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Polish migrant women's narratives about language, racialised and gendered difference in Barcelona

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ABSTRACT

The European Union expansion in 2004 resulted in significant changes in migration in Europe. For Spain, which did not open its labour market to the new accession countries until 2006, the extent of Polish migration has been substantially smaller than in countries like Britain. Hence, little scholarly attention has been paid to the experiences of Polish migrants in the Iberian Peninsula. Compared to other European cities, the case of Barcelona is significant, especially in terms of cultural diversity, Catalan identity and bilingual status, something that the newcomers are often unaware of. By drawing on the conceptual framework of conviviality and on data gathered through participant observation, narrative interviews and a focus group conducted with Polish women in Barcelona, this article concentrates on various forms of encounters with the local population. It argues that race, ethnicity, gender, language and spatiality are important factors influencing convivial relations. It contributes to the existing literature by exploring various forms and degrees of conviviality discussed as situated, not necessarily free from tensions and racialised and gendered perceptions of the Other.

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Introduction

Despite a growing body of research on Polish migration, little attention has been paid to gendered, spatial and temporal dimensions influencing everyday experiences of Polish migrants in multi-ethnic Spanish society. Although there is an increasing body of research on Polish post-2004 migration in Spain (Kruszelnicki 2008; Main 2013; Władyka and Morén-Alegret 2013), migrant women's experiences of interaction with difference in terms of race, ethnicity, gender and other categories in various city spaces are under-researched.

The case of Barcelona, situated in Catalonia, one of the seventeen *Comunidades Autónomas* and a stateless nation, is particularly interesting because of its Catalan identity and its multicultural character, with its local government's emphasis on intercultural mixing, making it an ideal setting for studying convivial encounters

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with difference. Barcelona is a city with a migration-friendly narrative characterised by a wide support from the local government through campaigns and projects regarding diversity, living together and prejudice reduction (Barcelona City Council 2010; Zapata-Barrero 2014). At the same time, as mentioned above, Barcelona is the capital of a Catalan nation without a state with a strong discourse of Catalan independence.

Recent debates highlight the link between identity and migration in the Catalan context. While some scholars argue that Catalans as members of a sub-state nation 'may try to distinguish themselves from the nation-state by pursuing liberal/multicultural integration policies' (Rodon and Franco-Guillén 2014, 669); others suggest that migrants may be perceived either as 'foes', threatening the cultural and linguistic unity, or as 'friends' (Jeram, van der Zwet, and Wisthaler 2016, 1238). Nevertheless, in multi-ethnic Barcelona the discourses about language, identity and migration differ from the rest of Catalonia. There is a strong discourse of *convivencia* as part of the interculturalist approach to managing cultural difference with Catalan language placed at the forefront of the integration strategies and considered as a factor of social cohesion, as highlighted in the Barcelona Interculturality Plan (Barcelona City Council 2010).

By drawing upon ethnographic research conducted in Barcelona in 2012, this article focuses on encounters of Polish women coming from a predominantly white society with the local population (the native Catalans, other migrants and ethnic minorities of non-Polish origin) in various settings, including neighbourhoods, family spaces, streets, workplaces and homes. It contributes to feminist geography by exploring conviviality shaped by the dynamics of spatiality, gender, race, ethnicity, language, motherhood and other categories which often intersect. The intersections of these categories highlight the importance of intersectionality in understanding situated conviviality. The central argument in this article is that gender, race, ethnicity, language and spatiality shape complex and various forms and degrees of conviviality between migrant women and the local population.

After outlining the context of Polish presence in Barcelona, this article sets out the theoretical background underpinning my research by reflecting on the key concept of conviviality understood as situated and as a dynamic process of living together. It stresses the importance of viewing conviviality and racism as highly dynamic and at times overlapping each other; and it highlights geographies of encounters by concentrating on various, often gendered, spaces where people encounter each other. After discussing the methodology applied in the research, Polish migrant women's narratives about encounters with difference in various locations of Barcelona are explored.

Polish migrants in Barcelona

As a result of restrictive immigration policy, Spain opened its labour market to the new accession countries in May 2006. In December 2014, 90,835 Polish migrants

were recorded as living in Spain with a residence permit (Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social 2014). Since the transition period, Polish migration has been characterised by a new type of Polish migrant: young, educated, highly skilled, coming from bigger cities and entrepreneurial (Nalewajko 2012). Their employment often matched their qualifications or served to improve them.

At the time of my fieldwork in 2012, Polish migrants living in Barcelona numbered 2224, according to the statistics (Barcelona City Council 2015). The majority live in Raval, Poble Sec and Sagrada Familia, but many are dispersed in other parts of the city. There has been no significant opposition towards Polish citizens in Barcelona and in Spain as a whole, in comparison to non-European migrants. This could be due not only to the small numbers of Polish migrants in Spain but also an assumed cultural historical, political and religious proximity (Nalewajko 2012). Poles are often referred to as a model of a migrant group well-integrated in Spanish society (Hellermann and Stanek 2006). This discourse sharply contrasts with the anti-Polish rhetoric in Britain, where Polish migrants have been often accused of taking British jobs, benefits and exhausting local services (Burrell 2009; Rzepnikowska 2017). In Spain, they have been used in comparisons with other migrants. For instance, in 1991 Jordi Pujol, former President of the Catalan Autonomous Government, said: 'In Catalonia (…) it is easy to integrate the Polish, Italians or Germans, but it is difficult to achieve that with Arab Muslims, even with those who are not fundamentalists' (Cesari 2006, 236). This rhetoric may influence Polish migrants' perceptions of other migrants.

Exploring encounters with difference through the lens of conviviality

In recent years there has been a growing scholarly interest in the concept of conviviality understood as a way of living together in urban spaces (Gilroy 2004; Heil 2014; Nowicka and Vertovec 2014; Wise and Noble 2016; Wise and Velayutham 2014). Gilroy (2004, xi) has defined conviviality as 'the processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculture an ordinary feature of urban life'; and as a social pattern in which different groups live together but their racial, linguistic and religious differences are not obstructive to conviviality.

While the current literature makes an important contribution to the understanding of conviviality, there are several shortcomings. Firstly, it often focuses on encounters between the natives and non-white and non-European minorities (Gilroy 2004; Heil 2014). Nevertheless, convivial encounters should be explored in the context of diversity characterised by the presence of migrants with diverse ethnic origins, migration histories, religions, languages, ages, genders, legal statuses, education and economic backgrounds (Vertovec 2007). Secondly, the impact of gender on conviviality remains underexplored, especially when it intersects with other axes of difference including race, ethnicity and class (Morawska 2014). Thirdly, spatial characteristics influencing conviviality in various city spaces are often overlooked. Therefore, this article aims to expand the understanding of

conviviality by exploring spatialised social relations influenced by gender, race and ethnicity dynamics which often intersect. Finally, existing literature often interprets conviviality as limited to superficial, fleeting and casual encounters in public spaces (Fincher 2003; Laurier and Philo 2006) unlikely to generate meaningful engagement with difference (Valentine 2008). This interpretation of conviviality overlooks a possibility of different forms and degrees of living together.

Conviviality can be better understood in conjunction with the Spanish word *convivir* describing the action of living and interacting together (Giménez Romero and Lorés Sánchez 2007). Therefore, I use the term 'convivial', as informed by the idea of *convivir*, to describe relations of living together in shared spaces, which involve various forms and degrees of interaction. I expand my conceptual framework of conviviality by drawing on the contemporary uses of the term *convivencia* in Spanish society to refer to social relations between people at different levels, for instance, between the family members, neighbours and co-workers (Suárez-Navaz 2004). While conviviality in this article is used as a frame to explore everyday practices of living with difference, *convivencia* is a discourse which cannot be separated from the Spanish/Catalan context and therefore it is used in its original form.

Conviviality is explored in this article as a process of interaction embedded in social practice which is not free from racism and tensions (Gilroy 2004). Wise and Velayutham (2014, 425) highlight the existence of various forms of social relations that 'are never entirely rosy, nor entirely negative', and therefore there is a need to explore the full range of interactions and 'the interconnections between "happy" and "hard" forms of coexistence'. Instead of viewing conviviality and racism in a dichotomous way, the two should be considered as highly dynamic. This article identifies a tension between conviviality and gendered, racialised and stereotyped perceptions of difference. By doing so it addresses the critique that the research on conviviality masks racism. As Wise and Noble (2016) point out, this critique stems from traditional scholarship on race and ethnicity that has focused on racism as a starting point and the reproduction of relations of social power as the end point. In contrast, this article highlights the complexity of encounters and social relations. While it acknowledges hierarchies which are often present in encounters with difference, it also explores the way in which differences are negotiated and connections are built.

Research about migration to cities often treats locality as containers providing space for settlement (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2011), without much consideration of how the spatial characteristics of the cities may influence migrants' experiences of encounters with difference. Hence, it is useful to draw on the field of geographies of encounters (Amin 2002; Valentine 2008). Interaction between different groups and individuals occurs in various spaces of the cities such as neighbourhoods, streets, family spaces, as well as largely under-researched workplaces and homes. Conviviality is generated at specific times and places and by different individuals; therefore, it cannot be explored outside of the context in which it occurs. Thus, I find it more appropriate to use the term situated convivialities.

It means that they are 'local and specific', 'not something that can be replicated in a programmatic way' (Wise and Velayutham 2014, 425), as they are influenced by encounters in the particular space, time and other factors. Based on her study of East European construction workers in London, Datta (2009) reconceptualises cosmopolitanism as spatial where openness to others is shaped by localised spatial contexts where encounters with Others occur. While cosmopolitanism is a competence based on tolerance and openness *towards* Others, conviviality is explored in this article as the actual spatialised interaction *with* Others in various spaces often influenced not only by race, ethnicity, gender, space and time dynamics but also personal circumstances.

This article highlights the gendering of spaces by drawing on feminist geography (Ehrkamp 2013; Johnson 1994, 2008; McDowell 1993; Valentine 1989; Yeoh and Ramdas 2014). It follows Johnson's (1994, 107) call for a new geography based on the ways 'in which women and men are situated, move through, apprehend and engage with space'. Furthermore, an intersectional approach that acknowledges the complex dynamics between race, gender, class and other social categories (Crenshaw 1994) is important in discussing city encounters with difference. Intersectionality stresses the need to consider the way in which different social categories interlink in terms of the production of social relations (Anthias 2009). Polish migrant women discussed in this article are often placed at the intersection of multiple categories (race, ethnicity, class, gender, motherhood and so on) and these interconnections are important in shaping their encounters with difference in various spaces. Hence, this article offers an important contribution to the feminist geography by highlighting situatedness and intersectionality in exploring conviviality.

Researching Polish migrant women

This article draws on fieldwork conducted in Barcelona between September and December 2012 which involved participant observation with groups and organisations working with Polish migrants, narrative interviews with twenty Polish women who entered Spain just before or after Poland joined the EU and one focus group with six Polish women who had previously been interviewed. The focus group participants brought photographs reflecting everyday situations in multicultural Barcelona, used to stimulate group discussions. The research participants were mainly recruited through the groups with which I conducted the participant observation and subsequently snowball sampling was applied. My sample aimed to capture the heterogeneity of Polish women in terms of age, socio-economic status, marital status, migration history and length of stay, although the majority were young (the average age was 31) and educated to a university degree. Out of twenty interviewees, six had children up to secondary education. The informants had little or no contact with ethnic diversity prior to arriving in Spain, although a few had previously lived in an ethnically diverse country.

The transcripts were summarised and coded manually to identify the main themes and subsequently analysed as narratives (Riessman 2002). The data from the narrative interviews was cross-checked with the material from the focus groups and participant observation.

Finding a 'common' language

In the informants' discussions about relations with Catalans, the issue of Catalan language was frequently mentioned. This section highlights the role of language in shaping conviviality. This requires examining the current situation of Catalan language in Barcelona and its importance in Catalan politics. After decades of state repression under Franco dictatorship (1939–1975), Catalan was recognised as an official language. The Catalan immigration approach has become strategically linked to its language policy which has gone some way towards reducing the 'ethnic closure of Catalan' (Woolard 2003, 86) by making it *llengua comuna*, 'the vehicular language of immigrants' to be commonly used in the public sphere, as part of the national building project (Climent-Ferrando 2012). While the Barcelona Interculturality Plan (Barcelona City Council 2010, 33) recognises Catalan and Spanish as official languages, it places special emphasis on encouraging the 'learning of the Catalan language, as a language in itself and as a factor of social cohesion and generator of opportunities'. Furthermore, Catalan language as a marker of Catalan identity plays a part in the discourse of Catalan independence. This socio-political context is important in understanding migrants' encounters with the native population.

Upon their arrival, many interviewees were surprised to learn that Barcelona was part of Catalonia with its own language and culture. They largely assumed Spanish to be the language of communication and often associated Catalan language and culture with the homogenous construction of 'closed Catalans'. During her first year in the city, Zofia (28, university graduate) found it hard to enter the circle of Catalans who according to her:

> together guard their fortress … they guard their heritage, their little world … they guard it through speaking Catalan. Many Catalans I have met don't want to speak Spanish. If you don't speak Catalan they prefer to speak English.

This example illustrates the interplay of linguistic hierarchies and the perception of Catalan as a marker of national territory. While many interviewees in this research discussed an immense pressure to speak Catalan (see also Władyka and Morén-Alegret 2013), other studies illustrate some contrasts. For instance, Pujolar's (2010) research on Catalan language delivery for Moroccan and West-African women in Northern Catalonia shows that even when migrants want to learn or speak Catalan, the locals switch to Spanish. While language policies identify Catalan facilitating social cohesion, this is contrasted with contradictory linguistic practices in everyday life in various settings whereby newly arriving migrants are expected to 'treat Catalan as a fully functional public language while large sectors of the

local population still treat it as a minority language not adequate to be spoken to strangers' (Pujolar 2010, 229).

Nevertheless, some narratives illustrate how learning Catalan becomes a way to overcome barriers in communication with Catalans. For instance, Eliza (32, office worker), took part in a voluntary Catalan language learning project (*Voluntariat per la llengua*). She was matched with a retired Catalan man with whom she practised Catalan on a weekly basis. This resulted in a friendly relationship across linguistic, cultural and generational differences. It is argued that the situation of using Catalan functioned as an in-group language only used among those categorised as 'Catalan' is gradually changing due to the contemporary conditions of mobility and access to language and 'implications for ethnic ascription are open to negotiation and contestation' (Pujolar and Gonzalez 2013, 139). Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge different social classes, gender, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds of migrants with regards to access to language classes and other linguistic possibilities and their relationship with dominant discourses about language. As Pujolar (2006, 3370) stresses, 'speaking Catalan is socially experienced not as a cognitive skill, but as a component of the performances that embody the cultural capital of the middle classes'. Therefore, in terms of learning and speaking Catalan with the locals, the experience of educated and white middle-class Polish women will be different to that of illiterate or near illiterate black African women from a poor background in Pujolar's study (2006). The local government's efforts to promote interaction in Catalan considered as a factor of social cohesion should take into consideration the intersection of race, gender and class shaping interaction between migrant women and the locals.

For Zofia, being able to communicate in Catalan facilitated deeper bonds and a sense of belonging with her partner and his family:

> They accepted me from the beginning and they didn't make me feel that I am different or inferior … I started learning Catalan from my own will, not because of pressure from Catalan society … When I wanted to pass the national exam, we switched with my partner from Spanish to Catalan to practise and it remained like this. I speak Catalan with his entire family … I did a reading in Catalan at his family baptism and it was important for me because it meant that I am part of the family.

Socio-linguistic boundaries can be overcome through a relationship with a Catalan partner who facilitates conviviality with his family and friends. This example of conviviality is situated at the partner's family home which becomes a common place of interaction where Zofia is able to communicate in Catalan. It is also situated at a particular time of Zofia's migratory experience, contrasting with her encounters with Catalans upon arrival in Barcelona. These findings demonstrate that inter-ethnic relationships may constitute an important factor in facilitating deeper and more sustained forms of conviviality developed over time and how positive relations may encourage migrants to communicate in Catalan, make connections and build a sense of belonging.

While this section focused on the role of language and deeper forms of contact developed with Catalans over time, the next section discusses often gendered street encounters with non-white men.

Street encounters with difference

The narratives about more meaningful conviviality with white Catalans sharply contrast with the accounts about street encounters with non-white men. While the local government's discourse of *convivencia* stresses the importance to promote intercultural mixing in public spaces, this section illustrates how the dynamics of gender and race in the context of street encounters constitute challenges to the idea of streets as spaces for convivial relations. During the interviews and focus group discussions, various spacialised representations of South Asians, Arabs and Muslims emerged (see also Rzepnikowska 2016b), often corresponding with the discourse of Orientalism (Said 1995). Several informants discussed their perceptions of Arab men as sexually violent and dangerous:

> I know it sounds stupid, but it is a question of the way they look at you and you know, Spanish men may look at you indecently, but when it comes to Arabs for me it is a gaze of a predator at a victim. (Julia, 36, accountant)

> We have a view about most of the European nations and we know what to expect from Italian [men] who would follow you and whistle at you, but if it is an Arab [man] and he looks at you, then you wonder if he wants to drag you behind a first corner and rape you or whether he looks at you this way because this is how they look at people over there. (Dominika, 28, pharmaceutical consultant)

There is a striking contrast between the narratives about street encounters with Arab men marked by fear and encounters with Spanish and other European men (there was an absence of discussion of street encounters with white Catalan men, although they may have been categorised as Spanish). While it is perceived as more acceptable for white European men to look at women in a sexual way and harass them, the gaze of Arab men is associated with racialised and sexualised male violence. These narratives indicate the binary of the familiar, culturally close (therefore safe and acceptable) white European men and the unknown and culturally distant dark men perceived as sexually violent. Furthermore, these perceptions and encounters should be situated in the context of widespread negative representations of non-white, South Asian and Arab men in some media, political and public debates in both Spain and Poland (and beyond). Some research reveals that the perception of Arab men as oppressive to women is one of the most common stereotypes in Polish society (Nowaczek-Walczak 2011). This view has been recently reinforced by a controversial image in the Polish magazine *wSieci* portraying a white woman, covered with the EU flag, screaming while being groped and assaulted by dark skinned male arms (*wSieci*, February 13, 2016).

Some research participants also discussed street encounters with black men. This is illustrated in Amelia's (31, hostel receptionist) narrative about street encounters with black men on her way to work (Rzepnikowska 2016b):

> It irritates me when on the way to work someone whistles at me and the one that whistles is always a black man … They treat me, I don't know, like an animal … So as you can see there is the dark colour of the skin, annoying because they whistle … I just wanted to point out that it never happened to me that a whitey [białas] whistled at me.

The experience of street harassment and fear, having a profound effect on women's full participation in the public sphere, physical well-being and freedom, has been explored in literature (Bowman 1993; Day 1999; Koskela 1999; McDowell 1993; Pain 1991; Valentine 1989). Furthermore, in the Catalan context, the publication *No Surtis Sola* [Don't go out alone] (Freixanet Mateo 2011) exposes the relationship between public safety and gender. It focuses on the analysis of the safety and security in public space, and on the design of public space to combat women's insecurity and fear in the city. Feminist geographers have concentrated on the racialisation of fear, highlighting that 'the problem of fear in public space is typically constructed from a white perspective' and that women mostly fear non-white men (Day 1999, 307). Nevertheless, the issue of street harassment and fear has hardly been discussed in literature on migrant encounters. A foreign appearance may possibly make some women feel more prone to harassment. Based on her study on street harassment in Cairo, Egypt, Ilahi (2009) stresses that looking more explicitly foreign was linked with a higher likelihood of harassment and racialisation. The narratives implied that the embodied difference of Polish women may become an object of desire for non-white men (see also Ehrkamp 2013). This raises the feminist concern for sexualised bodies moving through space (Johnson 1994). However, the narratives of gendered street encounters reflect racialised discourses by mostly referring to non-white men as dangerous and threatening to 'foreign looking white women'. Most interviewees expressed their awareness of their foreign appearance in Barcelona. Some said they felt 'exotic' due to their foreign look which they thought attracted negative attention particularly from non-white men:

> I am talking about different beauty … Here you feel you are treated differently … but sometimes, when it comes to those Pakistani men, it can be problematic … You walk on the street … and you hear their opinions about your body … I'm always judged based on the colour of my eyes [blue] and hair [blond]. (Daria, 31, photographer)

Some literature on Polish migrants in Spain stresses the privileged treatment of Poles who due to their skin complexion are considered as *nórdicos* from the North, highly respected in Spain (Nalewajko 2010; Ramírez Goicoechea 2003). The existing research in the British context reveals how some Polish migrants distinguish themselves from other ethnic minorities on the basis of skin colour (Lopez Rodriguez 2010; Parutis 2011; Rzepnikowska 2016b), although whiteness might not be explicitly claimed (Fox 2013). In Poland, highly sexualised depiction of Polish women seems to be acceptable with regards to national pride and community depiction

(Burrell 2008). This gendered and sexualised stereotype of Polish women can be reinforced in the migratory context.

At the same time, the interviewees' perception of threat might also be affected by a racialised schema where black masculinity is seen as inherently more threatening than white masculinity (Bowman 1993; hooks 1992). The narratives of gendered street encounters highlight the intersection of race, sexuality, masculinity (Johnson 2008), gender and space. The experiences of street harassment shape ideas about the whole group as dangerous and oppressive to women and 'race fear' sustains race prejudice (Day 1999). The street encounters with non-white men are situated not only in the physical space of the streets but also in the context of race/ethnicity and gender discourses.

Some stereotypical perceptions about the Other may be challenged through mothering activities in various spaces of the city and may shape conviviality, as discussed in the next section.

Spatialised experiences of motherly conviviality

After becoming mothers, women start using their local areas more intensely than before and seek other mothers to spend time with (Byrne 2006; Ryan et al. 2009). This section discusses the importance of a connection between motherly activities, spaces for mothers and conviviality. It also argues that motherhood intersects with other social positions and geographical locations, having impact on convivial relations. Several interviewees stressed the importance of relations with other migrant women, regardless of their ethnic background, because of the perceived shared experiences of being migrant mothers (see Rzepnikowska 2016a).

Marta, a 34-year-old marketing specialist and a mother of a 3-year-old child, moved to Sants, a very diverse residential area in the southern part of the city, in order to have a better access to family-friendly areas and educational facilities where she met other parents:

> I have managed to establish relations with quite a lot of people since my daughter was born. I have acquaintances from the nursery, preschool, park, workshops and extracurricular activities … We can talk about getting to know others when we meet each other at parents' evenings, school events or when we collect children from school.

This highlights the importance of the intersection of motherhood and space in shaping relations with others beyond ethnic boundaries. As Wilson (2014, 102) points out, 'repetitive interactions of everyday school life shape the capacities of parents to live with difference'.

Emila, a 35-year-old mother of three children expressed her desire to establish convivial relations with Moroccan and Pakistani mothers who gathered in front of the school gates in her local area of Les Roquetes with a strong presence of migrants:

> This is a great neighbourhood with people mainly from South America, Romania and Pakistan. You notice it when you take children to school … If we could become more

> open and get to know a woman from Morocco or a man from Pakistan, if we could become their friends, I would love that. I need it because there are groups of people in front of the school: women from Pakistan in one group, women from Morocco in another and this woman from Poland totally on her own … It would be great if we could have a chance to get to know them and be invited to their home, where they all wear veils, and to taste their delicious food.

Beneath the fascination about getting to know veiled women, there is an expression of loneliness and a desire for closer relations with other parents. Although it is claimed that schools in Barcelona involve parents from ethnic minority backgrounds in daily school life (Council of Europe 2011), there might be a need for creating more opportunities for parents to break down some barriers and for coming together to reduce isolation. Ryan (2015) suggests that accessing new relations requires not only opportunities for contact but also reciprocity and mutual willingness to make the effort. She claims that not sharing a common language, interests, lifestyles or beliefs may lead to more effort needed to get to know others.

Emila's desire to interact with difference is partly fulfilled by creating opportunities for interaction between her children and their friends from diverse backgrounds. This inevitably results in encounters with other parents. Emila discussed home visits and outdoor birthday parties, based on the pictures she brought to the focus group:

> They play, they are celebrating birthday. What difference does it make that this girl is from Poland? … There are no differences. A bunch of kids playing together. There are no class or national differences … they have a language in common – Spanish, although the girls from Morocco sang Happy Birthday in English.

This narrative illustrates an example of conviviality beyond ethno-national boundaries in convivial open spaces of the neighbourhood and at home. Also, it is important to point out that Spanish, not Catalan, becomes a common language of interaction.

Not all mothers managed to establish contact with the local residents in their local areas. After Dorota (36, shop assistant) divorced her husband who wanted her to adopt traditional gender norms, be a housewife and look after the family, she had to learn to negotiate different roles in different spaces, that of a mother and a worker. The workplace became a place of new acquaintances and friendships with co-workers: 'It was like a waterfall where I could meet people from different cultures'. The narratives of several other interviewees illustrated how boundaries along ethno-religious lines become blurred through everyday interaction at work (see also Rzepnikowska 2017). While the workplace enabled rich encounters, Dorota had less time to get to know other mothers and get involved in school activities of her son. Her experience of conviviality was situated in her personal circumstances and impacted by a constant negotiation of different roles. As a single mother with a low income and extended family network in Poland, she struggled to collect her son from school due to her working hours coinciding with the collection time and remote location of the school. She admitted she did not know mothers in her local

area because of a busy working schedule. Dorota thought that if she knew other mothers it would have been easier to find someone who could offer her support. This example demonstrates a struggle to negotiate different social roles across different spaces, also impacting on migrant women's relations with others. The gendered everyday lives of the interviewees are influenced by the intersection of personal circumstances, support networks, socio-economic and spatio-temporal dimensions, having impact on social relations.

Conclusion

The empirical material discussed in this article illustrates various forms and degrees of conviviality situated in various city spaces. Race, ethnicity, gender and language play an important role in shaping encounters with difference in various spaces. This article contributes to the existing literature by recognising the spatiality of convivial relations which seem to be closely linked with the dynamics of race, ethnicity and gender, indicating different hierarchies of conviviality, setting a challenge to the local government's efforts to promote inter-cultural mixing in various spaces of the city.

The article contributes to feminist geography by demonstrating how the situatedness of conviviality is characterised by various often intersecting factors, including geographical location, discourses about gender, race and fear, social positions, temporal dynamics and personal circumstances. The article illustrated how various city spaces can shape conviviality; for instance, how street encounters differ from conviviality in the neighbourhoods, family spaces, homes or workplaces. However, focusing solely on the geographical location would obscure the understanding of convivial interaction. Conviviality also has to be situated in the context of the sending and receiving societies, and particularly the discourses about language, race, ethnicity, and gender shaping peoples' perceptions about the Other. Moreover, convivial practices should be situated in different social positions, personal circumstances and experiences. The article illustrated how class and race/ethnicity influence the possibilities of communicating in Catalan and how being a single mother on a low income limited convivial possibilities in the neighbourhood and family spaces. It is also important to highlight how the significance of language and the specificity of the Catalan context disappear in the narratives about gendered street encounters, and how discussions about encounters with non-whites are absent in the narratives about language. This raises the issue of Catalanness perceived as a homogenous category defined by whiteness and Catalan language seen as an inherent feature of particular groups, contrary to the attempts of the local government to make these categories more inclusive regardless of a person's place or culture of origin.

Finally, convivial practices are also situated at specific times and life stages of the informants and it is possible that their perceptions of difference and experiences of conviviality will change over time. While initially Catalans were perceived as closed

and guarded by their language, closer relations developed over time resulted in the possibilities of crossing socio-linguistic barriers. Longitudinal research involving repeated observations and interviews over a longer period of time would be useful to explore changes in perceptions and convivial practices.

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