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The linked lives of Polish worker-carers in the UK and their families in Poland: Making the case for valuing unpaid care labour.

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The linked lives of Polish worker-carers in the UK and their families in Poland: Making the case for valuing unpaid care labour.

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Geography, Durham University

2019

Abstract

This thesis is a qualitative narrative account of a 2 year study into Polish migration and stasis in the UK and Poland through the language of care. It explores the linked lives of Polish worker-carers and their children and parents across borders and over the lifecourse, and how their experiences, discourses and practices of care are shaped by and in turn shaped broader geopolitical and economic structures. The research was a multi-sited and bi-lingual ethnographic study based on repeat visits to 18 households in the UK and Poland, biographical interviews with midlife women, and follow up visits to some participants' families in Poland. It was framed conceptually by ideas about mobility and immobility, social reproduction and care practices, and used the 'care diamond' to situate familial caregiving in a broader shifting constellation of complex, contradictory and unequal care relations distributed between the state, family, market and community. The thesis finds that mobility and fixity can be an opportunity for some individuals to rebalance intergenerational power relations and develop intimacy at a distance, develop non-familial relations of care or escape toxic relations and remake social reproduction. Some women who undertake unpaid care work are at risk of cumulative financial disadvantage and pension poverty when they miss out on social insurance credits accrued singularly through paid labour, particularly if they have little or no access to pooled familial resources. The thesis also finds that there is a need to take into account the ways in which some of the 'young old' often continue to work, care and remain independent well into old age, and the ways in which people accommodate, contest and circumvent the emergence of punitive welfare and work regimes based on 'flexicurity' – flexible work, a weak social safety net and the shifting of care onto families.

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Statement of Copyright

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the author's prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

Acknowledgements

There is a saying that it takes a village to raise a child. It has taken a village to bring this PhD to fruition, and there are so many people to thank that I don't know where to begin.

Perhaps I will start by thanking my supervisors Professors Cheryl McEwan & Alison Stenning and Dr Kathrin Hörschelmann. Thank you to Cheryl for taking me on and sticking by me through thick and thin with great integrity, to Kathrin for believing in me and the research, and to Alison for the inspiration in your book 'Domesticating Neoliberalism'. I also want to thank five other wonderful scholars in particular, without whom I would not have started and finished this PhD. Dr Eleanor Loughlin for encouraging me to dip my toe in the water and providing inspiring training and support at every turn. Dr Madhu Dutta for keeping me going during the first year and at the end with unfailingly good advice and humour. Dr Sarah Hughes for keeping me going during the last year and at the end and for giving me the gift of understanding. Dr Pat Richardson and Dr Margaret Masson for their ever-timely wisdom.

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I would also like to voice my gratitude to the organisations and individuals who contributed to the PhD financially. It was funded through my own part-time freelance work, a legacy from my late parents-in-law, and fieldwork and conference grants from postgraduate funding initiatives in the Geography Dept and Faculty of

Social Sciences and Health at Durham University, and the Polonia Aid Foundation Trust.

I always wanted to finish this thesis with the following quote about the return home of a character from the book The Railway Children[1].

He goes in and the door is shut. I think we will not open the door or follow him. I think that just now we are not wanted there. I think it will be best for us to go quickly and quietly away. At the end of the field, among the thin gold spikes of grass and the harebells and Gipsy roses and St. John's Wort, we may just take one last look, over our shoulders, at the white house where neither we nor anyone else is wanted now.

But if I'm honest I'm more likely to linger by the garden gate talking about one more thing & another & another, like Madhu's friend Satya's father Professor Sivarman. So many interesting conversations to look back upon & forward to, not least with Ruth Winden with your incisive career's expertise, great kindness, and longstanding ambition to undertake your own PhD – you will do it.

And last, but not least, one final extremely important acknowledgement. Profound thanks to my beloved family, friends and dog. Let's go for a walk in the sunshine together.

---

[1] Nesbit, E. (1906) **The Railway Children.** Darton: WellsGardner.

For our children and those who came before us.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Introduction: The Uneven Geographies of Care

> *"If the national debate is all around the negatives, keeping people out, then of course it's going to be polarised and xenophobic…..This is not me having an Anglophobic rant. Right across Europe the evidence is that migration makes a positive contribution, not a negative one. Migrants contribute far more than they take out and they are necessary to keep a balance between retirees and workers."*

> Peter Sutherland, UN Special Representative in International Migration 2006-2017 and founding director General of the World Trade Organisation, (McVeigh, 2015).

As this quotation shows, migration continues to provoke intense debates across the European Union (EU). Within EU policy however, these discussions have predominantly – but not exclusively - focused upon migration from *outside* the EU (e.g. the so-called refugee 'crisis') rather than on the nuances of freedom of movement within it. One notable exception to this is the UK, where the migration of EU citizens eligible for social protection has been the focus of sustained attention within public, policy and research conversations (Pollard et al, 2008, Burrell, 2010) and arguably contributed to the narrow vote in favour of leaving the EU in the 2016 UK European Union membership referendum (Shipman, 2016, Ford and Lymperopoulou, 2017). However while Sutherland (in McVeigh 2015) rightly identifies the need to resolve the contradictions arising out of the clash between the rise of 'nativism' on the one hand, and the need for workers to rebalance an ageing workforce on the other hand, he does not acknowledge the problems arising from globalisation and the neoliberalism inherent to the systems he works within, such as inequality (Harvey, 1990, 2010, Smith et al, 2010, Dorling, 2014) that contribute to such polarised politics. Sutherland also focuses on migrants at an aggregate level, as valuable for their labour and contribution to economic growth and competitiveness (Favell, 2008), rather than their vital economic and social roles in kinship networks. This omission is captured in

a popular quote often repeated in Central Europe: '*It (Switzerland) has called for workers and has been given human beings*' (Frisch, 1972, Iglicka et al, 2016).

With this in mind, this thesis argues that the primary focus in these debates on economic globalisation (Held et al, 1999) renders invisible the reproductive work that sustains productive work and is vital to the continuation of human society. As Lawson (2007, p.5) states "care is absolutely central to our individual and collective survival". Individuals migrate not only in order to earn money, but also in order to achieve social reproduction, and are social beings enmeshed in complex personal relationships, interdependencies and linked lives across generations and borders (Elder, 1998, Dykstra and Hagestad, 2016). However, making sense of entangled productive and reproductive work, paid and unpaid labour and mobility and stasis, and making a case for reining in neoliberalism and formulating new policies which reconfigure labour markets and welfare systems, is difficult for many reasons, not least because "many migration decisions evolve incrementally and unpredictably, and some produce a series of outward and return moves in response to personal or family needs" (Ackers and Dwyer, 2004, p.463), which can be "very hard to interpret" (Lewis, 2009, p.6).

This thesis further argues that one of the first steps to disentangling complexity and making sense of care work over time and space is to take account of the broader geographical, economic, political and socio-legal policy context in which it is embedded (King, 2012 , Barber, 2012). In this thesis, the broader context is the EU with its freedom of movement and unrestricted family reunification for EU citizens. However, mobility is not the only consideration, for the EU is also shaped by tensions between the economic adult worker model and the social model of 'cradle to grave' social protection designed to mitigate the problems caused by the complex dynamics of peoples' lives and in particular the stages in the life course when people are young, ill or elderly (Jurado and Bruzzone, 2008, Jurado et al, 2013). The adult worker model means that social security is not based on a male breadwinner model, but on all (able) adults working and accruing welfare rights through paid work. The question then arises, whose responsibility is it to square the circle and balance paid work and unpaid care – a government responsibility or a private responsibility? (Lewis, 2009). Increasingly, and in the context of austerity, governments within the EU argue that as there is not enough money to go round, and that everyone needs to be active in the

labour market well into old age in order to achieve personal financial security, so that the tax base is widened and economic growth boosted.

The problem with this argument is that, while the family has long been central to policy responses to care (Phillips, 2007), care has been shifted so far into domestic domains and the public sphere and welfare devalued so much (Watson, 1995) that some people with dual care and economic responsibilities have to 'magic' themselves into two places at once, both earning money and caring. Although some manage, all the evidence shows that pushing care onto the family exacerbates structurally determined inequalities and increases the risk of harm to both caregivers and receivers (Himmelweit, 2007). Externalising care work onto families and communities has simultaneously diminished their capacity to perform it (Fraser, 2016). The least well off are most disadvantaged by this balancing act (O'Connor, 2018), for they are generally more exposed to economic, social and health inequalities, get sicker earlier and die younger (Marmot and Bell, 2012, Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010). Women are also cumulatively disadvantaged, as when care needs are not met, women's labour market participation drops, and with it their accumulation of the national insurance required for a reasonable pension (Austen and Ong, 2010, Phillips, and O'Loughlin, 2017).

Given this context, in this thesis, care is not a private or sentimental matter (Dahle, 1995, Milligan et al, 2007, Valentine, 2008a), even if it is understood as shaped by profoundly-felt personal relations (Holmes et al, 2018), and bears witness to people "far removed from centres of power" (Pine and Bridger, 1998, p.1). Therefore the second step that this thesis takes to address the complexity of care work, is to conceptualise it as *relational* (Zelizer, 2011) and as fundamentally intertwined with broader public and political issues that tie the practices of everyday life into the heart of the political economy (Cole and Durham, 2007, Pain and Smith, 2016). How care is made, unmade and re-made shapes the extent to which people can live comfortable or disadvantaged lives (Toynbee and Walker, 2017, Hills, 2017). Thus the everyday care relations and linked lives investigated in this thesis provide a lens through which to ground and examine the politically charged discourses (Atkinson et al, 2011) around the creation and redistribution of power, money and resources, or 'who gets what'. This is particularly salient in an era of population ageing across the EU, which means that the number of people aged 65+ is increasing faster than the

number of babies being born (King, 2014) and therefore the number of persons of working age relative to the number who are above traditional working age is shrinking.

In the light of this context of longevity and population ageing, the third step in this thesis is to explore everyday mobility and reproductive practices in households 'stretched across' Europe and across multiple generations, and, crucially, to examine what the consequences might be for emerging new social, economic and political settlements. A range of scholars concur that there is a dearth of material on how migrants and stayers combine productive and socially reproductive work (Dyer et al, 2011, Bolzman, 2012, Janicka and Kaczmarczyk, 2016), undertake global householding (Douglass, 2013), and mediate family support and the welfare state (Vargas-Silva, 2011, Kraler et al, 2012, Näre et al, 2017) in Europe (McGhee et al, 2013). For example, Kofman (2014, p.81) argues that the powerful focus on global care chains and the broader commodification and geographical extension of social reproduction risks obscuring the significance of households. She states:

> *"We need therefore to unpack what is happening in the household in a period of economic, social and political change in which inequalities have increased massively, and state intervention is reshaping how and what activities are undertaken in particular sites and institutions."*

Similarly Kilkey et al (2018, p.1) contend*:

> *"While there is now a large body of scholarship on migrants' contributions to plugging the social reproductive deficits in migrant-receiving countries, considerably less, although increasing, attention has been paid to migrants' own social reproductive experiences".*

This thesis addresses these gaps by drawing on a range of geographical scholarship concerning globalisation and personal relations (Hörschelmann and Schafer, 2007, McEwan and Goodman, 2010, Stenning et al, 2011) to shape novel, multi-sited, feminist and 'thickly descriptive' (Gibson-Graham, 2014) research into the everyday care relationships and linked lives of workers in two EU member states, the UK and Poland during 2013-2015. These two particular EU member states were chosen because free movement by EU citizens, particularly Polish citizens, has had significant political traction within the UK, especially given that just under 1 million of the 3.7 million EU citizens living in the UK are Polish nationals, the largest single

group by nationality. Additionally there was a rich lineage of work to build on (Burrell, 2010, White 2011a, b). At the start of my research in 2012, Polish nationals constituted the fastest growing migrant community in UK, with Polish the second most reported main language (ONS 2013) and therefore a large part of the "the largest, most sustained and most diverse inflow of migration in British history" (Ford and Lymperopoulou, 2017, p.3). Since then migration patterns have changed, in part following the UK EU Membership referendum, but this research has enduring relevance as I am, as Newman (2014) puts it, telling a particular (political) time which still resonates.

A multitude of concepts could be used to make sense of how people engaged in multiple relational practices extend social reproduction across borders and make, un-make and re-make care in a myriad of different and complex ways. This thesis draws on three particular sets of ideas to construct a conceptual framework (which is detailed in full in chapter 2). Firstly it draws on ideas about mobility and immobility to consider the people who move, stay put and circulate, and the fluid and unequal social relations between them in the context of unequal global mobility (Sheller and Urry, 2006, Massey, 2012). It also draws on longstanding feminist challenges to the marginalisation of vital unpaid reproductive work (Hochschild 1983, Folbre, 1994, Rowbotham et al, 2013), challenges that seek to disrupt grand narratives of global relations (Pratt and Rosner, 1996) through small scale geographies (Dutta, 2016). Thirdly it draws on ideas about care as a social practice (Tronto, 2017) and moral experience (McEwan et al, 2017) essential to the process of maintaining family relations over the life course (Katz and Monk, 1993, Clark et al, 2009, Bailey, 2009, Baldassar and Merla, 2013, Lulle, 2018a). In this context familial caregiving is situated in a broader shifting 'care diamond' constellation of complex unequal care relations distributed between the state, the family, the market and the community (Katz, 2001, p.711, Raghuram, 2012, Kofman, 2014). In-depth consideration of different dimensions of family care is facilitated by a novel 'quarter-carat care diamond' which can be envisaged as sitting inside the larger 'care diamond' and 'care pentagon'. It draws holistic attention to eight particular dimensions – intimacy/distance, taken care of/self-care, interdependence/dependence and living together/living apart (see appendix 1). This simple model acts as a mental toolkit to keep all the core themes in mind while feeling overwhelmed by the stories (Thomson, 1999) and contradictions that emerge during fieldwork (Crang and Cook, 2007). By

bringing these ideas together in this way space my thesis intends to open up for new conceptual insights into the framing of care, work and migration within geographical literature.

From a methodological perspective, research into how individuals experience and respond to caregiving requires sensitivity (detailed further in Chapter 3). This thesis is thus underpinned by feminist principles of mutual trust and respect, repeat visits to key participants, biographical interviews and multi-sited ethnographic research (Marcus, 1995) in the UK and Poland into the minutiae and agency of local lives and livelihoods and the broader structures and processes that create such everyday lives and which are in turn created by them (Rigg, 2007, p.7). Close attention is paid to the experiences, discourses and practices of those who are 'left behind' or 'stay put' (King et al 2014, White, 2016a) as well as those who migrate. Specifically the study consists of 16 households in the North East (NE) of England and 2 households in Poland, and focuses primarily on women aged 30-60, and additionally their family members in NE England, and also in the case of four households, their family members in various part of Poland. Although their perspectives are not generalizable, they can be synthesized into themes which can help make sense of formal and informal care. All of the participants, non-participants and 'connectors' in the research have been given pseudonyms (apart from three individuals in organisations whose names do not compromise anyone's anonymity in any way).

In conclusion, drawing on fieldwork conducted between 2013-2015, this thesis seeks to contribute in a modest way to geographical debates and progressive policy making about migration and social reproduction and the intertwining of public and private, global and local, everyday and geopolitical processes (Mills, 1959, Fincher 2004, Moran, 2005, Pain and Smith, 2008). As I will continue to detail, a new politics is emerging, shaped in part by the global scope of migrant processes which may become 'entrenched and resistant to governmental control' (Castles et al 2014, p.6). Secondly, responding to Back's (2012) call to invigorate the sociological craft , this thesis seeks to use a 'lens of scope' (Atkinson et al, 2011) to imagine the potential place for an ethos of care in society (McEwan and Goodman, 2010) and in particular a new worker-carer model (Lewis, 2009). Such a model balances paid and unpaid work, family wellbeing and gender equality, and criticises the valorisation of paid work and economic competitiveness above sustainable family communities and a

sustainable world. Sustainable care is not only a feminist concern, but a concern for us all.

Before moving onto the aims and objectives, the next section sets out in more detail the broader European policy context to the research, specifically the tensions between the economic and social models underpinning the EU, and between different approaches to population ageing

1.2 Freedom of movement within the European Union

The freedom of movement and Polish migration to the UK that underpin this thesis contextually have been well researched, as have the different contexts in Poland and Britain, and the re-making of Britain's relationship with the EU. There has however, been less focus on the broader issues, such as the tensions (Vaughan-Whitehead, 2015) at the heart of the European project between the economic model of freedom of movement for workers, and the social model of collective support for social reproduction, and, more recently, the emerging adult worker model, which obliges adults to accrue rights to social protection through paid work. This thesis is moulded by the perspective that the contradictory ways in which these models are understood and enacted in Poland and the UK is contributing to the development of labour market, welfare and migration regimes shaped by neoliberal 'flexicurity', which exacerbates gender, class and ethnic inequalities and uneven social reproduction.

When the European Economic Community (EEC) or Common Market was founded in 1958, two of the key aims were to bring about social and economic progress through the formation of a customs union with a common external tariff, and a single labour market to enable workers to move freely between and live in other member states. The UK joined in 1973, bringing the total number of states to 9. The right to free movement was further formalised in 1992, in the *Maastricht Treaty on European Union*, which laid out the principles of a deep and wide 'Single Market' based on the free movement of goods, people, services and capital, removal of trade barriers and rules harmonisation. In 2004 the EU expanded to incorporate 10 new member states from Central and Southern Europe, including Poland, bringing the total number of member states to 28 (European Union official website, 2019).

The status of family members in the single European labour market has often been ambiguous (Ackers, 1998, 2004). Since 1958, workers have been entitled not only to move to, reside and seek work in other countries, but also to social protection in the countries they work in once they become lawfully resident. Eventually they gain the right to permanent residence. According to Kay and Trevena (2017)

"*The legal framework of the EU also allows families to move freely within the Union and to constitute and re-constitute their families largely as they wish. Under EU law, the concept of family is fairly broad and goes beyond the nuclear family. It includes the rights of adult dependent children and ascendant relatives, thus recognising the existence of wider kinship relations.*"

However, legal classification of the status and rights of their family members carrying out unpaid care work has been less clear. Although unpaid family carers were allowed to accompany and join paid workers, they were typically classed as 'economically inactive' or non-workers. Their rights were limited by two conditions – they had to have sickness insurance and sufficient resources to avoid becoming a burden on the social assistance system of the host member state during their period of residence. This meant that their status was "markedly different from that of nationals of that country and from other 'economically active' migrants" (Ackers and Dwyer, 2004, McGhee et al, 2013, Shutes and Walker, 2018).

The marginalisation of social reproduction in this way echoes debates down the generations, as exemplified by Friedrich List, a 19th century German-American economist. He claimed: "Those who raise pigs are productive, while those who raise children are unproductive, members of this society" (Moebius and Szyszczak, 1998, p.125). Arguments were repeatedly made under equal treatment law "in favour of an extension of the concept of worker to include persons who perform unwaged care work for children, the sick and the elderly" (Ackers 2004, p.377). However they carried little weight, as they were trumped by arguments that decisions about social entitlements should be devolved to member states, which had their own individual and diverse systems of social welfare rules, and their own constant debates about the mutual obligations and citizenship requirements underpinning their particular welfare regimes (Fóti, 2015).

In the UK the principles of freedom of movement and European-wide economic and social progress were never wholly accepted, with some attitudes shaped

by a strong tradition of mercantilism and Euroscepticism (Wilby, 2008, Ford 2012, Rogers, 2019). While the principle of a Beveridgean welfare state based on reciprocity between people who contributed and people who claimed and who all belonged to a bounded population was generally accepted, the principle of pan-European reciprocity was much less popular in some quarters. Negativity increased after the 2008 economic recession and the introduction of fiscal 'austerity' in 2010 in the shape of reduced public spending which (continues to) hurt the least wealthy hardest, and contributed to a spike in early mortality (Dorling, 2017). Fears mounted in some circles that EU citizens from the newer EU member countries were unfairly claiming rather than contributing, and therefore partly to blame for economic and social decline. Such fears were fuelled by political discourses about migration as something 'done' (Jurado and Brochmann, 2013) to an 'overcrowded' UK (Migration Observatory, 2013) by outsiders who could and should be 'controlled' (Daily Mail, 2011, Mead, 2011).

I drew on the manufacturing of blame in my application for a PhD place in 2012, quoting Chris Grayling, Employment Minister and Damian Green, Immigration Minister. They stated that "The last government had lax immigration and a chaotic way of controlling foreign benefit claimants." (Daily Telegraph, 2012). Their claims, which resonated through to the hyperbolic language on migration in the media throughout the course of the thesis were based on a flawed report into 'benefit tourism' (BBC, 2012). They were rebuked by the head of the UK Statistics Authority (Travis, 2012).

In contrast, there has been less public discussion of the role public policies, such as labour market flexibility and minimal regulation, play in incentivising employers to employ migrants (Andersen and Ruhs, 2011). Less attention has been paid to the labour shortages migrant workers have filled in hospitality (Janta, 2009) and social care (Harper, 2014), their fiscal contribution (Dustmann and Frattini, 2014) and the trade-offs around citizenship, labour and welfare entitlements (Hanley 2011, Spencer 2003). Despite trenchant criticism of the 'cavalier use of evidence' (Meager, 2012), and positive support for migration in some circles (Ford and Heath, 2014), factually inaccurate anti-migrant discourses continue (d) to circulate (Rzepnikowska, 2019). As the Migration Observatory (2013) put it: *"Data and evidence are crucial to the migration debate, but limited in that they cannot resolve fundamental value judgments."*

By April 2013 the British government went as far as unsuccessfully calling on the EU to change its rules on free movement in order to make it harder for EU citizens to claim benefits when moving to another country (BBC, 2013). Arguably this failure and the EU's resistance to 'differential integration' (Rogers, 2019) was one of a series of events that provoked the decisions that led to the 2016 UK European Union membership referendum (Shipman, 2016), moves towards de-accession known as Brexit, and heinous uncertainty for EU citizens in the UK and British citizens in the UK burdened by 'precarious citizenship' (O'Brien, 2019).

In Poland, the context was shaped by geopolitical upheavals that had often made it difficult to guarantee fundamental personal freedoms, and secondly by a Bismarckian model of social insurance linked to earnings. During the communist regime after World War II, a command economy and huge informal economy co-existed (Stenning et al, 2011). It was disrupted in 1990 by the introduction of a neoliberal economic regime, and so-called 'shock therapy' in the shape of swingeing cuts to welfare (Hardy, 2009). Effectively, Polish workers and carers had to "deal with the debris left over from communism" as well as "the new order" (Pine and Bridger, 1998, p.1). After Poland joined the EU in 2004 it prospered at a national level, but this wealth was not distributed evenly (Hardy, 2009) and the weak social safety net was maintained, with family caring valorised but unrewarded financially. Furthermore, concerns about welfare were driven less by fears about other EU nationals turning free movement to their advantage, and more by fears that too few children were being born to work, pay and care for Poland's ageing population (Mishtal, 2012). When incoming migration was mobilised as a problem in political and media discourses, it was minority groups from the Islamic world who were vilified, not other EU nationals. In 2015 low voter turnout, a split opposition and promises of government spending on child poverty alleviation led to the voting in of yet another regime, which promised more state funding for social welfare for children. At the same time political attention turned away from the arrival of 1 million Ukrainian workers on short-term visas, who powered Poland's large informal care economy (Kindler et al, 2016), but were not eligible for social protection themselves.

Although there are clear differences between Poland and Britain, there are also similarities between the emerging labour market, welfare and migration regimes in both countries (Osipovič, 2015). Both governments subscribe in some domains not only to the adult worker model, but also to a form of neoliberal capitalism

dubbed as flexicurity – the deregulation and relaxation of worker protection in order to allow employers to employer workers on 'flexible terms'. Workers are still eligible for residual social protection from the state during, for instance, periods of unemployment, but the welfare state is assigned a residual role as a weak safety net (Keune and Jepsen, 2007). As Lutz and Palenga- Möllenbeck (2012, p.5) put it, Poland and UK "have arrived at a nexus in which labor market participation was seen as an adult citizen's duty, while states were not or no longer prepared to deliver the necessary support for the balance of waged and care work". Debates rage as to whether flexicurity helps create much-needed jobs and "a market with a human face", or makes workers reliant on work for security when there is no work, and favours employers' interests over workers' interests (Keune and Jepsen, 2007, p.6).

Indeed there is a compelling argument that the legitimisation of precarious work (Rogaly, 2014) and erosion of public safety nets is a key factor in "the unequal distribution of conditions of flourishing that render some bodies, some workforces, and some communities far more precarious than others" (Strauss and Meehan, 2015, p.1). The European Anti-Poverty Network (2019) gets to the heart of the matter by arguing that "the overall persistent high level of poverty in the EU suggests that poverty is primarily the consequence of the way society is organized and resources are allocated. The decisions over how to eradicate poverty in the end are political choices about the kind of society we want." Similar anger about injustice is voiced in Marmot and Bell's (2012, p.1) World Health Organisation (WHO) report into the social determinants of health, and 'killing on a grand scale' through the toxic combination of "poor social policies and programmes, unfair economic arrangements, and bad politics" that are responsible for producing and reinforcing health inequalities.

Another similarity in the labour market, welfare and migration regimes in Poland and the UK is the tacit recognition of the value of migrants as cheap and expendable labour, and simultaneously the mobilisation of migration as a threat to 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1983). The 'migration as a threat' narrative is a proxy for concerns about globalisation and a distraction from poor national governance. The 'migration as a threat' narrative also serves the purpose of winning public support against unrestricted family migration (Kilkey and Merla, 2014), and outsources the cost of education, healthcare and family life onto migrant-sending countries. The irony is that, while the Polish and British authorities have multiple aligned interests, the ways in which they have facilitated flexicurity and mobilised the

politics of grievance against migrants - rather than discussing contribution, control and fairness in measured ways (Rutter and Carter, 2018) and drawing on evidence-based policy-making (Robinson, 2007, Meager, 2012) - are proving increasingly problematic and contradictory, not least when they are reliant on overseas health and social care workers (Harper, 2014). Moreover, migration statistics are 'blunt instruments for measuring, managing, and understanding migration to and from the UK' (House of Commons Public Accounts Select Committee, 2013) and crude migration targets are not as effective as 'migration plans' for meeting social, economic and strategic interests. The issue of care is becoming increasingly pressing in the context of population ageing, which is addressed in the next section.

1.3 Unequal social reproduction and caregiving in the context of ageing populations

The uneven social reproduction that anchors this thesis conceptually has been thoroughly researched in literatures engaged with feminist political economy (Hochschild, 1983, Folbre, 1994, Lewis, 2009, Zelizer, 2011, Rowbotham et al, 2013, Oakley, 2016, Dutta, 2016). Population ageing is opening up major new research agendas, including emerging new social, economic and political settlements around extending the pensionable retirement age, devolving unpaid care work to the family and/or drawing on migrant labour that lends itself to flexicurity.

The vexed question in the Polish context involves looking beyond discursive constructions of care as an exclusively family matter, largely undertaken by women, and rooted in filial solidarity, and examining instead everyday lived experience. It is also important to take into account the ways in which care in Poland is shaped by social policy, which promotes implicit familialism (Plomien, 2009, Keryk, 2010, Dykstra and Hagestad, 2016), and is buttressed by multi-faceted support networks (Stenning et al, 2011) and commodified domestic labour (Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2012). This thesis is methodologically and theoretically embedded in the understanding that the job of the researcher is to critically examine the broader structures shaping social reproduction from every angle (Raghuram, 2012), without letting slip the ways in which they are always evolving and competed over by interest

groups (Read and Thelen, 2007), and also without losing sight of individual agency, a longstanding endeavour in the social sciences (Rigg, 2007, Bakewell, 2010). This can be difficult in a political climate in Poland in which there is so much emphasis on *rodzina* (family) and motherhood (Hryciuk, 2017) by the ruling party (see Chapter 4).

Population ageing has been identified as one of the defining issues facing Europe in the 21st century (Academy of Social Sciences, 2011). In Europe, fewer births have led to a decline in the proportion of younger people in the population, and the relative share of older people has increased through better health care and longevity. There is currently an even balance between young and old, but in 2017 nearly one fifth (19 %) of the EU population was aged 65 and more and this percentage is expected to rise to nearly one third (30%) by 2050 (Eurostat, 2019), with a corresponding increase in the number of people living with one or more long term or chronic health conditions associated with old age. In the post-communist countries of the European Union there is not only population ageing, but also population decline brought about by a decrease in the birth rate and high rates of emigration (Fihel and Okólski, 2019). Poland is ageing fast and "the children who are born in today's Poland stand a good chance to live until 100: *sto lat*, as the song goes" (Devictor, 2012). While the data is compelling, it has to be examined with the proviso that population always statistics are not completely accurate. Furthermore, old age is variably defined as anywhere between 50 and 100+, which means that the term 'old people' refers to a huge cohort who vary enormously in chronological age.

Comparatively less attention is paid in the research and policy-making community to the uneven geographies of caregiving and receiving deepened and extended through population ageing. The multiple practices involved are intertwined with complex ideas (e.g. love, duty, responsibility) that, unlike financial and health indicators, cannot easily be measured, counted and depicted graphically and numerically. Furthermore, the concept of care is often synonymous with 'the family' in its broadest sense (Bengston and Lowenstein, 2003, Phillips, 2007, Carney, 2010) and in some European countries "the principle of subsidiarity forms the bedrock of all policy responses to care with the family seen as the natural carers" and the welfare state assigned a residual role as a safety net (Philips, 2007, p.56). Family cannot be easily quantified and neither can the contested moral values and moral worlds based on 'moral experiences' (McEwan et al, 2017) which are deeply embedded in local social and cultural relations' and 'context-specific' (Carling et al, 2012). Analysis

easily becomes bogged down by moral questions such as 'does the family still care?' This thesis concurs with the assertion by Chambers et al (2009) that the question "what are the barriers to care?" is therefore more useful when unpacking the nuances of care work.

Some models of ageing focus on the fiscal and labour market implications of population ageing, and produce and mobilise health, welfare and pension 'costs' as a problem and an intergenerational burden (Eurostat, 2019) rather than a social question. For instance, in an ILO report (Samorodov, 1999, p.5) worries that 'If these trends persist, and unless countermeasures are taken, the social burden of the growing number of pensioners could cripple economies which cannot cope with the soaring costs of supporting non-workers.' Other approaches refute fearful (Pain, 2009) framing and complicate overly homogenous pessimistic and/or positive literatures (McEwan 2004). In this light population ageing can be discussed as a geographically contingent, spatially produced and embodied social process (Sampaio et al, 2018) rather than a biologically constructed process, with old age variably defined as anywhere between 50 and 100+, and the 'silver economy' as full of potential (Round, 2017). This means that older people in all their diversity (Sampaio et al, 2018) can spend many years as 'active old' or 'young old' in 'un-retirement' (Lain and Vickerstaff, 2014) before becoming 'old' and the 'oldest old'. The point here is not to deny ageing or the cost of long-term care for people with two or more long term conditions (Fell, 2017) and for the very elderly (Walker, 2018, p.256). The point is to highlight how the older generations can spend many years as 'active old' before they become 'inactive old' and in need of support. During their active years they can contribute significant amounts of paid labour and unpaid care labour, with some individuals more aligned as 'givers' rather than 'receivers' of care up until the very end of their lives. One practical way of thinking about ageing through this lens is to draw on a variation of Katz's 'care diamond' (discussed above) termed a 'care pentagon' (De Silva, 2017). This concept expands the four-sided 'care diamond' into a five-pronged constellation in order to bring older people into the model and thereby foreground their agency (Johnson, 2013) and neglected perspectives (Wiles, 2011).

Within literature engaging with feminist political economy the focus is on the cost to women and society of cutbacks to public support for health and social care, subsequent reliance on unpaid family care, and positioning of women as 'natural' carers, care as 'women's work' and of women supported financially by their families

(Williams and Brennan, 2012). Dykstra and Heistad contend that "The less public support there is, the greater the risk of exploitation of unpaid family carers, potential harm to care recipients, and disparities between those who can afford to purchase care services and those who cannot" (2017, p.60). Concerns are repeatedly raised around 'the reproduction of human insecurity' (Strauss, 2013), the 'global care crisis' (Isaksen et al, 2008) and 'denial of women's work' (McGrath and DeFilippis, 2009). Nguyen et al (2017, p.200) place global caring as "a part of the neoliberal project that is deeply moralizing" and contradictory. Campbell (2013) further warns that emancipation and social protection is now being defeated by what she terms the counter-revolutionary, neoliberal priorities of the world's financial institutions. Similarly, Mitchell et al. (2004) and Bakker and Silvey (2012) contend that sustainable and progressive social reproduction is under intense pressure because, although capitalism needs social reproduction and care, there is not enough time to do it. Hoskyns and Rai (2007, p.297) argue that "[t]here is, we believe, a widespread and growing depletion of the capacities and resources for social reproduction – that is, the glue that keeps households and societies together and active."

In a Polish context Stenning et al (2011) strike a more positive note in drawing attention to the unpredictable ways in which people get by, some well and some less well. They identify family and friendship networks as crucial. They explain that the families in their research who struggled most with tough economic circumstances "were those without good relationships with family, friends and neighbours, who found themselves isolated from all sorts of support networks, through which information, money, and love, amongst other things, might flow" (Stenning, 2013). My thesis seeks to build on this seminal work and to consider it alongside another important issue in the postsocialist Polish context, which is population decline and low fertility.

1.4 North East England

Before moving onto the aims and objectives of the thesis it is necessary to draw attention to the social, structural and geographical context of NE England in which research participants were recruited. What is interesting about North East England is that while it is neither densely populated, nor a 21st century migration 'hot

spot', it is typical of large parts of the UK during the early part of the 21st century with its experience of relatively low levels of migration, which nevertheless have had an impact (Stenning and Dawley, 2009). It is also typical of much of the UK and Europe as a whole in that its population is ageing, a topic that receives considerably less attention than migration and Brexit in public and media debates (Dean, 2011).

Standard accounts of NE England sometimes lapse into depicting the region as poor (ONS, 2012a, 2012b), although there are exceptions to this which extol the region's natural beauty and note the comfortable lives people with secure work can lead (Clements, 2014). The region became totemic soon after the UK European Union Referendum polls closed on 23 June 2016, and the Newcastle and Sunderland results came in, showing a higher-than-expected vote in favour of leaving the EU (Shipman, 2016). The British pound immediately plummeted in value, foreshadowing the final outcome narrowly in favour of leaving the EU the following morning. The ensuing media coverage of the region often depicted it as 'left behind' (Islam, 2016) and many of its inhabitants as homogenously white working-class and insular (Beider, 2015a, 2015b).

The region is more complex than such stereotyped, prejudiced and discriminatory images allow for. It has a long history of population movement, emigration and immigration, exploitation and enrichment, from the Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Viking eras through to the Victorian era industrial revolution, when workers from around Britain and Ireland flooded in. It is generally a fairly successful multi-ethnic and multi-faith polity, like the rest of the UK, although there has been less inward migration since 1945, and there are currently fewer non-UK born residents in the North East than in all other regions of England and Wales (Krausova and Vargas-Silva, 2013, ONS, 2013). The resident population in the 2011 census stood at around 2.5 million, with 5% or 128,500 born outside the UK. The Migration Observatory (Krausova and Vargas-Silva, 2013) calculated that

"Residents born in India represent the most numerous non-UK born group in the North East with 10,375 residents, amounting to 8.1% of the region's non-UK born population. This is followed by residents born in Germany (9,797), Poland (8,759), Pakistan (8,046) and China (6,824)."

Migration from Poland since 2004, albeit lower than from other countries, has contributed to the arrival of Polish speakers in every postcode area (Booth, 2013, Rogers 2013).

Although the region polled 58% in favour of leaving the EU in the 2016 EU membership referendum, it is likely to be the case that few British-born survey respondents report that migration in their local neighbourhood causes anxieties (Rutter and Carter, 2018, p.6), or that there is regular everyday overt hostility (Katwala and Somerville, 2016). Some Polish-born survey respondents in the North East have experienced xenophobia, particularly since the recession in 2008 (Fitzgerald, 2013, Fox et al, 2015), and, like other EU citizens across the UK, their sense of belonging and security has been further eroded since the EU membership referendum (Botterill et al, 2019, Tyrrell et al, 2019). However, as Burrell and Schweyher (2019) note, a wider range of power relations beyond Brexit shape everyday lives.

Socio-spatial inequalities in the North East are also multi-faceted (Robinson et al, 2007) over time and space. The region has had periods of prosperity - for instance in 1915 it produced half of the world's ships – but wealth was and still is distributed unevenly (Hudson, 2005). Economic decline set in over the course of the twentieth century as production moved from a Fordist model towards dispersed and flexible accumulation and de-industrialisation (Painter and Jeffrey, 2009). The region is currently economically less wealthy and healthy than other parts of the UK (Bambra and Garthwaite, 2015), and scores poorly on multiple social and economic indicators (Stenning et al, 2006, Bennett, 2015), with high levels of unemployment, low levels of productivity and skills shortages (Murray and Smart, 2017) and areas of desperate insecurity and poverty (Alston, 2018). This is not because the North East is essentially poor, but because of longstanding structural weaknesses (Robinson et al, 2007) and political decisions to focus resources on the financial sector in SE England (Chang, 2016), rather than on post-industrial redevelopment underpinned by, for instance, an effective Northern Powerhouse project (Cox and Raikes, 2015) with a clear purpose (Lee, 2017).

The following description that was written about Poland could apply to parts of North East England.

"The public display is much shabbier and the years of hardship under socialism, quickly followed by new kinds of impoverishment and privation under the new system, are visibly engraved on to the surfaces of the buildings and etched onto the faces of the people." (Pine, 1998, p.106).

This comment has to be read with the proviso that people and places have complex and contradictory qualities that enhance resilience and keep decline at bay (Skinner et

al, 2015). Furthermore, there has however been some substantial investment in the North East over the past 30 years – for instance £433 million between 2014-2020 from the £8.6 billion EU Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) which aims to 'to tackle poverty and boost growth' (Wright and Case, 2016). There are also some successful industrial sectors, such as pharmaceuticals, and Nissan, the Japanese car manufacturer, which is heavily integrated into the EU single market (Conn, 2018). It would be damaged by de-accession from the EU if tariffs and non-tariff barriers were imposed. According to the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Trades Union Congress (TUC)

"Trade is a key part of the North East's economy and trade with the EU is particularly important. Of all the regions in England, the North East is the only one to export more goods and services than it imports, with a global trade surplus of over £3.4 billion. Trade with the EU has delivered at least 100,000 jobs in the region, equivalent to 8.5% of the total workforce." (*Glendinning and Farhat, 2017*)

What some of these economic accounts skim over is the ongoing demographic change in North East England, termed 'acute demographic challenges' by Murray and Smart (2017). It comes in the shape of the slowest rate of household growth of all UK regions (ONS, 2018a), net population loss in some areas, and rapid population ageing, with the proportion of people aged 65+ estimated to rise and grow as a share of the population to 21.7% or one in five people by 2024 (ONS, 2016). Population ageing is not a problem in itself, but strategies are needed to support the existing population to create the right conditions for an economy with the opportunities for skills development and secure jobs that people want (Bambra et al, 2018).

Planning is underway, for instance in the NE region's seven Local Plans, which are formulated every 10 years by local authorities to guide future economic development (Planning Inspectorate, 2012). However the provenance of the replacement workers who will be needed if the workforce shrinks, through population ageing and skills shortages, is rendered somewhat low-key in these plans, unlike in Scotland. There the need for EU migrant workers to stem population decline is more clearly articulated, for instance through the 'Stay in Scotland' campaign referred to in the First Minister of Scotland's April 2019 open letter offering practical support and stating ' *This is your home, you are welcome here, we value your contribution, we want you to stay'* (Sturgeon, 2019).

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In contrast, in parts of England and Wales, the focus is on restricting population growth. Strict new rules for so-called 'low-skill' EU workers have been mooted by the Migration Advisory Committee, such as a minimum salary threshold of £30,000 a year. If these rules are brought in if the UK leaves the EU, at least three quarters of current EU workers in the North East may not qualify for visas, as they would be deemed too low-paid (Morris, 2018, Savage 2018). Given that 'migration industries' always emerge (Garapich, 2008) it is likely that such restrictions would be contested, modified and reinterpreted by multiple parties in multiple ways. However, this would not overcome the problem of EU citizens in the UK being unable to reconstitute their families in the ways permitted under EU freedom of movement rules, rendering the UK less attractive to work in to some potential workers. The region may well find itself undergoing 'managed decline', rather than sustainable growth underpinned by social policy and institutions that address the reality of the society we live in.

As a longstanding resident of the North East I feel a responsibility to ground my research in the region in ways which build on existing research (Stenning et al, 2006, Clements, 2014) and enable place-based politics, thereby drawing connections between on the ground experiences and their broader emerging geopolitical significance. Places are not spaces frozen in time, clearly enclosed or unproblematic collectivities (Massey, 2004), but processes with multiple identities that are made and remade (Massey, 1994). There is a complex interplay between people and place (Robinson and Walshaw, 2011). As Massey puts it (1994, p.154)

"What gives a place its specificity is not some long internalised history, but the fact that it is constructed out of particular constellations of social relations meeting and weaving together at a particular locus."

I also feel a responsibility to think deeply about local geographies of change and the operation of unjust power where I live (IPPR Commission on Economic Justice, 2018), and about the worker-carers whose voices are rarely heard in public discourse (Crawley, 2010), without becoming too partisan (Gabb, 2010).

1.5 Aims and Objectives

The overarching aims are to

- recognise and bear witness to the lived experience and hidden histories of family members giving and receiving care work across borders within the EU, including members who exercised their right to freedom of movement across the EU, and the members who largely stayed put.
- put their experiences into a broader context which takes account of broader societal and geopolitical factors shaping Polish migration and stasis in order to grasp the complexity and unpredictability of spatial and relational care practices across borders and generations.
- re-think economic accounts of migration and develop new conceptual insights into care discourses, practices and moral experiences across time and space.

Thus, based on fieldwork conducted in North East England and Poland, this thesis seeks to explore and answer the following research questions:

- what are the lived experiences of everyday care work across borders and over the lifecourse for Polish worker-carers and their children and parents?
- how do Polish worker-carers make discursive moral sense of linked lives?
- how are their experiences of care shaped by and shaping broader geopolitical and economic structures in an era of population ageing across the EU?

1.6 Definitions of English and Polish words and phrases

At this juncture I would like to clarify the choice of certain discursive constructions (Painter and Jeffrey, 2009).

UK and **Britain** are used rather than United Kingdom**. UK is** understood as the United Kingdom of Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) and Northern Ireland). Britain is understood as a shorthand version.

British is used rather than English in order to emphasise the multifaceted nature of citizenship in the UK.

North East England and **NE England** are used interchangeably.

EU is used rather than European Union, with the exception of references to the **UK European Union membership referendum** in 2016 which led to **Brexit.** The adjective **European** is also used on the understanding that Europe is not just composed of EU member states.

EEA denotes the European Economic Area, which comprises EU countries and also Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. **EFTA** denotes the European Free Trade Association, which comprises EU and EEA members and Switzerland. They all participate in the **Single Market**, an internal or common market based on the free movement of goods, people, services and capital from one member to another

Poland is used and **Polish or EU citizens** is used. Poles is used less, except when material is drawn on by authors who have used it. Poland is seen as situated in **East** and **Central Europe.**

Migrant is used when material is drawn on by authors who have used it**.** It has become a toxic word which can imply an 'other' who is not part of a community of citizens of equal worth. However migrancy can also be part of people's personhood. I try to call **Polish or EU citizens** exercising their right to freedom of movement **worker-carers** where possible.

Worker can also be problematic as it can invoke labour and 'a work ethic' rather than human beings and self-realisation. **Work** is also problematic as it can evoke paid labour rather than equally important unpaid care labour. For this reason **worker-carer** is used in this thesis, as well as **carer** and various iterations, including **caregiver, care receiver** and **sandwich carer.**

Care means different things in different contexts. In this thesis it is used to denote unpaid practical and relational work that is vital for life. Various versions are used, such as care labour, care work, care responsibilities and caregiving and receiving. Care is understood differently in Polish. Terms range from *opieka społeczna* (social care) or *pomoc społeczna* (social support) or *troska* (caring about) or *pielęgnajca* (hands on care), but they are not equivalent to the English versions.

Welfare is used to denote the state funded universal provision of basic needs.

Linked lives is a term for interdependent lives first used by Elder (1998)

Adult worker model is a term for a work and welfare model obliging all adults to accrue welfare rights through paid work (unlike the earlier male breadwinner model).

Flexicurity is a term for the deregulation and relaxation of worker protection in order to allow employers to employer workers on 'flexible terms'. Workers are still eligible for residual social protection from the state during, for instance, periods of unemployment, but it is conditional on work.

Communism is used to denote the era of Soviet Union control over Poland between 1945-1989. In Poland a common term for that period is the **Polish People's Republic** (*Polska Rzeczpospilita Ludowa* or **PRL**). **Postsocialism** is a term used in some academic circles and post-communist in other circles to denote the significance of the Soviet era for the post-1989 era that followed in East and Central Europe. I switch between them all depending on the context and the choices of the particular authors I am referencing.

1.7 Thesis outline

Chapter 2 makes the case for why linked lives and everyday care across borders and over generations is important conceptually for enriching how we understand Polish migration in an era of population ageing. It lays out a conceptual journey from literatures on mobilities and immobilities, to feminist literatures on social reproduction, and gerontological and sociological literatures on intergenerational care practices over the lifecourse. It builds a case for re-thinking economic determinist accounts of migration, making sense of the unequal distribution of care labour, and unpacking intergenerational care practices across time and space. Chapter 3 explains and accounts for the methods employed in carrying out fieldwork into complex social worlds stretching from NE England to Poland with participants who capture the range and diversity of Polish migrants, rather than a representative sample. This chapter also explores the limitations and ethical dimensions embodied in the research. Chapter 4 explores the Polish context in relation to social reproduction, examining aspects of life that are important in understanding care practices.

The subsequent three chapters examine the research findings in the context of the theoretical and methodological frameworks outlined earlier in the thesis. Chapter 5 examines factors shaping migrants and stayers perspectives on and experiences of social reproduction in Poland, namely the significance and limitations of familial care, the ways in which familial care is experienced differently depending on how familial care is supported by state welfare, community and market provision, and thirdly stereotypes of old age and challenges to prejudice and discrimination. Chapter 6 then explores linked lives and how migration is both supported and driven by the people who choose to stay put and how three personal, societal and geopolitical dimensions contribute to but do not determine their choices - the adult worker model of welfare and work, housing and subjective wellbeing. Chapter 7 drills down into care practices across borders and sheds light on the remaking and unmaking of care alongside the making of care by complicating 'flying granny' and 'abandoned children' narratives, bringing the complex reasons for the unmaking of care to the fore, and testing the boundaries of new spaces of unfamilial care. The final chapter reflects on the implications of the research findings grounded in empirical evidence and explored in person-centred detail, and the possibilities for and barriers to dissemination.

Chapter 2 - Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter makes the case for why linked lives and everyday care across borders and over generations is important conceptually for enriching how we understand Polish migration across Europe in an era of population ageing. Specifically, I bring the concepts of mobilities and immobilities, social reproduction and intergenerational care practices together in order to do three things. The first is to re-think economic determinist accounts of migration and draw attention to the importance of uneven and fluid personal and social relations across time and space between people who move and circulate and people who stay put. The second is to build on and contribute to feminist scholarship on the marginalisation of vital reproductive work and the unequal distribution of care labour within families and across the globe. The third is to complicate discourses of family solidarity across borders, which are discursively dominant in the Polish context. This is done by examining the making, unmaking and remaking of intergenerational care practices over the life course, rather than foregrounding the lens of geographical distance and the problems caused by lack of proximity, important as it is.

This thesis makes three specific conceptual contributions. Firstly, I use of the 'care diamond' (Katz, 2001, p.711), which imagines care through a shifting constellation of multiple spheres of provision by the state, the market, civil society and the family, to examine care in a European context. It brings to the fore the importance of state welfare in care configurations, and sheds light on how 21st century European state welfare regimes based on adult worker models and earnings-related welfare and pensions increasingly oblige adult worker-carers to juggle paid and unpaid responsibilities with the support of family and friendship networks, or neglect their care work or their financial security (Hoskyns and Rai, 2007, Bakker and Silvey, 2012). Secondly, in order to take account of population ageing, I expand the 'care diamond' into a five-pronged constellation or 'care pentagon' (De Silva, 2017) to bring the oldest old in society who are both caregivers and receivers into the model, and thereby foreground their agency. Thirdly, in order to enhance the family

dimension of the 'care diamond' I draw on a 'quarter-carat care diamond' (see appendix 1) that I designed to act as a mental toolkit. It can be envisaged as sitting inside the larger 'care diamond'. It draws holistic attention to eight particular dimensions – intimacy/distance, taken care of/self-care, interdependence/dependence and living together/living apart – that emerged as important in this thesis.

2.2 Migration and moorings, mobility and immobility

This section demonstrates how ideas about mobility, immobility and power relations anchor the conceptual framing of thesis. These ideas draw attention not only to migrants, but to people who stay put, people who circulate, the social relationships between them, the links and ruptures, the role of broader structures and the making and unmaking of uneven geographies of care over time and space. This is important because whilst the wealth of scholarly attention to migration has attended to the figure of the 'migrant', it has paid relatively less attention to stasis and linked lives (for exceptions see Burrell, 2008b,c, 2009, 2010, 2011a,b). This is particularly the case in some of the Polish migration literature, with its underpinnings in economic determinism and typologies. I also use these ideas to speak back to scholarship on social networks, transnationalism and remittances, which is another rich corpus of academic work (by Glick Schiller et al, 1992, 1995) that identifies links between origins and settlement societies, but pays less attention to care relations, and rarely frames care labour as a type of remittance (Leinaweaver, 2010, Mazzucato, 2011). Lastly I consider research on families and migration. I bring the messiness of family relations back into literatures which sometimes segregate families and individual family members into measurable categories and neglect intergenerational care relations over the lifecourse, with the exception of scholars examining gendered inequalities. This feminist approach points to a need for a closer examination of social reproduction, which is undertaken in Section 2.3.

Scholarly debates around mobility and immobility underpin this thesis conceptually (Brettell and Hollifield, 2014) for they draw attention to the ways in which the movement of people, things, information and ideas are central to people's lives (Sheller and Urry, 2006, Burrell 2008c, 2011a) and a keyword for the twenty-first-first century (Kohn, 2007, Castles et al, 2014). As King (2012, p.140) puts it, the

'mobilities turn' draws inspiration from Bauman's *Liquid Modernity* (2000), which he says is "a forceful commentary on the 'incessant mobility' of the (post-) modern era with its metaphorical figures of the tourist and the vagabond (and the migrant, the refugee, the pilgrim, etc.) arranged in a 'kinetic hierarchy' of voluntary and forced mobility and immobility". These ideas challenge ideas of migration as something abnormal that has to be explained (Glick Schiller and Salazar, 2013) and set the scene for re-imagining mobility as a condition which enables societies to be formed in the first place (Nail, 2015) and a way of life into which people settle (Morokvaśic, 2004). This is important in the current era of populism across Europe, which shapes the broader context of this research (see Chapter 4). This body of scholarship also draws attention to the ways in which immobility enables mobility (Cresswell, 2010 Pavlovskaya et al, 2018) as mobility can only be enacted if there are moorings which are "things, people and processes that stay relatively put" (Lulle, 2018b, p.1195). This is not to say that there are simple binaries between the people who move and the people who stay put, as mobility and immobility are spatially capricious (King, 2002) and spatially and temporally complex (Ackers, 1998, 2004, 2010) across scales from regional groupings to nation states to households. Instead, as Plyushteva and Schwanen (2018, p.131) put it in their examination of everyday mobilities in households: "The transformations which everyday im/mobilities undergo over the life-course are not limited to pre-defined milestones, but unfold through a range of abrupt, subtle and multi-directional processes".

Furthermore mobility and immobility are uneven and unequal across time, space and scales (Burrell and Hörschelmann 2014). Rogaly (2015, p.528) reminds us that "mobility and fixity are imbued with and reproduce class inequality and racism", echoing Massey's concept of power geometries (1994, p.149), which refers to the more or less systematic and usually highly uneven ways in which different individuals and groups are positioned within networks of flows and interactions, and the greater choices that are generally afforded to the wealthier. Some people who move at one point can also be stuck, reluctantly immobile, at another (Rogaly, 2015 Bermúdez and Oso, 2018), constrained by poverty and visa restrictions. Some people choose not to be mobile for reasons such as the value of well-established place-based networks to their survival (Stenning et al, 2011), even if their spatial boundedness is both a resource and a constraint on their economic security (Gilbert, 1998). As Hanson (2010, p.11) puts it, it can be argued that "mobility *and* immobility can be empowering for

some people in some circumstances, just as each can be seen as oppressive for others in other situations". This perspective is more helpful to my thesis than ideas that fixity can be attributed to habitus in a negative sense.

Recent scholarly debates on Polish migration and particularly Polish emigration to the UK since 2004, rich as it is (Kicinger and Weinar, 2007) do however sometimes go against the grain of this fluid mobilities and immobilities approach, and tends more towards answering three questions. These are (1) why people migrate, (2) how long they will stay, and (3) who benefits. This mirrors UK policy research (Audit Commission 2007, Pollard et al 2008, Sumption and Somerville, 2010) underpinned by the framing of the free movement of people across the EU as a potential problem in need of a solution. Polish migration research focuses on whether or not migration is a discrete and permanent act of movement across borders, or temporary, shuttle (Iglicka, 2001), pendular (Iglicka, 2001), circular (White and Ryan, 2008), liquid (Engbersen et al, 2010) incomplete (Okólski, 2001) or return and double return (White, 2014); and whether or not the choices migrants make about where to live, work, access services such as education, healthcare and social security, and integrate have positive or negative impacts in both the UK and Poland (Burrell, 2009, 2010, Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2008, Thompson et al, 2010). There is also research on how much migrants contribute economically rather than on how much they take (see Chapter 4). More recently, following the UK European Union membership referendum on 23 June 2016, researchers have examined how long Polish and EU workers will stay in the UK, and the negative impacts on the economy of reductions in migration.

Typologies are also popular in Polish migration scholarship, drawn from a plethora of possible categories (King, 2012), and ranging from sociological and policy types, to categorisations of migration and/or migrant, based on qualifications, skills or motivation and length of stay overseas (Triandafyllidou, 2006). One frequently cited typology on Polish migration to the UK (Eade et al, 2006) divides Polish migrants into storks (circular), hamsters (long stay), stayers and searchers, the latter being the largest group composed of people keeping their options open. This might be seen as easy to grasp, but is deeply problematic, as comparing people to animals is offensive, and the categories used in typologies (which are never exhaustive or mutually exclusive) risk becoming the focus of attention, rather than a deeper understanding of lived experience (Rigg, 2007), superdiversity (Vertovec, 2007) and the contingency and sheer

messiness of life (Cloke et al, 2004). Furthermore there is a moral dimension here regarding the ways in which typologies render people as heroes or victims, and migration as successful or 'sour' (Düvell and Garapich, 2011), rather than individuals with agency, capabilities and assets who try to meet their everyday needs (Rigg, 2007, p.30) which may be deeply felt and profoundly emotional (Heath et al, 2011). As Rogaly (2015) points out, migration is not necessarily the key defining moment in peoples' lives, for we are often shaped more profoundly by social relationships over the life course, and migration may be felt and fueled through personal relationships (Holmes et al, 2018).

The theme of economic rationale and neglect of linked lives is so pervasive that it is worth outlining in more detail. Economic rationalist scholarship on migration originates from Ravenstein's nineteenth century 'push and pull' theory of migration (Ravenstein, 1885, Hiebert, 2009), which views migration as an economic act carried out by rational economic man [sic] moving from poorer to richer countries. The more modern and complex version of 'push and pull' is the new economics of labour migration (NELM) theory, which posits that migration and remitting is a household strategy to maximise income, spread risk, and overcome market failure (De Haas, 2010). These theories have been challenged, for instance by scholarship drawing on Wallerstein's world systems focus on broader structures of inequality (Wallerstein, 1979, Hiebert, 2009), which contends that labour migration is driven by a neoliberal promotion of underdevelopment and a 'brain and brawn drain' in economically poorer countries, thereby limiting growth to a core of wealthy countries, which allocate so-called 3D jobs – dirty, dangerous, difficult – to migrant workers. Favell (2008, p.711) draws on this approach in his work on exploitative dual labour markets drawing "a new servant class of workers from the east to the west of Europe"'. These Marxist-inspired theories in turn have been challenged in arguments that the notion of an exploitative 'brain drain' should be considered alongside 'brain waste' and 'brain overflow', which means a lack of opportunities for jobs in Poland, and 'brain exchange, circulation and gain' which means opportunities for mobility and personal development across Europe (Fihel et al, 2006, Kazcmarczyk, 2010, Burrell, 2010). Some scholars nuance the economic rationalism debate, but still draw on it. For instance, White (2009a, b, 2013) applies a livelihood strategies approach based on the new economics of labour migration (NELM). However she does helpfully argue that migration is rarely triggered by a single stimulus, and is instead informed by a series

of events, preferences and choices which are considered appropriate in the context of the local culture, and which in turn reflect individual and household dispositions and resources. Similarly Pine and Bridger (1998, p.11) argue that:

> *"survival strategies are not necessarily 'economically rational' according to models of supply, demand and efficient self-interest, but, in terms of cultural meaning, local knowledge and understanding, and within the context of social relationships and networks, they are often the best and most sensible responses people can make".*

Despite these thoughtful interventions, the theory of economic rationalism can be traced implicitly or explicitly through much scholarly literature in this area (White 2009a, b, 2013, Fihel et al, 2006, Favell 2008). I see this as problematic because economic rationalism underpins singular and stigmatising public and political discourses which depict migrants as driven by 'money' rather than a complex mix of personal circumstances and broader structures which affect all of us. These discourses morph into 'they' take 'our' money discourses rather than 'they contribute' and 'shape' our 'shared' society and are also grounded in the assumption of a rational - male - subject

The linked lives I am interested in are not totally ignored in the recent academic literature on Polish migration. For instance Okólski and Salt (2014,p.33) list 'family goals' as one of a number of goals in their summary of the 'non-economic motives' explored by other Polish migration researchers. However, these 'family goals' are not clarified, and are grouped together with other non-economic motives, including 'migration for love or adventure, self-development, to realise family goals, maximising friendship networks, migration for lifestyle improvement and even (in case of young people) for 'seeking a lark', which are all considered less significant than 'gainful employment'. My thesis nuances this work by taking seriously the intricacies and nuances in the lives of these individuals, who cannot be readily grouped. It therefore adds nuance to scholarship such as Janicka and Kaczmarczyk's (2016) account of 'family-related strategies' which does not spell out what the strategies actually are. They do however concede that economic theory based on statistics cannot fully explain human behaviour. Similarly, while Pytel and Rahmonov (2018, p.16) draw attention to what they term 'senior mobility' in and beyond Poland,

their generalisation below needs to be nuanced. "*Due to their unsatisfactory finances as well as deficits in knowledge of foreign languages, Polish pensioners rarely decide to settle down abroad. The Polish model of multigenerational family in which seniors assist their children in raising their grandchildren also contributes to lower emigration.*"

I suggest that they insert the word 'some' as not all the older generation are poor. Some speak minority and regional languages or the Russian, Ukrainian and German they learned in their youth, and not all seniors undertake intergenerational family care.

Other scholarship on Poland lays more solid and nuanced foundations for ways of re-thinking Polish migration by taking linked lives into account. Burrell (2008) examines inbetweeness and material relations between stayers and leavers and Ryan et al (2009, p.74) examine how intergenerational Polish families split between London and Poland are perpetually "reconfigured in complex and diverse ways". White (2016a) highlights 'transnational space' by examining how Poles come and go, making it impossible to differentiate between Poles in Poland and Poles abroad in a diaspora. Rather they are in a transnational space, and simultaneously members of two societies, and part of Polish communities of practice in and outside Poland (Page and Mercer, 2012). The postsocialist canon of literature also draws vivid attention to the historical structural injustices shaping people's lives in Poland (Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008), but primarily seeks to understand everyday life in Poland rather than everyday lived experiences of migration even if, as Pine puts it (2014, p.98) migration is "one of the most common alternative strategies in the postsocialist world and beyond, since the collapse of the socialist states and the simultaneous acceleration of globalism and fragmented capitalism."

Various authors have identified the need for more research into linked lives and relational care, including Ackers (2004, p.378), who asserts that

"We need to conceptualise migrant decision-making as an ongoing process and in many cases under constant evaluation and review. Care is a key determinant emerging and re-emerging over the lifecourse, often in a most unpredictable fashion, to challenge location decisions".

Pemberton and Scullion (2013,p.454) further argue that although "there is growing recognition of the importance of caring responsibilities as a factor in shaping migration strategies, there has been little exploration of this aspect in relation to

migration flows within the EU", a point reiterated by McGhee et al (2013). Locke et al (2013, p.1875) go further with their observation that "mobility, whether within or across borders, is frequently motivated by the desire to safeguard the social reproduction of households, but, at the same time, poses specific challenges to sustaining social reproduction", while Kay and Trevena (2017) use the frame of family social security and migration to think about the multiple ways in which family members create social, economic, personal and cultural security for themselves and mitigate (and also generate new insecurities) through migration.

As part of my intention to address these gaps within scholarly literature, I draw on social network and transnationalism literature, particularly that which engages with remittances, to conceptualise the links between the people who stay put and the people who move and their relational caregiving. Social network analysis sheds light on chain migration and social capital (Massey, 1990) and in the Polish context is used to look at the ways in which migrants access networks (Ryan et al, 2009) and use networks to find work (Sumption, 2009). However, the focus here is very much on loose ties and discursive hostility (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2005, Garapich, 2007b, Gill and Bialski, 2011) rather than emotional wellbeing, care labour and interdependency.

The transnational approach to migration (Vertovec and Cohen, 1999) pioneered by Glick Schiller et al (1992, 1995) explores the process by which migrants develop and sustain "multi-stranded relationships – familial, economic, social, religious and political – that span borders and link their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch et al, 94, p.7). Näre et al (2017, p.517) bring in everyday life by focusing on "transnationalism from below" in order to:

> *"draw attention to the informal, private and micro worlds of migrants and their transnational networks, with the aim of highlighting how important they are to the formal, public and macro contexts that characterize the political economic analyses of migrant lives in which they are so often overlooked."*

In contrast, Portes et al (1999, p. 219) critique the 'spurious extension' of the use of the term 'transnationalism' 'to every aspect of reality' of migrants' lives. They call for caution with regard to the use of terms such as 'transnationalism' and 'transmigrants' when existing terms apply, for example 'migration' and 'migrants' (quoted by McGhee et al, 2013, p.234). As Stenning et al's (2011) detailed study of neoliberalism and family life in postsocialist Poland and Slovakia demonstrates,

family relations and practices in such situations are not necessarily less dynamic than those of transnational families.

Despite the limitations of the above literatures, one of the most useful strands of a transnational framework to this thesis is *remittance* research, as it facilitates the unpacking of the intertwined financial, material and social links between 'migrants' and 'stayers' (Sana and Masssey, 2005, Garapich, 2011b), together with their everyday practices. Remittances can be small but significant gifts, as well as goods or the financial transactions (see Chapter 4 for the Polish context). However there are limitations to remittance research, primarily that remittances only provide pointers as they are difficult to measure (Vargas-Silva, 2011, Christophers, 2011) and always incomplete (Burrell 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011). Although some remittances show up in official data on financial flows (Bouhga-Hagbe, 2004, Mansoor and Quillin, 2007, Houle and Schellenberg, 2011, Barbone et al, 2012), others circulate informally and go unrecorded (Stenning and Hörschelmann, 2008) or are kept below the radar because they are illegal (Cassidy, 2013). Some scholars broaden remittances beyond the financial to the socio-cultural by exploring 'social remittances' which show that migrants embedded in multi-layered social fields export ideas and behaviour – specifically norms, practices, identities and social capital – to their sending communities, as well as financial and material items (Levitt, 2003, p. 567, Levitt, 2011, Grabowska and Garapich, 2016) However other authors have rightly cautioned that it is difficult to pinpoint specific social remittances and disentangle them from broader processes of social change (White,2016a, 2016c).

This thesis therefore sees more value in emphasising the *social* relationships – the discussions that go on about deciding to migrate and stay put, organising migration, keeping in touch when separated – rather than focusing singularly on material, financial and socio-cultural flows. Migration can then be viewed as more than the movement of people and their cultures, goods and money, but also "the complex social relationships created, expressed, sustained and modified by their material transactions" (Lindley, 2007 & 2010, p.14). Remitting money may be a financial transaction, but it also has a profound social basis (Cliggett, 2005). Lucas and Stark (1985) discuss remittances as implicit contracts of intra-familial mutual care and 'co-insurance' between migrant and family, while Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) view remittances as a form of 'social insurance'. Cliggett (2005, p.36) also focuses on 'gift exchange' which enables the giver to express sentiment and loyalty to home, invest in

people, relationships and networks, diversify social coping strategies and establish mutual recognition, which is more important than the material gift.

> *"The lens of gift exchange allows us to make sense of variability in social ties, remittances in the form of small gifts and behaviours, variability in time frames of remitting, and the possibility of not remitting at all, as well as remitting as symbolic acts of recognition."*

Some authors have cautioned that there is a darker side of gift-giving which warrants attention. It can also put migrants under pressure to prove that they are 'successful' migrants (Burrell, 2011), or create feelings of uncomfortable social indebtedness in recipients (Marcoux, 2009). Bajic (2007) identifies in her research in Serbia the ways in which parents do all they can to be 'givers' to their children overseas, while the children in turn try to avoid being recipients of vicarious financial support from impoverished parents. Carling (2007) broadens the debate further by warning that remittances are a useful one-word catch-phrase for a much more complex set of exchanges. He lists these as "household income, investment capital, life-saving assistance, a social obligation, a sign of love, a token of power, a source of military finance, a business opportunity, macroeconomic inflow or loss, potential dirty money, potential development capital" (Carling 2007, p.49). He also highlights how "emigrants can feel socially obliged to remit, yet dislike the way the remittances are spent. The nature of this social obligation is at the heart of remittance patterns and expenditure decisions" (Carling 2007, p.56). Some scholars pick up on complex and ambivalent relations between remittance senders and receivers (Akuei, 2005) and the potentially fraught relationships the term 'reciprocity' can hide (Dyer et al, 2011, p.695).

In the contemporary European context, this literature can be enhanced by bringing ideas of reverse, two-way and circular flows of remittances to the forefront in order to show that EU migration can be better understood, not through the lens of economically poorer people moving to richer countries and sending money home, but through the lenses of multidimensional flows of goods, services, capital and people (Stenning, 2010). When understood in this way, care also needs to be brought in and theorised more fully, for instance through a remittance lens. Maintaining intimate relations in transnational families depends on various care practices that involve not only the circulation of objects and money, but also of people. The act of care for others

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can even be viewed as a form of remittance (Leinaweaver, 2010) or reverse remittance (Mazzucato 2011), such as the care undertaken by so-called 'flying grannies' who fly from their home countries to help care for grandchildren (Baldassar and Wilding, 2013, Kilkey et al, 2014). Caring for oneself and one's own future by saving money for oneself in the form of a pension can also be viewed as a type of remittance. However, one problem with this approach is that it risks reducing care to the equivalent of a financial transaction.

Family migration is another lens that holds out the possibility for bringing relational care and linked lives to the forefront. However, closer examination reveals that it is often part of, but not central to, or a distinct topic of its own in migration research, and the same can be seen in 'family research', which prioritises proximate families (Kilkey et al, 2018), and also characteristics, categories and measurements such as gender differences in earnings before and after migration. As Dykstra and Komter (2012, p.489) argue, age groups are socially constructed and not an essential category, and "critical interdependencies between family generations and between men and women in families, are built and reinforced by social policies".

Geographers have regularly steered away from the use of the word family (Harker, 2010), partly because 'family' is particularly loaded politically and ideologically, as it risks feeding assumptions about stereotypical Western and heteronormative 'domestic units' (Bowlby et al, 2010). Budgeon and Roseneil (2004) therefore suggest decentring the family and the heterosexual couple in our imaginaries. Valentine (2008a, p.2101) says that the 'family' in its widest sense is a peculiar absent presence in the discipline of geography and argues that 'family' defined in the broadest sense, still remains a form of relationship that most people strive to create for themselves and are still attached to, through birth, adoption, marriage, and by processes such as the transmission of values and inheritances. Cooke (2008) goes as far as to say that family migration should move front and centre in discussions regarding migration in general. One possible reason for the neglect of family migration is that the mobility and stasis it involves are spatially and temporarily complex (Ackers, 2010). As Bailey and Boyle (2004) claim, family migration' is not a simple unitary concept - it encompasses a wide variety of families, migrations and institutional contexts that are difficult to capture in a single typology. Kofman (2004, p.256) attributes the neglect to the deliberate side-lining of unpaid domestic labour, arguing that it:

"has resulted from the emphasis on labour migration and the separation of the economic—associated with males and the public sphere—from the social, linked with females and the private sphere. In its conceptualisation as part of the private sphere, the family has also been consigned to the realm of tradition; modernity is thus expressed through individual and decontextualised rationality".

She also argues that the gendered nature of welfare provision, which prioritises women's roles as carers in society, is heightened during migration (Kofman 2014, Kofman and Raghuram, 2015).

I find such gendered approaches helpful as they allow for attention to attitudes to work, power relations and the unequal division of labour and therefore give credence to social reproduction. Gender inequality approaches to care labour grew out of a feminist critique of the focus on men and labour migration, which meant that women working for free in family businesses or undocumented were rendered invisible in statistics (Kofman, 2000) or seen as secondary players to men who made the decisions and then placed women in a position of 'choice or constraint' (Halfacree, 2004). A 'feminisation of migration' lens (Ryan and Webster, 2008, Castles et al, 2014) brings women back in by taking account of their agency, their labour migration and reproductive labour, such as nannying and other paid care work. However, that lens does not frame domestic care labour as fundamental - but undervalued - labour power.

In contrast a 'gendered inequalities' approaches draw attention to the roles social differences play in shaping unequal geographies of mobility, belonging, exclusion, and displacement (Silvey, 2004), intersectional oppression (Cuban, 2009, 2013) and global stratification (Zimmerman et al, 2006). This work provokes reflections on the commodification of care, particularly global care chains, through which women from economically poorer regions of the world migrate to care for the children and elderly in households and institutions in the West in order to earn the money to support their own children left in the care of relatives (Hochschild, 2000, Yeates, 2009, Pratt, 2012) but their wages are kept low through de-valuing of soft skills (Sahraoui, 2018) and lack of recognition of their qualifications from their home countries and the imposition of barriers to new qualifications such as stringent language tests (Cuban 2009, 2013). Katz (2001, p.709) uses the term "vagabond capitalism" to describe the "making, maintenance and exploitation of a fluidly

differentiated labour force" and highlights how it is facilitated by "the uncompensated caring work of families" in migrants' countries of origin. Kilkey et al (2018) suggests paying attention to multiple circuits of migration, those who move, as well as those who do not, and the different processes that constitute social reproduction across the life-cycle. There is emerging research into the outsourcing of eldercare (Pratt, forthcoming).

This understanding of social reproduction is so pertinent to the aims of the thesis to re-think migration that it deserves fuller attention and is thus the theme of the next section.

2.3 Social reproduction, care, welfare, gender and generation

This section argues that social reproduction is a helpful way of making sense of the ways in which everyday care labour is distributed unequally over time and space. It challenges narrow definitions of work as valuable only when rewarded financially, which results in socially valuable labour becoming ignored and undervalued. In doing so, this section highlights the multiple, and messy, reasons for the complex nature of the inequalities underpinning gendered divisions of care labour in the family and globally. It draws attention to the linkages between the life course unfolding over time, and the 'double helix' of everyday life and geopolitics (Smith and Pain, 2016). It also brings in social policy, such as social protection, which can be actively supportive or detrimental to the people who care and are cared for (Dykstra and Komter, 2012), and who are the focus on this thesis. I argue that the ideological and practical erosion of state welfare and shifting of responsibility for care onto families and the subsequent production of financial insecurity for some, and gaps in provision for others, is a major consideration. It is not however, not the only consideration, as care is shaped by other factors that mitigate against and exacerbate neoliberal and conservative structural injustices (Staeheli, 2010). These complex issues point the way to a closer examination of lived experiences of care in section 2.4.

There are various approaches to theorising social reproduction. I draw on ideas of social reproduction as the biological, daily and generational reproduction of society and of households (Locke et al, 2013) together with the social processes and labour

that go into the daily and generational maintenance of the population (Strauss and Fudge, 2013). Kofman (2014) helpfully broadens this definition of social reproduction out by bringing in time, place and space and defining it as the varied multi-sited and multi-national processes involved in maintaining and sustaining individuals and societies over time. Stenning et al (2011) add an important extra dimension by summarising social reproduction as the daily and long-term reproduction of the means of production, the labour power to make them work and the social relations that hold it all in place. Anderson (2001) goes further by highlighting arguments that reproductive labour is central to the capitalist mode of production because, through unpaid household labour, labour power itself is produced. Kilkey and Urzi (2017) go even further and argue, drawing on Fraser (2014,) that ignoring social reproduction contributes to obscuring the fact that capitalist production is not self-sustaining, but free rides on social reproduction. Katz's breathes vivid colour into the term social reproduction by summarising it as "the fleshy, messy and indeterminate stuff of everyday life and a set of structured practices that unfold in dialectical relation to production, with which it is mutually constitutive and in tension." (2001, p.711). Clearly social reproduction is multi-faceted, and brings multiple dimensions to the conceptual framework underpinning my approach to my research question on how Polish worker-carers organise their linked lives and make, un-make and remake intergenerational care.

Firstly, this thesis uses social reproduction to create a space for seeing the economy and work differently (Gibson-Graham, 1997, 2002b, 2006). This lens is important because the relational caregiving work under investigation in this thesis is overlooked (Folbre, 1994, Zelizer, 2011, Messac, 2018) especially when the economy is framed by orthodox measurements such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), summarised as the production, allocation and distribution of resources (Meehan and Strauss, 2015) and explained as driven by "protean forces as individual self-interest, competition, efficiency, freedom, innovative entrepreneurship, exploitation, and the pursuit of private gain" (Gibson-Graham, 2014, p.151). Geographers challenge orthodoxy and re-construct the economy as made up not only of economic processes, but also of social and cultural processes (Amin and Thrift, 2008) and economic activities which are both socially and politically structured (Cloke et al, 2004). These perspectives open up the possibility of challenging universal models and making space for alternative notions, such as moral economies (Sayer, 2000, McEwan et al, 2017).

One particularly helpful alternative lens is the notion of a diverse economic life beyond capitalism (Gibson-Graham, 2008), as depicted in Gibson-Graham's iceberg model (2002a). The visible tip of the iceberg is the formal economy of commodity flows, monetary exchange and GDP. Below - and keeping it afloat - lies the non-formal social economy which constitutes nine-tenths of the whole and is composed of the natural resource base and the social and informal economy of communities, households, co-operatives, volunteers, street traders, illegal markets and barter exchanges (Gibson-Graham, 2002a, Barnes et al, 2007, Tickell et al, 2007). Although Samers (2005) rightly points out that not all of these diverse economies are progressive, and Tronto (2017) notes that people who engage in alternative economies can be constructed as 'dropping out of' rather than reining in or reforming neoliberal capitalism, the critique by Gibson-Graham (2014, p.148) of "an over-reliance on a capitalocentric view of the world" does nevertheless open up space for rethinking the economy and examining motivating forces. These include "trust, care, sharing, reciprocity, cooperation, divestiture, future orientation, collective agreement, coercion, bondage, thrift, guilt, love, community pressure, equity, self-exploitation, solidarity, distributive justice, stewardship, spiritual connection, and environmental and social justice" (Gibson-Graham, 2014, p.147). Ideas about a diverse economic life beyond capitalism are extremely applicable to the Polish context where the informal economy is vital to wellbeing (Stenning et al, 2011) and a site of ingenuity and inequality, innovation and suffering, across time and space (Materka, 2014).

In short when the economy is re-thought and reproductive work is viewed as enmeshed within (Kofman, 2012), and as valuable, as productive work, it opens up space for *care* to move to centre stage. Before moving to other reasons for using social reproduction as a conceptual building block, it is important to define care, as it is complex and slippery word which conveys both a disposition and a set of actions (Tronto, 2017) and can also be summarised as a set of ideas, ideals, practices and policies. It is also a social construction which changes over time and depending on who is using it and which language is being spoken. For instance, care means different things in Polish (see Section 1.6) and English. In the English language in the early 21st century a carer denotes both a formally paid worker, or a family member offering full-time care, although from my experience unpaid carers often name themselves partners, wives, daughters, mothers, grandmothers, aunts, husbands, sons, fathers, grandfathers, uncles, friends, neighbours, colleagues and so on, use the word carer less frequently,

while paid carers tend to feel more comfortable calling themselves carers or care workers. Carers and the cared for are not singular or universal groups, nor a uniform population, but instead complicated, unequal and multi-faceted (Dalmer, 2018).

In this thesis care is understood as a multi-faceted dimension of social reproduction and essential to the functioning of capitalism (Fraser, 2016) and also a universal human need (Nussbaum, 1999, Held, 2004) which is essential for human flourishing, but frequently taken for granted and undervalued (Lawson, 2007). This thesis also envisages care as a social process involving taking care of, caring about, giving care, receiving care and caring with (Tronto 1993, 2017) and care as interdependent in that we are all givers and receivers of care (Bowlby et al, 2010). Care and family are often inextricably interlinked as caregiving and its management is constitutive of family life (Morgan, 2011) and the exchange of care is one of the central processes that maintain family relationships (Baldassar and Merla, 2013) but at the same time the reasons for caring are complex and gendered. I find Katz and Monk's (1993, p.275) use of the metaphor 'webs of care' productive for framing care, and also Phillips' ideas about "the myriad practices which come together in a series of interlocking spaces to express and enact 'affection, love, duty, well-being, responsibility and reciprocity" (quoted by Stenning et al, 2011, p.1913). I also pay close attention to Katz's conceptualisation of care as the "fleshy, messy, indeterminate stuff of life" (2001, p.711) as such a framework links the aforementioned 'abstract' ideas of care above to the daily work of care under investigation in this thesis.

The second reason for using social reproduction is that it helps to explain the reasons for the uneven distribution of care needs, responsibilities and the gendered patterns of paid and unpaid work (Hochschild and Machung, 2012) which are fundamental to the problem of gender inequality (Badgett and Folbre, 1999, Lewis, 2009) that emerge in the thesis. Calling family care work a 'labour of love' (Finch and Groves, 1983) captures the nature of both the care labour and emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) involved, but can obscure the fact that it is often unpaid work which has consequences such as a reduction in lifetime earnings and financial security (Badgett and Folbre, 1999). I recognise that such kinwork (kinwork is a useful term for the doing of family work) is not always unpaid, as cash payments or payments in kind can be made to family members, and they may be in a position to receive deferred payment in the shape of inherited wealth, money and assets. It is also important to note that when caregiving is neither valued (England and Folbre, 1999) nor easy to attribute

a financial value to (Kofman, 2004), the people who need care are discursively produced as less valuable, subordinate and a drain on society (Green and Lawson, 2011).

Feminists have long challenged limited definitions of work which produce exclusions and devalue the work women do (Rowbotham et al, 2013, Oakley, 2016, Dutta, 2016) and argued instead for an expansion of the definition of work beyond waged work to include unpaid and reproductive work. Arguments about unpaid domestic labour gained prominence during the 'wages for housework' movement, which tried to make unpaid work visible in the 1970s (Federici in Shwartz, 2013). More recently this has been taken up in popular economics epitomised in Marçal's book (2015) '*Who Cooked Adam Smith's Dinner? A Story about Women and Economics'* on the myth of economic man. This lens focuses attention on the ways in which GDP calculations and definitions of economic activity and inactivity fail to account for unpaid care labour (Himmelweit, 2017) but when reworked and included, for instance in the Household Satellite Account (ONS, 2018b), it places the output of unpaid care at £1tr, comparable with that of major industries in the official economy worth £1.8tr (Jones, 2016).

These arguments are productive for refining the conceptual framework of this thesis, albeit with the proviso that gendered inequality cannot be thought about singularly (Nelson and Seager, 2008). For instance, if the focus is on gendered paid and unpaid labour, there is a risk that glaring classed and racialized inequalities (Strauss and Fudge, 2013) are not taken into account, and that the social change that occurs involves primarily middle class women taking on paid work, and achieving a work-life balance at the expense of economically poorer cohorts and migrant women, who end up taking on the low paid housework and care work (Anderson, 2001, McGrath and DeFilippis 2009, Dyer et al 2011, Pratt, 2012). Such commodification of social reproduction (Zimmerman et al, 2006) is an issue in Poland, which is both a receiving and a sending country, with Polish women dispersed across the EU as cheap care labour, and Ukrainian women migrating to and from Poland on temporary visas to provide cheap care labour in Poland (Elrick and Lewandowska, 2008, Kindler et al, 2016).

Furthermore, whilst care is often carried out by women it is - of course - not essentially gendered or biologically fixed, nor a circumscribed activity carried out exclusively by women. "Bodily endowments" must be separated from "cultural

positioning" (Oakley, 1974, Isaksen et al, 2008). Whilst full discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is important to signal in brief that women are not the only ones doing the care, as men care too and experience, enjoy and endure care differently and in the same way as women, and struggle balancing care and paid labour or "care and career" (Carling et al, 2012) and their roles as emotional fathers as well as economic providers (Datta et al, 2009, Kilkey et al, 2014). Having said this, most research on caregiving indicates that overall a higher proportion of women than men provide unpaid care in households, that women are more likely to be in the role of the primary carer which involves a higher level and intensity of caregiving (Phillips and O'Loughlin, 2017) and that consequently women have a lower chance of being in full-time employment, and a greater chance of working part-time or moving in and out of paid employment. .

The terms 'family' and 'household' also need to be unpacked (Katz, 2009a) here, as both are used in a plethora of different ways in academic discourse and colloquially. In this thesis both household and family, particularly family, are used as representative of domains without implying acceptance of the dominant form. A neutral definition of family is a group of people of different ages related through conjugal, biological and kinship ties or by blood and marriage who may or may not be co-resident. I use family in order to tune into the ways my research participants consistently used it to express emotion, 'feelings of 'biological connectedness and place' (Smart, 2007 p.7) and kinship as a central organising principle (Harker, 2010). More decentred terms include families of choice, personal lives (Roseneil and Budgeon, 2004, Holmes et al, 2018), relatedness (Nash, 2005) and intimacy or intimate relations (Jamieson, 2007, Valentine, 2008a). The term household is useful when considering the economic aspects of social reproduction. Households may also comprise of unrelated persons such as colleagues, friends and lodgers, an especially common trend in the wake of large-scale migration, urbanisation and globalisation in recent decades. Households can be understood as made up of fields containing different actors possessing different stocks of capital whose practices are shaped by habitus (Huijsmans, 2012). The term 'global householding' is useful in that it captures "the formation and continuity of the household as an ongoing, always unfolding process involving interconnected relationships and actions within and beyond the household as a social institution and physical space" (Douglass 2014 p.314). However

this definition is rather clinical, as it misses out emotional aspects such as the social and moral ties that emerge from co-operation and companionship.

The third way that social reproduction frames my research is the way it enables me to give meaning to the stories of the everyday lives of the people who create, shape and embody my research. There is a long social scientific tradition of examining how quotidian lives, spaces and practices unfold over time and space, from Thomas' and Znaniecki's classic work *The Polish Peasant in America* (1918) and efforts to understand migrants' construction of the everyday (Pinder, 2009, Ho and Hatfield, 2011) and how society works to Ley's (1977) call to Human Geographers to pay closer attention to the ordinary, everyday, and 'mundane experiences' of people's lives and Halfacree and Boyle's (1993) conceptualisation of migration as situated in everyday life. Furthermore, the everyday is a lens through which to view wider social processes and as inherently political as the big P political sites (Fincher, 2004). This ties into another longstanding social scientific tradition of linking private troubles to public issues (Mills, 1959) and examining the way in which the everyday is intertwined with global processes as if in a double helix (Smith and Pain, 2016), while remaining tied to local conditions and histories (Moran, 2005). What a social reproduction approach does is to enact the political and thus to pay attention to the ways in which ordinary activities can be bound into structures that discriminate against women (Katz, 2009) and critically interrogate the frequently 'taken for granted' and 'mundane' activities that prop up and challenge gender and other ideologies. As Näre et al (2017, p.517) put it:

> *"everyday life is then not solely about the mundane, it is also where we confront the wider structural questions of inequalities related to socio-economic differences, negotiate access to welfare and care institutions and deal with family and inter-generational relations".*

I pay particular heed to Stenning et al's (2011) work on "domesticating neo-liberalism" and to Pine (1998) who, drawing on her research in Poland during the postsocialist period of dramatic change after 1990, calls for us to look at how grand political narratives play out in everyday life. Focusing on the minutiae of everyday lived experience sheds light on how participants might exercise agency amidst broader structures and processes (Rigg, 2007), as people are neither passive victims of outside forces not totally in control of their own fate (Bridger and Pine, 1998). Additionally places can also be examined through an everyday lens in order to challenge ideas that

in transnational spaces global is "dynamic, thrusting, open, rational, cosmopolitan and dominant" and local is "communitarian, authentic, closed, static, nostalgic, defensive (but ultimately defenceless)" (Ley, 2004, p.155, Ho and Hatfield, 2011).

Ideas about the life course supplement ideas about the quotidian and can be marshalled into a framework for examining everyday human lives and changing social structures (Riley, 1987). Elder's (1998) life course toolbox conceptualises a method for identifying four key opportunities and constraints to consider when looking at life pathways, and the ways different cohorts experience continuities and change. These are: the era and place individuals are born in, the timing of life events, the nature of the interdependency within families and the role of individual agency. However Hörschelmann (2011) cautions that life pathways can be ruptured and discontinuous rather than predictable and that individuals make multiple transitions, reversals, and re-inventions. Like Hörschelmann I draw on the broad principles of life course theory to understand how broader structures shape and are shaped by lives, without rigidly sticking to Elder's strict criteria, and I also recognise the value of personal biographies. As biographical, historical and generational time are interwoven across the life course, biography draws attention to the possibility of insights into people's inner lives through their accounts of past experiences (Coleman, 1986).

The terms 'generation' and 'intergenerational' need to be unpacked here because there is no one simple definition of generation. It means a life-stage, a principle of kinship and a cohort (King et al, 2014), together with an age group and a historical period. Generation can be understood as multifaceted (traversed by multiple social divisions and identities), dynamic (rather than a static form of belonging) and recursive (rather than denoting clear, temporally sequenced, distinctions), according to Newman (2014). Hopkins and Pain's (2007) relational approach to the intergenerational is also helpful, as it involves appreciating the ways in which one generation is structured in relation to the other, and the relationships between generations, as well as the movement of people across generations. Vanderbeck (2007, p.16) rightly criticises the compartmentalisation of different age groups in his work on intergenerationality. In this thesis I take inspiration from Huijsman's (2012) idea of households shaped and re-shaped through a dynamic interaction between changing external dynamics (such as economic transformation) and internal dynamics (the life cycle) to differentiate not only between, but also within generations. This allows me to foreground consideration of questions concerning the stage of development at

which intensive childcare should 'stop' and children can start to be defined as responsible adults, and the stage of decline at which eldercare should start. Hopkins and Pain (2007, p.287) remind us that old age is a "socially constructed… culturally variable category underpinned by a range of social and economic processes, lived experiences and spatial practices".

A fourth interpretive debt to social reproduction is the way it helps me make sense of the multiple, messy and contradictory landscapes of care and welfare (Read and Thelen, 2007, Raghuram, 2012) that are part of the processes involved in maintaining and sustaining individuals and societies over time. One way of making sense of these 'carescapes' (Bowlby, 2012) and addressing gaps in our understanding of the changing geographies of care at a range of scales (Cox, 2010) is through the 'care diamond', which draws on feminist political economy (Staeheli et al, 2004, Luxton and Bezanson, 2006) and depicts a 'shifting constellation' of multiple spheres of provision by the state, the market, civil society and the family over the lifecourse (Katz, 2001, p.711). Although Katz's interpretation of the 'care diamond' can be criticised for not taking sufficient account of entanglement, the boundaries between the points are depicted as blurred and fuzzy and the points multi-layered, and each point contains spatial as well as institutional arrangements (which are not necessarily coterminous), adding another layer of complexity (Raghuram, 2012, Ochiai, 2009). Furthermore, the 'care diamond' can be expanded into a five-pronged pentagon constellation in order to bring in and foreground the agency of older people who both care and are cared for (De Silva, 2017).

Other conceptual tools are not quite as useful, such as Baldassar's (2007b, p.275) notion that transnational lives are shaped by the "economies of kinship", which develop across changing state ('macro'), community ('meso') and family migration ('micro') histories. Where Baldassar pushes us to envisage distinct layers, bounded families and bounded states, the 'care diamond' enables us to envisage overlapping spheres of care, and care as relational and a resource flow (Atkinson et al, 2011). Dykstra and Komter (2012) use the idea of 'constellations', as in 'family constellations'. However, this narrows the focus down to familial care rather than expanding our horizons to multiple domains. 'Familialism' (Esping-Andersen, 1996) is another approach which divides welfare obligations into 'familialism by default', where there are few or no publicly provided alternatives to family care and financial support, 'supported familialism', where there are policies, usually in the form of

financial transfers, which support families in maintaining their financial and caring responsibilities, and 'defamilialisation', where caring needs are partly addressed through services, basic income, pensions, but public provision is messy rather than not fully comprehensive (Saraceno and Kwek, 2010). The problem with the term 'familialism' is that it focuses on two distinct domains, family and state, rather than pushing us to explore how people attempt to bring together multiple spheres of care and welfare over the life course in their efforts to ensure social reproduction (Stenning et al, 2011). Mahler and Pessar (2001) take a "gendered geographies of power approach", which provides a framework for analysing structure and agency. They usefully understand structure as how people are positioned "within multiple hierarchies of power operative within and across many terrains", but nevertheless lead us down the path of examining individuals rather than the numerous interlinked spheres in which they move. Philimore et al (2016) use a "welfare bricolage" framework, which is appropriate for the processes of collaborative knowledge production about healthcare in in superdiverse populations in the UK that they are interested in, but has less purchase than when focusing on the aforementioned "fleshy, messy and indeterminate stuff of everyday life" (Katz, 2001, p.711)..

I find the 'care diamond' a particularly valuable conceptual tool for drawing attention to the social policy and legal frameworks which reward or discourage particular patterns of state-funded welfare, and shape decisions about who is young enough, sick enough and old enough to merit care, who should take responsibility and where it should take place. The word *welfare* is used in this thesis as shorthand for the collective state funded provision of universal basic services (even if welfare can be care by, as well as beyond, the family (Kay and Trevena, 2017), and a condition of physical and emotional well-being, and an activity that promotes the well-being of people who cannot or are not inclined to perform these activities themselves.) There are many dimensions to collective state welfare. The word 'welfare state' is used to describe variable social systems through which the state takes on some responsibility for the welfare of its citizens, by providing varying levels of health, education, social, unemployment and transport services, and ensuring a basic standard of living in the form of 'social transfers' (Cook, 2010) such as income or pensions. Another term is 'social security', which is broadly defined as public policy measures designed to protect members of society against social and economic distress in relation to sickness, economic insecurity, unemployment, disability, poverty, old age and so on. The term

'social protection' means "the organisation of social security that is the outworking of social policy (both formal and informal, both broad and targeted) as well as of social and family relations" (Locke et al, 2013, p.1875). 'Welfare citizenship' (Cook, 2010) or 'social citizenship' are often used to define people's rights to welfare, which are broadly non-contributory welfare benefits, social housing and public healthcare (Osipovič, 2010). Lastly, 'welfare regimes' are state policy responses to care work and the allocation of responsibility between family, state and market. The 'welfare contract' is the extent to which governments and citizens agree on the division of responsibilities.

The 'care diamond' draws our attention to fiercely contested debates (Fink et al, 2010) about the current terms of European welfare regimes. Broadly the debates are shaped by competing political ideologies in favour of, or against state or non-state provision, philosophical discussions about the boundaries between public and private life, and economic arguments about the need for higher taxation and wealth redistribution versus the need for retrenchment and weaker worker protection driven by low economic growth, declining tax bases, shrinking labor forces and ageing populations. Trade union researchers argue that social security is being reconceptualised as adaption to change rather than protection from risk, and solidarity as competitive rather than redistributive (Keune and Jepsen, 2007). Other researchers, for instance Frericks et al (2014), use more 'neutral' and bland terms such as the 'social risks implicit in different welfare regimes'. These terms are deceptive because they make social risks sound like abstract and painless choices, rather than acknowledging poverty, ill-health, homelessness and profound suffering. This thesis agrees firstly with Daly and Rake's (2003) contention that the welfare state reaches deep into people's lives and shapes men's and women's roles, access to resources and power relations, and secondly Hills' (2017) thesis that the state still plays a crucial role in mitigates the problems caused by the complex dynamics of people's lives.

In Europe political commitment to the public welfare regimes that multiplied in the aftermath of the Second World War (Esping-Anderson, 1996) has been eroded by neoliberal and conservative forces since the late 20th century (Staeheli and Brown, 2003), in both Western liberal democracies experiencing 'austerity' (Power and Hall, 2018) and in formerly centrally planned socialist states such as Poland where 'shock therapy' was implemented in 1990 as part of the transition to a market economy (see Chapter 4). However the postwar period up until the 1990s was not a 'golden age' of

welfare state, even if the welfare state has subsequently been rolled back and provision of care services, cash or tax incentives to cover the costs of care and social transfers for those excluded from reasonable access to life chances has diminished and sustainable and progressive social reproduction undoubtedly put under pressure (Finch and Groves, 1983, Mitchell, Marston and Katz, 2004, Bakker and Silvey, 2012). Welfare was also uneven during the postwar period, but in different ways. For instance scholars such as Fraser (2016) rightly criticised discourses which position men as 'economically active' citizens through their engagement in paid work and taxation, which qualifies them as 'rights-bearers' who are 'entitled' to welfare should they become unemployed. In contrast women caregivers are considered economically inactive 'beneficiaries of government largesse' or 'clients of public charity', rather than rights-bearers. As Morokvaśic (1984, p. 888) says: "Women always work. They are not in and out of economic activity, but at various stages of their life cycle they are either paid for their work or not, and their work is either recognized as economic activity or not."

The difference between the early 21st century and the period after 1945 is that the emphasis has shifted from rights to responsibilities, and from 'passive' to 'active' and individualising welfare provision. Both men and women are encouraged to take on paid work (Lewis 2009, p.7) and the 'adult worker' model prioritised over the previous 'male breadwinner' model. Welfare to meet need increasingly comes in the shape of 'flexicurity' (Keune and Jepsen, 2007) - a residual safety net conditional on social insurance credits accrued through economic activity. 'Economic activity' is defined as paid work in a labour market. Women, particularly older women, who move in and out of full-time and part-time paid work due to unpaid care work, and also at times their own health, are deemed 'economically inactive' when they are not earning, are penalised through the loss of social insurance credits, and risk long term negative consequences for their retirement incomes and retirement (Austen and Ong, 2010). The cared for also lose out, as Finch and Groves (1983, p.10) put it:

> *"When public policy 'virtually dictates' that care be given in the home of relatives, "the labour of love can very quickly become labour quite devoid of any of the feelings of affection which are meant to be its cornerstone".*

When framed through a historical lens, the boundaries between state and non-state, public and private, and tax and spend, are always blurred and shifting, because

welfare regimes are always evolving and competed over by interest groups (Read and Thelen, 2007). At the same time the family is constantly being reconstituted and re-negotiated (Oláh et al, 2018) as people interact with state structures and draw on multiple personal resources to manage uncertainty and create security for themselves (Kay and Trevena, 2017). However the rolling back of the welfare state, erosion of workers' rights, rising numbers of precarious jobs and financial insecurity that characterises contemporary neo-liberal economies, means that many people are increasingly dependent on family or other intimate relations for material and moral support (Cole and Durham, 2007, Gott, 2018). How then, do the families at the heart of this thesis practice care? Kofman (2014, p.79) calls on researchers to unpack

"what is happening in the household in a period of economic, social and political change in which inequalities have increased massively, and state intervention is reshaping how and what activities are undertaken in particular sites and institutions."

How do the families at the heart of this thesis feel about it? The way care is experienced profoundly affects people's emotional, physical, practical and financial well-being and human flourishing (Bowlby et al, 2010) and sense of belonging to or alienation from home (Blunt and Varley, 2004). The next section lays out a way of thinking through 'unpacking' in order to equip researchers with a conceptual toolkit suitable for theoretically rich empirical research into lived experiences of kinwork across time and space.

2.4 Everyday care practices across generations and borders

This section uses a care practices approach to make sense of the everyday lived experience of transnational kinwork under investigation in this thesis. It starts by laying out why 'care' is used rather than 'family', and why 'practices' are used rather than 'fact-collecting approaches'. It then problematises two dimensions - gendered assumptions around care, and Polish discursive constructions of familyhood. It then explores how intergenerational care practices are made, unmade and remade across the lifecourse as one set of needs is replaced by others as people move from dependent to provider and back (Bengston, 2001, Ackers and Dwyer, 2004). Lastly this section pioneers a simple mental toolkit (see appendix 1) which might be useful for holding

the key practical and relational dimensions of family care in mind when untangling the overwhelming array of ideas and stories that emerge over the course of research into family life. I call the toolkit a 'quarter-carat care diamond', as it sits inside the broader all-encompassing 'care diamond' (Katz, 2001, p.711), and enables holistic consideration of eight crucial dimensions of care relations: intimacy/distance, taken care of/self-care, interdependence/independence, living together /living apart. I call it a 'pioneering' concept as it is the beyond the scope of this thesis to fully theorise it, but holds the potential for the unfurling of fruitful scholarship in the future.

A practices approach underpins my thinking because it directs attention to the complex and unpredictable unfolding of intergenerational family care across the lifecourse, and the dynamics, motivations and experiences that shape the stretching of households across borders. It is helpful to group practices into three overlapping sets - the *making* of care through practices of obligation, circulating reciprocity and forbearance, the *unmaking* of care through practices of silence, absence, distancing and escape, and the *re-making* of care through practices of family restructuring and diversification, intimacy at a distance and 'family-type' care relations with friends, neighbours and members of the community and civil society. Together these practices enable me to try to make sense of the contested moral orders (Grillo, 2008) at the heart of family care, rather than become side-tracked by the moralising question 'does the family still care?' (Ottaway, 2004).

My focus on the making, un-making and re-making of care is where the thesis makes an important intervention within geographical literature on care, as there are gaps in the research on the diverse articulations of private transnational intergenerational family care, and in particular the unravelling of care. This is challenging to investigate (Chapter 3), represent and conceptualise, saturated as it is with the structures and messiness of feeling (Fink and Gabb, 2014). Furthermore, the desire to expose the injustices in neoliberalism can lead to the valorisation of a "migrant ethic of care" amongst migrant workers who leave home and undertake low-paid work in order to earn money for their families, for instance by Datta et al (2010) rather than a critical scrutiny of care (Raghuram, 2012).

My interest in everyday care practices across borders and generations was sparked by the sociological literature on practices of everyday life (De Certeau et al, 1998, Stenning et al, 2011). This scholarship directs attention to the ways in which habitual care practices are shaped by broader structures, but enacted individually and

constantly evolving. Furthermore, it also usefully draws attention away from two common themes in family migration scholarship - separation across transnational borders (discussed earlier in this chapter in section 2.2), and/or the impact of regressive neoliberal and socially conservative forces (discussed above in section 2.3). In particular my approach models Morgan's (2011) notion of 'doing family' or 'kinwork' as care needs emerge and re-emerge over the lifecourse. It enables me to encompass people's agency into my interpretation, and draw attention to the active involvement of people in the construction of their family relationships and their moral worlds, rather than their uncritical acceptance of 'conventional cultural rules or expectations' or norms (Chambers et al, 2009). It also enables me to encompass the structure of the "everyday routines and agendas of family living", social networks, material contexts such as housing and income, and cultural contexts such as understandings of appropriate family and kinship responsibilities and behaviour (Chambers et al, 2009, p.7).). It also draws attention from 'typical' to multiple. As Rigg (2007, p.30) puts it: "While researchers may not go into the field with the intention of finding a typical individual or household, having collected life histories it is all too easy to endow selected cases with just these qualities."

There is one drawback to Morgan's approach. He does not fully clarify what he means by 'appropriate'; I assume that he means moral. Thus I draw on McEwan et al's ideas (2017, p.572) about 'moral values and worlds' based on 'moral experiences' which are 'the contestations and compromises that actualise values which are deeply embedded in local social and cultural relations' and are 'context-specific' (Carling et al, 2012). These values can be seen as based on shifting rather than binary notions of good and bad, fair and unfair, just and unjust, and 'the proper thing to do' (Finch and Mason, 1990,1993). I enrich this discussion about the moral underpinnings of care with two additional points. Care is not only a moral choice, but a profoundly embodied physiological and emotional experience (Davidson et al, 2007). Care work can be extremely hard work, especially when the cared for have complex needs, and carers are not in good health. Furthermore, care is not always benign, selfless or moral (McEwan and Goodman, 2010).

A multi-dimensional approach to care is more fruitful than a narrower 'fact-collecting' approach. One such information gathering approach, used for instance in eldercare research, is based on what, where, when, who and how questions such as what kind of care, where and when it is carried out (at home or in an institution) and

who undertakes the work (self-care, familial care, paid and community careworkers). In a similar vein, a categories approach subdivides care - for people in the final stages of life - into support (financial and material); housing and practical assistance in the household; personal care; emotional support; and cognitive support (Attias-Donfut, 2003). Another set of ideas are based on measurements such as social needs, social capital and social networks (Phillips, 2007, Breiger, 2011, Barglowski et al, 2015), which can be mapped out into diagrams and understood as a snapshot into who people want to care for them, who comes in every day and who might be important.

While basic facts and figures about practicalities are important, if they are the sole focus they risk turning care into fixed acts of welfare done to dependent others, rather than recognising the ways in which most older people are involved in a range of exchanges and interdependencies, which change over time, with the need for support only a key issue for a short period of time (Chambers et al, 2009, Hardill, 2009, Wiles, 2011.) There is also a risk of over-simplifying formal and informal care when the boundaries between them are blurred, as they are highly interdependent (Ungerson, 1995, Bowlby, 2012). For instance, when payment is involved, it is less the paying for care that is the issue (Himmelweit, 1999, Cox 2010), and more the contexts and places within which care takes place, and who is doing the caring. Baldassar et al (2017) argue that 'kin-like' relationships can *evolve* in their study of care receivers and their families, and migrant domestic care workers and their families. Perhaps, most importantly, care in the home has 'complex material and psycho-social dimensions' (Conradson, 2003) and care-giving and receiving can be fickle and capricious. As Lewis cautions, attitudes towards central matters of family "can be contradictory and are certainly very hard to interpret" (2009, p.6.)

The term '*care practices*' is used rather than 'family practices' for a variety of reasons. Care draws attention to activities and emotions and not just the people who are conjured up when the word family is uttered. Family care does not just involve families, as caregiving and care-receiving members of families intersect with all other domains in the social world (Kofman, 2012). Care relations can include networks of affection (Phillips, 2007, Bowlby et al, 2010) beyond the family and commodified care labour with all its regressive and progressive possibilities (Cox, 2013, Schwiter et al, 2018). Care relations do not have to be geographically proximate in an 'environment of kin' (Phillipson et al, 1998) and can be with families of choice.

Discussions about family care can be subject to 'naturalising' discourses (Fincher, 2004, p.68) which define family care as exclusively heteronormative kinship work fixed in a spatially bounded and static localities (Blunt and Varley, 2004), and populated by delimited ethnic groups behaving in circumscribed ways. Such singular discourses are sometimes found in discussions about norms. Intergenerational care norms are varyingly conceptualised as 'culturally appropriate' care duties varying across time and place (Vullnetari and King, 2008), 'culturally constructed notions'" of ideal family relations and obligations' (Baldassar, 2007b) and ethno-moralities based on beliefs, intentions and care arrangements shared by a socio-cultural groups (Kordasiewicz et al, 2018). However the problem with norms, even if they touch on common understandings, is that they are sometimes used in a culturally reductionist way to form monolithic or unidirectional generalisations about behaviour – in this country we do this, in that country they do that – rather than framing activities as fluid, multiple contingent and frequently contested, and open to destabilisation.

There are however problems with 'care practices', in that care is often constructed as 'women's work', as reiterated throughout this thesis. One way of re-thinking assumptions that 'women naturally care' is through ideas about *gender orders* - the ideological and material practices through which power relations between men and women are made and remade (Pilcher and Whelehan (2004, p.61) and specifically the intertwinement of family policies, family practices and gender equality (Bjørnholt et al, 2017). Duncan and Edwards (1997) contend that differing care practices are rooted in competing 'gender orders' shaped by deep-rooted moral notions about what individuals think is the 'right' gendered and generational division of labour within families (Birgit Pfau-Effinger (1998, 2002). McDowell et al (2005, p.233) take a different approach and contend that decisions about paid work and care duties are shaped by 'moral economies of care' which draw on 'ideological orientations towards caring' and 'complex gendered understandings of caring responsibilities 'and 'differential commands over resources and assets' such as their class position, entrenched gender inequalities in the labour market and varying abilities to pay for care.

King and Vullnetari (2009) rightly draw attention to *gender and generation orders,* in order to take account of not only women's perspectives, but the perspectives of all the other members of the family. and to understand the ideological and material practices through which power relations between the generations as well as the sexes

are made and remade, and within generations and between brothers and sisters. These perspectives are helpful because they put women and care into a broader context, but re-thinking the gendered politics and economics of care while privileging participants' accounts and trying to make sense of tacit feelings about right and wrong, and moral equations, is not easy when positions can be polarised in the way they are in Poland (see Chapter 4) and my own positionality comes in (see Chapter 3) and there is no "simple 'fit' between work–family policies, work–family adaptations and gender equality in the family" (Bjørnholt & Stefansen, 2018, p.292).

There are two further salient points to make about family care practices. Firstly, while seeking to place linked lives and care in a broader context of multiple fluid complex social relations and roles and carescapes (Bowlby, 2012) I do not decentre the family. People attribute importance to family and bring it into being through the creation, telling and re-telling of family memories, which are edited and contested. Family relations and obligations are enshrined in legal codes and codified in birth, marriage, divorce and death certificates. Family is undoubtedly a key organising principle for care (Harker, 2010) with many intra-familial generations remaining interdependent (Phillipson, 1998), and committed to the reciprocal care and support (financial, emotional and instrumental) of kin (Valentine, 2008a). This thesis problematises arguments that modernity, individualisation and de-traditionalisation can render people less caring, given voice by Giddens (1991) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995), who argue that close personal relationships encumbered by kin and community obligations are being replaced by the pursuit of 'pure relationships'", and by Bauman (2000) with his focus on 'liquid modernity' and 'precarious containing structures' which do not keep their shape for long. This is not to say that 'family' always involves a cohesive and co-sustaining household containing members whose 'familyhood' is underwritten by altruism and co-operation (Brickell and Chant, 2010) and commitment to care. Familyhood includes moments of emotional and material support, respect, honour and trust and affection and moments of resentment, guilt, anxiety and distancing between family members (Dalmer, 2018) and shame if the family is tortured by toxic relations or so impoverished that members cannot participate fully in society. Family is a locus of competing interests, rights, obligations and resources, where household members are often involved in 'bargaining, negotiation and conflict' (Kandiyoti, 1988). Conflict is multi-dimensional rather than between, for instance, the generations (Arber & Attias-Donfut, 2002) and shaped by

multiple unequal social relations structured by age, class, ethnicity, gender, life course, nationality, race and sexuality (Brydon and Chant, 1989, Fincher, 2004).

Secondly, the transnational familyhood in this thesis adds extra layers of complexity and contradiction to family dynamics transposed to a new environment and 'webs of care'. Katz and Monk (1993, p.275) remind us that

"These extensive webs of care which absorb women's time, as well as their emotional and physical energy, are made simpler or more difficult to deal with depending on their particular spatial form".

Svašek (2008,p. 216) suggests that "the emotional life of migrants is often characterised by contradiction", as they are morally pulled in different directions in social networks and social and kinship spaces that stretch over large distances and painfully experience being both 'here' and 'there' (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997). Transnational migrants battle the paradox of not being able to be in and fulfil competing obligations in two places at once when there is simultaneous need for work outside the home and care inside the home, and citizenship in the 'host country' and commitment to supporting people in the 'home country' (Baldock, 2000, Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002, McGhee et al, 2013, Bell and Erdal, 2015).

On the other hand, as Stenning et al (2011) point out, dynamics are complex in every family, and as Baldassar and Merla (2013) rightly argue, absence and mobility are a common feature of family life. Recognising absence and mobility in this way does not discount either heartfelt and legitimate fears about the fracturing of relations through distance (Baldassar, 2007a) and the 'orphaning' of children and grandparents (White, 2011a, King and Vullnetari, 2006) or lived experience of painful long-distance separation and 'wretched' transnationalism (Pratt, 2012), nor does it discount the impact of poverty and restrictions on family reunion rights for migrants, which can seriously damage some children's wellbeing (Mazzucato and Schans, 2011).

Recognising absence and mobility does, however, draw necessary attention to ideas that proximity does not exclusively mean geographical closeness as even at a physical distance care can be socially and emotionally proximate (Milligan and Wiles, 2010) and 'face to face' contact and care exchange can be sustained through the use of letters, calls, information and communication technologies (ICT) and visits (Baldock, 2000, Baldassar, 2016). This has to be qualified by recognition of ways in which the virtues of 'virtual care' can be cynically over-extolled by government bodies

keen to restrict family reunion (Kilkey, 2018) or promote labour migration (Pratt, 2012).

Transnational Polish familyhood has its own context and specifics (see Chapter 4.) In brief, internal and external mobility and a culture of migration and transnational familyhood is longstanding in Poland, and powerfully evoked through a folk song '*Góralu czy ci nie żal'* (literal translation: 'man of the mountains, isn't it sad') about a '*Góral*' (man of the mountains or highlands) leaving his beloved Tatry mountains in search of work. Polish rights to free movement across the EU since 2004 have re-shaped rather than introduced transnational migration. Second and third marital relationships, and stepchildren and step-grandchildren, have also long been widespread, as maternal mortality and other health and death issues, which spawned fluid and diverse patterns of household formation and dissolution, also occurred in the past. What is distinctive in the late 20th and 21st century is longevity, low fertility and an increase in four-generation 'beanpole' families and single-person households. Correspondingly, as family structures undergo continuity and change, the way in which care is done inside and outside homes is also evolving. However the home is still the place where much care takes place, and debates about who should do the work can be, as my participants explained, hotly contested.

The specific context of transnational Polish familyhood is enriched by Polish scholarship. There is a strong body of Polish feminist writing on the contested move away from patriarchy towards egalitarianism in parenting (Wejnert and Djumabaeva, 2005) and gender equality and personal fulfilment at work and home (Aldred, 2007), and reframing debates around transnational motherhood. For instance Moskal (2011) challenges assumptions that all the needs of children can and should be provided by parents in nuclear families based in one community. Pustułka (2014a) contends that the meaning of motherhood should be redefined to accommodate periods of spatial and temporal separation and 'shared motherhood' and argues that migrant mothers who leave children in Poland battle against powerful internalised models of good mothering based on aspirational but unachievable icons (Lutz, 2015). Urbańska (2009, 2016) addresses class as well as gander when she argues that '*matki migruja za chlebem'* (mothers migrating for bread, which means migrating for money to put food on the table) are left with few choices and travel alone to seek work in Britain in order to escape poverty brought on by low pay, job insecurity or unemployment, and rising living costs, cuts to state-subsidised childcare and social benefits. They reconcile their

decision to focus on income provision rather than face to face care if it is in the best interests of the family and they are confident about their childcare arrangements. She contests the ways mothers are shamed as 'irresponsible' with their children posited as 'scarred for life' in the Polish media, and rightly challenges the ways in which migrant women are placed under closer moral surveillance than men (Carling et al, 2012). Kluczyńska's work (2015) on older husbands as caregivers in Poland and work on fatherhood by Kilkey (2013) and Pustułka et al (2015) broaden the debate about care as singularly female.

In contrast there is relatively little Polish scholarship on examining the reasons *why* women might condone and value identities such as being the home maker and main caregiver. This is important because researchers are likely to come across a wide variety of views (Dombroski, 2016). I try to engage openly with the diversity of women's values and identities, listening to their voices rather than prejudging voices and seeking to make sense of the love, companionship, status and enjoyment that some women – and men - gain from family work, albeit work and relations that can be fraught with tensions and shame too. As Brickell (2013) puts it "Western feminists should not lose sight of the fact that in many countries around the world, women's role as wife and mother remains central to their family and societal status." In the Polish context there is evidence some women relish the role of the 'managerial matriarch' providing indispensable family life management (Pustułka, 2014a), and economic responsibility is integral to their sense of being good wives, mothers and grandmothers (Pine, 1994). There is also evidence that women make strategic rather than reactionary choices to work unpaid inside the home (Ackers, 1998), such as women who when interviewed in the UK (Ryan et al, 2009) voiced their appreciation for the opportunity Poland's accession to the EU gave them and their families to migrate to a welfare economy based on the male-breadwinner model. This allowed them to work at home full-time while their children were young, rather than work the 'double shifts' common in Poland (Hardy, 2009). Staeheli (2013) makes the point with reference to the USA that resistance to welfare restructuring is enacted through an oppositional politics of obligation and care rooted in normative values 'rooted in family and faith' and I argue that the same applies in Poland.

This thesis problematises ideas that *domotorka* (women homemakers) are socialised into "ignoring their desires" (Duda-Mikulin, 2015, p.168), or "meeting all gender expectations ingrained in traditional Polish culture" (Bell & Domecka, 2018,

p.881) and that they suffer from false consciousness shaped by Catholic notions of sacrifice and a rejection of feminism due to its associations with Stalinist-style women's organisations from the communist era (Aldred, 2007). A more nuanced perspective is that women homemakers negotiate and express their ideas about their roles and identities as caregivers and paid workers in multiple ways, with some drawing quiet strength from everyday domesticity, religious faith and relations based on personhood (Dunn, 1998, Urbańska, 2018), privately resisting and modifying the most oppressive elements of patriarchal Polish Catholicism (see Chapter 4), and leveraging their 'noble self-sacrifice' to give themselves 'a moral upper hand in their domestic lives' (Marody and Giza-Poleszczuk, 2000, p.163). Others who see themselves as in egalitarian partnerships and marriages do not internalise a moral duty to be egalitarian in one particular way all of the time, namely a dual earner/dual carer model rather than a male breadwinner/female part-time employment model (Bell & Domecka, 2018) and are able to adapt and improvise (Bjørnholt & Stefansen, 2018) over the lifecourse.

The literature on grandmotherhood has a diametrically opposite problem to the literature on women as homemakers discussed above. It tends towards uncritical assumptions that when women become grandmothers they take on childcare (Heinen and Wator, 2006, Barglowski et al, 2015) and care of their partners, mirroring public discourses which valorise older womens' family care roles and simultaneously make fun of them (for instance through affectionate jokes about their purported desire to feed everyone all the time). Łaciak's (2014) research on the portrayal of senior citizens in Polish television drama serials bears this out. It shows that viewers were particularly fond of the image of the caring and warm and wise grandmother, guardian of home and hearth, and less taken by scenarios in which older women without dependents pursued adventurous lifestyles.

The older women become, the more they appear to be at risk of being pathologised (Holmes et al, 2018) and marginalised (Robbins-Ruszkowski, 2013, McKeon, 2014), without enough attention paid to the fact that widows were in their earlier lives willing and available family carers for their partners and husbands when required (Gott, 2018). Women making the transition from 'young and active old' in the third age to 'old' in the fourth age are depicted as shuttling between the doctor, cemetery, church and allotment (Radziwinowiczówna et al, 2018) and grumbling that '*starość nie radość i pogrzeb nie wesele*' (old age is not a joy and a funeral is not a

wedding). However at the same time other proverbs are used in discussions about older people, such as '*Nie można przesadzać starych drzew*' (you can't move old trees) and '*Chce umrzeć na stojąco*' (she wants to die standing). These epitomise desires to be independent, fears of becoming a burden and the fondness with which 'strong old characters' who have endured war and communism can be held in Poland. Fewer researchers pay attention to these complex and competing gender orders and challenge vulnerability tropes, with the exception of King et al (2017) and Lulle and King (2016), who examine how older Latvian women exercise agency, although this work tends to valorise the women who move, rather than the women who stay put.

There are also gaps in the literatures on eldercare, with a heavy focus on problems (Synak, 1987, 1989, Mucha & Krzyżowski, 2010) and on old age defined by chronological age and anthropometric measurements, rather than holistically shaped by physical, emotional and mental well-being. There is emerging research into the sandwich generation caring for both children and ageing parents while holding down paid employment (Stypinska and Perek-Białas, 2014) and also research into migrants' feelings of guilt and ambivalence around supporting elderly relatives (Bell and Erdal, 2015, Pustułka and Ślusarczyk, 2016,) and the gaps between 'care intentions' and practices (Radziwinowiczówna et al, 2018). Some Polish scholars contend that 'mechanisms' of 'matrilineal self-exclusion from mobility' ensure a flow of care for ageing parents (Barglowski, 2015). This theory contends that daughters and women of different generations specialise in care work at home in Poland, thereby enabling other family members to migrate and specialise in paid work, which generates remittances to cover the costs of care back home (Krzyżowski, 2011) Barglowski (2015) argues that this 'mechanism' contributes to 'the enduring persistence and strength of familial care obligations in Poland' and depicts a broader moral economy based on communal interdependence rather than fragmented 'selfdom'. She contends (2015, p.60) that the

"differences between Polish and Western caregiving are usually binary, in terms of collectivism and familiarity in Poland versus individualism and institutional care in western societies".

The limitation of this somewhat singular approach is that it assumes that all families contain partners and children, and that 'women's care' is natural rather than highly contested.

The value, however, of such perspectives are that they bring to the fore ideas about familialism as the natural order of society that are important for understanding the Polish context. Close families, moral rectitude, collectivism and a bounded culture are seen by some to hold society together and keep people out of poverty, hunger and death (Stacey, 1988), a spectre which haunts the older generation with their memories of war and, as Kandiyoti (1998, p.284) puts it, "a hankering for the certainties of a more traditional order, or a more diffuse feeling that change might have gone either too far or badly wrong". Families are seen to embody selflessness, morality and stability, and to play a key role in the transmission and reproduction of positive values, and the staving off of destructive individualism, in the same way that they staved off annihilation during the periods of Polish history when Poland was under occupation and terrorised by war. Women's pivotal roles are embodied in the image of the stay at home '*Matka Polka*' (Polish mother or mother patriot) who sacrifices everything for her family, replicating the self-sacrificing characteristics of the Virgin Mary (Dreby, 2006, Hardy, 2009, p.170) and always has a husband in the background (Hryciuk, 2017). In this worldview migration is discursively constructed as selfishness (Isański et al, 2014) and postmodern family structures herald potentially threatening levels of insecurity rather than the possibility of egalitarian and democratic forms of intimacy (Budgeon and Roseneil, 2004). Botterill (2012, p.158) observes that:

> *"The gloomy portraits of the decline of family in the context of modernity have leaked into mainstream political discourse on the family in Poland and frequently polarise the political arena. Poland's accession to the EU has intensified these debates with warnings that EU mobility is a threat to Polish family life".*

Narrow familialism fuelled by nationalism (see Chapter 4) is of course not the only worldview in Poland. Other worldviews do not view increased mobility and changing relationships and family structures as indicative of a weakening of obligation, a rise in selfishness. As Botterill (2012, p.226) puts it, while some individuals celebrate and preserve normative moral codes, others retreat from traditional family expectations and judgements, but maintain bonds of intimacy and care with family members, demonstrating that "mobility is not rendering the family obsolete." Migration can be a pragmatic response to opportunities by individuals who have to weigh up family goals with economic goals and other life options (Galbraith, 2008) and are given 'licence to leave' by their families (Baldassar, 2007b).

Furthermore migrants can also have close relationships with siblings, cousins and other extended family members, and pets. These pets can be much-loved 'members' of the family whose care and mobility poses as many challenges as that of human-beings (Nowicka, 2012a, p.115).

In this thesis I am interested in not only understanding different discursive constructions of care, but also looking deeper, and addressing the gap in the literature on the everyday lived experiences of individuals in families stretched across Europe navigating the processes of moving to and from phases of caring for to being cared for, and back, as care needs emerge and re-emerge over time and space. There can be difficulties of balancing compassion for others and self-interest both in globalised economic regimes undertaking welfare reform (Folbre, 2001). There can also be a lack of compassion in households riven by unequal social relations or violence, or for family members seen to have inflicted their problems on themselves, caused harm, or tormented by poor mental health. Vullnetari and King (2008, p.143) point out that "the desire to care depends to some extent on the 'health' of family relations" and Blunt and Dowling (2006) go further, reminding us that protection from harm and social inclusion is not guaranteed by being part of a family as home can be conflictual and violent for some as well as a space of intimate security and belonging for others. Baldassar et al's (2007, p.228) warning that we cannot assume that 'happy families' are the norm is reiterated in the Polish proverb 'rodziny są dobre tylko na zdjęciach' (families are only good in photographs).

At this stage it is helpful to group care practices into three overlapping sets - the making of care through practices of *obligation*, *circulating reciprocity* and *forbearance*, the unmaking of care through practices of *absence,* distancing and escape, and the re-making of care through practices of *family restructuring and diversification, intimacy at a distance* and *'family-type' care relations* with friends, neighbours and members of the community and civil society.

The first set of practices involve the making of care. Obligation is often drawn on as an explanation for enduring filial responsibility for care. People feel a sense of responsibility, duty and obligation to care for other family members within kin groups. Finch and Mason's (1993) work on eldercare for ageing parents is helpful because it highlights how obligation is shaped by principles rather than rules, is uneven and has limits rather than universal, is relational and negotiated between family members. They conceptualise three broad modes of negotiation – 'open discussions, clear

intentions and non-decisions.' These modes are best understood not as typologies but as "representing the framework of different approaches that family members may use individually or collectively in coping with the diverse issues and contingencies they face." Open discussions involve family conferences or linked discussions between different individuals. Clear intentions refer to "processes where individuals determine how they are going to act but then convey this to other members of the network without much debate." Non-decisions are implicit rather than explicit in that decisions emerge "without anyone apparently having formulated a clear intention or discussed it openly with others". Obligation applies to transnational care as it can be negotiated at a distance via Skype and other communication technologies (Baldassar, 2016).

The limitation with this obligation lens is that it conjures up images of one way flows of care, and obscures the desire of some older people not to be a burden (Chambers et al, 2009) and furthermore to let the needs of the younger generation take precedence (Finch and Mason, 1993).

A reciprocity lens enriches the discussion by bringing in the idea of mutual exchange across generations over the lifecourse, rather than a one-way flow, and the uneven circulation of activities across the lifecourse. Baldassar and Merla (2013) contend that the generational contract is governed by the norm of 'generalised asymmetrical reciprocity'. This is the expectation that the care giving in which today one family member does more will be reciprocated tomorrow when another family member does more. These ideas are particularly helpful when applied to care work circulating between family members in home and host countries, such as the participants in this research, and the possibility of material exchange in the shape of inheritance left for descendants in exchange for the care of a parent in old age.

The limitation with this reciprocity lens is that while it 'maintains familyhood' it is fraught with tension, contest and relations of unequal power (Baldassar and Merla, 2013), which are not often fully illustrated empirically with thick description, and exacerbated by broader structures of inequality and poverty (Bakker and Silvey, 2012).

One possible way of conceptualising the strains and interpersonal tensions enmeshed in the making of care is to think about forbearance alongside in obligation and reciprocity. Forbearance can be seen to be about habitually getting on with and enduring on a daily basis in undramatic, mundane and unremarkable ways. Forbearance seems to be produced and achieved through processes such as

prioritising, weighing up trade-offs and hoping that things will improve. For instance Lulle (2014) touches on prioritising in her discussions about Latvian migrant women justifying their decisions to leave their families by emphasising their belief that care from a distance should be prioritised over physical proximity to those in need of care. White (2011a) and Urbańska (2016) refer to trade-offs in their analyses of Polish migration driven by the best interests of the family in the long-term hope that things will improve. As Pine (2014, p.96) contends, Polish migration "can be both a symbol and an enactment of hope and of faith in the future and an act of or a reaction to hopelessness, despair, and acute loss in the present". Forbearance can also be understood by thinking about inner lives and spirituality drawn from religious faith and teachings on suffering and human frailty as part of the human condition, which are important in the Polish context (see Chapter 4).

The making of care cannot be understood without thinking about the unmaking of care, which is the second broad set of practices this thesis draws attention to. It is difficult to know where to start given the heart-wrenching range of possible disagreements and relationship breakdowns over housing, money and domestic labour, religion, politics and sexuality, drug and alcohol dependency, poor mental and physical health, neglect, abuse and violence, criminal offending and imprisonment. Some aspects around the unmaking of care are extensively covered in social science literatures, for instance conflicts over arranged marriages and free choice marriages, such as those between same sex couples in LGBT communities, and also domestic violence (McKie, 2005) and child and elder abuse (Pain 1997, Aitken, 2001). In the Polish context Urbańska (2016) makes a powerful argument for greater consideration of gendered domestic violence as a driver of migration in her research with Polish women forced to migrate and leave their children behind by their husbands and in-laws, and Krzyżowski (2011) hints at the violence in the unmaking and remaking of strained intergenerational power relations. I focus more on the *mundane* unravelling of everyday care which may develop into low mood, depression and poor wellbeing, as well as 'care deficits' (Hochschild, 1995, Daly and Lewis, 2000, Isaksen et al, 2008, León , 2016), domestic ruptures and 'home unmaking' which holds significance in, and beyond, the home (Brickell, 2012).

I suggest that for the purpose of this thesis, underpinned as it is by the avoidance of brutal excavations of pain and shame, everyday unravelling can be

conceptualised by thinking broadly about tacit practices of absence, distancing and escape and the possibilities for redemption and transcendence of loss.

Absence and distance go hand in hand, but are not fixed categories, as scales of absence and distance vary over time and space, and do not undo critical legal and material interdependencies, even if there is little or zero emotional and social interdependence. Raghuram (2012) calls on to researchers to be sensitive to 'absences' as care relations are, as Lulle (2018a, p.457) poetically puts it "dynamically stretched over and knitted through networks that are full of holes and disconnections" Absences can involve people who are physically absent, such as partners who have walked out, left or died (Lulle, 2018a). Absences can also involve the presence of people, but the absence of care and privacy, for instance for elderly parents who feel lonely and 'captive' when surrounded by family (Blackman et al, 2001, p.39, King et al, 2014). Often there is a silence around these absences, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Distance is often conceptualised as physical distance, but attention also needs to be paid to emotional distance, which can sometimes be brought on by the 'care overloads' experienced by family carers. Responsible for 24-hour-a-day care, they may be physically proximate but worn out and unloving (Finch and Groves, 1983). Hayashi (2011) goes as far as dubbing some familial care in the Japanese context "family caregiving hell" and blames the government for not sharing care responsibilities for the elderly more equitably between the state and the family.

Escape is often only implicit, rather than explicit, in some of the literature, even if some Polish worker-carers openly discuss leaving behind unhappy homes (Krzyżowski, 2011, Cieślińska, 2014). There is more on escape in psychoanalytic literatures (White, K. 2013) and in Saxby's forthcoming PhD, forthcoming, Newcastle University. White tantalisingly acknowledges the fact that there are many unhappy families whose members are glad to escape from living together' (White, 2011a, p132) but does not go into more detail, perhaps due to ethical commitments to her participants. Given that housing is in short supply and the "eternal, always longed for, hard to attain goal of generations of Poles" (White, 2011a, p.66.) I contend that migration can be seen as the chance for some to escape claustrophobic togetherness and difficult relationships in small flats where psychosocial wellbeing is limited by lack of living space, and to remake or even un-make relations.

Lastly, the third broad set of practices relevant to this thesis involve the potential for remaking care through practices of intimacy at a distance and household

restructuring, diversification and 'family-type' care relations with friends, neighbours and members of the community and civil society.

Practices of 'intimacy at a distance' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2013) coupled with ideas about autonomy (Bastia, 2011) enable us to think about children leaving home and setting up their own independent lives, with their parents giving them 'licence to leave' (Baldassar, 2007b), and also to think about parents regaining independence, albeit in a different way to the period of their lives before they had children. The development of intimacy at a distance opens up opportunities for the flowering of new relationships of care with friends, neighbours, colleagues, fellow churchgoers and paid carers, who become 'family' (Budgeon and Roseneil, 2004), and a rich range of complex alternative arrangements that were not available in the past. Smart (2007) gives emphasis to ideas of connectedness, relationality and embededdness, rejecting assumptions about modernity and decline in family caring. Bowlby (2011) draws valuable attention to debates about kith and kin and friendship care, which is culturally variable and shaped by individual contexts and contingencies rather than role ascription. Anderson et al (2015) highlight 'infrastructures of kindness' developed by groups and organisations without a formal remit for support who nevertheless bring people together in webs of care. In a Polish context there is not yet much work on this theme, apart from Conkova and King's (2019) emerging work into the significance of context in non-kin ties.

However, the flowering of new relations of care is not a panacea for the challenges to social reproduction and retrenchment of state welfare discussed in section 2.2 above. The extent to which care and kindness from friends and community in all their diversity stretches into appropriate intimate help with washing, dressing and feeding, and makes up for cuts in social spending, is debatable (Luxton and Besanson, 2006, Hayashi, 2015). I contend that friends and neighbours are likely to be governed by the same ideas of obligation, reciprocity and desire not to be a burden as family carers, and subject to the same ruptures and distancing.

This is where the 'care diamond' (Katz, 2001) and 'care pentagon' (De Silva, 2017) are helpful, as they direct our attention to the broader context, and back again to the agency of the cared for (Wiles, 2011, Johnson, 2013). During the course of the thesis, and particularly when bombarded with impressions, I developed my own additional mental toolkit, a 'quarter-carat care diamond' (see appendix 1). It sits inside the 'care diamond' and 'care pentagon', and enables holistic consideration of eight

dimensions of family care. These are: intimacy/distance, taken care of/self-care, interdependence/independence, living together /living apart. This simple model acts as a mental toolkit to keep all the core themes in mind while feeling overwhelmed by the stories and contradictions that emerge during fieldwork (Crang and Cook, 2007). As Douglass (2014, p.313) points out that there are "multiple motives for cooperation and contestations and for human agency to have a role in negotiating positions and benefits in ways that could be contrary to preconceived expectations."

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have brought together the concepts of mobilities and immobilities, social reproduction and intergenerational care practices in order to makes the case for why linked lives and everyday care across borders and over generations is important conceptually for enriching how we understand Polish migration in an era of population ageing. These conceptual framings are inherently entangled with the methodological approach to this thesis, which is explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter emerges from, and aligns with, the previous conceptual framing of the thesis, and makes a case for multi-sited, feminist, ethnographic research based on repeat research visits and biographical interviews as a methodology for exploring social reproduction and everyday care across borders across multiple generations. After providing an initial overview of the research strategy for fieldwork in NE England and Poland I set out three important dimensions to multi-sited research into linked lives – the importance of trust during recruitment and relationship building, the role of the shifting positionalities of both researcher and participants throughout the research, and the need for a toolkit of personal ethics to supplement formal ethical guidelines. My research involved 100 individuals, including participants, non-participants who agreed to take part in a preliminary chat but chose not to take part in follow up meetings and interviews, and 'connectors' who sometimes brokered successful connections. They have all been given pseudonyms (apart from three individuals in organisations whose names do not compromise anyone's anonymity in any way). The chapter contributes to a growing body of scholarship concerning what constitutes an ethical mode of engagement when researching the often deeply personal issues around family relations and migration, and reaffirms the challenge of carrying out research into the sensitive subject of how different generations do and/or do not exercise responsibility for each other through care labour. The chapter also sheds light, as many other researchers have done so before, on the ways in which the messy reality, fluidity, contradiction, and a sense of always being in an ever-evolving field, undid the best laid plans.

3.2 Research Strategy

The multi-sited and bi-lingual fieldwork undertaken for this thesis was carried out over a two-year period between 2013-2015 in NE England and Poland with Polish

families with members who had lived and worked in the UK following Poland's EU accession in May 2004. This research was conducted primarily with low and middle-income Polish caregivers, mainly women aged between 30-60 with intergenerational 'sandwich' family care responsibilities in both Poland and in Britain, and their partners, children, siblings and parents, who are, or may in future be, recipients of care. Qualitative research methods, specifically feminist methodologies (Stanley and Wise, 1993), multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995), 'following' people (Cook, 2004), and narrative biographical interviewing (Dutta, 2019) were used, in order to build up trust, go beyond simplistic tropes and statistics concerning Polish migration, draw out the evolving perspectives, narratives and practices of care (Crang and Cook, 2007). This approach also allowed me to cope with research "where the only inevitability seems to be unreliability and unpredictability" (England, 1994, p.243).

The primary location for my research was NE England, stretching from the southern parts of County Durham close to the North Yorkshire border up to Gateshead and the river Tyne, and east to Sunderland. This location corresponds to the pre-1974 County Durham boundaries, which covered a sizeable area until boundary reorganisation shrunk the county and created new metropolitan districts in Gateshead and Sunderland. This location was chosen for three reasons. Firstly, it is an example of a region with relatively low levels of migration since World War Two that had not attracted workers and residents of Polish origins until 2004 (Stenning and Dawley, 2009). Until the 2016 UK European Union membership referendum (see Chapter 4) such regions with relatively low levels of migration featured less in media and public discourse than so-called 'migration hot spots' such as Harlow, Rotherham and Lincolnshire, or the national context. However, even low levels of migration can have an impact on public imaginaries, and it is valuable to research specific local geographies of change (Stenning and Dawley, 2009) in order to explore how different dimensions of place shape experiences of migration. Secondly, North East England is an example of a region with a mixed socio-economic outlook. The economy is undermined by entrenched structural weaknesses and socio-spatial inequalities (Hudson, 2005, Robinson et al, 2007, Bambra and Garthwaite, 2015). However housing and living costs are comparatively low and migrants who find secure work can often build settled lives and supportive communities (see Section 1.4). Thirdly research within a driveable radius of my home was convenient for me, for my research

could fit in around my caring responsibilities, including visits to my increasingly frail parents in Scotland.

The target group of primarily midlife women with intergenerational sandwich care responsibilities across borders was chosen for two reasons. More women than men undertake unpaid care work through (what is often termed) personal 'choice', or gendered familial and career compromises (see Chapter 2). As a female sandwich caregiver myself I believed it would be easier to access and recruit women, build up trust and meet other members of their households than if I had tried to access their partners first, or their parents, who are sometimes housebound and even more difficult to recruit. To reiterate, this is not to say that men do not care as clearly men of all ages care too (see Chapter 2), sometimes in invisible ways. For instance in 2004, my family and I stayed with a multigenerational family in rural Poland whose grandfather had recently died of a heart attack in his early 60s. One of his daughters told me that the family attributed his death to his gruelling experience of running their farm and having to get up throughout the night to tend to his domineering widowed father in his 80s, who refused intimate care from anyone else.

An initial scoping study and mapping exercise clarified where the highest concentrations of possible participants were located, where it would be feasible to start to meet possible participants, and what material might be useful in a recruitment leaflet. The scoping study drew on quantitative census data from the ONS (2013), NOMIS at Durham University, which calculated that the Polish population in the North East was around 8,500. The Guardian's datablog (Rogers, 2013) was also used as it mapped the spatial distribution of languages in Britain, and showed that Polish was spoken in every ward across my fieldwork location. My aim was to recruit 15-20 participating households, carry out baseline interviews followed by recorded interviews, and then narrow down to a select few who would be happy to allow me to visit their households in Poland when they were there or by myself during a visit brokered from the UK.

A qualitative research strategy was used in order to elicit answers to the 'why' questions that follow on from the 'how questions', and to generate a deep and detailed picture of quotidian lives full of 'thick description' (Valentine, 2006, Open University, 2012, Gibson-Graham, 2014), and insights into the motivations, meanings and emotions enmeshed in care practices and the nuanced social textures that cannot be quantified, tested, replicated or generalised. Qualitative research has its perceived

limitations, such as the researcher's positionality, participants' partial memories, tactic knowledge (Skeggs, 1994). However despite its limitations qualitative is suitable for exploring a particular aspect and motivations in depth (Bryman, 2008) and is methodical even if not counted and measured (Carling et al, 2012). No social research is ever totally neutral or value-free (Bryman, 2008) as all conceptual frameworks, methodologies and data analyses are influenced by the ways in which researchers view the world and what they consider acceptable knowledge, in my case multiple, contextual, situated, relational and socially constructed knowledge based on a constructionist ontology and interpretivist epistemology. I tried to heed Roberts (2006, p.9), who calls upon qualitative researchers to avoid a 'subtle realist paradigm' through which they recognise their own subjectivity and the social situatedness of their research, but still based on seek out social facts as if they are real and there is only one way of knowing them.

My qualitative methodology was underpinned by a feminist commitment (Reinharz and Davidman, 1992, Finch, 1993) to document lives and activities, often seen as marginal in mainstream public discourses, develop non-exploitative relationships, and understand women's lived experiences in their own localities from their perspectives and in context (not decontextualized outside a social context). Ethnography, as a set of research methods and a written product, was the chosen method as it involves long-term and in-depth research participant observation and repeat visits which enable the researcher to look beyond public display (Pine and Bridger, 1998) and tropes. It therefore facilitates researchers in gaining "greater insights into the contradictory behaviour of the everyday" (Skeggs, 1994, p.88) including thick description which challenges overly simplistic relationship (Gibson-Graham, 2014). Smart (2007, p. 42) posits that "a few lives - purposively selected - can capture a complex picture of social change and connections with networks of kin". I carried out multi-sited ethnography, defined by Marcus (1995) as "multiple sites of observation" which follow (Cook, 2004) the people (especially migrants), the thing (commodities, gifts, money, works of art, and intellectual property), the metaphor (including signs and symbols or images), the plot, story or allegory (narratives of everyday experience or memory), the life or biography (of exemplary individuals), or the conflict (issues contested in public space). Multi-sited observation is valuable for research on care practices because it takes not only 'non-mobile' household members people into consideration (Barglowski et al, 2015), but also "different forms,

orientations, and directions of care giving and receiving" that can only be investigated "longitudinally and spatially" (Kofman, 2012, p.153). Furthermore it enables researchers to experience in person the family site not as one site, but stretched across borders, and sheds light on migrants' multiple "regimes of value" (Pine, 2014). Given that discussions about family life can go in multiple directions, semi-structured biographical-narrative interviewing in Polish and English was used to focus the recorded interviews around life stories and care practices, while bearing in mind the implications of local, national and world events on the participant's cohort (Elder, 1998).

Predictably research does not work out in practice, as discussed in the following sections. The messy realities of life (Crang and Cook, 2007) confounded my initial self-imposed expectation that I could devise and deliver a reasonably concrete plan, carry out fieldwork systematically and classify participants into fixed socio-economic categories and localities in order to create partial knowledge that could be written up neatly and tidily. In practice I was always in the field (Hyndman, 2001), my methods evolved messily, and my participants defied orderly categorisation. My field stretched back to my past, into the lives and care labour of friends, fellow PhD researchers and associates from my personal and professional life worlds and beyond the UK and Poland to southern Africa and South East Asia. Perhaps Stanley and Wise (1993, p.66) put it best when they wrote that the

"Western industrial scientific approach values the orderly, rational, quantifiable, predictable, abstract and theoretical: feminism spat in its eye."

3.3 Recruitment, relationship building and the importance of trust

In this section I outline how I recruited key participants with the intention of carrying out repeat engagement in order to build trust and ascertain which participants I would approach about 'following' them to Poland and meeting their family members. I recruited 18 households – made up of 18 key participants and 57 family members in North East England and Poland (see appendix 2). The research also involved 13 people who I call non-participants. They were potential participants who were aware that I was a researcher seeking participants and chose not to take part (see appendix 3). The research also involved recruiting 12 people who I call 'connectors'. They were the

new people I approached for help with finding participants (see appendix 3). In total this research involved 100 participants, non-participants and 'connectors'.

I also approached people in my existing networks for help with finding participants, with some success. However I did not keep a strict record as everyday conversations were intertwined with other matters beyond the research. For this reason they are not included in the 100 as if they were I am not sure how many of them to count. While a numerical list of who was involved in research is necessary to set the scene for readers (Bryman, 2008), a rigid focus on a numerical lens obscures the challenge of relationship building and the fluidity of the field (England, 1994),

The initial recruitment of participants involved an explanatory leaflet in Polish and English (see appendix 4) aimed at my target group of midlife Polish women with caring responsibilities; 'outcropping' (Bloch, 2007); and 'snowball sampling' (Bryman, 2008). Outcropping involved picking locations with a high density of Polish workers and 'hanging around' shops and community venues where I thought I might meet people who might then introduce me to other people, thereby facilitating 'snowball sampling'. At one stage I even checked out a huge greenhouse complex in Billingham on Teesside, where tomatoes were grown indoors and packed all year round. I had heard that there were lots of Eastern Europeans working there, but it proved difficult to hang around and meet people, as the long road leading to the greenhouses was a private road and consequently workers appeared to come and go in vehicles, rather than on foot. I also sought out 'connectors' with direct contact with Polish workers, including the director of the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) in Durham County Council (subsequently renamed the EAL and Equalities Team), the two directors of the International Community Organisation of Sunderland (ICOS) and four Polish workers in professional jobs in NE England.

My recruitment leaflet was distributed to schools through the EMTAS network, and left pinned up and lying around in the ICOS offices in Sunderland and in several Polish shops around the NE of England. Copies were posted to those Catholic churches which hosted monthly services led by the priest in charge of the Polish *Parafia* (Parish) in Newcastle. The leaflet did not elicit any interest. One participant later pointed out that I might have generated more interest if I used a clearer photo of myself. She said that as I was wearing a hat and partially hidden behind the rest of my family, readers could not work out if they liked the look of me or not.

Face to face networking and serendipity proved the most productive. I asked friends, acquaintances and colleagues in the NE and further afield (and anyone who I could ever remember having said in passing they knew someone Polish) together with also friends and associates in Poland to recommend me to anyone who might want to talk to me, and to pass on my leaflet at the same time. This strategy led to four participants, and one of these participants then put me in touch with a further participant. An informal small group meeting at a small private Polish Saturday School led to two participants. I met four further participants by hanging around and making conversation in two separate shops, a library and a community centre, and these participants then introduced me to five other participants. I also met two further sets of participants by hanging around outside a Catholic church and bumping into two cheerful elderly churchgoers. They told me to come back at the same time the following week so that they would introduce me to their Polish friend. I did so, we got on well and she then introduced me to her friend.

Not everyone I met or to whom I was recommended was willing to connect or participate, bearing out just how important mutual trust and 'personal chemistry' (Bryant, 2014) can be for enduring relationships (Bloch 2007, Düvell et al 2010, Bourgois, 2012), especially when navigating complex familial landscapes across time and space. As Carling et al (2012, p.209) put it: "Capturing the emotional and moral part of the migration experience requires relationships of trust and solidarity between the researcher and participants." This need for trust and respect extended to my relationships with 12 'connectors', and 16 potential participants, all in NE England.

Throughout the fieldwork it was clear that people chose me as much as I chose them so. I backed away when I saw the warning signs of people not willing to take part. For instance, several people at the informal meetings in the Polish Saturday School and the Catholic Church did not go onto become participants, either because they did not want to, or said they were interested and gave me a phone number, but then did not reply. I guessed from the body language and the looks in the eyes of some potential participants that they were busy, sceptical about the research, unwilling to share private or sensitive matters, and/or took a mild dislike to me (Smith, 2014) or had weighed up that there was little in it for them.

My personal contacts and 'connectors' also weighed up the personal implications of helping me find people. One personal contact put me in touch with a Polish associate, but not with a Polish man who worked for her husband, as she did

not want to put her husband's employee under any pressure to do 'what the boss's wife' asked him to do. Three of the 12 'connectors' I approached for help with finding participants said that they would recommend me to five friends who would be suitable participants, but nothing materialised. One participant mentioned a previous housemate, but asked me not to reveal personal details about their current life. When I later met the housemate by chance near the house, I introduced myself as a researcher, but failed to gain her trust and confidence. I had to obfuscate about where her old flatmate lived and how to get in touch. She could see that I looked uneasy and scolded me for speaking very bad Polish. Five other potential participants took part in initial one-to-two-hour discussions, but three did not return my text messages when I contacted them to arrange follow up meetings, which left me wondering if I had 'done the wrong thing' (Harker, 2010) or if they were simply consumed by their extremely demanding lives. One went back to Poland and the other was always busy with her cleaning work so we could never finalise a mutually convenient time to meet. I took comfort in Cerwonka and Malkki's reflections (2008) that fieldwork can feel acutely uncomfortable, and that the participants were exercising their right to withdraw without explaining. I was also acutely aware that some people, for instance those who had not registered for National Insurance numbers and could be defined as 'semi-legal', would be understandably be defensive about engaging with research that involved potentially intrusive personal questions (Düvell, 2004, Düvell and Jordan, 2006, Kubal, 2009, 2016).

In turn I too paid heed to gut instinct when choosing participants, and did not approach everyone I had heard of, or follow up on everyone I met. For instance, early on in fieldwork I mulled over the possibility of contacting someone who was a factory line manager with access to Polish workers, but decided not to after hearing two anecdotes from people who felt irritated that they had been lent on to provide more support to this particular individual than they wanted to, and decided that the risk of finding myself in the same situation outweighed the benefits of finding participants. I was also careful not to push participants to recommend me to friends and colleagues they talked about if it was clear that an introduction would be forthcoming. I drew back as soon as it was clear that they had weighed up my tentative inquiry and decided who would not want to be interviewed or would not be a suitable interviewee. Some sounded marginalised through home-sickness, shyness or poor mental health, or appeared to be living chaotic lives fuelled by precarious work and accommodation,

alcoholism, casual sex and *kombinacja* (spaces of shady business, ingenuity and innovation). I could only listen vicariously to participants' colourful stories. Several participants suggested recruiting via Facebook, but I worried this would compromise my ability to protect people's anonymity. I was also aware of my own potential vulnerability (Banks et al, 2013) and best practice guidelines for lone workers (Peoplesafe, 2013, Health and Safety Executive, 2013) and bought a separate phone and SIM card in order to keep my research separate from my personal life, and avoid being drawn into giving more than I had time or resources for. Towards the end of fieldwork I met one final possible participant, a Polish woman in her 60s, in a shop, but realised I had gathered enough material and reached a 'data saturation point', always an important moment in fieldwork (Crang and Cook, 2007).

Whenever I did manage to make a warm connection, and successfully carried out a preliminary chat which appeared to be the foundation for a sustainable relationship, I was delighted. It resembled a love affair – will they ring, won't they, will they stay in touch after the first 'date' (Wimark, 2014). Reasons for people taking part are well documented – someone listening to them while they justify their lives, surprise and pride that that they are recognised as having something to say and mutual trust and respect between themselves and the researcher. For instance, when one participant was talking about what she saw as her grandmother's narrow-mindedness she said:

"*I am more flexible in my life. She not. Probably you are different as well because you have open mind, and you know life not just in England. Your mind is open for lots of things. Not like many people here, just closed eyes and "I see what I wants to see*" (interview Iza, 20.8.2015).

Initial meetings with new participants sometimes took place in cafes, in order to create mutually safe spaces for both me and the participant. If I had been personally recommended I was often invited to participant's homes and personal and intimate geographies developed (Hall, 2016). The separate phone was eventually ditched because it was difficult juggling two phones, and enough trust had developed to rely on my own phone. The original plan to carry out repeat engagement in order to build relationships and trust, followed by baseline interviews, followed by recorded interviews and then visits to a select few who I had 'followed' (Cook, 2004) to Poland. It did not progress along tidy linear lines. Instead recruitment, relationship-building, interviews and Poland research trips overlapped messily and the baseline interviews

were not all neatly done and dusted before the follow-up recorded interviews. Out of the 18 households, 12 were in NE England, 4 were in NE England and Poland, and 2 were in Poland. I visited each household in NE England at least 3 times and some 20+ times over 2 years (see appendix 5), starting with one key research participant in each household and getting to know other members to varying degrees during repeat visits. Some encounters with people in the North East were brief, while others involved spending time together for up to half a day. The time spent with households in Poland in August 2014 and August and September 2015 stretched out to as much as three days with each household. The first recorded interviews took place in June 2014 and finished in October 2015. Before recording started participants filled out consent forms (see appendix 6). In total I recorded 24 interviews, 10 in Polish and 14 in English, 18 in NE England and 6 in Poland. Out of these 24 interviews 18 are one to one, 1 is mainly one to one with a few interruptions, 2 are with 2 people and 3 have up to 6 people coming and going throughout the conversation. I ensured that they were all aware of the recording and gained verbal consent. Working out which households to visit in Poland was physically and emotionally demanding as evoked in reflections by Hage (2005, p.466) on his visits to Lebanese families dispersed across the world.

> *"I am interviewing X with Y and Z sitting around. X says something that I know Z feels strongly about. Z knows that I know she feels strongly about it. So the feelings generated by the interview and the analytical labour it requires is now much more complex and more demanding. Now each landing in the field and each departure was a major affair and the time between them was less and less touristy and more and more socially, psychologically and analytically demanding and exhausting."*

Before starting fieldwork I had imagined that I would tell participants that the research was to be conducted in three stages, with the final stage involving visits to family members in Poland, ideally with them when they went back on holiday. In practice it rapidly became clear that establishing relationships of ongoing and evolving mutual trust was critical, and that logistical and emotional considerations would shape the visits to Poland. Some participants did not visit Poland regularly as they could not afford to or choose not to, while others had difficult relationships which I felt it would be inappropriate to intrude into. Some participants visited Poland at times when I could not join them due to my own commitments, while others made it tacitly clear that they were happy to talk to me in the UK, but not to extend invitations to visit them in Poland. I had to choose who and when to ask judiciously. Finally I visited two

households in Poland at the same time as my participants from NE England were back with them on holiday, and two households where the visit was brokered by family members who remained in the UK. I also visited two households in Poland where the mothers had worked in the North East for several years and returned to Poland. They were recommended by personal contacts and I judged that their stories would shed valuable light on lived experiences of parental separation from children.

Neatly categorising participants' civil and socio-economic statuses was problematic. I focused on grasping broad life histories and relationships of care over time above all else, rather than trying to collect and list participants' precise ages, job titles, educational qualifications, income and home ownership/tenancy backgrounds, and possibly damaging trust. The key participants were predominantly married, divorced or widowed women aged 30-55, with multiple and diverse relationships of care for children, siblings and/or parents in both Britain and Poland. All the key participants and almost all the members of their households possessed formal Polish citizenship. Almost all of the key participants came to the UK after EU enlargement in May 2004, apart from one who came in the late 1990s and was now coping with ageing parents in Poland, and another, a grandmother in her 80s, who came in 2003 to support a daughter who came in the 1990s and a granddaughter. One key participant was a single man with siblings and parents in Poland, who started off as a passing acquaintance and then told me his own compelling story, which I realised added a valuable dimension to the research (see Chapter 7).

Class positions and income statuses were equally difficult to ascertain, particularly as some Polish words appear to have English equivalents but mean different things, and my knowledge of Poland and the Polish language is not developed enough to pick up on the nuances. Classifying an individual as low-waged or working class is problematic, as some Polish migrants started off working as 'factory operatives' in so-called low-skill sectors, and experienced social mobility, while others remained in low-paid work (Burrell, 2009, 2010). Wealth and home ownership is similarly fluid as some people may own, have owned or plan in future to own a home in Poland, or anticipate inheriting a home. What was clear however was that all my participants with higher education acquired English language skills, as did people who worked in environments where they had to speak English, while the older participants and participants working with predominantly Polish co-workers, found it harder to pick English up (Temple, 2010, McKeon, 2014) and developed a rich range

of survival strategies (see Chapter 7). However language acquisition is not 'fixed', as illustrated by one participant with whom I kept in touch. After the fieldwork ended she was drawn into substantially improving her limited English with her bi-lingual young son's help (Gill, 2018) when she was promoted to a supervisor role in the factory she worked in and had to communicate both with her managers and Russian and Romanian team members in English.

The value of the recruitment process, with all its rewards and disappointments, was that it demonstrated the futility of constructing an accurate sample frame representative of the wider population in my target group, given the difficulties in finding people to take part in research, let alone the inaccuracies in population data (Raymer et al, 2009, Ryan, 2011). It also revealed the opaqueness in the term 'purposive sampling' which means recruiting' the right sort of person' who is representative in some way of wider society, or of a phenomenon. In practice the 'right sort of person' is a slippery concept, given that all people (including the researcher) age, their circumstances change, society changes and social reproduction is fluid, dynamic, and unpredictable (Ackers, 2004). The recruitment process also illustrated the ways in which research stems from autobiographies (Skeggs, 1994), which is addressed in the next section.

3.4 Positionalities and reflexivity

This section examines how three positionalities in particular situated me. The first was my insider and outsider position as someone with multiple Polish connections who was not Polish, and also as someone with long connections to North East and South East Scotland who was neither Scottish nor Geordie (a nickname for someone from the Tyneside area) nor Mackem (a nickname for someone from the Sunderland area) and in some ways an 'insider outsider' in the North East too. The second was my sandwich caring work. A third dimension, my extraversion and sociability (Moser, 2008), was also significant. The need for researchers to think reflexively about their own and their participants multiple and shifting positionalities in the research process is well-established (Hopkins, 2007). As England (1994, p.251) summarises it "We need to locate ourselves in our work and to reflect on how our location influences the

questions we ask, how we conduct our research, and how we write our research". Skelton also guides researchers to consider how 'class, gender, 'race', sexuality, able-ness, age and education, and whether we are a parent or not' (2001, p.89) underpin the partial and situated knowledge we create. Arguments that personal qualities and traits need to be considered alongside positionality are also persuasive as embodied personality and emotion shape the biographies brought to research and frame and constrain ways of seeing, judging and acting (Moser, 2008, Banks et al, 2013, Smith, 2014).

None of the three positionalities outlined above and below were fixed, as by being in the field one changes it and is changed by it (Hyndman, 2001), and both my own and my participants' circumstances and lives evolved over the course of the research (Ng, 2017). My children grew up and came 'of age', my parents grew frail, my father died and my mother moved into a care home. Further, anti-migrant political and public discourses increased and the 2014 Scottish Independence referendum and 2016 UK European Union membership referendum took place, exposing visceral fault lines within my own family, local community and region (Curtice, 2018), together with the ways in which the profoundly personal and political tentacles of my research stretched into my life and my participants' lives, probing the profoundly visceral topics of family relations and national identity. Similarly my participants' children grew older and some of their parents grew frailer, some moved, some changed jobs, and the 2016 UK European Union membership referendum further complicated longstanding reflections on whether to stay in the UK, return to Poland or move elsewhere in the future. During the fieldwork spaces of 'between-ness' emerged which blurred rigid categories, allowed us to use our differences productively and enabled alliance formation (Hopkins, 2007). The limitations of the research (Bryman 2008) included my stilted Polish language skills and inevitable personal 'blind and blank spots' (Dunleavy, 2003) or 'degrees of reflexivity'. As Mauthner and Doucet (2003, p.425) put it:

> *"There may be limits to reflexivity, and to the extent to which we can be aware of the influences on our research both at the time of conducting it and in the years that follow. It may be more useful to think in terms of 'degrees of reflexivity', with some influences being easier to identify and articulate at the time of our work while others may take time, distance and detachment from the research."*

My Polish connections stem from my husband, who has British citizenship, but defines himself as Polish, and is bi-lingual in Polish and English. He is part of a cohort whose Polish parents and grandparents were displaced and scattered across Europe during World War Two and then re-settled in the UK in the late 1940s and early 1950s via European Volunteer Worker schemes and the 1947 Polish Resettlement Act, which allowed Polish nationals connected to the armed forces to stay and work in the UK (Burrell, 2018). They found work in cities across the UK and chiselled out spaces for themselves in which they could stay resilient during periods of antipathy towards outsiders (McGilvray, 2004) and feel integrated (but not fully assimilated) to differing degrees. They were supported by a broad Polish community (Górny and Osipovič, 2006, Community, 2009) with insights into wartime suffering rooted in thousands of individual tragedies (Zubrzycki, 1956, Sword, 1996, Winslow, 1999, Smith and Winslow, 2000, Temple, 2010, Burrell, 2002, 2003, 2006, 2008). One of the regions which attracted relatively few Polish workers was NE England, where work in the coal mining, ship building and docking sectors was less freely available than in the Yorkshire and Lancashire textile and steel cities. The workforce was heavily unionised, according to my father-in-law, who once told me that he went to Newcastle for an interview in the early 1950s but 'ran away' because it was so 'unwelcoming and miserable'.

Since the 1990s I have been listening to and learning Polish, spending time with people in Britain with multiple connections to Poland, and visiting Poland regularly. Since Poland joined the EU in 2004 my family has developed multiple relationships with first, second and third generation Polish and British Polish citizens. I have heard countless stories of care across borders, sometimes complicated by differing perceptions of 'the right thing to do' (Finch and Mason, 1990, 1993) which play into longstanding filial tensions (Chambers et al, 2009). A grandmother in Poland who would not go to hospital because she did not want to leave her cow un-milked; a granddaughter sent back to Poland for holidays on the 'boring' family farm; a beloved dog knocked down and killed on a Polish street while the owner was helping out her daughter in the UK; an ageing mother who grumbled when her daughter visited her in rural Poland and hung her old mat outside in the hot Polish summer sunshine in order to beat the dust out,

For some participants these insights and anecdotes positioned me as an insider-outsider (Mullings, 1999), as we could talk about people, places and other Polish

commonalities. Other participants had reservations about my family's narrative inheritance (McNay, 2009) based on the pain and suffering of World War Two. At the same time they were interested in the possibility that their bi-lingual children (Gill, 2018) could become British Polish in time, and draw on longstanding Polish-British links and the symbolism of Polish bravery and support for Britain in World War Two to find common ground (Best and Zukowska, 2016) and chisel out new spaces. At other times they voiced or intimated their view that my family had no claim to Polishness as we enjoyed some of the British citizenship, financial and class privileges that they lacked. This perspective of discursive hostility between old 'Odyssean' Poles and new Poles competing for resources and influence has been well-aired by Garapich (2007a) and Galasińska (2010), and in turn contested by Irek (2011), who found extensive evidence of blurred boundaries and classed, gendered and generational ruptures and alliances. Similarly Erdmans (1995) draws on her research with 'new' and 'old' Poles in Chicago to show that tensions are not fixed as over time, newer migrants access networks, resources and opportunities in the same ways as earlier migrants did, and gradually their needs and perspectives evolve. Irek's (2011) and Erdman's (1995) arguments chimed with my own personal observations over the years, of individuals' multi-faceted experiences of multiple domains of belonging to or rejecting 'Polishness' over the lifecourse, rather than two separate and antagonistic communities competing with each other.

Participant's scepticism about my position as an insider–outsider was justified in that I gradually realised I was driven by two sets of conflicting emotions. One set was partly shaped by what Gunaratnam (2013) identifies as visceral cosmopolitanism (Nava, 2007) based on empathy, emotions, the subconscious and an attraction and identification with otherness.

> *"Nava has identified contingent and libidinal fault lines of hospitality and openness to cultural others in British consumer culture, the arts and in politics. It seems that those who have allowed themselves to feel the precariousness of belonging or the dull flatness of sameness can find themselves desiring of and empathizing with outsiders." (Gunaratnam, 2013, p.26).*

Another cosmopolitanism, described as 'cosmopolitan patriotism' by Appiah (1998) was also important, based on the rejection of divisive political ideologies (Winder, 2009, Portes, 2013) underpinning ideas about 'citizens of somewhere' and

'citizens of nowhere' (Goodhart, 2013). This divisive creed was epitomised in a speech by the UK Prime Minister Theresa May in 2016, in which she said: "If you believe you are a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere." (BBC, 2016).

This xenophilia and cosmopolitanism had a less positive side. It went hand in hand with elements of a negative unconscious bias towards Poland as somewhat monocultural and illiberal, an orientalist (Said, 1978) perspective drip-dripped through countless media reports on Poland over the decades. I knew that Poland was not the grey, gloomy, battered country of my childhood imagination (Serraillier, 1956), but I had not gone as far as unpicking what my position prevented me from seeing (Spivak, 1988, Raghuram et al, 2009). This was most starkly brought home to me during a discussion with a Polish friend whose father's cartography had been doctored by the ruling authorities during the communist era in order to remove references to Poland's multi-ethnic past (Czaplinski and Ładogórski, 1986). This provoked me to open my eyes to unreported resistance, rule-breaking, and irony. I began to take more account of how Poland is shaped by its history and location at the 'heart of Europe', and how it combines illiberalism and inequality with plurality, diversity, tolerance, dynamism and modernity (see Chapter 4).

Another realisation that dawned gradually was that the communist regime loathed by much of the postwar Polish community in the UK had not been wholly negative for the people who lived through it in Poland (Witt, 2018). The gains of the post-1989 era and EU membership had to be weighed against the woefully unequal distribution of the wealth and the social destruction riven by economic restructuring, "a point so often overlooked by commentators in the West" (Titterton, 2006, p.564). As one participant said '*it was not a better or worse time, it was a different time*' [Paulina, interview, 9.9.2015] referring to the difficulty during the post-war era of having to know the right people in order to acquire building bricks, in contrast to the post-1989 era of not having enough money to buy building bricks. Another participant looked horrified when I admitted that as a child I had always thought that Poland was grey, and offered to show me family photos from the 1970s that evoked the colourful clothes, verdant countryside and dazzling summer sunshine.

The quest to understand where one is positioned, cut through essentialism, seek out nuance and contest misrepresentation is a lifelong one, not only for all researchers with their shifting insider/outsider roles (De Soto, 2000), but for participants and informants who also have power within the interview process too (Smith, 2014). Some

of the people encountered in my research voiced singular and negative views about their country of birth and compatriots (see Section 6.3). One participant told me she had looked up Polish poets after our conversation as she realised she had developed a negative mind-set, as if her country was second-class. In this space of inbetweeness we shared a poem *The End and the Beginning* by the poet Wisława Szymborska, who she had rediscovered and who I then looked up in my late mother in law's Polish/English poetry book (see appendix 7). Occasionally spaces filled with uncomfortable silence emerged when I heard intolerant othering (Harris et al, 2017, Narkowicz and Pędziwiatr, 2017) of 'Muslims' or dismissive comments about LGBT individuals, and was lost for words on how to challenge them politely in stilted Polish whilst a guest in their homes. Perhaps participants felt uncomfortable in turn when I occasionally closed down discussions that I feared would lead to religious proselytizing, or started up conversations about politics. More often contentious topics were handled with profound sensitivity to what was considered mainstream British opinion, with participants voicing much more nuanced views on abortion and religion than those voiced in loudly polarised debates (Botterill, 2012). Both I and my participants took for granted our positions as a white, heterosexual and 'abled' (as opposed to disabled) Christians. I did not reflect on these dimensions during the course of my research, as trying to make sense of other dimensions was all-consuming.

Lack of fluency (Gibb and Iglesias, 2017) was the biggest challenge with participants who spoke little English, and with whom I subsequently spoke in Polish. At times I felt that 'being' Polish and speaking Polish fluently would have helped me access a wider range of participants, make deeper connections, gain more rounded insights, understand the jokes and avoid the criticism that I was a privileged outsider. However Temple (2006a) argues that, even as a second generation speaker of Polish, her language fluency did not guarantee understanding, and her status created barriers during research with newer Polish arrivals. She calls for reflexivity which recognises that, even when there is a shared language, people use language in different ways which signal difference as well as similarity (Temple and Koterba, 2009). The words used for 'care' are an example. Care and related words such as care worker, carer, care needs, healthcare, childcare, social care and so forth have become commonplace in the UK, but carry a host of different connotations to the word for care in Polish. Both versions are shaped by different values, interpretations and configurations of care, with 'care' in English evolving into a word with much stronger official undertones

than 'care' in Polish, where there is less state-sponsored involvement in care. Regarding insider-outsider status, Osipovič (2010,p.78) helpfully points out that being a native Polish speaker and a migrant to the UK did not make her an 'unproblematic cultural insider to all the participants' as there were educational, generational, gender and socioeconomic "division lines", and "who respondents *think* you are affects what you get told."

My English-speaking participants felt equally frustrated in turn with their language skills, particularly in a European context, where English fluency brings social capital (Ryan et al, 2008, Moskal, 2013). There were benefits to our mutual linguistic clumsiness, including some participant's enjoyment at the chance to practice their English at length with me, and the extraordinary embodied multi-sensory intensity with which multi-sited and multi-lingual researchers and participants can be gripped as linguistic outsiders in someone else's home, community or country (Bauman, 2000). Linguistic fluency is not a prerequisite for robust research, as illustrated by Andrijasevic (2004) in Italy, who drew out important themes on sex worker's agency from stilted conversations in a language that was neither her own or her participant's first language.

Where language was a drawback, my female gender and position as a middle-aged mother of school-age children appeared to be an asset, but not an unproblematic one. At the start of the research I took it for granted that this second positionality as a 'woman in the middle' (Brody, 2003) would help me find common ground with participants. Confidences were shared in ways that I could not imagine would have been shared when I was younger and childless, and spaces opened up for lengthy and sometimes visceral discussions peppered with laughter about childbirth, childrens' personalities and family histories. At the same time this parenting identity work was enmeshed with moral judgement and social norms (see Chapters 2 and 6). I was simultaneously respected and disapproved of, asked for advice about bringing up bi-lingual children, and unfavourably scrutinised for muddling through, all of us caught in a whirlwind of angst and conviction (Clements, 2014).

This lack of clarity about where the power lay exacerbated the moral and intellectual challenge of unpicking age and class power relations reflexively (Smith, 2014), a challenge that is only ever half accomplished due to the impossibility of holding "a unified and coherent gaze at landscapes of power" (Mullings, 1999, p.348. My age seemed to position me as someone who by virtue of life experience was seen

to have some credibility and seniority regarding family matters. Some younger participants used the word '*Pani* Lucy' or '*Pani*' which translated literally means Mrs Lucy, even after I said that I preferred being called Lucy. To them prefixing my name with the word '*Pani*' was natural and normal, a sign of respect for an older associate. My class position was more contradictory. Several participants said they enjoyed listening to my BBC voice which they found clearer and easier to understand than 'Geordie' voices. Through this we established that both they and I were outsiders. Another reflected that some Polish people would associate with me in order to gain kudos, and that by the same token some British people would associate with her because she was 'exotic' [Interview, Klaudia, 17 12.2014]. I did not always live up to the image of a high-powered person, with a car and clothing closer to the 'scruffy' than 'smart' end of the continuum, and a good-natured but mingy three-legged hound with alopecia as a pet. One participant who came to meet me and my husband at the university said that we looked like we belonged to the university – not very 'smart' [Discussion, Marzena, 6.10.2014].

Nevertheless, even if I did not feel or look powerful, and my participants did not look or feel powerless, my citizenship rights, language fluency, economic, cultural and social capital, and familiarity with the NE region brought me security, not only more security than my participants but also than the least wealthy groups targeted by UK austerity policies since 2010 (Hall and Holmes, 2017). All this gave me a greater chance of achieving a level of inner confidence, outward respectability, and freedom from the fear or experience of discrimination, loneliness, poverty and depression that some participants felt and carried privately within themselves, and occasionally gave voice to (Peel, 2003). This was not monolithic, as participants and their families juggled and moved into and out of 'different regimes of value' throughout their daily life and over the life course (Gibson-Graham, 2014, Pine, 2014) and were much more comfortable and confident – particularly linguistically – than I was, for instance, during fieldwork in Poland.

Small acts of kindness and mutual reciprocity are a time-honoured method for trying to redress imbalances and put into practice what Cloke (2002, p.591) terms "a human geography not only '*of* the other', but '*for* the other' which is emotional, connected and committed". My approach involved information work (Dalmer, 2018) offering verbal and written information and internet links about shops and organisations in the region. I also offered, and took one participant to see a business

advisor, another to a community project, and another to an educational institution. I went swimming and cycling and for walks with several others. I shared out old children's' toys and books, and loaves of Ukrainian rye bread that we bought in bulk and could not completely fit into the freezer. This was reciprocated with biscuits, cake, meals and gifts of Polish foodstuffs, jam and fish, which resonated with traditions of food self-provisioning and neighbourly exchange (Smith and Jehlička 2013, Jehlička et al, 2013) and food rituals (Rabikowska and Burrell, 2009, Rabikowska, 2010) enabled us to forge new common ground. Reciprocity was part of a richly embodied research experience that, as Katz (2013, p.8) puts it, risks falling by the wayside when packaged to conform to the "the unitary register of storytelling in social science." Once a participant noticed I had a sore lip and offered some 'Polibiotic', a Polish ointment containing antibiotic, which is not on sale in the UK. She then squeezed some of the gel into a square of tin foil for me and folded the foil up carefully so that I could take it home and continue to use it there. When I was in Poland I bought a tube for her (and one for myself) as a reciprocal gesture, the process of which sparked off insights into frugality (see Section 5.4). My husband commented that discussions about the whys and wherefores of different remedies for numerous conditions x, y and z formed the backdrop to his childhood, as there is a longstanding medical self-help ethos in Poland (that has its downsides when the purveyor of knowledge thinks they know more than the patient or the doctor).

Reciprocal relations of care are not unproblematic as they can involve relationship-nurturing gift exchange (Cliggett, 2005) and the production or even manufacture of temporary intimacy that is not wholly worthy or genuine and is in the researcher's own interest (Madsiva, 2015). There can be a dark side to the gifts, services and favours in that people feel resentful or embarrassed at being socially indebted (Marcoux, 2009) and financially unable take part in circles of reciprocity. However some participants had a lifetime's experience of managing 'economies of favours' (as discussed in Chapter 4.3) and power relations constituted through not only material but also emotional exchange. When I received beautifully packaged gifts from one participant I felt under pressure to think about buying and packaging items of equal worth, but gradually realised the gifts were always in response to something I had done, a way of balancing the scales and nurturing mutual obligation. Participants were carefully weighing up the time and place and right circumstances to seek, accept and reject support, just as I was. Participants rarely phoned me to ask me for help and

never for money. If participants needed something – for instance help in filling out a supermarket membership card form in English – they did so with delicacy and sensitivity and I was pleased from a research and personal perspective to help. As Askins (2014) explains, it is possible to forge a quiet politics of being together with a strong caring dimension (Hall, 2016).

The third positionality that shaped the research, the way participants are chosen and the knowledge produced, were what Moser (2008, p.383) summarises as the researcher's "internal qualities and emotional abilities" that are as much a part of the research encounter as position and power. Smith (2014) argues that attending to personality serves to emphasise some of the commonalities of human experience and emotion. My extravert personality and personal inclination towards sociability enabled me to build relationships with participants, but there were limitations. I gravitated towards chatty individuals who appeared to be kind, as they were the people I could talk to most easily and feel safest with, and they seemed to welcome the opportunity to talk about their lives (Finch, 1993). We also built trust through humour, a dimension of research that is invisible in dry scholarship. As Lipniacka (1994, p.31) puts it, Polish sense of humour is exquisite (and similar to British irony).

> *"Poles tell jokes against themselves – thus beating others to it. They*
> *also turn bleak situations into a joke, by way of whistling in the dark,*
> *and no public figure or situation can escape their scathing wit".*

For instance, one participant's husband joked that talking to me was like confession with a priest, but without the absolution and penance at the end. This meant that I may have missed out on quieter individuals who might have opened up if I had persevered, although there are some things that cannot be said (Pratt, 2012) as they are too painful. This is covered in the next section on ethics.

3.5 Ethics

In this section I look at ethics during fieldwork, in particular how the principles in the ethical review were supplemented by an additional set of personal principles, and how these principles were both borne out and challenged during fieldwork.

Standard ethics procedural processes are valuable in that they highlight and formalise the importance of consent, confidentiality and anonymity and safety, harm and benefit (ESRC 2011, Open University, 2010, 2011) together with giving researchers a framework and starting point for thinking through potential problems. However ethics cannot be circumvented by researchers who have gained ethical clearance and want to do research for ethical reasons (Manzo and Brightbill, 2007) as research motivations and ethics are inseparable from issues of power and privilege (Kulz, 2017). Ethics are present in ways of being as well as acting (Banks et al, 2013), embedded in everyday practice and unfolding daily in dynamic ways as choices are made about who to include and not to include and what topics to include and avoid – a far cry from sanitised regulatory ethical issues (Finch, 1993). The awkward ethical dilemmas and quagmire or compromises and grey areas that arise during fieldwork and writing up raise important questions about the gap between unattainable standards and lofty ideals, and lived experience (Blake, 2007), and between grasping salient ethical issues and putting virtue ethics into practice (Banks et al, 2013). Furthermore, ethical reviews can be critiqued for constructing the participants as undiscerning and exploited objects upon whom research is done (Katz, 1994) rather than constructing both researchers and research participants as holders of ethics and vulnerability (Davison, 2004, Banks et al, 2013).

I supplemented regulatory ethics with my own loose tacit private set of personal principles in an effort to put into practice relational virtues such as trustworthiness, and an 'ethics of care', which focus on the responsibilities attached to particular relationships (Ellis 2007, Banks et al, 2013). As Hall (2016, p.3) puts it: "By listening to and empathising with participants, or in providing companionship or intimacy one can provide a caring role."

The first of these four principles was not to turn my research gaze too intensely on the pain of separation, and on children and vulnerable family members, some of whom I talked to and got to know during household visits as part of a natural process of interaction. This was driven partly by Pratt's (2012) powerful insights into the significance of what could not be put into words when it came to familial pain, drawn from her research with the children of Canadian domestic workers from the Phillipines. It was also driven by fear of provoking feelings of shame, guilt, longing and loneliness (Carling et al, 2012) or even treading on private family taboos regarding what can and cannot be shared, made public and should remain hidden (Isaksen et al,

2008). Secondly, I decided not to record any of my initial long conversations with potential key participants, in order to create a space for explaining what my research was about, and also in order to build trust before seeking permission to meet again and record.

Thirdly, I tried to construct interview materials which would focus attention on life stories and transnational care in creative and trust-enhancing ways, and unveil unexpected insights into participants' social worlds (Marshall, 2013). This involved, where possible, separating myself from the frame of my own experiences, asking appropriate questions, eliciting useful information, getting to the nub of the issue, and avoiding 'naïve empiricism', which meant collecting piles of anecdotal descriptions with no connection with theory (Bryman, 2008, p.8). Diaries were discounted as there had been little engagement with them in other research (Schneider and Holman, 2009). Life maps, family trees and network analysis/location maps based on systematic step by step questioning of 'egos' about the personal attributes of their' alters' and aspects of their relationships such as duration and frequency of contact (Breiger, 2011) were also discounted, as too much fact-finding might engender distrust. In the end I plumped for vignettes containing short hypothetical scenarios about fictional individuals facing dilemmas, such as a phone call about an ill family member in Poland (Finch, 1987b, Rahman, 1996, Barter and Renold, 1999, Bryman, 2008). The aim was to tease out how participants thought the fictional family members should respond, which I imagined might naturally lead on to a discussion about participants' lived experiences of similar situations.

Lastly, emotional rapport would be built on the basis of chatty comfort rather than 'how do you feel questions' followed by long expectant silences, or psychotherapeutic questioning and excavation of memories which might leave participants in a worse rather than a better place. While the process of talking can be empowering, and may help some people atone for the lies and secrets of a previous generation (McNay, 2009), the argument that storying unhealthy secrets is healing and the only ethical thing to do (Poulos, 2008) does not stand up. Talking can help people find ways of   living with biographical pain, but cannot heal it (Johnson, 2013) or enable people to go back in time to put right wrongs, Talking may even be destructively intrusive, as recalled by a writer cast back into depression after an unrelenting interview about his mother's suicide (Lott, 2015). There is, of course, a place for psychotherapeutic encounters, but they are best carried out by researchers

with training, resources and an explicit purpose, such as Winslow (1999), who undertook research with Polish Second World War veterans in the UK in order to produce best practice guidelines for her colleagues, and Munt (2012), who trained as a psychoanalyst and ran psychotherapeutic and educational workshops for refugee women in the UK. This is not to say that therapeutic discussion is the preserve of the professional therapist, as Nagar (2013) illustrates through her involvement with a collective of nine women who wrote diaries, and collectively analysed and published them in order to shed light on the factors shaping their lives in India (Writers and Nagar, 2008). Nagar made an intensive commitment, which involved taking responsibility for some of her sisters' burdens, rather than simply talking and writing. My approach to broaching sensitive subjects was best captured by Malkki (1995 quoted by Hyndman 2001, p.262), who concluded that:

> *"the success of the fieldwork hinged not so much on a determination to ferret out "the facts" as on a willingness to leave some stones unturned, to listen to what my informants deemed important, and to demonstrate my trustworthiness by not prying where I was not wanted. . . . It may be precisely by giving up the scientific detective's urge to know "everything" that we gain access to those very partial vistas that our informants may desire or think to share with us."*

Putting this into practice in my participants' homes was the next step, a series of minute-by-minute decisions, who to choose to talk to, when to pull out the voice recorder, what to focus on, what to steer away from. Not gazing too intensely was complex as some children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews wanted to gaze quite closely at me, and my dog if she was around. Once my dog even bit a small child's nose when he eyeballed her close up, which left me feeling mortified and vowing to start using a muzzle, but the parents took it in their stride. Other children were not at all interested in talking to a middle-aged visitor. One older child enjoyed the attention, to the extent that I had to say that I had come to see her mother, not her, while the only traces of another daughter were footsteps on the stairs and long dark hairs in a hairbrush in the bathroom that I asked to use when I needed a toilet break. I also talked to siblings, partners and parents and found that deciding if and when to formally interview other family members had to be negotiated on a needs-must basis.

Not recording was more straightforward, even if it meant I lost out on five interesting accounts that I thought I could record during follow up meetings that did not happen. Unhurried and unrecorded conversations appeared to engender trust and created opportunities for participants to air initial migration tropes. These often revolved around setting out on a mission, overcoming dangers, suffering and finding redemption, and then the conversation moved on to snapshots of complex family histories and practices that I could go back to in recorded interviews.

Vignettes were a failure. There were so many possible scenarios to choose from that it was difficult to know which ones to choose. They evolved into 4 x A4 sheets focusing on broad 4 themes – firstly linked lives and intergenerational caring, secondly earning and spending, thirdly ageing and return, and fourthly, sex, religion and politics. Each of the four pages contained a box of sentences next to a smiling face and, below, a second box of sentences next to a miserable face. The top set of sentences were positive statements such as '*All the women in my family lived long and healthy lives so I think I will do too and then when I am very old my children will look after me'*. The bottom set of sentences were negative statements such as '*I worry that society is changing in Poland and that in the future younger people won't be able to or want to look after older people in the way that we looked after our parents and grandparents. There is less of a sense of duty'*. I tried the vignettes out with three participants. One participant said the Polish translation was appalling and asked where I had got the information from. I said somewhat sheepishly "my head". We discussed a few of the topics but continually wandered into more interesting and complicated territory. Another tried to answer the questions but I realised that the 'real issues' in her life were more important and could not be captured in this way, and gave up. With a third participant our conversations were so richly textured that I decided not to interrupt the flow and put the unused vignettes to one side. I realised that the vignettes were far too prescriptive and loaded with implicit assumptions about the characters (Bryman, 2008). Vignettes made sense when used in the health and social care sector to bring groups of practitioners together to consider specific ethical issues and work out ways forward, or to measure individual practitioner's clinical knowledge and reasoning and ethical sensitivity (Haas et al, 1986), or to tease out attitudes, perceptions and beliefs (Hughes and Huby, 2002) and specific perceptions in specific groups of patients, for example perceptions among injectors of HIV risk (Hughes, 2001). Vignettes did not make sense in more broad-ranging research on familial care.

'Coffee, cake and co-constructed conversation' proved more effective in developing meaningful sociological insights. Through immersion in face to face conversation, ideas and information flowed in a natural way. Materiality was part of the process as participants showed photographs and gifts they were packing and sending or receiving. As Botterill (2015, p.2) puts it "*The research interview is a space where knowledge is co-created through dynamic interactions between interviewer and interviewee and their overlapping and shifting positionalities*". As well as bringing ourselves, our ways of framing the world and our emotions to our encounters, every time I met people we talked about things that were on our mind and affecting our moods at the time – recent phone calls from children, illness, weather, shocking news of a suicide, a chance sighting of a funeral or a chance encounter with a bereaved acquaintance. Tannen (1990) argues that women use 'troubles talk' to be intimate with others, and while I contest her gender stereotyping, I acknowledge that 'troubles talk' can create connections (Finch, 1994) and maintain personhood (Kitwood and Bredin, 1992), but can also misfire and cause pain if more is revealed than the speaker intended or if guilt is provoked. I tried not to be too intrusive and pulled back if the conversation appeared to be touching raw nerves or straying into delicate territory, ever mindful of the privilege that deeply personal reflections were being shared. For example, when one participant was showing photographs of the home she was building I spotted the foundations of another house nearby and asked her what they were. She said that her parents were building that house when she was a child – and then her father walked out. I realised that the subject was off-limits and moved onto the next photo, but was privately touched by the melancholy nature of the image and the ramifications of the untold story. Other participants reflected that our conversations were thought-provoking and they enjoyed being prompted to think afresh about routine and even mundane aspects of life that they usually took for granted.

In addition to regulatory ethics and personal principles based on an ethic of care, social researchers need a set of ethical principles to enable them to care for themselves, a topic that is underexplored in social research. Social research can be gut-wrenchingly uncomfortable (Cerwonka and Malkki, 2008) and leave researchers feeling like a viper in the nest (Bryant, 2014). Dauphinee (2013, p.1) captures the feeling in her autobiographical and fictional narrative *The Politics of Exile* about her academic research in Bosnia: *"I built my career on the life of a man called Stojan Sokolović. And I would like to explain myself to him. I would like to ask him to forgive me before*

I leave this life, but I don't know how to begin." Researchers need to find ways of living with the gap between the lofty ideals of caring and the insecurities, hypocrisies and fears that undermine lofty principles. As Stanley and Wise (1993, p.157) put it:

> *"Whether we like it or not, researchers remain human beings complete with all the usual assembly of feelings, failings, and moods. And all of those things influence how we feel and understand what is going on. Our consciousness is always the medium through which the research occurs; there is no method or technique of doing research other than through the medium of the researcher."*

My self-care strategy evolved messily, based on acceptance of three concerns. Firstly, it became clear that researchers cannot measure or fully know if they have left participants in a good place. It is also important not to over-exaggerate the importance of research encounters, as participants often have busy lives peppered with fraught exchanges with family members, colleagues and people they come across on a day to day basis. These can leave them in an even worse place than an interview during which painful memories may have been churned up but at the same time authentic connections based on mutual respect may have been made, and opportunities to think, and be listened to, created. Secondly, recorded interviews are like the proverbial curate's egg - good in parts. Listening back to interviews, researchers can feel disappointed with themselves for not picking up on certain points or saying 'walk me through this story again' during the interview, only to find themselves touched by unexpected moments of revelation and insight that were not clear at the time (Bryman, 2008). Thirdly, concerns about professional ethics are rooted in longstanding debates about who social science is for, as illustrated by debates between Stacey (1988) and Skeggs (1994). Stacey (1988, p.23) writes about situations of "inauthenticity, dissimilitude and potential and perhaps inevitable betrayal situations". I come down on side of Skeggs (1994), who argues that Stacey's views construe women as victims when they have the opportunity to resist, and that ethnography is well suited to goals of feminism in that it is based on reciprocity, documents and contextualise lives and activities often seen as marginal. Ellis (2007) and Cerwonka and Malkki (2008) adopt different perspectives. Ellis (2007) says that researchers usually initiate the research relationship, have authority over what gets said and done (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994), and earn prestige and power from their research (Lincoln, 1995). I agree with Cerwonka and Malkki (2008) in aiming for imperfect but engaged scholarship

informed by an 'ethic of care' and a commitment to 'bearing witness and pursuing a caring vigilance' without losing concern for questions of evidence or explanation.

Analysis, writing up and leaving the field are part of ethical practice. As Rigg (2007, p.30) puts it "It's not just what the researcher does in terms of method and approach but how a researcher chooses to use the resulting data and information". Analysis and writing is a profoundly emotional process that draws on the ethical principles outlined above, such as choosing what to focus on and what to leave out, which are as important during analysis and writing as during fieldwork. As Thomson (2016) posits in her blog post on the ethics of analysis and writing:

'The decisions you make about how to analyse and how to write are not simply about the best process, the most robust, the most transparent, something transferable. They are also profoundly about the ways in which we think about what we are doing with people who have given us their time, thoughts and words."

I decided to focus primarily on interview transcriptions and to be particularly judicious with information linked to children, physical and mental health and well-being, and specific facts and figures on age, education, occupation, earnings and location of home and workplace in NE England or Poland which might reveal a participant's identity. The interviews in Polish were transcribed by a certified Polish transcriber as it would have taken me weeks to do them by myself. She was recommended by friends as someone who adhered to high standards of trust and confidentiality. She fitted freelance work in around her day job, which required robust confidentiality, and signed a non-disclosure agreement. I transcribed the English interviews myself. Grounded theory was used to analyse and write up fieldwork data, as it fosters an iterative approach in which the researcher moves back and forth between data collection and analysis in order to draw out key themes (Charmaz, 1990, Bryman, 2008, Timonen et al, 2018). After a prolonged and deep engagement with the data, systematically sifting and moving beyond the obvious meanings to deeper patterns and themes, I also found that I had to leave out a wealth of material on work, housing, life in the UK, spirituality and language acquisition.

During the writing process I realised that my initial aim to get to the nub of issues as seen through participants' eyes was unachievable, but that it was possible to grasp something of their articulated experience and subjectivity through a research encounter (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003). Life stories and care stories are always social

constructions rather than simple factual accounts (Smart, 2011) as they are continually remade over and over throughout our lives in order to help us make sense of our lives, and in so doing, make our lives as they unfold (Thomson, 2017). I stopped using the term 'secrets and lies', an expression often used to describe family life which implies a deliberate hiding, and started thinking along the lines of shame and pain, memory (Riessman, 2005, McDowell, 2013), and imagined families constituted through myth and ritual (Valentine, 2008a), drawing on Gillis's idea (1997) that everyone lives in two families – the one they 'live with' in everyday reality and the one they 'live by'.

I was particularly aware of the ways in which a commitment to participants can come into conflict with the academic need for a critical, analytical mind (Gabb, 2010), and the need to develop the skill of writing about participants in ways which did them and the research justice without misrepresenting them (Ellis, 2007) or avoiding troubling issues (Thomson, 2016), and without either rendering my embodied, situated and subject self as invisible (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003) or going to the other extreme of 'me-search' and using an overly confessional (Morrison, 2015) or auto-ethnographic in the style of Goffman's (2015) '*Fugitive Life in an American City'* (Van Maanen and Rond, 2016).

The politics of representing research can be equally problematic. Trying to present research findings so they are acted upon by a larger public (Cahill and Torre, 2007) in order to better participants' situation in some way (Blaikie, 2007) runs the risk of research being misused, misrepresented or rejected (Cahill et al, 2007). As Staeheli and Mitchell (2005) suggest, the relevance of our research is indeed a political question shaped by the social context in which research is presented, interpreted, and used. I settled for the hope of realising the transformative potential in research (Erel, 2007, Back, 2012) and 'talking across worlds' outside the academy (Nagar, 2002) at some stage in the future when the right opportunities arose.

Leaving the field is also an ongoing process. Having become entangled in participants' intimate and personal lives I felt a moral responsibility and genuine affection and interest in keeping in touch beyond fulfilling the offer to participants to receive information about the outcome of the research when it was finished. When fieldwork finished I dramatically scaled back on visits and contact in order to establish a new phase, but kept in touch with most of the participants through occasional texts, emails, letters and Christmas cards, and occasionally visited or offered hospitality as part of ongoing friendships (Oakley, 2015) beyond the research.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has made the case for multi-sited, feminist, ethnographic research based on repeat research visits and biographical interviews as a methodology for exploring social reproduction and everyday care across borders across multiple generations. This chapter aligns with the next chapter, which puts the research into a broader geographical, social and structural context.

Chapter 4 - Polish context

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contextualises Poland and the UK and thereby situates the research participants' motivations for, and experiences and processes of migration and social reproduction in particular places with particular histories and dimensions, which are always contested and evolving, and influence (but do not determine) individual experience (Kilkey and Merla, 2014). This is necessary in order to put the shifting and contradictory tensions around sharing responsibility for social reproduction between the state and the family - that the following chapters go onto explore - into a specific territorial, spatial and temporal context. It does this by outlining the factors shaping the Polish state's particular provision of social protection, starting with Polish geopolitics and the shifting nature of the Polish state over the past 100 years. It then moves onto the ways in which Polish social protection has been moulded by Bismarckian social insurance schemes linking welfare to work. These were re-worked during the communist era with its focus on social control through work, and then re-worked again during the post-1990 neo-liberal era, with its drive to shift care onto the family. The third section explains how accession to the EU and the ensuing opportunities for mobility and migration for social reproduction added yet more complex layers to debates about and experiences of 'social' citizenship in Poland. The third section also explains how public opinion and law and policy in the UK on EU migration and Britain's de-accession from the EU evolved between 2004 and 2019.

4.2 The shifting and contested nature of the Polish state

This section outlines the debates, barriers and opportunities that have shaped Polish migration and the Polish state's ability to provide social protection for individuals and families over time and space. I argue that it is important to bear in mind that Poland and Polishness is not fixed, as Poland's shape, size and borders have shifted (see appendix 8) and its population reassembled and diversified over the

centuries. Polish migration in response to external threats to its very existence has been well-documented (Triandafyllidou, 2006, Burrell 2009). I further argue, drawing on Davies (1981,1984, 2001), that it is also crucial to look at internal disputes about how Poland is governed, how wealth is shared out, 'who gets what' within Poland, what rights and responsibilities citizens have, and who is eligible for which public goods. There is a common Polish saying 'two Poles, three political parties', which ironically captures the agonistic nature of pluralist democracy (Mouffe, 2000, Painter and Jeffrey, 2009, Staeheli, 2010) in Poland. However, it is more useful to look at the long history of competition for resources and legitimacy between two broadly different groups. One group broadly promotes a multi-ethnic and communal Poland, with citizenship rights gained on the basis of civic commitment to a shared set of political practices and virtues (Croke et al, 2005, p.379). Another group broadly promotes a more fixed view of Poland as Catholic, white, and 'for the Poles,' with citizenship rights gained on the basis of ethnic characteristics and a shared history of patriotic 'blood and soil' resistance to outside oppressors. I conclude by highlighting how the latter group is currently in the ascendency but still facilitates supranational external political alliances and population flows, with consequences for social reproduction.

A brief history of Poland might be useful here as outside Poland there is very little on Polish history (for instance, in school textbooks in the UK). The name Poland comes from the Slavic word '*pole*' (plain). Traditional Polish folk tales about the founding of the Slavic peoples in central Europe often cite, according to my Polish family and friends, three brothers called Lech, Czech, and Ruś, who went their separate ways while hunting. Legend has it that Lech went hunting westwards, came across a clearing in the forest, spotted a white eagle flying up into the red sunset and decided to settle; a classic story of mobility and home-making. The Lechites or West Slavs were united by one particular group called the 'Polanians' who used a red flag decorated with a white eagle (McBride, 2014, p.6). These myths are significant because since Poland became a formal state in the 10th century, its history has been shaped by its location on a flat and traversable plain, edged to the south by mountains, and by its co-existence with, expansion into and occupation by neighbouring dynastic empires (Davies, 1984, Stachura, 2004,p.48). By the mid-16th century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth ruled vast tracts of land in Central and Eastern Europe. This period is widely seen as a Golden Age (McBride, 2014) during which Poland traded across the region, prospered and enjoyed a cultural renaissance. By 1795 the

Commonwealth had collapsed and Poland was partitioned between the Russian, Prussian/German and Austrian/Austro-Hungarian empires for 123 years, and wiped off the map (see appendix 8), contributing to extensive migration to the USA, Canada and Australia and to the industrial centres in Germany, France and Belgium. Independence at the end of the First World War in 1918 was short-lived as the Second Polish Republic was invaded in 1939 and occupied by the Nazi and Soviet armies throughout the Second World War. In 1945 Poland found itself both on the winning side of World War Two when the Nazis were defeated, and one of the losers, when Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt agreed at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences to carve Central Europe up between East and West Europe along the 'Curzon line' (Stachura, 2004). Poland and its inhabitants, diminished from 35 million pre-war to 22.2 million post-war (Golinowska, 2009) became part of the Soviet-aligned Eastern Bloc and was governed by the Polish People's Republic as a one-party state from 1947-89. After a two-year transition period towards multi-party democracy the current Third Polish Republic was formed in 1991 and Poland acceded to the EU in 2005.

During the past 100 years since Poland regained its independence, it has swung from ideas of nationhood based on diversity and 'common wealth', as envisaged by the 1918-35 leader Piłsudski, to more nativist ideas such as those pursued by his rival Dmowski, who envisaged a smaller state made up of white Roman Catholic Poles (Davies, 1984). Pre-war nationalism was taken on by the communist regime and used to its advantage in narrow reinventions of the past, which airbrushed historical diversity in order to prevent collaboration with neighbouring states and resistance to 'mother Russia' (Czaplinski and Ładogórski, 1986). After 1989 there was a swing back towards plurality and multilateralism, and 20 years later Poland went as far as ratifying the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Since 2015 and the election of the conservative 'Law and Justice party' (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* or *PiS* for short) with its overtly 'family, church and nation' politics there has been a re-traditionalising return to a nationalistic and patriarchal, rooted once again in singular concepts of an independent rather than an interdependent Poland. However it is important not to over-simplify Polish politics into good and bad, or to look through a British lens by categorising parties as rightwing and leftwing. It is more helpful to look at the contradictions and complexities on all sides. For instance, Piłsudski may have been an inspiring leader in some ways, but he consolidated power through a military coup in 1926, which led to a degraded democracy typical of others in the region

(Davies, 1984). Furthermore, PiS is socially but not fiscally conservative, as it has reintroduced elements of what elsewhere in Europe might be called 'leftwing' welfare support in the UK.

Despite this rich history, discussions about Polish migration sometimes tend towards over-simplification. One key theme in Polish discourses is oppression by invaders who drive Poles from their lands – and resistance. The experience of oppression permeates literature, music, art and all aspects of Polish culture. For instance the national anthem '*Mazurek Dąbrowskiego*' (Dąbrowski's Mazurka), written in 1797, contains the words '*Jeszcze Polska nie zginela*' (Poland Has Not Yet Perished) and still resonates powerfully in political and popular culture. The experience of painful and heroic familial separation is another key theme, evoked poignantly in the popular folk song '*Góralu, czy ci nie żal*' (the Highlander's Regret). In it a '*Góral*' *(*highlander) laments leaving the mountains '*za chlebem*' (for bread), which is a symbol of earning money to put food on the table (White, 2011a, p.4). A third theme is the self-sacrificing role of women, who are written out of the stories of male and labour-driven migration (Pustułka, 2014b). Where they are written in they are glorified as '*Matka Polka*' (Polish mother or mother patriots), as long as they are not single mothers (Hryciuk, 2017). '*Matki Polskie*' (Polish mothers, plural) bore and reared future generations who would fight for and populate a new Poland, and who coped unflinchingly with everything life threw at them while their husbands were away (Wejnert and Djumabaeva, 2005, Titkow, 2007). Sacrifice is a multi-faceted concept threaded through multiple domains, ranging from the liturgical repetition of the Catholic belief that Jesus shed his blood for many 'for the remission of sins' in church services, to literary renditions of acts of sacrifice, such as Adam Mickiewicz's poems on the struggle for freedom and exemplary martyrdom by Poland, 'the Christ of nations' and a geopolitical sacrificial lamb.

International discourses about Poland's history also tend to focus on singular interpretations, sometimes in disparaging ways. Much attention is paid to the Second World War, the Holocaust and the mono-ethnic nature of the country. The latter is conflated with Muslimophobia and anti-Semitism. Less attention is paid to the long view revealing Poland's multi-ethnic history, the unhealed traumas of the past and the manufacturing of consent for populism. Much attention is also paid to the popular protests in Poland leading up to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, which have been grouped into grand narratives in which the 'good forces' of Western democracy and

capitalism defeated the 'evil forces of communism' (Pine and Bridger, 1998) and transformed the Polish economy into one of the most robust in Europe. This perspective is partly rooted in orientalist ideas (Said, 1978) which conceive of Western Europe as modern and the rest of the world as shaped by pre-modern elements and waiting to catch up (Chakrabaty, 2009). Less attention is paid to the inequalities exacerbated by neo-liberal capitalism. Much attention is paid to strict abortion laws within Poland, and less to the progressive dimensions of Catholicism. I contend that it is important to grasp the complex and shifting nature of Poland's history and geography, rather than envisaging it as fixed and singular, and to grasp the contested ideas underpinning its contradictory progressive and exclusionary internal politics based on conciliatory and intransigent discussion, in order to avoid generalising about the Polish context when considering migration and social reproduction.

Four key images are helpful. Firstly, there is not just one map of Poland (see appendix 8). Poland's shape, size and borders have shifted over time and space, most recently westwards in 1945, thereby incorporating parts of what was Germany and disjoining from parts of Lithuania, Belarus and the Ukraine. Poland is not unique as its central European neighbours have similarly shifted and changed, with some disappearing totally from the map, such as the ancient kingdom of *Galicja* (Galicia) which straddled what is now the border between Poland and the Ukraine and thrived as a crossing point for major trade routes between Hungary and the Baltic Sea.

Secondly, there is not just one singular Polish identity. Instead it is helpful to picture diverse ebbs and flows of people north, south, east, west, across continents, mountains and oceans, to and from rural to urban areas, moving voluntarily and forcibly, with multiple identities shaped by the regions in which they found themselves (Castles et al, 2014). After World War Two, for instance, as sizeable Polish community remained in eastern areas which had been part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and were then designated as part of Lithuania. Other Poles moved from the 'east', such as many of the inhabitants of Lviv (known as *Lwów* in Polish and *Lemburg* in German) in what is now the Ukraine, to start new lives in what was German Silesia and is now Polish Silesia (known as *Śląsk* in Polish*)*.

Patterns of migration beyond Poland's borders also varied in scale and direction between and within regions, with extensive migration to Brussels from NE Poland and to the USA from the Tatry mountains (Pine, 2014). During the Polish People's Republic from 1947-89, migration was enabled by tourist visas, temporary

seasonal labour permits and relocation to Germany on the basis of claims to German ethnicity. Since 2004, emigration has been greatest from what White (2011a, p.28) terms "Poland B", the Eastern part of the country containing regions, urban and rural areas, towns and villages, which have lost out economically in the transition to a market economy. There are localities where every resident has friends and relatives who have migrated and many residents are themselves former migrants, but not every local community in Poland is equally touched by migration (White, 2011a).

Internal migration within Poland since 1945 is similarly uneven and differentiated. Just as I carry my family history with me, and always say that I grew up in Scotland, but am not Scottish, so my participants repeatedly differentiated and grounded themselves in particular places when telling their particular personal histories. For instance, several sets of participants talked about their families moving to *Śląsk* (Silesia) from other parts of Poland for work at different points during the past 50 years, and further differentiated their particular part of *Śląsk* from other parts of *Śląsk*, using authentic and mimicked *Śląskie* (Silesian) accents to explain the use and origins of place names and particular words. Differentiation reaches deep into families too, with different members ascribing differing identities to themselves and their deceased relatives, be it German, Ukrainian, Polish or other. They agree with each other, they argue, they stay silent. Discussions tap into profound experiences of fear, prejudice, belonging, and separation. One participant in *Śląsk* (Silesia) talked about the challenges his parents and grandparents faced moving from the East, mirroring the 1967 Polish film *Sami Swoji* (Our Folks). In contrast his adult daughter said she was proud to be *Ślązaczka* (Silesian woman) and actively involved with emerging community groups celebrating *Ślązak* heritage and landscape. She was drawing on a long tradition of defying categorisation, such as that identified by Bjork (2009) in his research in Silesia, which concluded that the inhabitants of one of Europe's most densely populated industrial districts managed to defy clear-cut national categorisation, even in 'the heyday of nationalising pressure' (Bjork, 2009, p.15) at the turn of the twentieth century.

Thirdly, snapshots of the ethnic composition of communities at different times in the past reveal an abundantly diverse population. Bill (2018, p.16) points out that "In 1918, the Polish state that rose from the ruins of the Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian empires was multi-ethnic, multicultural, multilingual and multi-confessional. Almost one-third of Polish citizens belonged to Ukrainian, Belarusian,

Jewish, Lithuanian, German and other minorities", including the Lipka Tartars and their mosques. Davies and Moorhouse (2002) capture this 'ethnic kaleidoscope' in their book '*Microcosm: A Portrait of a Central European City*' on Silesia's largest city Wrocław (also known in different historical periods as *Breslau, Bresslau, Presslaw, Vretslav and Wrotizla*). They argue (Davies and Moorhouse, 2002, p.10).that Wrocław contains:

"a condensed compilation of all the experiences that have made Central Europe what it is – the rich mixture of nationalities and cultures, the German 'Drang nach Osten'[2] and the reflux of Slavs; a Jewish presence of exceptional distinction; a turbulent succession of imperial rulers; and, in modern times, the shattering exposure to both Nazis and Stalinists. In short it is a central European microcosm."

This diversity has been captured in literature and film, such as in the Polish film director Andrzej Wajda's film *'The Promised Land',* showing Jewish, Catholic and Protestant workers in the nineteenth century industrial city of Łódź. It is also in Sands' (2017) book '*East West Street'*, which intertwines his research into his family's heritage in Lviv with the development of human rights law, and captures the tensions between Jewish, Ukrainian and Polish residents, and the unspeakable annihilation of Jews during the Holocaust. While arguably Poland can be represented as somewhat 'isolated' from ethnic, national and religious diversity from the 1940s until the late 1980s, as a result of the World War Two and the communist regime (Gawlewicz, 2015a, b), in practice inward migration to particular urban locations in Poland from the Soviet bloc, Vietnam and those African states sympathetic to communism continued during this period (Iglicka, 2007).

Fourthly, Polish women cannot be termed 'oppressed' even if some dimensions of their lives are threaded through with structural and personal gendered inequalities (Coyle, 2007, Hardy, 2009). Hryciuk & Korolczuk (2012) argue that the term '*Matka Polka'* (Polish mother or mother patriot) is now out of date, while other researchers highlight 'self-investing' women (Marody and Giza-Poleszczuk, 2000). Changing migration patterns mean wives, girlfriends, partners and children stay behind in Poland less, as family reunification is extensive, and both men and women undertake circular and long-term migration (Burrell, 2008, Ryan et al 2009, White, 2013). Heinen and Wator's (2006, p.189) contention that the weight of the church and

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[2] Push to the East.

traditional attitudes render women as second class citizensis valid in some domains at some times for some cohorts, such as single mothers (Hryciuk, 2017) but not others, whose roles as daughters, wives, mothers, aunts and grandmothers remains central to their economic and emotional security and personal and societal status (see Chapter 2.4).

However, under the Law and Justice Party (PiS) elected in 2015 gender equality has taken a backward step, most notably with the bio-political disciplining of womens' bodies through restrictive abortion laws, which have driven abortion underground, and also with the undermining of civil society organisations. Public discourses celebrating the legacy of ethnic and cultural diversity inscribed in people and places across Poland have been crowded out by the nationalistic and libertarian conservative politics of the governing party, which manufactures threats to Poland's political sovereignty from Russia, the EU, Muslim refugees, and a new threat from within – population ageing, outward migration by young people and a fall in fertility rates below the replacement level. Life expectancy for women increased from around 71 in 1960 to 82 in 2015 and for men it increased from 65 to 74 (World Bank DataBank, 2017). The average number of children born to a woman in Poland in her lifetime has dropped from 3 in 1960 to 2.1 in 1989 and 1.27 in 2007. The latest figures indicate it is around 1.3 (Mishtal, 2012, World Bank DataBank, 2017). The level of fertility at which a population in a country like Poland replaces itself from generation to generation is crudely defined as 2.1 (Harper, 2014). Concerns are mounting that too few children are being born able to work, pay and care for ageing population and sustain economic growth. The share of population over 65 has gone from 8% in 1950 to 20% in 2015 and the old age dependency ratio – the ratio of the population over 65 relative to the 'working' population – has risen from under 15% in 1950 to over 30% in 2015 (World Bank DataBank, 2017).

In this context, a raft of policy incentives have been introduced to encourage women to have more children. In 2017 the Polish Ministry of Health promoted a video encouraging Polish couples to 'breed like rabbits' in order to boost the birth rate (Ministerstwo Zdrowia, 2017, BBC, 2017). It was ridiculed in some quarters, as for instance in an ironic cartoon in Wprost magazine '*Breed like rabbits, toil like oxen, vote like sheep.*' The joke chimed with longstanding fears in progressive circles about the erosion of womens' reproductive rights since the 1990s, when strict abortion laws

were introduced. The issue is crystallised in the following quote by a government minister, Patrycja Popowicz, in 1992 (Wejnert and Djumabaeva, 2005, p.154).

"As soon as the right-wing politicians win the election to the Polish government, women's role will be limited to that of mother, care giver, and homemaker . . . and nobody will invest in the education of women, whose only role will be to bear children".

Progressive reformers called for 'work-family reconciliation policies' like those 'that have stimulated fertility elsewhere in Europe' rather than discourses blaming women for 'irrational' non-reproduction' (Mishtal, 2012, Devictor, 2012). Moves since 2015 to further tighten abortion laws brought people out onto the streets to take part in national strikes known as *Czarny Protest* (black protest) (Easton, 2016, Narkowicz, 2016, Koper and Goettig, 2018), which gained worldwide attention. Less widely covered, but equally powerful, were protests by disabled adults, who occupied the Polish Parliament building during a 2018 NATO summit as part of their campaign for better healthcare and social support. They held up banners asking why the government wanted to protect unborn babies, but not the disabled adults that some of the babies develop into. An award-winning photo captured the disdain on a politician's face as she walked away from the protestors (Kacprzak, 2018), and spoke to the constant struggle for political change.

However, in other quarters the 'breed like rabbits' message reinforced nationalist myths that Poland's indigenous white Catholic population and culture was under threat. In a typical toxic fashion the far right media organisation Breitbart (Friedman, 2017) praised the Polish government for "encouraging couples to make their own citizens, unlike Germany". Breitbart claimed that the German government 'believes mass migration from third world countries is the only way to solve their demographic decline'.

Away from the public gaze population growth has happened by default through a steep increase in immigration from the Ukraine since 2014 (Eurostat, 2017, Aris, 2018), transforming Poland into a country of net immigration (Iglicka, 2010, Fedyuk and Kindler, 2016). Thousands of Ukrainians - the number varies from quarter of a million to one million depending on which source is accessed (Kindler et al, 2016, p.10) - undertake low paid care work for the growing elderly population (Keryk, 2010, Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2012). Care has to be taken when describing Ukrainians as migrants, as Eastern Ukraine was part of Poland before 1945, which is

still in living memory. Some Ukrainians speak fluent Polish, and there are longstanding neighbourly ties that do not map neatly onto state borders.

In conclusion, Poland is still evolving, not through the territorial remapping of previous centuries but through supranational external political alliances and population flows with neighbours, and through ongoing internal battles for resources and legitimacy and contradictions. Some of the most profound contradictions are rooted in tensions around social protection policies, which are outlined in more detail in the next section.

4.3 Polish social protection shaped by Bismarck's contributory welfare system

This section outlines the emergence of the Polish welfare context over the past century, shaped not only by the aforementioned Polish geopolitical struggles for self-determination, but also by domestic politics about how to guarantee that people's dignity and freedom is not severely compromised by social conditions under which they cannot procure basic needs and services. In particular debates have emerged concerning the way social reproduction is organised, resources and roles allocated and inequalities exacerbated or moderated. The role of the family in the social state in Poland receives much attention and been well documented (Golinowska, 2010).

I argue that it is important to unpack why the family is central, and how social reproduction is stratified and differentiated. I draw on Katz's 'care diamond' (see Chapter 2) to shed light on the many complex ways in which families are positioned alongside the state, market and community. I pay particular attention to the development of a German Bismarckian contributory system of social welfare, which is conditional on employment-linked contributions to occupational social insurance funds (Michoń et al, 2013). This is different to a British Beveridgean system based on universal social assistance, which broadly aims to meet subsistence needs and aims to alleviate poverty. Attention is also paid to the ways in which Polish welfare law and policy build and reinforce gender and generational interdependence and social differentiation. Furthermore, the role of the Catholic church is considered, and the ways in which it valorises private domains over the public sphere and the 'ideal

family' as a private social and moral unit responsible for younger and older members (Blackman et al, 2001, p, 23).

At first glance readings of the primacy of intergenerational family care in Poland are borne out by demographic statistics. Proximity and propinquity – families living together or near each other with affective or emotional ties (Fanganhel et al, 2012) – is understood as meaning they can take on huge caring responsibilities for each other at different stages of the lifecourse, particularly when children are young and the elderly are frail (Heinen and Wator, 2006, Glass and Fodor, 2007, Radziwinowiczówna et al, 2018). Three quarters of adult Poles living in Poland see their parents once a week according to a 2007 survey (White, 2011a). Grandparents step in to offer unpaid childcare to their grandchildren, and when grandparents grow old and frail their children often fit in unpaid caring for them around their paid work or retirement. Kotowska et al (2008) draw on surveys that show that the majority of society (90%) thinks that the care of older people should be the duty of their children or other relatives. Up to 85% of survey respondents were willing to take their older parents to their household (85%), whereas negative opinions about the institution of nursing home were declared by 70% of the respondents (Kotowska et al, 2008).

Closer examination through the lens of the 'care diamond' (see Chapter 2) shows that the traditional family model, which values the nurturing of relationships between generations, has been reinforced over the years by, as Stenning (2011, p.191). puts it, "family policies that have sought to devolve responsibility for childcare and wider welfare to the family" Retirement, pension and social care policies have also shaped how different generations exercise responsibility for each other through care labour and finance. Early retirement for women in their mid-50s and the security of a regular albeit small pension income (Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2012, Dykstra and Komter, 2012) has positioned grandmothers in particular as informal carers for grandchildren and ageing relatives while their adult working children earn a living), in exchange for familial eldercare when they themselves are frail. Interdependence is also reinforced by the absence of a formal comprehensive duty on the state in Poland to assess need and provide support for the frail elderly. Interdependence is further underpinned by the Polish legal system, which sets out familial responsibilities for care, assets and debts in law. For instance, when one parent dies, inheritance law follows a formula to split any inheritance - and any debts - between the remaining partner and children.

Catholicism bolsters a particular version of familialism, with its vision of the ideal interdependent family responsible for younger and older members (Blackman et al, 2001, p.23), and even 'social development and progress'. The ideal family fails if it does not provide care (King et al, 2014). The ethos of familial loyalty can also be viewed through the lens of Poland's turbulent history in which the family has been viewed "as a sanctuary in a sea of hostile social relations" (Buchowski, 1996, p.82) and an institution for the preservation of national identity (Titkow and Duch, 2004). In contrast Krzyżowski (2011, p.55) interprets intergenerational solidarity as 'a trap' driven by necessity and shaped by 'culture-defined expectations of specific age categories, reinforced by the unavailability of public care institutions'. Social policy researchers define Polish social protection as a disjointed (Bjørnholt et al, 2017) and geographically uneven 'model in the making' based on 'implicit familialism' (Keryk, 2014) or neo-liberal 're-familialism' (Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2012) or 'familialism by default' (Dykstra and Komter, 2012).

The social policy shaping Polish familialism has a particular history dating back to the industrial revolution and state formation in nineteenth century Europe. The earliest state social protection schemes in Poland were based on models introduced by Otto von Bismarck, the first Chancellor of the German Empire, in the 1880s in German-occupied western and northern Poland known as Prussia. The schemes were simultaneously pioneering building blocks for a welfare state and a crafty calculated strategy to gain working class political support and quell social unrest. The schemes were extended across much of the rest of Poland after it regained independence in 1918 (Golinowska, 2009). However provision was patchy given the difficulty of creating a unified Polish state in which gaps between regions, urban and rural areas and the economically wealthier and less wealthy were bridged. There was less state provision in rural areas in eastern Poland dominated by powerful magnate families who controlled huge tracts of land. The schemes were based on large insurance funds which acted in a similar manner to National Insurance in the UK, in that they automatically deducted contributions from workers' pay packets and pooled them to provide healthcare, welfare and pensions (Toynbee 2011, Osipovič, 2010). Charitable organisations filled gaps in provision by providing support for the poor and destitute, and for those who lived into old age. The 1920 *Law on Health Insurance Funds* and the 1923 *Social Welfare Act* tried to extend provision by setting up health services and determining that those unable to support themselves had a right to social assistance

and that their basic needs should be met by municipal authorities (Golinowska, 2010, Michoń et al, 2013).

During the Second World War the social insurance institutions were preserved and administered by the occupying forces. After 1945 health, welfare and pension provision was centralised and extended to everyone as part of a centrally planned economy implemented through a powerful bureaucracy. The link between earnings and welfare was upheld. As workers were needed women were mobilised into the paid employment workforce as 'worker mothers' in urban areas in particular (most women had long *worked* as family farmers in rural areas). Theoretically this mobilisation enabled 'female emancipation from the household and patriarchal family" (Botterill, 2012). In practice "a two bread-winner model was developed at the cost of doubling women's work: at home and at workplaces" (Golinowska, 2009, p.221). By 1970 80% of women aged 15-54 were in employment (White, 2011a), often in the lower levels of the labour market (Hardy, 2009). Some families had access to employer-run kindergartens, but others did not, and sometimes had to resort to putting house keys on strings around their childrens' necks and telling them to let themselves into their homes after school. By the beginning of the 1980s one of the demands of the trade union *Solidarność* (Solidarity) was family-friendly employment policy. The state pension age was set at 56 for women, on the basis that it was more beneficial to use their care labour than retain them in the labour market as paid workers. Everyone was entitled to a pension from *Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych* or *ZUS* (Social Insurance Institution). Some state pensions were supplemented by a range of occupational pension schemes, which enabled some workers in special sectors such as civil servants, teachers, soldiers, police officers and miners to retire earlier on relatively larger pensions. There was a separate insurance scheme for farmers (Golinowska, 2009). Eldercare, which was becoming more important as longevity increased, was largely the domain of the family, with the gaps filled by philanthropic and religious organisations or 'soul-less' state-run institutions (Keryk, 2010).

When communist rule came to end in 1989, many Poles hoped for a more prosperous economy, a freer society and improved social security. Instead for some the economic 'shock therapy' introduced on 1 January 1990 was more 'shock' than 'therapy', with the shock of empty shelves replaced by the shock of empty pockets (Hardy, 2009, p.5). The new regime initiated immediate reductions in public spending, the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, wage freezes, workplace closures, job

losses and unemployment, which led to a drop in outputs and employment in the early 1990s (Stenning et al, 2011). Although some cohorts benefitted (Leven, 2008) employment protections were weakened in favour of flexicurity that benefitted employers. Dunn (1998, p.7) identifies a

> *"process of convergence and globalisation that transforms people*
> *into 'flexible, agile, self-regulating workers who help their firms*
> *respond to ever-changing market conditions"*

Temporary contracts known as *umowy śmieciowe* (junk contracts) emerged, which paid little, and offered no stability, or social security, or regular hours that fitted in around the traditional early start to the working day and 3pm *obiad* (dinner and main meal of the day). The 'mother homemaker' model emerged as job opportunities shrunk and jobs were prioritised for men (Coyle, 2007). Home and work became an even bigger 'double burden' for some women (Hardy, 2009) and child poverty rose, with poorer women lumbered with the thankless and corrosive task of 'poverty management' (Fodor et al, 2002, Jastrzębska-Szklarska, 2002).

The welfare system was re-shaped after 1990 into a hybrid (Golinowska, 2009) adult worker and welfare model based on a contributory principle, with some formal welfare entitlements. These included state pensions, and basic universal healthcare provided through the *Narodowa Słuzba Zdrowia or NSZ* (National Health Service). As most people had to pay for prescriptions and treatments were rationed, public healthcare was dubbed 'ill-fare' (Ferge, 2001). A parallel private healthcare system operated alongside the public healthcare system, with clear socially determined health and longevity gaps between economically rich and poor groups (Tymowska, 2001), and particularly clear links between low educational and income levels and early male mortality (Kołodziej et al, 2007). *Ulga dla dzeici (*child benefits*)* were considered particularly inadequate and derisory (White, 2011a). Responsibility for unemployment benefit and social care was largely devolved to local authorities, the church and the charitable and private sectors – and the family. In a 2015 survey three quarters of the unemployed claimed that their subsistence was provided by other family members (CBOS, 2015).

In contrast earnings related occupational pensions were protected, and described in some quarters as 'staggeringly generous' (Rutkowski, 1998). Pension expenditure gradually rose up the policy agenda as it made up more than 10% of GDP (Toynbee, 2011, Golinowska, 2009). In 1999 the pension system was re-organised,

with benefits more explicitly linked to contributions and capital-funded pensions (called Open Pension Funds or OPEs) introduced alongside pay-as-you-go state pension provision run by *Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych* or *ZUS* (Social Insurance Institution). The pension age was increased from 56 to 60 for women in 2009, and the rolling out of a state pension age of 67 began in 2013. In 2011 Donald Tusk, the prime minister, promised not to "tamper with Poles' pension payouts", but rearranged funding by transferring some of the private pension funds into ZUS (Social Insurance Institution) in order to ease pressure on the public accounts (OECD, 2015).

Despite the focus on pension reform, there was little evidence that the labour market was willing or able to absorb an influx of midlife workers. In 2016 the employment rate of 55–64-year-olds in Poland was 46%, well below the OECD average of 59% according to the OECD (2015). Perek-Białas and Turek (2012, p.107) contend that:

> "*Poland may be described as a typical early-exit age culture where ageing wage earners are pushed out of the labour force*" but there are "*numerous opportunities for receiving a long-term benefit (early retirement pensions before, now bridging pensions, disability pension or pre-retirement benefits)…*"

What the dry economic analyses skim over is the value of the huge amounts of unpaid care work for children, the sick and the very elderly undertaken by active pensioners, and the dearth of policy solutions for families who would lose childcare or eldercare if relatively newly retired family members gave up their unpaid care work. As Stypinska and Perek-Białas (2011) put it "The problems related to the situation of caregiving of an older adult, especially by those in employment, have not yet been deeply analysed for Poland". However, attitudes may gradually be shifting. For instance, the OECD opined in 2018 that 'insufficient institutional care for the elderly' was a barrier to female employment (Brandt and Guérin, 2018).

State-funded eldercare provision has long been minimal, discretionary and means tested and eligibility was limited to people who were very poor or very disabled, meaning only 10% of applicants meet the criteria. Elderly people without family support can have their pensions cashed by 'public benefit institutions' in exchange for district nursing or full-time care in not-for-profit care homes, which are run by church charities such as Caritas, occupational charities such as military veteran's networks, and local authorities (Golinowska, 2010, Leszko, 2015). New formal and informal

care infrastructures have emerged, such as private care homes, and domestic care labour undertaken by Ukrainians (see Section 4.1). These are often unregulated or regulations were unenforced, to the detriment of both cared for and carer, with everyone at risk of becoming victims. More prosperous cities, such as Gdynia, have begun pioneering community-based social care services, such as senior clubs and day care centres, and new technologies to allow people to live at home for longer (Kordasiewicz and Sadura, 2017). Economically poorer localities appear to remain more dependent on traditional philanthropy and the longstanding informal economy.

The informal economy is important in a Polish context, as it extends into all the domains of care distributed between the state, the family, the market and the community (as depicted in the 'care diamond', see Chapter 2). There are often blurred boundaries between the different domains, for instance cash transfers to neighbours, people in the community and even other family members for care work undertaken during shortages of family care labour. As Pavlovskaya (2004), Williams (2005), Round et al (2008) and Stenning et al (2011) explain, the informal economy in Central Europe emerged from the multiple economic practices and multiple 'rainbow economies' of the communist era. The three primary colours of the rainbow symbolised the three adjoining economies: the official, the unofficial and rule–breaking (out of necessity), and the barter economies. Barter economies revolved around *economies of favours (*Ledeneva, 1998) with *znajmości* (acquaintances) who were in the know and helped each other overcome shortages. Rule–breaking (Morawska, 2001, p.59) was done out of necessity and known as *dojścia (*getting into the right place at the right time but not necessarily through the right means*)* and *kombinacja* (spaces of shady business, ingenuity and innovation). Essentially *kombinacja* involved extracting money from the state, on the basis that it was a hostile structure which one ought to cheat and treat with suspicion, but at the same time provided benefits and welfare. A more benign version was *załatwić sprawy* (getting things done) driven by 'pragmatic small individualism' or the maximum usage of public opportunities in order to achieve private aims (Osipovič, 2010, 2015). Dodging the system through *kombinacja* is still an entertaining national sport for some and highly corrosive of the public realm for others (Osipovič, 2010). For instance a European Commission (2017) country report on Poland noted that tax compliance 'is markedly below the European average'.

Throughout the years following the era of 'economic shock therapy' in the 1990s poverty has been a rising concern. Attitudes have been splintered by ideological battles over definitions of poverty as absolute or relative and people living in poverty as strivers versus skivers (Valentine and Harris, 2014). According to the European Anti-Poverty Network (2015), almost one in four of the Polish population were experiencing material poverty and social exclusion in 2015, with women and children at the higher risk of poverty. These calculations were based on poverty defined as below 60% of the median income and the inability to cover not only bills and heating but also to pay for a holiday, car, phone, washing machine or colour television (European Anti-Poverty Network, 2015). Sceptics have long attributed penury to personal failings such as laziness, unwillingness to work and alcoholism (Golinowska, 2009, p. 245, CBOS 2017a), rather than a structurally uneven landscape of jobs, housing, healthcare and pathways through bureaucracies. Sceptics have also consistently dubbed welfare as a 'fiscal burden' (Siemieńska et al, 2013), and a form of government largesse, which promoted 'inactivity' amongst people with a socialist mentality', a syndrome of *wyuczona bezradność'* (learned helplessness) and over-reliance on an overly paternalistic welfare system (Sztompka, 2003). These views were often rooted in a longstanding ambivalence about the state's role in securing rights and reducing poverty, expressed through a deep-seated aversion to assistance based on rights rather than discretion (Ferge, 2001) and a strong attachment to 'just desert' or quid pro quo deservingness (Osipovič, 2015).

In 2015 anger about poverty contributed to the election of the *Law and Justice* (PiS) party to government, partly on the back of promises to reconsider welfare (a strategy used by Bismarck a century earlier). Some of the promised welfare changes went ahead, notably the introduction of child benefits called '*Rodzina 500+*' (Family 500+) which added up to 500zl (equivalent to £100) per month per child, with conditions attached (European Commission, 2018). Another change was the re-introduction of a state pension age of 60 for women (and 65 for men) in 2017. One of the underlying aims of these policies was to encourage families to have more children, and to free up grandmothers to undertake childcare when their daughters and daughters in law returned to paid work outside the home.

These well-publicised policies have been made in tandem with less publicised reductions in pension benefits (European Trade Union Institute, 2018), which are calculated by dividing accumulated contributions by average life expectancy

(Devictor, 2012). There is also a trend towards reduced funding for public healthcare and the welfare safety net for the unemployed, as well as little serious public policy making on eldercare, long term medical conditions and disability. Furthermore, trial work is underway on a new social care insurance fund, based on a Bismarckian contributory system, to enable individuals to save for their care when they are frail [Discussion June 2017, at Warsaw University Centre for Migration Research conference on ageing]. None of these policies have necessarily gained public consent, as borne out to some extent by a CBOS (2016) survey in 2016 which concluded that

> "*the general public agree with the principle of contributory pensions supplemented by at state pension, and freedom of choice to work after retirement, but not with a universal retirement age of nearly 70, or penalties for retirement at 60 in the shape of higher taxes or lower pension values*"

In conclusion, Polish social policy is constantly evolving. Political decisions about social policy shape everyday lives and decisions about who stays put and who migrates, and the perspectives that migrants to the UK and other EU member states carry with them and draw on to make sense of their new lives. The EU and UK migration context is examined in the next section.

4.4 The European Union - Poland's accession 2004 and Britain's de-accession 2016-2019

This section outlines the ways in which the social reproduction and migration under examination in this thesis has been re-shaped since Poland joined the EU, and latterly since Britain began the process of trying to re-work its relationship with the EU following the UK European Union membership referendum in 2016. Migration to the UK since Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 is well documented (see Chapter 2) and emerging new literature from academic think-tanks, such as The UK in a Changing Europe based in King's College, London, captures the changing nature of the EU. These include fiscal stresses and strains and the rise of populist political movements (Menon, 2016), and Britain's journey towards de-accession known as Brexit (Goodwin and Heath, 2016, Shipman, 2016), which Menon (2016) argues is 'another toxic issue to add to the pile' in the EU and 'feeds into pre-existing problems.'

This section argues that, however, more attention needs to be paid to the lens of superdiverse (Vertovec, 2007) and stratified citizenship (Ackers, 2004, Kilkey, 2018). This lens sheds light on the tensions at the heart of the EU project between an economic model of freedom of movement for workers, and social model of social protection for workers and their families, and between non-discrimination on the basis of nationality, and exclusionary migration and citizenship regimes. This section further argues that increasingly work, welfare and migration regimes in Poland and the UK are shaped by 'flexicurity'- flexible work, a weak social safety net and the shifting of care onto families - which exacerbates gender, class and ethnic inequalities and uneven social reproduction.

EU accession in 2004 is often presented as a mixed blessing to Poland - beneficial economically for some but not others, with migration enabling people to 'help themselves', but splitting families and threatening family life (White, 2011a). A year before EU accession, Poland generated an annual GDP of £130bn. By 2013, that figure had grown to £305bn. GDP per capita rose from 44% of the EU average on accession to 67% in 2014 (Adekoya, 2014). Remittances have increased since Poles accessed EU labour markets in 2004 and boosted household and GDP growth by approximately 1-2%, especially for the least well to do in small towns and rural areas who are the main recipients (Pine, 2003, p.106, Barbone et al, 2012). An alternative view is that remittances are an indictment of an unjust system as Poland's rapid integration into the world economy has led to uneven development, with the upgrading of some industrial capacity and all major cities, but the downgrading, neglect and decline of other sectors and regions, particularly in Eastern Poland, forcing people to migrate (Favell, 2008). Reports that the Polish economy is 'on track' sideline the impact of high income inequality, precarity, poor working conditions, unemployment and low spending on social welfare, and the growing proportion of people at risk of hardship and poverty (Ferge, 2001, Hardy, 2009). Furthermore, development is not only uneven within Poland but also within the EU, where Poland is peripheral economically. According to Hardy (2009, p.9)

> *"a constant theme in interviews conducted in 2007 was the belief*
>
> *that transnational companies regarded Poland as the 'Africa' of*
>
> *Europe. Not only were the wages and working conditions on offer*
>
> *seen as an affront to the dignity of working people, but they were*

> *viewed as the cause of outward migration, which was robbing the*
> *country of skills and fracturing families".*

After Poland joined the EU in 2004, the UK quickly became one of the most popular destinations for Polish workers. The British approach appeared generous when on May 1st 2004 it opened its borders to the free movement of nationals from the eight accession states known as the A8 within the enlarged EU - Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Poland. This decision was made was during a period of relative openness to migration in the UK, following a period of restriction aimed at limiting migration from the Commonwealth after World War Two (Winder 2010). Poles who registered as workers with the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) could access work and after working legally and continually for 12 months they gained full rights of free movement, and could apply for a UK residence permit (Fihel et al, 2006, Stenning et al, 2006) which allowed them to be designated as 'lawfully resident' and thereby become eligible for some social transfers. In contrast other member states (apart from Sweden and Ireland) put in place a variety of transitional restrictions on labour migration, ranging from quota arrangements to work permits.

Closer examination of this glossy picture bears out arguments that the UK's approach to A8 workers could be likened to that of a 'wolf in sheep's clothing' (Anderson, 2012). It was designed to sustain Britain's flexible labour market, which is shaped by light-touch regulation by sparsely-funded regulatory bodies such as the Gangmasters Licencing Authority (Wilkinson, 2012) and under-investment in training and education (Migration Advisory Committee, 2016). Anderson (2012, p.261) argues that:

> *"a combination of regulatory practice, lack of qualification*
> *recognition, and labour market institutions and practices in the UK,*
> *means that in general they are confined to low-waged, poor work.*
> *In effect, the UK's 'generosity' has masked national interest"*

There was a clear 'migrant division of labour' in cities such as London (Datta et al, 2006, Clark & Drinkwater 2008, May et al, 2006, Wills et al, 2009, Dyer et al, 2011). There was de-skilling (Cuban, 2013|; downward mobility (Nowicka, 2012b); vulnerability (Commission on Vulnerable Employment 2008); exploitation (Wilkinson, 2012) and forced labour (Scott et al, 2012, Geddes et al, 2013), particularly amongst people with limited financial resources and language skills

(Spencer et al, 2007). There was confusion about what they could and could not access, and uneven access to information about rights and local service provision (Stenning et al, 2006, Audit Commission, 2007, Schneider and Holman, 2009, Thompson et al, 2010). Although trade unions carried out recruitment drives, relatively low numbers of workers signed up (Anderson et al, 2006a, Heyes, 2009, Fitzgerald and Hardy, 2010).

The picture is perhaps less negative through an everyday social reproduction lens. Workers who found jobs, housing and companionship and were deemed 'lawfully resident' (Anderson, 2012) enjoyed the new opportunities, higher earning potential and lower taxes than in Poland, the freedom, diversity and the sense of possibility (Moszczynski, 2010). Many felt secure and settled, and even integrated, albeit in complex ways that, for instance, Fox et al (2015) argue were shaped by their positioning of themselves (as white Europeans) in a favourably high position in Britain's racialised status hierarchies. Polish shops proliferated, Catholic churches were revitalised, (some) football chants were shared (Stenning, 2010). People brought family members over or started families as the conditions for social reproduction appeared favourable to some (Ryan et al, 2009) as health provision was free, places were made available in schools and welfare transfers in the shape of in-work, housing and child benefits compensated in some cases for low wages.

Turning next to British perspectives, initially concerns in the UK about opening up labour markets to people from countries with lower wage levels (Fomina and Frelak, 2008) who might or might not stay (Pollard et al, 2008) and were entitled to proactively engage with welfare (Cook et al, 2012) were interspersed with a cautious welcome to hardworking Poles doing the jobs no-one else wanted to do (Janta, 2009). The Institute of Employment Studies report highlighted the importance of migrant labour in filling labour shortages in low-skilled positions of work, deemed unattractive to domestic workers (e.g. long hours, poor pay). In turn, migrant workers were perceived by employers as advantageous in terms of

> *"their general attitude and work ethic. They tended to be more motivated, reliable and committed than domestic workers. For example, migrants were said to be more likely to: demonstrate lower turnover and absenteeism; be prepared to work longer and more flexible hours; be satisfied with their duties of work…." (Institute of Employment Studies, 2006, p.iv)*

After the 2008 worldwide recession media coverage - underpinned by exclusionary migrant discourses and banal nationalism (Billig, 1995, Scheffer, 2011) - began to stoke resentment that EU migrants were taking jobs and claiming benefits to which they were not entitled, having babies and overburdening health and education facilities such as GP surgeries and schools, failing to integrate and eroding national identity. Ideas about 'overcrowding' circulated, as noted by the House of Lords European Union Select Committee (2012).

"*Population density in the United Kingdom, which is roughly twice that of Germany and four times that of France, means that migration policy is a matter of keen political debate.*"

Consequently research was undertaken by multiple organisations, including the Oxford University Migration Observatory and the London School of Economics Centre for Economic Performance. Broadly they all concluded that, while the share of immigrants among working age adults in the UK had more than doubled between 1995 and 2014 from 8% to 17% and stood at around 6.5 million, according to official figures (Wadsworth, 2016), there was no robust empirical case for the harmful effects of immigration on employment, training and average wages of the UK born. However, it was also noted that the pay rates of the lowest paid may have been driven down fractionally (Ruhs and Vargas-Silva, 2015, Wadsworth, 2016), and some employers employed agency staff – sometimes from the EU – as employment law loopholes meant they could sometimes be employed on lower wages and weakened terms and conditions (Judge, 2018).

Despite the thrust of research findings, discourses of unfair competition for a limited pool of jobs by foreigners from low-income countries who were undercutting British workers became entrenched at the same time (and paradoxically) as narratives about lazy welfare claimants. Researchers such as Portes (2019) repeatedly pointed out that ideas about a fixed number of jobs to go round and fixed pots of money (the 'lump of labour fallacy') were flawed. He argued that migrants contributed to 'demand and supply', to job increases through spending, ideas and capital inflows, to the welfare system through their taxes and to the NHS and other public services through their labour and expertise. Ince et al (2015) took up the issue of employers drawing on employment law loopholes to pay EU workers wages below nationally agreed levels and undercut British-born workers. They examined 'British jobs for British workers' strikes at the Lindsay Oil Refinery in Lincolnshire, and analysed the challenge of

overcoming exclusionary spaces of agency and creating solidarities and alliances (Hanley, 2011). Such attempts were given little credence.

Even the Royal Geographical Society's secondary school teaching packs on the EU (RGS, 2019) focused, for instance, on the numbers of Polish workers registering and not registering to work in the UK, on their 'dependents' and the child benefits paid to their children, and on their positive and negative impacts on the UK. The lesson plans made little, if any, reference to the ways in which migrants are effectively scapegoats (Portes, 2013) for an economic system that fails poorer workers and their children (Alston, 2018), and the ways in which in a complex post-industrial capitalist society (Ince et al, 2014) business and government are not held accountable for bringing in regressive forms of flexible work for some (Anderson et al, 2006b, Chakraborrty, 2018), which leads to destabilising employment insecurity (Fitzgerald and Smoczynski, 2015, Rutter and Carter, 2018) and forced labour (McGrath, 2016).

The seeds were sown for a new political settlement in the UK, which supporters envisaged would limit free movement and the acquisition of British citizenship, reshape the labour market, ring-fence social security and access to the NHS, and address the so-called failure of multicultural Britain (BBC, 2011). On 23 January 2013 the Prime Minister David Cameron made his Bloomberg speech (BBC, 2013a, Shipman, 2016).

> *"Simply asking the British people to carry on accepting a European settlement over which they have had little choice is a path to ensuring that when the question is finally put - and at some stage it will have to be - it is much more likely that the British people will reject the EU. That is why I am in favour of a referendum."*

When the Conservatives won a majority in the 2015 election, David Cameron had to carry out his pledge. He went to Brussels arguing that he would leave unless the EU allowed an 'emergency brake' (Full Fact, 2016) on the benefits EU migrants can receive, meaning that new EU/EEA migrants would have to wait four years to receive in-work benefits (even though 90% did not claim in-work benefits). When the EU refused, he pushed ahead with plans for the UK European Union membership referendum. It took place on 23 June 2016, amidst a climate of whipped up anti-migrant and anti-EU sentiment, illustrated for instance by a tweet entitled 'The Sun admits '600,000 benefit tourists' story was false' (Michael@therightarticle, 2016) and

calls to take back control of borders, money and laws, which appealed to deep-rooted concerns around immigration, political disengagement and economic insecurity.

The Leave campaign won narrowly, and the consequences are still unfolding as this thesis is submitted, for the vote did not specify the nature of the future relationship, provoking a dialogue of the deaf between different advocates of close and distant relations (Rogers, 2019) and a heinous lack of guarantees on the rights of EU citizens in the UK and British citizens in the EU (McGhee and Piętka-Nykaza, 2016, Jablonowski, 2019). The resulting division (Curtice, 2018), uncertainty (Miller, 2016) and paralysis has been exacerbated by the deeper underlying tensions around whether Britain is a plebiscitary or representative democracy, what Britain's place in the world is (Bond, 2016), which economic path to take (Van Reenen, 2016) and what sort of universal basic services the state should provide (Kibasi, 2019).

4.5 Conclusion

Having established in chapter 2 that social reproduction and linked lives are important but neglected in accounts of Polish migration to the UK, in chapter 3 that linked lives require sensitive and ethical research, and above in chapter 4 that the specific Polish and British geopolitical contexts, and the broader European context of population ageing, the adult worker model and flexicurity across the EU need to be taken into consideration, the next chapter examines the dynamics that shape social reproduction in Poland.

Chapter 5 - Social reproduction in Poland

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is driven by the principle that it is crucial to understand the structures and processes that shape social reproduction in Poland in order to then understand the significance of social reproduction across borders in an era of population ageing. It examines the factors shaping migrants' and stayers' perspectives on and experiences of social reproduction in Poland, and the significance of moral worlds (McEwan et al, 2017), the gendered division of care labour (Kofman and Raghuram, 2015) and diverse practices of later life independence (Chambers et al, 2009).

The first section of this chapter outlines how family care is significant but not unproblematic, detailing the participants who draw on 'family-type' care practices involving friends, neighbours and the wider community, and commodified care labour provided by Ukrainian care workers to overcome shortages of care labour and interpersonal tensions. The second section uses the lens of the 'care diamond' (Katz, 2001) to put familial care into a broader context of multiple spheres of provision, which show that while intergenerational solidarity is viable in households underpinned by secure work and welfare provision, and support networks, it appears much less viable in households restructured by difficult life events, with particularly negative consequences for the poorest members of society and women who have carried out unpaid care work. It argues that the rhetorical focus on 'family care' in public and political discourses in Poland denotes a range of gendered practices that speak to a dearth of well-regulated alternatives produced by the erosion of state welfare in a neo-liberal economy, particularly regarding eldercare. The lens of the 'care pentagon' (De Silva, 2017) is applied in the third section to complicate singular ideas around ageing and eldercare, and to reveal how the older generation in Poland are an active part of care landscapes and often navigate the process of ageing and moving from care-giving to being cared for with much more agency and independence than is often afforded them.

It is important to note at the start, that this chapter is based on fieldwork in the UK and Poland between 2013-2015 *before* the UK European Union membership

referendum and drop in the value of the British Pound in 2016, which changed perceptions and experiences of migration to the UK, and before the introduction of state-funded 'Family 500+' child benefits in Poland in 2016 (see Chapter 4), which changed perceptions and experiences of family life for some in Poland.

5.2 Complicating intergenerational familial care narratives

This section unpicks the singular rhetorical focus on 'family care' in Poland that shapes the understanding of care, feelings of moral obligation and practical responsibilities that some migrants carry with them to the UK (Raghuram, 2012). The focus narrows down on care for ageing parents, an important theme given that population ageing and spatial inequalities are such pressing social policy issues in Poland (see Chapter 4). I argue that, while family care is significant in the context of Polish migration, it is not singular, predictable, unconditional or limitless in a social world that is experienced and negotiated at multiple scales of differences. Public and political discourses of singular familialism speak to the need for filial solidarity in the face of a dearth of options outside the home (Kandiyoti, 1988), and weak regulation of what little provision there is. Some older migrants with frail parents successfully share out care-giving with members of their immediate family, while others also draw on a range of 'family-type' care practices involving friends, neighbours and the wider community (Stenning et al, 2011). They draw on 'networks of affection' (Phillips, 2007) and 'economies of favours' (Ledeneva, 1998) with *znajmości* (people you know or useful acquaintances) in order to *załatwić sprawy* (get things done) and overcome shortages of care labour. These practices may, or may not involve informal cash payments. Some younger migrants who anticipate that their parents will need care in the future harbour fears of financial insecurity and emotional trauma, particularly if tensions arise between parents and between siblings over housing, money and labour, and they either cannot afford to mitigate care labour shortages by paying for care, or have to resort to paying for poor-quality care.

The importance of intergenerational familial eldercare in Poland is borne out by everyday conversations, policy documents (Golinowska, 2010, OECD, 2011) opinion polls and much academic literature (see Chapters 2 and 4 and Temple, 2010, Cieślik, 2012, Krzyżowski and Mucha, 2014, Radziwinowiczówna et al, 2018, Pytel

and Rahmonov, 2018). It underpins the powerful tropes, memories, imaginaries, and moral considerations that emerge when Polish worker-carers in the UK talk about kinwork. It can be challenging for researchers to read against the grain of conventional narratives (Back, 2007) and to make sense of intergenerational family politics, which are complex and messy (Katz, 2009b). My participants were no exception to the intricacies and sometimes painful realities of family life, and therefore facilitating (where and when appropriate) participants to talk about this could be hard. As discussed in Chapter 3, researchers need to build up trust before touching upon 'warts and all' private familial domains saturated with structures of feeling (Gabb and Fink, 2015). When people do talk another challenge is the way in which familial care emerges as an issue that strikes at the heart of not only the participant's, but also the researcher's, sense of self. Researchers have to bear in mind their own positionality, shaped by their personal experience of broader political and cultural economies of care in a different context to that of their participants.

However positionality is not fixed as it evolves as understandings deepen. Thus during my research I went on a journey. During preliminary discussions I initially interpreted some participants' platitudes and generalisations about uncaring Britain as revisionist 'othering', based on nostalgic myths of all-caring families who were less selfish than modern individualistic families ruined by weak ties. I railed internally against their over-simplification of eldercare in UK, and lack of recognition that public and private health and social care funding is fiercely contested in the UK (Pearce, 2017). Indeed Walker goes as far as arguing that policy making in the UK is hindered by an "extreme brand of neo-liberalism, which militates against the collective approach necessary to implement a social policy for active ageing" (2018, p.253).

When in Poland I also came across over-generalising about 'uncaring others' in other countries, and also, notably, in other parts of Poland and other Poles. For instance, during a visit to Poland in 2016 I noticed a huge glossy sign for a care home on the main road to Zakopane in the Tatry mountains. When I pointed it out to the driver, who had just had a phone conversation with his wife while she was putting their son to bed at home, he replied "We don't do that here, in other parts of Poland perhaps, not here." In 2017 I noted a crude homemade sign for a care home during a drive through the countryside towards Gdansk with friend. They tutted, then said "We're not those kind of people" and told me about the ways in which they had

supported an elderly friend who had recently died peacefully at home alone, unwilling to move in with either them, or his children and grandchildren living in Germany.

Gradually it dawned on me that some participants recognised that different people make different choices, and were not being judgemental so much as favourably comparing themselves with the models of eldercare they saw around them, as part of a process of enacting new ways for gauging the quality of care (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, p.97) in new circumstances. Their sense-making spoke to everyday moral experiences, discourses and practices of familialism in Poland as the natural order of society, with families seen to embody selflessness, morality and stability, and playing a key role in the transmission and reproduction of positive values and the staving off of destructive individualism (Stacey, 1988). I came to understand that not all participants shared this world view. Other participants were quietly sceptical about familial norms, but valued relational personhood (Dunn, 1998, Pine 2003). They focused more on the dehumanising commodification of care by the care industry, harking back to a profound dislike of communist era institutions (Keryk, 2010) and hyper-productive 21st century work. Others embraced the opportunities the commodification of care created for family members to live more independent lives.

Familialism was all important to Teresa, who was in her 50s, lived alone and worked as a cleaner and shelf stacker in NE England, and had a large family in Poland. She regularly opined that it is 'not normal' to put your parent in a care home in Poland. She observed how elderly people in Britain lived, such as an old man living by himself in the block of flats near one of her workplaces. She felt sorry for him living alone, but approved of his cheerful demeanour and well-turned-out appearance, and spotted him being taken out for trips now and then by people she assumed were his family. During another conversation she talked about an elderly couple who came for lunch every day in the hotel where she cleaned. She disapproved of the way their white tablecloth was left splattered with food for the waitresses to clear up, because the frail man could no longer eat properly. She wondered why he didn't eat in the privacy of his own home, where he could make a mess with no-one watching, and guessed that they had no family to help. When she talked about her large extended family in the province of Małopolska in SE Poland, their longevity, and familial care, she often repeated a Polish saying that '*money can't buy health and happiness*'. She frequently mentioned how much she looked forward to retiring from her cleaning jobs in the UK

at the age of 60, and returning home to the bosom of her family to live in the flat she shares with her ageing mother, adult daughter, son in law and grandson.

Similarly Krysia, who was in her 30s, lived with her husband and two children and worked in health and social care in NE England, remarked that she was 'shocked' by the number of care homes in the UK. *In Poland it is not that it is more expensive… but natural you look after your grandma….. Maybe a little bit less and less but still we look after old people……If I would be in Poland and I had a flat or house and my mum couldn't cope and would be on her own I would take her to myself….. Prosperity destroy countries sometimes. It is good to have money but something is destroyed like relationships. Always in Western countries they have good income. On the East people live more closely together, because they are more poor, they help each other, they are closer to each other. Something we gain. Something we lose.* [Interview, Krysia, her home, 6.5.2015]

Familialism by default, and personhood as an alternative to profit-driven and hyper-productive transactional care labour, were more important themes for Laura and Paulina. Polish women in their 50s (like them) have, through their labour as care workers in homes and care homes across Europe (Lutz & Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2012, Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2013) and memories of institutions from the communist era in Poland (Keryk, 2010), critical insights into the ways in which commodified care can dehumanise both the carer and cared for. They also understand that if care is based on intensive and unrushed relationships, rather than outputs (Schwartz, 2013), it can be skilful and holistic practical and emotional work (Hayes, 2017).

For instance Laura, who worked as a cleaner in NE England, where she lived with her husband and one of her adult daughters, talked about her nursing friends from her home province of Warminsko-Mazurskie in North-Eastern Poland. They had worked in care homes in Germany, where hyper-productivity was all-important and relationships non-existent. Laura vowed never to work in a care home in the UK.

The time with each patient is specified. If, for example, I have 10 minutes with each patient over eight hours, to feed them, give them food, give them injections……with these people you should sit down, talk, because they are old people, they want to talk… it's crazy. It's the same in England, too few people, not enough service, too few nurses. That's why they don't have time. [Interview, Laura, her home, 20.5.2015].

Similarly Paulina, who worked as a kitchen assistant in a restaurant in NE England, where she lived with her husband and three adult sons, said that she would rather wash dishes than work in a care home in the UK. She liked spending time with older people who had many interesting tales to tell, and knew she could bring the patience and kindness needed to the job, so much so that she was thinking of volunteering with an eldercare organisation and thereby improving her English. What she did not want to do was to deal with people as commodities, bearing out arguments (Himmelweit, 1999, Cox, 2010) that care workers can have motivations that are not purely monetary, and also care about the results of their work.

She told a story about a Polish friend who had worked in a British care home and befriended a frail resident, who told her she had been in love with a Polish soldier in the 1940s. He had been the love of her life, but they had to part. When I told her that my father was spending a lot of time in bed and had sore skin, she took a great interest, and suggested boiling camomile flowers in water and bathing him with the soothing concoction when it was cool, a time-honoured tradition in parts of rural Poland.

Laura and Paulina's concerns and interests speak to some Polish worker-carer's rejection of commodified care, but not all participants shared these concerns about destructive individualism and commodification. For instance, Elżbieta challenged notions of Polish familial eldercare as intrinsically more caring and moral than other kinds of care, and embraced the opportunity the outsourcing of care work gave to individuals who wanted to lead a life of one's own. She was in her 50s, had an adult daughter in the UK and lived by herself in NE England. She had started out working in a care home in the UK before gaining qualifications in evening classes, and moving into education and training. She was grateful for the opportunities the care home job had led to, and felt she had been well-treated, even if the work had been physically demanding.

In Poland it is more complicated because firstly we haven't got care homes like in Britain. We have few private, but the cost is really huge, and we haven't got funding for social service, so we haven't got conditions like you have got here. …additionally I don't think so that really older people they are happy they are living with whole family in the one place and they need help. And I don't think that people who look after are happy as well because they haven't got own life ….I don't think that it is because people loves each other, that is family connections. No, it is because

if you haven't got any option you have to do it. [Interview, Elżbieta, on a bench, 4.10.2015]

Once trust was established, and snapshots of lived experience shared, a more complex picture began to emerge of the complex household relations which participants carried with them to the UK, and which bore out some of Teresa's devotion to and some of Elżbieta's cynicism about family, and also spoke to the diverse nature of household formation and dissolution in dwellings ranging from one-room urban flats to multi-storey and multi-generational detached houses. Coping with inactive 'oldest old age 'emerged as a significant theme. As couples age, a residing spouse or partner is an important provider of care (Chambers et al, 2009). However when a parent is single, widowed and frail, and needs intensive support, where they live and who funds and undertakes the care work takes on crucial importance (Attias-Donfut, 2003). The making of this phase of kinwork draws on practices shaped by obligation, reciprocity and forbearance discussed in Chapter 2. However this duty was two-way, as not only were family members obliged to care for the frail elderly, but at the same time the cared for felt an obligation not to burden the carers and to reciprocate personally and financially. This results in some older people having to sell their property and reside with family in order to free up resources and money to pay for their upkeep. According to Laura

....it's rare that old people have their own flat, because the children take it and then they complain that they aren't happy about it. They take grandma, grandpa to their homes, and then sell the flat for example, and grandma has money. When there's money and when grandma is healthy it's ok. It's worse when grandma is ill and they have to look after her, that's worse. It's ok if people are happy, but not when they are unhappy. [Interview, Laura, her home, 20.5.2015]

When additional care labour is needed 'family-type' care networks are drawn on to, for instance, help put out rubbish, clean, shop, cook, wash up, ease access to and provide transport to medical appointments and undertake some personal care (Stypinska and Perek-Białas, 2014). These networks can be made up of friends, neighbours and *'znajmósci'* (acquaintances) in networks of affection and economies of favours, and working class or Ukrainian care workers living near or in the family home often paid cash in hand (Peterson, 2007, Kindler, 2008). These patchworks of 'good enough' reciprocal care can be termed 'family-type care' in that they were managed by the family, revolved around the home and could develop into ties of relatedness

similar to those underpinning unpaid caring (Himmelweit, 1999). They are 'patchworks of care' because they operate in similar way to the livelihood strategies (White, 2009a, b) and diverse economic practices in post-socialist shortage economies (Stenning et al, 2011, p.260). Monthly wages and pension payments are integrated into a broader portfolio of diverse economic practices, care labour is divided between family and support networks are used to mitigate shortages. Laura reflected on the demands on caregivers juggling paid and unpaid work, and decisions about who to turn to.

They get by. They sort things out so that they can go on holiday, maybe pay someone, different ways of doing it. I know that people have various types of work, that my sister for instance has that sort of work, she can come and go. It's good that she can come and go and get organised, sorted. There are other people who can't come and go, and have to ask other people to help. Or they have to run, morning, before work, later after work, again in the evening, and so on. [Interview Laura, her home, 20.5.2015].

Patchworks of care rely not only on individuals' abilities to seize opportunities as they arise, but on delicate management. As Phillips (2007, p.64) argues "the responsibilities which people feel are complex and akin to commitments which are developed over time on the basis of reciprocity and individually negotiated." However they are not without tensions and do not necessarily extend to offering the most intimate personal, financial and cognitive care. Laura's reservations about asking for help, in her comment below, touch on the challenges of sustaining reciprocity. She worried about asking for too many favours, as they might mushroom beyond mutual practical assistance and emotional support into one-sided dependency on a neighbour for day to day survival, and thereby strain relations and provoke harsh judgements.

M*y parents in law are together, they live with my husband's brother and wife and another son, they are looked after. It's not that they haven't got anyone and have to ask someone, neighbours… that's not good.*

[Interview Laura, her home, 20.5.2015].

Laura reflected that both her and her husband had gone ahead with their migration plans safe in the knowledge that the family members who stayed put supported each other (Isański et al, 2014). Her widowed mother had got together with a new partner, and lived near her sister who was staying put, and her parents in law lived with two of their sons. In future, if she and her husband ever acquired enough

money, one idea was to build a house near his brothers and parents, with whom they had a good relationship.

If my mother was alone, perhaps I would not have come, because my father died 16 years ago, he was young, he was 59 when he died. ...I would not have come, would not have left her. But I saw that my sister was staying put……and it's good that she [her mother] has got that man [her mother's new partner]. [Interview Laura, her home, 20.5.2015].

For other participants the knowledge that siblings lived nearby was not necessarily comforting, as siblings may love and care differently, there may be underlying tensions around inheritance of assets and property, and care is not fixed, as both parents' and siblings' circumstances and networks change overtime and as people age. For example, Paulina's widowed mother lives alone in a rural farmhouse in the eastern province of Lubelskie. When Paulina migrated with her family to the UK her father and mother were fit and well and her husband's widowed father had '*two sisters and two brothers in the same town, so they often see him, he isn't alone.*' [Interview, Paulina, in a café, 9.9.2015]. After Paulina's father's death her mother was initially supported by one of her sons in a nearby city, and a longstanding neighbour, who became a source of emotional support. Then her other son returned from the USA, where he had worked in low paid work for years, to live with her in the family home. He took over the running of the household.

> *Paulina: My brother lives near a big city. In winter he went once or twice a month, to stock up on wood and coal…and the neighbour visited everyday…he was a very good friend of my father's ….and when tata [dad] died he felt the need to visit the old lady. Every day after he finished his work he went to see her at six o'clock in the evening for an hour, to sit down and chat. Mama felt much better when she was alone, not like now. My other brother returned and changed the way things were done because he wanted to have his life. I think that mama doesn't like it. It's not that my brother is bad. Only mama doesn't like it because, until then, mama was the most important. It's normal. If you went to your mother's house and told her what to do, she would be annoyed.*
> *Lucy: How old is the neighbour?*
> *Paulina: 65, much younger than mama.*
> *Lucy: Is he married?*

Paulina: Yes he has a wife and children. The son still lives with them. He isn't married and hasn't decided what to do with his life. His wife is very ill. He (the older neighbour) hasn't got an easy life. [Interview, Paulina, in a café, 9.9.2015]

Another of Paulina's mother's nearby neighbours was a young mother, who had moved from the town to the countryside and worked unpaid at home while her husband commuted to his employers in town. Paulina reflected that this neighbour might be a bit lonely, and would probably like to talk to or even visit her mother, but was not welcomed in. Her mother had never been particularly open to new people, and was increasingly haunted by memories of unspeakable bloodshed and forcible relocation during the Second World War.

Paulina felt guilty at not being able to offer her mother more support, but talked to her and her brother in Poland often on the phone, and visited Poland twice a year. She rationalised that the journey from the UK to Lubelskie took the same amount of time as it used to take for her to travel back to Lubelskie from the town in Southwest Poland where she and her husband had lived and worked. She regretted not being able to visit Poland at the same time as her husband, who always did his family duties at different times of year from her, in order to ensure that one of them was always in the UK covering shifts in the restaurant. She speculated that she may well go back to Poland for a longer stint if her mother fell ill and needed intensive and intimate personal care, as she could allocate her work to her husband and sons. No decisions had been made about how to subdivide the family home and farm after her mother's eventual death.

In contrast to the older participants, who had experienced and adapted as best they could to the emergence of care needs and changing familial circumstances in Poland, younger participants often dreaded the unknowable future, with all its personal and practical challenges and potential for disagreements with siblings and parents about the right strategies around where to live and who would do the work (Radziwinowiczówna et al, 2018, Kordasiewicz et al, 2018)

For instance, the unpredictability of the future care needs of the older generation in Poland were evoked by Ala, who is in her 30s, works in the hospitality sector, lives with her husband and three children in NE England. Ala had few concerns about her parents in law, as their daughter lived at home with them and they had strong family and community networks. She was more concerned about her mother, whose

life had been punctuated by violence and crisis. Her mother had carried out unpaid care work in the home while her husband drank heavily, ran several unsuccessful businesses, fell out with his siblings and accumulated debts until he was *'destroyed by alcohol'*. After his death when she was in her 40s she had to go into full-time work outside the home *My mum, she work 8 hours in job, and when she back home is very, very tired*. Her mother had to do this in order to make a living, accumulate a national insurance record and thereby gain eligibility for a pension.

That's something what I really, really scare, you know, old people, my mum. I see how my uncle lived with his mum. He's tell me how it's difficult this. But my mum. I can't give her to special home, care home. In England it's popular yes. In Poland my sister in law working in care home now, but no, no, now it's not in my mind. .. we have family…..it's difficult…..Maybe somebody go to Poland and stay with parents. Maybe we take them here and they will be live with us. But I don't know. [Interview, Ala, in her home, 1.5.2015]

The question of who would look after her mother when she grew frail was complicated by Ala's tense relationship with her sister, who lives in Śląsk and had become a Jehovah's Witness, which is disapproved of in some domains in Poland (see Chapter 7). Ala believed her mother was better off nurturing social connections in the same evangelical Catholic Church that Ala had attended herself and been supported by when she was growing up in Śląsk. *"I see how my mum believe again, return, born again, and go to church, how this help her…. I told her "if you take my mum, you don't be my sister."* [Interview, Ala, in her home, 1.5.2015]

Krysia also had concerns about the financial, spatial and emotional barriers she was likely to come up against in future, which would challenge her moral commitment to family care described earlier in this section, both in her own family and in her husband's family. Kordasiewicz et al (2018) describe this as the moment when 'social actors confront moral beliefs with capabilities and construct various social accounts for not following the norm of family care'. In the past her in-laws had shared their house with her father in law's parents, who were now dead. She said: '*My mother in law did not get on with her mother in law. They lived separate lives. My father in law was the one who had contact.'* If Krysia and her family return to Poland one option would be to live with her in-laws, as there is enough space in the house for two households, but her sister in law is a complex character (see Chapter 7). Furthermore,

as she explained: 'my *mother in law ...it would be difficult to live with her because of her attitude. Her personality is harder...'* [Interview, Krysia, her home, 6.5.2015]

Krysia is closer to her own parents in the province of Śląsk, but the lack of space in their tiny flat would prevent her from living with them if she returned to Poland. If one of her parents died she would like to bring the remaining parent to live with her in the UK, but again there were challenges. She said: 'M*y dad could live here but my mum not as she has roots in Poland. She would not be able to start a life in another country. Too late.'* [Interview, Krysia, her home, 6.5.2015]. It would make sense for her sister and brother, who had small flats close to her parents, to help in the same way that her sister had helped her grandfather with shopping and chores after her grandmother died. Krysia recognized that some elderly people, such as her other grandmother, prized independence above all else (see Section 5.3*).* Krysia explained: *She lived on her own. My dad said we had only three rooms, but please come to our flat, we look after you. She didn't want. She wanted to be independent.* [Interview, Krysia, her home, 6.5.2015]

The concerns voiced by Ala and Krysia spoke in part to their position as outsiders who had lived outside Poland for a decade, and had not been able to maintain in full the vital support networks with actors beyond the family through which "information, money, and love, amongst other things, might flow" (Stenning et al, 2011). This was also a concern for Dorota, a single parent in her 40s who worked in the education and training sector in the UK. She was herself an only child with parents living in Mazowieckie, who could afford to pay for care work. Dorota knew others who had gone down the route of recruiting Ukrainians, but she had heard scare stories, and worried that she and her parents would be abused. The possibility of becoming the beneficiaries of new ties of relatedness, rather than victims, was absent, even though her mother was skilled at nurturing networks for personal pleasure and in order to sustain a steady flow of customers for her small business.

> *Dorota: In Poland as well there is not such a good care system.... my uncle got sick, and he [my cousin] had to organise care, find someone to pay to live with him, to look after him. .... Ukrainian woman as they are cheaper and looking for somewhere to live so they look after people.... there is no control, they don't give food, don't wash them. My cousin lives in a big city and dad lives 150 km away and is not mobile. He realised dad getting thin and she [Ukrainian carer] was spending money on herself, not getting food. Nowhere*

to go for old people's house, nightmare, you don't want to go to old people's
house. ...

Lucy: Have you visited one in Poland, is it rumour or myth?

Dorota: I think it is a myth. People who I know they try to organise if they
cannot look after older parents they pay privately.

Lucy: The state doesn't pay, people pay privately?

Dorota: All I know is you hire someone to live in your parent's house and cook.
...wish I had a brother or sister, easier .... [Interview, Dorota, my home,
11.12.2014]

These accounts provide a snapshot of the multiple perceptions and experiences of family care, and shed light on the practical and emotional significance of family care 'moorings' (Lulle, 2018b) to migrants in the UK. They lead to two more issues to unpack, firstly the role of broader structures and the uneven and gendered geographies of care, which are tackled in the next section, and secondly the significance of self-care and independence in the older generation, which is covered in section 5.4.

5.3 Landscapes of care through the lens of the 'care diamond'

This section uses the 'care diamond' lens to put the multifaceted elements of family care outlined in the previous section, into a broader context of multiple spheres of provision by the state, the market, civil society and the family (Katz, 2001). I argue that intergenerational solidarity appears more viable in large or cohesive families with skills, knowledge and material security underpinned by reliable incomes, secure housing and welfare entitlements such as pensions. They pool their resources, sustain strong networks and draw on family members who are physically able and emotionally willing to undertake unpaid care of children, the sick and the elderly. Intergenerational solidarity appears to be less viable and more difficult in households re-structured by death, divorce, separation, poor physical and mental health, fractured relationships and weak networks, and unable or ashamed to access public safety nets or philanthropic social protection. This section bears out arguments that the erosion of state-financed welfare in Poland, which mitigates the problems caused by the complex dynamics of

peoples' lives, has particularly negative consequences for the poorest members of society trapped in low-paid and precarious work, and women who have carried out unpaid care work (Himmelweit, 2017). As Stenning et al argue (2011), the poorest in society bear the cost of neo-liberalisation, the normalisation of poverty, fear, alienation and stress and the emotional and material violence that it can provoke.

Welfare is often looked at through the lens of typologies of welfare regimes in Western Europe inspired by (and challenging) Esping-Andersen's seminal classifications of ideal liberal, social democratic and conservative/corporatist regimes in his book 'The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism' (1990). When the initial data-sets were compiled in the 1980s, communist welfare regimes in Central Europe were not included. Bambra (2007) argues that the typology is gender-blind and Attias-Donfut et al (2005, p.171) warn against "…*simplistic models of cause and effect, such as the equation of high levels of family support in countries with low mean incomes and less developed welfare states*".

What is interesting about the typology in the context of this thesis is that welfare systems in the EU have converged in some ways (Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2012). On the one hand there is a commitment to the values of the European social model, considered 'the soul of the European Union' by some (Vaughan-Whitehead, 2015). As Golinowska and Żukowski (2009, p.14) put it:

"*Whatever European social system we examine we find the common values of equality, non-discrimination, solidarity and redistribution as fundamentals, with universal, free or cheap access to education and healthcare, and a variety of other public services as the right of a citizen and as essential to creating the basis for a successful modern economy and a fair society. It is in this respect that our European model differs from the US model, for example.*"

On the other hand the European social model is under pressure from the 2008 financial crisis, and the development of the adult worker model and flexicurity, and the linking of welfare to individualising national insurance contributions and shifting of care onto families across the EU (Williams and Brennan, 2012). These tensions have been contested, endured and subverted in different ways by different governments and groups of citizens. For instance in Poland there is a longstanding belief in the need to deserve welfare and the risk of welfare in encouraging 'learned helplessness' (Ferge, 2001, Sztompka, 2003, Osipovič, 2015). However in 2015 the Law and Justice Party was voted in on the basis of better welfare such as 'Family

500+' child benefits and the re-introduction of a state pension age of 60 for women (see Chapter 4).

This context is important to make sense of how some people get by and others get by less well (Stenning et al 2011), and how their experiences are part of a rich tapestry of personal, familial and societal continuity and change. Some of the participants in this research were clearly committed to a traditional familial care model based on an intergenerational care contract (Baldassar, 2007a) heavily underpinned by state welfare and supplemented by market provision, such as some private medical care, and community support networks.

For instance, Teresa, a cleaner in her 50s (see 5.2 above), talked repeatedly about going home to Poland as soon as she retired in order to live with family whose wellbeing was her life's work and purpose. When examined through the lens of the 'care diamond' the significance of each family member's respective and interlinked positions in the state welfare regime became clear. Teresa's family's financial wellbeing was buttressed by the financial security of her mother Czesia's small pension, accrued through regular hotel work, and her status as the widow of a state forestry worker, and also her eligibility as a pensioner for free healthcare. It was further buttressed by Czesia's lifelong tenure of her flat gained during the communist era, and long established neighbourhood and community networks in their hometown in Małopolska. Additionally Teresa's daughters, Danka and Zosia, were entitled to basic financial support after their father's death during their teenage years and free healthcare while they were in education, and again as new mothers with partners who are low earners.

As a working age adult, Teresa is the family member currently entitled to the least social protection. It made financial sense for her to take on the role of primary wage-earner outside the home. Her earnings in the UK supplement the household's modest but relatively secure income, and are used to pay for prescription medicines, glasses, specialist private medical and dental treatment for her mother and daughters, her younger daughter's car and running costs (used to transport her grandmother to medical facilities and back) and clothing and expenses for both her daughters while they were in college (see Chapter 7). As the girls matured she paid for their weddings after they finished their education, and further contributed to her niece's wedding (that I attended in August 2015), and also funded the purchase of prams and other equipment for her grandchildren when they arrived on the scene. Teresa plans to retire

back to Poland as soon as she is eligible for a state pension, and anticipates that her daughters will find paid work while she cares for her grandchildren (and her mother Czesia, if she is still alive).

Other participants in the research were committed to a different version of intergenerational care, which did not involve co-residence. They were also committed to a different form of mobility, which did not involve long term migration. Freedom of movement across the EU can involve short bursts of work away from home for fixed periods until enough money is acquired to achieve specific financial and self-realisation goals (Okólski, 2001, White, 2009a,b).

For instance Agnieszka and Ziemowit were a couple in their 50s, who lived on a smallholding in the countryside in the province of Dolnośląsk. They had bought it 20 years earlier after growing up and starting their married life in a nearby town. In 2010 they gave up their professional jobs, as they had accrued enough social insurance contributions for secure future pensions. They sought temporary work in NE England in order to save enough money to develop agro-tourism businesses on their smallholding, and to contribute to their daughters' university living costs. At the time of fieldwork in 2015 one of their daughters had come back to live with them after university while she established her career, and Ziemowit and the other student daughter had spent 3 months packing fruit and vegetables in Belgium.

Their unwritten intergenerational care contract was looser than that of Teresa's family in that they, their elderly parents and their children, aspired to financial independence and separate households, bolstered by their good occupational pensions, lifelong housing tenure and strong personal networks knitted together through food provisioning (Jehlička et al, 2013, Smith and Jehlička, 2013), equipment sharing, skills exchange, and church and civic activities. They regularly helped each other out with care work when needed. For instance, Agnieszka's mother provided after-school childcare for her grandchildren in her flat when they were young, and lived with one of her teenage granddaughters on the smallholding while Agnieszka and Ziemowit were in the UK (see Chapter 7). Agnieszka envisaged bringing her mother to live with her in her house if she grows frail. Their modest prosperity, ownership of land and property and prospect of secure state pensions enabled them to engage in entrepreneurial strategies closed to the least wealthy (Kideckel, 2003). They lived frugally, and put every spare penny into securing their livelihood for the long term.

Such intergenerational solidarity rests on and can be tested by the willingness and ability of family members to take on care roles for small children, the ill, ageing parents and grandparents (Baldassar, 2007). Decisions are shaped not only by 'personal sacrifice' (Hardy, 2009, Barglowski, 2015), which is sometimes over-emphasised in singular discussions about the Polish context (see Chapter 2), but by personal circumstances, lifecourse stage and other spheres of provision such as wealth, income and house size.

For example, Urszula's work as a full-time and hands-on grandmother, while very much a personal choice, was shaped by her status as a prosperous retired widow. She had a good occupational pension, supplemented by her widow's pension, and three children in well-paid professional jobs, two in Poland and one in the UK.

Lucy: I've heard that grandmothers are very important in Poland.

Urszula: Yes. Not all grandmothers, but I've got a friend, who also looks after her grandchildren all the time. She doesn't have a husband, my husband also died early, she doesn't have a husband and has looked after her grandchildren since they were born, because her daughter in law works, son works, she looks after the grandchildren all the time, now they are studying but they still come to her.

Lucy: But other grandmothers?

Urszula: No not all, but they look after grandchildren. But not all, no not all my friends, because it somehow happens that they can't, either illness, or something else………..I can sacrifice lots of time for children, it's very good.

[Interview, Urszula, in her home, 21.3.2015]

Urszula started looking after her grandchildren as soon as she retired from her job in the region of Śląsk in her mid-50s. She had happy memories of long summer holidays with her grandchildren in a family summer house next to an orchard full of apple trees. She recounted her grandson Krystian saying*: Babcia, they were the best holidays, the best childhood you could ever dream of, holidays with you in Polska babcia.* She explained: *I like cooking and I like it when lots of people come. And looking after them and making sure they eat their first breakfast and then their second breakfast.* [Interview, Urszula, in her home, 21.3.2015]

After her first set of grandchildren had grown up, her daughter, who was working in the UK, gave birth to a child. So, at the age of 72, she moved from Poland

to the UK to support them. She cherished the opportunity to look after her youngest granddaughter.

> *Urszula: I want to pass on the good things about Poland, because she is half Polish, half English, and I want her to love Poland like I love it. We organised life so that I could live here and look after her, I am very happy about that.*
> *Lucy: Was it a big decision to move to England?*
> *Urszula: No it was not. When I left Poland, my granddaughter there cried a lot, she cried a lot for me, I had looked after her since she was two…….now she is at work. She was two when her mother went to work and I retired. I only had two days of retirement.*
> *Lucy: How old is she now*
> *Urszula: She will be 27 in March. She cried a lot, and I said I would only stay 3 years. I would look after auntie's baby and I would return to Poland. I missed Poland such a lot. But what has happened has happened.* [Interview, Urszula, in her home, 21.3.2015]

Urszula returned to Poland every school holiday to her room in her son's house. The question of who exactly would provide care for her when the balance between 'dependent' and 'provider' shifted, as it does over the lifecourse (Ackers and Dwyer, 2004), and she became frail, was difficult. She said she was equally close to all her children and grandchildren, but secure in the knowledge that she would be cared for without being a financial burden on any of them.

Not all grandparents are financially and personally able and willing to be as involved as Urszula, and most continue to be based in Poland, with varying degrees of involvement in their offsprings' lives. Some subscribe instead to 'intimacy at a distance' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2013) based on separate homes, financial independence and spells of intensive intergenerational care work when young children need care, or when a family member is ill or frail.

For instance Renia and Bartosz were in their late 60s, retired, and living in the Podlaskie region in NE Poland in a flat with lifelong tenure in a well-maintained block, which they had been able to buy through an occupational scheme. Their secure public sector pensions lift them above the breadline and they emanated gentle satisfaction as they shared domestic chores, watched TV, and attended to their cat. They were deeply integrated into life in the town, where the old houses in which they were respectively born are still standing. This was evidenced by their collections of photographs of civic

events, neatly stuck into albums stored on bookshelves, regular inspections of funeral notices posted onto lamp posts and Renia's stories laced with references to people she knew

They had a son Piotr, who lived with his wife Natalia and their young children in the UK, and a daughter in their home town in Poland, who lived a kilometre away from them with her family, in an old house which they were slowly renovating. When their daughter's children were young they regularly helped withchildcare. During fieldwork they were taking turns in the UK as 'flying grandparents' (Baldassar and Wilding, 2013, Kilkey et al, 2014), which Renia in particular found painfully challenging (see Chapter 7). Renia talked about being 'in the autumn of her life', and took comfort from her daughter's work in the town's health sector, which means she would know who to talk to in order to smooth the way if and when age-related ill-health arose.

Not everyone in Poland enjoys the same existential emotional security. The four sets of participants above are examples of the possibilities of intergenerational solidarity underpinned by housing tenure, financial security and grandparental commitment to supporting the younger generation at differing scales of intensity. Plans for what might happen when the grandparents discussed above come towards the end of their lives, and may well need care, are not clear, but they appeared reasonably confident that they will be looked after.

Other households in this research appeared less optimistic. They were more likely to be households structured by one or more disruptive life events and experiences, ranging from bereavement, divorce, separation, fractured relationships and weak networks, and poor physical and mental health, to poverty brought on by precarious work or unpaid care work, and a lack of social or philanthropic welfare such as food banks and support groups. Spatial inequalities and structural disadvantages, for instance in the labour market and in pensions (Price et al, 2016), are embodied at the level of individual experience (Kideckel, 2003).

For example Julia was in her late 50s and married to Łukasz, who was in his 60s. They lived on the same housing estate in Podlaskie as Bartosz and Renia (see above) whose son was married to one of their daughters. Their block of flats was owned and managed by the city council, and markedly shabbier than Renia and Bartosz's private and newly renovated block, but did give them secure lifelong tenure. Julia used to work as a cleaner on her own housing estate, firstly as an employee of

the state, and then as an employee of the privatised company that took over the job of managing her job cleaning the stairwells and windows in some of the housing blocks. At the time of fieldwork her husband Łukasz worked as a casual labourer in various locations in order to supplement his pension. Both their daughters and their families live in the UK.

Julia and Łukasz jointly explained that she had given up her cleaning job a year ago, before she was eligible for a pension at the age of 60, because she was angry with the way she was treated, denuded of dignity, status and any sense of shared endeavour or progress, and denied the opportunity to make social insurance contributions.

> *Julia: There was a boss [on the phone]. I was at the lake, catching fish. "Hello! There's something dirty here." She wanted to tell me to go to clean it up for her. Hey, listen. She operates as if I have to be there all the time. Don't I have a private life? I do. That's why I don't work now. She rang me about going to work. No. My husband said no.*
>
> *Lucy: How long did you work there for?*
>
> *Julia: Six. On the black. I didn't get anything out of it. If I had worked normally then when I slowed down before retirement I would have a few coins. And now nothing.*
>
> *Lucy: Why did you have to work on the black?*
>
> *Julia: Because they don't register you.*
>
> *Łukasz:. If they register you they have to pay contributions.*
>
> *Julia:. They have to pay insurance, tax.*
>
> *Łukasz: Yes, she took it from you.*
>
> *Julia: She puts it in her pocket... it's hard work and you work for small change … When you have a vacation, holiday as you call it, I did not have one. The children came from England and she didn't want to give me the time to sit with them.*
>
> *Lucy: Terrible.*
>
> *Julia: Terrible. Gloves – down to me. Workwear – down to me. That thing that you use to pick up rubbish – down to me.* [Interview, Julia and Łukasz, in their flat, 6 August 2015]

The question of who exactly would provide care for them they became frail hung in the air, as there were hints of tensions with their daughters, alleviated by a shared interest in traditional food and drink from their locality, particularly fish and

vodka. They spoke warmly about their relationships with family members their own age, such as Łukasz's sister in law, whose husband worked in Scandinavia and whose children lived in in a city in another part of Poland where job prospects were more promising.

Structural disadvantages in the labour market can be exacerbated by an ideological orientation to marriage and family-oriented law and policy and individualising welfare in Poland (see Chapter 4). This serves the purpose of 'cementing' (metaphorically) couples and families into exercising responsibility for each other through care labour and finance (SPLASH-db.eu (2014)), and casts a blind eye to the very real strains that couples who are legally obliged to stay as a domestic unit and pool their income endure, and to the poverty inflicted on couples who do not stay together and have to pay for two sets of rent and upkeep on small salaries.

For example Gabrysia and Tomek were in their 50s and had married in the 1980s, when Gabrysia fell pregnant in in her teens with the first of seven children. They moved from Eastern Poland to Śląsk, where they acquired a relatively large flat allocated to them on the basis that they were a large family. Gabrysia worked inside the home raising her family while Tomek worked for a public utility. They grew apart. He started a relationship with another woman, a 'family friend' and considered asking his wife for a divorce. She said she would not give her consent, which meant that under Polish law a judge would be highly unlikely to grant a divorce (SPLASH-db.eu, 2014). Gabrysia's daughter Kinga, who was in her 30s, and worked full-time inside the home bringing up her three children in NE England, told her mother's story.

…my dad came to me one day when I was live with Dawid in Poland, and he asked me can he talk with me, privately. And he took me to the coffee shop, and we talked, and he says "I met someone, and what do you think about that?" and, you know like, he is in a depression as well. Because at times he was saying that he wants to make a suicide, just want to finish all the life…..and remove burdens from shoulders …that was special, and that was like, difficult, because that's like OK, my dad, he told me he met someone. What about my mum?

… my dad he knows I don't appreciate that, because it's hurting my mum actually…..and so, so when he's going somewhere and I ask him "with who you been" he's always saying "oh, with someone" and I know it's with her. I said, you can't… building your happiness on someone pain.

.....my dad stays with her because he knows my mum she can't cope with paying for everything. She doesn't work, and she don't have even social care, so he knows she depends on him financially, and that's one of the problems in this family

....my mum had depression, when my dad tell her he met someone, she had really bad depression, and that was actually when I have been here, she was in a mental hospital, and she tried to kill herself. So my dad he called me on my birthday to tell me my mum just tried to suicide... So it was hard being here and doing nothing and being helpless...

I tried, we all tried to fix our parents life... but I learn it's not about that, it's not the way. [Interview, Kinga, in a café, 31 July 2014]

In 2015 Gabrysia took part in an employment scheme for the over-50s. Such schemes, with titles such as 'Solidarity across Generations' (Perek-Białas and Turek, 2012), provide training for employees and wage subsidies for employers recruiting unemployed people above the age of 50. They have been criticised for prioritising labour market participation over reforming the labour market marginalisation of workers with significant family commitments, and also for paying lip service to investments in healthy ageing and building human capital across the life course (see Chapter 4). Furthermore the evidence that they have boosted employment rates for the over-50s is unclear, but what is clear is that small disability pensions are still widespread, and treated as de facto early retirement pensions (Perek-Białas and Turek, 2012).

Gabrysia had secured work through her particular job-creation scheme in a battery factory, partly in the hope that it would improve her national insurance record. During my visit in September 2015 she had to get up at 4am to catch a minibus to her dark and dirty workplace. I got the impression (later verified by her daughter Kinga), that she was scorned by her fitter younger colleagues, expected to lift heavy containers of acid and other materials on and off conveyor belts, and at serious risk of putting her joints under serious strain. After several months the doctor signed her off work with a bad back and damaged hands, and onto a 'bridging' disability pension, which rendered her eligible for a small monthly payment and better pension than she would otherwise have been due as a woman without a history of national insurance payments. She continued to undertake childcare for her grandchildren who lived nearby and to provide a home for their adult children and grandchildren when they needed somewhere to stay. Her husband continued to split his life across two households.

Two further discussions during fieldwork about Gabrysia's situation shed light on the ways in which familial-oriented law and policy and individualising welfare regimes and the need for self-reliance are contested and re-iterated in everyday discourse. This is done is ways which can render individuals responsible for their success and misfortune, and families responsible for ameliorating problems (see Chapter 4). Not everyone is able to 'pull themselves up by their bootstraps with grit and determination', rigorously disciplining themselves in line with neoliberal demands for flexibility, mobility and self-reliance (Hörschelmann and Schäfer, 2007).

One of the discussions was between Kinga's mother in law Ula and her friend Amelia (who is introduced in Section 5.4). They voiced concerns about women in Gabrysia's predicament, querying who would provide for such a woman in her old age if her husband did not stay with her. They debated whether or not Gabrysia should have gone out to find paid work earlier in her life, in order to be able to support herself into her old age; whether or not her children should help her find a flat of her own and fund her as she had brought them up; and whether or not she could find a lawyer, go to court and win the right to 'alimony' (financial support) from her husband if he left her. As the 'guilty party' he would be liable for enduring financial responsibilities for his former spouse (if she consented to divorce and if the judge agreed). The two discussants could not come to a conclusion about whose responsibility it was – Gabrysia's, her husband's or her children's [Interview, Ula and Amelia, Ula's flat, 22.9.2015]).

The second discussion was with Lydia, the mother of another participant, Tolek (see 5.4). She took a tough line when I asked her if she would consider taking on someone like Gabrysia as a cleaner in the organisation where she was an operations manager. She said that a woman who had stayed at home would not be a good worker, as she had grown used to sitting around and gossiping, rather than working hard to achieve her goals, and that she had made her bed, so she should lie in it [Discussion, Lydia, in a café, 27.9.205] Lydia had twice had to support herself, once when her father threw her out of the family home when she was an argumentative teenager, and once when her husband walked out, leaving her responsible for three sons. Tolek praised the way his mother had coped with brutality and hardship, and run the household with military precision, sharing out chores and childcare for the youngest brother. [Interview, Tolek, my house, 27.4.2015].

The potential for financial and personal tensions to unravel ties of relatedness and escalate into neglect, abuse and violence were only occasionally hinted at, but not made explicit by participants. In the autobiographical graphic novel entitled 'Marzi' (Sowa, 2011) the vulnerability of a demented and acutely vulnerable elderly woman living near her family farm in the countryside is powerfully evoked. Similarly Dorota (see Section 5.2) talked about her friend's fractured family in Mazowieckie and the ways in which childhood abuse re-emerged over a generation into elder abuse (Phillips, 2007).

> *Dorota: I have friend, she was living two floors below me. We knew each other from childhood... Her dad was alcoholic, can be quite abusive to mum. She (the daughter) hate him so much that she actually kick him out of the flat. He has nowhere to live, he has cancer, she treat him abusively, spend Christmas on his own, lives in room with ex-wife and her new partner...*
>
> *Lucy: Revenge?*
>
> *Dorota: Yeah ..... .like punishing him ... he sometimes calls my dad and says it's Christmas and they come to see mother with presents and nobody invites him.*
>
> *Lucy: Does he realise why?*
>
> *Dorota: He doesn't realise and is not very intelligent, very simple man. I think it is not his fault. He grow up and do things and drink. He did things the best how he can. He doesn't understand, because he was doing the best job he thought he was doing, and now he is getting punished.*
>
> *Lucy: You are kind. Some people would say he is getting what he deserved?*
>
> *Dorota: I know. I never been in house and been abused. Then I thinking about my friend and what she do if he dies. Maybe she should forgive him a little bit, you are putting punishment more towards yourself. If the victim looks for revenge for the things that happen, it is not the person who inflicted the pain, but the victim suffers more. If you are trying to understand and forgive, not to say that it was right, but you heal more.*
>
> *Lucy: Did your parents often tell you about this?*
>
> *Dorota: Yes, sometimes my parents tell me he called. He phones Christmas, name day, he usually cried on the phone, saying how sad his life is now, he doesn't have contact with his children. He has prostate cancer or something*

like that so he is doing chemotherapy and everything and nobody is interested.
[Interview, Dorota, my house, 11.12.2014]

Neglect and abuse is complex, but what the example above, and the following example below, speak to is the very real absences and holes in the multiple spheres of 'care diamond' provision by the state, the market, civil society and the family (Katz, 2001) and the challenges for social policy.

For instance, during fieldwork, Agnieszka and Ziemowit (see above) talked about one of the members of their community in Dolnośląsk. He lived in the shadiest part of the valley, where there was the least sunlight and the steepest hillsides. He stockpiled old white goods such as fridges in his back yard. Some of them had exploded and sparked a fire, which had burned half of his house down. The neighbours were worried about a repeat incident during the dry summer. Over the years his wife and children had moved out, and he would not accept advice or help from representatives from his family, community, charities or state-funded social services. Social workers were reluctant to step in, because he was considered troubled, but not enough of a risk to himself and others to be sectioned, detained and treated in hospital. [Discussion, Agnieszka and Ziemowit, 25.9.2015]. Agnieszka commented that there was less money in Poland than in the UK to support such troubled individuals.

In this section I have drawn attention to the role of structural advantages and disadvantages which shape social reproduction in multiple and complex ways and create opportunities and insecurities. The next section explores self-care and independence in the older generation.

5.4 Later life practices of independence and un-retirement

This section complicates and enriches the discussion so far by problematising the focus on older people as 'left behind' and 'care receivers', and challenging ageism and simplistic accounts of fragility in old age (Walker, 2018). The older generation are brought more fully into the picture through the expansion of the 'care diamond' into a five-pronged pentagon-shaped care constellation (De Silva, 2017). This which makes a space for their perspectives, foregrounds their agency and inner lives (Johnson, 2013), and draws attention to their role in negotiations with the family,

community, market and state, their experience of inequalities (Scharf et al, 2017) and how they find innovative ways of living on small incomes (Collins et al, 2009).

I argue that some of the older generation in Poland do not see themselves as abandoned like 'stones in the road', the phrase memorably used in King and Vullnetari's research (2006) on 'orphan pensioners' in Albania left behind by their migrant children. Instead they purposively stay put when their children migrate, and navigate the process of moving from care-giving and to being cared for in complex and unpredictable ways on multiple scales. Some find employment in the informal economy (White, 2009a, b) in order to supplement their small pensions, and undertake self-provisioning (Jehlička et al, 2013), frugality (Stenning et al, 2011), convivial pastimes (Robbins-Ruszkowski, 2014 and romantic self-realisation (Lulle and King, 2016). For some, putting the family first is not achieved solely through the provision of 24 hour a day family care for their grandchildren (Pytel and Rahmonov, 2018). It can also be equally meaningfully achieved through independent living, self-care and 'intimacy at a distance', and through supporting the younger generation financially and practically to form their own households (Attias-Donfut 2003, Dykstra, 2012).

In Poland a significant proportion of later life practices of independence and 'unretirement' amongst the 55+ age group revolve around the 'grey' economy, according to the OECD (2015). Older workers in the 'grey brigade' undertake paid work in order to increase their small monthly incomes, and are often paid cash in hand in order to reduce employers' liabilities for social insurance payments. Grey brigade is a pun on the word for the brave 'older resistance fighters' who were active during Poland's conflict-ridden past. 'Grey brigade' practices involve considerable skill, resilience and agency in marshalling resources (Collins et al, 2009) to optimise personal benefit in both above-board and subversive ways.

While this sort of 'making do' (Stenning et al, 2011), 'zig zag capitalism' (Jeffrey, 2013), anti-institutionalism (Garapich, 2011a) and 'small-scale resistance of the weak' (Garapich, 2016) in semi-legitimate domains can enable people to chisel out new spaces of hope, it can also be corrosive of the public realm (Osipovič, 2010). It reduces the tax base, and fails people who need the protection of rules and regulations and enforcement when problems arise with wages and terms and conditions of work, or alternatively protection from abuse. Materka (2014) captures the contradictions by envisaging *kombinacja as* a site of both ingenuity and inequality, both innovation and suffering, across time and space. Furthermore, 'unretirement' is not necessarily a

fulfilling choice, as it may involve exhausting work undertaken in order to keep people afloat financially, and may also intertwine with problematic power relations with children, which together may make individuals feel and look miserable (see Section 6.4). The thrust of 'unretirement' in the formal economy is on keeping older workers in the labour market, not on re-training and flexible working in ways that enables people to balance unpaid responsibilities and sustain good health (as in Gabrysia's case in 5.3)

For example, Ula and Amelia, pensioners who work in the grey economy. Ula is the mother in law of Kinga, and Amelia is one of Ula's best friends. Ula is single, held down a full-time job for 35 years before reaching state pension age and has a small occupational pension and secure tenure in a two roomed flat. Amelia is widowed, moved in and out of paid labour and unpaid care labour before reaching state pension age, and receives what she calls a small widow's pension.

Amelia: … we work for our pensions, because they are small.

Ula: I disagree. We work, because the bosses….

Amelia: …want us

Ula: Because we are the grey brigade. They don't contribute towards our benefits, they contribute nothing.

Amelia: We work on the black. …and I tell you from my heart, that in Poland the grey brigade is very well developed. There are even old people working as security guards on building sites! They could put people on proper contracts. We like being able to work and earn money, but it would be better if young people had the work and could live.

Lucy: Where do you work?

Amelia: In a kitchen. Very heavy work for seven złoty an hour. They don't pay properly for my work. The kitchen doesn't have any air conditioning or windows.

Lucy: Where is it?

Amelia: Not far from here, five minutes away. I am happy that I can do it because one of my sons doesn't work, the other earns 600 złoty. I am happy that I can contribute to the family budget.

Lucy: How many hours do you work?

Amelia: It varies, four or sometimes ten. One shallow plate weights a kilogram, so when I carry five plates that's 5 kilos. Now that I am older, it's heavy.

Sometimes I am so tired that I sit down and say "I can't work today, I am going to sleep." I am so tired sometimes. [Interview, Ula and Amelia, Ula's flat, 22.9.2015]

Amelia lives with her two sons and is nostalgic for the financial security she experience during the communist era. Her sons, unlike herself and her husband at their age, have found it difficult to find secure work and move into their own homes. According to the World Bank (2014) at least a quarter of the population in Poland are employed on *umowy śmieciowe* (junk contracts) in casual or agency work, which pays little and offers no guaranteed hours, stability or social security.

Amelia: Do you know, the worst thing in Poland is that there are many contracts which are not work contracts with paid sick leave and holidays, but only so-called contracts. You are paid, but no contributions are paid to cover your pension, sick leave and holidays. And some young people have this contract work – as it is called – for several years. Some years you cannot take any time off.

Lucy: Terrible

Amelia: In Poland we call them 'junk contracts' because they are not worth it. Rubbish. There are a lot of them…..

Lucy: Life was totally different 20 or 30 years ago.

Amelia: Absolutely. There was work. There was everything. If you didn't like one place you could go elsewhere. There was child benefit, there were vacations in the countryside and contributions towards the cost. There were social funds, workplace trips. For instance I worked in communications and could go to a cheap holiday home. It's all gone. The holiday home has gone. When you went on holiday you had 14 days, two weeks, that was standard in Poland. Now you take 5 days because you are worried that when you return you might not have a job. [Interview, Ula and Amelia, Ula's flat, 22.9.2015]

One way of coping on a low income is through frugal economising, which is widespread (Stenning et al, 2010). Agnieszka evoked the sheer effort and intense discipline underpinning frugality when talking about her mother's elderly single, widowed and divorced friends in the Dolnośląsk region.

You have to live very modestly, counting every coin. You know, you can cover your food and bills, but you have to think … you can buy something cheap once a year.

The problem is that you can't go on holiday, you can't save for a holiday or a trip. No you can't do it. [Interview, Agnieszka, in her home, 25.9.2015]

During fieldwork in Śląsk I noticed how carefully people scanned prices and sought out good deals. During a shopping trip to a small outdoor market Amelia was constantly scanning prices and seeking good deals from stall-holders with whom she had built convivial relations – one had had a burglary. They told her where the food came from, and gave her a discount in return for her loyalty and empathy. When we arrived at a small neighbourhood pharmacy to fetch Amelia's son's drugs I mentioned that I needed to buy a particular cream (Polibiotic) unavailable in the UK and she and Ula insisted that we buy it there and then at a good price using Amelia's discount card When Ula got home she folded and refolded her plastic bags neatly and put them on a shelf under the coat rack, ready for re-use. These small practices were repeated numerous times in numerous small ways, from to the re-use of teabags and grinding up of old bread into breadcrumbs for use in cooking. Similarly in Podlaskie Julia and Łukasz (see Section 5.3) were constantly dimming and switching off lights in flats to save money, and Renia bought ear-rings for her grand-daughter from a stallholder she knew in the indoor market in her town who would give her a cheap deal.

Food provisioning through growing, catching, hunting, harvesting, preserving food is another 'unretirement' practice, which cuts across classes, generations and localities (Jehlička et al, 2013) and can be done for pleasure, and also for a small profit through sales to people in networks, or contributions in economies of favours. For example, Renia and Bartosz (see Section 5.3) talked about the pleasure they gained from berry-picking and jam-making in the summer and mushroom picking in the autumn. Similarly Julia and Łukasz (see Section 5.3) have fished and shared their catch all their lives, drawing on a visceral knowledge of their local lakes, forests and farmland and deep-rooted and wide-ranging economies of favours developed over generations. They repeatedly said that they did not sell fish but did give it to people, such as their son in law's family, including their son in law's mother and their son in law's sister, who is a nurse and a useful person to know in the hospital.

> *Lucy: …your family were fishermen?*
>
> *Julia: They were fishermen and we are anglers. It's our hobby. They caught fish and sold them in the shops….*
>
> *Lucy When you have a lot of fish do you give it to your children and neighbours?*

Julia: Yes, I don't sell them. I only give them to friends, neighbours, to one neighbour, to the next. When I have a lot of fish I take a bucket and I say "take them and that's it." I also gave them to Renia [her daughter's mother in-law] and Renata [her daughter's sister in law]. [Interview, Julia and Łukasz, in their flat, 6 August 2015]

While these practices evoke images of a romantic rural heritage, they can be highly differentiated, with the working class increasingly forced to rely on reactive, defensive strategies, many derived from earlier practices (Kideckel, 2003). For example Julia's mother had had a house by the lake which had been forcibly pulled down. Another house near to the overgrown site and surrounded by a high metal fence was still standing. My difficulty in getting to the bottom of why one house had been knocked down and another left standing, and in making sense of all the fishing and land ownership rights and wrongs showed the gaps in my understanding (see Chapter 3). More importantly, it also highlighted the gaps between winners and losers in the uneven redistribution of state-owned land and assets over the past 25 years (Hardy, 2009, Stenning et al, 2011) and the disadvantages of being the weaker party in the power relations underpinning 'economies of favours with *'znajmósci'* (useful people in the know).

When previously active pensioners did finally become frail, ongoing self-care and independent living were clearly important for some, driven partly by a desire not to move, especially if homes were lost during the war and then regained or rebuilt. There is also determination not to be beholden to or a burden on children (see Chapter 4) and awareness of the ways in which gendered informal familial care place huge burdens on caregivers in terms of finance, time, and carer wellbeing (Dalmer, 2018).

For example, Teresa's mother Czesia, in her 80s, kept fit by walking down the stairs in her block every day in order to fetch her newspaper from the shop near the bottom, sit on a bench and gossip or put the worlds to rights with her longstanding neighbours and friends and muster the strength to walk all the way up again. Her late husband had done the same until shortly before he came to the end of his life, motivated by the need not only to meet people, but also to walk their small dog (which had also passed away). Czesia also continued to cook meals daily, voicing reluctance at giving up an activity she had always enjoyed and been skilled at.

Similarly Ula and Amelia, looking to the future, wanted to remain mobile and independent, unlike Ula's mother, who had 'given up' after she was widowed, put on

weight, grown immobile and become trapped in her flat until she died. Ula's brother had suggested that Ula moved in with him and his wife in old age, but she favoured intimacy at a distance. As for Ameila, even though her sons lived with her, she too worried about the future, as she wanted them to start their own families in their own homes. Her own siblings lived too far away to offer her much support in old age. She was concerned about healthcare rationing, joking ironically that the Polish health services is known as the 'Polish death service' and that pencils are used to write in appointments as pencil marks are easier to rub out when the patient inevitably dies before the appointment years later [Interview, Ula and Amelia, Ula's flat, 22.9.2015] Both women mitigated the fear of incapacity and isolation in old age by nurturing networks based on common interests and needs, arranging walks and fitness classes with their friends, socialising over beers or coffees in cafes and relaxing with handicrafts at home.

Other women with more resources at their disposal enact their right to autonomy and the pursuit of hobbies when they retire, and move to the countryside or by the sea or a lake (Pytel and Rahmonov, 2018). For some who can afford it the romantic tradition of escape to the mountains is still highly prized. For instance Tolek, who was in his 40s and worked in the public sector, said of his mother Lydia in Poland. *'Her dream is to move to mountains to have a little house, isolated, no-one around even at night, only her, the mountains and the sky.'* [Interiew Tolek, my house, 27.4.2015]. This was shared in my sitting room where there is a painting of a slightly hunched old Polish lady in black hurrying past pollarded trees on a bleak winter's day. It was painted by one of my husband's relatives, a woman who fled to the Tatry mountains in Poland to live alone and paint after her lover was shot dead. Lydia reiterated her love of the mountains when I met her in Poland [Discussion, Lydia, in a café, 27.9.2015].

When crises occur towards the end of life, the ways in which households cope can be unpredictable. For instance, when the mother of Elżbieta broke her hip, Elżbieta fetched her from her home in the countryside, took her to her flat in the city, arranged treatment and decided to look for work in the UK as she had just lost her job at the same time and needed to keep the household afloat financially (see Chapter 6).

"I left my mother and I arrange her operation in hospital and I arrange social service, so she had got help… and my neighbour she help them as well……She told me "I will die" and I said "oh mum, what you talking about" and she told me "I will

die, you just go and do what you have to do". So I told her "oh mum I will go over, settle down, I will take you to my house". And she said "No, I will never go to England" and I thought "Mum how can you can think that" and she said "No I will never go to England" because she really knew……… her time nearly finish ... she told me "don't look at me, don't help me, you will not help me staying here, you have to think about your daughter and about her future." [Interview, Elżbieta, on a bench, 4.10.2015]

Her mother died on the operating table soon after she arrived in the UK.

The findings in this section bear out critical gerontological arguments that the older generation can spend many years as 'active old' or 'young old' in 'un-retirement' (Lain and Vickerstaff, 2014) and balancing work and care (Carers UK, 2012, Ben-Galim and Silim, 2013) before becoming 'old' and the 'oldest old' in need of caregiving and a peaceful journey towards the end of life.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have drawn on my conceptual framework and findings to challenge discourses around family care, welfare and ageing in Poland. I have reframed debates by arguing that family care is much more complex and contested than it initially appears in discussions about the primacy of family care in Poland, which however have to be understood in the context of the uneven distribution of options beyond the family. I have demonstrated, drawing on the 'care diamond' (Katz, 2001), some of the ways in which government welfare, commodified provision and community support play important roles in Poland alongside the family, and how the erosion of state funded welfare and shifting of welfare onto the family has negative consequences for the poorest in society and for women cumulatively disadvantaged by unpaid care work. I have argued that population ageing is an important consideration in debates about care, and reframed debates by highlighting how, contrary to gloomy stereotypes, the older generation in Poland is constituted of a wide range of 'young old' and 'old' people who give care and remain independent until they are the 'oldest old' and chisel out spaces of hope in longstanding informal and

sometimes semi-legal socio-economic domains. There is anecdotal evidence that healthcare for the elderly is subject to rationing, a subject beyond the scope of this PhD.

In short, this chapter contributes to scholarship on care, migration and intergenerational relationships by describing the complex lives and messy realities that nuance simplistic accounts which can too positive about family care, too negative about population ageing and ill-informed about the vital role of state welfare. I have argued that the real issue is the dominance of the adult worker and flexicurity work and welfare models, and the side-lining of the pressing need for the government to think differently and creatively about the opportunities and challenge of an ageing society, and develop policy solutions which help people juggle work and care over the lifecourse, and take emerging new gender, generation and migration regimes into account.

Chapter 6 - Reasons for Migration and Stasis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is driven by the principle that, having established the structures and processes that shape social reproduction in the previous chapter, it is now helpful to examine how decisions are made concerning who migrates, stays put or returns in order to make, un-make and remake social reproduction. It argues that the 'figure of the migrant' only comes into being if there are immobile 'moorings' (Lulle, 2018b) to move from, and that while various factors shaping migration and stasis can be identified, decisions about staying put, moving home, going back home or drawing on migrant labour in one's home in order to enact social reproduction are contradictory and unpredictable. With this proviso in mind, this chapter considers four particular factors influencing, but not determining, the uneven landscapes of mobility and immobility in 21st century Poland - work and welfare regimes, affordable housing, psycho-social well-being and lifecourse stage.

Grounding these factors within the rich descriptions of my participants' lives the chapter proceeds as follows: the first section builds on Chapter 5 and examines how some decisions are propelled by the uneven distribution of paid and unpaid work and welfare rooted in the adult worker model and flexicurity. This, I show, means that young people in education or training and pensioners are usually better supported by the welfare system and more eligible for a fuller range of free healthcare than unemployed adult workers, even if those adult workers are midlife women who work unceasingly hard providing valuable unpaid care labour. The second section examines how some decisions are driven by the cramped size of some homes, and shortage of affordable social housing in Poland. While comfortingly intimate for some, small flats can exacerbate uneven or toxic intergenerational power relations for others, and limit opportunities for household members, particularly the younger generation, to form new households and thereby enact social reproduction. The third section examines how some decisions are driven by some individuals' longing to improve psycho-social wellbeing by escaping the confines of existing patterns of social reproduction, establishing intimacy at a distance and re-making the self and the family in a new

environment. The significance of the stage of the lifecourse that individuals are in, with stages viewed as fluid, and open to reversal and rupture (Hörschelmann, 2011), rather than categoric, emerges in each section.

It is important to state at the start that this list of reasons is not a model or typology of motivations for migration and stasis, not least because mobility and intimacy at a distance is not abnormal, and mobilities and immobilities have to be further differentiated through the lens of the diverse political and cultural economies in different regions in Poland (White, 2011a). Furthermore, migration and stasis are not mutually exclusive, as shown by my participants' discussions of returning to Poland. I argue instead that anyone can ultimately be a 'stayer' or a 'leaver' (Rigg, 2007) and that my findings matter because they inform critical scrutiny of the political decision-making that shapes whether people lead comfortable or disadvantaged lives.

6.2 Midlife women worker-carers and flexicurity

This section examines the ways in which household decisions about who migrates and who stays, and if migration is time-limited, are shaped by the uneven gendered and generational distribution of work across the lifecourse (Hills, 2007) and within cohorts (McKeon, 2014) and localities (White, 2011a), and also by eligibility for welfare support. This section focuses on the case of midlife women who, when they cannot find secure work, lose out on income which helps keep their families from sinking below the breadline, lose their eligibility for all but the most basic of free healthcare, and lose the right to accrue the social insurance record needed for a secure pension. I argue that when they deliberate about seeking paid work outside Poland, thereby creating new "spaces of hope for themselves and the next generation" (Pine, 2014), considerations about current and future social protection for themselves and others in their households are key. I further argue that the kith and kin relations that they know would operate in their absence, and the particular moral rationalities about good care that they bring to bear on their everyday lives, are also highly influential, as are their particular personal circumstances. All these factors shape whether or not the act of migration starts off and stays as a time-limited, or alternatively becomes a chance to develop a new life in another country.

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Scholarly attention to gendered and generational labour market discrimination and the particular challenges that older women face in avoiding precarious work has been well-documented (Hardy, 2009, White, 2011a, Pustułka, 2015). Some women who do not succeed in finding secure work find themselves too old to be attractive to employers in search of fit and strong workers, and too young to be eligible for a pension and the healthcare that comes with it (Osipovič, 2010, p.134) and can feel side-lined, undervalued and worthless (McKeon, 2014). Experiences are shaped not only by the national context of 'economic shock' in the 1990s and the closure of key employers and cuts to public service (see Chapter 4) but also by differing labour markets in differing localities and post-industrial decline. For example, White (2011,p.28) classes the east of Poland 'Poland B' as it is the part of the country containing the regions, urban and rural areas, towns and villages, which have lost out most in the transition to a market economy. Migration is driven by the use of informal networks to respond to opportunities outside Poland following local post-industrial decline. As White (2011a, p.66) explains, the insecurity of work "create a paradoxical situation where people in Sanok or Grajewo feel they need to get a job in Britain or another EU country in order to pay contributions towards their pensions". Some experiences were also shaped by the bargaining power 'flexicurity' gives to employers, which, when combined with *kombinacja* (spaces of shady business, ingenuity and innovation), can jeopardise workers' rights in multiple troubling ways (Keune and Jepsen, 2007, Strauss and Fudge, 2013).

Research into the ways in which migration is seen as either time-limited or open is also well established (Eade et al, 2006). Pine contends that migrants who see their migration as time-limited "simultaneously occupy two or even three different regimes of value". Pine (2014, p.101) defines these as:

> *"their local one, where they expect to be visible, known, and recognized and to carry out their financial obligations to kin and community; that of the Polish state, where they have to be visible as citizens in some contexts, such as education or taxation, but may try to limit the financial implications of this involvement, and where they want to be visible and financially supported in others, such as pensions or health care; and that of their migration place, where they exchange their unvalorised present labor for economic value in the future and try very hard to stay invisible in the meantime."*

Pine recognises that not everyone views migration as time-limited (2014, p.101) and argues that in these circumstances migration seems to be "less of an investment by several generations into the growth of the family/house than a bid for personal, individual freedom". Lulle and King (2016) reiterate this theme of freedom and transformation, and contend that material conditions and subjective conceptions of ageing and well-being are transformed when people move from one country to another.

What my research does is to enrich these perspectives by providing personal accounts that both bear them out, and also highlight additional complexity and messiness, as I now continue to detail.

Migration for a time-limited period as a response to post-industrial decline, and with the backing of a large family, drove Teresa to work in two jobs as a cleaner and shelf stacker in the UK (see Chapter 5). Before she migrated she was an unemployed single parent in her 40s sharing a flat with her parents and two daughters in a post-industrial town in Małopolska in SE Poland that her parents had moved to from their '*chata*' (cottage) in the nearby countryside in the 1980s. Work was plentiful, but post 1990 privatisation set in, as her sister Bogusia explained:

> *Bogusia: There was work, but there was not this privatisation. Everything was different and now everything is private, everything…at this moment one room is enough for me. It used to cost less, but year after year it is goes up … whether it is rent or water or electricity. Everything, for us at the moment in our town, everything is private.* [Interview, Bogusia, in her mother's flat, 8.8.205].

Unlike Teresa, Bogusia had no intention of migrating. She was also a single parent, but with a small flat of her own, a longstanding job in a shop and a grown up son who earns a living in one of Poland's largest cities. Two of Teresa's brothers worked for local businesses and the third was a priest. They are all embedded in their community, with extensive family and friendship networks, which I saw in action at a huge family wedding part-funded by Teresa in her role as the aunt and godmother of the bride.

Bogusia repeatedly asked Teresa to come home, saying 'she knew people' who could help her find work despite the eclipse of state-run workplaces, secure jobs, regular working hours and low-cost housing in their home town. Teresa's response was that she did not want precarious low-paid work and cash in hand payments, that would leave her living hand to mouth and reliant on charity to cover her healthcare

costs beyond the most basic free provision, and also strip her of opportunities to pay national insurance and accumulate a reasonable pension. She reflected on how she had found two jobs as a cleaner and shelf-stacker in North East England in 2006 through a bus driver called Sergiusz, who had been recruited during the wave of Eastern European recruitment after Poland joined the EU (Stenning and Dawley, 2009).

> *When the crisis came we lost our jobs at the centre for invalids, like everyone else. Then I was on holiday for several years, how do you say it, 'unemployed and receiving benefits.' At that time my brother's friend Sergiusz was working here in England. When he rang my brother he asked how Teresa was doing at home. My brother replied: "She's sitting at home looking for work." Then his friend said that there would be work for me if I came to England.*
>
> [Interview, Teresa, in her flat, 17 June 2014].

Teresa's use of the words 'holiday' and 'sitting at home' should not be taken at face value. They imply that the management of domestic, educational and health activities and relationships undertaken by someone who enjoys her role as a diligent, conscientious and sociable mother of two teenagers, daughter of two ageing parents, sister and aunt is not work. This is work (see the discussion on social reproduction in Chapter 2), as is the enacting of migration, which involves hours of labour arranging journeys, packing and sorting out affairs, and so forth.

Teresa's decision to migrate for work also has to be seen in the light of the kith and kin relations that operated in her absence. The opportunity to leave her teenage daughters in the care of her parents and 'stretch the household across borders' in ways which kept everyone safe and cared for - and enabled the one adult of working age to undertake remunerative work - was key. In some ways she is 'stuck' (Massey, 2012, Rogaly, 2015) in that her life in the UK revolves almost entirely around paid work and occasional visits to church, while her family in Poland enjoy much more loving daily interactions, but in other ways she is accruing upward mobility through lifting the family above the breadline as they create their own households. She says she keeps going by keeping busy all day long and feels lucky that she has a stable main job, is treated fairly and generally gets on well with her employers and colleagues. She never talked about the father of her children, from whom she had separated many years earlier and who had recently died. Although he was an 'absent other' (Raghuram, 2012, Lulle, 2018a) he also felt very much present, but a private topic.

What died emerge repeatedly was her longing to return to Poland to look after her grandchildren, but had to wait until she retires. Migration for work was "something to be endured in the short-term present for a greater good in the long-term future" (Pine, 2014).

> *Well the girls have got used to it, that mum has been away for years and that she has to stay until she retires, because there is no other way Lucy, because if I go back to Poland, what next? Old woman, 53 years old, no-one will take me on. If my health holds up I will stay here until I retire. And then I will go back to Poland, to my home, to my children, close to the family.* [Interview, Teresa, in her flat, 17 June 2014].

If Teresa's case seems relatively straightforward, others are more complex especially when they involve precarity, weak worker protection and *kombinacja* (spaces of shady business, ingenuity and innovation), which rewards some and disenfranchises others.

For instance, Elżbieta, who was in her 50s and had an adult daughter, lived alone in NE England and worked in education and training (see Chapter 5). Elżbieta came from Lodzkie in central Poland, where her parents had worked in the textile industry. Earlier in her life Elżbieta had had no desire to migrate as she had a degree, a 'good job' as a marketing manager for a company, and a flat passed onto her by her parents when they retired to the countryside and she got married to a car mechanic. All of a sudden in 2005 her widowed mother broke her hip and moved to live with her. Her husband, whose alcoholism was by this time abundantly clear and preventing him from holding down a job, revealed that he had had a child with another woman. Her boss then called her in for a crisis meeting.

> *... he had big control from Polish tax man and he was really scared so he offered me to be self-employed and work for him. If you self-employed you have to pay 42% insurance contribution so it wasn't really good deal for me, and additionally he offer me his car and his phone so I hadn't got any expenses, so wasn't a point for me to work as self-employed. So I told him no and during 10 minutes I lost car, job, everything. ..... I had mother in home, plus my daughter and I split up from my husband, so what to do?* [Interview, Elżbieta, on a bench, 4.10.2015]

Elżbieta was dismissive of the paltry amount she would receive if she applied for unemployment benefits.

I applied for job in Poland and didn't get any answer and I applied for 20 jobs in England and got 19 answers. And my English was really very low level. So I took first job that I got. ..When I lost my job I was too young to die and too old to work. I was 41……. Usually they look for people 25 years old with 10 years of experience. It was quite harsh. I think it was a little bit changed in Poland, but at that time nobody interested in my qualifications. .. I think it was about after transformation and people, employers did not recognise that people with life experience and work experience they more valuable than really very young people. [Interview, Elżbieta, on a bench, 4.10.2015].

Soon after she arrived in the UK her mother died (see Chapter 5) and her daughter went to live with her paternal grandparents and aunt for six months before joining Elżbieta in the UK (Chapter 7). Elżbieta initially worked as a care worker in a nursing home for the elderly. Building on the social capital she had gained from her education and professional status in Poland (Erel, 2010) she worked hard at improving her English, acquired a range of qualifications, and moved into the education and training sector. Her daughter also flourished educationally and professionally.

What I really liked and what I was surprised when I came to England was that people my age didn't have any problem to find any job. [Interview, Elżbieta, on a bench, 4.10.2015]

Elżbieta reflects that she was lucky to arrive in the UK when she did, as life has got much harder and migrants are less welcome than in 2006. She enjoys the opportunity for 'me time' in the UK after the relentless 'double shift' approach to life in Poland (Hardy, 2009) and her tortured relationships with some family members (see 6.3).

Not all of my participants' migration experiences were driven by strong views shaped by kinship and obligation-based futures (as in Teresa's case) or by go-getting entrepreneurialism (as in Elżbieta's case). Others were shaped by ambivalence (Bjørnholt et al, 2017) and difficulty in reconciling tensions between, on the one hand, gendered and generational compromises enabling the younger generation to 'build new, different and often far more individualistic futures' (Pine, 2014) and, and on the other hand, hoping for a better life for themselves. Some worker-carers cannot escape low-paid work where workers have limited rights and may find themselves at risk of 'wounded ambitions' (Osipovič, 2010, p.134). They may at the same time use the structures and discourses available to them in pragmatic and eclectic ways (Bjørnholt

and Stefansen, 2018) and enjoy the small domestic pleasures involved in everyday homemaking.

For instance, up until 2006 Laura (see Chapter 5) had a secure and reasonably paid job in a manufacturing company in the province of Warminsko-Mazurskie in north-eastern Poland, where she lived with her husband and two daughters in a flat part-purchased with the help of her grandmother. Then the company was re-structured and her wages were halved.

> *Laura: ...It was quite good until this moment came that began to spoil things, and I had to accept that they gave me half. God, that half, that....*
>
> *Lucy: Because business was not good.*
>
> *Laura: Yes and then I had to work two weeks here and two weeks there in the accounts office, that's how it was. Two weeks in the office here and there. Przemek wanted to come here because Przemek drove buses. Przemek drove buses and the money was not good, such a little, and it was tough work, they did not respect him. Drivers are not respected in Poland. Here they have some respect for me, but not in Poland. Drivers in Poland are not respected, that's how it is.*
>
> *Lucy: Did Przemek think it would be better in England?*
>
> *Laura: Yes and when he came here he got a uniform, a white shirt, trousers, boots, everything, and respect, and overtime not extra hours, that for example...*
>
> *Lucy: Overtime?*
>
> *Laura: Yes, overtime yes, and if he did it he was paid, yes they respected drivers.... He felt very stressed because of the English language that he had not learned at school because we did not have English lessons. Yes there was a lot of stress at the beginning but he was given time to train and learn all the routes, how to do everything, and he was pleased with it and so was I. I said: of course I can manage, I'll manage and things will be better for him. So if it's meant to be, let's go.* [Interview, Laura, her home, 20.5.2015]

Her husband worked as a bus driver in NE England until he developed a health condition and switched to taxi-driving. Her younger daughter Beata flourished at

school and secured a place at a British university. Her older daughter Olga aged 19, stayed in Poland, completed her university education and married her boyfriend Gawel. Olga's agency had been a key element in the household strategy of migration and stasis.

> *Laura: Olga had finished school, gained her Matura [A-levels] and wanted to study, and I asked her if she wanted to come with us when we went, the whole family. But she wanted to study in a big city, Gawel was there, she had known him for two years, and if we had stayed in our town she would not be living with us, and that's how it worked out. Us coming here, well fine, but she did not want to come, she had however decided to finish her studies in Polska. Yes, she had too many friends in Poland and had a boyfriend, and she would never say' yes', that was her thinking. Really it was 'no', she said from the beginning, that it was 'no' and that was that, she was staying in Poland. She decided immediately and she was not going to change her mind.* [Interview, Laura, her home, 20.5.2015]

The broader support networks in place for Laura's wider family were also crucial. Laura's widowed mother, who lived in a large town, was supported by her new partner and Laura's sister. Laura's parents in law, who lived in the countryside, were supported by her husband Przemek's siblings (see Chapter 5).

As for Laura herself, while in the North East she worked in a factory and as an agency cleaner in a hotel, initially enjoying the work until the terms and conditions worsened.

> *Laura: I did not realise that I was already 44. I felt very good, younger than before, and then I realised that I would never work in an office here, that I had do physical work. It only dawned on me after one or two years when Beata had settled down and it had become less interesting, that I learned that I had come off worst. I was worst off, but I consoled myself that my husband was better off, do you understand.* [Interview, Laura, her home, 20.5.2015]

Laura tried to learn English, but found it difficult, and marvelled at the ease with which her younger daughter Beata picked it up. She wished there were organisations to help her join in with community activities, but reflected that she was a '*domortorka*' (home-maker) as that was how she was brought up. Her house and garden were immaculate, walls painted pastel, matching throws on the sofa, not a sign

of a weed in the neatly fenced garden. We exchanged cards in which she wrote eloquently in Polish about the scent of the pine trees in Poland. This yearning for home as an emotional space and an imaginary (Blunt and Dowling, 2006) contrasted with her narrative of a neighbour in the flat below her in her block in her Polish home town, who perpetually complained about the slightest noise and added to the stress in their lives. At the time of interview she was uncertain about the future, weighing up where her children might be, where she and her husband would live and work, and pension portability between Poland and the UK after 10 years (Pemberton and Scullion, 2013). After the 2016 referendum (McGhee and Piętka-Nykaza, 2016) the decision was made to return to Poland to live near their oldest daughter and grandchild once their youngest daughter had finished her education in the UK and secured a job.

This section has teased out why and how some midlife women seek paid work in the UK in order to bring about social reproduction, which is intimately linked to the need for affordable housing explored in the next section.

6.3 Longing for a home of one's own

This section argues that decisions about migration and stasis are also shaped by generational imbalances in the distribution of affordable housing and opportunities to form new households and sometimes escape existing households. Housing can be described as the "eternal, always longed for, hard to attain goal of generations of Poles" (White 2011a, p. 66). Housing shortages and overcrowding are acute for the least wealthy (Pittini et al, 2015) and make it more difficult for the younger generation to start new homes (CBOS, July 2017b) and achieve a 'normal life'. Normal life is often expressed as a grand narrative in migrants' justifications for living and working abroad (Galbraith, 2008, Galasińska and Kozłowska, 2009, Polkowski, 2017) and explained as dignity, happiness, affordability and ease of life (McGhee et al, 2013) in a meritocracy (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010). I complicate these discourses of normality by understanding them as also linked to housing shortages personal and physical space, and about home, both a home which is a safe space free from violence (Blunt and Dowling, 2006) and a home of one's own which allows autonomy.

Discourses about housing shortages in Poland are borne out by statistics showing that Poland has the lowest rate of homes for its population in Europe (Pittini et al, 2015). According to Habitat for Humanity (2019) around 15% of the population live in sub-standard buildings and "44% of young people (25-34 years of age) still live with their parents, with a third of them never moving out to live independently." This has to be put into a geographical and historical context of widespread destruction of housing during World War Two, followed by rebuilding during the communist era governed by the miserly designation of 15 square metres of space per person. Private houses were subsequently subdivided, and row after row of uniform blocks of flats constructed. Although housing allocation was a means of social and political control, there was nevertheless a culture of secure tenure, relatively low rents and local authority management. Since the 1990s official state policy has promoted private ownership and mortgages, leading to the selling off at low prices of flats to existing tenants. This proved to be a windfall for the older generation and their beneficiaries, but not for a new generation of younger tenants who were not earning enough or in stable enough work to afford to rent from private landlords, or take out a mortgage loan, especially after stricter lending conditions were brought in after the 2008 financial crash, and the closure in 2009 of the National Housing Fund which supported affordable rental housing. However there is still some (15%) cheaper co-operatively owned and municipal housing, and three-quarters of households owning their homes outright (Pittini et al, 2015). There is also a huge unofficial 'grey' rental market in line with Polish practices of *kombinacja* (spaces of shady business, ingenuity and innovation).

The formation of new households was important for my younger participants, who were in their 30s. They had entered the Polish labour market in the 2000s at a time of widespread unemployment, and could not afford to live apart from their parents. At their age their parents had been able to move into their own flats when they started their own families, because affordable social housing was more widely available during the communist era, and housing was allocated to some workers as part of their employment in some state-run organisations. Migration became, in some ways, a quest for autonomy and the opportunity for young couples to start their own family life (Bell and Erdal, 2015). Some were supported by parents who wanted their children to take responsibility for their own lives, recognised that they faced multiple options (Galbraith, 2008) and gave them 'licence to leave' (Baldassar, 2007b) to

differing degrees. Others found that migration was 'oppositional to parental expectations' (Botterill, 2012), and challenged power relations in which parents sought to exercise ongoing parental control shaped by traditional conceptions of familyhood (see Chapter 2). This worldview sees the move towards nuclear families dispersed across Poland and Europe as potentially disruptive of intergenerational solidarity necessary for survival.

The irony is that while traditional homemaking and childrearing is valorised in political discourses (see Chapter 4), housing shortages and high rents and mortgages mean opportunities for homemaking are not open to some of the younger generation, particularly if they do not know the right people (Magala, 2011). However, this intergenerational divide has to be differentiated through an intra-generational lens, which recognises that housing shortages are most acute for the least wealthy. Some of the housing in which the older generation live is poor quality, and some of the younger generation have greater potential earning power to enable them to buy, rent or build their own homes, and also some move into homes their parents have arranged or bought for them.

The goal of a family home of her own was important for Kinga, who was in her 30s and worked full-time inside the home bringing up her three children in NE England. After she and her husband Dawid had coupled up at an employment training centre in their home province of Śląsk, they had to live with her parents Gabrysia and Tomek (see Chapter 5) and some of her siblings in a large flat or in Dawid's bedroom in his mother Ula's flat (see Chapter 5) as they could not afford their own flat. Kinga felt stifled and they sought opportunities in the UK, to the disappointment of their families, who would have preferred them to stay closer to home. They found jobs in London, but as rents were high they always shared houses with other Polish workers. They moved from London to NE England when Kinga fell pregnant with their first child. Dawid secured a factory job to which he was signposted by friends, and earned enough to enable them to rent their own small flat. Kinga explained:

> *....in London part it was more like living on the boxes, and just in the rooms, so it's more like student's life, not like marriage life, not when you are starting normal life. .. coming here was breath of something normal, and try to settle down. The neighbours on our street were lovely and really welcoming, and they help us a lot and that was the good part and special when we barely know someone here.* [Interview, Kinga, in a café, 31.7.2014]

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Cheaper housing costs, income from Dawid's full-time job and what Kinga calls 'pocket money' from her informal cleaning jobs for neighbours, plus careful budgeting and occasional help from Poland, have enabled them to survive on one salary in NE England (Clements, 2014) and settle down into a routine of domesticity, parenting, nursery and school. They aim to buy their own house in the UK when Dawid is promoted.

Similarly Natalia and Piotr, who were also in their 30s, had two children and worked in food processing in NE England, also dreamed of 'normality'.

> *There you live at the lowest level. Here you can live a normal life and there everything is very difficult. Here it's easier because in England the government gives you social money for the children …it's easier to live here.* [Interview, Natalia, 8.5.2015].

Housing had been a key factor in their decision-making. They too had been unemployed in Poland and lived with Piotr's parents Renia and Bartosz (see Chapter 5) as they could not afford to rent or buy their own flat. In 2011, encouraged by Renia and Bartosz, they moved with their young children, and Natalia's sister and brother in law and their young children, to work on a farm on the English-Welsh border. They all shared a house on the farm until they moved to North East England, where they could afford to rent separate homes, picked up food factory jobs, and shared childcare and travelling to work. In future they planned to either buy a house in the UK or return to Poland to live in Renia and Bartosz's flat, which they will inherit at some stage in the future.

Not all young couples and their parents were trapped in unwanted intimacy. Some couples in their 30s did manage to acquire a home of their own, and for them the challenge was protecting their hard-won 'normal' life when unemployment struck, and not putting their parents under pressure by returning to live with them in their tiny flats. For instance Ala, who was in her 30s, worked in the hospitality sector and lived with her husband Wacek and three children in NE England. She and Wacek had managed to find factory work in their region, Śląsk after leaving school and to take out a mortgage on their own home. Suddenly their earnings shrunk and they could not pay their way. Ala explained:

> *We come to England because my husband is sick. He have epilepsy. In Poland it is very, very problem. In Poland he have just one attack one and a half two years … The law changed. He can work in there, they don't have special place*

for disability people. In Poland it is very, very difficult law about this. When he lose job they told him he can work just like security man in shop. He told me "Ah no it is not enough. I cannot go for half my wage … about 500zl, so very little money when we have mortgage, we have bills, everything we must pay, and two children. It's impossible life normal on this wage. [Interview, Ala, in her home, 1.5.2015]

Supported by friends and 'given permission to leave' (Baldassar, 2007) by their families, they found hospitality work in North East England and Ala set up a small craft business from home. They both worked on a zero hours contract basis, that translated into a full-time job for Wacek, flexible part-time work for Ala and extensive shift and lift sharing with their co-workers. If and when Wacek suffered from an epileptic attack, which happened rarely, his colleagues and employers supported him and he was no longer frightened of talking about it openly. They owned their own low-cost home in NE England and rented out their house in Poland for a small amount to someone who was trustworthy and a reliable payer. They anticipated that they might sell it to pay for university fees at some stage in the future, or return to live in it at some stage in the future.

A home of one's own which allows intimacy at a distance is not just driven by the desire to form a new and independent household. It can also be an escape from domineering parents (Botterill, 2012) and strained or thoroughly toxic household relationships (Brickell, 2012) in cramped intergenerational spaces, carried out by the individuals who are most mobile and who aspire to re-make themselves and create happier new homes.

For instance Ala (see above) had spent periods of her childhood in absolute poverty due to her father's drinking, job losses, business failure, debts and bankruptcy. For her 'normality' was not just a stable family, but also a stable income, and freedom from the fear of bailiffs banging on the door demanding repayment and repossession.

Similarly Dorota, a single parent in her 40s, who worked in the education and training sector, and lived with her daughter in their own small house in NE England, wondered if her decision to marry a British man, and move to North East England had been driven by her subconscious desire to escape her parents and the interdependent life they envisaged for her and themselves in Poland, with them in control.

Dorota: My parents have flat in city and little house from grandmother in little village. My dad said if you get married and stay in flat in city, this will be your

flat, but if it is cold in winter we will come back. I thought that it is only two rooms and I will have my life and I cannot imagine to have you whole winter. I know it is comfortable in town but .....In Poland get used to living in little flat. They don't winge. My aunt raised two children in one bedroomed flat - living room, parent's room, children's room in the same room. They live there until they got 30s, one daughter moved out, one stayed and they changed flat for 3 bedroomed flat. People never wish for any more. They were happy they had flat.

Lucy: There must have been terrible tension.

Dorota: We haven't seen that. It happened behind closed doors. I remember my friend's two bedroom apartment, brother and sister share the same bedroom, three children in one room. This was norm, you did not expect anything more. You were glad that you had your own roof and somewhere to live.

Lucy: I can see your parents would want you to be back there living the life they think is best for you. But you are living the life you think is best.

Dorota: The difference as well between my mum and dad. Someone pointed to me that my mum made me her partner and removed my dad out of it. When I was little she always said "now I have a little companion, so we can go together everywhere, do things together, help me", things like that. Then when I start to have my own life it started to be a problem..... [Interview, Dorota, my home, 11.12.2014]

Another participant in her 50s, Marzena, who worked in the retail sector and lived in a rented house with her adult daughter in NE England, recalled her childhood in a small flat in a town in the province of Lubelskie. She aimed to buy her own house in the UK when she was in a stronger financial position.

Lucy: Did you live in a block of flats?

Marzena: Yes …. it was horrible because we have three kids, two bedrooms, no living room… then it was horrible and it was really…. sometimes…I can do my homework in the kitchen for example. Always sometimes was fights between our brothers and sisters….it was horrible when I look, and unfortunately a lot of families live still like that. Sometimes I think it is worse because sometimes are two, three generations in one flat. For example, one family in one room, and second family in second room. One family with kids in one room. Such it

is still in Poland. It's nothing better. Of course some people have a house, flats. For example my son bought a flat, took a credit, and now he has a flat. It's new flat....he split with girlfriend after that.

Lucy: He and the girlfriend bought the flat together?

Marzena : He wanted because he want to live with her together, and took credit, and after that split with her.

Lucy: I hope he can still afford to pay the credit.

Marzena : Hopefully.

Lucy: Buying your own flat gives you freedom, but then you have to have the money to pay for it.

Marzena : He doesn't want to come here, definitely not. He has his own life with his climbing friends... and all the time to the mountains, or somewhere to climb ...

Lucy: Thinking back to your childhood, did all your friends live in flats with two rooms?

Marzena : It was very typical. It wasn't that our family was different. It's very rare when family has house, and in the classroom if somebody has a house, wow, it was very rare. I just remember one of my friends has a house. Three kids. But grandparents as well. And always fighting between two families. It's not like here, you have living room. It's definitely very, very different. And it doesn't matter you educated or not. Similar level of economic, because educated people, for example teachers or university teachers, had the same level of life.

Lucy: Do you think all families had arguments, or some families got on better than other families?

Marzena: I think some families, maybe they got on better, but I think that living in that.. it has a lot of problems. No intimate you know. I never had my own room, bedroom. It's horrible. [Interview, Marzena in her home, 3.6.2015]

As Marzena evoked, home can be unhomely, with an absence of care and civil negotiation, "a space of violence, alienation and emotional turmoil" (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p.15). Elżbieta (see Section 6.2) recalled her 'un-normal life' with her alcoholic husband and wanted to put a distance between herself and her former life in Poland.

Now I am quite happy, well, sometimes I thinking "oh no, it is absolutely so boring to live myself". But I am quite happy that, you know, that I am not waiting ,he will be drunk or not, it will be argument or not, he will be lie down before he open door, or not. You know, you sit at home, and you waiting, and you hear the, you know, steps, voices. This is un-normal, absolutely un-normal, and you still scared, you still don't know what will happen. No it is not life, definitely not life. Now I'm really happy that I needn't listen to drunk person who argue with me, who is doing things what he never should do. It is huge difference. If I want I leave my socks in the middle of the table, it is not...you know, it is quite different story. You needn't, you know, you needn't look at this person who vomiting, who is sick, smell, stink. So it is a different life. [Interview, Elżbieta, on a bench, 4.10.2015]

In contrast, for other participants and their families, shared intergenerational living spaces are 'normal' because they are financially viable, comfortingly intimate and common practice. These spaces may be in flats in urban areas or plots of land in the countryside.

For instance, Teresa said she would hate to live alone and feel lonely when she grows old, and often talked about retiring to her hometown (see Chapter 5 and Section 6.2). Her household's commitment to intergenerational interdependence and the sharing of limited space with mutual tolerance, good humour and frugality, appeared enduring.

Another example was Stefania from Malopolskie, who was in her 30s, worked as a cleaner and lived with her husband and two children in NE England. She said she moved to North East England with her husband for the sole purpose of earning enough money to build a house on her mother's large plot of land in a village in Malopolska. [Interview, Stefania, in her house, 27 June 2014]. She planned to return before the children had spent too long in the British educational system to adapt back to schooling in Poland, an issue often discussed by Polish parents with school-age children (Ramasawmy, 2014). The photos on her laptop showed the house taking shape year by year after each summer visit, during which they use their hard-earned cash to pay for materials and supervise the builders. She and her husband had previously lived with her mother in the house built by her late grandparents on the same plot of land where her new house is going up, and where her mother had once started building a house with her ex-husband until he absconded. The foundations of the abandoned

house are still visible in some of the photos, echoing Brickell's (2012) idea of absent homes and invisible but unforgotten violence.

In conclusion, this section has demonstrated the importance of 'a home of one's own', which is intimately linked to well-being and inner lives, which is the focus in the next section.

6.4 Importance of subjective wellbeing

This section complicates and enriches the discussion so far in chapter 6 by arguing that household decisions about who migrates and who stays are shaped by individual biographies and inner lives, as much as labour market, welfare and housing inequalities. Poor psychosocial wellbeing can un-make social reproduction and lead to migration driven by the hope of re-making social reproduction in a more nurturing environment. What can be at stake in some migrants' inner lives is escape from intergenerational power relations under strain from poverty, poor mental health and other personal torments, played out against a broader backdrop of social and generational change and disenchantment with normative social codes and singular religious conformity. However, much as the act of migration may transpose family dynamics into a different context for those who pack their bags, and bring about transformation and opportunities for a second chance at a 'better life', ultimately escape from the shadow of the family and the selves created by their families and childhoods is impossible, and may provoke depression in later life (Winslow, 1999, Leavey et al, 2007). Thus migration is not the key biographical event in an individual's life (Rogaly, 2015), even if it comes over as key in classic migration tropes about venturing, overcoming and conquering and achieving self-realisation through that often emerge in initial discussions (see Chapter 3). This is not addressed as fully as it could be in migration literatures, and is difficult to research, as discussed in chapters 2 and 3.

Furthermore, when well-being is considered, the perspectives of the people who stay put, often the older generation, are not fully explored, and the question "why do you stay?" is not asked. There is a tendency to assume that habitus and narrow-mindedness play a big part in later life decision-making, as discussed in analysis of

stereotypes about older generation in 5.4. Interpretations that take Polish history and political and cultural economies into account would help contextualise the later life 'negativity' (Wojciszke, 2004) that some younger migrants recoil from, and shed light on the comfort gained by some of the older generation from stories of shared suffering (Robbins-Ruszkowski, 2014)

Inner lives and imaginative realms and processes have long been linked by geographers to material experiences (Blunt and Dowling, 2007) and this has been fruitfully applied to research into migration motivations and choices which are bound into diverse relations and practices, but nevertheless share commonalities. Images of the west in film and literature and discourses of the west as the 'promised land' have enchanted some migrants (Burrell, 2011). Britain has been "positively idealised as a prosperous, wealthy and modern state where good employment standards prevailed, thus offering a comfortable, unproblematic life" (Polkowski, 2017).

Others nurtured self-realisation projects such learning English (Isański et al, 2014) or vested their hopes for 'a better life' in their children, planning family size carefully (Marczak, 2013) and focusing on education as one of the best routes to success (Lopez Rodriguez, 2010, Lopez Rodriguez et al, 2010). Self-development through grasping opportunities, testing oneself and surviving hard times appeared to be another element of people's inner lives, an aspect reinforced by self-help and motivational literature on and sayings such as "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger" memorably quoted by the Polish politician Donald Tusk in 2016 during his tenure as President of the EU's European Council (Goulard, 2016).

More recently a growing body of research has emerged into the ways in which enchantment with the West and dreams of unproblematic new identities can turn to disenchantment and depression (Winslow, 1999, Leavey et al, 2007, Bell and Domecka, 2018). The "idealising and homogenising myths" about the UK that overlook "class, ethnic, territorial and various other inequalities" and feelings of being "thwarted stakeholders" (McGhee & Pietka-Nykaza, 2016) may well form the basis of future narratives of disenchantment with the UK.

Literature can help make sense of this important topic. For instane, Crossan's novel *The Weight of Water* (2012) evokes both enchantment and disenchantment through the eyes of a Polish teenager, who accompanies her mother to the UK to seek her father, who had walked out. Her mother staves off destitution by finding a job in a hospital.

Mama's job is to clean and carry.

She doesn't have to speak to

Anyone.

Mama's long vowels scare

The older patients.

They'd prefer to hear

A familiar imperial voice.

They know a Pole is bringing them breakfast.

On her first day

A woman with a crust in her face

Asks Mama where she's from,

And when Mama tells her,

The crusty creature snarls and says,

'I'd like someone English'

Politely adding, 'Please'. (Crossan, 2012, p.19).

The following reflections by participants capture the multiple dimensions of escape and self-realisation, and the ways in which dreams of enchantment and self-realisation through migration can be embodied in family life in multiple ways.

For instance Paulina is in her 50s, works as a kitchen assistant in NE England and lives with her husband and three adult sons (see Chapter 5). Her dreams of re-making herself and her family through migration stretched back to her youth.

I watched a film, a very nice film, can I talk about it? I can't remember, maybe the title was 'Into The Wind', maybe, and I watched it because it was an English film about Englishmen exiled to Australia, and there was this William, who was facing a new life, he got to know a lovely wife and so on…I said, if I have a son... at that stage we did not have children, because we had just got married…. I watched that film, that serial, and I said, when I have a son, he will be called William. But the first one no, we did not give that name to him, the family influenced us, so ok, he was named Marek. But the second was William. And he suited that name, he is tall, handsome, blonde, not like us, because I don't have blonde hair and neither does my husband…it's from my father's brother. My dad was dark, he had dark hair, but his brother was a true blonde. [Interview, Paulina, in a café, 9.9.2015]

For others enchantment involves sharing the same sense of humour and pleasure in blockbuster movies and TV series. For instance Kinga's family had always enjoyed Western films and TV, such as Star Wars and Star Trek, and her husband Dawid was a Monty Python comedy connoisseur. This emerged when I revealed my fears that the parrot Kinga was feeding for friends while they were on holiday in Poland might be dead. Kinga's husband Dawid started quoting the lines "*it is no more, it has ceased to be*" from a Monty Python sketch about a lifeless Norwegian blue parrot (Monty Python, 2019).

Self-development through acquiring English language skills and greater self-esteem was important for others. For instance Ala explained:

I always want speak English, you know that's my dream, go and speak English, don't have any problem with this language, don't have any stress, all this time, past and future [Interview, Ala, in her home, 1.5.2015]

Emilia, who was in her 50s and worked in the health sector in Lubelskie, reflected that she had been 'a mouse' before she went to work in the UK by herself in order to earn enough money to pay off her family debts (see Chapter 7) and thereby achieved a degree of autonomy (Bastia, 2011) and greater self-confidence. Similarly Agnieszka, who was in her 50s and worked in the UK with her husband in order to earn enough money to move into agrotourism in Poland talked about reading the self-help book *The Secret* (Byrne, 2006), which inspired her to think positively and enact her migration plans.

Further discussions with some participants before formal interviews (see methodology) shed light on the ways in which enchantments can be intermeshed with and overshadowed by powerful emotions (Davidson et al, 2012) and disenchantments such as shame and frustration with poverty and social mores in Poland, captured by Ryan (2002, 2004) in her work on Irish migration. Feelings may also be shaped by a retreat from traditional Polish family expectations and judgements (Botterill, 2012) and the rebalancing of familial power relations in which parents have a say over how their children live long into adulthood.

For instance Paulina (see above) had to keep her migration plans fuelled by her enchantments under wraps. Ostensibly they migrated because her husband could not find work and she was the sole breadwinner on a small teacher's salary.

We told the family at the last minute because we didn't want anyone
to know apart from my brother. We didn't tell our parents, neither

mine, not my husband's, because we didn't want to hear any nonsense, like "what are you doing that for, stay". That was our family's decision. It was our family, maybe I should not say, it is too dramatic, but it was our family's financial problem, only ours, me and my husband and our children. We didn't want any pity, someone to look after us. [Interview, Paulina, in a café, 9.9.2015]

Paulina also reflected on the longstanding significance of her relationship with her mother.

If she had not been so bossy, maybe I would not have gone so far away. Maybe I would have found a husband closer. Maybe I would have lived close. But I realised that it would be a shame to spend all the time fighting with mama, all the time there would have been fights.. ... I have to prove that I am not a camel, that is a Polish saying.....you can't learn from your own mistakes, because she always knows better ....I think that she doesn't realise she is doing it. She has a good heart and a clear soul, but each young person wants their own experiences, to live their own lives. [Interview, .Paulina, in a café, 9.9.2015]

Paulina also said that she feels that her family is less conformist and judgemental than, and 'different' to, other families in Poland. In her spare time she reads Polish books, watches Polish films, looks out of the window and observes the comings and goings of her neighbours and their children and grandchildren. She looks forward to having her own grandchildren too, and thinks of her mother home alone in Lubelskie (see Chapter 5).

Escape was also important to Marzena, who said she got married in order to escape her fraught childhood home, but experienced little emotional fulfilment in her marriage, and found daily life unendingly predictable. She then escaped to the UK to avoid being trapped into sharing a flat with her ex-husband when she started a new relationship with another man but could not find an affordable new flat to live in with him. She and her new partner successfully found jobs and a home for themselves and one of her children in NE England. Her son remained in Poland. After several years her world came crashing down when her partner ran off with another woman, and at the same time she lost her job in the downturn after the 2008 recession in the UK. Nevertheless she managed to pick herself up and began to earn enough money from

her new job and a small creative home-based business to support her adult daughter until she left home, save for a mortgage and pursue other opportunities unavailable to her in Poland.

Marzena's escape was underpinned by a longstanding feeling of being an outsider in both her family and in Poland. She had never felt properly part of her family because her mother had fallen pregnant with her in her youth, been prevented from marrying her father, returned home and married a man with whom she went on to have two more children and with whom Marzena had a troubled relationship. As a child she was captivated by films about the life she should be having in the USA.

> *.....American films they have so big houses and bedrooms. It was dream. I had to say that a lot of people dream about go somewhere to live. Sometimes I say question to myself "why I just born in Poland, not America?" America because England was not popular at that time. America was land of ...opportunity...dreamland.*
> [Interview, Marzena in her home, 3.6.2015]

Although there is less discursive shame around children born out of wedlock that there was in previous generations, there is still intolerance of some people who go against traditional religious expectations in other domains. Two further participants shed light on the fraught consequences when intergenerational tensions were exacerbated by the older generation's difficulty in accepting religious pluralism and different lifestyles. Iza's move to the UK was partly driven by familial estrangement rooted in her decision to become a Jehovah's Witness (see Chapter 7). Iza, who was in her 40s, worked as a factory machine operator, and lived with her second husband and daughter in NE England, explained:

> *In Poland the Catholics is very strong. It's not like here. If you wants to change something - your religion - it's absolutely opposite everyone, every time is argue …. because "your mother, your grandmother and long history is will be Catholics, why you wants to change?" That is this problem. You know here I feel more comfortable with my religion…. in England it is absolutely amazing… if you want to change nobody tell you, you can't. In Poland, no, everybody argue for you. [Interview, Iza, in her home, 20.8.2015].*

Her grandmother in the province of Opolskie was particularly intransigent.

> *Iza: She is proud for me because I take a lot of hard decisions. I don't need take something from her. She is proud from me, but she wants to expect from*

me just about religion. So that is just this problem. ... why she tell me what I must do in my life. It is my life, it's my decision, but she expect from me the same, she is like old generation, she expect, that's it.

Lucy: In Poland in her generation did everyone do the same?

Iza: Yes exactly that, it like mental problem

Lucy: Life is different now, there is more choice, more freedom.

Iza: Yes. I am, like, more flexible in my life. She not.

[Interview, Iza, in her home, 20.8.2015]

Mental health is often an important intertwined consideration. For instance Kinga's move to the UK, ostensibly driven by practical considerations such as a home of her own, was also underpinned by a long history of familial tensions over religious and lifestyle choices. Kinga recalled her father's eruptions. For her 'normality' involved discussion, understanding and compromise, not uncontrollable rage and smashed crockery.

He always think that he has to be strict .... and sometimes when he was angry ... flying plates. It was like aliens...just like that   [Interview, Kinga, in a café, 31.7.2014]

His anger was part of a longer family history of loss shaped by Polish history, poverty and religious norms. His mother had committed suicide after he converted from Catholicism to the Baptist church in Poland. He subsequently suffered from depression, and found events repeating themselves when his wife tried to commit suicide after he fell in love with another woman. As he himself aged he found himself in turn challenged by his children's choices, such as the decision by Kinga's sister to become a vegetarian. During fieldwork he and his wife were looking after their grandson in their home while their daughter was out at work. They fed him slices of *kielbasa* (Polish sausage), which the poor little lad anxiously gobbled down when his vegetarian mother turned up to collect him unexpectedly early, causing much hilarity amongst the rest of the family, all meat-eaters. Kinga frequently voiced profound sympathy for his depression and frustration about his 'Polish negativity' and dismissiveness, for instance, of her sister's eco-friendly associates.

Dorota vented frustrations with what she saw as a Polish 'culture of 'misery' symbolised by an incident in which her cousin rang her father to wish him Happy New Year and he replied 'there is nothing to be happy about'. Such pessimism is encapsulated in a common saying in Poland '*starość nie radość, pogrzeb nie wesele*'

(old age is not a joy, a funeral is not a wedding). Dorota challenges what she sees as a Polish obsession with health, citing a barrage of advertisements for drugs on TV, needless visits to doctor about minor ailments like colds and endless discussions on the phone.

> *His sister is the same. They love phoning each other and for half an hour. They talk about disasters. His sister is just all the time 'black cloud'. It's like "Agata has a cold and she has 40 degrees temp and ....oooohh .....she suffers so much.....and she couldn't go to work she is off work and..... ooooh .....her husband he just tripped" and this is their major topics to talk about.......My reasons to emigrate weren't economic. I always thought I would actually maybe be better off financially in Poland than here but.. ..I don't like the system in Poland. I know on the surface it's ok, but in Poland I cannot deal with those misery people shouting at you everywhere*

Some of the reasons for the seeming loss of optimism and joy in some of the older generation in Poland, which is not shared by all the older generation, appear to arise out of different experiences of and perspectives on Poland's turbulent history (see Chapter 4). Some of the older generation carry within them the traumatic memories of their parents and grandparents' wartime losses and destitution, in addition to depression and poor wellbeing mental health shaped by predisposition, past life experiences and life on the breadline. Their children's migration is another loss to add to their long list, echoing Bauman (Botterill, 2012 quoting Bauman, 2000, p.58) "*Some of the world's residents are on the move, for the rest it is the world itself that refuses to stand still*". Their narratives of suffering provide them with moral frameworks for their life histories (Robbins-Ruszkowski, 2014) and complaining serves the function of creating social bonding (Wojciszke, 2004). They talk about ill health because there is a culture of self-diagnosis and self-medication in the face of a shrinking public health service (see Chapter 4).

Again literature can help make sense of suffering, public misery and generation gaps. Pasulka's book *A Long Time Ago and Essentially True* (2010) evokes the suffering of World War Two. The main protagonist in Krakow receives a visit from her grandfather after her grandmother dies. Her grandmother Nela had stayed in Poland all her life '*in front of the iron stove, touching the fur collar at her neck*'. Her grandfather had fled to America from the communist authorities. He tells his

granddaughter how he tried to keep in touch with his wife without putting her in danger. The protagonist sorts her grandmother's possessions and clothes.

'*There were always shortages and Nela would use whatever she could to stiffen her collars: a piece of composition book or a folded Christmas card or an old party flier. I pull out the first one and unfold it, then work the other two through the hole. It's exactly as he said. 1956.1968.1984. Airline tickets to New York, rubbing up against her neck all those years.*' (Pauslka, 2010).

The poet Wisława Szymborska writes about the forgetting of World War Two in her poem *The End and the Beginning* (see appendix 7) and contends that looking poker-faced was much easier than putting on a brave face during the Communist era (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019)

> *I came to the paradoxical conclusion that some workers had it much easier in the Polish People's Republic. They didn't have to pretend. They didn't have to be polite if they didn't feel like it. They didn't have to suppress their exhaustion, boredom, irritation. They didn't have to conceal their lack of interest in other people's problems. They didn't have to pretend that their back wasn't killing them when their back was in fact killing them. If they worked in a store, they didn't have to try to get their customers to buy things, since the products always vanished before the lines did.*

Powers' novel In *The Memory of the Forest* (1997) touches on the beginnings of the globalism and consumerism which have profoundly affected the expectations and aspirations of the younger generation who wish to escape a gloomy hand to mouth existence (White, 2010). The main character in the novel, a young farmer, reflects on life in Poland before 1990.

> '*…and yet no-one starved, I suppose, or froze to death from lack of clothes. And God knows, the nation had been through worse, and the memory of it was still vivid. But the country, and the countryside as I knew it, seemed suspended in ice. The winters, then, stretched on forever in years of grey……this was years ago, a very different time. There are American detectives now on our television screens, and serialised melodramas of Texas families rich with oil. We wonder if our lives too will be different. We have a new politics. A new time is upon us. Many of us have to work at believing this, and many will not, many cannot. My grandfather cannot. He spent his life running a plow through the fields as though he were laying open Russian entrails. He does not believe the*

Bolsheviks have gone away, nor their local hirelings, who he says, have burrowed in like ticks on a sick dog. You can pull them off, he says, but their heads are still there, below the skin, where they will infect and fester…but I think of this as a wasteful bitterness. And I promise myself that this fight will not be mine.   (Powers, 1997, p.19-20).

For this fictional character, an 'everyman' figure, a combination of education, application, financial discipline, familial and marital and friendship ties and networks and love of the natural environment appeared to be the ingredients for a rewarding life. When challenges arose God, Freud and family (but not Marx) are turned to rather than flight to faraway shores. These insights appeared to be relevant to my participants who stayed, but further research is needed, for instance, through the lens of practices of meaning and belonging (Erel, 2016).

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have drawn on my conceptual framework and findings to challenge discourses around economic migration and the figure of the migrant, and reframed debates by foregrounding 'moorings' and arguing that migration is clearly shaped by migration and stasis. I have further argued that decisions about who stays put, who moves and who returns are shaped by a complex interplay of the welfare and housing entitlements of families, their relationships with each other and interlinked subjective psychosocial wellbeing, and their position in the reproductive life cycle.

Drawing upon rich narrative accounts, I demonstrate the ways in which different individuals and groups are positioned within networks of flows and interactions and how mobility and fixity in Poland in the early 21st century can be reproduced through migration. I have exposed the irony in the Polish government's tendency to valorise the family as a moral and cultural symbol without enacting enough of the social policies needed to help create the material circumstances families need to enable social reproduction over the lifecourse. I have further exposed the contradictions in the Polish government's campaign to reduce outward migration, boost fertility and restrict inward migration by refugees and asylum seekers, while turning a blind eye to Ukrainian migration. Governments should not be blamed for all

human suffering, but they can do more to help their citizens balance work and care over the lifecourse and to govern in transparent and accountable ways.

Having established the processes in which social reproduction is embedded and the role of migration and stasis in making, unmaking and remaking care, I have set the scene for making better sense of the everyday dynamics and experiences of linked lives across borders.

Chapter 7 – Care Practices across Borders

7.1 Introduction

This chapter thinks deeply about Polish worker-carers' experiences of everyday social reproduction over time and space, and contends that discourses which draw negative attention to the ways that distance may rupture familial relationships and friendships, or conversely romanticise the role of caring grandparents, belie a much more complex set of practices, trade-offs and tensions around what comes to constitute care. It argues that attention needs to be paid instead to the ways in which relationships *endure* over time and space and how intimacy at a distance may help, rather than hinder, enduring flows of care. Additionally, my participants highlight the need for attention to be paid to the ways in which care can be unmade, and the potential risks and consequences for the most vulnerable. Thirdly, more attention need to be paid to the hopefulness and limitations in the remaking of care through new non-familial caring relations.

The first section argues that, contrary to essentialising discourses about 'euro-orphans' left behind in Poland by their migrant parents and 'flying grannies' who offer spells of childcare wherever needed, children and grandparents have agency and shape decisions about the length and nature of time they spend together and apart. The second section argues that the unmaking of care can range from what can be termed 'mildly uncaring' through to implicitly and explicitly violent. However but distancing, absence and estrangement cannot negate critical legal and material interdependencies, and the prospect of redemption is present alongside the spectre of loss and silencing. The third section argues that new spaces of non-familial care are shaped by powerful emotional bonds, which are full of possibility, but can be subject to the same tensions as family relations, and create insecurities, particularly around intimate personal care for the most vulnerable.

7.2 Not just 'euro-orphans' and 'flying grannies'

This section complicates essentialising discourses about 'flying grannies' (White and Ryan, 2008, Baldassar and Wilding, 2013) and '*eurosieroty'* (euro-orphans) looked after by extended family members such as grandparents (White and Ryan, 2008, Lutz and Palenga-Möllenbeck, 2012, Cieślińska, 2014). It makes four contributions.

It argues that there are no clear rules or consensus on who should give and receive what care when, what is reasonable and when limits should be set (Finch and Mason, 1993). I endorse White's observations (2011a, p.4, 2016c) that there is considerable pragmatism about leaving teenagers in a nurturing family home and community environment with grandparents and other relatives and neighbours offering support while their parents migrate for *'chleb nie kokosy'* (bread not coconuts - bread symbolises needs, coconuts symbolise luxuries). I also endorse Ryan's (2011) observations that while male relatives can play leading roles in caregiving, female relatives feature more in discussions about caregiving, hence the use of the reductionist term 'flying grannies'.

Secondly children have agency and a voice in family negotiations (Bushin, 2009, Cunningham, 2012) and are not perpetually young and in need of care (even if their parents always call them 'children'). Thirdly, grandparents also have agency, which means that if they are able to, want to or feel duty-bound to undertake childcare, they are often in a position to recognise limits to their care work and the need for 'intimacy at a distance' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2013). At the same time they are in such an intimate role that they can easily be seen to be overstepping the mark and intruding into the childrearing and financial management domains of their childrens' lives.

Fourthly, thinking about care in households stretched across borders entails much more than focusing on one singular episode of absence, even if the pain of familial, and particularly in the context of this thesis, mother and child separation across borders (Pratt, 2012) and the experience of being both 'here' and 'there' (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997) can be particularly profound. The experience of caregiving and being cared for falls unevenly on and is felt, experienced, valued and contested differently by different members of the household at different times and in

different ways as the years turn into decades. I argue that family practices, negotiations, need to be viewed through a lifecourse lens (Bowlby et al, 2010) which encompasses how care needs emerge and change unpredictably as children grow up, their care needs reduce, ageing parents need more care and unexpected episodes of ill health and other crises arise and diminish.

Essentialising discourses are powerful (Fairclough, 2013), particularly those around '*eurosieroty*' (euro-orphans). This term was coined to describe children seen to suffer emotional, psychological or physical neglect as a result of labour emigration of one or both parents (Fundacja Prawo Europejskie 2008, in Osipovič, 2010). These concerns are linked to broader debates on family and societal breakdown. For instance, Cieślińska (2014, p.69) contends that:

"A side-effect of emigration is the suffering caused by weakening relationships within the family, as emigrants "lose touch with home" and in a sense "move out". In the worst cases, people lose those closest to them, family ties are broken, there is a sense of mutual alienation and health can be affected."

An industry has emerged around this narrative, offering costly psychological analysis and treatment for 'damaged' families. For instance an article in The Daily Telegraph (Day, 2009) quotes a Polish Jungian analyst and psychotherapist claiming that "problems stemming from migration could destroy up to 600,000 marriages' over the next five years", and squarely attributing the problems to individuals, not the state and broader structures. White (2011a, p.118) describes the moral panic over '*eurosieroty*' (euro-orphans) in the Polish media as sensationalism in pursuit of a political agenda (Cohen 2002). She debunks over-simplistic analysis by revealing that many people appear to be pragmatic about bonds at a distance, and say 'migration is normal' or 'a necessary evil', particularly when children are older, given the failure of social policy to help people balance paid work and unpaid caring and lack of child benefit and financial support. White (2011a, p.120) identifies examples of Polish media coverage based on careful research rather than sensation, showing that the key issue is a "well-functioning family" rather than separation.

As I now continue to detail, my research shows much more complex practices, which should not only be looked at through the lens of migration and families split by distance, but through principles of reciprocity, obligation and forbearance, and through not only family, but family-type care work, even if the ways in which

participants experienced absence, negotiated their obligations and enacted reciprocity and dealt with tensions vary.

For instance Agnieszka and Ziemowit from Dolnoslaskie in southern Poland (see Chapter 5) left their youngest daughter Oliwia in Poland when they went to NE England to work and she stayed at home preparing for her *Matura (*A-level school-leavers' exams) while her older sister Oktawia was away at university in Poland. Practical daily support from Agnieszka's mother, Ziemowit's parents and their next door neighbour, based on years of mutual interdependence and reciprocity, proved crucial while they were away.

> *Agnieszka: He came every day to light the central heating, because it was winter, it was December, he came every day and helped Oliwia light the central heating so that they stayed warm. The fuel was in the basement, everything was down there, but he came, he lit it…..it was great. The neighbour's wife ….she asked if she could buy anything, or take my mother and Oliwia shopping. l…. I didn't have to pay. I didn't pay them money for that, absolutely not.*
>
> *Lucy: And when you are here what sort of help do you give them?*
>
> *Agnieszka: Look, for example this is the situation, the neighbour is a young man, sometimes he needs help with official government paperwork. I say to him "listen, do this, do that". I guide him, because I know more than him. ….Sometimes he has problems with his computer and Oktawia helps him … Sometimes the animals are ill, Ziemowit goes to help, he doesn't bother that it's night-time, that it's winter, that it's cold, he goes, he always goes…*
>
> *Lucy: It's great that your parents helped …they are old*
>
> *Agnieszka: Absolutely, for them it was a big effort, because they had to change their lives. You know, half a year is a long time….. You know, my mother goes to church in her town and there she couldn't, she had to ask someone to give her a lift. That was really hard for her. Sometimes she made it to church. When she couldn't she went to the little chapel near our house to pray. She said "Tough, this is the way it has to be". She helped me because that helped the children.* [Interview, Agnieszka, in her home, 25.9.2015]

The parents returned after six months when Oliwia asked them to come home, negotiating ways forward on the basis of open discussion (Finch and Mason, 1993). As there are no clear rules or consensus on what is reasonable, what people do in

practice in an open discussion is work out and negotiate a way forward, taking particular set of circumstances at the time and principles about 'the proper things to do' into account. Teenage children are able to exercise considerable agency and a voice in family negotiations (Bushin, 2009, Cunningham, 2012).

> *Oliwia was very strong. You know, she never told us that she was suffering, because she didn't want, you know, she didn't want to spoil things. But the moment came when she could not do it any longer, when psychologically she could not take it any more. It was beyond her strength, and then she said to us "You know, you must come home. It's better to eat dry bread than to stay away for so long"......we made the decision, that we were coming back, but that when we were back, we had to think of something, in order to make sure we didn't have to go back again and had work here at home.* [Interview, Agnieszka, in her home, 25.9.2015]

Once Oliwia had passed her exams and gone to university Agnieszka and Ziemowit returned to the UK for another 6 months to earn more money. Several years later Oliwia found seasonal work in a fruit and vegetable packing and distribution business in Belgium, and took her father with her, so that he could earn money to pay for building materials for a new small business which brings money in all year round, unlike seasonal agro-tourism. He has subsequently returned to Belgium for several months every year. Her grandparents have also contributed to the building projects in order to stave off future absences, which they all agreed were difficult to endure. Agnieszka recounts a conversation with her daughter in which the right time and place for reciprocity were discussed.

> *Oliwia said to us: "I can give you some money" when she was earning "because I will help you to get there". But we did not want this, we did not want it. You know, it's not possible ....because we are still healthy and strong and we can still earn ourselves. I don't want it......now is now is not the time for the children to help us. For now we have to be self-sufficient, and the children have to go their own way.* [Interview, Agnieszka, in her home, 25.9.2015]

Not all participants were able to tall so openly. Other households stretched across borders keep their domestic affairs private, and for some family tensions and financial troubles can be a source of profound shame and pain.

For instance, Emilia, who was in her 50s and worked in the health sector in Lubelskie, left her school-age son Marcin home in Poland with her husband and older son while she earned money in the UK to pay off the mortgage debts she and her husband had accumulated after setting up a small business in the early 1990s. Initially the business had been successful until large supermarket chains with bulk purchasing power began to undercut them, and customers dwindled. As she spoke better English than her husband she decided to take the plunge and seek work outside Poland, in order to prevent bankruptcy. She took up a relatively well-paid job in NE England in early 2008. She returned to Poland in late 2010 at her younger son's request and then took on a job in the state-run health service, where her husband also worked. They kept in regular contact with Emilia's widowed mother, and her siblings and their families on a farm in the countryside. She recounted their deliberations before she set off for the UK.

> *Lucy: What did your mother and sister think of you coming to England?*
>
> *Emilia: They told me it is your decision. I don't know what they thought. l think they say you should go, because if you don't go you might be not unhappy, but you might regret this, because you had this opportunity and you didn't do this. Something my sister told me. If you stay in England you might miss Poland and family and be unhappy in England. But if you come back you might be unhappy and miss England. It is true. I think about North East England very often. If I close my eyes I can see my flat, my building, my small path I walked very day to work….I am very happy that I have this kind of memory.* [Interview, Emilia, in her home, 15.8.2014].

Her mother and sister provided valuable moral and practical support when she was away, and in return she reciprocated by providing board and lodging for her nephews when they come to her city to further their studies.

> *Lucy: So your husband managed to cook and look after Marcin?*
>
> *Emilia: Yes.*
>
> *Lucy: Did anyone help?*
>
> *Emilia: My mum and sister came here and brought them something to eat, pierogi, bigos, something made some day before, and bake some cakes. It was very helpful but Marcin told me" I hate pierogi, no, not more pierogi".*

> *Lucy: Babcia made him pierogi?*
>
> *Emilia: Yes she make him eat for one two three days. Or bigos.*
>
> *Lucy: It lasts for ever!*
>
> *Emilia: Yes!* [Interview, Emilia, in her home, 15.8.2014].

Emilia worked in the UK for almost three years until Marcin asked her to come home while he was sitting his Matura school-leaver's exams. This is a key moment in young people's lives in Poland, as Matura success opens the door to a greater range of life choices and higher earnings.

> *Emilia: Marcin wanted me to come back. He was so lonely in the house. He said "I have to stay afternoons alone in the house" because my husband worked from 9am-5-6pm. "Maybe I could buy a dog, a small dog, not a big dog, I might sleep with him you know." I think he was very happy when I came back.*
>
> *Lucy: It was difficult to give your job up when you were earning good money?*
>
> *Emilia: Yes very hard. We think about this. One month more. More money. We have to pay off our debt.*
>
> *Lucy: Are you still paying the debts off?*
>
> *Emilia: Almost not but yes.*
>
> *Lucy: You paid off most of the debt when you were in England. A big relief.*
>
> *Emilia: Marcin understood that, but he was lonely. I have another son I will tell you about, maybe tomorrow.* [Interview, Emilia, in her home, 15.8.2014].

Their older son was a profoundly painful topic of conversation, a reminder of absence, distancing and rupture brought on not by migration but by illness, accidents, ageing and death and the emergence of care and distancing in unpredictable ways (Raghuram, 2012). Emilia, her husband and Marcin, by now a university student, had become estranged from their older son after a difficult period following a road traffic accident, in which he sustained life-threatening brain injuries. He had been living in the family home, in which he had a bedroom that he had used at weekends during his apprenticeship and then full-time after his accident. Eight weeks earlier he had moved out to live in the flat his girlfriend shared with her mother, and cut off contact, a more significant biographical moment in Emilia's life than her sojourn in the UK (Rogaly, 2015) and an example of how care needs emerge and re-emerge unpredictably over the lifecourse (Ackers, 2004).

Other families live in intergenerational households and manage separation and distance through phone calls and annual visits. Remaining intimately connected to the everyday minutiae of life, exercising some control over how money is spent and offering and seeking support and advice is an important part of the experience of some migrants and at the same time sustains long term relations of reciprocity (Baldassar, 2007).

For instance keeping in touch with her mother, daughters and extended family via her mother's landline was the highlight of Teresa's day. Calls could last as long as they wanted, thanks to special telecoms deals for a small set monthly fee. Her lengthy chats to her mother, daughters Danka and Zosia and sister Bogusia about the intimate details of their lives gave her pleasure, comfort and reassurance.

> *Teresa: Oooh, we talk for hours. Sometimes I ring twice a day ....last time we talked for two and a half hours, because Bogusia was also there. So yes, to mama, to Danka, to Zosia, to my sister, we talk for a long time.*
>
> *Lucy: Everyday, yes?*
>
> *Teresa: I talk to Danka every day. I tell her, how things are with me, and she tells me how things are in our town, and at home.* [Interview, Teresa, in her flat, 17.6. 2014].

These long daily conversations enable Teresa to keep track of the minutiae of life back home, and offer emotional support and advice at a distance (Baldassar and Merla, 2007). She was able to exercise control to a certain degree over how the money she remitted was spent. It went towards family medicines and medical expenses, such as appointments with private practitioners, glasses, the car her daughter Danka uses, and associated bills and fuel. It also went on occasional treats like a meal out for all the family when she was back home in the summer, and on material items and activities that mark important rites of passage for young people in the community. For example, Teresa paid for several tattoos for daughters during the period of courting and coupling up they underwent before starting their own families. Her account of how decisions are arrived at and conflict avoided bore out her family's commitment to good-natured open negotiation (Finch and Mason, 1993).

> *Teresa: .... And they said "in England everyone has tattoos".*
>
> *Lucy: So you paid?*

Teresa: ... I said "girls, girls." "But mum, you know, we want to do it because so and so is doing it, and so and so is doing it, so I also want to do it." You see, one does it, the second, third, fourth, and so you do it.

Lucy: It's difficult.

Teresa: It's the same when one smokes, the second smokes and drinks, but mine don't smoke and drink, and don't want much.

Lucy: I wonder what I would do if my daughter got a tattoo.

Teresa: Say "get a little one done, a nice pattern, they look nice on young girls, but think about what will it look like when you are old." But if you look around, Jezu, everyone has them.

Lucy: My husband is not keen.

Teresa: I'm not keen. The little ones are ok, but not the, you know, the big ones all over the face. Jezus Maria, it's a shock.

Lucy: And it's your money.

Teresa: Yes it's my money. When they work they will repay me. Do you know how the children talk to me "Mum, when we are working we will give it all back.. I say: "I'm waiting, waiting". Children are a revelation. "Mum, when I work....." "I'm waiting". [Interview, Teresa, in her flat, 17.6.2014].

Teresa talked frequently about returning to Poland upon retirement (she does not think she will be forced to go back to Poland in the event of Brexit as 'who will do the work if we all go back?') and looking after her grandchildren while her daughters undertake paid work outside the home.

Other grandparents 'follow' their children to the UK to undertake childcare (White and Ryan, 2008, Baldassar and Wilding, 2013). 'Flying grannies' are valorised for their labour and commitment to family solidarity, but this valorisation downplays the tensions that can arise during longer stays (King et al, 2014), the need for delicate negotiation and the continuous trade-off between material wealth, family solidarity, access to health and social interaction, and the contribution of grandfathers as well as grandmothers. Tensions can arise over grandparent's loss of power and independence, social relationships and 'pining for their homeland' (King and Vullnetari, 2009) and over their children's resentment at being told what to do or given unwanted advice. Different attitudes to disciplining children can also be a flashpoint, with clashes between the older generation's stricter parenting norms (Wejnert and Djumabaeva,

2005, Iglicka et al, 2016) often shaped by the communist era in Poland, and practical factors such as the strict rules governing noise in shared blocks of small flats, and the younger generation's more lenient approach. Language barriers can isolate grandparents (King et al, 2014) leaving them only able to talk to their families and other Polish language speakers.

Some of my participants' families negotiated brief stays in order to avoid fallouts. For instance, Ala, who was in her 30s, and lived with her husband Wacek and children in NE England, occasionally had her mother in law to stay for 1-2 months when needed. Her mother in law had retired with a reasonable pension after working as a school cleaner for 40 years, and was fit and active. Her last visit involved her looking after her grandchildren while Ala and her husband re-decorated the new house they were buying before they moved in.

> *Ala: now she is almost one year on retiring, yes, and she still do something, she don't wanna sit, because you start sick... She stay here two months and do everything .... I am working. I am decorating new house. Very, very energetic.*
>
> *Lucy: Is her husband OK when she is here?*
>
> *Ala: Yes I have very good mother in law. We have situation when we scream at each other, because she think something, and I think different, maybe two or three times. Normally I don't wanna live with my mother law, no, I think every marriage must have new own house and live together. It is so much better because it is different the situation with children. She say "you must do da,da,da,da,daa", I don't know how you say with children*
>
> *Lucy: Discipline?*
>
> *Ala: And I have my different. Usually it is problem with children. Two months it's enough. It is a very good woman.*
>
> *Lucy: Her husband, is he ok ...how did he eat back in Polska?*
>
> *Ala: My father in law cook very, very good, believe me. He cook everything so she don't have problem.* [Interview, Ala, in her home, 1.5.2015]

The clashes that emerged here were over the best way to parent and care for children. Ala's mother in law has a less lenient approach rooted in what are sometimes seen as different parenting ideals to those in countries such as the UK and Norway (Iglicka et al, 2016, p.134). She escapes for a walk with the dog when the house is too noisy for her liking. In return Ala allows her to have free rein over how she looks after her grandchildren when they are staying with her, her husband and Ala's sister in their

small flat in Poland, just one example of the lengths they go to in order to avoid falling out. Ala and her husband Wacek have stopped going as an entire family on holiday to Poland every summer, as there is not enough space for a family of five in either her mother's or her parents in law's small flats, and they do not want to overstay their welcome or to run up debts.

Similarly Kinga, who is in her 30s and works full-time inside the home bringing up her three children in NE England, and her mother in law Ula also try to respect each other's differences. However, by the end of her visits to the UK Ula is homesick and looking forward to going home to her 'own country' to do her own thing, while Kinga says she is tired of being observed and found wanting. Kinga found her own mother, Gabrysia, easier to be with, but Gabrysia was reluctant to come to the UK for physical and mental health reasons and because she was enmeshed in providing informal childcare for her grandchildren in Poland. She did come once when Kinga paid for her flights visit after she had tried to commit suicide (see Chapter 5) and spent time recovering in hospital. Later, in an effort to be a 'giver' (Bajic, 2007) she sold some household furniture and sent the proceeds to Kinga in the UK in order to help her buy a new washing machine.

> *Kinga: Sometimes she is buying me curtains to the window, or something like something for table, something to home, or some clothes for my kids. So it is like "you are still my daughter and I want you to feel like you I am care about you". I said that I don't want. She feels like she has to pay back for being here because she has been here with us nearly 2 months when she was… after the hospital thing …when she was in hospital we invite her here so she could have more peace. She was really depressed when she came, and I think that helps her a little bit, that helps her being with us, because she said she felt loved and welcome…*
>
> *Lucy: Does Dawid's mother come to stay with you and do you send money to her?*
>
> *Kinga: Sometimes she was borrowing us the money, and sometimes she was helping us, and she always saying "you don't have to pay me back" but we do, because we feel it like it is good thing to do.*
>
> *[Interview, Kinga, in a café, 31.7.2014]*

Some grandparents stay for longer, but this can give rise to tensions when obligation is taken for granted, and unpaid care work moves from being emotionally fulfilling to a strain and grandparents feel trapped. Conversely the intimate roles that grandparents take on can spill over into intrusion into domains that parents think are theirs.

For Renia and her husband Bartosz, who are retired and live in the Podlaskie region in NE Poland, this form of care involved spending time in NE England for months at a time, in order to provide childcare for their grandchildren while the children's parents Natalia and Piotr worked in a factory (see Chapter 6). Their experiences speak to Finch and Mason's contention (1993) that there are no clear rules or consensus on who should give and receive what care when, what is reasonable and when limits should be set, and sometimes plans are thrown into disarray by unpredictable events. At the time of the interview Renia had been in the UK for 5 months, much longer than anticipated, as her husband Bartosz had been taken ill and undergone surgery while back home. When he recovered he flew back to the UK, and overlapped with his wife for a week. She was due to fly home the day after the interview, while he spent two months looking after the children until the summer holidays, when they all planned to return to Podlaskie for a holiday. Renia explained her concerns for her family.

> Renia: For me the worst thing is that they have very little contact with the children, because 40 minutes a day they see the children, because in the morning they go to school, get up at 8, at 8.55 the children must be at school. Then they return late when the children are sleeping. And so on. Only at the weekend a bit more, because as we know, weekends are free, so they can go for walks with the children to see something they are interested in from school. But yes, for five days a week, they only have 40 minutes contact with the children. They will never get this time with them back again. The best way to do it would be if one worked on one shift, the second on the other. Then there is always contact with one of the parents. It's an irreparable loss.
>
> Lucy: Isn't it possible for one of you to work in the morning and one in the afternoon?
>
> Renia: Yes, but who will fetch the children from school?

Natalia: I would take them, if one of us was working in the afternoon, like me, I would take them. But fetching the children. I am at work until midnight. And him – there is really no way he can come home at 2pm. However early we go in the morning it is 7.45 to 4 and we have to fetch the children half an hour earlier at 3.30.

Lucy: You can't talk to the boss and say "We have children"..?

Natalia: It's just that ...everyone has children and you have to cope with it, that's what the boss thinks. Because why should one person leave an hour early because they have got children? The second person has children and puts up with it. You have to consider, for example like us, at the school, it's not possible, but I know, that for example at other schools, only I don't know which ones, there friends have children and their children can stay at school an hour or two. They pay and they stay….but at this school it's not possible. So we need help from babcia or someone.

Renia: Practically we cannot be here the whole time. We have our life, our affairs, our flat, and we cannot be here non-stop. ..

Lucy: You've been in England for 5 months and return tomorrow. How are you feeling?

Renia: I wanted to leave earlier, to fly earlier, I was really, really missing it. I know that my husband is now here, but how long will we be together. A week in total, one week together and then I fly. He is coming back with them in July. [Interview, Natalia, Piotr and Renia, 8.5.2015].

Over the course of my multiple visits before this interview Renia's sense of wellbeing had deteriorated, and her agitation intensified. She often mentioned her cat Watek, who she missed, and said she did not like being alone all day while the children were at school. Neither she nor her husband has the opportunity to learn much English. Bartosz said little when I visited during the periods when it was his turn to be in the UK, but he appeared less agitated, and even gently contented with his domestic role. He came back to the UK on and off for the rest of 2016, and then stayed in Poland when his wife's health deteriorated, bearing out how the experience of caregiving and being cared for falls unevenly on and is felt, experienced, valued and contested

differently by different members of the household at different times and in different ways as time passes.

Similarly Natalia and Piotr's lives moved on. They switched shifts so that they could work at different times and share lifts to work, and childcare with Natalia's sister's family who lived nearby. Natalia was promoted to supervisor at work, and took out a loan in order to buy herself a small car. She grumbled about her mother in law telling her not to waste money on a second car, when in her view it made sense to have two cars to enable both her and her husband to travel separately to their workplace in a location poorly served by public transport and a 45 minute journey from their home. Working in the UK and easy access to credit gave her the space and the money to make independent spending decisions and nurture 'intimacy at a distance' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2013) in ways that would be more difficult if she had gained low-paid factory work in Poland and remained beholden to her in-laws for financial support and accommodation.

In conclusion, this section has complicated family care tropes and demonstrated how they belie a much more complex set of practices, trade-offs and tensions around what comes to constitute care, which is constantly made, unmade and re-made over time and space. The unmaking of care is explored in the next section.

7.3 Degrees of estrangement and transcendence of loss

This section argues that distancing needs to be given as much consideration in discussions of familyhood as a "feeling of collective welfare and unity" (Bryceson and Vuorela, 2002, p.3). Degrees of estrangement can be shaped by multiple factors ranging from disagreements about religion, sex and politics to gendered and generational power struggles over who owns, controls and inherits familial assets and liabilities and who should be responsible for care (see Chapter 2). Researching distancing requires sensitivity (see Chapter 3) and it is important not to avoid or push aside damaged relationships in participants' lives if they come up in conversation and is something they choose to talk about. Analytically it is important to consider the critical material and legal interdependencies that persist when emotional

interdependency has been severed (Raghuram, 2012). Migrants are inextricably linked to their families by birth and biology even if, as the Polish saying goes "*Rodziny tylko dobrze wyglądają w fotografiach*" (family is only good in photos). However, unlike snapshots, relationships are not frozen in time, leaving open the possibility of transcendence of loss and even some sort of redemption, as evoked in Polish filmmaker Andrzej Wajda's 1976 film *Man of Marble* (Pine, 2014).

The violence in the following accounts are threaded through with poor mental health in the first, alcoholism in the second, domestic violence in the third, religious differences in the fourth and emotional pressure in the fifth. As outlined in Chapter 3 an ethical approach to such discussions was uppermost in my mind.   However, these testimonies are included here as they important because they bear out the long-lasting effect of violence and toxic relationships within the family home and across the whole family during childhood (Leavey et al, 2007). Furthermore, for some participants, emotional damage is intertwined with material damage such as loss of home and livelihood (Brickell, 2012, 2013). For other participants a lack of open discussion, and the use of non-decisions, reverting to the status quo and drifting along, or one person's non-negotiable decision (Finch and Mason, 1993) shape events in painful ways. However making sense of absence, distancing and estrangement is highly contradictory. While not being able to practice intimacy at a distance appears to be a burden for some, not being able to be intimate and loving due to relationship breakdown appears to be an equally heavy burden for others.

For Krysia, a health and social care worker in her 30s, her and her husband Kasper's partial estrangement from her husband's sister and nephew was a painful absence. They did however hear about the sister from his parents, and remained critically interdependent through shared familial relationships and assets.   Krysia explained how her sister in law fell pregnant while working as a care worker in the UK.

> *Krysia: She got child with English boyfriend but left him. She*
> *doesn't have contact much. Very complicated story.*
> *Lucy: Does she see the child?*
> *Krysia: She's got difficult personality which is why it is complicated*
> *for her ...good relationships with people. Sometimes she is visiting,*
> *I heard. She doesn't tell much. She doesn't have contact with us….*
> *Lucy: Difficult for your husband.*

Krysia: He get used to it. They were never close, not like me and my brother, we talk.

Lucy: Does she go back to her parent's house, must be difficult as it is not her house.

Krysia: Sometimes she was staying for a few months there, later she find job again, later she back again, she can't settle anywhere I think. She knows she can have some support off her parents so she back. Contract job for a year so probably after this time back again. You never know. Quite difficult situation but she complicated it. It is her fault.

Lucy: How old is the child?

Krysia: One, one and half….my husband is actually very angry that she did that….

Lucy: Difficult for his parents.

Krysia: Yes they know Kasper can cope, but she always some problems. Probably her dad is also known as a person in the town and people saying of course probably they know she had a baby, where the baby, people gossip….

Lucy: Difficult in small town in Poland where lots of value is given to children.

Krysia: Doesn't happen often, unusual thing. …. I think the thing is that we knew there might be problem because she had English boyfriend. Different culture. Did not feel at home. When kid was few months, back to Poland, could not take kid, because he did not have passport yet. She left the situation, did not find a flat, job. I told her you can have benefits, find job, whatever….. there is something wrong with her thinking. [Interview, Krysia, her home, 6.7.2015]

Krysia was relieved that her nephew was well looked after by his father's family, who wanted little to do with the child's Polish family, and critical of what she perceives as her sister in law's selfishness, which she acknowledged was intertwined with her poor mental health. Her perspective was shaped by painful loss and moral considerations, which involved putting family above all else, even if it meant huge personal and financial sacrifices. 'Migrating for bread' (White, 2011a, p.4) is a

common phrase in Poland used to describe migration to earn money to put food on the table.

> *Lucy: Lot of criticism in Poland of mothers……*
>
> *Krysia: If grandparents you can leave [children] for a while, but usually there is chance you can take kids, find childcare, it's up to you. In Poland you can find very bad job but I would never leave my child behind. If I would have to I would prefer to just have bread with nothing but with my kids. I don't know what kind of people do this …it's difficult.*
>
> *Lucy: Mental health problems?*
>
> *Krysia: Her mum was saying she is very nervous, something wrong, she is leaving situation, she does not want to solve it, you know, her mum was saying she was going to find psychiatrist with her. Maybe something from long time. I don't know.*
>
> *Lucy: Very difficult.*
>
> *Krysia: I know the baby is quite good looked after by the father that is good thing. We don't have contact. I was writing to him, but he did not write back.*
>
> *Lucy: A lost nephew?*
>
> *Krysia: Probably the only one we will have.*
>
> *Lucy: Very difficult*
>
> *Krysia: I have not seen child. We were planning to visit when we went to Poland last year. She call me the day before she fly back to Poland, she not living with him anymore, she made the decision, nobody could persuade her. …in hairdresser I met one lady her son had a Polish girlfriend and they had a baby and she back to Poland. She said "I am very devastated. I can not see my grandchild any more. She not want to come here anymore." They lost contact. You lose part of yourself.* [Interview, Krysia, her home, 6.7.2015]

Krysia acknowledged that the nature of estrangement would change in the long term if her husband took responsibility for his parent's assets and money at some stage in the future, especially if they moved back to Poland, something Krysia was weighing up. There was also the possibility that her own children and her nephew might decide to seek each other out in the future. Her testimony spoke to Lulle's (2018a, p.457)

description of relations "dynamically stretched over and knitted through networks that are full of holes and disconnections."

The unpredictable and messy issue of distancing, and the role of children as they grow up, seek out long-lost family members and renew relationships, was also raised by Elżbieta. She has been estranged from her alcoholic brother and her alcoholic ex-husband and his family since migrating to the UK shortly before her mother died, and missing the funeral (see Chapter 6). Similarly to Krysia there was the possibility of ongoing and unwanted contact and responsibility, partly for legal reasons such as the sharing out of inheritance, which in Poland necessitates an appearance in court. There was also the possibility of more fruitful contact, as Elżbieta's daughter was fond of some of her relatives on her father's side, and Elżbieta's brother's daughter, who she last saw 10 years ago, had contacted *ciocia* (auntie) via social media. During fieldwork recovery was more important for Elżbieta than renewal.

> *When my mother died I really didn't want come back to Poland for funeral because I knew, I knew that I never came back to England. I felt massive homesick you know, and I really wasn't happy here, and I couldn't understand people, language, work very hard at care home. When she died I knew that if I came back to Poland and saw my daughter I never came back here. So I didn't want do it, so I didn't go for funeral, and my brother used really very rude words, and said it was "because you hadn't got money" or whatever. It wasn't about money. I knew that if I saw my daughter I wasn't able to say her "bye and see you for a few months' time". No. I don't think so. In that time I'm really felt, you know, I felt like my body was here, but mentally I was in the different place. Sometimes you doing something, but you know that you move your hands, legs, you are doing work, but your mind, your brain is somewhere else. So I felt like this.*
>
> *First half year when my daughter came to England I picked her up from the airport. I hadn't got car, so I popped by train, and next we had to wait so long time for train north. When we came back, and she went to bed, and I opened her suitcase, I saw her clothes,*

everything that was white was grey. I just started cry and I thought "oh no, I never leave my child by herself". I put everything to bin, and next day we went to Metro Centre, and I bought her everything new. You know, it was something, I even, I can't express, but when I saw the clothes, and I looked and I thought "oh your mother wasn't with you only for a half year and nobody look after you". Of course look after her my father in law and my ex-husband's sister, but you know it wasn't it wasn't, it wasn't really the same.....

I think it was the most difficult half year in my life. I think that I had depression, but I never thought about it. Additionally, my ex-husband sister, she wanted send my daughter to child home if I never came back to Poland to look after my daughter. So you know everything together. Additionally, my ex-husband family blame me for everything that happen, that we split up. It was everything my fault. They said "she left ill mother daughter and she just moved somewhere". It was quite difficult.

And now my family, ex-husband family, wants me to forgive them and they want to meet me, and they tell my daughter they are so sorry they thought like this, because they saw their mistake. But too many words were said. When I needed support I didn't get this. So it is quite difficult to forget about it. So my answer is that I wish them never regret what they said or they will say. [Interview, Elżbieta, on a bench, 4.10.2015]

Neither Elżbieta nor her daughter intended to return to live in Poland, but cutting the ties that bind with her brother was harder, as she and her brother shared ownership of her late mother's house and would at some stage have to arrange to sell it and divide the proceeds. At the time of the interview he was renting out the house and had put his own name on their mother's tombstone, but not hers. This echoed communist-era practices of leaving out the names of critics of the regime who lived outside Poland, in, for instance, reports about funerals and the deceased's relatives (an experience inflicted on my father in law when his father died). There appeared to be no limits to the violence, which spoke to arguments that migration is shaped by profoundly-felt personal relations (Holmes et al, 2018).

So you know even I hadn't been on her funeral ... but it is really not important. It is important that she is in my, my, head, in my brain. Sometimes I am really, really missing her, but it's the life. Too late now. And my brother he built monument on cemetery from my parents and he wrote 'this monument is from your son'....he is mental. [Interview, Elżbieta, on a bench, 4.10.2015]

The third case centres on Tolek, who was in his 40s and worked in the public sector. His violent father had taken advantage of him and his mother financially after they became estranged.

Lucy: When you were young you went to court, and now again.
Tolek: I had to go to court to testify against my father for the divorce. Later he had me evicted from my house. My mother lived in one and I had a little house next door. He had me evicted because I was in the UK and could not prove I was living there. He knew I was in the UK but did not have my address. Now he is selling this place, this is why he wanted to evict me.
Lucy: So that he can sell it and have the money for himself. Who paid for it?
Tolek: They both paid for it and my student's loan went into it. My mother and I had to pay my student's loan off to the bank..... You do not think someone will do this. You have to have something like this to learn. Sometimes you are lucky and never have to learn.[Interview, Tolek, my house, 27.4.2015]

Migration has offered Tolek opportunities unavailable in Poland, such as reasonably-paid work, and an extensive friendship network. He remained very close to his mother and one of his brothers back in Poland, and acted as an intermediary over the phone when they fall out when his mother felt her youngest son was not pulling his weight at home. *"I sometimes get frustrated and say they should sort their own problems out!" [*Interview*, Tolek, my house, 27.4.2015]* He did not intend to return to Poland.

A combination of alcoholism and religious differences drove the fourth case, Iza, in her 40s, worked as a factory machine operator, and lived with her second husband and daughter. Iza's estrangement from some of her family was exacerbated by structural factors such as the social acceptance of estrangement by some Catholics and Jehovah's Witnesses towards family members who take up another faith or marry

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outside their faith. Iza's parents had been alcoholics. Her father beat up her mother. Her mother took off with different men. Her grandmother took responsibility for her seven grandchildren, but then threw Iza, the second oldest child, out of her home when she married a Jehovah's Witness at the age of 18.

> *Many years ago I meet my first husband, his family was Jehovah's Witness. I was looking at what this religion, this is what I want. Nobody in my family accept. This is my decision. My sister said if I came back to church "I help you"…but you don't wants to go to church, we not help…..I not talking.. ….one sister from Holland and one step-sister in Poland accept my decision…this sister from Holland understand my decision. She live for 10 years in Holland. She change mind, she see how is important feel comfortable for yourself. ......if you want to be Jehovah's Witness it is not negotiation, it is your decision. I hate situation like this, because for me family is very important, but if someone not want to talk to me because of religion, I'm not bothered.* Interview, Iza, in her home, 20.8.2015].

Iza still had limited contact with a few family members. Her mother gave her an empty house in the countryside that her alcoholic uncle had once lived in, and that no-one else wanted.

> *First in the morning when you go outside, forest, soil, it is lovely, lovely smell. If you close the eyes you will feel like you will be in heaven. It is absolutely amazing. I never feel, see, here this experience…..I missing food, smell, weather.* [Interview, Iza, in her home, 20.8.2015].

Iza renovated it and lived there with her husband, until her marriage broke down and she sold it to pay for the costs of migrating to the UK with her two children. The possibility of return to Poland one day was ever present for her, but much less so for her children.

Distancing brought on as a reaction to gendered familial pressure and feelings of claustrophobia was raised by Dorota (see Chapter 6) who bore a burden of guilty relief (Pustułka and Ślusarczyk, 2016) about her decision to migrate and achieve intimacy at a distance. She was in regular contact with her parents, but resisted the pressure put upon her to return to Poland. She recalled her parent's expectations when

she got married. Her father had lamented the loss of opportunities to pass on his family land to her, his only child.

"*Even my mum on getting married "you are going far away, who will look after us, we will have to live in old people's house"* [Interview, Dorota, my house, 11.12. 2014].

Dorota also reflected on broader societal pressure*:*

"*Children are expected to look after parents….. your mum was looking after you so good, you left them. .. what's wrong."* [Interview, Dorota, my house, 11.12. 2014]

Within her extended family the pressure took on a gendered shade, with her male cousins free to migrate or arrange for paid care for their father (see Chapter 5) while her female cousin lived with her mother. Dorota had decided to provide 'good enough care' if and when the need arose.

> *I sometimes end up in tears. The moment I speak with her [on the phone] puts me down. I want to feel sorry for her that she is not well……but for mum it is the end of the world. "Nobody cares, I am dying, such suffering, I am on my own." ….. ….I stop myself, saying "stop worrying now, everything at the moment is alright, if the problem will be, I will look for solutions, usually if you look for solutions you find solutions"….* [Interview, Dorota, my house, 11.12. 2014]

In conclusion, the unmaking of care opens up the possibility of new spaces of care (Smart, 2007, Bowlby, 2011), which are explored in the next section.

7.4 New spaces of non-familial care

This section argues that spaces of non-familial care and new forms of family, shaped in part by an absence of an environment of kin and familial care, can be critical to migrant's sense of well-being and survival in a new homeland. However there has been a tendency for this dimension of people's lives to be side-lined by research focusing on strong and weak ties in Polish social networks with people in Poland, other Poles in the UK and other UK residents (Ryan et al, 2008, Ryan and White,

2008, Ryan, 2010) and the risk of mistrust and damaging discursive hostility within Polish networks based on opportunistic loose ties (Grzymała-Kazłowska , 2005, Garapich, 2007a, Elrick, & Lewandowska, 2008, Gill, 2010, Gill and Bialski, 2011). This section further argues that mundane everyday care relations develop under the radar of the public gaze, not only between Polish compatriots, but also through everyday proximity with multiple neighbours, workmates, leisure associates, church-goers and parents at the school gate. While some of these relations only involve prosaic everyday civility (Amin, 2002) created through "unintended and lived cosmopolitanism" (Beck and Sznaidner 2006,p.9) and do not necessarily develop beyond tolerance into engagement, meaningful contact and respect for difference (Valentine, 2008b, Cook et al, 2011), others develop into conviviality (Rzepnikowska-Phillips, 2009), practices of meaning and belonging (Erel, 2016) and interdependent relations of care (Bowlby et al, 2010, Tronto, 2017) that are anything but superficial but also anything but simple.

If domestic interdependency develops, the obligations that underpin them appear to be similar to familial care obligations, in that they are shaped by principles of mutual interest, trust, reciprocity and boundary-setting, and can be subject to the same fluidity, tensions and ruptures as within families. Everyday care relations can also develop into mutually beneficial relations of commodified care (Cox, 2013). However, these new spaces should not be assigned excessive merit, as while they create opportunities and hold potential, they also create insecurities. They are not always imbued with the same enduring obligation that can hold some families together for better and for worse, and there are fewer incentives for friends, such as the possibility of inheritance of tenure of scarce accommodation and other assets. Whether or not non-familial care relations endure at times of crisis and when there is a need for intimate domestic bodily care, such as for small children, the ill and the frail elderly, is questionable, even if there has been a history of payment for family-type care work, such as cleaning or babysitting. A full exploration of this topic is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Participants in this research experienced interdependency and care differently as it was contingent on their individual life histories and material circumstances. In the Polish language there are words that describe different degrees of friendship. From the most intimate to the least intimate, these terms are '*przyjaciel*', '*kolega*', and '*znajómy*'. The closest English translation for *przyjaciel* would be close friend. A

kolega could be translated into buddy, chum, or mate, and *znajómy* would be an acquaintance (Gill and Bialski, 2011). Some of the strongest connections are with Polish 'hometown' *przyjaciel* (close friend) and through church and home-church activities, but other new and diverse connections also flourish with citizens of other countries as well as British citizens. Some participants naturally developed networks on an unreserved give and take basis, based on purposeful emotional engagement that is simultaneously open-hearted and arising from loving emotional bonds which give meaning to life. Others took a more incremental approach, while others were more strategic and at times self-serving in pinpointing people who would be useful, for instance a Polish *znajómy* (acquaintance) who spoke fluent English. Some participants spoke with deep passion and emotion about how their networks literally helped them survive, and how they felt loyalty and bonds to their *przyjaciel* (close friend) akin to kinship, while others struggled with a loss of independence and found the necessity for intense interdependence weighing heavily on them. Others exercised delicate reciprocity in every domain, found profound meaning and personal satisfaction in interdependency and repaid acts with gifts (Burrell, 2008). Participants also talked about Polish friends and acquaintances in the UK who found it painfully difficult to forge new relationships – due to a lack of trust, shyness, mental health issues and language barriers – but I did not interview anyone in that position (see Chapter 3).

Some non-familial relations of care actively involve 'caring for' each other as well as 'caring about' (Tronto, 1993, 2017, Phillips, 2007, Bowlby et al, 2010) and buffer against crises that can cast people through the holes in the welfare safety net into poverty (Buchowski, 1996). For instance Ala's narratives about her and her husband's lives in Poland and then the UK (see above) shed light on the intense bonds and interdependency they nurtured with *przyjaciel* (close friend). Wacek worked in factories where his friends always covered for him when he had an epileptic attack. When he took on a better paid job in a new factory run by a multinational company he was downgraded to a lower-paid role as soon as managers discovered he had epilepsy. He then found a job in England through friends who said "*ok you come to us and we help you*". [Interview, Ala, her house, 1.5.2015]. Another major source of emotional support was an evangelical Catholic church, where they worked voluntarily with friends, associates and the priests in charge to develop a religious centre which tried 'to do many things', as Ala explained.

"We have place for playing for football, place for children who can eat dinner there, many things…l miss for my church because they are very intensive group who praying together over in Poland. We have church, have special group for adults, for teenagers. They have meeting, one, two, four times on year, when people come for every place in Poland. There are miracles. People be healthy…' [Interview, Ala, her house, 1.5.2015].

They created similarly supportive networks in the UK, sharing lifts and shifts with Polish co-workers and developing friendship networks with other parents and worshippers at the Catholic church. The first time we met in the church Ala said she had to give thanks for her husband's long spell without an epileptic attack, which she attributed to the power of prayer by friends who care about them in Poland and the UK. Her faith in the church and in her friends was fluid and contingent, constantly evolving, not a dogmatic and non-negotiable 'must' set in concrete, but a source of reciprocal support that was both valued and contested. For instance, at the time of interview she was no longer going to church regularly because of the challenge of coping with people's irritation with wriggly young children. She also discussed her reservations about an offer of a job from friends, saying that there were risks involved in working for friends and then falling out over money.

For others, caring for and being cared for on their own terms, and without feeling dependent, was more desirable. For example, although Agnieszka and Ziemowit were supported by friends who accommodated them in the UK and signposted them to networks, they disliked having to be reliant on and ask others for help, but grew to appreciate the opportunities for mutual support and spontaneous 'help in passing' (Anderson et al, 2015).

It was stressful for me not being independent, not having a car, not coming and going as I pleased. You know, for me it was difficult. Here I do everything by myself, there I had to learn to count on the help of others. But all the time there were good people who helped us and for whom it was not a problem. ….I was surprised to hear that Poles don't help each other…. There were lots of Poles at the factory and it turned out that all of us, who worked there, were good to each other. Sometimes on my line, the special line, where there were eight of us, when I had so many duties that I was scared that I didn't have enough time, a Polish colleague who had less time came

to help, so that I could go faster, so that I could manage. And that was beautiful. [Interview, *Agnieszka* , *in her home,* 25.9.2015]

For others mutually beneficial economies of favours are an everyday way of life. For instance, Teresa (see above) was perpetually alert to opportunities. She delicately nurtured mutually reciprocal relationships with *kolega* (friends) who would give her lifts to the airport whenever she went back to Poland. In return brought back gifts or useful items, such as cheap Polish cigarettes. Finding trustworthy people to take money to Poland in order to avoid hefty bank charges was crucial, as she did not use the internet or PayPal which was popular with the younger generation. She once entrusted money to a student called Bronek.

> *Teresa: The girls phoned me about giving them some money. I said, yes, but I don't want to send it via the bank, but there is Bronek, I don't know him, only at the shop. He said he was going to Poland for Easter and I said that I would like to ask him to do me a favour, could he take £500 for me. He said: "no problem". I didn't know him. Honestly I have a receipt, it worked out. I said: "If you're not going to have a problem, because I don't know anyone else and I have got to know you in the shop." He said: "Honestly Pani Teresa, don't worry, I am coming back in three weeks and I will bring you the receipt" And honestly after three days my daughters phoned me saying that they had the money at home. I didn't know him. I only knew him from his visits to the shop to do his shopping. But I trusted him. Either send it or don't send it.*
>
> *Lucy: You thought about it and you trusted him. ....did he pay it into the bank in Poland?*
>
> *Teresa: No he took it to a kantor and sent it to the Post Office in my home town.. Not the bank, no. We change money in kantors. ...it's normal for us..... I thought, he is a student, he is coming back to university. I really trusted him, he was such a nice person. Later on I met his parents, they came to see me in the shop, so nice. ..I said I trusted him, what will be, will be, my risk.*
>
> *Lucy: You've never had problems.*
>
> *Teresa: No. For example a girl came to the shop, she was completely different, not very friendly. I could have asked her but I*

didn't. I might have been wrong. She might have been a nice person,
but he was completely different, so nice. I thought to myself, I trust
him.

[Interview, Teresa in her flat, 17.6.2014]

For some people economies of favours were an 'old-fashioned' Polish way of doing things that sometimes veered into rule-bending, and transgressed boundaries of reasonableness. For instance, Kinga and Dawid were asked by members of their church to help an elderly Polish couple who could not speak English. It transpired that the man had been caught drink-driving by the police, but refused to fill in any paperwork or take part in a drink driving re-education course. Losing his car meant he could not drive himself or his wife to work. They both lost their jobs and ended up at the church's food bank. Kinga and Dawid helped them with English paperwork and phone calls, and in return they did odd jobs such as weeding their front garden and supplying them with homemade sausage and meat products. Kinga and Dawid laughed about this, as they liked sausage, but said they didn't want to eat it day in day out. They recognised what they describe as the couple's 'typical Polish strategies' and urged them to stay on the right side of the law in order to make life easier in the long run. Eventually the couple moved elsewhere, and stopped ringing them after Dawid said he did not want to make one particular phone call which involved mild *kombinacja* (spaces of shady business, ingenuity and innovation).

For others, reciprocal favours with *kolega* (friends*)* in the workplace were one of a range of strategies to fall back on when money is short and developed into a form of integration. For instance, Elżbieta became involved with austerity-era reciprocal money-lending practices in her workplace. Colleagues lent each other money at work, so that they could afford to buy lunch in the canteen if it was close to the end of the month and they had run out of cash. Once a British colleague came to visit her after she had had a minor operation and brought along a bag of groceries in a show of solidarity with and awareness about the loss of earnings she incurred on her precarious contract which did not include sick pay. (Interview Elżbieta, on a bench, 4.10.2015].

Not all participants moved beyond banal tolerance and 'rubbing shoulders' (Beck and Sznaidner, 2006) into engagement, meaningful contact and respect for difference (Valentine, 2008b, Cook et al, 2011), particularly when there were language barriers and new unspoken cultural 'rules' to learn and body language to make sense of and they felt painfully exploited, excluded or ignored, compounded by feelings of

shyness, inadequacy or frustration [Interview, Klaudia, 17 12.2014]. Kinga reflected upon depression.

> *There is people who has deep depression being here, and I think life abroad is not for everyone. You have to have strong courage, and quite positive attitude, because sometimes you can feel lost, and not acceptable…. language, lack of confidence, lack of sense being here.* [Interview, Kinga, in a café, 31.7.2014]

Although English language skills were both a restraining and facilitating factor, participants who did not speak English compensated in all sorts of ways. Teresa's 'flexible' coping strategies (Weishaar, 2010) included smiling, nodding, gesticulating, saying 'yes yes' a lot, ringing a friend or calling a colleague and asking them to translate over the phone, using a dictionary or phrase book or Google Translate.

Other participants crossed multiple boundaries and developed intimacies through everyday proximity with workmates (Cook et al. 2011), employers and recruitment agents (Elrick and Lewandowska, 2008), neighbours, and 'middle layers' such as church and childcare groups, which created the conditions for "ordinary kindness" simply by encouraging social interaction (Anderson et al, 2015). These activities illustrate the fluid possibilities within the 'care diamond' (Katz, 2001) of state, market, community and family and bear out how relationships based on commodification are not fully commodified and can replicate familial relationships (Cox, 2010).

For instance, Iza discussed how her landlord lived next door and how she invited him for supper or took plates of food round for him, because he said he loved her cooking. When he moved to London he invited her and her husband to stay for the weekend, the highlight of her year. Marzena talked about colleagues, those who were friendly, those who were lazy, and one older man whose wife had been ill for a long time and who found comfort in discussions with colleagues. She was one of the first people he texted, late at night, when his wife died. [Interview, Marzena in her home, 3.6.2015]. Patrycja recalled how she had been semi-adopted as a daughter figure by an older colleague, who protected her at work, and his wife, who she got to know outside work [Interview, Patrycja, in her house, 31.5.2015].

Kinga reflected on relationships with neighbours.

> *Kinga: The neighbours on our street are lovely and really welcoming, and they help us a lot and that was the good part and special when we barely know someone here. We just knows my*

friend, and her husband, and that's it, and no-one else, so that was good. .. my neighbour, , she is really helpful…

Lucy: Does she live next door?

Kinga: Not next door, but a few doors behind. It's like bringing flowers or nice card, or just pray with you, or just talk with you. It's simple, really simple things, or asking you "do you need a lift going to the town" or bringing you milk. When we was in Poland and just came back, she brings us milk and eggs, and she says "I know your fridge will be empty" ….it good learning how to be a good friend…… another friend she is lovely……she is the mother of 3 kids, so she is a busy girl.

Lucy: Does she live near you as well?

Kinga: Now she lives nearer, but we didn't see each other for a long time. She is working now so I understand she don't have the time. So it's like one day we have been in hospital with Szymon because he was really poorly, and she came back, she came to see him, and she says to us "Can I came just quickly just for a second" and we said "yes, yes you can, of course" and she brings us quiche made by herself. So it was like simple things, but it makes you like thinking that you are important, and you have someone, you don't have maybe family here, but you have someone who care about you, and really care about you.

Lucy: Are they both in your church, is that how you know them?

Kinga: Yes both are in the church. Lovely examples of caring.

[Interview, Kinga, in a café, 31.7.2014]

Kinga developed a multigenerational welfare community built through reciprocal smiles, conversation, passing on information, Christmas cards and small gifts, exchange of childcare and second-hand clothes and toys. The 'caring about' experienced between her and her neighbours blurred into commodified 'caring for' when she started cleaning for a neighbour in her 90s, who paid her 'pocket money'. 'Listening to' another retired neighbour and his wife about their problems with depression led to an offer of support when she and Dawid needed a guarantor in order to move to a larger house.

Lastly, serendipity and chance can play a part in opening up new possibilities which do not develop into domestic interdependency, but do enhance wellbeing and challenge stereotypes. Emilia recalled a chance meeting with a North African Muslim who became a valued friend.

> *Emilia: I went inside the bus station. I took my suitcases and I noticed the lady she was sitting and I ask her if she might pay attention to my suitcase because I have to go to find taxi driver and she said OK. It was Miriam. She was very nice. She asked me if I moved here. I said yes I working ..... She said ok I will sometimes go there. I said ok, if you will be there, you might come and see me. She said ok. It was the next day or month someone asked about me. I was very surprised... It was Miriam. ....*
>
> *We start meeting, not very often, but we went sometimes to metro centre, or meeting at my house or Miriam's house. One day she made some BBQ.....It is nice these chance meetings. It is very nice to find somebody who is very nice and helpful, to find a true friend in a different country. It is amazing. [Interview, Emilia, her house, 15.8.2014]*

This section has demonstrated that the re-making of care in non-family spaces holds rich and rewarding potential but is ultimately subject to the same fluidity, tensions and ruptures as within families.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have drawn on my conceptual framework and findings to challenge discourses around care at a distance and to highlight the ways in which care is both valued and contested. I have reframed debates by draw attention to the enduring nature of familial care across time and space, as well as the violence in its unmaking, and the hopefulness and limitations in the flowering of new relations of non-familial care. I have contributed insights into debates about care across borders by highlighting the complex ways in which it is made, unmade and remade. I have

identified the paradox that, despite the many limitations in family care, there may be as many limitations in non-familial care relations once they mushroom into the realm of intimate personal and bodily care. What is at stake here is the need for public and political support for Hill's (2017) thesis that the state still plays a crucial role in mitigating the problems caused by the complex dynamics of people's lives, and should be defended, not eroded.

Having established the processes in which social reproduction is embedded, the insecurities and opportunities created, the complexities underpinning the use of migration and stasis as a strategy for bringing about and ensuring social reproduction, and the significance of everyday practices across borders between the people who move and the people who stay put, I now move to the conclusion to tie all the threads together.

8. Conclusion

8.1 Summary

The aim of this research undertaken between 2012-2019 has been to explore narrative accounts of how people make, un-make and remake everyday care work and sustain linked lives across borders within the EU at a time of population ageing, politically-orchestrated anti-migrant sentiment and an economic model which increasingly pushes responsibility for care and welfare onto the family and exacerbates inequalities. The research was underpinned by the argument that insights into continuity and change in reproductive labour is vital, because the labour power necessary for capitalist production is produced though household labour, and the ways in which people navigate paid labour and unpaid care labour are shaped by political choices. This topic matters because, even if people exercise agency in all sorts of creative and unpredictable ways, political choices shape the extent to which people can live comfortable or disadvantaged lives and the extent to which men and women share work and care. Although extensive research has been carried out, particularly into the commodification and geographical extension of social reproduction, there are empirical and conceptual gaps in research and policy literatures within a European context on everyday household care practices, and the linked lives between the people who stay put and the people who move.

In order to examine this question in a particular social, structural and geographical context, I focused on the linked lives of worker-carers in two EU member states, the UK and Poland during 2013-2015. The British-Polish context is of value in the light of the intense debates around the inflow of Polish workers to the UK after Poland acceded to the EU in 2004, and the build-up to the UK European Union membership referendum in 2016. In order to make sense of a wide array of relational practices this thesis was theoretically positioned in three particular sets of ideas – mobilities and immobilities, social reproduction and care practices. It utilised a methodology shaped by feminist, ethnographic and multi-sited research principles and involving repeat visits and follow up visits to family members in Poland, and biographical interviews and mutual trust with participants and their families.

This approach has resulted in a multi-layered study that goes beyond many of the existing studies of Polish migration to the UK and reinforces the value of slow qualitative scholarship to the creation of new knowledge. In each chapter I have considered a different aspect of migration and social reproduction in order to contextualise, analyse and interpret, and let "small facts speak to large concerns" (Gibson-Graham, 2014).

8.2 Thesis outline

Chapter 1 introduces the thesis, with a focus on the context of freedom of movement within the EU and social reproduction and care practices in the context of ageing populations.

Chapter 2 makes the case for why linked lives and everyday care across borders and over generations is important conceptually for enriching how we understand Polish migration in an era of population ageing. It brings together the concepts of mobilities and immobilities, social reproduction and intergenerational care practices together in order to re-think economic determinist accounts of migration, make sense of the marginalisation of vital reproductive work and the unequal distribution of care labour within families and across the globe, and unpack the making, unmaking and remaking of intergenerational care practices across time and space. This chapter uses the 'care diamond' (Katz, 2001), which imagines care through a shifting constellation of multiple spheres of provision by the state, the market, civil society and the family, to bring to the fore the importance of European state welfare regimes in care configurations. It also expands the 'care diamond' into a five-pronged constellation (De Silva, 2017) in order to foreground the agency of older caregivers, and introduces the 'quarter-carat care diamond', which enables holistic consideration of key dimensions of family care.

Chapter 3 emerges from and aligns with the conceptual framing of the thesis, and makes a case for multi-sited, feminist, ethnographic research based on repeat research visits and biographical interviews as a methodology for exploring social reproduction and everyday care across borders across multiple generations. It takes account of three dimensions – the importance of trust during recruitment and relationship building, the role of the shifting positionalities of both researcher and

participants throughout the research, and the need for a toolkit of personal ethics to supplement formal ethical guidelines.

Chapter 4 contextualises Poland, and thereby situates the research participants' motivations for, and experiences of migration, and social reproduction, and the shifting and contradictory tensions around sharing responsibility for social reproduction between the state and the family. It outlines the factors shaping the Polish state's particular provision of social protection, starting with Polish geopolitics and the shifting nature of the Polish state over the past 100 years, and then moving onto Polish social protection. It then goes on to explore how accession to the EU and the ensuing opportunities for mobility complicated further debates about and experiences of multiple regimes shaping 'social' citizenship.

Chapter 5 argues that the rhetorical focus on 'family care' in public and political discourses in Poland denotes a range of practices that speak to a dearth of well-regulated alternatives produced by the erosion of state welfare in a neo-liberal economy, particularly regarding eldercare. The chapter demonstrates how spatial, classed and gendered inequalities in the provision of care become lived experience. It further argues that scholarship exploring the relationship between care, migration and social reproduction should take population ageing into account, without slipping into simplistic narratives whereby the 'young' care for the 'old'.

Chapter 6 examines how decisions are made concerning who migrates, stays put or returns in order to make, un-make and remake social reproduction. It argues that the 'figure of the migrant' only comes into being if there are immobile 'moorings' to move from, and that while factors such as work and welfare regimes, affordable housing, subjective well-being and lifecourse stage can be identified, decisions are contradictory and unpredictable.

Chapter 7 argues that overly pessimistic or conversely sentimental discourses belie a much more complex set of practices, trade-offs and tensions around what comes to constitute care. It demonstrates that attention needs to be paid to the ways in which relationships *endure* over time and space and how intimacy at a distance may help, rather than hinder, enduring flows of care. Additionally, it argues that the violence in the unmaking of care needs to be considered more fully, as well as the hopefulness and limitations in the remaking of care through new non-familial caring relations.

8.3 Key findings and contributions

While I recognise that it is not possible or appropriate to make specific claims and generalisations on the basis of a small-scale research project, four tentative findings have emerged from this study, which open up for debate important topics rich with ethical implications and inform policy interventions to improve situations. Firstly, while the heart-rending focus on the pain of separation, distance and absence in migration is important, it draws attention away from the lens of linked lives as broadly enduring and made, unmade and remade not only by distance, but by complex everyday social relations that unfold unpredictably over the lifecourse. Mobility and fixity can create opportunities for some to rebalance intergenerational power relations and develop intimacy at a distance. Mobility and fixity can also, in the case of toxic relations, provide opportunities for others to escape and remake social reproduction, even if ultimately family histories are inextricable and critical material and legal interdependencies persist

This argument challenges the tendency in some migration literatures to focus on migration as singularly economic (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2008, Okólski and Salt, 2014, Janicka and Kaczmarczyk, 2016) and adds to the literatures that do focus on the personal and emotional (Katz, 2001, Silvey, 2004, Pratt, 2012, Kofman and Raghuram, 2015). This argument also extends the scholarly arguments that absence, mobility and intimacy at a distance are a common feature of life (Baldassar, 2007, Baldock, 2000) that reciprocal care circulates asymmetrically across the lifecourse (Baldassar and Merla, 2013) and that migration does not render the family obsolete (Botterill, 2012). Specifically I extend the argument by making space for ideas and testimonies about the implicitly and explicitly violent unmaking of care (Brickell, 2012). My underlying claim that migration is normal, multi-faceted and ultimately uncontrollable will come as no surprise to some readers familiar with Poland's history and worldwide diaspora. However it does need to be reiterated in the light of the political turn by some Polish politicians to a narrow 'blood and soil' version of Poland and advertising campaigns exhorting the younger generation to stay in Poland and 'breed'. From a British perspective my claims are modest contributions to perspectives on migration which refuse to 'other' migrant worker-carers (Datta et al, 2006, Crawley, 2010, Pratt, 2012), and which acknowledge that Britain has long been

constituted through migration, and that migration is integral to Europe's 21st century reality (Winder, 2010).

Secondly, while much attention is rightly paid to gendered inequalities in the uneven distribution of paid labour, unpaid care labour and welfare support across generations and borders, there is a risk that this focus valorises paid labour and does not direct enough attention to the fact that socially reproductive work and the fleshy messy stuff of life (Katz 2001, p.711) is also labour, albeit unpaid. Unpaid labour puts some of the people who undertake it, both men and women (Kilkey, 2013) but mainly women who bear a disproportionate burden (Phillips & O'Loughlin, 2017, Witt, 2018), and particularly the least wealthy women, at risk of cumulative financial disadvantage over the life course (OECD, 2017). In Poland if men and women miss out on social insurance credits accrued singularly through full-time paid labour, and therefore the chance to build up a reasonable independent pension, they are at risk of pension poverty if they have no access to pooled familial resources to top up their incomes. If some of these Polish men and women then seek paid work in another EU country such as the UK for a fixed period, they are eligible to apply to transfer their social insurance credits back to Poland in order to qualify for a full Polish state pension, but in the light of the UK European Union membership referendum, uncertainty has crept in regarding pension portability. There is also uncertainty around the citizenship and pension prospects of Polish men and women who decide to stay in the UK long-term (Jablonowski, 2019).

This argument aligns with socio-legal research by Ackers (2004) and Ackers and Dwyer (2004) into the ambiguity in the EU social model, and the need to ensure that even if not all social rights are currently portable across the EU, bilateral and multilateral agreements are reached to ensure that pensions are portable (Taha et al, 2015). It also aligns with social policy research by Lewis (2007) and Kilkey et al (2018) on the ways in which pushing care onto the family and onto women exacerbates spatial disadvantage. It also aligns with gerontological research and policy work by Scharf et al (2017) on inequalities in later life and Price et al (2016) on equitable pensions. I extend the argument by *reframing views of socially reproductive work as work* and encourage others to refine the concept and to use it through, for instance, repeatedly differentiating between paid and unpaid labour. This perspective feeds into EU-wide debates that work needs to be valued differently, that care work needs to be valued properly, that the people who undertake the care work need to be paid what

they are worth and that the people who need care – all of us at certain stages in our lives – are not valueless (Himmelweit, 2007, O'Connor, 2018). In a nutshell: creating equality for all genders and wealthier and less wealthy sections of society requires collective support for social reproduction. This call for a transformative geopolitics is not new in a British context, but it needs more than lip service when it comes to policy-making and funding. Similarly in the Polish context alliances of academics, policymakers and non-governmental organisations advocate progressive policy making (Kotowksa et al, 2008) but debates on the subject are dominated by conservative ideologies about the role of women and the family and conservative fiscal policy that welfare support is costly and encourages inactivity.

Thirdly, too much attention is paid to population ageing in the EU as a *burden*, and too little to the need for supportive rather than punitive social policy that challenges ageism without denying ageing, and recognises and values the vital contribution of migrant care workers. More account needs to be taken of the fluid ways in which some of the 'young old' often continue to work, care, share out money with family members and remain independent well into old age. 'Unretirement' needs to be a flexible choice, and not as a result of a one-size fits all policy to extend working lives by raising the pension age, scaling back the value of the state pension and making people primarily reliant on income-related pensions, which exacerbates gendered and structural inequalities. More account also needs to be taken of the need for equitable provision for the 'old' if they need intensive care during the final period of their lives, as frailty and dying do not mean that lives have no meaning.

This conclusion extends scholarly research and policy work on independence in later life and ageism (Phillips and O'Louglin, 2017, Walker, 2018), and on the enduring relevance of the welfare state (Hills, 2017), by bringing both sets of literatures together and making a case for a new social contract which takes into account intergenerational injustices, and also the case for universal, non-discriminatory, collective provision of basic services in both Poland and the UK. Again this is not new in a British context, but policy making on ageing is often neglected (Pearce, 2017) and state-funded social care labour costs stripped to the bone, which exacerbates the risk of elder neglect and abuse. In a Polish context debates are still in an early stage (Perek-Białas and Racław, 2014), state-funded care is rationed, and tighter regulation of the huge informal care sector in ways which protect carers from exploitation and the cared for from harm appears some way off. There is also

scope for more geographical research into ageing (Harper and Laws, 1995, Skinner et al, 2015) as it concerns 'the place of the elderly in the world in which most of us will grow old' (Rowles, 1986, p.531).

Lastly, while moral concerns about the negative impact of mobility and modernity on family life on the one hand, and about neoliberal capitalism and commodified care on the other hand, are legitimate, they sometimes render invisible some of the important ways in which people contest, modify, circumvent and block the broader social structures shaping their lives and sustain enduring and fulfilling relationships of care. As Bryceson (2019, p.19) puts it

"*The odds are that nation-states, attempting to block rather than bridge the operation of fluid global labour markets and family life cycle care, are on the losing side of history.*"

Poland is an interesting case-study, as while it is often diagnosed in UK discourses as beset by economic, political and social problems ranging from authoritarian governance and the disciplining of womens' bodies, Polish citizens find ways around systems of inconvenience and oppression in multiple complex and contradictory ways. Although this ingenuity is more amelioration than transformation, and does sometimes involve *kombinacja* (rule-breaking, shady business, ingenuity and innovation)*,* which is corrosive of the public realm and collective support for social reproduction, at the same time it creates multifaceted spaces of hope (Materka, 2014) and companionable human interaction (Jehlička et al, 2013, Cox, 2013, Schwiter et al, 2018).

This thesis therefore extends the work of Bridger and Pine (1998) and Hörschelmann and Schäfer (2007) by shedding light on the complex and contradictory ways in which people engage with global processes and everyday care work, and are neither passive victims of the powerful dominant structures of the state and market economy, not totally in control of their own fates. It also challenges Polish migration research to engage more explicitly with critiques of the operation of unjust power, unrestrained neoliberal capitalism and the erosion of welfare by drawing on, for instance, Hardy's work (2009). It also challenges Polish migration research to engage more fully with the complex and contradictory nature of everyday resistance to inequalities and injustices unveiled by Stenning et al (2011). This thesis draws attention to the hopefulness, solidarity and extraordinariness of people who get by

(Hall and Holmes, 2017) without over-riding or ignoring the crucial role the state plays in shaping people's finances, homes and subjective wellbeing (Hills, 2017).

These findings demonstrate that I have achieved my research aims, which were to:

- recognise and bear witness to the lived experience and hidden histories of Polish family members giving and receiving care work across borders within the EU, including members who exercised their right to freedom of movement across the EU and moved to the UK, and the members who largely stayed put.
- put their experiences into a broader context which takes account of broader societal and geopolitical factors shaping Polish migration and stasis in order to grasp the complexity and unpredictability of spatial and relational care practices across borders and generations.
- re-think economic accounts of migration and develop new conceptual insights into care discourses, practices and moral experiences across time and space.

I achieved these aims by recruiting 18 households to take part in the research and building up trusting relationships which enabled me to conduct multi-sited fieldwork in both NE England and the UK. This was a major achievement given the challenge of carrying out research into the sensitive subject of how different generations do and/or do not exercise responsibility for each other through care labour.

I examined their testimonies in the contextual light of Poland's shifting borders and membership of the EU and the build up to the UK European Union referendum in 2016, and also population ageing and the restructuring and diversification of families.

I challenged economic accounts of migration by demonstrating the importance of small-scale geographies and life stories, and developed new conceptual insights into care through the use of the 'care diamond', 'care pentagon' and 'quarter-carat care diamond', which enables holistic consideration of key dimensions of family care. I also contributed to a growing body of scholarship concerning what constitutes an ethical mode of engagement when researching the often deeply personal issues around family relations and migration.

These findings also demonstrate that I have achieved my research objectives encapsulated in the following research questions:

- what are the lived experiences of everyday care work across borders and over the lifecourse for Polish worker-carers and their children and parents?
- how do Polish worker-carers make discursive moral sense of linked lives?
- how are their experiences of care shaped by and shaping broader geopolitical and economic structures in an era of population ageing across the EU?

I answered the first question by presenting, contextualising and interpreting multiple lived experiences throughout the thesis. I also paid careful attention to ethical considerations, which obliged me to think carefully about how I represented what participants shared. I answered the second question by giving participants space to voice commonly-held tropes about 'family care' in Poland, and then gradually making sense of more complex and contradictory narratives, and questioning my own positionality. I answered the third question by setting out how care is being reshaped by the adult worker model and flexicurity, which are in turn accommodated and contested and reworked by worker-carers. I highlighted how population ageing is significant, not because of the burden the older generation place on young workers, but because of the diversification of opportunities for new patterns of work and care, with some of the older generation continuing to contribute until the very end of their lives.

8.4 Limitations and new research directions

Perhaps the most significant limitations in this research were the gaps in the researcher's knowledge of the Polish context, the Polish language and research and policy literatures written in Polish. This did however mean that I was able to ask seemingly simple, but important, questions that might otherwise have been taken for granted, and to absorb with profound intensity the cues that come from being an insider-outsider. There is huge scope for further work on the social reproduction and care practices underpinning migration which would create new knowledge. It could be undertaken in collaboration with researchers from, for instance, the Centre for Migration Research in Warsaw University in Poland, and also those listed on the on the Polish Migration website organised by Professor Anne White at the UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies in London. Such research would not be

grounded in 'methodological nationalism' (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002, Rogaly, 2015) and 'essentialist groupism' (Nowicka and Ryan, 2015), a criticism sometimes levelled at Polish migration research. It would involve a 'situated transnationalism' (Kilkey and Merla, 2014), in which wider processes are examined within particular contexts and specifics or 'locational specificities' (Raghuram, 2012), and place-based 'geo-histories' and genealogies (Green and Lawson, 2011). It would pay heed to the need for caution around identifying normative communities and the need to explore the multiplicity of experiences and relations (Blunt, 2007) through a fluid methodological cosmopolitanism lens (Beck and Sznaider, 2006). Four specific areas that could be built on are change and continuity in care practices; kaleidoscopic and contradictory forms of care involving *kombinacja* (rule-breaking, shady business, ingenuity and innovation); personal relationships; and the unmaking of care.

Change and continuity in care practices is one area of research that this thesis could have addressed more thoroughly. Care landscapes are constantly evolving, as they have done over the duration of this thesis, most notably in connection to the UK European Union membership referendum. During fieldwork I did not think enough about social history and what had changed in participant's families over the generations, and instead I focused too much on current context and experience. This was partly because I let participants say what they wanted to say about their family work, but I could have directed conversations towards discussions about their parents' and grandparents' experiences of care work, linked lives, networks of affection and economies of favours.

Future research could incorporate biographical interviews looking back at care work in the past, and a commitment to asking participants to 'walk the researcher through particular events again' in order to build step by step accounts of life stories in rich detail. It would also be useful to discuss ideas about 'Polish family care culture' and to, for instance, use quotes from media articles to stimulate reflection. One quote could be the following, made by a male politician during a legislatorial discussion on changes to the state pension age (Krzyżowski, 2011, p.76).

'*Women have the right to retire early because Polish women attach a great importance to family life, even at the expense of their career. There is a belief that the woman's role is to raise children, or grandchildren. We cannot just look at the financial aspects. Let us appreciate the cultural aspect as well.*'

This could then lead to a discussion of culture not as fixed and bounded, but traced to gendered and generational social policies designed with *'babcia'* (grandmother) in mind. Grandparental care could be discussed as an example of a 'negative' and ageist life course policy shaping interdependence between family generations, as care by grandmothers enables daughters to adopt modern gender roles while grandmothers are taking on the traditional roles for themselves, rather than getting men to do more. The rising acceptability and use of paid careworkers inside the home and provision care institutions outside the home could also be raised, and the role of housing and intergenerational inheritance.

The findings could feed into policy work on ideas about flexible paid work and flexible retirement, fair social protection and fair pensions decoupled from paid employment, a citizen's wage and pension, and a social care system, all of which should take into account inequalities in circumstances. This work could also feed into ideas about care work for the frail elderly as a social investment and under-exploited source of employment, rather than a cost. Understanding the journeys worker-carers make through the lifecourse and across borders is a necessity for workforce planning, welfare budgeting and migration policy.

Kombinacja (spaces of shady business, ingenuity and innovation) is a second area that is significant in a Polish care context, but often difficult to talk about for all sorts of reasons. Comments such as the following by the Polish historian Adam Zamoyski are somewhat unhelpful. He was quoted in a newspaper article (Rainey, 2013) as saying:

 "As with every large group of migrants, you do get an underbelly…. There are huge scams going on with benefits, whereby Poles come over to work, bring their families, sign them all up for child benefits and then go back home again with the money.").

While these claims, of which Zamoyski's is one of many, rightly point out that fraud threatens the rule of law, they are rarely backed up with evidence and context. A more helpful approach is Materka's (2014) lens of *kombinacja as* a site of ingenuity and inequality, innovation and suffering, which makes space for *kombinacja* as both corrosive of the public realm (CBOS, 2013) but also as a complex and contradictory response to poverty and injustice (Jeffrey, 2013), and also to not having the right connections and networks (CBOS, 2014, Magala, 2017), which is deemed crucial for well-being, and even survival, in Poland.

For instance, a variation of *kombinacja* of particular interest to this thesis emerged during a discussion with a Polish researcher, who had come across older people pretending to social workers that their families had migrated. The point of the pretence was to render themselves eligible for welfare support, and to avoid being beholden to or burdening their families with care work [Discussion June 2017, at Warsaw University Centre for Migration Research conference on ageing]. Social workers reportedly turned a blind eye and went along with the pretence in order to avoid having to spend time and money pursuing the families and taking them to court. This is an important social question with implications for care provision that merits careful thought.

Subjective wellbeing and in particular erotic agency, romantic wellbeing and marriage migration is a third possible area. In research circles there appear to be gaps in the research into the mundane minutiae of everyday domestic intimacy, companionship and marriage, with the exception of Lulle and King (2016), even though it has significant implications for everyday lives and care relations. Marriage migration has been memorably illustrated by the character called Valentina in the novel *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian* (Lewycka, 2006). Valentina is a 'fluffy pink grenade' from the Ukraine who comes to the UK and befriends the main protagonist's widowed father, who is of Ukrainian origins and has British citizenship. I would argue that romantic relationships give some women intimacy and sense of self-worth, a roof over their heads, health insurance and access to the wealth and status that capitalism denies them. At the same time they can be drawn into uneven household power relations, which can, in extreme cases, see children feeling that their rights to resources and inheritance have been usurped, and loving filial relationships unsettled. For instance, during my fieldwork I met one of Ula and Amelia's friends. She had gone to work in Germany as a domestic care worker when she was poverty-stricken, and married 'Herman', the elderly man she cared for. When he died she had reportedly inherited his house, much to the annoyance of his children. She split her life between Germany, where she had a new elderly companion and lover, and Poland, as she missed her friends and family back home. Another participant reflected on her friend's marriage (of convenience, in her opinion) to an older British man and the opportunities it gave her for beauty treatments and foreign holidays denied to her when she was in Poland. This is another important social question that merits careful thought.

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The unmaking of care is a fourth possible area, as raised in Chapter 7.3. The complexities and contradictions around firstly, self-determination, and secondly, cuts to social spending on people who can no longer care for themselves, also merit further research.

Another major limitation in this thesis was the risk of perpetuating stereotypes through focusing on women primarily as heteronormative worker-carers and family members or wives, rather than as individuals who also care about friends, colleagues and the world. The men in this thesis are often shadowy figures. Future research could examine men's changing care roles, decentre the family, and take fuller account of families of choice and individuals without partners, children or grandchildren.

Lastly, dissemination. The knowledge in this thesis could be used to 'jump scales' between academic scholarship and public engagement, and conduct activities richly informed by stories about individuals that might encourage people to engage with the facts and then reconsider myths. However there are serious ethical issues to consider, such as confidentiality, so blended accounts would have to be created. Furthermore, publicity can have unexpected consequences, and PhD data can be misused (Boswell, 2009). I did not set out to improve lives, speak for or campaign on behalf of my participants, and they did not ask me to do so. Rather I aimed to challenge divisive ideas about citizens of somewhere and citizens of nowhere through 'a quiet politics of togetherness' (Askins, 2014) and connectivity (Massey, 2004) as European citizens. It remains to be seen if our voices can be amplified in positive ways which 'talk across worlds' outside the academy (Nagar, 2002) and help place an ethic of care right at the centre of economic and social policy. As Strathern (1987) puts it

'New strategies and forms of consciousness do not simply emerge from the ruins of the old and smoothly produce a new consensus, but are created through personal and political struggles, which are often complex and contradictory' (Kandiyoti, 1988).

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