aimed at sharing her research with the Northern Irish policy makers, Bell consciously chose not to present her findings about the in-group distrust, concluding that the topic is far too complex to explain in a comprehensive manner within the format of these meetings. She realized that a rushed presentation of the topic could lead to a misinterpretation and blur the picture of the Polish migrant community rather than provide an accurate characterization. This was similar for S2

and S3: while analytical portraits of migrant mothers and TCKs were nuanced during conference presentations, they did not dwell on the discovered racism, sexism or other prejudice to avoid sensationalising.

Finally, it should be considered that a simplified or taken out-of-context comment may have detrimental effects on one's future standing in the community and thus make a possibility of long-term engagement with the research field unfeasible. If one decides to cross that boundary, an 'outsider' status of a 'traitor' could be expected. With that in mind and despite feeling torn during the dissemination stage, the insider researchers are likely to act as compassionate ambassadors to their interviewees and broader communities.

Conclusions

This article aimed at taking a more granular approach to the arguments arising from the insider/outsider debate. We largely agree with Naples (1997:89) that this debate's bipolarity entails a false separation. Similarly to Carling et al. (2014), Mullings (1999) and Ergun and Erdermir (2015), among others, we view field identities as being in flux, permeable and ever-shifting. We demonstrated that they can be better understood when conceived in a context of a research study as structured process progressing on a time axis (see Table 3).

TABLE 3

	Type of insiderness	Key premise	Main identities	Potential Challenges
Stage 1: Field entry	Apparent	Immediate trust	Ethnic researcher	Overreliance on insiderness
Stage 2: Data collection	Trespassing	Questioned trustworthiness	Nuanced: researcher has various (some questionable) social characteristics	Losing participants' trust.
Stage 3: Data analysis	Distanced	Loyalty to university	Professional researcher	Selectivity in data processing.

Stage 4: Dissemination & Representation	Ambassadorial	Loyalty to participants	Professional yet loyal researcher	Balancing academic (data) and (ethnic) loyalty/trust

Organizing insiderness on a temporal axis of a project's life-cycle makes the contribution of this article methodologically innovative. Under the premise of empirical work with Polish migrants as female academics, we began our studies as apparent insiders (Carling et al. 2015), being granted an immediate access to the ethnic field (see also Chavez 2008). We could take advantage of the expediency of the field, low costs and imminent trust. This has changed once we proceeded to the core data collection. With reference to mutual disclosure and sensitive topic, one may easily become a 'trespassing insider', as the respondents discover non-ethnic and discrepant social characteristics of the researchers. During data analysis, this is exacerbated as the professional status of a scholar overpowers the insiderness, which must be kept 'in check' for the sake of a scientific analysis. At dissemination, loyalty towards study participants – and by extent the researched community – resurfaces. While being professional as scholars, researchers tend to serve as ambassadors of the group they have learnt so much about and are members of.

We concur with Ergun and Erdermir in that field researchers are often "suspended in the betwixt and between position in the transformative process" (2010:16). However, to account for the dialectic and continuously changing relationship between insiderness and outsiderness, we should juxtapose these relationships with a research process' stages. Contrary to expectations of ever-increasing withdrawal from the field, we discovered that loyalty and trust alter one's relationship with data during dissemination activities. The applied temporal lens makes the transitions between apparent, trespassing, distanced and ambassadorial insiderness more evident.

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All in all, we do not argue for neither insider nor outsider position, but simply draw attention to problems that may affect researching (Polish) migrants as migrant researchers. In addition, we advertise cooperation between insiders and outsiders, ideally including those who may feel "in-between". As a type of cross-validation, such collegial debate shall contribute to design and interpretations' improvement across various projects. Throughout the temporally progressing stages of research projects, understanding insiderness as a nuanced and temporal can assure ethical process and helps anticipate potential challenges.

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