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Domestic Violence, Liminality and Precarity in the British Borderlands Polish women's experiences of abuse and service engagement in Edinburgh

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Abstract

Despite extensive attempts to tackle domestic violence, it remains a pervasive, insidious and pertinent issue. This applied anthropological study attends to several unchartered dimensions of domestic violence in a previously unexplored context – namely, Polish migrant women's experiences of abuse and associated service engagement in the United Kingdom. Research was conducted between 2013 and 2015 via a multi-sited ethnography, across institutions that administered and provided support to women experiencing domestic violence in Edinburgh. Analysis focuses on the significance of political economy in the context of domestic violence, particularly on how political economic practices relating to British statecraft intersected with Polish women's migrant identities and experiences. Accordingly, this work is foregrounded within an intersectional paradigm of *borderlands*. This perspective permits this text to demonstrate how markers of difference, engendered by nation states, shaped Polish women's experiences of abuse and their help-seeking interactions.

In constructing this analysis, I draw attention to the salience of political concerns that are not typically included in discussions about domestic violence, and reflect upon their practical, existential and subjective implications. This reveals various ways in which the UK border, ethnic categorisation, and welfare governance intersected with Polish women's migrant identities, to forge specific domestic violence realities. Throughout my analysis liminality and precarity prove prominent themes, which I argue permeated women's experiences, their political subjectivities, and ultimately, their ability to achieve safety and protection from abuse. Principally, this work serves to create a critical discourse, highlighting how political economic factors can engender greater marginalisation and risk of domestic violence for Polish women.

The research that grounds this thesis is therefore situated in the under-explored field of the anthropology of domestic violence. Through the use of ethnography, this work elucidates Polish women's lived experiences of domestic violence and service engagement, but also the nature of the *British borderlands*, in which Polish women are emplaced. In doing so, this thesis illustrates the potential of anthropology for informing understandings of domestic violence, and conversely the possibility of domestic violence research for contributing to perspectives in anthropology.

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Anthropology

Durham University

2017

Contents

List of Abbreviations

ASA: Association of Social Anthropologists
BME: Black and Minority Ethnic
CPS: Crown Prosecution Service
DHR: Domestic Homicide Review
DOH: Department of Health
DWP: Department of Work and Pensions
ECH: Emergency Council Housing
ECJ: European Court of Justice
EU: European Union
GP: General Practitioner
HMIC: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HRT: Habitual Residency Test
IPCC: The Independent Police Complaints Commission
IRR: Institute of Race Relations
IS: Income Support
JSA: Job Seeker's Allowance
LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
NHS: National Health Service
NRPF: No Recourse to Public Funds
NSPCC: National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
ONS: Office for National Statistics
UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UK: United Kingdom
UN: United Nations
US: United States
VAWG: Violence against Women and Girls
WHO: World Health Organisation

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to Asia

And is in memory of Michelle

1. Introduction

This is an applied anthropological study, which examines Polish migrant women's experiences of domestic violence and associated service engagement in the United Kingdom (UK). Research was conducted between 2013 and 2015 via a multi-sited ethnography, across institutions that administer and provide support to women experiencing domestic violence in Edinburgh. Analysis focuses on the political economic dimensions implicated in women's experiences. Particularly, I examine how Polish women's specific migrant status varyingly intersected with domestic violence, as well as with state and service provider practices, as they attempted to respond to or evade abuse. This thesis therefore makes a contribution to the under-explored field of the anthropology of domestic violence. However, it also contributes towards larger discourses in political, legal and applied anthropology, and adds a unique aspect of scholarship to the anthropology of Britain, and to British domestic violence research.

In this introductory chapter, I first contextualise the issue of domestic violence in the UK, and explain the reasoning behind the specific research topic to which this thesis attends. I then discuss the key theoretical paradigms that I use to inform my analysis, and present the core research questions which foreground this thesis. I close this introduction by providing a chapter summary, which outlines the structure of this text and highlights the original contributions of this work.

Contextualising Domestic Violence

Innate in the discipline of anthropology is a suspicion of all-encompassing, descriptive social categories, especially those that relate to diverse human behaviours and interactions. In use, such classifications risk being so essentialised and abstracted from lived experience that they become hollowed and homogenous, stripped of the specificities of context and subjectivity that drive the significance of the phenomena described. Certainly, the encapsulation 'domestic violence' is an ambitious term; it attempts to capture the infinitude of maleficent practices and dynamics that take place in intimate relationships across the world. Yet, the salience of this phenomenon persists, and it is implicated in the suffering, harm and premature deaths of millions of individuals worldwide each year (WHO 2002, 2013). Indeed, both the vocabulary and issue of domestic violence have become mainstream, highlighted in human rights discourse and by supranational bodies such as the

United Nations and the World Health Organisation. However, there is considerable variability in what people mean when they refer to domestic violence. This is because definitions of domestic violence are both perspectival and socially constructed, as are both its constituents 'domestic' and 'violence' (Muehlenhard and Kimes 1999, Tang 1994, Bennett *et al* 2011, Bui and Morash 1999, 2000). It is therefore important to emphasise that understandings of domestic violence reflect historically contingent, prevailing knowledge structures; they are the nexuses of competing interests and power distributions (Foucault 1980). While the phenomenological development of domestic violence is reviewed in greater detail in Chapter 2, here I briefly discuss the understanding of domestic violence in which this thesis operates, and contextualise the socio-political climate in which this research is situated.

In the UK, domestic abuse has become a commonplace term to describe domestic violence, and has emerged as a key policy issue for governments, local authorities, third-sector organisations and activists.[1] This is of course notwithstanding its significance amongst communities, families and individuals who experience it everyday. However, there remains no national, operational definition of domestic violence in Britain (Westmarland 2015: 2). Nevertheless, since all of my data collection took place in Scotland, the Scottish government's definition of domestic violence was key in shaping the potential scope and parameters of this study:

> *Domestic abuse (as gender-based abuse), can be perpetrated by partners or ex-partners and can include physical abuse (assault and physical attack involving a range of behaviour), sexual abuse (acts which degrade and humiliate women and are perpetrated against their will, including rape) and mental and emotional abuse (such as threats, verbal abuse, racial abuse, withholding money and other types of controlling behaviour such as isolation from family or friends)* (The Scottish Executive 2003).

The sheer scope of the behaviours listed in this definition is testament to the multitude of ways in which domestic violence can both arise and be perceived. However, within this definition, the Scottish Executive (2003) defines domestic violence as a gender-based issue. As Orr (2007) explains, writing on behalf of the Scottish government, this stance means that while the Scottish definition acknowledges that domestic violence takes place in different contexts, it recognises that men are the main perpetrators of abuse against women and children. This gender-based understanding mirrors findings from both global and national

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[1] I provide a more comprehensive discussion on this thesis' choice of domestic violence-related vocabulary in Chapter 3. However, from the outset I should stress that I treat the terms 'domestic abuse' and 'domestic violence' as synonymous, and use the latter in this thesis purely for stylistic reasons.

domestic violence research (WHO 2002, 2013, Westmarland 2006, Hester 2009). Moreover, the prevalence of this gendered dynamic is reflected in official statistics that measure domestic violence in the UK, as well as in surveys that attempt to measure unreported crime.[2]

The Scottish definition was adopted by many of the service providers in Edinburgh that feature in this ethnography, and the domestic violence I encountered during fieldwork corresponded with the above definition. However, a more succinct working definition of domestic violence that I have developed for use in this thesis is: intentional harm perpetrated by another, in the context of a current or previous intimate-partner relationship. In line with domestic violence literature and the Scottish Executive (2003) definition, this thesis recognises the gendered aspects of domestic violence, alongside the multitude of other individual and collective intersectionalities that are implicit in the patterning and experience of abuse. All of the individuals who experienced abuse that feature this ethnography are women, and all of those who perpetrated abuse are men. However, while the Scottish Executive suggests that a single act of violence or abuse constitutes domestic violence, the women whose stories I present in this thesis experienced multidimensional and patterned abuse that accumulated over many months and years.

Moving beyond definitions, domestic violence is often described as being a 'hidden problem', in that it is often thought about as taking place 'behind closed doors' in the realms of private, domestic life. Certainly, in the UK it is widely acknowledged as being an under-reported issue - as being far more prevalent than police reports or official records indicate (Barnish 2004: 8, Stanko 2001, Walby *et al* 2014). Nevertheless, statistics that attempt to capture the incidence of domestic violence in the UK present an alarming picture. Two women a week are murdered by their current or former partner, which is by far the most prevalent cause of homicide for women in Britain today (ONS 2016b). More generally, 27% of the female population in the UK – that is more than 1 in 4 – are believed to have experienced domestic violence in their adult lives (*ibid*). Of course, the pervasiveness of domestic violence also greatly affects children; NSPCC research indicates that one in five British children will experience or witness domestic violence during their childhoods (Radford *et al* 2011). Despite Stanko's (2001) estimation that only 35% of abuse is reported to the police, police services on average received a call for assistance because of domestic violence every 30

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[2] Women comprise roughly 85% of domestic violence victims in official police and judicial statistics (CPS 2010) and disproportionately experience more severe and sustained abuse than men (ONS 2016b, also Walby and Allen 2004). The ONS statistics cited in this paragraph have proved relatively stable, with earlier reports (e.g. ONS 2013c, 2015b) echoing similar domestic violence prevalence rates.

seconds in the year of 2013 (HMIC 2014). Domestic violence thus accounts for 8% of all recorded crime in the UK (*ibid*). Given its prevalence, latest estimates suggest that domestic violence costs the UK economy approximately £15,730,000,000 (15.7 billion pounds) each year (Walby 2009).

Undoubtedly, these dire statistics reveal domestic violence to be an extensive social problem in Britain. Indeed, in recent years, domestic violence has emerged as a burgeoning issue in the UK, and has received unprecedented attention in public and political spheres. In the wake of far-reaching sexual abuse scandals, such as 'Operation Yewtree' in 2012, Britain has encountered a surge in awareness about, and in the reporting of, intimate, sexual and violent gender-based crimes. Additionally, the media has covered high profile domestic violence cases, and policy makers and activists alike have worked hard to make domestic violence more visible. Consequently, domestic violence has come to be seen as widespread, harmful, unacceptable and, importantly, as an addressable problem (Westmarland 2015).

However, it is not only the prevalence of domestic violence that has received publicity. Statutory service responses have also been exposed to scrutiny, with the recent publication of high profile reports outlining service failures to adequately protect victims and prevent further violence, both generally (HMIC 2014, 2015) and in response to numerous domestic homicides (Home Office 2013, IPCC 2007). While acknowledging that domestic violence service provision has improved significantly over the past 40 years, such reports have heightened calls for an overhaul in how services respond to domestic violence in the UK. Nevertheless, since 2010, consecutive UK governments have radically reduced spending in public and third sector funding. This has meant that both statutory and charitable organisations that deal with domestic violence have had to grapple with significant budgetary cuts, causing a deficit in the services available (Towers and Walby 2012, Ishkanian 2014, Westmarland 2015).

Therefore, this research is situated in the specific context of the UK, where the issue of domestic violence is extensive and proving increasingly topical, and where the practices of service providers are coming under increasing scrutiny and strain in an uncertain political economic climate. These conditions alone emphasise the need for further research into domestic violence in the UK, and provide multiple avenues that may be elucidated and enriched through anthropological enquiry. The need for anthropological research is further heightened by the sparsity of anthropological contributions to the study of domestic violence (McClusky 2001, Brunson 2011, Weis and Haldane 2011, 2015). This is surprising, given the

devastating prevalence and impact of domestic violence, and the special qualities that an anthropological approach, grounded in ethnography, might bring to understandings of the issue. The past few decades have seen a small but growing number of American anthropologists turn their gaze towards domestic and other forms of gender-based violence. Yet, anthropologists in Britain have so far failed to recognise the significant potential of anthropology in the study of domestic violence and its service provision, and conversely the possibility of domestic violence contributing to innovative approaches and theoretical perspectives in anthropology. This two-way potential forms the bedrock of this thesis, and is an issue that I reflect upon implicitly throughout. However, it was my consultations with service providers that led me to focus my specific research plans on Polish women's experiences of domestic violence, as I describe in the following section.

Selecting the Research Topic

The specific research topic of this thesis originated from preliminary consultations I conducted with service providers in the UK in 2012, before I commenced fieldwork. I arranged these consultations because, given the gravity of the subject matter, I wanted my research from its inception to be applied, relevant and of potential 'use' (Singer 1993). I contacted service providers that deal with domestic violence in their everyday roles and asked if there were any issues they were encountering that they felt would benefit from anthropological analysis. Three respondents indicated they were encountering difficulties that related to domestic violence and service delivery in the context of Polish migrant families. Following on from this, I probed further into the salience of these reported difficulties, which included approaching staff members from the organisations that eventually participated in this research.

While different service providers expressed different perspectives, there appeared a common theme: that there was a 'problem' with domestic violence and service provision amongst Polish families, and there was no research in this subject area that organisations could use to inform their policy responses. Below I introduce some of the dimensions of the 'problem' that service providers discussed. I do this not to essentialise Polish migrants'[3] experiences or behaviours, nor service provider perspectives, but to highlight key narratives that featured in the consultation responses, and which contextualise the inception of this research.

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[3] Of course, the term 'migrant' is a problematic and essentialist term in itself, laden with political significance (see for example Khelaifat *et al* 2014, Andersson 2014: 4-8, De Genova 2005, 2013). While recognising the limitations and potentially negative connotations of the phrase, I employ 'migrant' in this thesis literally, for want of a better word, to describe an individual who has moved from one nation state to another. This phrasing also reflects the vocabulary used by research participants.

'Problem Statement'

Representatives of Scottish domestic violence organisations, social services and the police all reported encountering an unprecedented volume of domestic violence cases involving Polish nationals. For some, this appeared disproportionate to the size of the Polish migrant population in the UK, which raised concern that there was more domestic violence occurring amongst Polish families than in families of other ethnic or national origins. Moreover, service providers suggested that Polish cases of domestic violence tended to be more 'complex'. One team of police officers, for example, suggested that the domestic violence they encountered in Polish cases was particularly 'high-risk', and involved elevated levels of substance misuse, physical and sexual violence, and harm.

Beyond the reported extent or nature of domestic violence occurring in Polish families, professionals expressed concern that their service interventions were proving unsuccessful at both adequately managing and reducing the abuse that Polish women and children were experiencing. This was partly attributed to a reported reluctance amongst Polish clients to engage in sustained service provision. However, professionals further explained that their Polish clients presented with additional service needs that complicated their service engagement. Issues cited included individuals presenting with language difference, having little in terms of economic capital or local support networks, or being unfamiliar with domestic violence services and the provisions available. For some service provider respondents, these additional service needs proved hard to identify and accommodate, especially in light of the funding cuts that I described in the previous section.

<p align="center">***</p>

Before proceeding to comment on the specifics of this 'problem statement' it is necessary to contextualise one further dimension for this research: Polish migration to Britain. At the time this research was conducted, Britain remained a member of the European Union (EU).[4] In 2004, the EU underwent its largest population enlargement since its inception, when 10 states joined the Union. Of these 10, eight (Poland, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary and Estonia)[5] were associated with the previous 'Eastern Bloc' of Europe, and with having relatively poorer post-communist economies (Bideleux and Jeffries 2007, Black *et al* 2010, Sumption and Somerville 2010).[6] Collectively, these states

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[4] I return to the issue of 'Brexit' in the addendum to this thesis.

[5] The other two countries that joined the EU in 2004 were Malta and Cyprus. However, these countries were pre-existing members of the Commonwealth, so their residents already had fewer restrictions on their right to enter the UK before 2004, relative to the other eight countries (Gillingham 2010).

[6] Although there is great diversity between these states, the 'Eastern Bloc' is a term generally used to describe countries from Central and Eastern Europe that previously operated under communism, and were either annexed by or considered satellite states of the Soviet Union following the Second World War (Bideleux and Jeffries 2007, Black *et al* 2010).

were known as the 'Accession 8' states, which were eventually joined by two other Eastern European post-communist states, Romania and Bulgaria, in 2007.[7]

Following EU enlargement, an unprecedented number of individuals from these new member countries migrated to the UK and joined its labour market. This equated to the most rapid in-movement of migration ever experienced in Britain (Home Office 2009, ONS 2012, Bauere *et al* 2007). With Poland having by far the largest population of these states, Polish nationals comprised the largest proportion of the new Accession migrants. While Polish migration to the UK has a long history (e.g. Fassmann and Munz 1994, Ziarski-Kernberg 2000, Burrell 2002, Trevena 2009, Zubrzycki 2013, Garapich 2013), since the enlargement of the EU, the population of Polish migrants living in Britain has sharply increased (Fihel *et al* 2009, Pollard *et al* 2008, Trevena 2009). At the time of writing, estimates suggest that there are 831,000 Polish UK residents, which means that Poles now comprise the largest foreign-born population living in Britain (ONS 2016c). Therefore, we can see that a significant and rapid demographic shift in the UK population occurred shortly before my research began where, more than ever before, a substantial number of Polish migrants and nationals from other Central and Eastern European countries were living and working in the UK.

Despite this new and significant population of Polish migrants living in Britain, as the service providers I consulted suggested, no research existed that attended to the issue of domestic violence or related service engagement in the UK in this specific Polish national context. The paucity of research in this area has been highlighted elsewhere by academics, such as Dudley (2014: 15) and Raj and Silverman (2002: 368). This lacuna in knowledge perhaps ties into the dearth of domestic violence scholarship involving ethnic minorities in Britain generally (Yoshihama 2008, Strid *et al* 2013, Thiara and Gill 2010, 2012), although several studies have now been conducted, over the past two decades, amongst ethnic and national groups associated with the post-Commonwealth states (e.g. Mama 1996, Gilbert *et al* 2004, Gill 2004, Parmer *et al* 2005, Izzidien 2008, Anitha 2008, 2010, 2011, Belur 2008, Thiara and Gill 2010, 2012). Regardless, the lack of research in the context of Polish migrants reveals a large and concerning gap in our knowledge and understanding of domestic violence in the UK. This furthered my motivation to select Polish migrant experiences of domestic violence and help seeking as a topic of inquiry for this research – so that this thesis may highlight and begin to address this current dearth in knowledge.

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[7] With the inclusion of Romania and Bulgaria, these Central and Eastern European countries are sometimes collectively referred to as the 'Accession 10' states. I collectively refer to these nations as the 'Accession states' in this thesis.

However, beyond this both the research topic and the problem statement that inspired it generate compelling analytical questions and issues. Is there a disproportionate issue of domestic violence amongst Polish nationals, or a reluctance to engage with services? Are there dynamics in service interactions that are impeding 'successful' interventions? Do Polish women accessing domestic violence services have additional service needs? If so, are they being met? And if not, how and why? Certainly, I do not have the scope in this thesis to give all these questions the comprehensive attention they deserve. However, throughout my analysis I tease out different threads from them, as I attempt to disentangle constellations of significance that may be connected to the problem statement that I have presented here. Yet, before I delineate the specific research questions that this thesis raises and addresses I, perhaps unusually, will first outline what I did not find during fieldwork, to contextualise the theoretical situation and contributions of this text.

The Conceptual Framing of this Thesis

In light of the abovementioned perspectives that arose during service provider consultations, as I began to negotiate fieldwork access and my research focus with participating organisations, it was initially conceived that I would engage with issues of 'cultural competence'. That is, that I would investigate Polish women's 'cultural' experiences of domestic violence and help seeking, and observe service interactions, to produce information that might assist organisations in making their services more accessible or responsive to Polish women. However, in keeping with the multitude of applied anthropological research that criticises culturalist analyses of social problems, such as violence, illness and suffering, my fieldwork experiences emphasised the significance of situational and systemic marginalisation (e.g. Farmer 1996, 2004, 2005, Fassin 2001, Almeida and Dolan-Delvecchio 1990, Kleinman *et al* 1997, Kleinman and Benson 2006, Green 2006). I neither encountered regular breakdowns in communication nor disengagement with services that could be identified as an issue unique to Polish women, or to Polish 'culture'.

Rather, I observed that there were myriad ways in which Polish women's specific migrant status shaped, and at times complicated, their experiences of abuse and service engagement. By migrant status, I mean women's situational, social and legislative positionings, as relatively new Polish migrants living in Edinburgh. Particularly, Polish women's legislative identities proved salient in the context of their encounters with institutions and the wider bureaucratic practices of the British state. This observation parallels the previous work of many anthropologists, who have studied how institutions and their policies can influence social actors, societal boundaries and the construction of social

identities (Wedel *et al* 2005 provide an excellent summary, also Shore and Wright 2005, Shore *et al* 2011).

In light of these fieldwork observations, my analysis in this ethnography focuses on ways in which Polish women's experiences were mediated by their migrant status, which I connect to wider political economic relationships, practices and rationalities. Consequently, this thesis combines two overarching paradigms to inform analysis: a political economic reading of domestic violence, integrated into a consideration of migrant intersectionality. I will proceed to introduce these paradigms briefly here, and will continue to expand and reflect upon this framing as my analysis unfolds in the text.

A Political Economic Approach to Domestic Violence

As I have highlighted so far, anthropological attention to domestic violence remains markedly sparse. However, a key contribution to this field has been Adelman's political economic framing of domestic violence. Adelman first outlined this theoretical approach in her article *The Battering State: Towards a Political Economy of Domestic Violence* (2004), when she highlighted intersections between domestic violence and the political economic organisation of the United States (US), particularly in the context of welfare provision. However, as my writing of this thesis came to a close, Adelman added to her work through the publication of her book *Battering States: The Politics of Domestic Violence in Israel* (2017). In both texts, Adelman argues that domestic violence can be more effectively studied and pragmatically addressed if it is treated as a phenomenon that is connected to the state.

In her recent book, Adelman (2017) uses the context of Israel to present a compelling socio-historical account of domestic violence, and demonstrates how its meaning, manifestation and management is mediated through the practices of the state. Adelman argues that the ways in which a state defines itself - how it defends its borders, and how it organises its economy and legal system – comes to shape domestic violence. In doing so, Adelman's thesis attends to the politics of domestic violence, wherein she views the state as engendering domestic violence, and simultaneously, domestic violence as engendering the state. Adelman's work therefore adopts a multi-scalar consideration of domestic violence, which reflects the importance of context and cultural difference but also the many ways in which the 'political is personal' (*ibid*: 27). In this way, her work highlights how complex national and transnational processes can come to fashion domestic violence, and those who experience it.

Adelman's (2017) analysis has a great deal of salience in the ethnographic context to which I attend in this thesis. However, although I adopt her paradigm in this work, my analysis is distinct from hers in several respects. Firstly, although Adelman does attend to the differential experiences of women with various social identities (including migrant women), she primarily concentrates on the overarching interconnections between the state and intimate-partner violence. In this thesis, conversely, I focus my attention squarely on the previously unexplored experiences of Polish women, and their interactions with the British state amidst domestic violence.[8] Moreover, Adelman conducts her analysis mainly through mapping the 'cultural-historical' context of domestic violence (2004, 2017: 42). While she does draw upon ethnographic examples to inform her arguments, in this thesis I foreground my analysis within ethnography - providing detailed accounts of individual women's experiences and service provider practices, within the localised context of Edinburgh. In Chapter 4, for instance, I attempt to capture the breadth of women's experiences through invoking numerous examples and in Chapter 6 I present detailed vignettes involving two women, in a bid to depict their lived experiences of domestic violence and subsequent service engagement. Finally, although my arguments overlap with Adelman's (2004, 2017) in some respects, my analysis attends both theoretically and topically to different dimensions of governance, given the specific research focus and political economic context that underpins this study.

However, despite the differences in application, the value that Adelman's (2017, 2004) political economic paradigm brings to analysis remains. Namely, it provides an innovative perspective, wherein domestic violence emerges as interconnected to political concerns that are not typically included in discussions about intimate-partner violence. This is particularly pertinent, since there is a tendency in some fields of domestic violence research to focus on individualist analyses. Such a lens poses the risk of overlooking the significance of larger forces in shaping individuals' lives, and can result in abuse being attributed to 'cultures of violence' or victims' 'poor choices' (also Adelman 2017: 187-188, Merry 2003, Wies 2011, Adelman *et al* 2012, Westmarland 2015) – where dysfunction is inscribed onto individual bodies or particular social groups. Therefore, by adopting this specific political economic framework in my analysis, I bring new dimensions to understandings of domestic violence in Britain which challenge individualist perspectives and move beyond the pathologisation of domestic violence.

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[8] However, as I explain in Chapter 3, some aspects of my arguments relate to Polish women's regional, European status, and therefore I incorporate the accounts of women with other European nationalities into analysis where relevant.

Nevertheless, as with any macro-level or multi-scale anthropological analysis there is a risk that, in adopting Adelman's (2017) paradigm, political economic practices or dimensions may be depicted as 'sui generis', or as entirely determining of women's experiences of abuse and help-seeking (Rapport 1997: 41). Moreover, Polish victims of domestic violence and their interactions with the state could easily be homogenised in analysis. In her work, Adelman (2017) evades these risks by tracing the emergence of political economic practices, and emphasises the divergent ways in which women are treated and constituted through their interactions with the state. However, to address these potential issues, I explicitly use intersectionality as a second theoretical paradigm.[9] As I discuss in the following section, I tie the salience of migrant intersectionality to the political economy perspective, through invoking the synecdoche of *borderlands*.

Articulating Migrant Intersectionality

While I expand my discussion on intersectionality in Chapter 2, intersectionality is a paradigm which focuses on multiple, interlocking aspects of individuals' identities, which are analysed within a wider context of intersecting systems of power and oppression (Crenshaw 1991, Mann and Grimes 2001, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005). In this thesis, I interrogate the intersectional dynamics that relate to Polish women's migrant positionings. This migrant intersectionality perspective reveals how women's specific migrant status intersected with abuse and service engagement, to forge individual domestic violence realities. As I proceed to argue in the body of this text, this paradigm permits analysis of both the individual and commonplace marginalisation with which Polish women contended.

As McCall (2005) writes, intersectionality is a useful tool for analysing the complexity of lived experience because it permits the study of constellational issues that affect certain populations of individuals, in all their diversity. This approach, she argues, permits the articulation of salient patterns or processes, yet it also accommodates individual complexities - the messiness and idiosyncrasy of individual experiences, lives and perspectives. In this way, McCall contends, intersectionality proves a valuable methodological paradigm in applied research, because it can be used to highlight ways in

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[9] In this text, I do aim to contextualise the political economic climate in which this research is situated, and identify dominant political rationalities where it proves immediately relevant for analysis. However, it falls beyond the scope of this thesis to trace how these facets were intended, produced and sustained by individuals, beyond those whom feature in this ethnography. Therefore, before proceeding, I should emphasise that I do not view the political economic practices that I attend to as constituting an impersonal and stable societal structuring, exerted deterministically or homogenously onto individuals (Rapport 1997: 41). Indeed, throughout this thesis I highlight both the complexity and multiplicity of women's interactions and experiences, and try to attend to the significance of agency, heterogeneity, uncertainty and arbitrariness in the forging of individuals' domestic violence realities.

which issues configure amongst individuals who share particular 'structural' locations. Therefore, while attending to the polysemantics of individual experience, intersectionality also provides scope for collective, actionable analysis. To exemplify this, she highlights ways in which intersectional analysis has been used to reveal structured inequalities, which in turn has been used to inform policy development and exact social change. This paradigm then, proves particularly significant in the context of the present study, given that it is an applied anthropological investigation into constellational issues encountered by Polish women, as they experienced and sought help for domestic violence.

McCall (2005) argues that intersectionality is well suited to studying the complexity of people's lives, simply because it attends to the significance of multiple, interconnected and complex factors implicated in the ordering of experience. This echoes the benefits of Adelman's (2004, 2017) political economy approach to domestic violence; in both paradigms, there is scope to step away from the commonplace research focus of victim-perpetrator dyads, and instead to incorporate wider, situational factors into analysis. Accordingly, in the body of this text I seek to combine both the political economy and migrant intersectionality paradigms, through invoking the notion of *borderlands.*

As I describe in Chapter 4, borderlands are subject to a growing focus in anthropological research, particularly amongst studies that explore regions and peoples that transcend, or lie proximal to, territorial borders. As Scott (2012) writes, borderlands are regions that accentuate contours and confrontations in the context of the politics of identity, difference and interest (also Alvarez 1995, Donnan and Haller 2000, Van Houtum *et al* 2005, Green 2013). However, in this thesis I adopt a particular reading of borderlands, which I borrow from Anzaldúa (1987). In her seminal literary work, Anzaldúa depicts a borderland as an undetermined place where unnatural boundaries meet - where markers of difference touch, dwell and transform. She uses this metaphor to foreground her prose, which tends to issues of race, language, sexuality and gender in the 'hybridised' context of Mexican migrants living near the American border in Texas.

In this thesis, I use Anzaldúa's (1987) notion of borderlands to encapsulate the significance of migrant intersectionalities, where I equate 'markers of difference' to Polish women's migrant status. Moreover, I extend Anzaldúa's definition of borderlands to make explicit that the unnatural boundaries that feature in my writing relate to and indeed are engendered by nation states, and interrelated political economic practices of statecraft. As my analysis unfolds, it becomes apparent that by conceptually situating Polish women *within the borderlands*, their unique experiences of domestic violence, help seeking and service

engagement are elucidated. Additionally, this paradigm permits analysis of the qualities and nature of the borderlands in which Polish women are emplaced. Thus, this combinative paradigm serves to re-socialise the practices of the British state, underlining its role in the governance of domestic violence, and the migrant women who experience it (*cf.* Adelman 2017).[10]

So far in this chapter I have traced and contextualised both the research topic and the theoretical orientation of this thesis. To summarise: within a political economic, intersectional framing, this thesis examines how Polish women's experiences were mediated by their migrant status as they experienced and sought help for domestic violence in Edinburgh. In the following sections, I delineate the core research questions that this work raises and addresses. I then provide an outline of my thesis structure, and close this introduction by highlighting the unique contributions of this text.

Research Questions

This thesis addresses the following research questions:
- What can anthropological analysis bring to current understandings of domestic violence and service engagement, in both theoretical and applied ways?
- What are the methodological challenges and benefits of researching domestic violence from an anthropological perspective?
- How does Polish women's migrant status intersect with their individual experiences of domestic violence and service interactions?
- How are these experiences shaped by political economic factors?
- What does the political economic regulation of Polish migrant women tell us about their relationship to the British state, and their political subjectivities?

Thesis Overview

This thesis is organised into a series of interrelated chapters. Each makes an original scholarly contribution and collectively the chapters provide a response to the research questions posed above. Chapter 2 introduces key literature that informs this thesis. It traces developments in the phenomenology of domestic violence, since it emerged as a key issue within the feminist violence against women movement. Particularly, it attends to emergent debates about understanding, representing and responding to women's differential

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[10] As the title of this thesis suggests, I conceptually situate my study of domestic violence and political economic practices within the *British borderlands*. This is because, although this research took place in Scotland (which at the time of fieldwork had a semi-autonomous, devolved government), the political economic practices I attend to in this text relate to governance implemented by the centralised British Government.

experiences of abuse. The paradigm of intersectionality is discussed in this context and I reflect upon how the rising popularity of this framing has affected domestic violence research and professional practice in the UK. I then turn to review literature that attends to domestic violence in Poland, and to Polish migrant service engagement more broadly in Britain. I close this chapter by reflecting upon the epistemological and methodological insights that anthropological scholarship both does and might offer to the study of domestic violence.

In Chapter 3 I present the research methodology adopted in this doctoral research. I reflect upon the methodological challenges of researching domestic violence, and the ways in which ethnography has contributed to and shaped my analysis. I describe the methods I used for data collection and introduce the different field sites in which I conducted this multi-sited ethnography. I then discuss this project's orientation towards an applied, feminist anthropology, and describe the ways in which this orientation has intertwined with ethical and practical methodological complexities, to form the knowledge this thesis has produced.

Chapters 4 through 7 comprise my main results chapters, wherein I ethnographically attend to women's individual experiences of abuse and service engagement, and to service provider practices. Each chapter addresses a distinct subject and draws on particular theoretical ideas and literature. I highlight overarching themes in my analysis – intersectionality, liminality and precarity - which I build upon as my thesis progresses.

In Chapter 4 I explore women's encounters with the UK border, and the boundaries it engendered, as they experienced domestic violence and engaged with services. This chapter demonstrates the differentiating yet indeterminate effects of political economic forces and migrant intersectionalities in shaping women's experiences of abuse, their help-seeking options, and their interactions with service providers. Chapter 5 examines the extrinsic construction and categorisation of Polish ethnicity, across both national and local fields. In this chapter I argue that Polish women's ethnic categorisation influenced the supports available to them, contending that their 'in-between' ethnic minority status inhibited the financing and execution of targeted service provision. This analysis emphasises the significance of legislative categories and the wider political economic practices of the state in forging responses to domestic violence.

I continue my attention to legislative identities in Chapters 6 and 7, where I focus on the issue of Polish women's statutory categorisation as European migrants in the context of welfare support. In Chapter 6 I demonstrate the difficulties that some Polish women experiencing domestic violence encountered as they attempted to access or retain social

securities and protection from the state. I do this by presenting detailed vignettes featuring two women, to capture the lived experiences of their welfare encounters, and reflect upon the additional difficulties and vulnerabilities that such encounters can engender. While I use Chapter 6 to reflect upon the immediate, practical and existential implications of British migrant welfare policies, in Chapter 7 I 'study up' from this analysis, to explore interconnections between the local context and non-local systems of state power. Principally, I attend to neoliberal, nationalistic and sovereign rationalities embedded in the political economic regulation of Polish women, through the site of welfare entitlement. I close this chapter by reflecting upon the implications of welfare practices for Polish women experiencing domestic violence, emphasising Polish women's precarious legal subjectivities and their liminal membership of the British state.

Lastly, in Chapter 8 I provide a summary of the key arguments and contributions of this thesis. I weave together my analysis to highlight how the body of this text has responded to the research questions posed in this introductory chapter. Moreover, I reflect upon the ways in which my analysis has informed dimensions of the problem statement, which first instigated this thesis' research topic. I discuss the theoretical and applied implications of this research, and reiterate the value of anthropological contributions to the study of domestic violence. The thesis ends with a short addendum, which discusses political economic developments that have occurred since I completed my fieldwork. Particularly, I discuss the uncertain implications of 'Brexit' for European migrant women, and highlight the need for further political economic research into areas that relate to gender-based violence.

Situating the Contributions of this Text

As a standalone text, this thesis makes a contribution to an unchartered area of scholarship in the anthropology of Britain: namely, the anthropological study of domestic violence in the UK. Across all disciplines, this thesis attends to an unexplored subject in domestic violence research - investigating Polish migrant women's experiences of domestic violence and service engagement. Moreover, in this work, I employ a distinct application of Adelman's (2004, 2017) political economy approach which I pair with intersectional analysis through the paradigm of *borderlands*. Accordingly, this thesis could be used to inform future works that are situated in both political economic and intersectional fields. Yet, within the body of this text I also contribute to other discourses in anthropology. As I have indicated in this introduction, my substantive ethnographic chapters (4-7) attend to ways in which the UK border, ethnic categorisation and welfare legislation shaped Polish women's experiences and subjectivities. Consequently, my work also contributes towards larger discourses in

political, legal and applied anthropology, which I reflect upon throughout my analysis and tie together in my concluding remarks in Chapter 8.

2. Domestic Violence, Intersectionality and Anthropology

In three sections, this chapter introduces key literature and perspectives that inform this thesis. In the first section, I trace developments in the phenomenology of domestic violence since it emerged as a key issue within the feminist violence against women movement. Predominantly, I attend to the problematisation of difference: to issues that relate to the accommodation and representation of heterogeneity within domestic violence discourse. In doing so, I engage with literature across a variety of disciplines, weaving together various debates, perspectives and concerns, and describe how these have affected domestic violence research, understandings and practice. I cite literature that highlights the importance of attending to individual, social and geographic contexts in domestic violence research - specificities that are understood to shape expressions and experiences of abuse, as well as subsequent service interactions. In the UK and US, this body of literature centres on the differential complexities and oppressions that ethnic minority and migrant women encounter, and is most commonly foregrounded within the paradigm of intersectionality.[11] To close this section, I reflect upon the practical and theoretical implications of intersectionality in the context of domestic violence, particularly in relation to ethnic minority women.

In the second section I relate perspectives on intersectionality to literature that attends to domestic violence in both Polish and Polish migrant contexts. I provide a brief overview of domestic violence and service engagement in Poland, which research connects to the influence of the Polish Catholic Church and the country's recent political economic history. I then present the exiguous research that attends to Polish migrants, service engagement and domestic violence in the UK. Although I refer to anthropological works throughout this chapter, in the final section I focus on anthropology's potential to contribute to domestic violence research. Through surveying existent anthropological works and sub-disciplines, I reflect upon the epistemological and methodological insights that anthropology both does and might offer. I conclude this chapter by arguing that anthropology provides many

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[11] As I discuss in Chapter 5, 'ethnic minority' is a problematic and ambiguous phrase. However, for now, I will proceed to adopt the vocabulary used in the literature I discuss here, wherein ethnic minority typically refers to 'non-majority' ethnic groups/identities, situated within a given population where a statistical 'majority' ethnic identity is identifiable. Hereafter, I include migrant women within ethnic minority terminology, unless I explicitly express otherwise.

avenues that could be used to enrich intersectional domestic violence research and inform policy responses, both generally and in the context of the present study.

Feminism, Domestic Violence and Difference

Domestic violence, in the form of men abusing their female intimate-partners, features throughout history (see e.g. Pomeroy 2007, Clark 2011, Butler 2007 and Lentz 1999). However, it garnered greater public attention with the rise of feminist scholarship and activism in the 1960s and 70s, which highlighted and challenged the extensive issue of male violence against women (Dobash and Dobash 2003, Nixon and Humphreys 2010, Yllö and Bograd 1988). During this time, feminist scholars rejected what they saw to be a societal tolerance and ambivalence towards everyday violence against women, and presented it instead as an immoral, unacceptable and preventable phenomenon. Violence against women (including domestic violence) was thus reframed – to be a result of patriarchal attitudes, institutions and gendered power differentials, which foster structured and socialised gender inequality (Brownmiller 1975, Kelly 1988, Dobash and Dobash 1979, 1992, 2003).

Therefore, through feminist discourse, violence against women emerged as an issue that was attributed as being both a cause and consequence of women's inequality: a mechanism through which men established and perpetuated patriarchal control. Feminists pressed the primacy of gender in both the structuring and experience of this inequality, placing emphasis on the ubiquitousness of patriarchal violence, and the commonality of abused and oppressed women's experiences worldwide (Dobash and Dobash 2003). This feminist discourse forged a strong international movement, which was acutely influential in exposing the issue of violence against women, campaigning for change, and galvanising resolutive action (Sokoloff and Dupont 2005: 41, Wies and Haldane 2011: 4, Dulmus *et al* 2004, Nixon and Humphreys 2010).

Developing Understandings of Domestic Violence
Consequently, feminist scholarship and activism has been attributed with both challenging and transforming understandings of domestic violence. Rejecting paradigms that blame or pathologise victims for the abuse they experience, feminists have redefined domestic violence as a gendered phenomenon, engendered by men attempting to establish power and control over their partners (Johnson and Ferraro 2000). More recently, feminist perspectives have worked to expand conceptualisations of domestic violence, detracting focus exclusively from physical violence by highlighting the devastating harm that non-

physically abusive behaviours can cause (Barnish 2004: 6, Westmarland 2015: 6). Contemporary works on domestic violence have built on feminist paradigms, and nuanced understandings of the interpersonal dynamics involved have been developed. For example, Stark's (1995, 2007) distinguished domestic violence work on 'coercive control' outlines a range of tactics men may use to impose their will in heterosexual relationships, which draw upon social norms of masculinity and femininity. Through feminist discourses then, domestic violence has emerged as a harmful wrongdoing – a crime of 'liberty' first and foremost. Amongst feminist audiences, the term is now used to describe patterned intimidating, degrading and regulatory practices which ground fear and threat in everyday life, with or without the presence of violence (Stark 2007, Westmarland 2015). Current perspectives understand domestic violence to inhibit victim's 'life space' (Lundgren 2004), or 'space for action' (Kelly 2007) but still emphasises victims' agency - their ability to resist and challenge violence in myriad ways.

Feminist Influences in Policy and Practice

From the 1990s onwards, both the feminist agenda and its explanatory model of violence against women has been adopted by some of the world's most powerful institutions, such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). In 1993, the UN's General Assembly (1993) explicitly identified violence against women as being a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, and a mechanism by which women are constrained to subordinate positions. In the same year, the UN's World Conference on Human Rights focused on the historical disregard of women's unequal enjoyment of human rights, and reframed gender-based violence - inclusive of domestic violence - as a central human rights issue. Since then, these transnational organisations have consistently reinforced this discourse (Thomas and Beasley 1993, Richters *et al* 1994, Dudley 2014, Westmarland 2015: xiii). As a result, it has become mainstream for discussions about domestic violence to be situated within human rights frameworks - an issue I return to in Chapter 7.

Today in the UK, the feminist perspective underpins a great deal of institutional policies and responses to domestic violence (Greenan 2004). At a national level, Scotland adopts a feminist analysis of domestic violence (Orr 2007). Furthermore, recent reforms in England and Wales have seen the incorporation of Stark's (2007) gendered concept of coercive control into the statutory definition of domestic violence and criminal justice frameworks. Influential third-sector domestic violence organisations, such as Women's Aid and Refuge, additionally strongly identify as feminist. This ethos is also adopted by their many member

organisations across the country that provide support to those affected by abuse, such as the two domestic violence charities which comprise key ethnographic sites in this research.

In sum, the feminist perspective on domestic violence has burgeoned over the past 50 years, and its core, gendered understanding of domestic violence continues to strongly influence institutional responses to the issue, both globally and nationally. Yet, this mainstream feminist paradigm has not gone uncontested. As I will discuss in the following section, feminism has been criticised for its monolithic representation of domestic violence, which fails to account for the different contexts in which it occurs and is experienced.

Challenges to Mainstream Feminist Discourse

Despite its successes in raising awareness and transforming understandings of domestic violence, the feminist perspective has been criticised for essentialising both the phenomenon and the women that experience it. Authors have argued that domestic violence does not occur homogenously, and that its incidence varies across geographical, social and individual contexts - something that the patriarchal explanatory model cannot account for alone (e.g. Johnson and Ferraro 2000, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005). For example: the patriarchy thesis has been reprehended for its inability to explain why some men commit domestic violence while others from the same society or social group do not; nor does it account for female aggression towards male partners, or for domestic violence in LGBT relationships (Renzetti 1994, 1998, Johnson 1995, 2006, Dutton and Nicholls 2005).

In response to the theoretical limitations of the patriarchal account of domestic violence, a multitude of additional (and/or oppositional) theories have developed over the past 25 years. This includes proposed 'typologies' of domestic violence, which recognise that domestic violence can occur and manifest variously (Johnson and Ferraro 2000). Johnson's (1995, 2008) typologies are the most prominent, and include: situational common couple violence, violent resistance (self-defence) and intimate terrorism. Johnson's works highlight that individuals in relationships can be violent or abusive to one another in contexts beyond the uni-directional, systematic and controlling manner that the feminist perspective of domestic violence outlines. Johnson's typology 'intimate terrorism' however, closely fits the feminist paradigm of domestic violence. Therefore, he argues that his typologies serve to expand understanding of the different forms of violence that can occur in intimate-partner relationships, rather than to denigrate feminist domestic violence scholarship altogether (Johnson 2005, 2011, Johnson and Ferraro 2000).

Yet, with claims of a patriarchy thesis being unable to account for why some men are violent while others are not, various ecological, psychological and evolutionary perspectives have attempted to identify causative factors of domestic violence (see e.g. Dutton 1995, Cunningham *et al* 1998, Heise 1998, West and George 1999, Mauricio and Gormley 2001). Within these works, individual developmental, situational and personality theories are often cited to explain why a particular person becomes abusive to their partner. Analysis often highlights factors such as poor mental health, stress, personality disorders, substance misuse, low self-esteem, or the abuser having experienced disruption, domestic violence or trauma in childhood. While proponents of the patriarchal model do not refute the salience of all of these factors, they warn of the risk of drawing false conclusions, by mistakenly conflating correlation and cause. Ingala Smith (2004), for example, discusses how individually-oriented explanations let both men and society 'off the hook' by providing excuses that ignore the predominance of patriarchy in socio-cultural contexts, and conceal an overarching pattern of men committing violence against women (*cf.* Westmarland 2015: 56). Although feminism and other explanations of domestic violence may appear oppositional, there are diverse shades of opinion within each paradigm. In recent years, some domestic violence perspectives and interventions have moved towards integrated, multi-dimensional understandings of the phenomenon, recognising that no single theory alone can sufficiently account for domestic violence (see Cunningham *et al* 1998, Heise 1998, Mauricio and Gormley 2001, Schumacher *et al* 2001).

However, there has also been a great deal of contestation about the depiction of domestic violence within mainstream feminist discourse. Criticism has focused upon the paradigm's inattention to differences in the manifestation of domestic violence, and the primacy of a certain vision of gender in shaping individuals' domestic violence realities. As Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) note, the feminist movement strategically mobilised a grand narrative of domestic violence (and violence against women more widely) as it campaigned for widespread awareness, change and justice. However, in the process, women's experiences of abuse were homogenised. Accordingly, as the feminist domestic violence movement has progressed, it has had to grapple with the complexities of polyvocality and representation: issues which have arisen with the coextensive ascent of postcolonial critique and academia's postmodernist turn towards the epistemology of lived experience (Fraser and Nicholson 1994). Consequently, academics and activists alike have pressed for further exploration into the relationship between context, domestic violence and victimisation experience. This has resulted in the emergence of a diverse literature, which emphasises the divergent individual experiences of abused women. Worthy of note are works from a variety of feminist scholars that recognise the plurality of meaning, perception and

interpretation (Barrett 1987, Bordo 1990, Lugones 1991, Harding 1991, Gordon 1991, Crosby 1992, Hewitt 1992, Waits 1998, Hearns 2009).

Yet, perhaps the most fundamental problematisation of essentialist feminist discourse has been its failure to acknowledge and give voice to the varying subjective experiences of abused women in different ethnic, cultural, racial and global contexts (e.g. Richie 1996, 2000, Ristock 2002, Raj and Silverman 2002, Ellsberg and Heise 2005: 140). With feminism traditionally being devised and disseminated by white, heterosexual, American and European middle-class women – calls have subsequently been made for more reflexive, reflective and 'decolonised' feminist perspectives (Fraser and Nicholson 1994, Nixon and Humphreys 2010). In response to these calls different schools of feminism have emerged, which include black feminist and anti-racist movements. These movements have established a strong tradition of activism and academic research that challenge both the practice and theory of mainstream feminism, critiquing the feminist rhetoric of 'collective victimhood' and its focus on the primacy of gender in the ordering of experience. Scholars argued that such an approach ignores the fundamental experiential and structural differences that exist between ethnic minority and white majority women, and between women living in 'first' and 'third' world countries (e.g. Bograd 1999, Raj and Silverman 2002, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005, Thiara and Gill 2010: 42). Resultantly, an array literature has emerged that explores the different cultural, situational and structural conditions in which domestic violence occurs and is experienced.

Divergence in Domestic Violence: Culture, Ethnicity, Race and Class

While it is clear that domestic violence is a prevalent and critical global issue, research has pointed to variation in its incidence across the world. Although the identification of regional and social trends in domestic violence remains methodologically problematic, several studies have found that women in some contexts are exposed to differential violence, both in terms of prevalence and form (WHO 2002, Watts and Zimmerman 2002, García-Moreno *et al* 2005, Westmarland 2015: 10). Research that attempts to explain this variation has drawn upon a range of situational, sociological and cultural influences. Academics such as Walby and Myhill (2001) for example, have found interlinkages between several factors and an increased risk of abuse - such as a woman's age, socioeconomic status, poverty, relative geographic or social isolation, and unemployment (also Walby *et al* 2004). Research has also drawn upon other sociological factors that increase the likelihood or commonality of domestic violence. These include poor criminal justice responses to violence against women, and polarised, conservative and inequitable gender roles, especially in societies

where the statuses of women are in transition, or where violence has been normalised through political instability and war (Heise 1998, Jewkes 2002, García-Moreno *et al* 2005).

With the identification of societal and social factors being significant in the shaping of domestic violence, the role of culture has come to the fore in attempts to explain divergence in abuse manifestation (Merry 2003, 2008, Dasgupta 1998). Social scientists have highlighted that, despite the influence of international definitions and values disseminated by global institutions, notions of what domestic violence 'is' - its acceptability, and what behaviours constitute abusive acts - remain localised and socially informed (Merry 2009, Yoshihama 1999, Tang 1994, Bennett *et al* 2011, Bui and Morash 1999 are excellent examples). A key theme that has emerged from this area of literature is that while some women may acknowledge or define their partner's behaviours to be abusive, others, in other contexts, would not (Sokoloff and Dupont 2005, Raj and Silverman 2002). In her research with South Asian women in England for example, Gill (2004) describes that some of her participants acknowledged that their husbands' physical violence constituted 'abuse' but they did not necessarily define their experiences as domestic violence. This was because they did not believe that their husbands thought their actions to be harmful or wrong - a sentiment that Gill attributes to a 'subculture of tolerance' for violence against women. Drawing on examples such as Gill's, researchers discuss the idea of 'culturally-sanctioned' violence against women, where violence is deemed legitimate if it is congruent with localised behaviours, norms and beliefs (Merry 2009, Vandello and Cohen 2003, Fernández 2006).

Implicit in the idea of culturally sanctioned violence is the suggestion that some cultural contexts are more conducive to domestic violence than others; with an increased tolerance to abuse comes increased prevalence. However, authors have rightly warned that caution must be exercised when discussing culture in relation to domestic violence. Feminist scholars have argued that culture should not be confused with patriarchy, and that focus should turn to how patriarchy operates *within* different cultures, rather than focusing on culture in isolation (Dasgupta 1998, Almeida and Dolan-Delvecchio 1999, Baker *et al* 1999).

Yet, it is anthropologists working within the field of domestic violence who have come to the fore of the 'culture' debate. In line with the manifold of anthropological literature that critiques the concept of culture and its sole significance in the ordering of experience, beliefs and behaviours (e.g. Fox and King 2002) - anthropologists researching domestic violence have challenged culturalist explanations of abuse. Merry (2003) for example, has written extensively on the 'demonization' of culture in the context of domestic violence discourse, wherein she argues that culture is often erroneously depicted to be a static, coherent,

homogenous, and consensual whole. When culture is mobilised in this form, she claims, 'cultural difference' becomes reified and deterministic, and subject to ethnocentric, moral judgements of 'inferiority' and 'backwardness'. Moreover, Merry emphasises that culturalist approaches problematically focus on the harmful effects of 'beliefs and values', and overlook the potential for 'culture' to harbour protective and supportive dimensions (also Merry 2001, 2006, 2008, 2009, Dasgupta and Warrier 1996, Kantor *et al* 1994, Adelman *et al* 2012).

Nevertheless, the focus on social and cultural factors in the shaping of domestic violence has led to research on abuse prevalence *within* nations, between 'subcultures' or different social groups in society. Initially, a great deal of scholarship in this area focused on differences across racial categories – e.g. black-white differences in incidence in the US (Crenshaw 1991). Victimisation research has since expanded to include the study of ethnicity, migrant women and minority groups. The evidence emanating from this area of literature has been conflicting (Raj and Silverman 2002). Data from New York and London, for example, indicate that ethnic minority women are disproportionately represented as domestic violence homicide victims (Frye *et al* 2000, Richards 2003). Other studies have additionally found that some specific ethnic minorities are more vulnerable to experiencing domestic violence than others (Morgan and Chadwick 2009, O'Donnell *et al* 2002, Mouzos and Makkai 2004).

However, large-scale quantitative research suggests that when socioeconomic and other demographical factors are controlled for, the relationship between race or ethnicity and domestic violence mostly disappears (Schumacher *et al* 2001, Walby and Myhill 2001, Jewkes 2002, Tjaden and Thoennes 2000). For example, crime analysis in the UK concludes that the risk of victimisation for women does not differ significantly by ethnic identity (Walby *et al* 2004). This is not to say that these quantitative studies are not problematic; in line with concerns raised about the inaccuracy of ethnicity data in domestic violence statistics (Raj and Silverman 2002, Anitha 2011), I critique the UK's use of ethnic categories in Chapter 5 of this thesis. Nonetheless, this intra-national research investigating differential rates of domestic violence challenges the perception that some ethnic or socio-cultural contexts are more *culturally* disposed than others to violence against women. As Merry (2003) argues in her critique of culturalist explanations of abuse, political economic factors connected to issues of poverty, class or structural inequality may prove more significant in the engendering of domestic violence. This is an area of domestic violence research that to date remains relatively under-explored (Johnson and Ferraro 2000, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005: 40). Regardless, anti-racist and black feminist voices, among many others, have argued that we must look beyond the statistical manifestation of domestic

violence to understand the additional complexities that women of colour, migrant women, and women from different or non-majority ethnic backgrounds must contend with when they experience abuse (Crenshaw 1991, Thiara and Gill 2010). As I will present in the following section, a great deal of these complexities relate to the additional obstacles that women may encounter when they seek to *address* domestic violence, and engage with services.

Ethnic Minority Women and Domestic Violence Service Engagement

A large body of research now exists that explores the differential opportunities and obstacles that migrant women, and women with different ethnic and racial identities, may experience when seeking help for domestic violence. Although much of this work has been conducted in discrete contexts, several authors have identified commonalities across ethnic minority and migrant women's experiences, in both the UK and the US. In identifying such commonalities these authors purport not to undermine the heterogeneity of experience, nor the multiplicity of potential help-seeking outcomes, but to identify salient situational factors that may expedite targeted policy development and responses (e.g. Erez *et al* 2009, Raj and Silverman 2002, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005, Menjívar and Salcido 2002). I will describe the prevailing points presented in this body of literature below, before reflecting upon the theoretical articulation and implications of this work in the following section.

In much of the domestic violence help-seeking literature involving ethnic minorities focus again turns to personal beliefs, social contexts, and cultural and religious norms, which are presented as deterrents to women - from disclosing abuse, contacting formalised services, and leaving violent relationships. For example, Thiara and Gill (2010) note ethnic minority victims of domestic violence must contend with powerful individual, cultural and religious conflicts when deciding whether or how to address the abuse they experience (also Raj and Silverman 2002, Renzetti and Lee 1993, Gill 2004). Additionally, ethnic minority women may fail to receive social validation that names their experience as domestic violence and, even in cases where victimisation is recognised, women may face censure, dishonour or rejection if they choose to leave their partners or engage with services. This includes being subject to chastisement for drawing negative attention to their 'communities' (Gill 2004, Erez 2000, 2002, Belur 2008, Thiara and Gill 2010, Lee 2000, Gilbert *et al* 2004). Therefore, this literature stresses that for some victims, disclosing domestic violence or leaving an abusive partner may not be considered a viable option, because of personal convictions or the social stigmatisation that might ensue (Menjívar and Salcido 2002, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005, Erez *et al* 2009).

However, paralleling her critique of culturalist explanations of domestic violence, Merry (2009) warns that all too often culture is hastily blamed for failed domestic abuse service uptake amongst minority communities in particular, which serves to exoticise and 'other' the issue (also Snajdr 2007, Adelman 2017). As Volpp (2005) argues, in domestic violence cases involving minority groups, culture tends to be afforded a stronger explanatory power than in cases involving white 'majority' women - thus, individual motivations are overlooked and entire groups are stereotyped.[12] Indeed, collective studies have emphasised that ethnic minority women report facing personal difficulties that feature across mainstream domestic violence literature: citing concerns about breaking up their family, still loving their partner, feeling ashamed, blaming themselves for the violence, or harbouring hopes that the abuse will end and the relationship will improve (Menjívar and Salcido 2002, Kearney 2001, Burke *et al* 2001, WHO 2002).

Yet, a prevailing theme in the help-seeking literature is the structural oppression and marginalisation that ethnic minority women experience, and the additional difficulties and violence that this can engender. As Sokoloff and Dupont describe,

> *The lack of adequate institutional support…and coercive controls by the state and its agencies is another level of violence experienced by battered women, which occur in ways that are racialized as well as gendered and classed* (2005: 44).

Authors have identified that women from socioeconomically marginalised ethnic groups disproportionately encounter issues such as poverty, limited employment opportunities and low educational attainment – all of which may result in financial dependence upon an abusive partner, and which can add to the difficulty of leaving a violent relationship and living independently (Coker 2000, Erez 2000, 2002, Erez *et al* 2009, Raj and Silverman 2002, Malley-Morrison and Hines 2007).

Research has also highlighted that ethnic minority women can both fear and encounter negative service responses when engaging with agencies in the context of domestic violence. Beyond Anitha's (2008, 2011) observation that inadequate welfare provision compounds women's structural marginalisation – an issue I return to in Chapters 6 and 7 - several authors have documented agencies' discriminatory practices, based on prejudicial

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[12] Accordingly, Vertovec (2011) notes the tendency for migrants' cultures to be presented as objects of political concern, discordant with imagined notions of cohesive national or majority cultures. He contends that the migrant family – replete with stereotypes of arranged marriage, patriarchy and domestic violence – comprises one of the most prevailing representations invoked in debates about cultural difference today. Therefore, when it comes to discussing domestic violence amongst migrant families, Vertovec concludes that the explanatory power of culture has become 'all too utterable' (Strathern 1995: 16), or 'loose on the streets' (Wikan 1999: 57).

stereotypes. An often-cited example of this involves practitioners having preconceived ideas about the commonness or acceptance of domestic violence in certain social groups, and consequently feeling less compelled to intervene (Volpp 2005, Crenshaw 1991, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005, Dutton *et al* 2000). Richie (1996, 2000) additionally describes how such negative stereotyping can result in fears of over (rather than under) reaction. She presents African American women's concerns about the racism, criminalisation and violence that their partners may be subject to, should they report their abuse to the police. This is an issue that remains strikingly relevant today with reports of ongoing, racialised police brutality, sparking the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Several works have also focused on the additional issues that migrant women specifically encounter, when both experiencing and attempting to address domestic violence. This body of literature argues that, while there is no 'generic battered immigrant woman' (Sokoloff 2008: 251, also Khelaifat *et al* 2014), migration shapes women's access to resources, their understanding of domestic violence, and possible responses to it (Erez *et al* 2009). Some studies indicate that collectively, migrant victims of domestic violence are less likely than non-migrant women to seek both informal and formal means of help (Bauer *et al* 2000, Dutton *et al* 2000, Tjaden and Thoennes 2000, Menjívar and Salcido 2002). This disparity in help-seeking has been connected to structural and socioeconomic marginalisation as outlined above, but also to additional barriers that women may encounter when attempting to access services, as a result of their situational or legal migrant status (Erez *et al* 2009, Adelman and Salcido 2004, Raj and Silverman 2002, Menjívar and Salcido 2002).

Raj and Silverman (2002) assert that migrant women, especially recently-migrated women, experiencing domestic violence may be particularly isolated and have no informal support network to turn to for assistance. As newcomers to a country, migrant women may also be unaware of the various services available to them or laws that might protect them when they experience domestic violence (Bauer *et al* 2000, Malley-Morrison and Hines 2007, Salcido and Adelman 2004). These issues can be further compounded by women's inability to speak the language native to their country of residence; 'language barriers' have been noted as a primary reason why many migrant women do not seek formal service assistance for abuse (Bauer *et al*, 2000, Dutton *et al* 2000, Tran and Des Jardins 2000, Erez *et al* 2009). Interconnected issues related to language include women being unable to access appropriate translators, or services in their own language (e.g. Belur 2008, Gill 2004, Thiara and Gill 2010, Anitha 2011).

Migrant women's legal status, immigration policies and the policing of immigration are also understood to shape marital dynamics, and complicate engagement with services (Erez *et al* 2009, Raj and Silverman 2002, Menjívar and Salcido 2002). For women that have an insecure immigration status, they may (rightly) fear that contacting services or leaving their partners will result in deportation, or jeopardise their visa or citizenship applications. Even if their immigration status is secure, as Anitha (2011) and Orloff and Kaguyutan (2002) note, non-citizen migrant women are often afforded fewer legal rights, which decreases the support and protection that agencies can offer, further jeopardising women's safety. This is an issue I discuss at length in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

Collectively, the situational difficulties that migrant women face are described as both exacerbating and shaping the abuse they experience. As Abraham describes (2000), perpetrators of domestic violence may be aware of the additional obstacles that their migrant partners may experience when attempting to engage with services, and exploit this to exert further control and abuse. Raj and Silverman (2002) call this 'immigrant-related abuse' and highlight certain tactics that perpetrators may use, such as: playing on a woman's insecurities that relate to her migrant status, preventing her from meeting her immigration requirements, prohibiting her from learning the local language, and destroying or withholding important immigration documents (also Anitha 2011, Loke 1996, Erez *et al* 2009, Jang 1994, Orloff and Kaguyutan 2002). Thus, several scholars have concluded that the social, economic and legal contexts in which migrant women are situated can produce obstacles to addressing domestic violence, and increase migrant women's vulnerability to abuse and harm (e.g. Merry 2009: 2, Poinasamy 2011, Raj and Silverman 2002: 367).

Therefore, we can see from the help-seeking literature on ethnic minorities and migrants, how racism, inequality, exclusion, class and constructs of culture, alongside gender, can interact to shape women's experience of violence, and constrain their opportunities to address it. These differential dynamics reaffirm the importance of attending to heterogeneity in domestic violence discourse; they emphasise that not all women within society are equal, nor do they have the same access to safety and freedom, or the resources to leave a context of violence (Westmarland 2015: xiv). In the context of ethnic minority women, scholars equate women's divergent experiences to the additional borders of exclusion (Somers 2008: 26) or multiple oppressions with which they must contend - because of their ethnic, cultural, class and migrant identities and positionings. While this literature is salient for considering the differential adversities that women in certain contexts may encounter, its attention to commonality potentially conflicts with the epistemology of lived experience and the deconstruction of grand narratives, which feminists and activists have pushed for in

recent decades. In the following section, I will discuss how scholars have attempted to approach and articulate these commonalities, through the paradigm of intersectionality.

Intersectionality in Theory and in Practice

As I described in the previous section, there is now a growing body of academic work that attends to the divergent obstacles and oppressions that ethnic minority women encounter when experiencing and seeking help for domestic violence. Contemporarily, these issues are most often foregrounded within the paradigm of intersectionality: a term originally coined by Crenshaw (1991) to frame the various ways in which race and gender intersect in women of colour's experiences of violence.[13] This paradigm focuses on the 'simultaneous, multiple and interlocking' oppressions (Mann and Grimes 2001: 8) implicit in the forging of individuals' domestic violence realities, which are grounded in specific social contexts. Intersectional theorists then, understand that social contexts are in part created by 'intersections of systems of power (e.g. race, class, gender, and sexual orientation) and oppression (e.g. prejudice, class stratification, gender inequality, and heterosexist bias)' (Sokoloff and Dupont 2005: 43, also McCall 2005).[14]

Sokoloff and Dupont stress that within intersectional approaches, 'no dimension, such as gender inequality, is privileged in explaining domestic violence' (2005: 43). Importantly, this means that gender inequality is modified by its intersection with other systems of power and oppression (Bograd 1999). Thus, individuals' experiences, forged through their social identity and societal positioning, are understood to be *constitutive* (Davis 2008). For researchers applying this paradigm, this means multiple oppressions that exist within participants' lives cannot be analysed separately (Yuval-Davis 2006: 195). In concurrence with this, Thiara (2005) adds that intersectional approaches should be used to move analysis away from additive perspectives, which can unhelpfully construe 'hierarchies of oppression'.

However, since its inception intersectionality has been interpreted as a paradigm and utilised in various ways by researchers, which has created some inconsistency and ambiguity in its

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[13] Mann (2000) identifies several similar approaches that attend to race, class and gender in perspectives on violence against women, including 'integrative feminism', 'women of colour', 'multicultural' or 'multiracial' perspectives. Regardless of the applied appellation, the author notes that these approaches similarly attend to intersectional issues of race, class and gender: 'by any of these names, its focus on multiple oppressions and difference has been its hallmark' (*ibid*: 477).

[14] Of course, these are not the only systems of oppression or discrimination that women have to contend with. For example, there is a growing literature on the issues that disabled women encounter when experiencing domestic violence, as well as women with different sexualities or religious beliefs - the latter of which I have only touched on in this chapter (Ellis *et al* 2011, Thiara *et al* 2011, Lutz *et al* 2011).

application (Phoenix and Pattynama 2006). In some instances, there remains a noted tension: between representing polyvocality and the diversity of experience, while still attending to the significance of shared socio-cultural or structural differences in the shaping of women's experiences (*ibid*, Nixon and Humphreys 2010). Authors such as Mann and Grimes (2001), Collins (1998) and McCall (2005) attempt to mitigate this tension, by advocating approaches that emphasise both individual and structural analyses of marginalisation and inequality. In doing so, such approaches recognise the importance of attending to lived experience, but also reveal and examine existing systems of power that can reproduce domination and privilege.

Theorists such as Bradley (2011) therefore, claim that intersectionality permits analysis of the complexity of ethnic minority women's experiences of abuse, without recourse to essentialism or stereotyping; as individuals within 'ethnic groups' have multi-dimensional social identities and positionings, these will uniquely alter their intersectional experiences and their situated 'space for action' (Kelly 2007). As I suggested in the introduction of this text, given the insights that the intersectional perspective offers to domestic violence research, I incorporate this lens into my analysis. That is, in this thesis, I ethnographically interrogate intersectional dynamics that relate to Polish women's migrant positionings and experiences, in the context of domestic violence.

To close this section I will briefly discuss the implications of intersectionality in relation to the practices of domestic violence service providers. With the increasing salience of intersectionality theory within British institutions in recent years, domestic violence services have been compelled to be cognisant of and responsive to the additional complexities that women may encounter when experiencing and seeking help for abuse (Parmer *et al* 2005, Gill 2005, Rai and Thiara 1997, Thiara and Gill 2010). In the UK, criticisms of mainstream organisations' inattention to ethnic minority women's needs led to the development of intersectional, 'culturally competent' domestic violence services for black and ethnic minority women (known collectively in Britain as 'BME').[15] BME feminist activists have been at the forefront of establishing and running these services, and specialist organisations are now commonplace in Britain, providing support to women across the BME spectrum. As Gupta (2005) notes, these third-sector specialist organisations first emerged in the late 1970s and early 80s, in line with the rise of the anti-racist and black feminist movements. In keeping

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[15] I discuss the ambiguous concept of BME in Chapter 5. However here I will continue to use this terminology, in line with the vocabulary deployed in UK policy discourses. Also, it is important to note that BME specialist services are not unique to domestic violence organisations – many other organisations across the third sector provide services tailored to BME individuals.

with the societal demographic of post-Commonwealth Britain, BME organisations at that time primarily provided services to women with ethnicities connected to South East Asia, the Caribbean and Africa. This client base fits the historical profile of Mandela - as I describe in Chapter 3, Mandela is a BME domestic violence service in Edinburgh, which comprised one of my primary ethnographic field sites.

However, in recent years, developments in UK domestic violence service provision have emphasised the need to mainstream service responses for BME or marginalised groups - to make core services accessible for all women, regardless of their social positionings (e.g. Parmer *et al* 2005). Yet, Thiara and Gill (2010) argue that there remains a disjunct between theory and practice in this regard, claiming that mainstream domestic violence services still regularly fail to meet the needs of ethnic minority women in Britain.[16] Criticism is most acute in the context of statutory agencies, such as social work, the police and welfare services. Academics and activists have asserted that governmental institutions still consistently fail to recognise and address intersectionality, and therefore do not effectively support or protect ethnic minority women experiencing domestic violence (Gill 2004: 466, Rai and Thiara 1997, Anitha 2008, 2011). Belur (2008) frames this as a form of institutional racism. Such a framing, Belur claims, highlights the detrimental effects of non-intersectional policies, the multi-dimensional structural inequalities that ethnic minority women encounter and, fundamentally, presses for urgent redress. In the context of domestic violence help-seeking, ethnic minority women have thus been described as experiencing 'double victimisation': firstly by the violence perpetrated by their partners, but then also through the violence of societal marginalisation, which manifests when institutions fail to provide adequate service provision (Gill 2004, Gupta 2003, Thiara and Gill 2010).

In this section I have discussed the theoretical and practical implications of intersectionality. I have highlighted works that advocate the use of intersectionality, championing its ability to attend to structural inequalities that intersect with domestic violence, while remaining grounded in the epistemology of lived experience. This review, combined with my foregrounding of intersectionality in the introductory chapter, substantiates my use of intersectional analysis within this thesis, as I research Polish women's experiences. However, the review I have conducted here mainly deals with intersectional issues in the abstract; it primarily attends to differential adversities that researchers suggest ethnic minority women commonly (but not uniformly) face. As Menjívar stresses (1999), when researching migrant women's intersectional experiences, it is essential that analysis remains

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[16] As I describe in Chapter 3, my other primary ethnographic field site was Women's Aid, which I portray as a 'mainstream' domestic violence organisation.

grounded in the specificities of women's migration, and attends to the distinct contexts of both the receiving nation, and women's countries of origin. Therefore, in the following section, I provide a summary of research that relates to domestic violence in Poland, and present the existent work that attends to Polish migrants, service engagement, and domestic violence in the context of the UK.

Domestic Violence in Poland and Polish Migrant Service Engagement

As I asserted in the introduction to this thesis, there remains a dearth in domestic violence research on migrant and ethnic minority populations from and within Europe (Yoshihama 2008). Indeed, abuse and associated service engagement amongst Central Eastern European migrants remains virtually unexplored (Raj and Silverman 2004: 368). Therefore, when it came to compiling the literature review for this thesis, the paucity of domestic violence research in the context of Polish migrants complicated this process. This is despite Poles now comprising the largest population of foreign-born nationals in the UK (ONS 2016c): a statistic that highlights the pressing need for this lacuna in British domestic violence literature to be addressed. However, in this section I will present a brief overview of the literature on domestic violence in Poland, before discussing the exiguous research involving Polish migrants, and their engagement with services in Britain. This literature is not drawn from work conducted within the discipline of anthropology, and consequently raises some epistemological concerns. However, I have included it here because I felt it important to understand the current discourses surrounding domestic violence and service engagement, in a Polish and Polish migrant context.

Domestic Violence in Poland

As with research conducted in many other countries, domestic violence in Poland has been widely documented as an extensive but under-recognised issue. Several reports have highlighted a range of political, economic, judicial and cultural issues that intersect with and engender domestic violence, and impede victims in their attempts to seek help and attain justice (Amnesty International 2004, 2007, Brunell 2005, Aberg *et al* 2002, Nowakowska 1999). These issues have largely been connected to conservative constructions of gender and the family, underpinned by Catholic discourses, and the political and economic unrest that Poland has experienced since the end of the Second World War. The rapid changes that followed Poland's transition from a communist to a free market economy with the 'fall of the iron curtain,' have been connected to a resurgence of the Polish Catholic Church, and the patriarchal, 're-traditionalisation' of gender (Watson 1993, Zielińska 2000, Gerber 2011). Authors such as Brunell (2005) highlight that this has constrained the roles and rights

afforded to Polish women, which she argues, makes them more vulnerable to domestic violence. For example, she describes that the Polish Catholic Church has consistently discouraged the dissolution of marriage, even in contexts of violence, which has resulted in the stigmatisation of women who leave their partners. Nowakowska (1999) similarly argues that sociocultural aspects within Poland - such as gender roles, the ideation of the family, the apparent virtues of privacy and stoicism, and the 'taboo' nature of domestic violence – make it difficult for victims to seek assistance. This is coupled with civilians' reported distrust of engaging with the state in Poland, given its authoritarian political history (Kawalek 1992, Pawlik 1992, Sztompka 1999, Stan 2006).

Moreover, institutional provisions and responses to domestic violence in Poland have been criticised for being inadequate for meeting victims' needs. Several authors have described that during Poland's communist period, domestic violence was an institutionally unrecognised issue; there were no specialist services or supports for victims of domestic violence, such as shelters, counselling or legal aid (Nowakowska 1999, Brunell 2005, Aberg *et al* 2002). However, as Brunell (2005) identifies, since Poland's democratic transition in 1989, domestic violence within the country has been repositioned. Echoing the phenomenological developments of domestic violence that I traced earlier in this chapter, Brunell argues that domestic violence in Poland has shifted from being a largely invisible social phenomenon, to a public violation of women's rights. Consequently, a range of institutional means to address domestic violence has recently been established in Poland – which Brunell suggests comprises a significant improvement to the support available to domestic violence victims (see also Chivens 2004). Yet, reports investigating domestic violence responses in Poland have stressed that Poland is still falling short of protecting and supporting victims seeking justice; reference is often made in this regard to the large gap that exists between the 'word of law' and 'law in practice' (Aberg *et al* 2002, Chivens 2004, Brunell 2005). For example, Amnesty International (2004) singled out Poland's failure to effectively intervene in, investigate and prosecute domestic violence cases. This report claims that the Polish police force and the judiciary does not treat violence against women as sufficiently serious or credible, and that there remains a significant lack of resources available to domestic violence victims, which impedes their ability to leave their abusive partners (also Aberg *et al* 2002, Nowakowska 1999, Gerber 2011).

While the above-described research provides contextual understanding about domestic violence and the discourses that surround it in Poland, the extent to which these issues are salient for Polish migrants in the UK remains unexplored. As I suggested in the previous section, scholars researching migrant women have stressed the import of understanding the

historical specificity of migration, and the context of domestic violence in women's countries of origin (Menjívar 1999). However, caution must be applied when considering the relevance of this literature in the context of Polish women's experiences in Edinburgh. Several authors have noted that the stresses and uncertainties that migration can engender can exacerbate abuse (e.g. Council of Europe 2009). Moreover, from an anthropological perspective, there are further epistemological problematisations to be made in the context of this literature. Firstly, these cited works highlight the salience of sociocultural and political economic structures in shaping domestic violence, but do not situate these within or connect them to women's lived experiences of domestic violence. Additionally, this literature's recourse to constructs to explain domestic violence could be criticised for 'ontological dumping' - for endowing these social structures with a false, impersonal and overly deterministic ontological status (Rapport 1997). Furthermore, anthropologists have long demonstrated the penumbral role of migration in the forging of individual behaviours, beliefs and relationships (e.g. Appadurai 1996, Brettell 2003, Vertovec 2007, Cohen 2011). Nevertheless, as I will discuss in the following section, there are parallels between some of the above-cited Polish literature, and observations made in the context of Polish migrants' service engagement in the UK. Additionally, as I will reflect, these observations also coincide with much of the intersectional literature that attends to migrant women's experiences of domestic violence and help seeking.

Polish Migrants and Service Engagement in the UK

Research on Polish migrants in Britain to date has retained a distinctly economic focus – concentrating on employment rates, net contributions to the economy, and costs to public services. As Ryan *et al* (2009) note, research has rarely touched upon social aspects of Polish migrants' lives, or the social problems they encounter upon arrival to the UK. However, the authors do identify that this is an emerging area of literature (see e.g. Burrell 2009, Garapich 2007, Eade *et al* 2006, Rabikowska 2010, White 2011). A small amount of this research has attended to social, familial or health issues that Polish migrants experience in Britain. For example, studies have shown that homelessness, substance abuse and mental health problems, such as depression and suicide, can be significant issues within some facets of the Polish migrant population (Lakasing and Mirza 2009, Garapich 2010, Galasinski *et al* 2008, Kozłowska *et al* 2008, Kreft and Ritchie 2009, Mills and Knight 2010). Bloomstedt *et al* (2007) attribute this to the economic and social stresses of migration, and the isolation that can be engendered by moving away from family and friends (also Garapich 2010, Weishar 2008).

Further research has been conducted on Polish migrants' responses to these social

problems - on their help-seeking behaviours and engagement with services. Reflecting the literature on domestic violence help-seeking in Poland, Garapich (2010) and Selkirk (2010) identified in their research that Polish migrants reported being distrustful of the state, and hesitant to engage with its institutions. In line with the broader domestic violence migrant literature on service engagement (e.g. Raj and Silverman 2002, Menjívar and Salcido 2002, Erez *et al* 2009), these authors also describe Polish migrants as preferring to rely on informal social bonds for sources of support. The pastoral role of the Catholic Church for Polish migrants remains a neglected topic of inquiry (Brown 2011), although Garapich (2010) notes that the homeless men who participated in his project felt rejected by the Church, because they had 'failed to live up to' its Catholic teachings. He further observed the shame that his participants felt in experiencing economic adversity, and problems with mental health and alcohol. This, he described, made his participants reluctant to seek support through their social networks, and fearful of marring the reputation of Polish migrants more generally: issues that are mirrored in domestic violence help-seeking research conducted in the context of ethnic minorities (Thiara and Gill 2010, Raj and Silverman 2002, Renzetti and Lee 1993, Erez 2000, 2002, Gilbert *et al* 2004).

Again, echoing the domestic violence migrant literature (Erez *et al* 2009, Adelman and Salcido 2004, Raj and Silverman 2002, Menjívar and Salcido 2002), research also highlights structural and practical issues that can constrain Poles' engagement with services. For example, scholars found that the uncertainty of the contemporary British labour market, combined with Polish migrants' tendency to work in insecure and low-paid employment, made Polish nationals particularly vulnerable to marginalisation (Anderson *et al* 2006, Currie 2007, Drinkwater *et al* 2009). Furthermore, Garapich (2010) observed that the Polish migrants in his study had relatively little social and economic capital upon coming to the UK, which made his participants more reliant on support from charitable agencies and the state in times of crisis. However, as Mills and Knight (2010) and McGhee *et al* (2013) describe, Polish nationals, because of their specific migrant status, are often unable to receive welfare or other forms of public funds in the UK. This, they argue, impedes their ability to access appropriate services for support and, correspondingly, address or manage the problems they encounter. Garapich (2010) refers to the lack of state support available to Polish migrants as being a form of 'structural exclusion,' and identifies this to be a significant contributing factor to the homelessness experienced by participants in his research. He described that this structural exclusion, alongside widespread anti-migrant rhetoric, instilled amongst the Polish men in his study a sense of being discriminated by and alienated from British society. These works additionally highlighted other practical issues that can impede Polish migrant engagement with services - such as the inability of some Polish nationals to

speak English or access support in Polish, and their lack of awareness about the organisational assistance available to them in times of need (Selkirk 2010, Garapich 2010, Weishar 2008, Mills and Knight 2010, Galasinski *et al* 2008).

While the above research relates to issues of homelessness, substance abuse and mental health problems, to date I have been unable to find any peer-reviewed work focusing on domestic violence in a Polish migrant context in the UK. In my search for literature, I did identify two reviews of pilot projects run by domestic violence organisations, which provided targeted support for Polish women experiencing abuse. The two reports were carried out by academics: Sidvha (2007) conducted a review of the 'Polish Family Project,' based at a small charity in Edinburgh and Thiara (2011) evaluated Refuge's 'Eastern European Community Outreach Project' in London.[17] Both pilot projects were justified by a narrative similar to the problem statement that I described in the introduction of this thesis – Polish (and other 'Eastern European') women were experiencing domestic violence but there was an absence of appropriate support that they could access, and organisation staff were encountering specific complexities that impeded their service interventions.

The reports highlight that many of the women accessing the pilot projects required language support, and that their earlier attempts to seek help for domestic violence had been hampered by their inability to speak English. Sidvha (2007) and Thiara (2011) also identified that Polish women's lack of knowledge about UK domestic violence services and legislation served as a barrier to their accessing assistance. Migrant service users in both reports were depicted as being isolated and lacking in local support networks, and being concerned about the shame and social stigma that disclosing abuse could engender. Certainly, these identified issues parallel the ethnic minority literature on domestic violence, which argues that specific social and situational contexts can deter women from disclosing or seeking support for domestic violence (e.g. Thiara and Gill 2010, Raj and Silverman 2002). Accordingly, in her report, Thiara connects the difficulties she described Eastern European women experiencing to her wider research on South Asian women, who experience abuse whilst living in the UK (2011:15). Thiara additionally identified that Eastern European women experienced family pressure to make relationships work, and to provide financially for their families 'back home.' Consequently, she described the burden women felt to succeed as migrants overseas to be 'huge,' and emphasised their fear of denigration, should they return to their countries of origin as 'failed' divorced women (*ibid*: 17). This coincides with observations made about the complex social contexts that victims of domestic violence can

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[17] Although the project Thiara reviewed catered to women from across Central Eastern Europe, the majority of service users were Polish, in line with the demographic of the UK migrant population.

encounter, in both Polish (Nowakowska 1999, Brunell 2005) and wider ethnic minority contexts (e.g. Raj and Silverman 2002, Erez 2000, 2002), which further complicates the redress of violence.

Both reports additionally discuss the negative encounters Polish and other European women had experienced when they engaged with statutory agencies. Organisation staff in Thiara's (2011) review reported that they felt statutory agencies were sometimes judgemental of, or discriminatory towards, Eastern European women, and that women's lack of knowledge about their rights and entitlements were often used against them in statutory service delivery. This was exemplified with reports that European women seeking assistance for domestic violence were encouraged by statutory agencies to 'go home', rather than being provided with essential practical support. Both Thiara and Sidhva's (2007) reports note that, even in cases where agencies wanted to intervene, the lack of public funds available to Polish and other European women meant that often there was little practical support that could be offered. This parallels wider research focusing on migrant women's experiences of discrimination (Erez *et al* 2009, Menjívar and Salcido 2002), and of limited access to statutory rights and protections in contexts of domestic violence (Anitha 2011, Orloff and Kaguyutan 2002). Additionally, this potentially coincides with Garapich's (2010) assertions about the 'structural exclusion' of Polish migrants in UK society (also McGhee *et al* 2013). The reviews (Sidhva 2007, Thiara 2011) conclude that migrant-specific, situational difficulties, coupled with stringent financial constraints, impeded the ability of the domestic violence organisations to support Polish women seeking their services. Both noted the need for targeted interventions for European migrants, and warned that without extra funding and support, women would be left with few options, beyond returning to their abusive relationships.

Therefore, despite the little attention that Polish migrant service engagement in the UK has received, much of the existent research parallels literature that attends to domestic violence in Poland, as well as in ethnic minority and migrant contexts. Although scant, and at times epistemologically problematic, the literature I have presented in this section further supports the importance of considering migrant intersectionalities in the context of Polish women's experiences of domestic violence and service interactions. However, as I have highlighted, existent works do not attend to Polish women's lived experiences of domestic violence and service engagement, in either Polish or British contexts. Clearly, there is a need for research to be conducted that specifically investigates the domestic violence and help-seeking realities of Polish migrant women living in the UK - to address the current dearth in understanding, and to inform service development.

Anthropology and Domestic Violence

In this literature review so far, I have engaged with works across a variety of disciplines, weaving together current debates, perspectives and issues relevant to researching domestic violence and its service provision. However, only scant reference has been made to anthropological perspectives; this is largely a result of anthropology's tardiness in contributing to debates and research on domestic violence. As Wies and Haldane note, although domestic and other forms of gender-based violence have historically been referenced in ethnographic texts, it is only in the past two decades that anthropologists have focused on these issues as topics of inquiry in their own right (2011: 5). This is surprising, considering the pervasive and pertinent nature of domestic violence, and the multitude of existent anthropological perspectives that could be used to inform research. As I suggested in the Introduction, there is a small but growing number of American anthropologists who have turned their attention towards domestic violence.[18] However, domestic violence remains an almost unchartered terrain in European and British anthropology, and specifically within the anthropology of Britain. In this section, I will reflect on some of the diverse ways in which anthropology both does and might contribute to the study of domestic violence.

Anthropological Perspectives on Violence

Anthropologists have a long history of studying violence and conflict, both everyday and exceptional (e.g. Skinner 1911, Gluckman 1956; Malinowski 1926). Anthropological works have emphasised the imagined, performative, experiential and symbolic dimensions of violence, and the processes through which it is embodied, communicated, normalised and contested (Margold 1999, Rapport 1987, Foucault 1977, Scott 1990, Bordieu and Wacquant 2004, Das 2007). Additionally, anthropological attempts to explain violence have examined the salience of historicity, power, sociality and culture in particular ethnographic settings, inclusive of theorising how 'cultures of violence' emerge and are reproduced (Das *et al* 2001, Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004). Collectively, these perspectives reveal the phenomenological complexity and ambiguity of violence, and highlight that its significance cannot be extracted from the social context in which it occurs (Göran and Abbink 2000, Stewart and Strathern 2002).

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[18] These works attend to ethnographic contexts that span across Central and South America (e.g. McClusky 2001, Lazarus Black 2001, 2007, Santos 2005, Macaulay 2006, Hautzinger 2007, Parson 2010, Alcade 2010, Friederic 2014), North America (Abraham 2000, Hall 2000, Malley-Morrison and Hines 2004, Adelman 2004, Weis 2011, Collins 2011), Africa (Bargach 2011, Lundgren and Ashburn 2015, Wirtz 2015), Australasia (Counts 1991, Haldane 2009, 2008, 2014) and Asia (Snajdr 2007, Kwiatkowski 2011a, 2011b, 2015, Adelman 2017, Babior 2011). Plesset (2006) provides an exception with her ethnography of two domestic violence shelters in Italy, which comprises the only anthropological study of domestic violence I have encountered that is situated in Europe.

Thus, anthropology has worked to problematise universal definitions, explanations and conceptions of violence, and has emphasised the importance of understanding different types of violence, within local specificities. Undoubtedly, these perspectives lend themselves well to the study of domestic violence, particularly in terms of attending to the heterogeneities that pattern abuse. Indeed, a small number of anthropologists researching domestic violence have made significant contributions in this area, highlighting the importance of localised contexts and individual experiences to understand how domestic violence is varyingly expressed, understood, reproduced, and resisted (Merry 2008, McClusky 2001, Malley-Morrison and Hines 2004, Hautzinger 2007, Parson 2010, Alcade 2010). However, there remain many existent anthropological paradigms of violence that could be used to elucidate further domestic violence understandings. The phenomenology of domestic violence, for example, remains a virtually unexplored topic of inquiry (excepting Kwiatkowski 2015).

Kinship, Gender and the Family

As Wies and Haldane note, anthropology remains predominantly focused on researching violence in the public sphere, despite the discipline's penchant for studying intimate and private contexts (2011: 4). This inclination is most evident in the prominent anthropological field of kinship, which examines interpersonal dynamics and relations across areas such as marriage, the family, personhood, sexuality, love and companionship (Fox 1967, Needham 1971, Schneider 1972, Peletz 1995, Stone 2001, Carsten 2000, 2004, McKinnon 2001). While some recent works on kinship in anthropology have accentuated the role of nurture in forging kin relations (e.g. Gow 1991, Thomas 1999, Storrie 2003, de Matos Viegas 2003), less attention has been paid to antonymic dimensions of relatedness (although see Hautzinger 2007, Kwiatkowski 2011a, Lundgren and Ashburn 2015). This highlights a pertinent avenue for future anthropological inquiry, inclusive of kinship-based perspectives of domestic violence. As Adelman remarks, the term 'domestic' in domestic violence should be viewed as synonymous to kinship, given that household dynamics are formed through practices of marriage, reproduction and labour (2017: 21).

Interrelated to kinship is the anthropological study of gender – although feminist anthropologists have long highlighted its theoretical import as an autonomous field of study (Moore 1988, Strathern 1988, Sacks and Brodkin 1982, Rosaldo *et al* 1974). Anthropology has emphasised the culturally informed nature of gender, which shapes how it is enacted and understood in different social contexts (Ortner and Whitehead 1981, Mohanty 1988, Mohanty *et al* 1991). This has challenged ethnocentric and monolithic assumptions about women's lives, de-essentialising gender and emphasising the heterogeneity of gendered

experience. More recently the significance of agency, discourse, and men and masculinities has arisen in research conducted within anthropology, to the enrichment of gender perspectives (e.g. Di Leonardo 1991, Ong 1991, Lamphere *et al* 1997). A notable example relevant to the present study is the anthropological problematisation of *Machismo* and *Marionismo* - gendered stereotypes that are often invoked to explain domestic violence in Latin American contexts (Lancaster 1992, Melhuus and Stølen 1996, Gutmann 2006, Townsend 2010, Hautzinger 2007). However, anthropological perspectives on gender remain under-theorised in the context of gender-based violence, and there is a need for further research that attends to phenomena not traditionally conceived of as 'gender-based,' but where experiences of violence and gender intersect.

A key theme in both kinship and gender studies within anthropology has been the role of power in forging individual subjectivities and interpersonal relationships (Cornwall and Lindesfarne 1994, Counihan 1999, Feldman-Savelsberg 1995 Carsten 2000, McKinnon 2001). As part of this, anthropologists have examined the effects of external exertions of influence – such as politics, governance, globalisation and structural inequality - within individuals' lives. Collectively these works point to the significance of societal and international forces in shaping lived experience, even in the most intimate of settings. As I will discuss in the following section, it is within the realm of political economic and legal anthropology that domestic violence research has achieved the most purchase within the discipline to date.

Political Economic and Legal Anthropology

With the rise of critical theory in anthropology, perspectives have been developed that attend to the ways in which political economic forces coalesce in localised contexts. This has included the study of how practices of nation states, global markets and institutions can be involved in the creation and perpetuation of violence. Most renowned is Farmer's (1996, 2004, 2005) polemic of structural violence, a term he uses to describe the processes, policies and polities that systematically produce or reproduce social and economic inequities. Through this paradigm, the concept of violence is expanded to include the harmful, coercive structuring of inequality, which renders some populations more at risk of disease, violence and poverty than others. Thus, structural violence permits articulation of how forces such as economic inequality and racism become embodied in individual experiences of suffering, and differential access to ameliorative resources. This perspective emphasises that analysis of morbidity and violence must move beyond individual pathologies, and instead be examined within the larger social, political and economic matrices in which they are embedded. For example, as Bourgois notes, such a political

economic approach can 'contribute not just to a documentation of human pain and social injustice, but also to a clearer political critique of how power relations maintain inequality and (useless) social suffering under neo-liberalism' (2003: 228).

Although Farmer makes reference to gendered inequality and violence in his work (e.g. 2005: 8, 17-18, 30), a number of anthropologists have incorporated his paradigm into their analysis of domestic and sexual violence (e.g. Parson 2013, Alcade 2010, Hall 2000, Brunson 2011, Wies 2011, Ghosh 2011). Notably, Adelman (2004, 2017) coined the polemical term '*the battering state,*' to press the centrality of statutory structural violence in the fashioning of domestic abuse. However, Farmer's (2004) work has been criticised for its recourse to insidious, abstracted and 'faceless' structures when attempting to explain suffering and violence. As Wacquant (2004) and Green (2004) argue, this focus comes at the cost of autonomy, nuance and accountability.[19]

Partly in response to such problematisations of structural violence perspectives, anthropologists have turned to other political economic theories in an attempt to attend to the relationships and tensions that exist between societies and individuals - between structures of power and civilian subjectivities and experiences. Some of these paradigms have built upon the concept of structural violence (e.g. Brodwin 2007, Massé 2007, Dressler 2007, Goldstein 2007), but others have drawn inspiration from the works of other seminal authors such as Foucault (1979), Agamben (1998, 2005) and Arendt (1951) (e.g. Fassin 2001, Comaroff 2007, Rensmann 2010, Gupta 2012, also Butler 2004). All of these paradigms highlight the potential of both political economic theory and contextualisation for illuminating some of the dynamics that underpin interpersonal violence, and provide exciting avenues for future anthropological research.

Beyond using political economy to develop encompassing theories that contribute towards explaining domestic violence, anthropologists have additionally applied this lens to foreground individual experiences of abuse. For example, researchers have

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[19] Similar comments have been applied to Adelman's conception of the 'battering state', which in her earlier article (2004) she connected to practices of US statecraft. Adelman's paradigm has additionally been problematised for overlooking the multiplicity and complexity of state practices. As Hautzinger (2010) notes, even though the US is plagued by structural inequalities that can engender or compound domestic violence, simultaneously there are many ways in which the 'battering' American state attempts to tackle the phenomenon - e.g. by funding shelters and prosecuting perpetrators. However, in her latest work (2017) Adelman emphasises the divergent ways in which women are treated and constituted through their interactions with the state. This emphasis is most evident in her theorisation of the 'ambivalent governance' of domestic violence, which I discuss in Chapters 6 and 7.

ethnographically explored how aspects such as poverty and racism intersect with women's experiences of rape and abuse, and associated attempts to receive support and attain justice (Lazarus-Black 1997, 2001, Goldstein 2003, Hautzinger 2007, Santos 2005, Adelman 2017). A key contribution of these works has been to challenge grand narratives and policy discourses that delineate appropriate definitions of and responses to violence, by revealing dissonance between the 'local' and the 'global' (Friederic 2014, Wies and Haldane 2014: 9). Hautzinger (2007) uses her ethnographic encounters in Brazil, for example, to critique the 'truisms' deployed in mainstream feminist domestic violence discourse. This includes the 'myth of classlessness', which, she argues, contrasts with and conceals the many ways that class can be implicated in the patterning of violence (*2007*: 34). Merry's (2006, 2012) research has additionally challenged the assumption implicit in international human rights law: that all people across the world have access to rights. Within several ethnographic settings, she reveals the gendered dangers to which women may be subject if they invest too heavily in human rights discourses, or the state for security and salvation (also Lazarus-Black and Merry 2003, Levitt and Merry 2009, Friederic 2014, Adelman 2017). These anthropological examples then, consider political economy *intersectionally* - by examining how global, national and local forces are implicated in individual women's lives. As I suggested in the Introduction, this is the framing which foregrounds my analysis in this thesis, where I combine Adelman's (2004, 2017) political economic paradigm of domestic violence explicitly with intersectionality, through the notion of *borderlands.*

However, more broadly, I contend that a core strength of anthropological analyses stems from the discipline's centralisation of intersectionality in its epistemological approach. Indeed, a key contribution of the works that I have presented in this section on anthropology is their close attention to lived experience. As I have suggested, anthropological analysis has been used to subvert grand narratives across fields of violence, power, kinship and gender, and revealed the specificities and significance of these phenomena, for particular individuals within localised contexts. In the following, final section of this chapter I suggest that the epistemological insights forged within these works can be attributed not only to the use of anthropological theory, but more widely to the discipline's methodology: to its commonplace use of ethnography.

Ethnography and Applied Anthropology
In this section I argue that anthropology is uniquely positioned to study domestic violence, given the holistic, nuanced and intimate understandings that the discipline's ethnographic methods and outputs afford. As ethnography permits inductive, adaptive and long-term methodological encounters with multiple interlocutors, the method can be used to develop

intimate understandings of victim and service provider experiences (Wies and Haldane 2011: 14). As McCall describes, the 'thick description' (Geertz 1994) involved in the collation and presentation of ethnographic data renders anthropologists exemplary practitioners of multivocal, interpretive and qualitative research (2005: 1782). This, she argues, renders the discipline prime for studying intersectionality. McCall substantiates this by highlighting the reflexive space ethnographic works give to researcher positionality. However, principally she premises this assertion on anthropology's methodological centralisation of research participants' experiences, during fieldwork and within subsequent ethnographic texts (also Caroll 2004, Schulz and Mullings 2006, Narváez *et al* 2009).

Moreover, as the works cited in this wider section on anthropology reveal, ethnography attends to multiple scales of analysis, while remaining grounded in local specificities and experiences, in all of their complexity. Ethnographic sensibilities then, permit attention to mercurial economic, social, political, and kin-based relationships, amidst which individuals live and forge their lives. Therefore, ethnography's ability to connect individual experience to wider societal and geopolitical landscapes well equips anthropology to explore how different dynamics interact, overlap and intersect, to affect human problems. As McCall (2005) suggests, such intersectional viewpoints provide scope for collective, actionable analysis, which can be used to inform policy development and exact social change. Accordingly, in recent years we have seen anthropologists apply ethnography and nuanced theoretical perspectives to social phenomena, with the explicit purpose of recognising, understanding and addressing issues that engender human suffering (Van Willigen 2002, Rylko-Bauer *et al* 2006, Lamphere 2004, Kedia and Van Willigen 2005, Bodley 2012, Bradby and Hundt 2016). This applied form of anthropology is perhaps most notable in the context of medical anthropology, where problem-solving anthropological research has been mobilised to identify issues relating to ill health or poor service uptake, and then used to develop targeted policy responses and inform professional practice (e.g. Scheper-Hughes 1990, Singer 1995, Nichter and Nichter 1996, Farmer 2001, Chrisman and Maretzki 2012, Brown and Closser 2016).

While domestic violence is both a topically and theoretically overlooked phenomenon in anthropology, it remains, moreover, a neglected issue in applied anthropological domains. Notably, there is an absence of anthropologists engaging with action-oriented research – of collaborating directly with service providers to facilitate specific domestic violence

interventions and inform policy development.[20] More generally, domestic violence service provider practices remain under-theorised in anthropological accounts (though Wies and Haldane's 2011, 2015 edited volumes provide welcome contributions). This is particularly acute in the context of critical engagement with service provision, however Merry (2006) has spearheaded this perspective by demonstrating how institutions and well-intentioned efforts to end violence can also create and maintain systems of inequality (also Santos 2005, Hautzinger 2007, Adelman 2017). Finally, as Wies and Haldane note, anthropological studies of domestic violence have been limited in their engagement with other disciplines – such as criminology, social work, sociology and legal studies – which to date have pioneered applied research in this domain (2015: 4-5).

Clearly, there is a need for further applied anthropological research in the context of domestic violence: for works that provide theoretical insight and nuance, yet also propose ways in which practices may be developed and change enacted. I contend that in many respects, this present research provides a response to this need and the above-described lacunae in applied anthropological works on domestic violence. Indeed, this chapter has engaged with works that span across a variety of disciplines, and I continue to engage in trans-disciplinary conversations and analysis throughout the rest of this text. Furthermore, I examine service provider practices in my subsequent ethnographic analysis, with a view to generate a critical discourse about Polish women's experiences, and to inform policy development. In the following chapter I proceed to highlight the collaborative, applied, and action-oriented dimensions of this research, and reflect further on the ways in which these methodological underpinnings have intertwined with the knowledge this thesis has produced.

Conclusion

Over three separate sections, this chapter has introduced key domestic violence literature and perspectives that inform this thesis. Firstly, I traced the phenomenological developments of domestic violence, particularly in relation to emergent debates about understanding, representing, and responding to women's differential experiences of abuse. In the UK, ethnic minority and migrant women come to the fore of these debates, with literature emphasising the salience of women's varying intersectional identities and locations. Intersectionality therefore is offered as a useful paradigm in the context of researching migrant women's experiences - for theorising the ways in which societal inequalities and social positionings

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[20] However, Kwiatkowski (2011a) and Friederic (2011) discuss the applied dimensions of their domestic violence research in Vietnam and Ecuador, respectively.

can exacerbate domestic violence, complicate leaving abusive relationships, and impede engagement with services.

I then connected domestic violence literature to research that attends to domestic violence in Poland, and Polish migrant service engagement in the UK. Collectively, these works suggest that the structural, political and economic marginalisation of Polish women intersects with their experiences of domestic violence and help seeking, in both Poland and in the UK. Additionally, the exiguous literature on Polish migrants in Britain highlights a range of situational migrant factors – such as language difference, isolation and unfamiliarity with local service landscapes – that can impede service engagement. These works, I argued, further support the salience of considering intersectionality in the context of Polish migrant women's domestic violence realities.

In the final section of this chapter I considered the potential of anthropology to contribute to domestic violence research. Across fields of violence, kinship, gender and political economy, I traced numerous works that elucidate domestic violence dynamics, and highlighted avenues through which existent anthropological perspectives might further enrich domestic violence understandings. I emphasised the intersectionality inherent in anthropological perspectives, which I connected to the discipline's methodological foregrounding of ethnography, and thus the epistemology of lived experience. I closed this section by noting the particular paucity of applied anthropological research in the context of domestic violence, despite applied anthropologists making significant contributions in other fields. In the following chapter I reflect further on ethnographic, applied anthropological approaches, as I describe the methodology that underpins this doctoral research.

3. Methodology

In the previous chapter I argued that anthropology has much to offer to understandings of domestic violence, both epistemologically and methodologically. In this chapter I continue to reflect on the strengths and complexities of the anthropological approach, as I describe the research methodology I adopted for this doctoral work. As I will detail, this thesis is based on an extended period of fieldwork across a variety of locations: a multi-sited ethnography of domestic violence, domestic violence service providers and Polish women's engagement with services in Edinburgh. Here I discuss the reasoning behind selecting this approach, and the conceptual underpinnings of my analysis. This chapter comprises of two thematic sections. In the first, I describe the specifics of the methods used, the different field sites, and the ways in which I collected the data I present in this thesis. In the second section I discuss this project's orientation towards applied, feminist anthropology and reflect on how this intertwined with ethics and the practicalities of the research context, to form the knowledge this thesis has produced. Throughout, I highlight the challenges and practicalities of researching domestic violence, which I encountered during fieldwork.

Researching Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a notoriously difficult subject to research; there remains much debate about how it can best be defined, effectively measured, and its prevalence, manifestations, and consequences represented (Dwyer 1999, Saltzman 2000, DeKeseredy 2000). The fact that domestic violence is often concealed from public view, and remains an under-reported issue, only compounds this difficulty (Stanko 2001). Furthermore, domestic violence is undoubtedly a 'sensitive' research topic (Renzetti and Lee 1990). Its perpetration involves coercion, control and intimidation, and discussing abuse with victims can involve delving into deeply intimate and potentially traumatic experiences. The complexity and sensitivity of researching domestic violence combined, means that methodological and ethical issues are heightened for researchers (Jewkes *et al* 2000, Ellsberg *et al* 2001). This was particularly so in the context of this study, with its focus on Polish women's experiences of domestic violence and service engagement specifically. As Ellsberg and Heise (2002) describe, researching abuse within a specific social group – especially a group that could be described as a 'minority', or 'hard to reach' group – increases the potential harms that participants may

encounter.[21] As I will outline in this chapter, these complexities affected almost every stage of the research process: from the formulation of the research problem and the study design, right through to the framing, representation and dissemination of analysis (Lee 1993: 1).

An Overview of Methods Used

Identifying the Topic of this Research

As I described in the introduction, although I knew that I wanted my research to centre on domestic violence, it was my preliminary conversations with service providers that directed me to the present topic of inquiry. In the early stages of my doctorate I consulted three domestic violence organisations, Police Scotland and social workers. I explained the sort of research an anthropologist might do, and asked if there were any issues the organisations were encountering that might benefit from an anthropological perspective. Three respondents reported experiencing similar issues in their domestic violence intervention work with Polish families. When I proposed to potential participating organisations that I research domestic violence and service engagement in a Polish migrant context, the topic was met with enthusiasm. This initial service provider input was used to formulate the 'problem statement' for this research, presented in the Introduction (p6). This was added to throughout fieldwork as the ethnography progressed.

Multi-Sited Ethnography

As ethnography has classically been treated as synonymous with social anthropology, both as a method and form of output, it was conceived from the outset of this project that data collection would involve some form of ethnography. Indeed, the extended and thorough engagement with a single field site, which the ethnographic method demands, has historically been 'more or less the only fully publicly acknowledged model for field work, and for becoming and being a real anthropologist' (Hannerz 2003: 202). Yet, Hannerz notes that anthropologists are increasingly looking beyond the single-site ethnographic model, given its limitations for studying trans- or multi-local phenomena. Certainly, seminal anthropological works have long benefited from employing a multi-sited method; for example, Hannerz

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[21] I return to the issue of Polish migrant's ethnic minority status in Chapter 5. While Jones and Newburn (2001) highlight there is a considerable lack of clarity in the term 'hard to reach', they delineate several characteristics of 'hard to reach' groups that could apply to Polish migrants: a widely dispersed, minority group or identity, whose members may have cultural or language differences which engender distinctive service needs. As my subsequent chapters reveal, some of these characteristics prove applicable in this ethnographic context. Additionally, several other authors and reports refer to Poles as comprising a 'hard to reach' group (e.g. Wilkinson *et al* 2009, Thickett and Bayley 2013, Parnez 2015). Nevertheless, Dudley rightly questions the politics of positing groups as 'hard to reach' in policy contexts, and argues that focus should remain on the failings of services - in their being 'hard to access' for certain individuals (2014: 6).

illustrates this point by invoking Malinowski's (1922) research, where he followed
Trobrianders along the Kula Ring (2003: 202-203).

As Marcus (1995) argues, multi-sited ethnography permits the exploration of experiences,
perspectives, ideas, and individual or collective trajectories that extend over multiple
locations, across time and space. Therefore, he suggests the method can be used to
elucidate understanding of how social processes and political economic forces, from
seemingly disconnected spaces, configure and coalesce. This approach, Marcus contends,
emphasises the importance of interconnection, and destabilises problematic local-global,
lifeworld-system dichotomies - acknowledging macro and micro configurations, while not
relying on them solely to account for contextualised subjectivity (*ibid* 1995:96, also Falzon
2016: 2). Marcus' assertions about the strengths of the multi-sited ethnography – its ability to
attend to the significance of systems of power, while remaining grounded in individuals' lives
- reveal it to be an exemplary method for researching intersectionality. This echoes my
arguments in the previous chapter, where I contended that anthropological approaches have
much to offer domestic violence research, and highlighted ethnography's grounding in the
inherently intersectional epistemology of lived experience.

Consequently, the multi-sited ethnographic method appeared most appropriate for the
context of the present research. Indeed, it was selected because of the multi-faceted nature
of the research topic, and the phenomena being researched. Domestic violence and
associated service engagement involves relationships and interactions between individuals,
organisations, and wider community and state socialities, the study of which would be
incompatible within a single field site (Marcus 1986, 1995, Candea 2007: 167). In adopting
the multi-sited approach, this method led this research on a diverse course: across
organisational, ideological, regional and political boundaries. In essence, I opted to 'follow
the thing' (Appadurai 1986, Marcus 1995). I 'followed' domestic violence, encountering a
multitude of individuals and organisations that engage with it in various ways. Additionally,
throughout fieldwork, I traced the course of individuals who were experiencing domestic
violence, as they navigated their way through different agencies and the services they
offered. In this sense, I similarly 'followed the people' or the 'plot' of victims' stories (Marcus
1995:106 -109). Consequently, data collected from this research are diverse. They range
from snapshots of fleeting interactions between service-users and service-providers, which
Carrithers (2007) might describe as inchoate 'story-seeds', to an aggregation of these
events, for particular women - gleaning a perspective of their lives, as they engaged with
services.

The Scope of this Research

Despite the apparent benefits of the multi-sited method, its methodological approach has been met with criticism. Specifically, Hage (2005) and Candea (2007) raised concern about the implicit holism that can be depicted in multi-sited ethnographic output. In response to these concerns, I should emphasise that a systemised or holistic aggregate was not the intended, nor is the actualised, research output presented in this body of work. Rather, it is a presentation of significant constellations that emerged from an experiential landscape of domestic violence and service engagement - where each encounter and field site is conceptually situated within a complex milieu of statutory, organisational and individual understandings, practises and responses to domestic violence.

To further avoid aggrandising my analytical claims, it is important to emphasise the defined scope of this work. Namely, that my writing only attends to experiences of domestic violence and service engagement for the small number of participants that I encountered during research. Indeed, my approach to data collection could be described as 'convenience' or 'opportunistic' sampling, where participants were selected on account of their presence, availability and practicality (Burgess 2002: 45-55). This approach is appropriate for investigations conducted in mercurial field sites, such as the present research context, where participants may be unknown to one another and their presence is fleeting, rendering other sampling approaches unfeasible (Bernard 2011: 147). Combined with the multi-sited approach, this sampling method gave me a diverse but detailed range of perspectives, which permitted the study of the 'large issue' of domestic violence within the small places in which people live and interact (Eriksen 2001). Thus, as a result of this methodological approach, the knowledge here produced must be recognised as temporally, spatially and contextually specific (Harding 1991, Hage 2005, Candea 2007, Hammersley 2013: 18).

Furthermore, all participants were recruited through their association with domestic violence services, and I encountered numerous issues when trying to engage with victims of domestic violence who had not left their abusive partners, or sought formalised help. That this research involves such a contained sample of participants proved seemingly unavoidable; as I will describe, this was because of the challenges of researching domestic violence generally, but also specifically, in the context of Polish migrants. There are inherent limitations to approaches that collect data within domestic violence services, since participant-victims have necessarily accessed organisations for support, and therefore only reflect the 'tip of the iceberg' of those who have experienced abuse (Mooney 2000: 24). Yet, as Stanko (2001) stresses, while much domestic violence remains hidden, one of the few ways in which it becomes visible is through surveying the daily work of public agencies. As I

detail in the following section, much of my data collection primarily took place within such organisations.

Fieldwork Locations

In keeping with the multi-sited method, the 'field' was conceived as an unbounded scape of sociality, with my 'being there' permitting experience and understanding of the situational field in which I was immersed (Henry 1999). Fieldwork took place in and across a number of locations over 18 months. Primarily I was based in Edinburgh, although I made occasional trips to other cities in Scotland to engage with a variety of domestic violence organisations. However, 'following' domestic violence took me to a number of other places during my PhD: notably, to Iceland, the offices of the College of Policing in Southern England, and to a university in central Colorado. However, while the body of this thesis does not draw directly on these subsidiary projects, these experiences were formative in developing my contextual and theoretical understanding of domestic violence, and related service responses.

Edinburgh: Selecting the Site

Edinburgh was selected as the main locus of this research for several reasons. Firstly, the policy climate in Scotland for domestic violence services was particularly conducive for conducting research. Scotland has a strong reputation for innovation in domestic violence legislation and service provision. At the time of fieldwork, the Scottish government had identified the 'eradication of gender violence' as a national priority for several concurrent years, directing unprecedented funding towards this area. Additionally, with Scotland having such a small national population, whilst scouting for locations I encountered there a close-knit community of domestic violence service providers who appeared relatively unencumbered by county and organisational jurisdictions.[22]

Furthermore, when I tried to establish the feasibility of conducting my research in Scotland, staff members from key organisations such as Scottish Women's Aid and Safer Families Edinburgh were positive about and open to research engagement. This was in part because of their support of my research topic, however their enthusiasm was undoubtedly strengthened by positive working relationships previously fostered by Durham academics.[23] All the service providers I worked with were supportive and encouraging of my research, and

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[22] However, I do attend to difficulties that were engendered by different jurisdictions and competition between services, in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively.

[23] Rachel Pain kindly introduced me to staff at Scottish Women's Aid following her collaborative work 'Everyday Terrorism' (2012) and one group, Safer Families, had participated in Nicole Westmarland and Liz Kelly's 'Project Mirabal' (2015), which measured the efficacy of domestic violence perpetrator programmes.

suggested new research avenues, offered useful introductions, and provided valuable insights, feedback and guidance. As so many of the key organisations I contacted were based in Scotland's capital, Edinburgh became an obvious choice for fieldwork. Finally, but perhaps most importantly, the city of Edinburgh has by far the largest sum of Polish nationals living in Scotland; with estimates of approximately 14,800 Polish residents, Poles are thought to comprise roughly 3% of Edinburgh's population (ONS 2016a).[24]

In total, I spent 12 months in Edinburgh: September 2013 - January 2014, and another stint in September 2014 - March 2015. Fieldwork there comprised several different components: an ethnography of two domestic violence organisations; a mapping out of domestic violence service provision; a participatory research project with Safer Families; and interviews with domestic violence victims and professionals.

Domestic Violence Organisations

Data was primarily collected through two core domestic violence organisations in Edinburgh: one 'mainstream' or 'universal' organisation, which I refer to as 'Women's Aid', and another that specifically supports victims of domestic violence who are from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds, which I refer to as 'Mandela'. The names of the organisations have been changed for the purposes of this thesis and, in a bid to further protect confidentiality, I do not specify in individual women's cases which organisation they engaged with unless it is relevant to analysis. Both were members of the larger umbrella organisation Scottish Women's Aid, which mean they were subject to shared national service standards. Consequently, Women's Aid and Mandela shared a great deal in common, in terms of organisational ethos, structure and the services they offered.

Women's Aid and Mandela are registered charities, governed by boards of directors, and received most of their funding from the Scottish government, Edinburgh City Council and the Big Lottery Fund.[25] Service user engagement with Women's Aid and Mandela was voluntary; women normally referred themselves to the charities to access their services. Sometimes women came to these organisations as 'first ports of call', having not contacted other services previously about domestic violence. However, if women did disclose domestic violence whilst engaging with other services, professionals would often signpost them to the domestic violence organisations for support. This was because the organisations filled a

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[24] The most up-to-date census data (from 2011) at the time of fieldwork suggested there were some 55,000 Polish residents then living in Scotland (ONS 2013a).
[25] Although both organisations receive funding from similar sources, with Mandela being a smaller organisation, at the time of fieldwork it received less financing from different funding pathways, which also seemed less secure. I discuss this further in Chapter 5.

unique lacuna in domestic violence service provision in Edinburgh: mostly, the police responded to immediate threats and criminal activity; social work managed risk engendered by domestic violence, implementing perpetrator interventions, and child and vulnerable adult protection measures; the National Health Service (NHS) provided services that responded to women's health needs; and the British government, via Edinburgh Council, supplied welfare support and temporary accommodation to women and children made homeless through domestic violence.

The domestic violence organisations offered targeted and independent support for victims of abuse, and provided otherwise unavailable services such as refuge. 'Refuge' is the local vocabulary for what is perhaps better known as a domestic violence shelter, which comprises safe and supported accommodation in an undisclosed location, where women may go to escape abuse. Although Mandela and Women's Aid are third sector organisations, a great deal of their work involved interacting with statutory agencies: attending meetings to provide input in multi-agency responses to domestic violence cases, and helping women individually navigate through statutory processes.

Both organisations identified as feminist, understanding domestic violence to be a cause and a consequence of gender inequality, and specifically supported women and children who had experienced domestic abuse. Their offices were designated as 'woman-only' spaces; men were generally not permitted to work in or enter either premises. Both services adopted a person-centred philosophy to service provision – listening to and believing their service users, and provided information and confidential support to enable women to make informed choices in a safe environment. Each organisation offered its own variation of:

- Crisis counselling
- Temporary accommodation for women and children leaving abuse (refuge)
- Outreach
- Advocacy
- Resettlement support
- Information and support for issues such as housing, welfare and legal issues
- A children's and young person's service.
- Group programme

However, there were some differences between the two organisations. Notably, Women's Aid was much larger than Mandela, employing over 40 permanent staff members and providing support to approximately 1000 women each year. Further, while Women's Aid

could be described as a 'universalist' organisation - recognising the importance of intersectionality and accepting clients of all social identities – white, British women comprised the majority of its client base. This is in part because Mandela specifically provided support to BME women, so many BME women requiring a domestic violence service preferred, or were signposted by professionals, to seek support there. In Chapter 5 I discuss the concept of BME more broadly, and connect it to domestic violence service provision within this ethnography.

Mandela's specific BME remit can be connected to the black feminist violence against women movement and the emergence of specialist organisations, which I described in Chapter 2. Ultimately, their service mission stemmed from the organisation's stance: that BME women experiencing domestic violence can encounter additional barriers to help seeking, which must be accommodated for. Mandela recognised that additional difficulties can arise from certain cultural contexts in which BME women may be enmeshed - with personal, cultural and religious beliefs potentially making it harder for women to leave their abusive partners or seek help, inclusive of community stigma surrounding domestic violence. Interconnected to this, Mandela staff members provided support for other types of intimate gender-based violence that can affect BME women: forced marriage, 'honour'-based violence and female genital mutilation (FGM). Moreover, Mandela provided additional language support for its clients, appreciating that English might not be some BME women's first language. Staff members also had in-depth knowledge of immigration law, particularly in the context of domestic violence, which they used to support BME women with insecure immigration statuses. Finally, Mandela recognised that women may encounter or fear judgemental or racist responses from service providers, and therefore explicitly offered a safe space for BME women to seek help, without fear of discrimination. Mandela therefore provided additional room, time and resources for supporting BME women, to accommodate any compounding complexities in service users' cases. Many of its 20 or so staff identified as BME and spoke several languages, and they supported approximately 300 women each year.

During fieldwork both Women's Aid and Mandela sometimes employed staff members who spoke Polish. Women's Aid employed a worker who serendipitously spoke conversational Polish throughout the period of my data collection, although she only worked part-time as a 'drop-in' worker. As I detail in Chapter 4, this meant that often Polish women accessing refuge accommodation, outreach services and group work had to do so in English. However, when I returned to Edinburgh to complete my second stint of fieldwork, Women's Aid had recruited a women's support worker for refuge and outreach who was fluent in Polish. Unlike

Women's Aid, Mandela sometimes used translators in their work with clients, and I observed several sessions where Polish women were supported in this manner. Additionally, by chance, a woman then employed as an administrative worker at Mandela was Polish, and as more Polish cases were referred to the organisation she took on their casework. However, half way through my placement at Mandela, with this worker being on prolonged leave and the organisation feeling considerable financial strain, the organisation stopped offering its services to Polish clients. This is an event that I again discuss at greater length in Chapter 5. With this policy shift, there were no Polish clients for me to 'follow' at Mandela and consequently I cut short my placement at the organisation and returned to Women's Aid. In total, I spent eight months at Women's Aid and four months at Mandela, working three to four full-time days each week.

Day-to-Day Ethnography

Throughout my placements at the domestic violence organisations, I collected data via participant observation and, wherever suitable, employed ethnographic interviewing - conducting 'conversations with purpose', whilst embedded within the research context (Burgess 2002: 102). I talked with staff, attended meetings, read through case files, helped out with small menial tasks, and shadowed workers as they supported and advocated for clients. Day to day, I mostly sat in on crisis counselling sessions and assisted staff in providing support: making cups of tea, filling out forms, assisting with childcare, and sharing useful information where I could. Additionally, I accompanied clients and their advocacy workers to appointments outside of the organisations – for example to housing or benefits appointments, to advice shops and lawyers' offices, or to make statements to the police. I also accompanied staff when they visited women in refuge accommodation, going out to the refuges every week to check in and provide support if required. As these tasks mostly comprised activities typically delegated to new employees and students as they 'learn the ropes', my role developed to be that of 'some kind of team member' (Reiter-Theil 2004, Lewis and Russell 2011).

While my research focuses on the experiences of Polish women seeking help for domestic violence, during fieldwork I sat in on sessions with women from diverse backgrounds: Polish women, but also women from the UK and other countries, of different ages, religions, ethnic identities, and with different levels of health and disability. As the placements developed and I felt more confident in understanding the organisations' responses to domestic violence, I shadowed cases involving Polish women more frequently. Staff would additionally let me know if a Polish or Central Eastern European woman contacted the service, and told me about cases they thought I would be interested in.

Over time, I feel that I developed strong relationships with the women that worked at Mandela and Women's Aid. This reduced issues of reactivity and established a degree of trust and rapport between staff participants and myself (Spradley 2016: 54, Bernard 2011: 344). Staff members shared with me their wealth of experience in tackling domestic violence, which proved testament to the value of working with front-line practitioners. By virtue of operating within these service spaces, staff had developed contextualised perspectives that collated hundreds of stories of victimisation (Jewkes *et al* 2000: 14, Merry 2008: 520) - emerging as allegorical 'barometers' to domestic violence and help-seeking (Wies and Haldane 2011:2).

Negotiating Consent

When it came to establishing my contact with clients using the domestic violence organisations' services, a system of consent was developed: before a meeting started workers would privately explain they had a student on placement who was researching domestic violence. They would then ask the women if they felt comfortable with me sitting in on their sessions, stressing that they could opt out at any point. For Polish clients, staff explained specifically that I was interested in Polish women's experiences of help-seeking for domestic violence. Before starting my fieldwork, I had prepared letters of consent for each research participant to sign, but staff members felt this approach was too cumbersome and invasive for the day-to-day operations of the services. While respecting this, I made it clear to the women I met that I was happy to talk more about my research or how their information would be used, and offered a card with my contact details on, in case they had any further questions. This experience emphasised to me that implementing pre-determined practices for ethical purposes can sometimes prove difficult in real-time fieldwork interactions (Lewis and Russell 2011: 408-409, de Laine 2000, Fluehr-Lobban 2002), an observation which I reflect upon further later in this chapter. Almost all of the women agreed to my observing their interactions - even women who were nervous about accessing the service for the first time, or who appeared to be in periods of heightened trauma or crisis. I suspect that some women heard the word 'student' and agreed to my presence, just keen to progress with the meeting, however others said they felt it was important I understand their experiences, and wanted to contribute to knowledge brought about by domestic violence research.

Interviewing Women Who Experienced Domestic Violence

Leading on from participant observation, I conducted extended interviews with migrant women who had experienced domestic violence since coming to the UK. Doing so

introduced the grounded, individual accounts of participants into this ethnographic inquiry, and added a further dimension to analysis. Additionally, rather than relying solely on interactions and observable behaviour, during interviews the past and perceived future could be accessed via the present (Hockey 2002: 210-220). This element of data collection was used to patch together the biographic stories of participating women, particularly in relation to domestic violence and service engagement. Interviewing proved important for gaining understanding of victims' specific experiences of domestic violence. However, because of concerns about maintaining anonymity, I do not detail specificities of abuse in this thesis unless they are relevant to analysis. Nevertheless, given that such abuse usually takes place 'behind closed doors', I found that interviewing provided a means to overcome boundaries between private and public spheres of knowledge (also Collins 1998, Hockey 2002: 215, Mason 2002: 1, Edwards and Holland 2013: 90).

Initially, I exclusively sought out Polish women to interview but, as my attention turned to political economic issues that affected European women as a collective legislative group, I extended the scope of the interviews to include women from the other 'Accession' countries. In total, I interviewed 15 Polish women and eight women from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia. Although I attempted to recruit participants who had not previously been in contact with services, this proved difficult - an issue I reflect upon in the following sections. In all but one instance, I established contact with interview participants through the domestic violence organisations. Most were clients with whom I had worked at length during participant observation, and others were women who had exited the service, but whom staff anticipated would be positive about participating. I interviewed one further Polish woman I originally encountered as a professional, while I was mapping the service landscape in Edinburgh. During this time, she disclosed that she was a survivor of domestic violence, and was keen to give input into this research.

All the women I interviewed were relatively recent migrants, having come to the UK 'post Accession', following the enlargement of the EU in 2004. All had left their abusive partner(s) at least once prior to interview, and all had contacted an organisation or a statutory agency for support in the UK at some point. Only two of the women interviewed were still with their abusive partners at the time we spoke, and three more, to my knowledge, later re-engaged in their relationships where abuse had occurred. The ages of the women interviewed varied from 19 to 45 years of age, with most women being in their mid twenties to early thirties.[26] I interviewed some women only once, over a couple of hours, while others I interviewed

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[26] I also spoke to a great deal more women either side of this age range in shorter ethnographic interviews, during my participant observation at the domestic violence organisations.

several times, as their cases progressed over the 18 months of fieldwork. Interviews mostly took place at women's residences or refuges, but I also interviewed some women at the domestic violence organisation offices or met them in coffee shops, depending on their preference. In the ethnography presented in subsequent chapters, I use whole conversations captured directly from these interviews. However, I also, where necessary, embed these discussions within data retrieved from case notes and staff member accounts, in an attempt to weave a cohesive description of a particular story, issue or event.

Minimising Risk and Harm Posed to Participants

In the context of researching domestic violence, there is a well-documented risk of research engendering additional harm – of compromising physical safety and emotional wellbeing - for both participants and researchers (Langford 2000, Ellsberg *et al* 2001, Fontes 2004, Sullivan and Cain 2004). Heightened danger is documented for example, if a perpetrator hears of a victim's engagement with services or plans to leave, or if an outsider is perceived to be interfering in 'private business' (Jewkes *et al* 2000). In keeping with the ethical conduct and approach underpinning this research – which I specifically outline in the second half of this chapter - throughout the research process, it was critically important that victims' risk of additional harm from perpetrators was minimised. This required that victims' research participation be kept confidential at all times.

Consequently, in concordance with domestic violence research guidance and in consultation with service providers, a safety protocol was developed for this research, which delineated my methods of participant recruitment and data collection (Parker and Ulrich 1990, Langford 2000, Sullivan and Cain 2004). In accordance with this protocol, it was deemed unsafe to instigate contact with a woman if she was still thought to be with her abusive partner, or to visit a woman in her home, unless there was conclusively no risk of the perpetrator being present. While essential, these safety factors contributed to the difficulty of recruiting 'off the radar' participants experiencing domestic violence, who had not engaged with the domestic violence organisations. However, safety remained an issue even when recruiting participants through the domestic violence organisations. Employees were understandably concerned about contacting women who had long exited the service, because their relationship statuses were unknown, and unexpected contact from the organisation could have caused distress. Therefore, we only reached out to women who had a designated 'safe' phone number recorded in their case files, and established a single contact rule: staff would either message or phone previous service users to inform them of my research, and if they did not want to participate or if there was no response, they would not contact them again.

Protecting the emotional wellbeing of participants in this research was also paramount. This issue was most acute when interacting with victims of domestic violence, given the known risk of causing re-traumatisation or re-victimisation if interviews are not conducted appropriately (Ellsberg *et al* 2001:2, Heise and Ellbserg 2001). Therefore, when conducting interviews with women who had experienced domestic violence, I tried to ensure respondents felt comfortable, safe, believed and respected, and knew that they could stop the interview at any time (Jewkes *et al* 2000). Other anthropologists researching domestic violence, such as McClusky (2001) and Hautzinger (2007), have favoured a formal, professionalised approach to interviewing, which reportedly overcame participant discomfort about disclosing their experiences. However, I employed an informal participant-led approach, which seemed to work well for participants, and helped to make them feel their priorities were heard. Nonetheless, if a participant became upset I would halt the session, unless they confirmed they wanted to proceed. This only occurred on one occasion; generally, participants seemed to feel positive about engaging with this research and some reported finding the interviews supportive, cathartic or empowering. This mirrors the observations of researchers who have conducted interviews about experiences of domestic violence (Jewkes *et al* 2000, Heise and Ellbserg 2001) and in other emotive subject areas (Collins 1998, Rager 2005).

Conducting Research with Children

While both Women's Aid and Mandela supported children, I did not seek to interview minors or frequently shadow the children's workers. This was for both practical and ethical reasons. Children's support sessions often took place at schools, and were geographically dispersed across Edinburgh. Consequently, travelling to and from these visits (especially when using public transport) often occupied a large proportion of the day. I additionally required pre-approved parental consent to attend these appointments, which further complicated logistics. Most importantly though: while children's voices are crucial for informing domestic violence research, I was concerned that my presence and inexperience of interviewing potentially traumatised children could cause additional distress or impede therapeutic outcomes. This clearly outweighed any potential benefits of having children participate in this work.

Language

The biggest issue I encountered when engaging with Polish participants, which altered my role as a researcher and limited data collection, was my inability to proficiently speak Polish. Classically, learning and communicating solely in the native language of the people 'being

studied' has been a cornerstone of the anthropological method (Burgess 2002, Bernard 2011). Both prior to and during fieldwork, I pursued learning Polish. However, several practical issues, combined with my fieldwork being situated in primarily English-speaking settings, meant that I did not get the chance to develop a strong command of the language. After several months in the field my language ability was such that I could understand parts of conversations in Polish. However, I soon became aware that within the timeframe of data collection I would be unable to achieve proficiency to the extent that I could competently interview participants in Polish. Given the sensitivity of the research topic, I felt the ethics of this were heightened. I was particularly concerned about talking to women about their intimate and potentially traumatic experiences of domestic violence without a nuanced understanding of the language in which the interview was being conducted. Therefore, I focused on using my basic Polish as an 'ice breaking' tool – for greetings and making introductions, playing with children, and using singular words to press my understanding where relevant.

Naturally, my inability to fluently speak Polish inhibited the sort of data I could collect – a limitation I would work to amend should I conduct a similar project again. I felt constrained particularly in my efforts to recruit and interview Polish women who had not contacted services. Unless other Polish people were present to translate for me, I was limited to interacting with Poles that spoke English well – possibly the easiest of the 'hard to reach'. Language difference was also an issue when interviewing participants recruited through the domestic violence organisations. Nevertheless, I worked hard to provide options that would facilitate involvement for all willing participants. For example, I always informed women that it was possible to conduct interviews via a third-party translator. Two women I spoke to had friends accompany them to interviews and assist with translation, and Polish-speaking workers at the domestic violence organisations kindly gave up their time to interpret for five other women.

However, within the interview cohort more than three-quarters of participants spoke English well. This could be connected to English-speaking women potentially being more likely to engage with services from the outset, or to maintain engagement for a sustained period of time. Yet some women I interviewed, who struggled to communicate with the domestic violence organisations initially, significantly developed their English language ability after first engaging with services. Women who left their partners subsequently reported encountering new opportunities to learn English, and the domestic violence organisations would routinely

signpost new non-English speaking clients to free English classes.[27] Furthermore, women who entered into refuge lived in shared accommodation, where they were often surrounded daily by native English speakers.

Mapping the Third Sector and Interviewing Professionals

As part of my 'following' domestic violence (Appadurai 1986, Marcus 1995), I identified and mapped services that in some way dealt with and responded to domestic violence in Edinburgh. Alongside my engagement with Women's Aid and Mandela, I contacted countless organisations across the statutory and third sectors, informing them of my research and requesting a meeting with an appropriate member of staff. Each meeting commonly involved me asking about the services provided by the organisation, its funding sources, and participants' experiences of domestic violence and service provision in the context of Polish nationals. Interviews varied in length from 30 minutes to more than an hour. I met with staff from some organisations on more than one occasion; for example, I spent two shifts at a homeless charity, once in the day and once in the evening, talking with employees, going over case studies and assisting with outreach activities.

From the statutory sector, I interviewed four police officers from community liaison and public protection units, nine social workers working across areas such as child protection and criminal justice, three doctors, and domestic abuse leads for Edinburgh Council and NHS Midlothian. From the third sector organisations, I spoke with employees from Rape Crisis, an alcohol misuse service, a homeless charity, children's support charities, race equality organisations, as well as with five charities that provided support specifically to BME populations in areas such as social integration, mental health, counselling and employment. I additionally traced and spoke with staff from the small number of organisations whose services were targeted particularly towards Polish migrants: a family support centre, a benefits advice shop, a counselling service, and the Polish Catholic Church in Edinburgh. I spoke with academics working in related research areas and, finally, interviewed members of domestic violence organisations based outside of Edinburgh, who wanted to give input into my research. In total, I interviewed 45 professionals. My interview sample included a number of professionals who were Polish nationals. With some Polish clients accessing services being unable to communicate in English, Polish-speaking members of staff often had the most Polish clients on their caseload, and therefore had the most direct experience relevant to my research.

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[27] I analyse the significance of language difference in the context of domestic violence and service provision in Chapter 4.

While mapping the domestic violence sector was useful for contextualising service provision, when it came to discussing perspectives on domestic violence and service engagement with Polish families, I found that I eventually encountered a degree of response saturation, with many service providers repeating similar abstracted or generalised observations. Despite the breadth of the professional interviews, I felt some responses to be relatively 'shallow' in comparison to the data collected through participant observation. Perhaps this is testament to Lambert and McKevitt's assertion: that significance, and forms of reasoning in action, cannot always be captured orally – especially in one-off interviews, which rather can result in participants' recourse to orthodox responses (2002: 211). Therefore, while I draw on this data to discuss what the perceived 'problems' were with domestic violence service provision in a Polish migrant context, I focus primarily on direct case studies and participant observation in my analysis.

Safer Families' Respekt Project

I worked in collaboration with Safer Families Edinburgh throughout fieldwork – a department connected to Edinburgh Council's social work services. Just as fieldwork commenced, Safer Families received funding from the Scottish government to pilot a project called Respekt, which delivered a behaviour change programme to Polish men perpetrating domestic violence, and provided separate support for the men's current or ex-partners (all of whom incidentally were Polish). In keeping with the problem statement that first instigated this doctoral research, Respekt was established in response to social workers' concerns about there being a high prevalence of domestic violence cases involving Polish families, many of which seemed to result in unsuccessful case outcomes.[28] Respekt was delivered entirely in Polish by Polish-speaking social workers, and over the course of two years sought to identify and respond to Polish clients' specific service needs.

I worked with the Respekt workers collaboratively, joined its steering committee and attended regular meetings with the staff. After 18 months of the pilot, staff developed a toolkit aimed to help statutory professionals better support Polish families experiencing domestic violence. My research was used to inform this toolkit and I gave editorial input. It has since been made into a resource available to all social work departments and other interested professionals in Scotland, and was shared amongst police forces in England and Wales. I later received an ESRC impact award as a result of my involvement in this work, from the North East Doctoral Training Centre.

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[28] This significance of 'unsuccessful outcomes' here centres on aspects such as clients' negative or non-engagement with services, the ineffective management of risk posed to victims and their children, and the continuance of abusive behavior.

Lastly, I was commissioned to conduct an evaluation of Respekt, to identify its service strengths and scope for improvement. This involved me interviewing six staff members, five referring professionals and service users: two women who had experienced abuse and were being supported by staff, and three men undertaking the behaviour change course. These men were the only perpetrators of domestic violence I knowingly encountered during fieldwork. These interactions were made possible by the safety measures put in place within the specific institutional setting. Additionally, anonymous feedback forms were distributed amongst service users, and I analysed case files on the social work department's computer system, to identify the dynamics of Respekt's interventions and their impact on clients' cases. All interview participants volunteered to participate, and data collected from these discussions – particularly those relating to service provider experiences - have been used to inform this research.

The Mechanics of Data Collection and Analysis

Note Taking: Throughout fieldwork, data was collected through my taking notes. In situations where note taking was not appropriate, I observed events closely and then wrote my notes as soon as possible after the session was over. All transcripts of conversations presented in this thesis therefore are not always verbatim, however I have taken the utmost care to ensure the significance and intent of participants' statements have been maintained. While audio recordings of conversations would have aided the accuracy of transcripts, no organisation or individuals participating in the ethnography consented to recording, given the sensitivity and delicacy of the subject being researched.

Confidentiality: Beyond the abovementioned safety protocols that related to confidentiality, which I expand on in the second half of this chapter, the identities of all participants were automatically anonymised when entered into fieldnotes. Further, all information of a sensitive or confidential nature was stored securely at all times. I have observed a strict policy of confidentiality throughout this research; all names have been changed and where possible I have tried to abstract details from the ethnographic examples I present, to prevent individuals from being identified.

Data Analysis: After finishing fieldwork, I spent several months reading through the data I had collected. With the multitude of sites, angles and perspectives I explored during my time in the field, I was left with a complex mass of information, the unpacking of which has been conceptually challenging and labour intensive. In an attempt to organise my data I used the qualitative analysis software, NVivo. Using this programme, I coded interview transcripts and ethnographic entries from my fieldnotes into thematic categories. However, these categories

were only used to inform the arguments formed within this thesis, as I was concerned that too rigid an approach might constrain the direction and content of my analysis, without enhancing the empirical or overall quality of my work (Lambert and McKevitt 2002: 210). My thesis however, still focuses on constellations of significance that emerged during this ethnography. Throughout my analysis, I connect these constellations to existent domestic violence and anthropological literature, as well as to institutional reports and policies.

Including the Experiences of Other European Women

As I noted in the introduction, despite the initial anticipation that this research would focus on issues of 'cultural competence' in the context of domestic violence service provision for Polish nationals, as fieldwork progressed my analysis turned to the salience of the state and political economic practices in shaping women's experiences. Amidst this, it became apparent that these practices were also relevant to the experiences of other European migrant women, because of their specific European migrant status and subsequent bureaucratic, legislative and organisational postitionings. This was especially the case for women originating from other Central and Eastern European countries, known collectively as the 'Accession states'. This is because women from these states tended to be associated with coming from relatively poorer post-Soviet economies in 'Eastern Europe', and were subject to targeted anti-migrant rhetoric and practices in Britain (see e.g. Fox *et al* 2012, Spigelman 2013, Balch and Balabanova 2016). Interconnected, these women also tended to have migrated relatively recently, had fewer socioeconomic resources, and occupied low-paid, less secure modes of employment (Drinkwater *et al* 2009, Sumption and Somerville 2010). Certainly, this was predominantly the case in the context of the women accessing the domestic violence organisations in this ethnography. However, as Adelman notes it is important to remember that women with the least capital are more likely to require institutional support, and therefore fall under the gaze of statutory services (2017: 190).

As I identified in Chapter 2, the situational commonalities of domestic violence experiences amongst 'Eastern European' women have also been noted elsewhere, by Thiara (2011) in her evaluation of a domestic violence service pilot. Given this observed continuity, and that my analysis in this thesis centres on constellational matters of situation, state practices and legislation – my investigation expands, where relevant, to include the stories of other Central Eastern European migrant women. This is because in many of the ethnographic descriptions that I present in this thesis, the issues that I describe Polish women encountering could easily have been, and indeed were, present in the help-seeking stories of Romanian, Latvian and Lithuanian women alike. For the sake of coherent articulation, my analysis continues primarily to attend to Polish women's experiences. However, throughout this thesis I try to

incorporate the wider salience of my findings for other European nationals, particularly from Central and Eastern Europe.

Applied Feminist Anthropology and Epistemology

The 'epistemology of fieldwork' in anthropology highlights the import of casting a critical gaze over the ways in which research aims, methods, field context and researcher characteristics can mould, or indeed co-produce, a project's knowledge output (Halstead *et al* 2008, De Sardan and Alou 2015). The second part of this chapter goes beyond the mechanics of the project's methodology, to consider how researcher positionality, theoretical orientation and ethics intertwined with practical limitations that I described in the previous section, to shape the knowledge this research has produced. In doing so I contextualise this project's epistemology as bound to practice.

Researcher Positionality

It is important in all anthropological work to acknowledge the complexity of positionalities, for both the researcher and the research participants involved (MacDowell 1992: 409, Haraway 2003, Harding 1992, 2004). As Burgess notes, gender, age, ethnicity, social status, and any other signifier that attaches the researcher to a certain social grouping creates an immediate impression on research participants - changing, limiting or expanding the possible role of the investigator and the data collected (2002: 104). In this section I will briefly reflect on key aspects of my own positionality, primarily by outlining some of the ways in which I fluctuated between that of 'insider' and 'outsider' during fieldwork,[29] and reflect upon the impact this had on the data collected. Although anthropologists have traditionally depicted themselves as 'outsiders' studying others, my reflections below emphasise Collins' (2002) argument that researcher positionality is multiplex, and should be viewed through the metaphor of continuum.

Certainly, my gender shaped my access to field sites. Particularly, it permitted access to and inclusion within the 'women-only' spaces of the domestic violence organisations. However, it also limited my ability to safely explore other research avenues, such as the perspectives of perpetrators. Thus, my gender can be seen as integral in fashioning the data collected; it too was relevant in the context of my interviews with female victims, who were perhaps more

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[29] This is something Babior (2011) also discusses in relation to her research on women's shelters in Japan, wherein she contends that 'insider' and 'outsider' positionalities are heightened in ethnographic contexts that require researchers to work with victims of abuse and domestic violence advocates.

comfortable or willing to talk with me about certain aspects of their relationships, than if I were a man (Reinharz and Davidman 1992: 55). Yet beyond this I was aware that, in my interactions with survivors of domestic violence, there was an inescapable gulf in my own experiential understanding, since I had never known the lived reality of domestic violence, or of being a Polish/transnational migrant, newly arrived to Edinburgh. Further, as I had no connection to Poland or Polish migrants prior to commencing this project, I was aware that as an 'outsider' researching this topic, my research could be viewed by participants as potentially meddlesome or stigmatising - drawing negative attention towards Polish migrants. Participant concerns about this could have been especially heightened, as fieldwork took place at a time when Poles, along with other European migrants, were subject to much hostility in public discourse (Spigelman 2013, Balch and Balabanova 2006). Collectively, these aspects, alongside other positional features such as my relatively young age and single marital status, will have influenced the ways in which women discussed their experiences of domestic violence with me (Ellsberg and Heise 2001:15, Reinharz and Davidman1992: 56). However, over time, I worked to build rapport and trust with participants - an unquestionable asset of the ethnographic method (Bernard 2011: 344). This, combined with the particular framing of my research - exploring Polish women's experiences to further knowledge and policy development - hopefully mitigated the limiting effects of my social identity.

I additionally had to negotiate my positionality when interacting with service providers, where again I found myself vacillating between being 'outside' and 'within'. Before undertaking this PhD I had already worked on several projects involving domestic violence. So, despite hailing from the extraneous 'ivory towers' of academia, by the end of my fieldwork I had developed practical working experience across a number of domestic violence service providers, which provided me with a perspective that staff members found interesting and, at times, helpful. Furthermore, my mother is a domestic violence social worker and has worked for a number of years in Aberdeenshire. She had even previously met some of the research participants at national training events. Service providers were enthused if I told them about this - my having domestic violence work 'in the family' added a perceived level of personal significance to the research. It also seemed to put staff at ease; because I 'understood' the domestic violence sector and was in some respects 'one of them', participants seemed less wary of me being unsympathetic to their perspectives, and the real-world limitations of professional practice. This is not to suggest that there was never discord in my encounters with different service providers. This issue was perhaps most acute when I changed field locations, leaving one organisational space and entering another. At times I found myself having to re-negotiate my identity or performance for different field sites, mindful that the

politics and ethics of working in one situation reflected in my relationships in another. Marcus contends that experiences such as this are common when using the multi-sited method, and are most heightened when researchers alternate between ideologically and institutionally divergent settings (1995: 215).

In this section then, it becomes apparent that my 'insider/outsider' positioning as a researcher was never totalised; yet, it dialogically shaped my interactions with participants in different contexts. This varyingly limited and expanded the potential knowledge produced. This speaks to Collins' (2002) depiction of mutually constituted selves in fieldwork interactions: where researcher positionality is necessarily penumbral, and meaning is precipitated in and through a 'we experience'. Having attended to the specificities of my social and physical positionality during fieldwork, I will next reflect more broadly on my motivational and theoretical orientations, and how these have become interwoven with the epistemology of this thesis.

An Applied, Moral, Feminist Anthropology

A driving motivation in the conceptualisation and execution of this project was to create an applied anthropological effort - an attempt to fashion 'knowledge for use' (Singer 1993) and merge accountable, critical reflection with practical application (Herzfield 2001). This aim is highlighted in my research question, 'What can anthropological analysis bring to current understandings of domestic violence and service engagement, in both theoretical and applied ways?' The entirety of the PhD process has been a journey of discovery in this regard, and my endeavours to explore this question go beyond the confines of the thesis here presented. In this section, I will briefly discuss the reasoning behind my applied anthropological ethos and how it has shaped my work, and then I proceed to detail some of the ways in which I have pursued dissemination and application in practice.

A significant proportion of contemporary anthropological studies deal with inequalities, violence and human rights violations that blight the world around us. Unquestionably, these topics are interesting anthropologically, given their accentuation of complexities such as subjectivity, sociality, power and resistance. However, beyond this Fassin (2008) claims this focus demonstrates a moral turn in anthropology - moral in the sense that anthropology is working more than ever before to make visible, and significant, exclusion and suffering, which is so often taken for granted. Indeed, some anthropologists argue that focus on such subjects alone can equate to acts of solidarity: through seeing, hearing and documenting, anthropology can be situated as bearing witness to inequality and hardship, rather than being a mere spectator (Scheper-Hughes 1994, 1995, Farmer 1996, 2004, 2005, Fassin

2008). Yet anthropology's penchant for theoretical abstraction has been criticised for both sanitising and aestheticising suffering - detaching readers from its banal materiality and consequences, and thereby minimising it's lived significance (Scheper-Hughes 1995: 439, Fassin 2008). As Scheper-Hughes writes, people in difficulty want not the anthropology of the deconstructed social imaginary, but the anthropology of the 'really real,' where its value is certain (1995: 438).

Scheper-Hughes' (1990, 1995) observations actuate the value of applied anthropology; underpinning this approach is the impellent to generate knowledge that is productive and accountable (also Bennett 1996, Van Willigen 2002, Rylko-Bauer *et al* 2006). As she notes, such a methodology is particularly important for research that takes place in contexts where lives and welfare are indisputably at stake. Certainly, this applies to the context of the present study, and to wider research in the field of domestic violence. Consequently, I felt compelled in my research approach to try to produce knowledge that is wanted, accessible, accountable, and has potentially applicable or impactful dimensions. I have attempted to achieve these aims throughout my PhD work in a number of ways, both practically and conceptually. Firstly, as I highlighted in the Introduction, I consulted with service providers to establish a desired and relevant research topic, and throughout my doctoral degree I have worked collaboratively with organisations, forming dialogues that have informed my research and analytical practice. Continuing the theme of dialogue, my completed thesis will be made available those who have contributed towards it and, in the production of this work, I have tried to avoid the use of impenetrable prose so that it may be intelligible to participants and non-academic audiences, as well as to anthropologists and other academics alike (Scheper-Hughes 1995: 417). To date, I have additionally disseminated knowledge in other arenas and by other means: I have shared information and knowledge with service providers throughout fieldwork; I participated in the development of the Respekt toolkit and its launch; and I held a coffee morning to express thanks and receive feedback on my analysis from women who participated in interviews. [30]

However, I have also endeavoured to fulfil my applied, moral anthropological aims through the conceptual framing of this thesis. In this body of work, I have attempted to create a critical discourse which raises awareness about some of the differential and marginalising issues that Polish and other European women can encounter when experiencing and

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[30] In Chapter 8 I additionally present some core policy recommendations that I have identified through this research. From this, I intend to produce a debrief paper for interested parties, which will highlight the key findings of this project and include the policy recommendations asserted in the conclusion, alongside other relevant observations that I have not had the space to include within thesis.

seeking help for domestic violence. Indeed, my primary focus on the political and economic regulation of Polish women is deliberately polemical and, as I asserted in the introduction, serves to expand domestic violence research focus beyond oft-used individual-scale explanations. This ties in with Strathern's observation about anthropological work: that representations of social reality are necessarily polemical, but their value lies in presenting perspectives from which the world can be apprehended anew (1990:19).

This research approach was partly formulated in cognisance of there being examples where anthropologists have not used their voices reflexively, in matters relating to domestic violence. Reddy (2002) for example, claims that increasingly in America anthropologists are appearing as expert witnesses to bolster 'culture defence' strategies in intimate-partner homicide trials.[31] Although the court cases that Reddy references occurred in the late 80s and mid 90s, there are also more recent examples of problematic anthropological work. Fox (2015) for example, in a report funded by the alcohol industry, links violent behaviour to culture and refutes there being a relationship between alcohol and violence. While the link between domestic violence and alcohol is complex and remains heavily debated (e.g. Finney 2004), Fox does not sufficiently engage with this literature and instead asserts an argument so dichotomous and polarised, that it seemingly benefits the funders of her study at the expense of anthropological nuance.[32] While there is value in having a variety of perspectives to inform debate, in the subject area of gender-based violence - where perpetration, legitimisation, 'victim-blaming' and 'victim-silencing' are rife (Westmarland 2015) - non-reflexive approaches and discourses can prove acutely detrimental. Fundamentally, they can cause direct harm to victims, and hamper wider attempts to tackle domestic violence. This observation parallels Nattrass' (2012) research on AIDS conspiracy theories and denialism, where she argues that such discourses undermined trust in antiretroviral treatments and prevention strategies, endangering the lives of hundreds of thousands of South Africans.

In keeping with my motivations to occupy my research with an applied, moral and accountable anthropology, my approach is necessarily feminist. This is firstly because of my research focus on domestic violence - a gendered phenomenon that disproportionately

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[31] For example, she cites two separate cases in American courts where migrant men, originally from China, had killed their wives, and anthropological testimony aided in the reduction of the men's charges and sentences. Reddy argues that the testimony, which focussed on the mitigating nature of the defendants' 'cultural backgrounds', mobilised a problematic depiction of culture – as determinist, relativist, monolithic and static - and served to legitimise patriarchal traditions and abuse within immigrant families (see also Rosen 1977, Magnarella 1991, Volpp 1994).

[32] For a more detailed critique, see Jackson and Kypri (2016).

affects the lives of women worldwide. However, feminist principles also align with my methodological approach. Given that there is no consensus on a delineated definition for feminism, I should make clear that my research is not feminist to the extent that in my analysis I continuously attend to the significance of gender (although it is of course significant). Nevertheless, my work is women-centred; it privileges women's voices and experiences, and attends to the inequalities that they are exposed to in this ethnography (Rosaldo *et al* 1974, Moore 1988, Reinharz and Davidman1992: 51). Ultimately, in my methodological approach I have investigated domestic violence and help-seeking issues inductively, but from a vantage point informed by and accountable to feminist research and activist goals (Hautzinger 2007: 13).

In presenting my research as being oriented towards an applied, moral, feminist anthropology, I am aware I open up my analysis to criticism - where detractors may question the possibility of achieving objectivity in research that adopts such methodological alignments (Strathern 1987, D'Andrade 1995). However, it is important to stress that the arguments presented in this thesis were critically formed *a posteriori*, and the observations and representations of events in my analysis remain 'as objective as possible' (Scheper-Hughes 1992: 28, Fassin 2008: 443). Borne of this approach then, is an attempt to produce work that Scheper-Hughes might call a 'good enough' ethnography (1992: 28). Moreover, I concur with Fassin that anthropology always will, and in fact should require a degree of problematisation - an assertion that highlights the need for consistent methodological and moral reflexivity in anthropological research (2008: 444). Perhaps, as Lambert and McKevitt argue, perceived methodological issues with anthropological work lie not in the scope or quality of the methods used, but in the misguided perception that methods can be separated from theory in research practice (2002: 210).

To summarise, when devising this project I wanted the knowledge my work produced to be productive - to be generative and constructive. Further, I wanted to orient my thesis towards moral anthropology; moral in the sense that it attends to the 'banal' inequalities and violences that the women in this ethnography encountered. However, also moral in the sense that my research gives 'primacy to the ethical' (Scheper-Hughes 1995), as knowledge from this research is created, presented and shared. Inextricable from this endeavour was the need to centralise the ethics of researching domestic violence in my investigative practice, as I will go on to discuss in the following section.

Although I have interwoven the ethical specificities of this project throughout this chapter, here I will explicitly demarcate my ethical practice. I received approval from the University of Durham's Ethics Committee to carry out this work, and all research was conducted in line with the Association of Social Anthropologists' (ASA) Ethical Guidelines for Good Research Practice (2011). As per the guidelines' stipulations, considerations were made to ensure: that research participants were protected and their trust honoured; that potential harms were anticipated and avoided/minimised; and that no undue intrusion into the private spaces of participants occurred. As ethical considerations are heightened when investigating domestic violence, this research also followed the WHO's Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Researching Violence Against Women (Heise *et al* 2011), and Ellsberg and Heise's (2002) guide to researching domestic violence. In addition to these guidelines I adhered to the safety and ethics policies of Scottish Women's Aid and other participating organisations, as per the negotiated access agreements.

Beyond this, ethical conduct was conceptualised as being irreducible to a predetermined statement of intent or set practices that, when deployed too rigidly, risk exteriorising ethics from mercurial field sites and the everyday interactions that occur within (Lewis and Russell 2011: 408-409, Meskell and Pels 2005: 1). Ethical conduct was instead conceived of as *processual* - as evolving throughout both the research process and the production of anthropological knowledge, as new dilemmas emerged and developed (Simpson 2011: 387). Ethics were therefore embedded in praxis and required an on-going negotiation with research participants, but also with my supervisors, Scottish Women's Aid advisors, and my wider doctoral peer network (Lewis and Russell 2011). As I described earlier in this chapter, the most pertinent ethical consideration in this research was that of participant safety. Certainly, safety considerations limited aspects of data collection, which in turn shaped the epistemological possibilities of fieldwork. Of course, ethical issues in anthropology arise not only in the design and operationalisation of research, but also after data collection, when writing up and publishing findings (Simpson 2011) – as I will consider in the following, final section of this chapter.

The Politics of Representation

When presenting domestic violence research there are risks of facile categorisation, stereotyping and disempowerment (Sokoloff and Dupont 2005) - both conceptual and concrete - which go beyond the universal issues of authoriality, polyvocality and subalternism present in anthropology today (Said 1979, Clifford and Marcus 1986, Spivak 1988). Consequently, paralleling Hautzinger's concerns about investigating domestic

violence within a localised community, throughout the process of writing this thesis, I have been 'nagged by my own potential to do violence as an author' (2007:274). In this section, I will discuss some of the ethical complexities that arose in the writing of this work and outline my attempts to mitigate them, reflecting firstly upon this project's use of vocabulary, and then its representation of participants, and domestic violence.

As I suggested in the Introduction, because ethnographic research took place in Scotland, the Scottish Executive's (2003) operational definition of domestic violence was key in shaping the scope and parameters of this study. I highlighted that in its definition the Scottish Executive uses the terminology 'domestic abuse'. This is an appellation that reflects policy makers' attempts to move away from out-dated understandings of abuse that centre on physical violence. As Westmarland (2015: 2) explains, this change in terminology comes in response to research that emphasises overt physical violence comprises but one dimension of the abuse that victims' experience, and that there are many other behaviours that can engender coercive control and risk of serious harm (e.g. Stark 1995, 2007). However, while remaining cognisant of the myriad forms, both physical and non-physical, that abuse can take, I continue to use the term domestic *violence* in this work. I do this in part because of the term's international ubiquity, both colloquially and in the context of academia, but also to emphasise the destructive force that domestic violence can have on personal integrity: the fear and suffering it can cause, and its ability to hinder human self-realisation (Galtung 1969, Anderson and Richards 2004: 6).

To proceed, I must also attend to the terminology I use in this text when referring to individuals who experience and commit domestic violence. The identity politics involved in the vocabulary used to name domestic violence dynamics and positionalities - such as 'victim' and 'perpetrator' - have long been problematised in research and public discourse. Kelly (1988) was amongst the first to critique the label of 'victimhood', when ascribed to women who have experienced sexual violence. She argued that the term carries misleading and negative connotations which ascribe evaluative characteristics such as helplessness, passivity, powerlessness, and that of being 'permanently damaged'. Instead she championed the use of the term 'survivor', which is increasingly used in academic and professional circles (e.g. Gondolf and Fisher 1988, Best 1997, Loseke 1992, 1999) in a bid to emphasise the resilience of women - to highlight agency and resistance, over despair

(Kelly 1988).[33] Echoing the debates presented in Chapter 2, others have stressed the potential of the term 'victim' to homogenise the diverse experiences of women. This is an issue, for example, that Mookherjee (2015) highlights in her research on public representations of women who experienced sexual violence in Bangladesh. While acknowledging the import of this literature, I contest the binary between victim and survivor in my analysis and depiction of women's positionalities. Consequently, in this thesis I prioritise use of the given names of the women that feature within this ethnography. However, where it remains necessary to discuss those who have experienced domestic violence as a collective, I use the term 'victim' as interchangeable with that of 'survivor'. In doing so, I wish to emphasise individual agency and resilience but simultaneously recognise the violation and harm involved in the exertion of domestic violence (Gupta 2014).

Similarly, the terms 'perpetrator' and 'abuser' carry significant political weight, although their use has received less critical attention within academic literature. However, Corvo and Johnson (2003) have criticised the use of synonymous terminology such as 'batterer', which is commonplace in America. They argue this appellation obscures the contexts in which men become violent in relationships, and creates a rhetoric of blame that posits men as undeserving of therapeutic interventions, which could in some circumstances alleviate domestic violence. Nevertheless, these terms comprised part of the mainstream vocabulary used by domestic violence service providers during fieldwork, to describe individuals who commit domestic violence.[34] For the lack of better terminology, in this thesis I likewise use the terms 'perpetrators', 'abusers' or 'abusive partners', in line with the vocabulary used by interlocutors. However, I do so tentatively and again, wherever possible, I use the given names of the abusive men who feature in this ethnography.

A further ethical dilemma that I encountered as I started to write this thesis was that of representation – of how to describe and depict the experiences, actions and beliefs of those whom feature in this work. As the above discussion describes, delineated narrations of domestic violence in research can have disempowering affects for individual participants, and misrepresent domestic violence dynamics. Therefore, the writing in this thesis attempts to uphold personal autonomy in its depiction of individuals – a principle which domestic

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[33] 'Victim' has further been criticised because its imaginary establishes a 'virginal', archetypal aesthetic, which apportions blame or denies legitimacy to those whom do not fit its unattainable, political 'ideal'. Estrich (1987) and Adler (1987) most notably discuss this in their work on rape, however there are similar critiques that apply to notions of victimhood in the context of domestic violence (Davies *et al* 1998, Loseke 1992, 1999, Gondolf and Fisher 1988).

[34] Victim and survivor were also mainstream service provider vocabulary that I encountered during fieldwork. However, these terms were used varyingly across organisations. The police and social services, for example, tended to use 'victim' while 'survivor' was more commonplace in Women's Aid and Mandela.

violence researchers identify as being particularly important when engaging with and portraying victims, given that they can often be presented as 'helpless' and 'passive' agents (Heise and Ellsberg 2002). Thus, I ground my analysis within a perspective of 'situated agency'; an aspect that has been specifically championed for researching violence against women by Vera-Grey (2016). Developing this perspective from de Beauvoir's (2014[1949]) seminal works on gender, Vera-Grey argues that the conceptualisation of agency as situated permits understanding and articulation of the constraining, intersectional context of gender based violence, without viewing this constraint as evidence of women's lack of agency, resistance or resilience. Although situated agency here is deployed in the context of patriarchal oppression, I extend its significance to wider political economic intersectionalities in the body of this thesis. This perspective echoes many intersectional works on domestic violence (e.g. Hilsdon 2007, Campbell and Mannell 2016), as well as approaches adopted by other anthropologists researching gender-based violence (e.g. McClusky 2001, Hautzinger 2007, Adelman 2004, 2017).

An additional representational concern, which in many respects parallels the abovementioned use of terminology, is the risk that my focus on ethnographic constellations of significance in this thesis could be misconstrued as homogenising and thus flattening Polish women's experiences of domestic violence and service engagement. However, while my focus on the political and economic regulation of Polish women does draw attention to a certain patterning of experience, through my use of ethnography as both a method and an output, I hope to contextualise the messiness of women's experiences and interactions. Indeed, by grounding my analysis in women's voices and stories, I give space for incorporating the particular as much as the general, and tensions as much as consensus (Murchison 2010: 221).

The risk of engendering negative stereotyping and/or homogenisation also applies to my representations of abusive men. Perpetrators' voices are notably absent from this research; in part, this is because of the previously mentioned practical issues that shaped my methods. However additionally, since the first conception of this study, their experiences have not been the focus of this research. Yet, at times, I have still had to portray perpetrator's actions within this work, to contextualise accounts of abuse. As Schmidt and Schröder (2001) describe, the representation of violence is often difficult for anthropologists, since rarely are they in a position to observe violent events directly. This means that information must instead be extracted from participants' narratives after the fact, which detaches ethnographers from the usual synchronicity of participant observation, and where multiple perspectives may not be available. This, the authors write, can erode the

vicissitudes and polysemantics of violence, which must be recognised in anthropological writing. Therefore, I concur with their assertion that ethnographers do not extract 'the truth' of violent events, but rather add another (*ibid*: 13). With these reflections in mind, my portrayal of perpetrator's actions within this thesis remains deliberately sparse. They are furnished only by service provider reports of events and the disclosed occurrences of the women who experienced the abuse. My accounts of abuse in this thesis therefore do not serve to identify cause or meaning, but rather focus on core performative and experiential elements, to contextualise the ethnographic interactions that I observed and present (Hautzinger 2007: 275).

Finally, issues relating to representation equally apply to the service providers with whom I worked, who exposed themselves in good faith to anthropological scrutiny. Disclosures in this thesis or in later publications could have professional and social consequences for employees, and the organisations they work for. I have tried to mitigate the risk of these consequences in my writing by providing an objective yet empathetic reading of organisational praxis, recognising the difficult and important nature of domestic violence service provision, and its hindrance in the political economic context of this ethnography. To summarise my deliberations in this section: applied anthropological methodologies can complicate issues of ethics and representation (Bennet 1996: 533), however these complexities are undoubtedly heightened in the context of domestic violence research. In a bid to respond to these complexities in my writing, I have consulted ASA (2011) guidelines and academic literature, to reflexively negotiate and respond to these issues as they arose.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach and conceptual underpinnings of this thesis. I have identified critical, practical and ethical issues in researching domestic violence, particularly amidst populations that might be described as a 'minority group' or 'hard to reach'. Research was conducted via multi-sited ethnography, permitting me to 'follow' domestic violence and the people that experience it, across different services in Edinburgh. Ethnographic data collected from participant observation and interviews, in a variety of settings, are used to ground participants' experiences of domestic violence and help-seeking, both within their individual lives, and in their own terms. This chapter delineated my research as an applied, feminist anthropological effort, and reflected upon the ways in which practical methodological issues and theoretical orientations have intertwined with the knowledge here produced. In doing so I have identified the epistemology of this research as being both inherently intersectional and bound to practice. Moreover, I have justified my overall thesis focus – providing a critical discourse on the political economic regulation of

Polish migrant women, as they experienced and sought support for domestic violence in Edinburgh. The following chapter comprises the first of four results chapters, and begins this critical discourse by connecting the regulation of the UK border to women's experiences of abuse and service engagement.

4. Domestic Violence, Migrant Intersectionalities and Vacillating Borders

In this chapter I explore Polish women's encounters with borders and the boundaries they engender, as they experienced domestic violence and engaged with services. The territorial borders of states, and the internal societal boundaries they produce, have long been important sites of investigation for anthropologists - with both being connected to processes of differentiation and marginalisation, for particular populations that encounter them (e.g. Appadurai 1996, Gupta and Ferguson 1992, Fassin 2011, Vertovec 2007, Kaiser 2012, Scott 2012). However, as Lamont and Molnár emphasise, in such analyses there often remains a lack of attention to the particular positionalities, processes and conditions that generate this differentiation (2002: 187). I attempt to identify these conditions here, through an ethnographic examination of Polish women's experiences of abuse and associated help seeking.

In the first half of this chapter I highlight situational migrant intersectionalities that impeded Polish women's engagement with domestic violence services. I focus ethnographically on three such intersectional factors, or 'boundaries', here: social isolation, unfamiliarity with local domestic violence services, and language difference, in cases where women could not speak English. In constructing my analysis, I pay particular attention to the issue of language, to highlight how language difference shaped the abuse that Polish women experienced and impeded their attempts to seek help. I draw parallels between the present research context and existent migrant domestic violence literature, to contend that the significance of the boundaries I describe stem from women's common positionality - previously situated *extraneous* to the UK border.

In the second half of this chapter I turn to consider further migrant intersectionalities that are not frequently discussed in domestic violence research, some of which were specific to Polish women, as Polish-EU citizens. I argue that these intersectionalities were engendered by Polish women's diffuse encounters with the UK border, in its myriad conceptual, physical and legislative dimensions. I provide examples that emphasise the uncertain and varying permeability of the border – in some instances it proved easily traversable, and in others

impervious. In my analysis I argue that these border encounters pervaded Polish women's experiences of abuse and their engagement with services, to effect increased risk to domestic violence. From this, I suggest that Polish women 'carried the border' with them as they forged new social worlds in Edinburgh, and as they experienced domestic violence. I argue that this liminal imagery besets the articulation of Polish women being emplaced in *the British borderlands* - a synecdoche that proves relevant throughout my thesis, as my analysis unfolds.

Through my arguments in this chapter then, it becomes apparent that Polish women's crossing of the border can produce new forms of vulnerability to domestic violence (Adelman 2017).[35] However, I additionally explore other scenarios that counter this observation, and suggest that the border can also harbour salutogenic and protective qualities. I connect this divergence to anthropological literature, which attests to the contradictory nature of borders, their 'vacillating' significance, performances and effects (Balibar 1998). Polish women I argue are caught 'betwixt and between' (Turner 1967) these vacillations, as legal but often insecure and precarious residents.

This chapter therefore contributes to anthropological research that attends to the ways in which border logics can be found far beyond their territorial demarcations, embodied in the experiences of migrants and the everyday work of institutions (Fassin 2001). While anthropological works on borders to date have primarily explored borders in relation to matters of immigration control, race and ethnicity, labour and tourism - this chapter highlights that state boundary practices can, perhaps unexpectedly, also be central to the issue of domestic violence. Fundamentally, my considerations emphasise the salience of Polish women's migrant status in shaping their encounters with the British state and its borders, but also in forging their experiences of domestic violence and associated service interactions. This analysis highlights the importance of considering specific migrant intersectionalities in the context of domestic violence research, and when devising targeted service provision.

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[35] In UK service provider discourses, using the term 'vulnerability' in the context of domestic violence victims is sometimes refuted for apportioning blame onto victims – for emphasising a victim's 'capacity to be hurt' over the insidious practices of abusers. While acknowledging the problematic framing of vulnerability, I employ it in my ethnographic analysis to articulate *situational* vulnerability. That is, to articulate how political economic practices, alongside other circumstances, can converge to increase a woman's situational risk of (further) domestic violence.

Situational Migrant Intersectionalities

In my interviews, and during my fieldwork at the domestic violence organisations, many of the difficulties that Polish women expressed grappling with when attempting to respond to domestic violence were commonly reported amongst the other non-Polish women I observed engaging with services. When trying to decide whether to leave their abusive relationships, for example, Polish women cited concerns about financial constraints, breaking up their families, and the welfare of their partners and children. Additionally, some articulated conflicting emotions; they still harboured a degree of affection for their partners, felt partly to 'blame', or hoped that their relationships and the abuse they were experiencing would improve over time. Such concerns are widely discussed in the domestic violence literature, and are cited as commonplace difficulties that victims encounter when deciding if and how to address the abuse they experience (Barnish 2001, Kearney 2001, Burke *et al* 2001, WHO 2002).

While Polish women may experience these conflicts differentially, during this ethnography I observed that there were additional issues and complexities that some Polish women had to contend with, which were interconnected to their migrant status. Some of these complexities feature in the domestic violence literature that I presented in Chapter 2, which argues that migrant-specific factors can exacerbate domestic violence and impede help-seeking interactions (Erez *et al* 2009, Raj and Silverman 2002, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005, Menjívar and Salcido 2002). As I contended, these works collectively emphasise the importance of considering migrant intersectionality in domestic violence research. In the first half of this chapter I will present and discuss some of the intersectional difficulties that Polish women raised and encountered during this ethnography that parallel core issues identified in the existent migrant domestic violence literature: social isolation, an unfamiliarity with available services, and language difference.[36] I do this ethnographically, to contextualise these issues, to situate them within individual Polish women's experiences, and to reflect upon the ways in which they served as boundaries - creating additional difficulty, risk and disadvantage within the present ethnographic setting.

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[36] These are but three examples of the many complexities Polish women had to contend with, which were interconnected to their migrant positionings. Paralleling the migrant domestic violence literature, women also reported facing xenophobic discrimination, which shaped their experiences of abuse and help-seeking (Volpp 2005, Crenshaw 1991, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005, Dutton *et al* 2000, Anitha 2008, 2011, Richie 1996, 2000). Additionally, Polish women experienced various forms of socioeconomic marginalisation, which was compounded by their legal status (Erez *et al* 2009, Raj and Silverman 2002, Menjívar and Salcido 2002, Orloff and Kaguyutan 2002). I return to consider these issues as my analysis progresses in this text.

First, I present the short account of Gosia, a 30-year-old Polish woman who I interviewed shortly after she had left one of the domestic violence organisations' refuges and moved into a new apartment with her young son Patryk. Gosia experienced sustained domestic violence from her partner, Alex, for over two years before she sought support from services. Below she reflects upon her experience and highlights aspects that she felt delayed her from exiting her abusive relationship, and from seeking formalised support.

Gosia

Gosia had moved from Poland to Edinburgh with her partner Alex some four years before I met her. Shortly after arriving in the UK, Gosia fell pregnant.

> *When I was pregnant, things [between Alex and I] got a lot worse, he was drinking a lot and always angry… I could just be sitting there and he would start nipping at me, I didn't have to do anything… A couple of times he attacked me, hurting me quite badly, over nothing…I knew then, when he hurt me when I was pregnant with our child… something was very wrong.*

However, as we talked, Gosia explained that she stayed in her relationship with Alex for two further years. During this time, his abusive behaviour continued.

> *I thought maybe [our relationship] would get better after I had Patryk but it didn't… It was a horrible time, I knew [Alex's behaviour] wasn't right, but I didn't know what to do. I didn't know anyone here, not well enough to stay with [if I ended my relationship with Alex]…Especially with Patryk [as a new-born baby]. I felt very alone, I wanted it all to end but I couldn't see a way out.*

Eventually, Gosia sought support from her GP for depression. During the appointment, she told the doctor about Alex's abusive behaviour.

> *I didn't go [to the doctors] planning to tell her [that I was experiencing domestic violence]. I didn't see it as a medical issue… But I was very low - I wasn't coping…that's why I went. [The doctor] could tell there was more going on [at home]… so I basically just broke down and told her everything.*

> *[The doctor] was fantastic, she said [my situation] was serious and it wasn't safe for me and Patryk… she told me about [the domestic violence organisation] that helps women who are experiencing abuse. I had no idea anything like this existed [in the UK], I'd never heard of these places before…in Poland I don't think we have anything like that.*

Gosia went to the domestic violence organisation for advice. Shortly afterwards, with staff members' support, Gosia left Alex and entered into refuge accommodation with Patryk. I asked Gosia, reflecting back, what were the biggest difficulties that she encountered when leaving Alex, or when deciding whether to contact services?

> *Nothing… I mean of course it was difficult for me emotionally, but the [domestic violence organisation workers] were perfect - they helped me so much… I couldn't have asked for more… The only thing I can say that would have made it different is if I knew about [the organisation] earlier. I would have left sooner, definitely, if I knew I could stay in refuge… I wouldn't have put up with [the domestic violence], put Patryk through all of that, if I knew these places were there to help me.*

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In this vignette Gosia explained that although she knew that Alex's behaviour towards her was abusive she '*couldn't see a way out*' of her situation, which prevented her from ending her relationship. In this context, she referenced that she did not have a local support network she could rely upon, or turn to for temporary accommodation if she did leave Alex. This coincides with much of the migrant domestic violence research that highlights the social isolation experienced by migrant women, which limits their potential sources of support in the context of domestic violence (Erez *et al* 2009, Adelman and Salcido 2004, Raj and Silverman 2002, Menjívar and Salcido 2002). This also echoes Thiara (2011) and Sidhva's (2007) observations about Polish women's lack of support networks in the UK. However, Gosia identified that, for her, the most significant hindrance to leaving Alex was that she was unaware there was support available to her, as a victim of domestic violence. Firstly, she was unaware that the doctor she disclosed her abuse to would offer her support; she had not thought Alex's behaviour was an appropriate issue to air in a medical setting. Secondly, she was unaware of the existence of domestic violence organisations, or the supports that they could offer to women in situations such as hers, '*I would have left sooner, definitely, if I knew I could stay in their refuge.*'

Gosia's account therefore also parallels how the domestic violence literature discusses the ways in which migrant women's unfamiliarity with support services in their 'host countries' can impede their help-seeking (Bauer *et al* 2000, Malley-Morrison and Hines 2007, Adelman and Salcido 2004). Her narrative indicates that Polish women in the UK, like other recently-migrated women, may be unaware of the supports available to them, which could delay or obstruct their engagement with domestic violence services. In the following section, I turn to focus on a further migrant-related intersectional issue: language difference. Although Gosia clearly had a strong command of English when I interviewed her, there were many other women I encountered during fieldwork who could not communicate freely in English. I

highlight some examples of such encounters below to argue that language difference not only delayed some women from seeking support, but also shaped the abuse they experienced and impeded their ongoing interactions with services.

Language Difference

As Ngan-Ling Chow *et al* (2011) describe, the multitude and division of languages, within and between nations, gives rise to a number of marginalising effects. This, the authors argue, renders language both an important intersectional dimension and a form of social capital, which is shaped by political, social and economic forces (*ibid:* 6). This framing of language is relevant to this ethnographic context; in this section I discuss how Polish women's language difference in this ethnography was shaped by intersectional factors such as access to resources, but also by their experiences of domestic violence. The salience of these intersectional factors are important to consider when discussing language difference, given the negative political rhetoric that is often horizontally applied to migrants who do not speak English in the UK (for example Spigelman 2013).

Unsurprisingly, research identifies a key factor in determining whether migrants have a strong command of a host country's language to be the length of time they have spent living in the country (Merry 2000: 209, Menjívar and Salcido 2002, Rumbaut and Massey 2013). Rong and Preissle (1998) also emphasise the importance of intersectional factors such as gender, class, educational ability, socioeconomic status, geographic location and health in affecting individuals' *opportunities* to learn new host country languages. The authors thus argue that, by extension, these intersectionalities are also significant for shaping migrants' overall language attainment. From this literature then, we can see that migratory-related intersectional dimensions – the recent nature of migration, and individuals' social positionings and identities when they arrive in the UK – can all prove important in shaping individuals' abilities to learn and speak English as a second language.

Certainly, such factors proved relevant for the non-English speaking Polish women in this ethnography. As I suggested in the introduction, at the time of fieldwork the majority of Polish and other Central and Eastern European migrants, including those that participated in this study, had migrated relatively recently to the UK – with free movement and labour rights only being extended to these countries in 2004 via EU enlargement. Moreover, during my interviews with Polish women, participants referenced aspects such as caring duties, long working hours and financial constraints as impeding their chances to learn English. Importantly, some constraints were produced extraneously; in Chapter 5, I outline how

European women's extrinsic ethnic and religious classification restricted their access to free English language classes.

However, through a vignette detailing the circumstances of Mariola, here I focus on the role of domestic violence in shaping women's language difference. Mariola and her then husband, Marius, were both from Poland, and she had lived with him and their two children in Edinburgh for six years when she first came to the domestic violence organisation for assistance. Despite the length of time she had spent in the UK, Mariola was unable to communicate freely in English when we first met.

Mariola

Mariola came to the domestic violence organisation to seek support in leaving her abusive husband, Marius. Mariola had brought a friend, Szarlota, to translate for her, as she had only a basic command of English. Through Szarlota, Mariola explained that she had asked Szarlota to come with her because she was worried that without her friend's translation assistance, she would not be able to discuss the important and stressful topics that she wished to cover in the meeting. I accompanied Mariola, Szarlota and a support worker, Sandra, into one of the organisation's counselling rooms, and we sat down to discuss her case.

Mariola described to us how she was being abused by Marius, and felt isolated and trapped in her relationship. As she discussed her situation, she in part connected her experiences of abuse and her subsequent isolation to her inability to speak English. She explained she had tried to learn English when she first migrated to Edinburgh from Poland some six years ago. However, Marius spoke English better than her; he was formally educated in English in Poland, and had been living and working in Edinburgh for two years before she had travelled to the UK with their children to join him. Mariola said that since she had come to Edinburgh, whenever she tried to speak English in public, for example at a supermarket, Marius would ridicule her. She described that he would tell her she sounded 'retarded', and mocked her for being 'ugly' and 'stupid' when she made grammatical mistakes. Mariola said she became so self-conscious as a result of Marius' insults she eventually stopped trying to speak in English, and instead let him talk for her when circumstances demanded it.

Additionally, Mariola explained that when she first moved to Edinburgh she found employment at a bakery – a time she clearly remembered fondly. She said that there her colleagues had helped her learn some English phrases, and consequently her English language skills improved. However, as her relationship with Marius declined, he insisted she

left her job and stay at home to care for their children. As the domestic violence she was experiencing worsened, Marius discouraged her from leaving the house at all – especially from participating in activities or social situations where he was not present. As a result, Mariola became isolated from friends and previous colleagues. By the time she came to the organisation for assistance, she had spent much of the past three years confined in her home.

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In Mariola's case, we can see that her language difference was interconnected to the domestic violence she experienced. As Mariola described, Marius humiliated her and undermined her confidence in interacting with others when speaking English. Then, he insisted she leave her job and become a full-time mother, which isolated her from her colleagues, who had been giving her informal lessons. As the abuse intensified, Marius forbade Mariola from engaging in situations where he could not observe and control her. This isolated Mariola further, including from opportunities to freely engage with people in English-speaking contexts. Through Mariola's story then, we can see how her inability to speak English emerges as both a conduit for and a result of domestic violence. That is, domestic violence shaped her ability to speak English, and dialectically, her language ability shaped the domestic violence she experienced.

Mariola's example emphasises how domestic violence victimisation can intersect with and manifest through migrant women's language difference. This observation is echoed in the domestic violence literature. Particularly, Menjívar and Salcido (2002), and Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) describe how language, for broad populations of migrant women, can become a means through which perpetrators exert abuse and control (see also Bauer *et al*, 2000, Dutton *et al* 2000, Tran and Des Jardins 2000, Erez *et al* 2009). These authors additionally emphasise that 'language barriers' can impede women's attempts to seek support for abuse – another observation which proved relevant in this ethnographic context. As Mariola explained in this vignette, she brought Szarlota with her because she was concerned she would be unable to communicate with workers without translation assistance. Although Mariola had the support of a friend in this instance, this was not an option available to all women who I encountered during this research. For example, some women in this ethnography, like Gosia, made clear that they did not have friends who could assist them with translation, or with other forms of practical and emotional support. Furthermore, beyond the first stages of contact, as a general rule both participating domestic violence organisations dissuaded their clients from using informal translators for prolonged service engagement, because of concerns about confidentiality, accuracy, and the sensitivities involved in discussing domestic violence.

There were many situations in this ethnography where Polish women were required to access services in English, regardless of their English-speaking ability. For significant periods of time during my fieldwork, both Mandela and Women's Aid did not employ full-time staff that fluently spoke Polish or other European languages. Moreover, Women's Aid did not routinely offer translation services to their clients, and in the later stages of data collection Mandela (which did provide women with translators) moved to exclude Polish women from accessing their services (*cf.* Chapters 3 and 5). However, at the time, statutory organisations such as the police, social work and council services were required to supply translators for communication with non-English speakers. Yet, as the below ethnographic examples exemplify, acquiring translators in statutory settings sometimes proved complicated in practice, and did not consistently occur (this echoes other UK domestic violence research, such as Belur 2008, Gill 2004, Thiara and Gill 2010, Anitha 2011).

Hanna

Hanna is a young Polish woman who came to Women's Aid drop-in whilst by chance Katherine, a worker who spoke conversational Polish, was on duty. When Katherine asked Hanna if it would be alright for me to sit in on their meeting, Hanna looked concerned and expressed her reluctance, citing that she would be unable to engage with us in English. Katherine reassured Hanna that they could converse in Polish, and said that I would listen to their discussion with my basic Polish skills, or Katherine could translate if necessary. Hanna was visibly relieved, and consented to my presence.

In the meeting, Hanna explained to Katherine and I that she had been experiencing domestic violence from her partner for some time, but she had felt unsure about how to address her situation. A friend had told Hanna about Women's Aid several months ago but she had previously been too nervous to approach the service, worried that the organisation could not help her because she did not speak English. Katherine responded to Hanna by saying the organisation would do their best to support her regardless and we proceeded to assist her with applying for benefits, so that she could live independently from her partner.

As we talked more, Hanna recounted how she first came into contact with services. She explained that one night her husband's behaviour became so violent she felt she had no other option but to dial 999 and call the police. Via Katherine, Hanna emphasised *'I was so scared for my life then, there was no choice… It wasn't a question any more, I had to [contact services].'* Hanna called the police and, unable to speak English, repeated her name and address down the phone, in the hope that the operator would hear her husband attacking her in the background and gauge the severity of the situation. Police officers were

dispatched and her husband was arrested. The attending officer, via a phone translation service, encouraged Hanna to attend Women's Aid.

<div align="center">***</div>

In this vignette, Hanna described her worry about contacting services, because she was concerned that her language difference would inhibit communication and prevent her from receiving support. Serendipitously Katherine was on duty, so she and Hanna were able to converse in basic Polish, which was enough to assist Hanna in applying for the benefits she needed to leave her partner. However, as Hanna explained, her concerns about communication had previously dissuaded her from seeking help, until the domestic violence she was experiencing had heightened to the extent that she feared for her safety and felt she had no other option. Hanna's situation parallels observations made by Apurva, an employee at Mandela, about her non-English speaking client's experiences:

> *Very often, we see with [non-English speaking] women that they are hesitant to contact services, until their circumstances are very serious. There are a whole host of reasons for this… but not being able to speak English can be a huge issue… So the domestic abuse, by the time they come to us, can be much more extreme... when we are talking about ethnic minority families as having the most extreme violence, it is important that we consider these factors… that, if they had felt able to seek help sooner, their situations might not be so grave.*

Like Hanna, Apurva asserted that language difference can prevent or delay women experiencing domestic violence from contacting services – in some cases until the abuse is so severe that they are compelled by situation rather than choice. In doing so, Apurva echoes the observations of domestic violence research, which warns of the perils of ethnicising violence (Merry 2003, 2009, Snajdr 2007, Volpp 2005, Adelman 2017), and highlights the importance of considering situational matters that may shape the severity of abuse (Crenshaw 1991, Merry 2003, Johnson and Ferraro 2000, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005: 40*).*

Returning to Hanna's vignette: when police officers did respond and assist her, they used a translator over the telephone for communication, and through her conversation with them she felt encouraged to attend Women's Aid and seek support. However, before this Hanna had to navigate phoning the police with her limited English skills - at a time of acute emergency, while being attacked by her partner. She did so resourcefully, repeating her name and address, communicating minimally while still conveying essential information. Nevertheless, she described to us that she did not know if police would come to assist her

until officers arrived at her door. This emphasises the stark uncertainty and precariousness[37] of her situation - her reliance on the operator for sending assistance, combined with her incognisance that her communication would be understood, and that help would arrive.

However, in Hanna's situation, when she first called the police, locating a translator would have only added to the crucial time that she was waiting for officers to respond. Therefore, the acute emergency of her situation pragmatically precluded her from accessing a translator in this service engagement context. Nevertheless, beyond situational examples such as Hanna's, other contexts were observed in which translators were not used by organisations. For example, I encountered several instances of 'bad practice' with regards to translator use within statutory organisations - a term that professionals in Edinburgh used to describe incidents where policies were not implemented appropriately, without a discernible reason. I highlight an example of such practice in Chapter 6 as I describe Trudka's interaction with police officers, who did not use a translator to interview her whilst investigating her ex-partner's threats to kill her, much to other service providers' frustration (again echoing Belur 2008, Gill 2004, Thiara and Gill 2010, Anitha 2011). Examples such as Trudka's emphasise that language difference and access to translators proved problematic in contexts that extended beyond stages of initial service contact, and complicated women's ongoing engagement with services. This was also an evident issue for Szarlota, whose story I outline below.

Szarlota

Szarlota is a Polish woman who was supported by a domestic violence organisation after experiencing extensive abuse from her husband, Kuba. In my interview with Szarlota, she described to me that Kuba's behaviour towards her and their son, Damien, became increasingly violent. His violence culminated to the extent that he attacked her during an argument, and attempted to strangle her. She described to me how she blacked out during the attack, and showed me a photograph taken shortly afterwards, where I could see vivid bruises circling her neck and numerous injuries covering her face. Szarlota said that following this assault she was in fear for her and her son's life, so she swiftly left the family home with her child and went to stay at a friend's house. From there she communicated to Kuba that she wanted to end their relationship, and would be applying for a divorce.

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[37] I attend to notions of precariousness and precarity more directly in Chapters 6 and 7. However here, and in the following chapter, I employ the term to describe circumstances that are largely beyond individuals' control, and to connote dimensions of uncertainty, instability and risk.

Kuba refused to accept their marriage was over and still attempted to intimidate and control Szarlota. He started stalking and harassing her. He watched her through the windows of her place of work and followed her in his car as she took Damien to nursery. Kuba then found out where Szarlota was staying, and turned up at her friend's house. He stood shouting outside, and tried to kick down the door to gain entry. Szarlota's friend called the police and they pressed charges. Kuba was arrested and was later released on bail, on the condition that he was not allowed to make contact with Szarlota.

However, Kuba continued to stalk Szarlota and tried to approach and confront her on several occasions. She worked as a cleaner at a high-street business, where most of her shifts started at 4am. Kuba was aware of this and when Szarlota went to work, she would often find him waiting for her outside the staff entrance, secluded down a backstreet. Szarlota said she realised that Kuba was specifically targeting her at times and locations where he knew she would be alone. This was because, she believed, he realised at these times it would be difficult for her to challenge him and, with her poor English skills, to call the police without assistance.

Szarlota became so fearful of Kuba targeting her when she was by herself, she asked her friend to write out a small wallet-sized card, which she could hand over to shop-keepers or passers-by if Kuba appeared. The card, written in English, read:

> *My husband cannot come to me and he is doing exactly that. Please telephone 999 police.*

Along with this card, Szarlota religiously carried her previous police incident reports with her at all times, so that if the police were called and officers responded, they would be able to establish the contextual history of her case through limited interaction.

Following the incident that led to Kuba's arrest, Szarlota was no longer able to stay at her friend's house. Having been signposted by police officers, she contacted the domestic violence organisation and entered into their refuge. There she and Damien were housed in communal accommodation, with other women and children who only spoke English. As there were no Polish-speaking refuge workers, she was assigned an English-speaking worker, called Rebecca. This is how I first came to meet Szarlota; at the time she first came to the organisation for assistance, I was shadowing Rebecca as she delivered support to women in refuge.

I watched as Rebecca worked patiently with Szarlota, and observed them develop a strong bond over time. However, certainly at the beginning, their ability to communicate was very

limited. Rebecca used slow and simple language to communicate the most basic of practicalities to Szarlota, for example to arrange a meeting with a divorce lawyer, or a nursery placement for Damien. However, she reflected to me that she was unable to attend to the complex emotions and trauma Szarlota was going through – aspects of support she would normally deliver in her role.

With time, Szarlota's reliance on her emergency card and police records subsided, and eventually she stopped carrying them with her. She started attending English classes when she entered the refuge and, living with English speaking women, she picked up the language quickly. Indeed, it was Szarlota who accompanied Mariola – the woman whose story I tell above - to the domestic violence organisation some 16 months later, acting as a translator.

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Like in Mariola's case, we can see through Szarlota's account how domestic violence can be shaped through victims' language difference (Menjívar and Salcido 2002, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005). Kuba targeted Szarlota when he knew she would be alone, aware of her hesitancy to call the police without someone being present to translate for her. The card Szarlota commissioned poignantly reflects the intense vulnerability that she felt, as a victim of domestic violence who could not directly communicate (or rely on successful communication) with the agencies there to protect her. Simultaneously, the card demonstrates Szarlota's agency, resourcefulness and resilience – her use of an innovative strategy to increase her safety and resist her husband's violence. Moreover, once Szarlota entered into refuge she managed to learn English quickly, to the extent that by the end of fieldwork she could converse with me freely, and used her skills to support her friend also experiencing abuse.

Despite Szarlota's resilience, her story does reveal the additional vulnerabilities and difficulties she encountered when accessing services, and when receiving on-going support from her refuge worker. As Rebecca described to me, in her work with Szarlota they 'got by', and managed to address basic practicalities. Yet, for the most part, they were unable to discuss Szarlota's situation in all its complexity, and consequently Szarlota did not receive the emotional support work that English-speaking women who attended the service could. Throughout fieldwork, domestic violence staff consistently emphasised the importance of such emotional support, citing that it helped women during difficult times and fortified them in their long-term ability to address domestic violence and move on with their lives. As Rebecca reflected,

Language is such a big issue…trying to build a good relationship with a woman, to assure her that she is experiencing abuse… and working through that with her, I mean, its difficult in any situation - let alone when communication is limited. [Language difference] really limits what we can do, even beyond the basic one-to-one support… [Women who can't speak English] can find refuge more difficult, more isolating... Often it's the relationships with other women [who have experienced abuse and are living in refuge] that they get a lot out of, that they draw a lot of strength from… They can't attend group work either, so it's the same problem there…

Rebecca's statement further highlights the fact that language difference can exclude migrant women from receiving forms of support that English-speaking women might access, throughout the period of domestic violence service engagement. For Rebecca, important therapeutic aspects of service provision – group support, building close relationships with fellow service users and staff – hinged upon unrestricted communication and common language.[38]

Collectively, the ethnographic examples presented in this section highlight that Polish women's language difference had different implications in different contexts; it manifested variously and engendered different effects in specific meetings, in ongoing relationships, and at different stages of service contact. Additionally, these examples reveal that language difference was negotiated and overcome varyingly - by chance encounters with Polish-speaking workers, through the use of translators and, in Szarlota and Rebecca's case, through sheer perseverance. Moreover, Mariola, Szarlota and Hanna inventively devised means to circumvent their language difference as they sought support for domestic violence: through having a friend translate, through carrying a card for emergencies, through repeating a name and address, until help arrived. Therefore, language difference in these examples poses, to a degree, not as a monolithic and deterministic 'barrier' - as it is so often described in domestic violence literature - but rather as divergent and navigable.

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[38] This observation also implicitly extends the issue of language difference beyond that of access to translators; even with increased resources, it would have been unfeasible to use a translator in group discussions, typically comprising 10 women or more, or to have a translator constantly present at the refuge. Accordingly, it is important that translators are not presented as a panacea to all issues of communication; as observed in other domestic violence (Belur 2008, Gill 2004, Thiara and Gill 2010, Anitha 2011) and anthropological research (Putsch 1985, Angelelli 2004, Davidson 2000, Kleinman and Benson 2006), frequently during fieldwork various problems arose relating to the use of translators in service delivery, for example relating to accuracy, although I do not have the scope to outline them here.

Nevertheless, it still remains important to recognise the stark and additional difficulties that language difference engendered for these Polish women. In these vignettes, I have highlighted how women's inability to speak English intersected with their experiences of abuse, and limited both their opportunities to seek help and the nature of the support they could receive from services (Bauer *et al*, 2000, Dutton *et al* 2000, Tran and Des Jardins 2000, Erez *et al* 2009). This analysis thus identifies that language difference was a prominent intersectional issue that differentially and adversely affected Polish women in this research context. Consequently, I suggest that we reframe our analytical framing, moving beyond the vocabulary of 'barriers', by articulating language difference as comprising a form of *boundary*. The notion of boundaries suitably emphasises delimitation and constraint, without resorting to the fixed materiality invoked in the metaphor of barriers; boundaries are not unsurpassable, however they require an additional degree of effort and resistance in order to be overcome.

As I have suggested, the difficulties engendered by language difference, and the additional efforts these effect, can be observed in the ethnography that I have presented here - perhaps most clearly embodied in Szarlota's emergency card. Accordingly, authors such as Somers (1994) and Emirbayer (1997) advocate the expression of 'boundaries' in intersectional analysis, arguing that through this paradigm the interactions that underpin and produce differentiation may be brought into sharp relief. Societal boundaries are often described in anthropological works as resulting in the unequal distribution of resources - as being inclusionary for some, while exclusionary for others (see for example Vermeulen and Govers 1994, Hannerz 2002, Lamont and Molnár 2002, Gupta and Ferguson 1992, Vertovec 2011, Fassin 2011). Certainly, this proves relevant for this ethnographic setting, where non-English speaking Polish women had unequal access to domestic violence services.

Moreover, I contend that the notion of boundaries is particularly appropriate in the context of the present study, given that language difference, alongside issues of social isolation and unfamiliarity with domestic violence services, can be connected to Polish women's previous situation, *extraneous* to the UK border. That is, these additional difficulties pertain to situational intersectionalities, which stem from women's migration and their 'newcomer' status in Edinburgh - to boundaries brought about by women's crossing of the border. This ties in to a host of anthropological literature that attends to the differentiating effects of borders, and the societal boundaries and subsequent marginalisation they can produce for particular populations (e.g. Kearney 1991, Alvarez 1995, Wilson and Donnan 1998, Van Houtum 2005, Fassin 2011).

My analysis in this section closely parallels Erez *et al's* (2009) observations about the shared, compounding complexities that *all* migrant women may face, when they experience and seek support for domestic violence in their new 'host' countries. In line with these arguments, I contend that the situational intersectionalities that I have highlighted here relate to Polish women's 'common' migrant status, rather than to their specific migrant identities; these boundaries could and indeed did apply to other migrant women, who I encountered in this ethnographic setting. Therefore, while boundaries produced by border crossings may not be unique to or uniform among Polish women, my arguments do indicate that Polish women encountered consequent migration-generated risks, as they experienced domestic violence. Accordingly, my arguments here highlight the salience of much of the existent domestic violence literature on migrant women within this ethnographic context (particularly, Erez *et al* 2009, Raj and Silverman 2002, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005, Menjívar and Salcido 2002). Additionally, my analysis bolsters Thiara (2011) and Sidhva's (2007) assertion: that, because of compounding migrant-related factors, Polish women may require additional supports and resources in UK domestic violence organisational contexts, in order for their particular service needs to be met.

However, during this ethnography I also encountered difficulties that are not commonly discussed in existent domestic violence literature. As I suggested in the introduction to this thesis, these issues related predominantly to aspects of political economy - produced through practices of British statecraft - which intersected with women's experiences of domestic violence and help-seeking (Adelman 2017). Moreover, I observed that some of these issues intersected with Polish women's migrant status specifically; they were particular to women's Polish or European migrant identities and positionings. Given that these topics remain unexplored in domestic violence research, I turn to concentrate my analysis on these perspectives in this chapter, and throughout the rest of this text. In the second half of this chapter, I shift my focus from the intersectionalities produced by women's migrant positioning, previously extraneous to the border, to consider the effects of the UK border more directly, within Polish women's experiences of abuse and service engagement.

Borders and Borderlands

Borders have traditionally been conceived amongst the social sciences to be relatively fixed and enduring structures that represent the marginal territories of the state (Heyman 1994, Wilson and Donnan 1998, Donnan and Wilson 1999). However, a great deal of anthropological research now focuses on how the performance and effects of borders reach far beyond the locus of demarcated territorial lines. Contemporarily, this is often articulated

through the paradigm of *borderlands*, which designates the production, reproduction and experience of borders through various practices, locations and interactions (Alvarez 1995). Building on classical border pioneers such as Simmel (e.g. 1983) and Cohen (1965), borderlands research therefore explores the ways in which borders varyingly order space and social relations *within*, as well as between, states (Anzaldúa 1987, Asiwaju and Adeniyi 1989, Alvarez 1995, Haller 2000, Donnan and Haller 2000, Van Houtum *et al* 2005, Jackson 2006, Wilson 2012, Agier 2016). Correspondingly, the paradigm of borderlands has been applied in diverse settings, and as a concept it possesses a degree of elasticity.

Indeed, recent anthropological works have warned of the perils of overly objectifying borders and homogenising their effects - emphasising how borders are dynamic and ongoing projects that are produced, constantly and communicatively, through different techniques, experiences and practices (Wilson and Donnan 1998, Donnan and Wilson 1999, Van Houtum *et al* 2005, Green 2009, also Anzaldúa 1987 and Balibar 1998). Nevertheless, anthropological analyses of borders and borderlands often centre on processes of control, constraint and differentiation (Alvarez 1995, Lamont and Molnár 2002, Walters 2006, Fassin 2011, Anderson 2012). Particularly, this literature focuses on populations that, at one time, have traversed the borders in question: foreign workers, refugees and now, increasingly, individuals with insecure statuses, such as 'illegal' migrants and asylum seekers (see for example Nevins 2002, Walters 2002, 2006, Huysmans 2006, Eller 2016: 270).[39] I continue this focus here by ethnographically exploring how the UK border variously intersected with Polish women's experiences of abuse and service engagement in Edinburgh. In the following sections I reflect on ways in which the border manifested in different dimensions for different women, nevertheless my analysis collectively serves to highlight how the UK border can prove a 'troublesome site of vulnerability' in the context of domestic violence. I conclude this chapter by drawing together the different threads of my analysis, applying the ethnography I present to anthropological border literature.

Porous Borders

Although the advantages and detriments of open and closed territorial borders have long been debated, this issue today in the globalised, post-9/11 world is of acute importance to states. As Wilson and Donnan (2012) describe, the permeability of borders is a tension that underpins and pervades all border performances, or practices of *bordering*, in the

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[39] The border literature I cite here is relevant to my analysis in the previous section, where I considered boundaries that were in part engendered by the UK border. As I will continue to expand upon throughout the rest of this chapter, these interconnections further emphasise the salience of borderland paradigms, which holistically encapsulate the multidimensionality of borders, and their myriad effects (Haller 2000).

contemporary era. With the proliferation of globalisation and neoliberal capitalism, the authority and integrity of borders - as devices that define, control, defend and exclude - have been described as often being at odds with the political economic interests of the states they contain. Particularly, Wilson and Donnan (2012) connect the revenue-enhancing, transnational mobilisation of labour and goods to the weakening of nation-state territorial and sovereign power (also Soysal 1994, Brown 2010, Vertovec 2011). Thus, as Guiraudon and Joppke (2001) describe, we exist today in an unprecedented 'new migration world' where bodies and capital can rapidly and freely permeate, even transcend, national borders. Nowhere is this permeability more apparent than within the territories of the EU, with its unparalleled geopolitical vision of 'open borders', which bestows free movement and labour rights to individuals hailing from member states (Anderson 2000, Green 2013, Berezin and Schain 2003, Wilson 2012: 169, Rumford 2006, Van Houtum 2005, Geddes and Scholten 2016).

Certainly, the permeability of the UK border was a salient factor for Polish and other migrant women from the EU in this ethnography, as they sought support for and protection from domestic violence. The significance of borders does feature in some existent migrant domestic violence literature, at least implicitly. For example, the looming threat of deportation for women with insecure immigration statuses is frequently described as serving as both a coercive device used by abusers, and as a deterrent to help-seeking (Raj and Silverman 2002, Menjívar and Salcido 2002). Adelman (2017) engages with the Israeli border more explicitly in her work, as she highlights the ease with which migrant women may cross the border, but also the intense structural marginalisation and increased vulnerability to domestic violence that they encounter, when living in Israeli society. While I return to the issue of bordering practices and systemic marginalisation more directly in Chapters 6 and 7, in the following sections I consider the significance of border permeability in the context of domestic violence in two previously unexplored respects. First, I argue that the perceived openness of the border expedited the narrative that Polish women experiencing domestic violence could simply 'go home,' despite Polish nationals' theoretically 'secure' EU migrant status. Second, I explore how the porous physicality of the border facilitated transnational domestic violence, and complicated women's protection from abuse.

'Incomplete' Migration

During fieldwork, I encountered that Polish migrants were often conceptually posited as having a high degree of mobility, given the relative ease with which they could enter and leave the UK as citizens of the EU. This mobility was at times framed in statutory service provider settings as itinerancy or transience – where Polish migrants were discussed as

being impermanent or transitory workers, only temporarily living in the UK. For example, a doctor performed a presentation at an NHS conference I attended where, as part of a larger discussion about the health needs and particularities of Polish nationals, he framed Polish migrants as having undergone 'incomplete' migration. The notion of incomplete migration in relation to Polish migrants has been discussed elsewhere in UK Polish migrant literature (White and Ryan 2008, Okólski 2012). However in this context, the doctor used the term to describe how some Polish patients maintained ties to Poland and, in his opinion, were therefore relatively less invested in long-term engagement with UK and its institutions. He cited, for example, that Polish migrants would return frequently to Poland to receive medical treatment, which he saw as complicating service provision in Edinburgh.

Participating women also discussed their dynamic geographic mobility with me in interviews. Several jokingly described themselves as belonging to Poland's 'Ryanair generation'; a trope that pays reference to the generation of Poles who have benefited from the recent availability of budget air travel in Poland. As Burrell (2011) describes, the introduction of low cost carriers such as Ryanair has been integral to facilitating and shaping Polish migration - opening up employment opportunities and permitting regular return, and thus the preservation of close social ties with family and friends who remain in Poland. However, in the context of domestic violence service provision, the perceived mobility and transience of the Polish migrant population sometimes worked against women seeking support. This was evident for Kasia, as I reflect below.

Kasia

I met Kasia while I was shadowing Katherine at Women's Aid, when she came to one of the organisation's drop-in sessions seeking advice. Kasia had lived in Edinburgh for three years, having migrated to the UK with her partner Eryk and their infant son, who she had cared for while Eryk worked full-time. At the time I met Kasia, her son had just started school, and she had recently given birth to her daughter, who she had taken with her to the meeting, asleep in her pram. Kasia told us she wanted to leave Eryk because of his volatile and abusive behaviour, but she was worried about finding and financing new accommodation for her and her children.

Kasia described that she had gone to several different organisations for advice before coming to Women's Aid, but that each agency she had approached had told her, *'there is nothing we can do, you must return to Poland.'* She had first gone to one of the 'Polish advice' agencies - high-street businesses that provide Polish migrants with advice and

assistance, for a fee. An employee there had told her that her only option if she left Eryk would be to return to Poland with her children.

After receiving this information, Kasia decided to stay with Eryk. However, his abusive behaviour continued, and it became clear to her that it was not safe for the children to be around him. One of Kasia's friends suggested she go directly to Edinburgh Council to seek support. The council worker she spoke with also informed her that she had few options open to her. Kasia said the worker had suggested to her that she should go back to Poland, saying *'it's your best option… to return home.'* Accordingly, the worker advised Kasia to contact the Polish Consulate, where staff members also informed her that the only support they could offer her was repatriation.

Kasia became distressed as she described these events to us, and explained that she did not wish to return to Poland. She had worked hard to build a successful life for her and her children in Edinburgh; her son had started school and was settling in well.

> *They tell me to go back to Poland like it is no problem, like it is no big deal. But it is not possible… This is where my family live. I have lived here for many years…I am a EU citizen… so why do we have to go? If I go back to Poland it will be much worse… there is nothing, nothing there for us…I need some help [to leave Eryk] but then it will be OK…Why does this mean we must leave?*

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This vignette describes Kasia's many attempts to seek assistance from organisations in order to escape the domestic violence she was experiencing from Eryk. However, consistently she was denied practical support and instead told that she should return 'home' to Poland - as if it were the foregone site of her belonging. However, as Kasia highlighted, she lived and wished to remain in Edinburgh, and felt she had 'nothing' to return to in Poland: Edinburgh was her 'home', and Poland was not.[40] Following on from the exchange featured in this vignette, Katherine offered support to Kasia, but expressed that it was likely the organisation could only practically assist her by applying for financial aid through the Council – a source of support Kasia had already tried and failed to access. Kasia subsequently left the meeting, clearly upset, and did not engage with the domestic violence organisation further. Therefore, it is unclear whether she remained in Edinburgh, with Eryk, or if she returned to Poland, despite her aversion.

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[40] This ethnographic excerpt is also relevant to literature that attends to concepts of home and home-making, particularly in transnational migrant contexts (see for example Olwig 1998, Al-Ali and Koser 2003, Christou 2006, Wiles 2008, Torresan 2001, Brickell 2012). However, I do not have the scope to explore these parallels here, given that my primary analytic focus is on borders and their intersections with domestic violence and service engagement.

This ethnographic excerpt coincides with Thiara's observation about Polish women often being told to 'go home' by the services they approached when experiencing domestic violence (2011: 14). Certainly, Kasia's example was just one of many I observed during this ethnography, where European women experiencing abuse applied for and were denied assistance, and instead were offered means to return to their countries of origin. For instance, this also proved an issue for two other women who participated in this research, Crina and Trudka, as I outline in Chapter 6, wherein I discuss in greater detail the political economic policies and rationalities implicated in Polish women's restricted access to practical support. Echoing my analysis of Crina and Trudka's situations, we can see here that Kasia's inability to receive assistance constrained her options to respond to domestic violence, which thereby increased her vulnerability to further abuse. Following her encounter with the Polish advice centre for example, Kasia felt she had little option but to stay with Eryk, despite his continuing violence.

Reference is frequently made to individuals being told to 'go home' in literature that discusses the commonplace discrimination migrants encounter in everyday social interactions (e.g. Anzaldúa 1987, Valentine *et al* 2009: 243).[41] However in this context, when statutory agencies articulated Polish women could or should 'go home', this differentiating and othering narrative emerges as a form of institutional *bordering practice* (Wilson and Donnan 2012, Kaiser 2012, Scott and Van Houtum 2009, Van Houtum *et al* 2005, Kapur and Pickering 2012). Of course, the bordering practice I have described in Kasia's case was not absolute – she was not physically detained and deported. Nevertheless, this form of bordering still exerted coercive dimensions: she was provided with no means of support beyond provision to 'go home', effecting the choice of remaining in an abusive relationship, or facing destitution and/or repatriation.[42] This analysis supports Rumford's (2006) observation that bordering practices pervade multiple dimensions of the state and its institutions, seeping beyond the territory of agencies directly responsible for border enforcement. We may say then, that in this ethnographic context, the border no longer existed 'at the border' but was 'all around' (Bohannan 1967, Kearney 1991, Balibar 1998, Fassin 2011, Yuval-Davis 2013, Yuval-Davis *et al* 2017).

Kasia's vignette therefore exemplifies how Polish women - despite being technically *secure,* legal residents with EU citizenship - were subject to bordering practices that destabilised

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[41] Echoing Kempny's (2011) research on everyday discrimination experienced by Polish migrants in Belfast, some of the Polish women who participated in this study reported being subject to such comments by the general public.

[42] This is an issue I build upon in Chapters 6 and 7, as I reflect upon the coercive governance implicated in Polish women's help-seeking options and experiences.

their residency. Through their engagement with statutory services when seeking support for domestic violence, Polish women's bodies were posited as 'repatriatable'.[43] The relative frequency with which Polish women were subject to the potentiality of repatriation during fieldwork was striking. I contend that this frequency was related to service providers' perception of Polish women as readily mobile and transient 'outsiders', which endowed Polish women, as Polish-European migrants residing in Edinburgh, with an ambiguous status of belonging. This ambiguous status of Polish women can be connected to Ballinger's (2013) analysis of 'symbolic geographies' (also e.g. Bakic-Hayden and Hayden 1992, Blunt and Varley 2004, O'Reilly 2007). Ballinger uses this geopolitical paradigm to foreground her research of ethnic tensions along the Adriatic coast and, paralleling my analysis here, highlights how Slavs were extrinsically conceived of as 'squatters' – as impermanent, potentially illegitimate settlers who did not quite 'belong'. Building on Ballinger's analysis, we can additionally connect Polish women within this ethnographic context to Douglas' theorisation of *matter out of place* (1966). Douglas deployed this term to discuss matter that contravenes hierarchically constructed, normative categories, which is endowed with symbolic dimensions of taboo, impurity and danger. By metaphorically invoking Douglas' seminal work here, the conceived indeterminate and potentially morally 'troublesome' qualities of Polish women's resident status are emphasised.

This framing of Polish women's residency additionally lends itself well to Turner's complementary notion of *liminality*, which he used to describe ambiguous periods of transition, which fall 'betwixt and between' 'relatively fixed or stable conditions' (1967: 93). The concept of liminality has proved a popular paradigm in anthropological works, particularly in the study of rituals (see e.g. Turner 1967, 1974, 1977, 1987, Handelman 1977, Trubshaw 1995). In many of these texts, liminality has been viewed as possessing relatively neutral, a-political, or even positive dimensions (Thomassen 2009, Colona and Grenier 2010). However, as Menjívar (2006) asserts in her study of undocumented migrants in the US, when ambiguous periods of being 'in-between' are extended or have no foreseeable end, they can become constraining and disempowering (also Chavez 1991, 2012, Traphagan 2000, Colona and Grenier 2010, Wirtz 2015).[44] The unsettled, unstable

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[43] My analysis here echoes anthropological works which focus on the embodiment, reproduction and lived experience of 'deportability' amongst asylum seekers and migrants with 'illegal' or insecure statuses (De Genova 2002, 2004, 2007, 2013, Kipnis 2004, Menjívar 2006, Peutz *et al* 2006, Nijhawan 2005, Basok *et al* 2014, Walters *et al* 2010, Puggioni 2014). However, as Ballinger notes, the notion of repatriation is distinct from deportation and remains an under-explored subject in anthropology (2007: 716).

[44] Although the examples cited in the text relate to the constraining effects of liminality for individuals with insecure migrant/refugee statuses, liminality is also used to describe uncertain and insecure aspects of political economy in several texts (e.g. Horvarth 1998, Szakolczai 2003, Jackson 2006, Heidemann 2016). These works prove relevant to my analysis, as it unfolds in subsequent chapters.

and potentially dangerous nature of extended liminality is something that Hautzinger and Scandlyn also highlight, in their research on US soldiers awaiting re-deployment in the post-9/11 wars (2014: 74). Additionally, although the works of Douglas (1966) and Turner (1967) stress that liminality is forged within particular societal contexts, Malkki furthers our understanding of the concept by incorporating Foucauldian theory (1979) into Douglas' paradigm, to emphasise that determinations of belonging occur amidst webs of unequal power relations (1992:34).

As I suggested in the Introduction, liminality proves a key theme throughout my analysis of Polish women's positionings and experiences in this work. In the following chapters, I proceed to highlight Polish women's liminality across contexts of ethnicity, welfare governance and citizenship, all of which I connect to political economic practices related to British statecraft. However, for now, this analysis serves to emphasise the ambiguous and 'troublesome' status of Polish women within service provider settings, and the constraining and potentially dangerous effects that this liminality can engender. As I have argued here, some service providers conceived that the UK border was easily traversable for 'transient' Polish nationals, and interconnected, that Polish women were liminal, 'repatriatable' residents. Through my analysis of Kasia's account, I have revealed how these intersections can converge in bordering practices, and subsequently impede Polish women's access to support and protection, thus increasing their risk of further abuse.

Collectively, the arguments I have presented in this section are necessary components in my examination of the diverse ways in which the UK border was assimilated within Polish women's engagement with services within this ethnography. My analysis evokes the imagery of Polish women 'carrying the border' with them, as they experienced and sought help for domestic violence in Edinburgh. In the following section I continue to examine Polish women's diffuse encounters with the pervasive UK border, where again I focus on its porosity. However, I do so by concentrating on the border's physical perviousness, in order to highlight the ways in which this facilitated transnational domestic violence and obstructed effective service provision.

Transnational Domestic Violence

In this section, I contend that the ease with which European nationals could cross the UK border complicated domestic violence service interventions and exposed victims to further abuse. In some respects, this observation parallels Adelman's (2017) argument: that the porosity of the Israeli border for migrant women engendered new risks to violence and harm. However here I focus on how the easy traversing of the border facilitated abusers. This was

most evident in cases where perpetrators, wanted by the police, fled across the border to evade arrest and then later re-entered the UK unimpeded, and continued their violence. To contextualise the below examples of such occurrences: domestic violence service provision from statutory agencies such as the police was often directed by the results of risk assessments. Cases deemed 'high risk', the most severe categorisation, typically received the greatest concentration of interventions and safety measures. For example, high-risk victims were often allocated specialist support workers or multi-agency teams; were given priority if they called 999; received panic alarms; and had other security devices fitted in their homes. However, as the cases of Bianca and Julija will show, in some instances women's risk of harm was obscured and thus heightened when their abusers exited the UK.

Bianca

Concerned neighbours called the police when they overheard a Polish woman, Bianca, being assaulted by her partner, Filip, in their apartment. Officers attended the scene and neighbours disclosed to them that they regularly overheard Filip abusing Bianca. The police officers spoke with Bianca and established that she was experiencing extensive domestic violence, and assessed her as being at high risk of harm from Filip. They arrested Filip, and entered his details into the Police National Computer, where it became apparent that Filip had an outstanding arrest warrant in Poland. Filip was transferred to the Polish authorities and returned to face trial in Poland. British police officers informed him that, given his record and the risk he posed to Bianca, he would be denied entry should he try to return to the UK.

Initially, specialist officers provided support to Bianca in Edinburgh, however her risk level was reassessed and decreased once Filip had been deported. Correspondingly, the scope of the support offered to her was reduced and eventually Bianca's engagement with services ceased. However, a short time later, Filip left Poland and re-entered the UK, crossing the border without hindrance. He reconnected with Bianca and his domestic violence towards her continued.

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In this vignette, we can see how the porousness of the UK border is implicated in the domestic violence Bianca experienced. For unclear reasons, statutory border enforcement was unsuccessful and Filip returned to the UK unimpeded, and recommenced his domestic violence. Therefore, although Bianca did not engage with the border directly, its permeability had far reaching effects that encroached into her social world in Edinburgh. Simply, Filip's ability to cross the border meant that his abuse towards her could continue. Furthermore, Bianca's vulnerability to abuse was exacerbated by the erroneous assumption that Filip would be unable to return to the UK. This altered Bianca's risk assessment score, which in

turn reduced the specialist support available to her - support which might have precluded or provided protection from further occurrences of domestic violence.

Unfortunately, Bianca's situation has similarities with a case that was subject to a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) (Goose 2013), which was conducted after a Lithuanian man, Emilis, murdered his ex-partner, Julija, in 2011.[45] Although the individuals in this vignette are from Lithuania, this example is relevant to the analysis in this chapter because it relates to border management in the context of EU nationals. Consequently, I contend that Julija could easily have been Polish, or from another European country, and encountered similar adversity.

Julija

Emilis and Julija moved together as a married couple from Lithuania to Peterborough with their son in 2010. Subsequently, Julija reported to police that her husband had assaulted her. Upon hearing the details of the assault, which included attempted strangulation and threats to kill, Julija was assessed as being at high risk of harm from Emilis and police attempted to arrest him. However, Emilis left the country as soon as the incident occurred and returned to Lithuania. Police advised Julija that Emilis would be arrested by the UK Border Agency, should he try to cross the border into Britain again.

While specialist services were put in place to support and protect Julija, the DHR notes that her case was closed *'when the risk was seen to minimise by [Emilis] having left the UK'* (Goose 2013: 12). However, Emilis managed to re-enter the UK unhindered, and again badly assaulted Julija. She contacted the police once more, but Emilis again evaded capture and left the country. While still wanted by the police, Emilis entered the UK a further time. He murdered Julija, having kidnapped her as she walked to work one morning. With her body in his car, he then drove back across the border unobstructed and concealed her remains in a field in rural Poland.

The DHR concluded that, while Julija's death was unlikely to have been preventable, different agency actions could have afforded her greater protection from Emilis. Among the several recommendations that the report made, it advised that services must better accommodate the transnational movements of perpetrators and establish contingency plans, should they return to the UK.

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[45] Although this case is in the public domain, I have changed the names of individuals in this description of events.

Again, we can see in Julija's harrowing case the stark permeability of the British border; Emilis, while wanted by the police, was able to re-enter and leave the UK on multiple occasions unhindered. The final time, this was with Julija's body in his car. As in Bianca's vignette, the border's permeability permitted Emilis' violence to continue, and was unanticipated by services. Julija's case was closed and service engagement ceased, because it was believed that the risk posed to her was minimised by both Emilis leaving the UK and the issuance of his arrest warrant, which meant he would theoretically be apprehended at the border should he try to return.

For both Julija and Bianca, we can articulate that their risk of harm was obscured and thus heightened when their abusers exited the UK. The unanticipated porousness of the border enabled Filip and Emilis' return, and resulted in the scaling back of protective and supportive measures for Bianca and Julija. In both of these cases then, we can see how domestic violence intertwined with and was enabled by transnational movement and bordering practices: here, the easy crossing and unsuccessful policing of the UK border. Certainly, both Bianca and Julija's stories diverge from research that attends to the deepening securitisation occurring across the EU, which discusses the omnipresent policing of populations within European territories (Bigo and Guild 2005, Huysmans 2006, Van Houtum and Boedeltje 2009). Additionally, these examples contradict the depiction of contemporary Western societies as being walled 'bastions' or 'fortresses', where borders serve to deflect extraneous threats (Rosello 1999, Low 2003, Nevins 2002, Walters 2006, Brown 2010, Geddes and Scholten 2016).

Bianca and Julija's situations are but two examples where transnationalism and the permeability of the border shaped domestic violence and impeded service provision within this ethnography. There were countless others where, for example, perpetrators dispensed threats and harassment from abroad, or threatened to harm family and friends located outwith the UK. In these circumstances, the fact that such abuses took place beyond British territory complicated their detection and address. This is an issue which was also observed in Julija's DHR:

> *None of the agencies asked [Julija] about her life in Lithuania prior to moving to Peterborough. It was as though her life had begun on the day she arrived in the UK. Had the police or children's social care sought information about [Julija]'s life in Lithuania they would have learnt that there had been a series of incidents prior to her arrival in the UK. This information would have informed their risk assessments (Goose 2013: 46).*

Consequently, the DHR recommended that, to comprehensively assess and respond to the risk posed to domestic violence victims, services should consider events that have occurred outwith the UK. Here then we can see that in Julija's case, while the border was materially porous, it was also conceptually rigid; with service providers focusing exclusively on domestic violence incidents that took place within the borders of the British state. For the DHR, the conceptual rigidity of the border precluded a comprehensive assessment of the risk posed to Julija, which may have affected the service provision offered. This of course contrasts with my above arguments about the conceived porosity of the border, evident when statutory services suggested Polish women could, or should, simply 'go home'. In the following section I consider further ways in which the UK border was encountered as rigid and impervious, again arguing that these qualities hindered service provision and rendered women more at risk of domestic violence.

Rigid Borders

In recent years the anthropological gaze has turned to the proliferation of bureaucratic and legal regulations that constitute and enforce borders (Malkki 1992, Heyman 1995, 1998, Fassin 2001, 2011, Bigo and Guild 2005, Rumford 2006, Green 2013, Yuval-Davis 2013, Yuval-Davis *et al* 2017).[46] In doing so, these processes are revealed as producing new means through which populations may be subject to surveillance, managed and restricted as they traverse and live within state lines (Jansen 2009, Brown 2010, Green 2013: 355). Here, I apply this lens to explore women's encounters with the UK border as it was bureaucratically and legislatively enacted, as they experienced and sought support for domestic violence in Edinburgh. Firstly, building on Julija's case, I examine how national jurisdictions inhibited service intervention and supports. Then, drawing on the ethnographic examples of Ewka and Marta, I proceed to consider women's encounters with rigid passport legislation and child custody laws.

Jurisdictional Boundaries

As Casey (2011) emphasises, borders comprise inter-national edges, which define the extent of states' formal legal and political jurisdictions. As Mary, a Scottish social worker I interviewed, described to me, in the context of domestic violence service provision professionals were often constrained by these jurisdictions, which inhibited the implementation of protective measures.

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[46] This anthropological literature on the differentiating power of bureaucratic processes is preceded by the pioneering works of Arendt (1951, 1963), as Green emphasises (2013: 355).

We've encountered quite a number of seriously high-risk situations that occurred in, say, Poland… but are not known about when families come to Scotland. That's for both domestic abuse and child protection issues, as well as other types of offending… So each foreign family we take on is basically given a clean slate… This makes our jobs more difficult because serious concerns we might have, which would have been flagged up by past incidents, are missed.

For example, I got involved in one case where a father had raped his 13-year-old daughter when they were living in Poland. But when [Scottish social workers] found out they'd said they couldn't incorporate this into child protection proceedings, because of the jurisdiction [and jurisdictional differences]. That was very concerning, because she was still living with her father when she moved over here. So they hadn't fully put measures in place for her… the support wasn't there for her.

…It shouldn't happen like this, but resources are massively stretched, and social workers don't know how to ask other countries [about their clients' case histories], or they encounter so many problems when they do… language [differences], different systems, incomplete records, or agencies over there not responding… You can try and try, but you just meet wall after wall… We are trying to improve this… improvements are being made, but given [the current climate and resource constraints] there is only so much we can do.

Here Mary described the jurisdictional difficulties that services encountered when trying to implement measures to protect victims of abuse. She cited a concerning child protection case, where the history of a family in Poland had not been used to inform the assessment and redress of the risk posed to a young girl by her abusive father. Additionally, Mary highlighted the difficulties professionals encountered when attempting to traverse jurisdictional boundaries - engaging with foreign agencies in different languages, and with different organisational procedures, evidential thresholds and documentation practices. Moreover, she invoked the metaphor of a 'wall' to emphasise the rigidity and seeming immutability of these difficulties.

While the distressing example Mary recounted relates to child protection, she noted that these jurisdictional issues also applied to cases of domestic violence. In my conversations with police officers and social workers more generally, often reference was made to the difficulty of 'keeping track' of families if they moved across UK county - let alone state - lines. In this way, we can see how, like the porosity of borders, border rigidity can favour abusers

and endanger victims; the gaze of statutory agencies can be disrupted when families and individuals traverse 'betwixt and between' fixed jurisdictional boundaries (Turner 1967). Again, Mary's perspective counters descriptions of the centrifugal securitisation of the EU, where the omnipresent surveillance of populations is posited as transcending national borders (Bigo and Guild 2005, Huysmans 2006, Van Houtum and Boedeltje 2009). Perhaps this divergence within the specific context of this study could be related to statutory prioritisation of certain types of crime, threat and harm over others. This is something Pain (2014) recently suggested, as she highlighted the disparity between governmental resources allocated to tackling terrorism and domestic violence in the UK, despite the latter's vastly greater incidence, and the 'intimate terror' it can evoke (also Adelman 2017).

Transnational Immobility

In my final ethnographic considerations of the border, I reflect upon how legislation obstructed the transnational movement of Polish women, who wished to leave the UK while experiencing domestic violence. First, I will consider the case of Ewka, who wished to return to Poland temporarily with her young son Adam. As her ethnographic vignette reveals, her struggle centred upon getting a passport for her son, which would permit their travel across both British and Polish borders. Although Adam was born and raised in the UK, both of his parents were Polish nationals. At the time of fieldwork, recently introduced legislation meant Adam was ineligible for a British passport, and he was instead required to apply for a Polish passport at the Polish Consulate in Edinburgh. The Consulate's application process required the consenting signatures of both parents, regardless of the circumstances. In the following vignette, we see that Ewka encountered this legislation as unyielding, which restricted her transnational movement and both extended and shaped the abuse exerted by her ex-partner, Tomasz.

Ewka

I met Ewka, a 28-year-old Polish woman, when she was staying in refuge with her three year-old son, Adam, who had a disability. She entered refuge after leaving her abusive husband, Tomasz, who was Adam's father. Shortly after leaving Tomasz, Ewka's grandfather fell gravely ill and he was told he only had two months to live. Ewka's father had died when she was young and together with her mother, Ewka's grandparents had raised her, living in the same home. As a result, Ewka was very close to her grandfather – she described him as being like a father to her. Distressed by the news of his ill health, Ewka desperately wanted to return to Poland to see him, and help her relatives care for him in the final stages of his life.

However, Tomasz did not want Ewka to go to Poland. Tomasz conveyed to Ewka that he wanted to maintain contact with Adam, and was concerned that she would not return with his son to the UK, should she leave. Refuge staff and her lawyer had advised Ewka to cease all direct communication with Tomasz, because he had been using their child contact interactions as a means to further abuse her. Through her lawyer, Ewka offered to sign an affidavit that swore she would only visit her grandfather for a short time, and would return from Poland with Adam within a couple of weeks to reinstate child contact.

As Ewka did not have many close friends in the area, and Adam was young and had special care needs as a result of his disability, she was unable to arrange for him to be looked after in the UK while she went to Poland on her own. At the time, because of his abusive behaviour, Tomasz was only entitled to supervised visits with Adam - so he was unable to care for him in Ewka's absence. In any case, given Tomasz' previous actions, Ewka was worried about leaving Adam with him and feared he might refuse to restore her son to her care when she returned.

Ewka applied for a passport for Adam at the Polish Consulate, but was advised that it could not be issued unless her husband co-signed the application form. Communicating through their lawyers, Tomasz refused to sign the application, despite the offered affidavit. Support workers from the domestic violence organisation spent a great deal of time advocating for Ewka, trying to negotiate even a temporary passport for Adam so that she could take him to Poland with her. However, the Consulate responded by saying that Ewka had to settle the dispute with Tomasz in order to proceed. Desperate, Ewka called him and was left severely shaken by their interaction.

Over the next few weeks, Tomasz tried to use his sway over the passport administration as a device to control and manipulate Ewka. He suggested that if she met him in person, and then eventually if she got back together with him, he would sign the documents that would permit her and Adam to visit her dying grandfather. He even extended his offer to pay for their flights – a proposition that was significant to Ewka who, as a single mother staying in refuge, was living on minimal state benefits and unable to work. Ewka was torn by her situation but heeded staff warnings, and did not feel safe re-instigating contact with him.

The Polish Consulate eventually agreed to issue an emergency passport for Adam, without need for Tomasz's signature. Tomasz found out, and tried to stage a meeting with Ewka in the car park of the Consulate. He waited for Ewka in his car, before ambushing her as she approached the entrance, shouting at her and pushing her. Through his lawyer, Tomasz

then issued an emergency interdict, expressly forbidding Adam from leaving the country. The Consulate explained to Ewka that regretfully the issuance of the interdict meant they could not help her further. Ewka was distraught.

Ultimately the situation did not resolve in time for Ewka to visit her grandfather and he died without her seeing him again. While Ewka has since moved on with her life and now has acquired a passport for Adam, she later told me she still looks back at this time with great sadness and frustration. Her refuge worker reflected,

> It was such a traumatic time for [Ewka], she was really in bits… All that misery, just for one signature? And didn't [Tomasz] know it? He used that situation to his advantage, to try and weasel back in and control her. She knew better though and resisted it… but it doesn't mean it wasn't devastating for her.

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Here we can see how, despite her attempts to circumvent passport procedures, legislation prohibited Ewka from crossing the UK border with her son, to visit her dying grandfather in Poland. Within this vignette, it becomes apparent that this legislation provided new avenues and opportunities for Tomasz to interact with Ewka: via communication between their lawyers, when she called him to appeal for his signature, and later when he staged an intimidating confrontation in the Consulate car park. Tomasz used his power over the application process as a means to further abuse, manipulate and control Ewka – he tried to extort additional engagement, even romantic contact, with her in exchange for his cooperation. This in turn extended the scope of services Ewka required from domestic violence organisation workers, who tried to assist her in navigating the complex bureaucracy of passport administration and supported her through the additional difficulties, risk and upset it engendered. Yet ultimately, legislation endowed Tomasz with control over Adam's passport that proved then unsurpassable; he refused to grant permission to let Ewka and Adam visit her grandfather, despite (or perhaps more aptly because of) knowing the distress this would cause her.

Passports and visas feature in numerous studies on migrant women's experiences of domestic violence (see e.g. Loke *et al* 1996, Dasgupta and Warrier 1996, Jang 1994, Abraham 2000, Raj and Silverman 2002, Menjívar and Salcido 2002, Erez *et al* 2009). Particularly, they emerge in the context of perpetrators seizing such documentation to entrap migrant women, or threatening to invalidate visa agreements or renewals, which can further destabilise victims' residency status and put them at risk of deportation. However, in this ethnographic example Tomasz is conversely using passport legislation to constrain Ewka's

desired movement *across* the border – highlighting an additional dimension to the ways in which passports can feature in domestic violence.

While Ewka's case centres on her desire to temporarily return to Poland, I encountered several other cases where women wished to leave the UK permanently but were blocked by legislation that forbade them from taking their children out of the country. This is evident in Marta's situation, as I describe below. As her vignette reveals, the legislative rigidity of the UK border was encountered not through passport restrictions that would prevent her border crossing, but rather through the criminalisation of her intended transnational movement.

Marta

Marta, a thirty-year old Polish woman, came to the domestic violence organisation for advice about a legal battle she was fighting against her Scottish ex-husband, Alistair. Alistair had been abusive to Marta, and she had recently divorced him. Marta explained that she had fallen pregnant with Alistair's child shortly before they separated. However, she described that since her daughter was born, Alistair had showed no interest in engaging with them, nor had he provided any financial support. Living as a divorced single mother with few resources and no social support networks in Edinburgh, Marta wanted to return to Poland with her child, to be near her family. Marta explained that from there she hoped to establish transnational child contact with Alistair, if he wanted.

Despite his non-participation in his daughter's upbringing, when Alistair heard of Marta's plans to leave Edinburgh he served her with a court order that forbade her from taking their daughter out of the country. She came to the domestic violence organisation to seek advice about how to overturn the injunction. However, Marta was dismayed to learn that challenging the order would be a lengthy and costly process, and that there was a realistic chance that she would ultimately be unsuccessful. In the meantime, Marta could be arrested and jailed if she took her daughter abroad before she turned 16, even if it were to go on holiday or to visit relatives in Poland. Marta became very distressed when she discovered this, as she had previously been unaware that this sort of legislation existed.

At the time that Marta came to the organisation her daughter was only an infant, and the prospect of remaining 'trapped' in the UK for the next 16 years was unbearable to her. Marta described to us that her family did not have the money to come and visit her regularly, and that she hated living, isolated, in Scotland. Given Alistair's previous disinterest in their daughter and his coercive behaviour towards her, Marta felt Alistair was trying to punish and

abuse her further by forcing her to stay in the UK, knowing how desperate she was to return 'home'.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

In this vignette, I describe Marta's encounter with legislation enacted as part of the UK's consignation to the Hague Convention (1980), which is a multilateral treaty that promulgates laws and rights surrounding international parental child abduction. In accordance with this convention, because Alistair still had parental responsibility and the right to see his daughter, if Marta were to cross the border with her child without his consent (and in contravention of a court order) her actions would equate to child abduction. From Marta's perspective, this legislation left her trapped, isolated and impoverished in Scotland with her infant daughter, and unable to fulfil her wish to return to Poland without breaking the law.[47] Her distress was increased by her belief that Alistair was using this legislation in bad faith; not as a means to secure contact with his child but rather to extend his domestic violence - to further restrict, control and punish her, following their divorce. Following on from this meeting, organisation employees tried at length to support Marta through her situation. Again, we can see that Marta's service engagement was complicated by her inability to leave the UK: she required additional advocacy, advice and support that related to her pending legal battle.

Ewka and Marta were but two of many examples I encountered where women were unable to leave the UK with their children because their abusive ex-partners invoked legislation that prohibited their crossing the border. These cases further challenge the above described conception that Polish women experiencing domestic violence can simply 'go home'. Moreover, for both Ewka and Marta, we can see how legislation endowed their ex-partners with new dimensions of control, and extended their available techniques of abuse. Accordingly, border restrictions were enacted upon their children's transnational mobility, where their bodies were obstructed from moving across national territories. Here then, and in some respects echoing Kasia's example, as the border was enforced through legislative techniques of bordering, Ewka and Marta's children came to embody sovereign space and power. The embodiment of sovereignty, and how it comes to be embedded within and across different migrant bodies is an issue that anthropologists explore at length in Hansen and Stepputat's (2005) edited collection (also Biersteker 2002, Fassin 2001, 2011). As with Navaro-Yashin's (2005) contribution to the volume, Marta and Ewka's accounts here support Guiarudon and Joppke's (2001) contention: that borders, in some dimensions, have maintained their power through the development and enforcement of new procedural

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[47] Ewka and Marta's vignettes also reveal that both women did not have local support networks to rely upon in Edinburgh. This parallels my above analysis of Polish women's social isolation, and further supports the salience of situational migrant intersectionalities in the context of domestic violence.

strategies and instruments of control (also e.g. De Genova 2004, 2007, Jansen 2009, Brown 2010, Green 2013: 355).

While the rigidity of the UK border that I have described in this section was not necessarily unique to Polish women – since, for example, the Hague Convention (1980) applies to all individuals and is upheld by some 81 states – I have not encountered any literature that connects this facet of border control to women's experiences of abuse. As I have argued, the rigidity of borders in these ethnographic contexts served to 'entrap' women in the UK, and intersected with their ex-partners' abusive behaviours. From these examples therefore, we can see how bordering legislation shaped women's social interactions in their previously intimate relationships. Additionally, I have highlighted that this also proved relevant in the context of service providers; that encounters with rigid borders can complicate service engagement and provision, which further increases perpetrators' opportunities to exert domestic violence. Again, this analysis highlights a novel, previously unexplored dimension of the significance of borders in domestic violence literature.

Protective Borders

So far in the second half of this chapter, I have demonstrated the multidimensionality of Polish women's border encounters, and the additional risks and vulnerabilities these can engender in the context of domestic violence. However, before I proceed to draw these encounters together and reflect on them collectively, it is necessary to also highlight scenarios where bordering practices did, or could, possess protective or salutogenic dimensions.[48] In this section I briefly present examples which emphasise that the UK border did not prove exclusively troublesome for Polish women, and was not consistently generative of further domestic violence.

Firstly, the porosity of the UK border in this ethnographic context could be regarded as advantageous for Polish migrants in many respects. As Burrell (2011) described, Poland joining the EU, in the 'Ryanair' Schengen era, has opened up unprecedented opportunities for individuals that were previously reserved for the wealthiest and most-highly skilled members of Polish society. Consequently, at the time of fieldwork Polish nationals could freely and affordably migrate to the UK, to seek increased employment prospects and earn higher wages. Therefore, we can see how migration in this context could serve as a means to counter poverty and scarcity (e.g. Galbraith 1979). Beyond this, research has emphasised

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[48] I borrow the term 'salutogenic' here from Antonovsky (1979, 1987), who coined the neologism *salutogenesis* to describe an approach to the study of health and medicine that focuses on factors which support well-being, resilience and health, rather on those that cause disease and illness (pathogenesis).

that migration offers new lifestyle and consumption opportunities, and greater freedom or protection from other societal inequalities and threats (Foner 1978, Grasmuck and Pessar 1991, Margolis 1994, Kaneff and Pine 2011). Several Polish women I interviewed described that in migrating to the UK they hoped to increase their economic security, and engage with opportunities they felt were closed to them in Poland. This was well encapsulated in a discussion I had with one Polish woman, Teresa, as she reflected on her motivations to move to Edinburgh:

> *Where I come from in Poland, there are not many opportunities to make something [of yourself]…I come from a small [industrial] town… the people [there] are very [conservative], very religious… if you are living there you basically have two choices: to be a farmer, or work in the factories… Or maybe if you are a woman, in a small shop or bakery... Life is very difficult, people are working long [hours] and [don't have] much money… and [women are] expected to get married [young]… to someone [from the town]…to be a 'good wife' and have lots of babies. That's it… all my life [in Poland] I saw people with terrible relationships, because they think "that's how it is." My father was… [abusive] to my mother but she would not do anything about it, because [in Poland, when you get married] 'you make your bed, you lie in it'…I see this happening for my sister also…I never wanted that for myself… I escaped Poland because of this.*

In this statement, Teresa described that she felt her employment options would have been heavily restricted if she remained in her hometown in Poland, which would have made it hard for her to *'make something'* of herself. However, she also referenced her desire to *'escape'* what she saw to be narrow and conservative patriarchal expectations placed upon women, particularly in the context of intimate relationships. Teresa's comments coincide with research that explores the gendered motivations of migration – namely, that migration can be prompted by women's desire to escape gender inequality and constraints in their countries of origin (Buijs 1993, Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994). Additionally, Teresa's description of the difficulties she observed women experiencing in her hometown parallels the Polish domestic violence literature that I presented in Chapter 2. As I outlined, several authors have written of women's restricted options for responding to abuse, and the constrained roles of women in both private and public spheres of Polish society (Nowakowska 1999, Watson 1993, Zielińska 2000, Amnesty International 2004, 2007, Chivens 2004, Brunell 2005, Aberg *et al* 2002, Gerber 2011). Although conditions generated by migration are often connected to the exacerbation of domestic violence (e.g. Raj and Silverman 2002, Menjívar and Salcido 2002, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005, Council of Europe 2009), this analysis suggests that migration, and the bordering practices that permit it, also has the capacity to increase

individual and economic freedoms. As Teresa explained, she anticipated these additional freedoms would provide her with further opportunities to evade and contest domestic violence.

A further protective dimension of the permeable UK border could have been the ease with which Polish women experiencing domestic violence could leave the UK and return to Poland (or elsewhere), in an attempt to escape abuse. Such a scenario was not encountered during this ethnography but there are several potential explanations for this; for example, women who had left the country would not have been available for me to interview. Further, women who did have enough capital to leave Edinburgh may not have engaged with domestic violence support services. As Adelman asserts, women experiencing domestic violence with requisite economic means, and other forms of capital, are often able to bypass domestic violence services while still managing their safety (2017: 190).

While increased capital and agency are clearly important factors for shaping border encounters, the extrinsic bordering practices enforced by state institutions that I have highlighted as being generative of additional risks in this chapter, could also produce protective or salutogenic effects. Firstly, it is reasonable to presume that there have been situations involving transnational domestic violence where the policing of the UK border was successful. The successful policing of the border could hypothetically inhibit perpetrator movement, and thereby prevent further domestic violence for women living in Britain. Both Bianca and Julija's ex-partners' return to the UK were unanticipated by service providers and breached expectations about effective border security. Thus they were, to a degree, viewed as anomalous. For example, bordering anomalies proved a key theme in Julija's DHR, and in part can be attributed to the DHR panel's conclusion: that it was unlikely services could have systemically prevented Julija's death (Goose 2013). The perceived anomalousness of Bianca and Julija's cases then, highlight the importance of 'happenstance' in bureaucratic bordering practices – an assertion that Gupta (2012) has made in the context of bureaucracies in general.

Finally, and perhaps most clearly of all these examples, the bordering legislation that prohibited Ewka and Marta from moving across national borders could also harbour protective dimensions for women and their families. Namely, this legislation could likewise prevent abusive partners from abducting their children and fleeing the country without the mother's consent. While I did not encounter an instance of a perpetrator abducting his children during fieldwork, domestic violence organisation workers recalled supporting women in such circumstances, and remained vigilant to this risk. Additionally, Burman and

Chantler (2005) cited an example of perpetrator child abduction in their domestic violence research involving ethnic minority women in the UK. One of their participants was an African woman who had left her husband and entered into refuge with her children. However, she described him as a 'master manipulator', who convinced the courts to grant him child contact. During one visitation, he abducted the children and absconded to an African country, from where he used his possession of the children to try to coerce the woman to return to their marriage (*ibid*: 71-72).

Therefore, in this section I have argued that there are counter-examples to my analysis, which has highlighted how the UK border in this ethnography proved a site of vulnerability for Polish women, and was generative of further domestic violence. Although the counter-scenarios I have provided here problematise the notion of borders being exclusively 'troublesome', they still should not detract from the differentiating risk, stark uncertainty and harm that the women featured in this chapter experienced, as they encountered the UK border in its myriad forms. In the following, final section of this chapter, I weave together the different examples I have presented, to reflect on the nature of the UK border implicated within women's experiences of domestic violence and service engagement.

A Reflection on Borders and Domestic Violence

In this chapter, I have examined Polish women's experiences of the UK border, as it manifested in various material, conceptual and legislative dimensions. In doing so, I have highlighted the multidimensionality of the UK border, revealing it to be 'a composite geographic, legal, institutional and sociocultural structure and process' (Kearney 2004: 131). However, as my ethnographic examples have illustrated, the various dimensions of the UK border did not meld coherently. I have argued that women with similar positionalities - as migrants from the EU, experiencing domestic violence - encountered the border divergently: at times, as porous and elsewhere as impenetrable. I have presented circumstances where the border presented as highly permeable, which I assert facilitated transnational domestic violence and expedited the narrative that Polish women experiencing abuse could or should 'go home'. Conversely, turning to the jurisdictional and legislative regulation of the border, I presented evidence indicating that the border can prove rigid and impervious, serving to entrap Polish women and their children within the UK. I have argued that each of these border characteristics can affect domestic violence: complicating and constraining service engagement, and shaping and increasing women's risk of abuse.

Collectively, these ethnographic examples emphasise the fluidity and uncertainty of women's border encounters, reinforcing our understanding of contemporary borders as

'complex, overlapping, disjunctive orders' (Appadurai 1990: 5). This observation was bolstered by my consideration of how the same dimensions of border porosity and rigidity could also harbor protective or salutogenic qualities – potentially serving to increase individual freedoms, facilitate the evasion of abuse, and prohibit child abduction. These affective discrepancies speak to the arbitrariness of border encounters – here, where agency and capital are significant, but so too are the specificities of context and happenstance. This coincides with Balibar's characterisation of borders as 'vacillating' – as oscillating, fluctuating and contradictory phenomena – wherein their implications prove equivocal (1998: 216, also Alvarez 1995, Matvejevic 1999, Hannerz 2002, Anderson 2012: 139*). Moreover, the ethnography that I have presented in this chapter parallels Bromberger's (2007) eloquent depiction of borders as 'polyphonic' or 'cacophonic' sounds; comprising a conjuncture of coexistent performances, which he varyingly connects to the metaphors of 'bridge' and 'wall' (additionally, Ballinger 2013, Cunningham and Heyman 2004).

Indeed, through the ethnographic examples provided, we can see how the women whose experiences are recounted in this chapter collectively experienced the UK border as cacophonous, as conjunctural and dissonant, its reverberations felt far beyond its territorial demarcation. As I have highlighted, various bordering practices were encountered and implicated in interactions that took place at council offices, domestic violence organisations, in consulate car parks, and most starkly of all, for Julija, when walking to work one morning. Consequently, I have expressed the pervasive nature of the British border by suggesting that Polish women 'carried the border' with them. This analysis encapsulates the salience of borderlands invoked in anthropological border works, and besets the articulation of Polish women being situated within the *British borderlands,* as they experienced and responded to domestic violence in Edinburgh. Particularly, my arguments prove relevant to Anzaldúa's (1987) certain depiction of borderlands: as undetermined places where unnatural boundaries meet, where markers of difference touch, dwell and transform. As I said in the introduction to this thesis, I ground my analysis in a particular reading of Anzaldúa's work; I equate 'markers of difference' with Polish women's migrant status, and conceive that the unnatural boundaries I attend to in my writing are engendered by British practices of statecraft.

As my arguments have attested, Polish women's diffuse encounters with the British border *in the borderlands* were diverse but consistently differentiating, and engendered effects that lay beyond individuals' immediate control. I contend, therefore, that Polish women were situated 'betwixt and between' (Turner 1967) the vacillations of the border, amidst its myriad significance, performances and effects (Balibar 1998). While I have already suggested in

this chapter that some Polish women were extrinsically posited as liminal 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1966), the indeterminate and pervasive nature of Polish women's wider border interactions adds existential dimensions to the liminality they experienced. This analysis serves to underline the liminal nature of borderlands (Anzaldúa 1987, Donnan and Haller 2000, Jackson 2006) and contextualises the particular ways in which the conditions of borders can exert differentiating and constraining effects for Polish women (Appadurai 1990, Gupta and Ferguson 1992, Fassin 2011, Vertovec 2011, Kaiser 2012, Scott 2012). My consideration of Polish women's existential and subjective liminality within the British borderlands, and the precariousness this can foster, are themes I continue to reflect upon and build into my analysis throughout the subsequent chapters of this text.

However, to close this chapter, I wish to return to reflect upon the particularity of Polish women's experiences of the border, to make my final point. As I have noted, women's border encounters in this chapter have in places contradicted key tenets of contemporary border literature – where Western states are depicted as fortresses (Rosello 1999, Low 2003, Nevins 2002, Walters 2006, Geddes and Scholten 2016) and the European Union a 'gated community' (Van Houtum and Pijpers 2007), with its citizens subjected to omnipresent policing and surveillance yet, paradoxically, freedom of movement (Huysmans 2006, Bigo and Guild 2005, Van Houtum and Boedeltje 2009). My analysis highlights the fact that Polish women - as theoretically 'secure' European citizens - can encounter constraints, uncertainties and vulnerabilities as they engage with European borders that fall outwith the paradigms of globalisation and securitisation that are so often employed in borders research.

This analysis suggests we should expand our conceptions of how migrants' lives embody the articulation of borders and boundaries, beyond the realms generally attended to in studies of transnationalism (Kearney 1991). Simultaneously, it remains important to emphasise that for some women, especially those with insecure immigration statuses, European and UK borders can still prove consistently unyielding (Joppke 1997, Bosworth and Guild 2008, Van Houtum and Boedeltje 2009, Bosworth 2008, 2011, Geddes and Scholten 2016). This supports Fassin's observation: that although the border may be all around us, we must be cognisant that it 'does not impose the same constraints on everyone' (2011: 215). Thus, it remains essential to attend to the dynamics of gender, ethnicity and class that underpin bordering practices (Garcia 2003, Basham Vaughan-Williams 2013), and to reflect upon the specificities of migrant intersectionalities, in order to effect a 'more evantalized and contingent understanding of bordering' (Walters 2015: 3). As I have evidenced in this chapter, the specificity of both Polish women's migrant status and their

border encounters, proved central in forging their particular domestic violence realities, and in delineating their opportunities to achieve support for and protection from abuse.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has revealed that borders and the boundaries they generate pervaded Polish women's experiences of abuse and service engagement. I have attended to intersectionalities – such as unfamiliarity with services and language difference – that were engendered by women's previous situation, *extraneous* to the border. However, I have also engaged more directly with women's encounters with UK borders, and the political economic practices that constituted them for Polish women specifically, as Polish-EU citizens. While I have argued that these border positionalities and logics can manifest, be experienced, contested and overcome variously, I highlighted that there are multiple ways in which these can exert differentiating and marginalising effects for women and their families as they experience abuse. Accordingly, I have provided several examples in which borders and boundaries constituted troublesome sites of vulnerability for Polish women - providing potential avenues and means for further domestic violence, and impeding help-seeking interactions.

Nevertheless, my analysis has also served to emphasise the equivocalness of women's border encounters. I have connected this to the vacillating significance of borders – their myriad and coexistent performances, dimensions and effects (Balibar 1998). From this analysis, I have contended that Polish women were situated 'betwixt and between' (Turner 1967) the various vacillations of the UK border. This invokes the liminal imagery of Polish women experiencing domestic violence in *the British borderlands* – an over-arching paradigm that frames my analysis in this text. In the following chapter I continue my focus on the salience of political economic practices and borderlands, by examining how Polish women's extrinsic ethnic categorisation affected their domestic violence service provision within this ethnographic setting. As I will argue, Polish women's liminal ethnic identities at times obfuscated the additional risks and uncertainties they faced - which, as I have highlighted in this chapter, were engendered in part by their relationship to the British border.

5. Extrinsic Constructions of Polish Ethnicity

This chapter explores the ways in which ethnic categories are mobilised in attempts to identify and respond to domestic violence. Particularly, it examines the construction, situation and effects of Polish ethnicity, in the context of Polish migrant women experiencing domestic violence. Analysis highlights the importance of ethnic categorisation across both national and local fields, and examines how these coalesce within the intimacies of the present ethnographic setting. Throughout, I conceive of these ethnic categories as organisational *boundaries* (Barth 1969). This is a conceptualisation that has long been central to the anthropological study of ethnicity and race, and the inequalities that these constructions generate (Lamont and Molnár 2002: 174). Again, the salience of borderlands seeps in to the analysis; I situate the events described within this chapter as taking place within a landscape where unnatural ethnic boundaries meet - where markers of difference, engendered by states, touch, dwell and transform (Anzaldúa 1987). As I argued in the previous chapter, Polish women, by nature of their migrant status, 'carried the border' with them as they carved their social worlds, and experienced domestic violence in Edinburgh. Analysis revealed that Polish women's relationships to the border added additional complexities and constraints, as they experienced and sought help for abuse. However, as this chapter will show, these intersectionalities were at times obscured by Polish women's extrinsic ethnic categorisation, to the detriment of domestic violence service engagement and provision.

The relevance of this chapter first emerged during the preliminary stages of my research through some initial conversations I had with service providers. As I described in the introduction, participants expressed concern that there were disproportionately high levels of domestic violence occurring amongst Polish families, and unsuccessful subsequent service interventions. These service provider conversations coincided with widespread media attention to revelations made by child trafficking researchers. Over the past decade authorities had noted an alarming increase in both child trafficking cases and reports of trafficked children in state care going missing. However, it was only when researchers deconstructed the relevant data that they realised a predominant number of these cases involved Vietnamese children, who were being coercively trafficked into the country and their

labour used to fuel organised crime activities.[49] Consequently, services deployed targeted policy responses to protect Vietnamese children, and to tackle the criminality driving their trafficking. This example highlights the potential importance of social categories in delineating and responding to emergent trends in social problems.

However, in the context of this research, further investigation revealed that the construction of ethnic categories within relevant datasets made it impossible to isolate Polish cases of domestic violence and thus identify statistical prevalence or trends. In this chapter I connect this to the pan-ethnic, racialised categories that were deployed at a national, statistical level, to organise population characteristics in the UK (Aspinall 2002). As I will show, Polish women were flattened into the 'white' pan-ethnic classification, which rendered their ethnic minority status ambiguous, and concealed the heterogeneity of their migrant positions. This, I argue, reflects the implication of state practices in producing difference, and simultaneously, in homogenising populations (Verdery 1994). This observation is used to highlight the potential perils of social categories, when mobilised in domestic violence policy contexts. Ultimately, I argue that the equivocal, problematic and contested organisation of ethnic categories situated Polish ethnicity, both nationally and locally, as *liminal.* Indeed, I implicate the ambiguous situation of Polish ethnicity in impeding both the financing and execution of domestic violence service provision for Polish women. This identified liminality again speaks to the precarious position of Polish women, experiencing domestic violence *within the borderlands*.

My analysis in this chapter is foregrounded by an ethnographic excerpt, wherein Mandela moved to exclude Polish and other white European women from accessing the service. As I describe, justifications for this at the time centred on funding concerns, and the argument that white European women did not fall within the organisation's Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) remit. Mandela's change in policy and the participant discussions that ensued are used to analyse the articulation and effects of ethnic logics within this ethnographic context. However, while ethnic organisation proves significant in this chapter, my analysis also reveals the problematic funding relationship that existed between the state and the domestic violence organisations (Ishkanian 2014). I argue that a coercive political economic climate drove scarcity, competitive marketisation and liquidity - which forged uncertainty for domestic violence workers, and constrained their practices. I conclude my analysis by

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[49] The findings were presented in a report compiled by RACE in Europe Project Partners (2014), and were broadcasted through multiple media platforms, such as the Guardian (McNamara and Mei-Ling 2015) and the BBC (Judah 2014).

pressing the influence of the UK's political economic organisation, inclusive of ethnic governance, in this ethnographic context. This chapter therefore highlights previously unexplored dimensions and effects of Polish ethnicity in the UK, and its interconnection to formations of state power. In keeping with the conclusions of the previous chapter, this analysis serves to emphasise the salience of state practices in the shaping of domestic violence service provision, and thus of domestic violence (Adelman 2017).

Mandela's Policy Shift

Several weeks into my placement with Mandela I attended a staff meeting that changed the course of my stay at the organisation. For the first hour, the looming and potentially crippling funding cuts that Mandela faced were discussed, as were potential strategies that would allow staff to provide sustainable services to the many clients seeking support at the charity. As part of this, Mandela's manager, a woman called Rani, conveyed the details of a recent meeting she had attended with Edinburgh Council officials. At the time, the Council provided significant funding to the service, but Rani disclosed she had been informed that Mandela's funding would decrease by 30% the following year. Cuts were being made across many organisations funded by the Council, in line with the reduction of its own budget, allocated by central government. Additionally, due to new funding requirements that centred on evidencing impact, Mandela's receipt of further funding was now dependent upon the organisation providing stronger indicators of the beneficial effects of their interventions. The difficulties of 'evidencing' impact in the context of supporting women experiencing domestic violence were discussed, including staff's frustration at the additional demands further, seemingly arbitrary, paperwork would make on staff time.

Rani continued to say that the Scottish Government was yet to announce the outcome of grant applications for the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Fund – another significant funding source for Mandela - for the pending financial year.

> As you know, for many of you, your salaries are paid by the fund, and without this funding we cannot employ you… Because of the delay in [the Scottish Government's] decision, we are going to have to issue [the relevant workers] with redundancy notices… that say your employment will terminate on the 1st of April. I really hope that it won't come to that, that the funding will come through... I can't imagine their reasoning for not giving us money… But everything is so up in the air right now, we can't be sure until they tell us [the outcome of our application.]
>
> …We need to let you know this, to keep you informed… and explain why you will get these [redundancy notices]… I know you all have financial

> *responsibilities…children…and mortgages… all I can say is that we are hopeful this*
> *won't be the case and that we will let you know as soon as we hear.*

The atmosphere in the room was sombre, with staff appearing dejected by the news but not surprised. A short discussion ensued, before Rani said there was one further announcement she had to make: Mandela had decided to no longer support Polish clients.

> *…We cannot take Polish clients any longer. This goes for all white European women*
> *that come to us: Lithuanian, Latvian, other Eastern Europeans... Any referrals we get*
> *for non-BME women must now be redirected to Women's Aid… unless they have a*
> *BME partner, and then we will still take them. You can continue supporting the Polish*
> *and other cases you are already working on, but this should be with the aim to*
> *transfer them or exit them [from the service] as soon as possible...*

There was a murmur amongst staff members - they had not anticipated this last announcement, because Mandela had never before denied migrant women support on the basis of their nationality. To me, this was equally unforeseen: just six weeks ago I had started my placement with Mandela, with the explicit purpose of researching domestic violence and help-seeking issues experienced by Polish women. If this decision had been on the agenda then, it had not been mentioned to me. I asked Rani why Mandela had come to this decision – why do Polish women no longer fit their service remit? To this Rani replied,

> *Polish women are not BME – so unless we change our manifesto to include non-*
> *BME women we are not sticking to our funding remit… Previously [Mandela] had an*
> *open-door policy to any woman that wanted support from us – we would even*
> *support white Scottish women if they came here... And this was manageable… we*
> *would have one or two Polish cases a year, mostly if they were married to black men.*
> *But since [the Accession] countries have joined the EU…now we have 20, 30 cases*
> *a year or more – mostly Polish women who have white, Polish partners… This*
> *means we are now turning away the BME women we are supposed to be serving,*
> *and this has to stop.*

I persisted: but why are Polish migrants *not* BME? In our previous discussions about Polish women accessing Mandela services, the issue of Polish women requiring extensive resources for support had been raised, however their BME status had not been contested. Furthermore, in my conversations with agencies that work in conjunction with Mandela, Polish and other Accession migrants had always been explicitly referred to as belonging to the BME category. Rani shook her head in disagreement,

No, Polish women are not BME. BME means Black Ethnic Minority – and Polish people are white Europeans. They are not visibly different – they are not visibly black, and this is the most important... Look at me, I am black, and our clients, the ones we are supposed to be supporting, are black also.

Rani, who is of Indian ethnicity, pointed at her skin on her arm and gestured to her face, to emphasise her point.

…They do not experience the extra barriers of racism when trying to access support that our BME women do. In fact, [Polish women's] needs are totally different. Yes, they have similar issues of social stigma, like the BME clients we work with, when they are leaving an abusive relationship… but overall their experiences and needs are totally different... They require extensive practical, emotional and language support, which is very costly... and it takes up resources that we don't have to give…

The money Mandela receives is for black minority ethnic women… Other agencies go so far as saying that they will only accept 'South Asian' women, but we will take on more [ethnicities] than that… so we are good compared to other charities, because we take women of any colour, faith or origin - so long as they are BME…. We are one of only two [domestic violence] charities in Scotland that have this [BME] remit – so why do we have to go against it?

...There are other agencies for Polish migrants…they have their own funding… so [those agencies] should be dealing with them. Our funders are not giving us any extra credit for taking on Polish clients. Some are even angry and saying we need to do what our funding pays for… Our services are very stretched…this justifies our decision.

Following on from the staff meeting, it emerged that Mandela were not the only organisation to adopt this policy position in Edinburgh. Another charity that provided specialist support for BME women, which I will refer to as 'Mitra', had also stated that their remit did not extend to Polish and other European women. Again, to me, Mitra's stance was surprising: Mitra is a relatively large organisation in Edinburgh, which advertises itself as delivering services that promote well-being for BME, refugee, asylum seeker and *migrant* women. However, I later discovered that preceding this Mandela staff meeting Mitra had distributed flyers advertising their services, with a sentence in bold font at the bottom that stated European women were not eligible to use their services.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

The meeting I have described here outlines Mandela's move to exclude Polish and other European migrant women from accessing their services. From Rani's statements, it is clear that central to this decision was the argument that white Polish and other white European migrants did not qualify for having BME status. However, as the vignette unfolds, so too does the complex of social meanings and issues attached to the BME category, and Mandela's policy shift. From Rani's statements, we can identify that the decision to exclude Polish migrants was driven by three key factors: firstly, white Polish migrants are not 'black' or visibly different, which is the hallmark of being BME. Secondly, Polish women's service needs are different to the BME women that Mandela caters for. And thirdly, Mandela's services were encountering stringent budget cuts and pressure from their funders to 'do what [their] funding pays for' – which does not involve the support of Polish women, because they are 'not BME'. While this vignette only captures ethnic constructions mobilised at one particular point in time,[50] these factors remained central in subsequent participant discussions. In this chapter, I use these logics to ethnographically explore the ways in which ethnicity, and specifically Polish ethnicity, was situated and mobilised during my fieldwork Edinburgh.

Although I observed that extrinsic ethnic situation was relevant to all European migrants, due to the comparatively large number of Polish women accessing domestic violence services (over women from other European countries, with smaller migrant populations in the UK) Polish nationals came to the fore of participants' discussions. For the sake of simplicity, in this chapter I will focus singularly on the extrinsic construction of Polish ethnic belonging and its consequences, but note its potential significance for other white European migrants. From the outset, I wish to emphasise that my arguments do not relate to whether Polish migrants comprise an ethnic (minority) group, in the sense that collectively they form a 'substantial entity that possesses a degree of internal homogeneity or collective agency' (Brubaker 2009: 27, 2004). Instead, I view ethnicity and the boundaries it engenders to be products of statecraft, rather than antecedents (Williams 1989). Furthermore, I do not previse whether Polish migrants should fall within Mandela's particular BME remit; this discussion is not about Mandela's decision being 'right' or 'wrong', and remains respectful of the organisation's right to self-determination. Finally, my analysis in this chapter does not serve to infer any 'hierarchies of oppression' - in terms of Polish women's experiences of abuse or service needs relative to BME women. Alternatively, I focus on how Polish ethnicity and

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[50] As I describe in the addendum to this chapter, the situation of Polish women's ethnicity and their domestic violence service provision appeared markedly different a year after fieldwork ended.

ethnic *minoritism*[51] was constructed and obscured as a social object and unit of analysis, both discretely and relationally, across individual and policy-level discursive fields. To begin this examination, I contextualise UK policy discourses and participant perspectives on ethnicity, ethnic minorities and the BME category, and connect these to relevant anthropological literature.

Ethnicity and Race

Ethnicity, as a concept, has become a mainstay of British policy vocabulary when discussing perceived, shared differences within collective populations. At the state level, the UK Department of Health (DOH) for example, defines an ethnic group as a collective of people who comprise a distinct population within a larger community, that have or ascribe to mutual characteristics. These include: a shared history, language or religion, common cultural traditions, a common geographical origin, or descent from common ancestors. The definition continues,

> *While an ethnic group is sometimes perceived as a minority within a larger community, ethnic groups cover people from all communities, not just those of African, Caribbean, Asian or Chinese backgrounds. For example, White British people are an ethnic group. Because they outnumber all other ethnic groups in England, comprising 87% of the population, they are the majority ethnic group at the national level* (*DOH* 2007: 4).

Ethnicity is often referred to as having superseded the biologicised idea of 'race' in UK policy discourses in recent years (IRR 2016,[52] Chaturvedi 2001, Afshari and Bhopal 2002, Sheldon and Parker 1992). However, myriad academic works continue to debate the meaning of ethnicity, and question its value, both in conception and application (Banks 1996, Erisken 2002: 1). Fundamentally, anthropologists agree that ethnicity involves the classification of people and inter-group relationships, and that it comprises an articulated, relational boundary, which organises populations and informs social interactions (Barth 1969, Horowitz 1985, Cohen 1978, Eriksen 2002). Yet there still remains discord about the differences between ethnicity and race - with some arguing that the terms have no practical differentiation, whereas others assert identifiable distinctions (see for instance, Brubaker 2009: 22). Adding to the confusion is the fact that, operatively, these two terms are

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[51] Here I attach the suffix '–ism' to ethnic minority to form the term ethnic minoritism, to convey the discursive process through which the quality or theory of ethnic minority, as ascribed to in different contexts and by different actors, is rendered visible and mutable for analysis.
[52] Institute of Race Relations (IRR).

frequently ill defined and used interchangeably in academia, policy and practice (Cohen 1978, Cohen 1985, Banks 1996, Aspinall 2002).

Nevertheless, the semantics and workings of race and ethnicity - their iconographies - have varyingly been described as: race as involuntary, ethnicity as voluntary; race as external categorisation, ethnicity as self-identification; race as phenotypical or biological difference, ethnicity as social or cultural difference; race as rigid, ethnicity as flexible; race as subordinating, ethnicity as coordinating; race as exclusionary, ethnicity as inclusionary; race as stemming from European colonial conquest, ethnicity as an outcome of the formation nation states (Banton 1983, Jenkins 1997, Bonilla-Silva 1999 *cf*. Brubaker 2009: 25). While ethnicity is distinguished from race in these cited works, emphasis is still placed on fluidity - both in terms of where one terminology is demarcated conceptually from the other, and where these concepts overlap (also Cornell and Hartmann 1998, Miles and Brown 2003).

However, at the state level, ethnicity (as differentiated from race) is now used in the UK as a concrete statistical tool, to order and manage the British population. This issue is immediately connotative of Foucauldian analytic perspectives such as that of biopolitics and governmentality (Burchell *et al* 1991).[53] More broadly though, such forms of social categorisation are recognised as being fundamental to the functioning of states. This includes ethnic categories being regarded as central to the identification of state priorities and the development of targeted policy responses (Steensland 2006, Gerber 2011). Yet, while statutorily defined ethnic categories may reflect existent or perceived social boundaries (Davis 2010), when ethnicity is extrinsically assigned and deployed through state practices, its iconography can be seen to stray away from that of flexibility and self-identification (Nagata 1974). This feeds into the observations of scholars such as Williams (1989), Starr (1992) and Verdery (1994), who emphasise the ways in which state practices can externally produce and reify ethnic difference. For example, drawing upon the seminal work of Barth (1969), Verdery argues that statutory ethnic organisation is not driven by the 'content' of different ethnic identities, but rather the state's investment in dichotomisation – of deploying absolute boundaries to further its administrative aims. Further, Veredy asserts that the fixing

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[53] Foucault's (2008) concept of 'biopolitics' attends to biopolitical technologies and techniques which govern human and biological processes and characteristics. As Gupta argues, the biopolitical management of a particular population is dependent upon comprising individuals being 'known, codified, recorded and enumerated, and…separated from the rest of the [national] population' (2012: 262). Therefore, while biopolitics are often discussed in the context of ethnic governance (e.g. Fassin 2001, Krieger and Fee 1994), I do not apply this paradigm to my analysis in this chapter because my arguments relate to the obfuscation and homogenisation of Polish ethnicity at the national, statistical level. I return to and provide a definition for governmentality (Foucault 1977) in Chapter 7 (p191).

of ethnic categories is achieved by the mobilisation of 'myths of homogeneity', as well as through rhetorics of incommensurable, relative difference (1994: 45). Collectively, she argues, these techniques serve to both separate and group populations, simultaneously.[54] Although statutorily defined ethnic categories are flawed, essentialist constructions, as Crenshaw (1991) reminds us, this does not mean they do not have real material consequences for people living in the world (also Starr 1992). This is inclusive of fostering social hierarchies and inequalities - an issue that proves salient in the context of ethnic minorities, as I will discuss in the following section.

Ethnic Minority Status

Connected to the definition of ethnicity is that of ethnic minority – which is often used in the UK to describe an ethnic group that has a numerically smaller populace than the majority ethnic population. As Banks highlights, the term 'minority' in this sense is only meaningful in relative terms to that of a 'majority': a relationship that is contingent on relevant system boundaries within the nation state (1996: 147-148). For example, one governmental definition defines ethnic minorities to be,

> …All sub-groups of the population not indigenous to the United Kingdom who hold cultural traditions and values derived, at least in part, from their countries of origin. This therefore excludes national minorities... such as the Scottish, Northern Irish and Welsh….White Irish people [from the Republic of Ireland] are an ethnic group; because they only comprise 1.3% of the population, they are a minority ethnic group at the national level (DOH 2007: 5-6).

However, the term ethnic minority is also used to describe ethnic groups, even those 'indigenous' to the UK, that are marginalised by discrimination, or inequitable access to economic and political power (Aspinall 2002: 804). Importantly, in this context, an ethnic minority's marginalisation is understood as being interrelated to their ethnic status. This was articulated in a conversation I had with Apurva, a staff member at Mandela, when we discussed whether Polish nationals comprised an ethnic minority. Apurva described that she was not convinced Polish people automatically qualified as an ethnic minority, simply because they are migrants. To explain her point, she drew upon the example of the Roma,

> To me, the Roma are a clearer example [than Polish migrants] of a European ethnic minority. The Roma are a distinct ethnic group – a people whose ethnic identity and origins are different from the [majority populations] in Eastern Europe. [The Roma]

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[54] This echoes Green's (2013) arguments about borders, further reinforcing the relevance of borderlands in this context.

have experienced extensive discrimination because of their ethnicity… they're
differentiated by their appearance, their culture… and they have a long history of
being oppressed…they have had less access to education, and are
socioeconomically very marginalised… So the Roma have a history of being
persecuted, in their countries of birth and in the UK… and we can't say the same
about Polish people… because in Poland they are the majority ethnicity… they don't
experience the same oppressions.

In this conversation, Apurva pressed the importance of ethnic minorities comprising an identifiably 'other' sub-population, whose ethnic identity is discrete from states' majority inhabitants, and who consequently experience extensive marginalisation and discrimination. She contrasted Polish ethnic positioning with the Roma by identifying that, unlike Poles, the Roma experience oppression in both their native countries and in the UK. This example serves to problematise that Polish nationals might automatically achieve ethnic minority status, simply because they are migrants in Britain. This is because Apurva's statements reflect that an individual's foreign nationality, or statistical minoritism, is not necessarily sufficient for achieving ethnic minority status. Rather, for some understandings of ethnic minoritism, a concrete and experiential dimension of marginality, that arises as a result of belonging to an 'other' ethnic group, must additionally be present. Here Apurva asserted the dimensions of 'otherness' and marginality are not present in the case of Polish migrants. As I develop my analysis in the following sections, I argue that this stance can be connected to Polish migrants' ethnic situation as white Europeans.

Pan-Ethnic Categories and Race
Various terminologies are additionally used to describe people who belong to ethnic minority groups, in a collective or overarching context in the UK. Generally, these terms are used to name 'pan-ethnic' groups or statistical collectivities, comprised of several ethnic groups that are perceived to share common characteristics (Aspinall 2002: 804). Prime examples of pan-ethnic groups deployed as taxonomical collectivities are 'Asian' or 'Black' in the UK, and 'Hispanic' or 'Latina' in the US. Yet, problematically, these labels can be used variably: as both subjective identifiers, and in more ambiguous, applied collectivist terms (*ibid:* 810, also Bhopal *et al* 1991, O'Neal 2000, Parekh 2000). 'Black' for example, has multiple meanings as a pan-ethnic term in Britain. This issue proves to be of significance in the context of the BME category, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

As in the US, 'black' can be used as an appellation of self-identity, to describe a person with ancestral origins in Africa and/or the Caribbean. While regularly deployed as an ethnic category in the UK, Aspinall emphasises that the term remains imbued with associations of tangibly 'black' skin colour or biologicised conceptions of race (2002: 805).[55] However, 'black' is additionally used as a collectivist political term, to refer to members of ethnic minority groups who are differentiated by their appearance - who may resultantly feel solidarity with one another by reason of shared experiences of racism, regardless of the diversity in groups' 'origins' or values (O'Neale 2000, Alexander 1999).[56] The generic use of 'black' then, can be externally applied to any people or groups that may experience racism; be they connected to Africa, the Caribbean, the Indian Subcontinent, China or Vietnam (Cornell and Hartmann 1997). This is regardless of whether group solidarity or identification with the 'black' epithet is ascribed to or shared in actuality - much to scholarly contestation. Scholars, for example, have criticised the black label in this context for its homogenisation of the different ethnic groups it encapsulates (Banton 1976, Modood 1988, 1994, Modood *et al* 1997). Moreover, despite the multiple meanings of 'black', concerns have been raised about political blackness being usurped by its significance as a bounded phenotypical or racial 'ethnic' category (Aspinall 2002: 807, Modood *et al* 1997). Modood (1994) further argues that the black political label problematically equates racial discrimination with discrimination occurring solely on the basis of 'skin colour' or visible difference. In doing so, she asserts, other forms of racism such as linguistic or cultural antipathy are obscured - concealing the character of the many discriminations that ethnic minorities experience.

Evidently these ambiguous pan-ethnic terminologies are sites of contestation, entangled in the politics of identity and recognition in both a 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' sense. At the state level, they comprise an uncomfortable mix of ethnic and racial terms, which in practice organises the British population on the basis of *racialised ethnicities* (Aspinall 2002: 806, Brubaker 2009, Isajiw 1993). Silverstein's anthropological paradigm of 'racialization' is clearly relevant here – echoing Verdery (1994), he uses this term in the context of state practices to describe 'the historical transformation of fluid categories of difference into fixed species of [racialised] otherness' (2005: 364). In the UK, racialised ethnicities can be exemplified by the definitive pan-ethnic categories offered in government censuses: 1) White; 2) Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; 3) Asian/Asian British; 4) Black/African/ Caribbean/Black British; and 5) Other Ethnic Group (ONS 2011a). Indeed, Kertzer and Arel

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[55] Of course, anthropologists have long criticised notions of 'skin colour' and race, both generally and in relation to the formation of social categories (e.g. Montagu 1942, Davis 2010, Sussman 2014).
[56] Aspinall compares 'black' in this sense to that of 'people of colour' or 'visible minorities' - mainstream vocabulary from the US and Canada that has not gained widespread currency in the UK (2002:806). He traces the British, political usage of 'black' back to anti-racist discourse, which I reference in Chapter 2 (*ibid*: 805).

describe these categories as being 'illuminative of Britain's recurring failure to distinguish race from ethnicity in national discourse' (2002: 2).[57]

Fundamentally, in analysis and representation, pan-ethnic categories are rarely broken down into the distinct ethnicities – assigned or self-identified - that comprise them. In the face of such abstraction, many have suggested that these pan-ethnic divisions prove arbitrary and meaningless (e.g. Aspinall 2002). Nevertheless, it is not just the UK census that has adopted pan-ethnic categories; they are used widely in Britain as a statistical tool to examine 'ethnic' trends at the abstract level. Employers, for example, routinely collect 'ethnicity' profiles of their workforce for equality monitoring purposes, which again are often distilled into pan-ethnic categories. The ideological significance of these extrinsic categories aside, in practice they cause confusion and fail to accurately account for the heterogeneity of the populations they describe. One conversation I had with Camila, a new Spanish employee at Mandela, exemplified this:

> *This morning I was thinking about when I was applying for jobs and they were asking me about my 'ethnic status'… I was really confused… I mean - I don't know where I'm supposed fit in. They ask if you are only black or white, or maybe Asian…and then there is Irish, as if this is different somehow! I don't see myself in these categories so I was not sure what to put… I am not you know, 'really' white, and I am not black. I do look different with my colouring…I am not the same as a Scottish person anyway, coming from Spain… And English is not my first language… I've been raised in a different culture, a different environment...*

> *…Ethnicity is a very strange concept for me – it is not something we have in Spain. I think there we talk about nationality or more generally race…With all of this discussion [about whether Polish people form an ethnic minority or fall within the BME category] I am thinking the idea of ethnicity is more confusing than helpful.*

As Camila explained, the ethnic categories she was asked to ascribe to in her job applications did not reflect her ethnic identity, which for her was interconnected to her differential positioning within the Scottish population as a Spanish migrant. Camila's description exemplifies that in everyday interactions in the UK (such as when applying for jobs) individuals, inclusive of migrants, come to be situated within these racialised, pan-

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[57] Paralleling Kertzer and Arel (2002), Davis (1991) additionally highlights the significance of racialisation within census level data, when writing about the statutory industrialisation of racial categories in the US.

ethnic classifications. Particularly in the context of migrants, this can be related to Ong's (1996) observations about the extrinsic categorisation of immigrants arriving in America. She describes the relative 'blackening' or 'whitening' of certain migrant groups, and identifies that incoming migrants are consistently placed along a racialised spectrum of colour (also De Genova 2005). Importantly for the context of this study, Camila's observations reflect the ways in which pan-ethnic categorisation subsumes migrant identities, and interrelated intersectional experiences. Accordingly, as Bhopal (2004) argues, even non-collective ethnic categories can hide an individual's migrant status, since ethnic identity does not necessarily correlate with nation of birth or citizenship status (also Khelaifat *et a*l 2014).

Thus, ethnic and pan-ethnic categories have received much denigration for homogenising populations - for flattening and obscuring differences between the individuals they encapsulate. Criticisms in this context include categories' concealment of migrant identities, as well as of ethnicities that do not sit easily within the predominant pan-ethnic classifications. Cited examples of identified ethnic minority groups that have a significant presence within the UK population, but which are not clearly represented in the nomenclature include: Jews, Arabs, the Roma, Turks, Cypriots and the Irish (Westwood and Bhachu 1988:1 Kosmin 1999, Fraser 1996; Aspinall 2002: 812). Specifically, these criticisms emphasise that the differential ethnic identities, and interconnected experiences of marginalisation, of these ambiguously situated groups are not reflected when they are subsumed into pan-ethnic categories.

The issue of categorical obfuscation and homogenisation then, can apply to ethnic minority groups that are ambiguously situated into the 'white' pan-ethnic category. Perhaps this is particularly so, given that the white pan-ethnic category is frequently associated with being synonymous to the privileged, white British majority ethnicity (Aspinall 2002: 810). 'White' ethnic minorities are consequently described as suffering 'injustices of recognition' (Fraser 1996), as their situational and experiential disparities can be easily overlooked (Parekh 2000, Aspinall 2002). For this reason, Aspinall describes white ethnic minorities as being Britain's 'insiders-outsiders' (2002: 810). Importantly, the obfuscation described in this context is in part relational. It arises through the state's dichotomous framing of difference (Verdery 1949), via the construction of 'other' racialised pan-ethnic categories that are often associated with experiences of discrimination and marginalisation (Roediger 1994: 13, Tyler 2012, De Genova 2016: 90). I stress that, in making this statement, I am not hierarchically or comparatively considering the marginalisation of people situated within different ethnic categories. Rather, I am highlighting that individuals or ethnic groups located within the 'white' pan-ethnic category may also experience disparities and discrimination, but that this

may not be recognised or addressed because of their ambiguous 'white' status. As my analysis progresses in this chapter I argue that this can also apply to Polish migrants, when they are subsumed into the 'white' ethnic classification. In the following section I identify instances where Polish ethnicity is 'flattened' by pan-ethnic categorisation in the context of domestic violence service provision, and begin to reflect upon the effects of Polish migrants' ambiguous ethnic situation.

Ethnic Categories in the Context of Domestic Violence

Abstracted pan-ethnic categories are used in the compilation of domestic violence statistics, both nationally and locally. This includes governmental crime statistics, which are used to measure crime prevalence in the British population. Relevantly for this research, statutory domestic violence and homicide statistics in the UK are parcelled into the racialised pan-ethnic victim profiles of 'White, Black, Asian and Other' (ONS 2014). As a result, it is impossible to identify trends in domestic violence within individual ethnic or migrant populations - including the Polish migrant population. This is a significant and surprising dearth in knowledge, given the serious and prevalent nature of domestic violence, and the extensive research and policy attention that the phenomenon has received in recent years. As we saw in the case of Vietnamese child trafficking at the beginning of this chapter, detailed ethnicity data can prove an important tool for delineating and responding to issues arising in specific populations. However, as it stands, Polish and other white migrant women are not differentiated from British women in statutory data, and instead are flattened into the 'white' pan-ethnic victim category. Therefore, national statistics are unable to reveal whether a disproportionate number of Polish women are being assaulted or murdered by their partners in the UK each year.

These statistical limitations are engendered by the homogenising effects of pan-ethnic categorisation and, in addition to preventing the identification of particular issues in domestic violence manifestation, they inhibit the development and financing of targeted policy responses. At a national level, this can be exemplified in a policy deployed by the British government in 2016. Following extensive cuts to English language education, the government announced funding for classes to teach English specifically to Muslim women. Although ethnic identity is not synonymous with religious identity, national definitions stress that the two are closely interrelated (e.g. DOH 2007, also Vertovec and Rogers 1998, Baumann 1999, Eriksen 2002). Nevertheless, this example reveals the ways in which abstracted, collective categories – ethnic or otherwise - can be used to further political aims, and inhibit the funding of services for ambiguously situated migrant populations. In announcing this policy, the then Prime Minister David Cameron (2016), used census data to

argue that Muslim women had particularly poor proficiency in English. He identified that this was indicative of Muslim women's marked social isolation, which he suggested increased their vulnerability to 'Islamic extremism' and to gender-based violence (including domestic violence).[58] Consequently, in a bid to reduce these 'vulnerabilities', Cameron announced funding would be allocated to provide English language classes exclusively for Muslim women.

By concentrating solely on Muslim women in this policy statement, the issue of language difference was crudely dichotomised to the furtherance of dubious political aims. The problematic rhetoric of this policy justification aside, in focusing on population data organised by religious identity, this policy excluded the many other migrants or ethnic minorities that may also have limited English skills and experience isolation, but who do not fall into the 'Muslim' category. For example, Polish migrants are identified as comprising the largest proportion of foreign-born Christian nationals, and Polish is now listed as a main language spoken in the UK, second only to English (ONS 2013b, 2015a). As I identified in the previous chapter, some Polish women I encountered in this ethnography did have limited English proficiency (also Garapich 2010, Thiara 2011).[59] However, the heterogeneity of migrant and ethnic minority language abilities is necessarily diluted within the Christian category, since such a large proportion of Christians in the UK comprise majority ethnicity, English-speaking British nationals (ONS 2016a). Therefore, this example serves to reveal how the potential needs of ambiguously situated migrants can be statistically concealed, to the effect that they fail to receive targeted resources that aim to reduce vulnerability to domestic violence. Here we may equate this to the paradigm of borderlands: Polish migrants' relationship to the border - inclusive of the boundaries engendered by their border crossing - is obscured by their ambiguous situation within abstracted statistical categories. This is an issue I will return to, as my analysis progresses.

However, returning squarely to the issue of ethnicity, the categorical obfuscation of Polish migrants proved to be a problem not just at the national level, but also locally, in the context of this ethnography. This is exemplified in my conversation with Niall, a domestic violence service provider.

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[58] Specifically, Cameron connected Muslim women's 'poor English proficiency' to patriarchal, 'backward attitudes' shared amongst 'menfolk' in some Muslim communities, which he claimed let men exert 'damaging control' over women in their families, and perpetuated women's isolation.
[59] Although I describe in the previous chapter that Szarlota received English classes, she did so before this policy was instituted.

Niall was involved in applying for funding for the Respekt project, the behaviour change programme specifically for Polish men (*cf.* Chapter 3). He described to me the difficulty he had in securing this funding,

> *It was really difficult evidencing the need for [Respekt]… its taken a long time to get it off the ground. [Social workers in Edinburgh] have been talking about there being a problem with domestic abuse in Polish families for quite some time, but there hasn't been any figures to back this up, so it's been hard to prove… This is an issue across all the services [in Edinburgh]… social work, NHS Lothian, Police Scotland…when we approached them for data, no one could say exactly how many Polish clients they were having, because their [ethnicity] records didn't have that detail… So [all the evidence] we have is anecdotal…it's made it much harder to get this project funded. Hopefully, now its running, we can show how needed it is… that there is a big gap [in service provision for Polish people], and that there are real benefits from this service… but its been a long road, getting to this point.*

As Niall described, services in Edinburgh encountered practical impediments, as a result of the ethnic homogenisation of Polish migrants within the 'white' pan-ethnic category. This made it difficult for him to confirm service providers' perceptions that there was an issue with domestic violence amongst Polish families in the area. Agencies were unable to quantify how many Polish women were accessing domestic violence services, or explore whether their service engagement and needs were different to that of their white British majority clients.

These described limitations have two important implications. Firstly, they complicated service providers' ability to identify and address any existent issues relating to domestic violence and service engagement in the context of Poles in Edinburgh. This was doubly so: services not only had to understand an issue in order to develop policy responses to tackle it, but they also had to apply for finance to implement these policies - from funding bodies that increasingly placed the burden of proof on quantitative substantiation of need. As Niall described, data limitations meant that the only evidence he could provide in his funding applications was 'anecdotal', which he believed made it more difficult for the Respekt project to receive funding. Secondly, our inability to quantitatively prove the statistically 'disproportionate' issue of domestic violence amongst Polish families means that the service provider perceptions that Niall describes – the likes of which first instigated this research - may be inaccurate. That is, service providers may have noticed a sharp increase in domestic violence cases involving Polish nationals, however this could have coincided proportionately

with Polish migration to Britain, following European Accession. This raises a tentative question of confirmation bias, and evokes Abu Lughod's (1990) assertion: that sometimes it may be more important to examine the signification of difference, over interrogating the 'content' of difference in actuality (also Gupta and Ferguson 1992, Verdery 1994).

However, anthropologists have long criticised sole reliance on quantitative evidence for understanding the complex dynamics implicated in social problems (see for example, Lambert and McKevitt 2002). Indeed, the obscuring effects and politicisation of statistical categories – exemplified here in national crime statistics and the statutory provision of English classes - emphasises the need for a contextualised, qualitative understanding of interactions taking place 'on the ground'. This is inclusive of listening to and valuing the perspectives of service providers, in addition to service users. Nevertheless, this section reflects that, both nationally and locally, the ethnic categories in which domestic violence victims are placed matter, and can have far reaching implications. Within the present ethnographic setting, this is perhaps most clearly demonstrated in relation to the final pan-ethnic category that I will consider here, and which returns us to the vignette that opened this chapter: the BME Category.

The Black and Minority Ethnic Category

The 'Black and Minority Ethnic' (BME) category is currently the most widely adopted policy term to reference ethnic minorities in the UK, and serves as a taxonomy to describe a collective, grouped on account of 'blackness' and ethnic minority group membership status. Despite its salience, as with the abovementioned pan-ethnic nomenclature, the term tends to be ambiguously defined in use (Aspinall 2002). This has led to confusion and contestation over which groups fall under the umbrella of this terminology. A core contention centres upon whether BME functions to describe black *and* minority ethnic groups, or whether it applies only to ethnic minorities who are black; two understandings of the category that I will discuss here consecutively, drawing upon the perspectives of research participants.

BME as 'Black *and* Minority Ethnic' has been used to describe people who are either: British and politically 'black', *and/or* who come from a minority ethnic group. BME here then encompasses both (politically) 'black' and non-black ethnic groups; Irish populations are frequently mentioned as falling within this BME remit, as are gypsy or travelling communities (e.g. Fraser 1996, Matthews 2008; McCabe *et al* 2014). This signification of BME is generally used to recognise that such individuals may experience disparity or inequity, relative to the majority white British demographic, which is interrelated to their 'other' ethnic identity. This understanding of BME is widely used, for example, in statutory reports that

discuss groups that are socially excluded from the 'mainstream' or who are unequally affected by negative social issues, illness and service engagement outcomes (e.g. DOH 2003, 2007, 2009, Greene *et al* 2008, also BRAP 2011, Universities Scotland 2013). As I discovered during my fieldwork, it is this signification of BME that many service providers subscribed to in Edinburgh.

Service Provider Reactions

In the weeks following the Mandela meeting, other services came to hear of the organisation's move to exclude Polish migrants from their services. Amongst the professionals I spoke to, this shift in policy was generally not well received. Particularly, this was in regards to the assertion that Poles did not fall within Mandela's BME remit. One participant cited Mandela's conception of BME as being discordant with his understanding of the current legislative definition:

> *BME stands for Black and or ethnic minority, with ethnic minority meaning any ethnic group that is not the indigenous majority of a country, i.e. white Scottish. You do not have to be black to be considered BME – I would say that [this interpretation] is a rather archaic understanding of what being BME is, and of the additional issues that BME communities face when accessing services.*
>
> *Certainly, legislatively, in the UK Polish migrants are seen as BME and [our specialist BME team] deals with issues experienced by Polish migrants on a weekly basis…I mean they are obviously ethnically different aren't they? They come from a different country, they have their own language, and they have things like their own food shops everywhere…As far as I can see its simple.*

Additionally, a Polish domestic abuse social worker I interviewed felt strongly that Polish people should be recognised as both an ethnic minority and as BME:

> *I checked this myself so I know for sure and ethnic minority means being 'not from the dominant group in society'…so not being white Scottish…Its crazy people are saying Polish people are not an ethnic minority... They are not white Scottish, so they should be BME. To say they don't have problems with language or cultural differences, or racism, from my experience it isn't true. I don't understand where [organisations that do not believe Polish nationals should be classified as BME] are coming from…[such statements] could be seen as being quite racist, really.*

Finally, I interviewed the director of another charity in Edinburgh, which supports disadvantaged BME children and their families. At the time, his organisation worked with a number of Polish families.

> *I'd heard Mandela had said they weren't taking on Polish clients any more, which I found …yes, quite surprising. But, you know, Rani has to do what she has to do, to try and keep Mandela going. It's a ruthless time just now - we're all just hanging on by a thread.*
>
> *Here [at this organisation] we don't place emphasis on skin colour in deciding who can access our services…we judge it on the basis of need… Need as in serious poverty, serious isolation, because of cultural differences or language barriers… and more generally discrimination and racism…like bullying at school. And for the Polish families we see there is a serious need… serious isolation and difficulties…so yes, we support them, absolutely.*

This last conversation makes reference to the scarce and uncertain funding climate that third sector charities were facing – an issue I return to later in this chapter. However, we can see that these participants collectively viewed Polish migrants as being both an ethnic minority and as BME. Participants invoked statistical minoritism and the legislative understanding of BME to justify Polish inclusion within the category. Yet, ultimately Polish migrants were identified as BME in these conversations because service providers recognised their differential experiences of marginalisation, and the additional service complexities this engendered. Echoing the notion of 'injustices of recognition' (Fraser 1996) one participant suggested it was discriminatory to claim that Polish migrants did not fall within these categories, because this obscured the systemic inequalities and barriers that her Polish clients experienced. However, there is a stark differentiation between this understanding of BME that I presented here, and the second predominant signification, which limits BME assignation to individuals who are politically 'black'.

The IRR define Black and Minority Ethnic as being 'the terminology normally used in the UK to describe people of non-white descent' (2016). Here the 'and' in Black and Ethnic Minority serves as a conjunction, rather than to introduce ethnic minorities as an additional, coordinated status that separately feeds into the category. This understanding of the definition emphasises the import of 'blackness' or visible difference – of being non-white, unlike the British majority - and is used in several policy contexts within the UK, particularly in the third sector. It is the IRR's definition to which Rani subscribed in the opening vignette, when she stated, '*BME means black ethnic minority*' – where 'and' is removed altogether.

As my juxtaposition between the two BME understandings suggests, there is discord over what the BME umbrella term covers, and how ethnicity should be represented in in its appellation (Bhopal *et al* 1991, Cole 1993).[60] This dissonance between the significance attributed to BME reveals it, both as a category and a concept, to be polysemous, unstable and political. That is, a site of conflict and contestation; a medium of recognition, inclusion and exclusion. However, the malleability of the BME term also highlights its fluidity. This is encapsulated in my conversation below with Ana, a white Scottish Mandela worker, as she reflected upon the relative significance of the BME category.

Ana

Ana and I were talking about a recent programme broadcast on the BBC called *Murdered by my Boyfriend* - a story of one woman's experience of domestic violence at the hands of her partner, which culminated in him killing her. We would often talk about domestic violence portrayal in the media; workers regularly commented on the media's recourse to unhelpful stereotypes of domestic violence, which obscured the nature and impact of the abuse experienced by the survivors who access their services. The programme was a dramatisation of a real case that occurred in London, involving a 'Black British' woman. Commenting on this, Ana said,

> *I find it interesting that the woman in the film was visibly black, but that BME issues didn't come into it at all when [the programme narrative] was trying to explain why she found it so hard to leave [her abusive partner]…or so hard to seek help… Maybe it's because England is so much more ethnically diverse than Scotland, especially areas like London… so maybe being BME is seen as less of an issue there, or being BME stands out less…Like, [in England] perhaps just because you are of a different skin colour, or your parents or grandparents are migrants, [it] doesn't mean you automatically are going to experience BME issues.*

> *…I don't know, but it did make me think about when I was in school [in rural Scotland], and I can still remember when the first BME family came to our school… it*

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[60] Concerns for example, have been raised over Asian ethnic minority presence and identity being lost in the BME designation (Bhopal *et al* 1991). Cole (1993) additionally objects to the separation of 'black' from 'ethnic minority' in the BME appellation because she argues this suggests that 'black' people do not comprise an ethnic minority, or are in some way distinct from other ethnic minority groups. In reflection of such debates, the BME epithet has taken on several variants over the years in different policy contexts, to stress particular aspects of ethnic inclusion or exclusion. BME has been rebranded as: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME); Asian, Black and Minority Ethnic (ABME); Black And Minority Ethnic (BAME) (where emphasis is placed on the 'and') and Black, Asian and Other Ethnic Minority (BAEM) (O'Neale 2000, Alexander 1999, Cole 1993). Finally, some definitions have advocated the explicit inclusion of 'Irish' in the BME title, in recognition of their 'frequently overlooked' minority status. This has lead to the rather cumbersome category title 'Black, Asian, Irish and other Minority Ethnic' (BAIME) (e.g. Parekh 2000 *cf*. Aspinall 2002: 804).

was a big deal, you know? Not like in a racist way or anything…but it must have been so strange for those kids, going to a huge school and being the only BME children there – the only ones who weren't white and Scottish… With Scotland having such a small, non-diverse population back then… [but even now]… BME families here probably do stand out more. I'd never really thought about it like that before.

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Here Ana reflected on the temporal and spatial variability of both the BME category and the experiences of those located within it.[61] This stresses the category's fluidity and varying significance, and coincides with Burman and Chantler's (2005) assertion that different political and social contexts - even within the UK - can varyingly shape the significance of ethnic categorisation. With the importance of local context emphasised, I will now return to consider the discursive positioning of Polish nationals in relation to the BME category, specifically in the context of Mandela's service provision. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, three facets were invoked to explain Mandela's situating of Polish clients outwith their BME remit: that Polish migrants are not 'black' or visibly different, which means they are not BME; that Polish women's service needs are different to the BME women Mandela caters for; and that Mandela was experiencing increasing pressure from their funders to '*do what their funding pays for*' – which did not involve the support of Polish women. These discursive logics were repeatedly raised in my conversations with Mandela workers in the weeks following the staff meeting, and are aspects that I will consider in detail in the following section.

'Being BME'

I later met with Rani and Apurva, to try and unpack further the move to withdraw Polish women's eligibility to use the service. During this meeting, Rani explained to me that Mandela was obliged to look after Black Minority Ethnic women *'first and foremost'* because this was written as a statement of purpose in the organisation's constitution. Fundamental to this reasoning then, is the belief that Polish migrants are not BME – a stance that both Rani and Apurva confirmed they ascribed to, given their understanding of the term. The issue of Polish migrants not being 'black' or 'visibly different' was cited as a major factor in this stance. Echoing my earlier discussion with Apurva about Polish ethnic minoritism, in this

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[61] As Ana is a white Scottish woman her observations about the BME category comprise an 'etic' perspective, but still they aptly capture the category's varying significance. However, I provide emic examples in the following section when I explore the perspectives of Mandela employees (Apurva, Rani, Uche and Samira) who self-identify as BME.

conversation, Rani and Apurva expressed that they viewed the historical context of racist oppression for Poles to be different from that of their visibly different BME clients. This was because they felt that Polish women, as white Europeans, do not have to face the everyday discrimination that BME women encounter in the UK. Clearly, here the issue of visible difference in being BME was key to Rani and Apurva – a binary difference that takes a tangible, material form. From the perspective they expressed, this difference was embedded in the life experiences of the BME women they supported, and generated differential complexities in their experiences of domestic violence and service engagement.

Interconnected to the issue of visible difference then, are the additional service needs that this difference can engender for BME women – which Mandela as a service accommodated for and responded to. In this context, the differential service needs of Polish women, as juxtaposed to BME clients, were cited as an additional reason for Polish migrants not falling within the BME category. Using paradigms of empowerment and oppression, Apurva explained that women from longer-established, visibly different BME communities in Britain, such as those connected to the Commonwealth, have *'had to live with generations of racism, barriers and prejudice.'* When this is combined with *'conservative patriarchal cultures, with constrained gender roles,'* she described that BME women's *'life experiences and expectations are totally different to that of Polish women.'* Here then Polish migrants' 'white', European, and recently arrived migrant status rendered both their ethnic minority and BME positionings ambiguous, or *'less clear cut.'* This ambiguity, Rani and Apurva suggested, meant Polish women fell out with Mandela's service remit, and made them suitable for accessing mainstream services.

However, not all Mandela staff members agreed that Polish women had life experiences and service needs that were distinct to that of their BME clients. Paralleling the abovementioned conversations I had with service providers from other organisations in Edinburgh, some Mandela employees identified continuities between BME and Polish women's experiences, which they felt qualified Polish women for having BME status. For example, one employee, Uche, explained:

> *For domestic abuse, yes I totally agree that Polish people are BME. So many of them do not speak English and need help with translation… and with understanding their rights [in the UK]… OK they are white, they [can] have blue eyes and blonde hair… but culturally they are totally different...Their culture is a lot closer to our BME culture for domestic abuse…so their needs are similar …they are totally not the same as Western British women, regardless of their skin colour.*

> *…Definitely [Polish migrants] experience discrimination, definitely… I have one Polish lady who's had a terrible time in [council emergency accommodation]. Some of the [youths on the estate] found out she was Polish, and they stand outside her door, harassing her and shouting horrible things when she leaves the house. She has young children… her son was very intimidated, very scared of them… I've helped her make a complaint and with getting relocated… And I've seen this is a problem for [Polish women] when they approach services also. I've seen with my own eyes, the bad attitudes they get when they ask for help…*

Here Uche described similarities she had observed between Polish and other BME clients: language difference, unfamiliarity of their rights, encountering social stigma connected to domestic violence, and experiencing prejudice and discrimination. Another staff member, Samira, supported these observations:

> *If I am honest I know in my heart that Polish women are BME – they have the same sorts of experiences as our everyday clients and we should be able to support them… Definitely you do not need to be black. I mean, the term BME is really quite contradictory, because so many of the women we support are not black…We have women who are Kurdish…Arabic… Brazilian... from Morocco, Turkey and Egypt… They would never describe themselves as black, and they would not like to be referred to like that at all… And really looking at them…you would say they are white. I mean, you can't tell by looking that they are not from the UK or Europe. Yes, they have dark hair and brown eyes, or whatever, but they could easily be mistaken as Portuguese, or Spanish, or French…*

> *…To me, being BME cannot only be about skin colour, it is much more complex. For us at Mandela it is about the extra difficulties that you encounter as a woman when you are in an abusive relationship. And Polish women, we have seen, do encounter these… Racism, the language barriers, the stigma… the difficulties with getting benefits… [Polish women] really need our help [at Mandela], and I am so sad that we cannot support them anymore. But when it is the funders that are making us do this, I don't know how we can change it…*

Contrasting the arguments made by Rani in the opening vignette, Samira was equivocal about the importance of 'blackness' in delineating who belongs to the BME category. Instead, paralleling Madood *et al*'s (1997) work, Samira questioned whether many of her clients would identify with the 'black' political label. Echoing Uche, Samira stressed that for her, 'being BME' involves more than visible difference – in the context of Mandela's

domestic violence service provision, she perceived it to be a reflection of the additional constraints that women encounter when experiencing abuse. Like Uche, Samira highlighted that her Polish clients experienced issues such as language difference and discrimination, similar to her other BME clients. Here Modood's (1994) emphasis on the multi-faceted nature of racism proves salient – including cultural and linguistic 'othering' and antipathy - which she argues can affect an array of ethnic minority groups in the UK.

The issues that Uche and Samira described their Polish clients experiencing in these discussions coincide with other research on Polish migrants in the UK (Thiara 2011, Kempny 2011, Garapich 2010). Collectively, these can be seen as complexities that are interconnected to, and engendered by, Polish women's *migrant intersectionalities*. This therefore coincides with my argument in the previous chapter: that Polish women can encounter additional difficulties when experiencing and seeking help for domestic violence, by nature of their situation within *the borderlands*. As I argued, language difference, discrimination, and unfamiliarity with UK institutions can all be connected to Polish women's previous situation, *extraneous to the border*, and similarly, to their 'carrying the border' with them, as they experience domestic violence in Edinburgh.

As the conversation with Rani and Apurva depicted in this section reflects, Polish women's relationship to the border was obscured by their white European status, which rendered their BME positioning unclear. Thus, Polish women may experience additional difficulties when experiencing and seeking help for domestic violence, yet these may be overlooked because of their association with mainstream, non-marginalised white ethnicity. In this way, we may conceive of Rani and Apurva's discourse as embodying statutory constructions of racialised pan-ethnicities – modes of classification that I have already problematised at the national policy level, for their homogenising and obfuscating effects. This can be connected to Kearney's (1991) argument, which again parallels my analysis in the previous chapter: that migrants come to embody the articulation of state borders and boundaries, as they live their lives in their 'host' countries. However, while Somers (2008) suggests that the boundaries migrants encounter within states constitute 'borders of exclusion', within this ethnographic context, we might say that it is Polish migrant women's *inclusion* within the white ethnic category that proves exclusionary. Accordingly, Aspinall's (2002) positing of white ethnic minorities as being 'Britain's insider-outsiders' proves relevant to Polish migrants in this ethnographic context.

More broadly, this analysis points once more to the liminal positioning of Polish migrants, both locally and nationally, within ethnic constructions. This is because Polish women, as a

result of their migrant positioning, cannot be placed coexistently with white British nationals, but neither can they amidst 'other' categorisations, because of their white European identity. This closely parallels Eriksen's conception of 'ethnic anomalies', which he developed drawing on Douglas' work (1966) and uses to describe ethnic identities that can varyingly be posited as 'neither-nor' or 'both-and' (2002: 62). As with my analysis in the previous chapter, we can again see in this context of ethnicity the potentially disempowering effects of liminality. This is an argument I will continue to reflect upon as I bring this chapter to a close.

Before doing so, I will attend to a final discursive logic invoked to justify Polish women no longer receiving support at Mandela: the issue of funding bodies constraining staff practices. As Samira described, despite her personal desire to support Polish women, Mandela's funders were coercing this policy shift. The issue of funding is a theme that has foreshadowed many participant discussions in this chapter, and was predominant in the vignette that first instigated this discussion. In the following section I will briefly contextualise the funding climate in which this ethnography is situated, before connecting it to Mandela's move to exclude Polish migrants from its service.

Funding Remits Amidst Austerity

As the opening vignette portrays, Mandela was facing debilitating funding cuts, which were constraining staff's ability to help the women seeking support at the service. Rani informed staff members that Edinburgh Council would cut its annual contributions to Mandela by 30%, and that this funding was dependent upon the organisation supplying quantitative evidence to demonstrate their work was generating impact – that the Council were getting 'value for money' in their service investments. Additionally, Mandela was still awaiting the Scottish government's decision on which organisations would receive funding from the VAWG grant – a monetary resource which paid many Mandela employees' wages. Due to the delay in this decision, all relevant staff members were told they would be issued redundancy letters, because if the funding did not come through Mandela could not afford to retain their employment. Clearly, the precariousness of Mandela's financial situation was stark. This corresponds closely with Ishkanian's (2014) critical commentary on funding relationships between the British state and domestic violence organisations, and the subsequent impact the political economic climate has had on service provision.

As Ishkanian (2014) describes, the Conservative government's 'Big Society' agenda focused on harnessing the innovation of civil society and strengthening its 'capacity' through encouraging entrepreneurialism and 'business skills'. Corbett and Walker assert the neoliberalism inherent in the Big Society agenda (2013: 452) – a form of governance that

involves the rolling back of the welfare state and the opening up of public services to market competition, which places emphasis on private enterprise, 'efficiency' and choice (e.g. Ong 2006, Larner 2000, 2003, Ganti 2014). I return to the issue of neoliberalism in Chapter 7, as I consider the 'deepening' neoliberalisation of the British welfare state (Ginsburg *et al* 2012). However, here I attend to the ways in which neoliberal governance also has had a striking impact in the charitable domestic violence sector, which I connect to the present ethnography.

At the time of data collection, the government had reduced the scope of state service provision, and had moved towards contracting out responsibility for key areas of welfare provision to the private and third sectors – including those working in the field of domestic violence. Ishkanian (2014) describes that this funding relationship between the state and the charitable sector centred on the competitive commissioning and tendering of contracts, fostered by market driven calculations. To achieve these contracts, the author argues that domestic violence organisations were pressured to pursue professionalisation and entrepreneurialism, which in turn has led to the marketisation of organisations' policies and service provision (also Westmarland 2015). Crucially, Ishkanian emphasises that, despite the rolling back of state services, the 'Big Society' agenda also fostered a radical reduction in state funding for charitable organisations – including domestic violence organisations – in their delivery of welfare support.

Although the insufficient funding of domestic violence services has been a long-documented issue (Lewis 1999, Harris *et al* 2001), Ishkanian (2014) emphasises that the cuts organisations faced after 2010 were unprecedented. She cites Kane and Allen (2011) to convey that UK public expenditure was forecast to decrease by £20 billion in real terms from 2009/10 to 2015/16, and that the charitable sector stood to lose £2.8 billion over the same period. This research shows that, despite budgetary resources being allocated to tackle domestic violence at the national level, locally, service providers were facing debilitating state-led funding cuts at the time of this ethnography. These cuts have been described as having a 'dramatic' effect on domestic violence organisations in particular, notably because of their reliance upon state funding (Ishkanian 2014: 340, Towers and Walby 2012: 3, Southall Black Sisters 2011).[62] Topping (2012) for example, demonstrated that organisations' loss in funding has resulted in the closure of some refuges, and described that many others had to restrict their service provision, turning away women requiring

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[62]As Clark *et al* (2012) and Pharoah (2012) note, domestic violence organisations remain an unpopular cause amongst private donors and, furthermore, the recent financial crisis has seen a unilateral decrease in individual donations to charities.

support when attempting to flee domestic violence. Research has also emphasised that these cuts have hit specialist services such as Mandela, particularly hard (Towers and Walby 2012: 3, Southall Black Sisters 2011). This accords with the observed tendency for BME domestic violence organisations to receive less public funding than their mainstream counterparts (Burman and Chantler 2005: 67, Hague and Malos 1999). Collectively, this extensive reduction in funding, combined with the competitive marketisation of services, was described as creating a hostile climate for domestic violence organisations, which both weakened and constrained their operational capacities (Ishkanian 2014). Accordingly, Kail argued that this political economic climate risked 'prompting a downward spiral in the stability and sustainability of [domestic violence] organisations' (2011 *cf.* Ishkanian 2014).

As we saw in the opening vignette, Mandela was reliant on funding from statutory agencies to finance the running of the organisation. However, both of the service provision contracts Rani referenced proved short-term and changeable; Edinburgh Council significantly reduced the quantity of funding it allocated to Mandela, challenging the services' ability to continue its service provision. Furthermore, the Scottish government's fund only provided discrete contracts on a year-by-year basis. These short-term, constantly shifting funding structures upon which Mandela relied may be linked to Bauman's (2013) concept of liquid modernity – a term he uses to describe the unending fluidity and temporariness that characterises the contemporary globalised, neoliberal era. As Bauman argues, this liquidity of social organisation fosters fragility and vulnerability, where 'uncertainty [is] the only certainty' (*ibid*: viii). This is an issue I return to Chapter 6. However, here we can see that the scarcity and liquidity that characterised Mandela's funding relationships rendered both staff employment and the operational capacity of the organisation precarious and uncertain. This echoes Wies' (2011) anthropological research in America, where she employed Farmer's (1996) paradigm of structural violence to press the role of state forces in constraining the lives and professional roles of domestic violence workers (also Merry 2006, Wies and Haldane 2011, 2014).

Nevertheless, funding scarcity and uncertainty alone does not explain Mandela's decision to exclude Polish clients *specifically* from accessing the organisation's services. As Rani described in the opening vignette, she was getting pressure from funders to make Mandela '*do what our funding pays for*' – which she asserted did not involve the support of Polish women. I explored this discursive logic in my subsequent meeting with Rani and Apurva, especially in relation to Rani's suggestion that funders were displeased with Mandela supporting Polish and other white European clients. Rani clarified that she doubted any of their funders would explicitly chastise Mandela for helping Polish women: they did not

examine the ethnicity of the clients they supported, and even if they did, she did not think there would be a problem with the service supporting Polish clients simply because they are not 'black'. However, Rani said her statement related more to her concerns about the reactions of other third sector organisations, and her fear that they might use Mandela's supporting Polish migrants to discredit the charity. Rani described she was worried that other organisations might accuse Mandela of not sticking to their *'original funding remit,'* which could give them a *'bad reputation'* – which, in turn, could jeopardise their chances for future funding.

In this context Rani mentioned Mitra - the BME organisation that had recently issued the leaflets stating migrant Europeans were not eligible to use their services. Rani was anxious that Mitra, in adopting this policy, would be able to advertise the charity as being the only organisation in Edinburgh that specialised in supporting 'black' women, and therefore present the service as a unique resource that addresses a lacuna in the local service landscape. This, Rani feared, could give Mitra a potential competitive advantage over Mandela, if they were both to apply for the same grant money. Here, Apruva nodded in agreement with Rani, and interjected that this concern was not unfounded: although Mitra's services focused primarily on capacity building among BME women, in recent years the organisation had extended its service scope to include BME-oriented projects tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG). This, Apurva described, reflected a frustrating trend in the third sector - of charities expanding their reported repertoire to include VAWG programmes, despite services potentially lacking the feminist ideological motivations or the practical expertise necessary for effective service implementation. The driving force behind this expansion, she argued, was the allure of additional funding available within the VAWG sector; while funding remained scant, it was relatively less so than in other areas such as capacity building, given the growth in public attention that gender-based violence had received in recent years. Apurva explained that this trend in charities 'bandwagoning' domestic violence support was making the already scarce grants more competitive – especially those awarded by statutory bodies, which tended to prioritise funding *'proven gaps in the [charity] market,'* over scrutinising the *'suitability'* of the applicant organisations for fulfilling their proposals.

Rani confirmed her agreement with Apurva's statements, and emphasised her regret at the negativity fostered by competition between third sector organisations,

> *…It is the reality of the funding environment nowadays…us BME charities, we are so under-resourced… it is very competitive, very cut-throat…I wish it wasn't like this, but our hands are tied.*

Connecting this to the move to exclude Polish women from the service, she continued,

> *…From our perspective, [according to our constitution] we can say 'no' to supporting a Polish woman and be right, whereas if we turn away a BME woman while supporting a Polish, non-BME woman we could be wrong. And that is where we are at – at not being able to accept everyone…at talking about waiting lists… and asking a woman to wait on a list, when her life is in danger… when her and her children are afraid and suffering – for me that is wrong… impossible. There are other, well-funded places that Polish people can go to, but there is really nowhere else for BME women to go. We at Mandela would like to be able to support Polish women again but for the time being cuts need to be made somewhere.*

<div align="center">***</div>

Mandela's justification for excluding Polish women then was not directly related to fears about the organisation being discredited by funders for not sticking to its remit. Rather, it was interrelated to concerns that Mandela's core identity and 'niche' as a domestic violence organisation was being diluted by their assisting white Polish and other 'mainstream' women. This, it was feared, could give other charities an advantage when it came to applying for funding. Other organisations were encroaching on Mandela's support territory, specifically one key 'competitor' organisation, which had already lightened its workload by normalising the exclusion of European migrants from its services. Resultantly, with the future of the organisation in jeopardy, in its policy shift, Mandela was investing in its *marketability*. Here then, Mandela's niche function was being deployed as a form of marketable, symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986), which distinguished the service from others - rendering it invaluable and, importantly, fundable. This suggests that Mandela's decision to exclude Polish migrants was economic and strategic, as well as political and ideological.

This analysis certainly coincides with Ishkanian's (2014) observations about the implications of the then repressive political economic climate for domestic violence organisations. Paralleling Apurva's frustration at the 'bandwagoning' of domestic violence support, the author noted that competitive, market-driven tendering processes were allowing generic service providers to win domestic violence contracts. Correspondingly, she identified that domestic violence organisations were constraining their services in attempts to fit funding requirements - shifting their focus from 'human rights to marketability and cost-savings' (*ibid*: 341). The ethnography I have presented here therefore, grounds this disembodied analysis, by providing a localised example of how neoliberal market forces constrain choice and create competition, even in philanthropic landscapes of domestic violence service provision.

However, while '*cuts need to be made somewhere*', it remains significant that these cuts were made along ethnic lines. The justifications Rani and Apurva cited bring to mind classical anthropological works on ethnicity, such as Barth (1969) and Cohen (1969), which emphasise that ethnic constructions can be readily invoked in times of heightened economic scarcity, or competition over scant resources (also Barth 1994, Cohen 1985, 1981, Despres 1975, Banton 1983). This also coincides with Ishkanian's (2014) contention: that the marketisation of domestic violence services was coercing organisations towards looking 'to their contract terms rather than their mission [when supporting those experiencing abuse]' (Independence Panel, 2013: 10 *cf.* Ishkanian 2014).

Undoubtedly, Mandela's use of the organisation's constitution and BME service remit to exclude Polish women was facilitated by the liminality of Polish migrant ethnicity: the ambiguity surrounding their ethnic minoritism, and their situation within the BME category. Indeed, Mandela's policy shift can be seen as embodying Polish women's liminal position within the national ethnic infrastructure. Fundamentally, however, their policy shift also had practical implications for Polish women experiencing domestic violence in Edinburgh. As I will go on to discuss in the following section, Polish women's exclusion from Mandela's services narrowed their ability to access appropriate services, which might accommodate any service complexities engendered by their migrant intersectionalities.

The Implications of Polish Ethnic Constructions

With Polish women no longer eligible to access Mandela's services, the service structure in which Polish women could seek support inevitably changed. Although Rani suggested that there were *'other well-funded projects'* from which Polish women could seek support, at the time of fieldwork, there were no organisations that could similarly offer Polish women specialist domestic violence services. As I describe in this section, there were two core alternative sources of support for Polish women: the Respekt project and Women's Aid. However, these services offered a qualitatively different form of support to Polish women, and could not necessarily accommodate the additional support complexities a Polish woman might require as a result of her ethnic and/or migrant status. Here I reflect upon the implications of this, drawing attention again to Polish women's liminality: situated as 'matter out of place', (Douglas 1966) in Edinburgh's domestic violence service landscape.

As I outlined in Chapter 3, Respekt is primarily a behaviour change project run by social workers, which works with Polish men who have been abusive. While at the time of fieldwork Respekt did provide support to Polish women, this occurred mostly in contexts where the woman's partner had, at some point, agreed to engage with the project. Consequently, there

was no established referral pathway for Polish women whose partners were not participating, beyond concerned social workers requesting Respekt staff offer their clients ad-hoc support. Respekt services therefore were delivered by statutory services and predominantly supported Polish families that were, in some way, already being supervised by social workers. This meant that the quality and function of the relationship underpinning the support that Respekt offered to women was markedly different from that of the independent, confidential advice offered by third-sector domestic violence organisations, available to any women experiencing abuse. Furthermore, the Respekt project at the time was only in its pilot phase; because of its small budget and workforce, it could only support some 25 men and their families each year. Therefore, Respekt's service capacity was both too small and unsuitable for providing independent, extensive support to all the Polish women in Edinburgh who were seeking help for domestic violence.

Consequently, Women's Aid, the mainstream third-sector domestic violence organisation in Edinburgh, was Polish women's main service alternative to Mandela. However, like Mandela, Women's Aid also reported facing stringent budget cuts, which inhibited the services they could offer to clients. This limited the forms of support that Women's Aid extended to its service users, including resources such as translators. As one Women's Aid manager explained to me,

> *Translators cost a fortune, so its not something that we can offer our clients, unless it is in exceptional, one-off circumstances… but very, very rarely. Normally this isn't a problem, because the women that can't speak English count as BME, so we refer them on to Mandela. The staff there can speak more languages, and they provide translators… It isn't ideal, but this is how it works.*

Here the manager described that women who require language support were viewed automatically as being BME within Women's Aid, and since the organisation did not fund translators, non-English speaking women were routinely referred on to Mandela for assistance. Additionally, unlike at Mandela, Women's Aid staff members were not familiar with the intricacies of how statutory welfare policies intersected with immigration law, and would again refer complex migrant cases to the BME organisation. As I describe in the following chapter, because of their legislative migrant status, Polish and other European women regularly struggled to achieve welfare support when attempting to leave their abusive relationships. This practical division of clients between Mandela and Women's Aid reflects the structuring of the service landscape in Edinburgh, and can perhaps be connected to Burman and Chantler's criticism of mainstream domestic violence organisations - for habitually shifting the responsibility of complex and costly service

provision onto BME charities (2005: 67-68). Fundamentally, although Women's Aid, as a 'universalist' organisation, would support any women who approached their services, at the time of this ethnography they were unable to provide any additional supports that Polish migrant women might need to facilitate their successful service engagement.

Thus, once Polish women were no longer eligible to receive services at Mandela, there were no alternative organisations where they could access similar supports, which might accommodate additional complexities engendered by their migrant status. This is not to say that the service structures I have described here shaped Polish women's experiences of domestic violence and help-seeking in a necessarily deterministic way. However, it does identify that Polish women were situated 'betwixt and between' the remits of the organisations that provided domestic violence support in Edinburgh. In both Women's Aid and Mandela, they were situated as 'other', as 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1966, Turner 1967, Eriksen 1993). Ultimately this meant Polish women's help-seeking possibilities were constrained - they did not have the option to access specialist support, which was a choice that remained open to other women, unambiguously located within the BME category. Therefore, as ethnicity, deployed via the BME category, was the basis upon which these domestic violence organisations were structured and operated, the liminality of Polish migrant's ethnic situation emerged as a constraining force for Polish women seeking support in Edinburgh's domestic violence service landscape.

Anka and Kasia

However, the implications of Polish women's liminal ethnic positioning went beyond limiting their choice of which domestic violence organisations they could access in this ethnographic setting. As I have focused on the extrinsic construction of Polish ethnicity in this chapter, the voices of Polish women have remained notably absent from analysis – an issue I will briefly attend to in this final section. Below I present an excerpt from a conversation I had with Anka and Kasia, two Polish participants who reflected upon the effect of their liminal positioning in shaping their everyday interactions with service providers.

Anka:

> [British] People just look at you [as a Polish person] and think you are completely the same… that you are coming from the same culture and understanding as them... But sometimes this is more dangerous than stereotypes [of ethnic difference] because they take this sameness for granted, and blame difference on things other than just a breakdown in communication or understanding.

Kasia [nodding in agreement]:

> *Yes, us Polish, we are Britain's invisible minority... [service providers] tend to just look at us like any other white person and do not expect there to be any difference. But it is completely different for us, because we will always be foreigners in this country… we can't change that…. not being a citizen… coming and starting everything from the beginning…these things make a difference when you are in a bad situation like [when experiencing domestic violence.]*

Both Anka and Kasia speak English fluently, so they described to me that language difference was not an issue for them when they sought support for domestic violence. However, still, these women drew upon how their migrant status, specifically as Polish women, was overlooked in service providers' appraisals of their needs. This, Kasia described, makes Polish migrants an '*invisible minority',* because their presumed sameness - their homogenisation within the majority white British population - can affect their everyday service interactions. Indeed, Anka suggested that the concealment of her ethnic difference can have 'dangerous' results, as it can negatively influence how others perceive her when manifest differences, engendered by her migrant status, go unrecognised in social interactions.

Clearly, the disempowering dimensions of liminality again foreground these statements, as does Fraser's (1996) conception of 'injustices of recognition', and Aspinall's (2002) consideration of Britain's 'insider-outsiders'. Once again in this example, Kasia and Anka reflect how their relationship to the border, as Polish migrant women, was concealed by the extrinsic situation of their ethnic belonging and identity. This analysis then, as with the previous chapter, speaks to the constraining liminality of living *within the borderlands*. Collectively this chapter has served to identify that Polish migrant women were liminally situated 'betwixt and between' markers of ethnic difference, engendered by nation states (Anzaldúa 1987). As we have seen, in the context of this ethnography, this was to the detriment of domestic violence service provision and engagement.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the extrinsic construction of Polish ethnicity in the context of domestic violence service provision, particularly in relation to its positioning within pan-ethnic nomenclature. I have argued that pan-ethnic, racialised categories are used at a national level to understand and respond to domestic violence, and that Polish women, both nationally and locally, can become flattened into the 'white' pan-ethnic classification. I have shown that this pan-ethnic situation concealed the heterogeneity of Polish women's migrant

positionings and rendered both their ethnic minority and BME status liminal. I implicated this ambiguous situation of Polish ethnicity in impeding both the financing and execution of domestic violence service provision. Within the grounded context of this ethnography, I argued Polish women's liminal ethnic positionings constrained their help-seeking options, and their service engagement. This analysis further emphasises the limiting effects of liminality, and speaks further to the precarious position of Polish women, when they experience domestic violence *within the borderlands*.

Consequently, in contrast to much scholarly work on ethnicity, in this chapter ethnicity is posited not as a flexible identity to which individuals may subscribe, but rather a mechanism through which individuals become externally categorised and reified (Jenkins 1986:177, Nagata 1974). I drew attention to the role of state practices in delineating ethnicity, both discretely and in relational, pan-ethnic terms. Coinciding with Verdery's (1994) comments I have highlighted how these ethnic constructions serve to differentiate and simultaneously homogenise populations. This analysis presses the salience of the state in shaping domestic violence service provision in this ethnography. This paradigm was bolstered further by my reflections upon Mandela's funding relationship with the state. I argued that a coercive political economic climate drove scarcity, competitive marketisation and liquidity, which in turn forged uncertainty amongst Mandela's workers, and constrained their organisational practices. Therefore, I suggested that Mandela's economic insecurity intertwined with ethnic categorisation (Barth 1969, Cohen 1965), arguing that Polish women's precarious ethnic positioning was in part fuelled by the precariousness of the third sector.

This chapter therefore has once again highlighted the influence of the UK's political economic organisation, inclusive of its ethnic governance, in the shaping of domestic violence service provision. Although I have not grounded the events described in this chapter within women's individual lives, as Adelman (2017) asserts, the nature of domestic violence service provision necessarily shapes women's experiences of abuse. This stance is perhaps more clearly exemplified in the following chapter, where I continue to explore themes of liminality and precariousness, as they emerged within women's stories as they experienced and sought help for domestic violence. Therein I argue that economic uncertainty and precariousness is not only distributed through ethnic categorisation, but also along legislative borders of welfare entitlement.

Fortunately, in light of the increased number of Polish women accessing their services following Mandela's policy shift, Women's Aid was later successful in securing funding to employ a support worker fluent in Polish. One senior member of staff at Women's Aid explained to me the reasoning behind this,

> *You have to be entrepreneurial to get by in the third sector today… you need to prove relevancy and demand. We saw a gap in the market [after Mandela stopped taking on Polish clients] and we went for it.*

Later still, when I returned to Edinburgh a year after completing fieldwork, I learned that Mandela had once again started accepting Polish clients. This followed their securing additional funding, which they used to hire a Polish-speaking support worker. These succeeding events again emphasise the liquidity of the neoliberal landscape in which domestic violence organisations operated. Moreover, they highlight that the perspectives presented in this chapter were not rigid, and encapsulate only a fleeting snapshot of time during which this ethnography was conducted.

6. Welfare Access and Domestic Violence

Restrictions to entitlement to benefits for EU migrants are having a devastating effect on women when separating from an abusive partner. EU migrant women …are ... not able to get financial support in order to leave an abusive partner or able to access the safety of refuge.

Scottish Women's Aid written submission to the Scottish Parliament Welfare Reform Committee's *Women and Welfare Inquiry* (2015: 2).

Many women using our service are no longer entitled to [benefits], whereas they would have been previously… [For example] one woman has already had her benefits stopped and is about to be evicted from her home due to not being eligible for housing benefit. Another woman, who has two children, is also facing eviction proceedings in the near future.

Perthshire Women's Aid Worker

In the previous chapter, I explored ways in which ethnic categories were mobilised in attempts to identify and respond to domestic violence. Particularly, I focused on the effects of liminal, extrinsic constructions of Polish ethnicity in the context of Polish migrant women experiencing abuse. Ultimately, my analysis revealed the salience of the legislative categories in which domestic violence victims are placed. These, I argued, can influence the support offered by services, and thus women's experiences of abuse. I continue this assertion in both this and the next chapter, however here I shift my focus away from ethnicity, towards the legislative regulation of welfare entitlement.

In this chapter I ethnographically explore how Polish women's individual experiences of abuse and service engagement can be shaped by welfare policies. As I describe, in the UK welfare can prove critical for women with little economic capital, who wish to leave their abusive partners and find refuge from domestic violence. However, I show that many Polish women I encountered during fieldwork struggled to achieve these provisions in practice. This was despite Polish nationals, at the time, technically having recourse to access British welfare support. I connect this to the 'wave upon wave' of changes to bureaucratic procedures and eligibility criteria deployed by the British government, which served to limit EU nationals from accessing benefits (O'Brien 2015). Therefore, the issue of legislative

regulation here relates not to ethnicity, but rather to Polish women's regional, *European* migrant status.

The analysis in this chapter elucidates the immediate, practical and existential implications of these welfare policies for Polish and other European women experiencing domestic violence.[63] My considerations are foregrounded by ethnographic examples that depict the experiences of two women – Crina and Trudka – and their arduous encounters with welfare policies, as they attempted to evade their abusive relationships. I highlight the uncertainty that underpins these bureaucratic interactions, which I argue rendered the safety and welfare of European women *liminal*. As I describe, both Crina and Trudka were ultimately left facing homelessness, with no access to economic support - which severely constrained their service engagement, and increased their vulnerability to further marginalisation and abuse. In keeping with my arguments in previous chapters, my analysis asserts the influence of state practices in fashioning both domestic violence and its service provision (Adelman 2017), in Edinburgh.

Building upon Crina and Trudka's stories, I suggest that prohibitive and opaque welfare policies converged with domestic violence, to engender a form of *existential precariousness*. I equate this precariousness to an embodied product of structural violence (Farmer 1996, 2004, 2005) with which European women - as a result of their specific legislative identity - had to contend uniquely. However, given the liquidity of the welfare policies depicted in this chapter, I suggest that the structural violence to which European women were subject exhibited unpredictable, nihilistic dimensions (Rapport 2000). Indeed, I emphasise the arbitrariness of women's bureaucratic outcomes in this ethnographic context (Gupta 2012). In other words, I highlight the importance of happenstance in shaping women's access to protection and, interrelated, the protean nature of welfare policies. I connect this to Adelman's concept of the 'ambivalent governance' of domestic violence (2017). Consequently, I suggest that analysis must attend to the effects of structural violence for both individual bodies, as well as body politics (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987, Hautzinger and Johnson 2017). Fundamentally, this chapter contributes to understanding of the phenomenology of women's help-seeking experiences - a previously unexplored dimension of domestic violence in anthropology. This analysis further reinforces my portrayal of Polish women's precarious, liminal situation, as they experienced and responded to domestic violence *within the British borderlands*.

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[63] I explore the wider political economic significance of these regulations in Chapter 7.

Domestic Violence and Welfare

In Chapter 2 I emphasised that, while domestic violence is a ubiquitous phenomenon, a variety of research indicates that socioeconomic marginalisation can pattern abuse, rendering women with fewer economic resources at greater risk of harm (Walby and Myhill 2001, Walby *et al* 2004, Jewkes 2002, García-Moreno *et al* 2005). This is attributed in part to the increased likelihood of poorer women having greater financial dependence upon their partners, or having fewer viable options and thus encountering additional difficulties, when attempting to leave an abusive relationship and achieve self-sufficiency. The disruption of leaving an abusive relationship can result in women having to leave their jobs and their homes and, if they have children, financing life afresh as single parents (Raphael 1995, Davis 1999, Lyon 2000). Consequently, women with less economic means may, upon leaving, struggle to pay for alternative accommodation and childcare, or fund everyday necessities (Ptacek 1999, Brandwein 1999, Davis 1999).[64] Domestic violence then is understood as being exacerbated by poverty, but it is also recognised as exacerbating the poverty in which women find themselves (Lyon 2000, Davis 1999, Adelman 2004: 55, Raphael 2015). As a result, researchers argue that access to independent economic capital is imperative for individuals experiencing domestic violence - for aiding decision making and safety plans, and empowering women with the ability to exit violent relationships (Raphael 1995, 2000, Brandwein 1999, Gondolf and Fisher 1998, Davies *et al* 1998).

Public welfare assistance offers a means by which women with low incomes may access such independent monetary resources (Brandwein 1999, Raphael 1995, 2015, Allen *et al* 2004). Certainly, welfare has proved essential for many women experiencing domestic violence in the UK, given the widely documented struggles of poverty and inequality in contemporary British society (MacInnes *et al* 2013, Wills and Linneker 2014). These issues – which coincide with the soaring cost of childcare, food, housing and transportation - are understood to disproportionately affect single mothers (Mink 1998a, 1998b, Purvin 2007, Dermot and Pantazis 2014, Kasearu *et al* 2016).[65] This is perhaps best encapsulated by the paradigm of 'the feminization of poverty' (Kingfisher 2013, Abercrombie and Hastings 2016).

Consequently, in the context of domestic violence, welfare supports are recognised as offering means through which victims may secure their most basic survival needs: shelter,

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[64] These are issues that are inevitably heightened in the context of economic abuse, where perpetrators restrict and control victim's access to money, which makes the covert accumulation of savings that might aid preparation for leaving particularly difficult (Davis 1999, Sharp 2008).

[65] As Wills and Linneker (2014) describe, these problems can even affect women in full-time work, given the precarious modes of employment that permeate the UK's political economy today, many of which fail to pay a feasible living wage.

food, and warmth. With these basic needs met, domestic violence organisations reason that women may then proceed to pursue lasting safety, prosperity, legal protections and justice (Lennet 1997, Davis 1999, Purvin 2007). Josephson (2002), among others, emphasises that welfare support in this context is critically important for women who, demographically, may experience extensive structural marginalisation (and therefore have fewer private resources) (also e.g. Crenshaw 1991, Brush 2001, Sokoloff 2005, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005). Highlighting once more the significance of intersectionality, Josephson argues that ethnic minority and migrant women in particular are more likely to experience situational marginalisation, which increases their reliance on welfare in order to respond to abuse. As I described in Chapter 2, scholars assert that Polish migrants are subject to such marginalisation in the UK, and therefore often require welfare supports when experiencing problems such as domestic violence (Garapich 2010, Thiara 2011).

While welfare provisions may provide vital help for some women experiencing abuse, research has shown they do not universally offer meaningful assistance. Brush (2000), for example, demonstrates a Catch-22 situation, wherein domestic violence interferes with women's abilities to comply with welfare policy requirements, which results in their failing to receive state provisions (also Lein *et al* 2001, Josephson 2002, Riger and Staggs 2004, Purvin 2007). Relevantly for this thesis, domestic violence literature also highlights that migrant and other ethnic minority women often encounter restricted access to state supports (Erez *et al* 2009, Orloff and Kaguyutan 2002, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005). This Dasgupta and Eng (2003) argue, makes the marginalisation that ethnic minority women experience twofold: first, they experience market inequalities as a result of their situational positionings and identities, and second, welfare policies rarely accommodate for such intersectionalities in the distribution of aid (also Crenshaw 1991, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005, Dudley 2014, Anitha 2008, 2010, 2011).

Therefore, academic works have evidenced that there can be an incongruity between the specific needs of women experiencing domestic violence and the protections that welfare policies provide. This, it is argued, can exacerbate the danger posed to women and their children, increasing their vulnerability to violence and placing them in more perilous positions (Scott *et al* 2002, Davis 1999, Purvin 2007, Anitha 2008, 2010, 2011). For instance, leaving an abusive partner is recognised to be a period of heightened danger for victims - as the act of leaving can engender an escalation of domestic violence (Barnett *et al* 2005). As Scott *et al* (2002) argue, women who require yet fail to receive welfare support in this context may have no other means through which they might support and protect themselves. Consequently, being unable to access welfare can make women situationally more

vulnerable to their ex-partner's violence, or compel them to return to their destabilised, abusive relationships.

Here then, we may again say that state practices – namely, the construction and deployment of state welfare policies - have the potential to exacerbate the risk and harm to which some women and children are exposed when they experience abuse (Adelman 2004, 2017). In this chapter, I will connect the arguments presented in this section to the experiences of women who participated in this research. However, first I will contextualise the then relevant UK welfare provisions for victims of domestic violence, before considering their implications in the ethnography that follows.

British Welfare Provision for Victims of Domestic Violence

At the time of fieldwork, among the welfare provisions available to people of working age in the UK, there were three core social assistance benefits that offered support to individuals experiencing domestic violence. These were Job Seeker's Allowance, Income Support and Housing Benefit.[66] Although there were other forms of benefits that individuals in different situations could apply for, I will focus on these three key supports in this section and outline them respectively. I then go on to describe the additional bureaucratic processes that European migrants had to undergo, in order to establish their eligibility to access these benefits.

Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA) is a benefit for people who are unemployed but who are capable of and actively seeking work. It pays a small stipend so that its recipients can pay for everyday necessities, such as food, transport and utilities[67]. Income Support (IS) is a benefit paid to individuals who fit the criteria for being eligible to receive benefits, without being required to actively seek work. Most relevantly here, IS often applies to pregnant women and single parents caring for young children. Paralleling academics that emphasise the importance of welfare provision in the context of domestic violence (e.g. Lennet 1997, Purvin 2007, Raphael 2015), O'Brien (2015) argues both of these supports are essential for women on low incomes when they leave their abusive relationships, since they fund basic subsistence costs.

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[66] All information relating to benefits in this section was accessed from UK Government website: https://www.gov.uk/benefits Accessed 05/07/2016.
[67] I use the present tense to describe these provisions because they were still in place at the time of writing. However, as I describe in the addendum to this thesis, they are gradually being replaced by Universal Credit as part of an overhaul of the benefits system.

Housing Benefit is another social security benefit that can be paid in conjunction with JSA or IS, which assists people on low incomes to meet their housing costs – by paying either partially or in full an individual's rent, often directly to their housing provider. As Bowstead (2015) describes, women who end an abusive relationship often have to leave their homes because their ex-partner may still live there for example, or it may not be safe for them to remain in their homes if their ex-partner knows where they live. Therefore, Housing Benefit is another important support for women with little economic capital, since it offers means to find alternative, safe accommodation and avoid homelessness (O'Brien 2015).

Housing benefit is particularly relevant in the context of refuge and Emergency Council Housing (ECH) - forms of accommodation some of the women participating in this research relied upon. Refuge accommodation, as I described in Chapter 3, is safe, supported housing where women experiencing domestic violence can stay without their partners being able to find out where they are. ECH is an alternative form of accommodation that women may access if they are unable to or do not wish to stay in refuge accommodation.[68] Generally, ECH provides housing for people who are classified as homeless. Persons who are 'at risk of domestic abuse' are automatically categorised as homeless and are afforded priority status.[69] As Burman and Chantler (2005) assert, it is often victims who do not have support networks or enough financial means that rely on refuges and ECH (also Anitha 2008, 2010). Therefore, Housing Benefit is particularly important for women who need to stay in refuges or ECH. This is especially so, given the prohibitively expensive rents that stem from the high administrative overheads involved in running these forms of accommodation. Refuge rents were approximately £60 a day during the time of fieldwork in Edinburgh - a prohibitive expense, even for women earning high incomes. With women often staying in these forms of temporary housing for many months, most women that entered refuge required long-term Housing Benefit support. This can be connected to Horley's description of Housing Benefit as 'the lifeblood of women's refuges' (2016).

Welfare Restrictions

Due to tight welfare restrictions, during data collection not all women experiencing domestic violence were able to claim the three supports I described in the previous section. This was the case for many foreign national women subject to immigration control[70] and, as this ethnography will show, for some women from the EU. This coincides with domestic violence

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[68] Women may access ECH rather than refuge for many reasons. For example, there may be no refuge spaces available or women may have additional support needs that make refuge accommodation unsuitable.

[69] Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 (asp 10).

[70] For an excellent account of legislative difficulties non-European migrant women encountered in Britain at the time of fieldwork, see Dudley (2014).

literature that describes the differential access to resources that migrant women are afforded when they experience domestic violence (Erez *et al* 2009, Orloff and Kaguyutan 2002, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005). Yet, in the context of the UK specifically, European women's limited access to welfare provisions can be connected to the 'wave upon wave of regulatory change' to EU migrant entitlement within British welfare law, which has occurred since 2014 (O'Brien 2015: 111). These swift changes in policy are again connotative of Bauman's (2013) concept of liquid modernity, which I return to later in this chapter, and coincide with the British state's shift towards neoliberal governance (Ishkanian 2014, *cf.* Chapter 5).

Perhaps the most significant regulatory change has been the introduction of the Habitual Residency Test (HRT), which was launched as part of the government's self-proclaimed 'tough stance' on 'benefit tourism' (O'Brien 2015). Subsequently, all European migrants were required to take the test, to establish whether they qualified as being 'habitually resident' in the UK, and therefore whether they had a 'right to reside' in Britain and access welfare supports. With all EU residents at the time legislatively having a right to reside in the UK and thus access welfare supports, this test was heavily criticised and its legality questioned. Academics and activists alike argued these changes severely restricted the welfare supports available to EU nationals and promoted an arduous and hostile administrative culture, to the detriment of all EU migrants (O'Brien 2015, Dudley 2014, AIRE Centre 2014).

However, O'Brien argues that these shifting welfare regulations and practices have a disproportional impact on victims of domestic violence (2015: 130). Yet, there remains no research that ethnographically explores the direct bearing that these changes in welfare provision have had on domestic violence service practices, or within the individual lives of European migrant women. I examine these issues in the following sections - by presenting extended ethnographic excerpts that depict two women's experiences of services engagement, as they experienced and attempted to evade domestic violence.

Welfare Encounters

As the quotations that open this chapter suggest, welfare policies deployed by the British state have had far-reaching effects, restricting many EU women's access to supports as they seek help for domestic violence. However, I focus on only two such examples here, in an attempt to capture the lived experience of women's encounters with these regulations. In this section, I introduce the stories of Trudka and Crina – two women whom staff at a domestic violence organisation spent many months trying to support. These ethnographic vignettes reveal each woman's idiosyncratic situation, and their complex interactions with welfare policies and the agencies that administer them. I analyse the significance of these

encounters for each woman individually, before progressing to reflect upon commonalities that may be identified between Crina and Trudka's cases. This analysis highlights ways in which state welfare administration can engender uncertainty and precariousness, and limit women's access to safety, justice and support.

Trudka is a Polish woman in her late forties, who had recently migrated to the UK when I met her. At the time of fieldwork, she did not speak English and she was clearly distressed by the events unfolding in her life. As I describe, Trudka first came to the domestic violence organisation in fear for her life, because of threats made by her abusive partner, Dymek. However, her European migrant status complicated her eligibility for emergency housing and Housing Benefit, which in turn jeopardised her access to secure accommodation.

I then proceed to represent Crina's experiences, as she engaged with statutory and domestic violence services. Crina is originally from Romania, and is in her mid-thirties. However, she had not lived in her country of birth for more than 12 years at the time I met her, whilst she was staying in refuge accommodation. Although Crina is Romanian, I include her story here because, as a European migrant, she falls into the same overarching legislative EU category as Polish migrant women. Therefore, Crina was subject to the same welfare restrictions as Polish women, and consequently her legislative encounters are of direct relevance to my analysis.

Trudka

Lidia, a Polish worker from a homelessness charity, contacted the domestic violence organisation because of concerns she had about the safety of a Polish woman she was supporting. Lidia explained that Trudka, and her Polish partner Dymek, were experiencing homelessness and had been in contact with the charity for two weeks. During this time, it had become apparent to staff that Dymek was subjecting Trudka to significant domestic violence.

Trudka comes from what Lidia described as a 'low-economic, industrial area of Poland,' which 'many people have left to find better opportunities.' Trudka had been employed for many years there, doing shift-work at a factory in the region. Lidia explained that Trudka had 'fallen on bad times' in Poland. She had separated from her then husband. Lidia believed domestic violence and alcohol abuse were involved. Her family were not supportive of their separation, and Trudka moved away from her home to a city in Poland, to look for alternative employment. There she met and started a relationship with Dymek, who had also recently moved to the area. They both found life difficult in the city. Trudka heard about a cleaning

job in London, advertised through an agency that arranged informal employment for Polish nationals who wished to work in the UK. With the chance to build a better life, Trudka and Dymek borrowed money to pay for their fare to London. Lidia suspected this funding came from a loan shark.

In London Trudka took up her arranged employment, working for a Polish cleaning company. Dymek also found work, but he was quickly fired for being intoxicated while on the job. Dymek's behaviour became increasingly volatile towards Trudka in England. Dymek started turning up at her work drunk, hassling her and refusing to leave. He intimidated staff and threatened violence. Trudka was told she could not work at her job any longer. She found further cleaning work through a different Polish agency, but again Dymek turned up at her place of work and was aggressive and abusive to her and the staff that tried to intervene. She was fired. Unable to speak English, Trudka struggled to find other employment.

During this time, Trudka and Dymek were renting a room in a multi-occupant house, living with other Poles who had recently moved to London to work. Dymek's behaviour was disruptive and they struggled to pay the rent. The landlord asked them to leave. Trudka and Dymek then slept in a car for several weeks. Dymek's abusive behaviour continued to escalate and Trudka became fearful of him. She tried to cut ties with him and approached her previous landlord for assistance. The landlord agreed to offer her shelter, but Dymek found out where she was. He came to their residence and assaulted the landlord, and was later arrested and charged by the police. Subsequently, the landlord said Trudka could no longer stay at the accommodation.

Trudka found out about a Polish company offering jobs in Edinburgh through a friend. She travelled to Edinburgh, as did Dymek, who was out on bail. Some days later they turned up at the homeless charity together, with Trudka's accommodation and work plans having fallen through.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

At the homelessness centre, staff members became concerned by how openly aggressive and controlling Dymek was towards Trudka. Lidia observed that Trudka was clearly scared of Dymek. The situation escalated when Dymek went through Trudka's bag when she had gone to the toilet. He stole her passport, Polish ID card, bankcard and remaining money, and then disappeared. Trudka was distraught. Staff called the police and they tried to trace Dymek. Dymek was angry with Trudka for involving the police and started sending her threatening messages. He said he would kill her, hurt her family and set her mother's house

on fire, with her inside. Trudka felt Dymek's behaviour was so unstable and erratic, that he was capable of carrying out these threats.

These events prompted Lidia to contact the domestic violence organisation. She hoped staff could offer Trudka a refuge place, because it had become clear it was no longer safe for her to stay in local homeless shelters. The previous evening, Dymek had turned up at a number of the shelters, looking for her and causing disruption. However, he swiftly left before the police arrived and evaded arrest. Recognising the risk she was in, Council staff had permitted Trudka to stay in Emergency Council Housing (ECH) for two nights. However, they stated she would have to leave after this time, as she was not eligible for welfare support. Given her EU national status and the short period of time she had been in the UK, the housing officers stated Trudka would automatically fail the Habitual Residency Test (HRT).

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Ashley, a Polish-speaking worker, was assigned Trudka's case at the domestic violence organisation. I was shadowing Ashley at this time so I also attended the appointments with Trudka that I describe below.

When I first met Trudka I was struck by how thin and small she was; she could not have been much taller than 5 ft. She looked exhausted and drawn. Throughout the initial appointment, when Ashley and I first met Trudka, Dymek called her phone relentlessly - at least 15 times. She was visibly wracked with worry and tensed every time the phone buzzed. She seemed disconnected from her surroundings, and kept repeating to us in Polish, *'it is not normal, what he is doing… it is not normal.'* She explained she had tried to end her relationship with Dymek several times, but he would threaten to harm her or kill himself.

We talked with Trudka about her options. She was closed to the idea of going back to Poland and still believed she could get a job in the UK, and work her way out of the difficulties she was encountering. She explained she had put so much into coming to the UK, that if she returned now she would be left with nothing, and unable to pay back the money she had borrowed for her fare. After Dymek had stolen her possessions, Trudka was left with only £7, which she had been carrying in her pockets at the time of the theft. Trudka told us she was too scared to approach a food bank to receive food, because she was worried she might run into Dymek. She explained she had been to the food bank with him before, and she thought it would be a likely place for him to go looking for her. Consequently, when we first saw Trudka, she had not eaten for some time.

Ashley responded to Trudka's account by emphasising the seriousness of the situation. Trudka concurred, and agreed to contact the police to report Dymek's threats to kill her. Ashley cleared her schedule for the day to focus on supporting Trudka. We planned to go with Trudka to a police station to make a statement, and then attend an appointment at the Council's Emergency Housing department. There we would try to get her tenancy at the ECH extended, while we worked on getting her new identification documents, which would assist her in finding employment.

Collectively, Ashley, Trudka and I went to the police station and waited for an officer to become available to make a report. It was early January and it was snowing heavily outside. Without a substantial jacket, Trudka was shivering violently. We waited for two long hours in the cold waiting room. Officers kept bursting in and out of the main doors next to where we were sitting, bringing in billows of snow behind them. Dymek continued to call and message Trudka while we waited. His messages suggested he was looking for her on the streets of Edinburgh, and wanted to harm her. Trudka showed us each message as it came in, shaking her head in disbelief.

Finally, two officers came to see us and took us into a small interview room. By the time we had briefly explained our situation, a process that was prolonged by Trudka requiring translation assistance, it was almost three o'clock. This was the time we had arranged a meeting at the Council accommodation office. I called the office to explain we were delayed because we had been filing a police report, but the worker on the phone relayed her anger, as their office had already booked and paid for an interpreter. We were advised that it would be unlikely they would book another appointment with a translator for Trudka, if she failed to turn up for the scheduled time. As Trudka was facing eviction the following morning, her housing situation took precedence. Reluctantly, Ashley suggested we go to the appointment. The police officers agreed, and advised they would send someone to meet Trudka later in the evening at her hostel address, to complete her statement. They stressed that death threats in the context of domestic violence should be taken seriously, and they would ensure a translator would be available for Trudka, since Ashley could not be present.

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We walked from the police station to the Council Housing Department, in the snow. Upon arrival, the appointment proved tense from the outset. After asking a long list of abrupt questions about Trudka's situation – her marital status, the amount of time she had spent and worked in the UK - the housing officer told us Trudka was not entitled to any emergency housing, and would be evicted from her accommodation the following day. Ashley tried to advocate for Trudka, explaining that she was fleeing domestic violence and at serious risk of

harm, and that she had a significant chance of finding a job in the coming week. This, Ashley emphasised, should make Trudka eligible to receive Housing Benefit, which could fund her stay in ECH. The worker tersely responded that even if Trudka did find employment, she would still not be eligible for emergency housing. This was because, while being questioned, Trudka had told the worker that her estranged husband part-owns a house in Poland. The worker explained that new legislation had recently come in, which meant any EU national presenting as homeless, who owns or partially owns a property in their country of origin, is categorised as being 'intentionally homeless'. '*This means we will not offer you accommodation,*' the worker stated firmly, *'and in fact, it means that you shouldn't even be using the homeless shelters here – you are not entitled to access those either.'*

Ashley again tried to counter the worker's point: Trudka was estranged from her husband and unable to live in the house he owns - but more importantly, because she was fleeing domestic violence, government legislation stated she could not be categorised as 'intentionally homeless'. But the worker shook her head in disagreement,

> *This is not the case for EU nationals… and anyway there is no clear evidence of domestic violence. What she says doesn't make sense…. There is nothing we can offer you here… you must contact your embassy so they can assist you with repatriation to Poland.*

By the time we left the appointment it was well after 5pm, long after when Ashley was supposed to have finished work. Trudka was clearly upset and we were all exhausted from the difficult day. Ashley tried to console Trudka, but she was despondent. We parted ways, agreeing to meet again in the morning to continue our attempts to find Trudka safe accommodation*.*

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The following day Ashley and I discussed Trudka's case with other staff at the domestic violence organisation. One worker, Mirren, who has a background in homelessness and housing support, was shocked by our account of the Council meeting.

> *I can't believe they said that to her… It's always been very clear that regardless of whether you own a home, if you are fleeing domestic violence you are legitimately homeless and require support… And you don't need any evidence to prove this, for housing, you don't need to give them any information… all you need to say is "I'm experiencing domestic abuse" and they shouldn't ask anymore… they should just say "OK fine," and get on with it.*

…I've never heard of anything like this [policy] before. For them to say her husband owns half a house in bloody Poland, as if it matters… and then to question whether she is telling the truth? It's double standards, that's what it is... And [Trudka] can't even access a homeless shelter?! Its disgusting, the whole thing, its really wrong… I'd never expect it to get to this. And she is so clearly [at] high risk [of harm], with this guy roaming around… she must be fucking terrified… Some cases, they just touch you in a way, you know…and this has really got to me.

Mirren asked Ashley if she had approached their manager to see whether they could house Trudka in refuge temporarily, because of the evident danger she was in. However, because Trudka was unemployed and had only been in the country for a short period of time, she was still not eligible to access any welfare supports that could be used to finance her stay in refuge. Ashley shook her head, and suggested she was worried about annoying the manager by asking her to bend the rules for Trudka. '*So many Polish women come here [without funding]… and I know we can't offer all of them refuge,*' Ashley replied. She intimated she didn't want to get a reputation for being a 'trouble maker'. Mirren disagreed, and suggested it was worth approaching the manager, given the severity of Trudka's situation.

The manager subsequently agreed with Mirren, and Trudka was offered refuge accommodation over the weekend. Given Trudka's extenuating circumstances, the manager explained she had decided that Trudka should be housed temporarily, to ensure her immediate safety, and to give her a few days of grace while she tried to find work.

Trudka was visibly relieved at the news, and repeatedly thanked Ashley as we drove her to the refuge later that afternoon. Ashley said she was pleased to help, but stressed that the refuge accommodation was only open to her for a couple of days. Trudka nodded her understanding, and told us she had been walking around the city all day, looking for work at local hotels and businesses. She explained that the night before the police had come to her accommodation, but when they realised she did not speak English they left, without speaking to her about her case or providing her with access to a translator. Ashley conveyed her anger at this, especially considering our emphasis on the severity of the situation, which had been met with assurances by the police officers. Trudka shrugged noncommittally, and said she was not sure she wanted to make a report to the police any more, since she was worried that Dymek's behaviour might escalate further if he found out she had spoken to them again.

After the weekend had passed, despite her extensive attempts, to her dismay Trudka still had not managed to find work. Although we had ordered her new identification documents, they still had not arrived. Ashley thought this was making it harder for her to get a job, since she had no evidence of a National Insurance Number, or of her legal right to work in the UK. Staff members at the domestic violence organisation said Trudka could stay for a couple more days, but that she would still have to leave shortly if her financial situation did not change.

Over the weekend, Dymek had continued to call and message Trudka persistently. He had suggested he would return her stolen documents if she would meet with him in person. By then, Trudka was certain that she did not want to contact the police. Instead, she said her priority was getting a job and restablising her life. Trudka told Ashley she felt very scared and low, and was anxious about leaving the refuge. Over the past few days she had been living off cans of food that the domestic violence organisation had given her, but she was running out of supplies and was still worried about attending the food bank.

Two days later, Trudka left the refuge accommodation of her own accord. Lidia called to tell us that she had seen Trudka and Dymek back together, homeless once more. Ashley called Trudka, who apologised for leaving, and said she was going to Glasgow shortly to try and find work. Ashley explained,

> *I asked her how she was doing, and she said things weren't great... But then I heard him in the background and she hung up… He sounded very aggressive… Her phone's been off since. I'd be surprised if we hear from her again…I can't see [her situation] getting better for her if I'm honest.*

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Trudka's vignette depicts her struggle to sustainably support herself in Poland, and her arrival in the UK with little social and economic capital. She arrived indebted, having borrowed money to pay her fare over. This parallels Erez *et al*'s (2009) assertion that migration can engender economic hardship and marginalisation for women, as they establish their lives in their new host countries. However, beyond this, we can see that Trudka's relationship with Dymek inhibited her capacity to maintain employment - his turning up at her work and being abusive caused her to lose her job. Trudka's subsequent inability to pay rent, combined with Dymek's disruptive behaviour, left her homeless, with their landlord no longer willing to house them. Trudka then tried to end her relationship with Dymek, and sought assistance from her landlord. But Dymek assaulted him, and in doing so severed a potential source of support for Trudka. Back together, Trudka and Dymek travelled to Edinburgh, as she sought further employment. There he continued to subject her

to domestic violence. The situation intensified when Dymek stole Trudka's IDs and bankcards, robbing her of her last financial resources. From these aspects of Trudka's story, we can identify how domestic violence can exacerbate the poverty that victims may experience – with Dymeks' abuse implicated in Trudka's unemployment, social dislocation and homelessness (Lyon 2000, Davis 1999, Adelman 2004, Raphael 2015).

Moreover, Dymek stealing Trudka's possessions further complicated her ability to work. As Ashley highlighted, Trudka was unable to evidence to employers that she had a National Insurance Number, or that she could legally work in the UK. These are issues that are necessarily interconnected to Trudka being a foreign worker, and thus to her migrant status. This dimension of Trudka's situation can therefore be connected to the import of migrant intersectionality in the context of domestic violence (Erez *et al* 2009, Raj and Silverman 2002, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005, Menjívar and Salcido 2002), as well as to Trudka 'carrying the border' with her, as she attempts to establish her life in Edinburgh. Echoing Ewka's experiences when applying for a passport in Chapter 4, Dymek used his possession of Trudka's foreign identity documents as a device to control her, to try and coerce her into meeting with him. This coincides with Raj and Silverman's (2002) assertion that women's migrant status can shape both their relationships, and the abuse they experience (also Erez *et al* 2009, Menjívar and Salcido 2002).

The metaphor of Trudka 'carrying the border' with her extends further, in the context of her engagement with services. When Trudka tried to access safe accommodation, fearful of Dymek's threats, she encountered unanticipated barriers that restricted her ability stay in ECH or refuge. As a result of her EU national status and, interconnected, the amount of time she had lived and worked in the UK, Trudka was not eligible to access public housing, JSA or Housing Benefit. Rather, resonating with my arguments about Polish women's liminal situation as 'itinerant' residents in Chapter 4, the council officer suggested Trudka sought 'repatriation' – that she 'go back home' (also Thiara 2011).

Trudka's ineligibility for any form of emergency housing or welfare support was unexpected by domestic violence organisation staff members. Mirren expressed her surprise at Trudka's encounters, and criticised the public services that had refused to provide support for her on the basis of a seemingly arbitrary technicality. This she suggested equated to 'double standards'. While I return to the signification of legislative differentiation in the following chapter, here Mirren's statements can be connected to the opaque changes within British welfare law, which specifically narrowed EU migrant entitlement (O'Brien 2015).

Although the domestic violence organisation then tried to support Trudka, recognising the exceptional situation she was in, without funding her access to refuge accommodation remained insecure. With the prospect of facing homelessness once more, Trudka feared that reporting Dymek to the police again would anger him further, putting her at more risk of harm from him. Instead, she indicated her priority was finding a job and re-stabilising her life. This is a stance that echoes earlier research, which indicates that for many low-income women experiencing abuse securing short-term subsistence often takes precedence over seeking justice or lasting protection (Purvin 2007, Allen *et al* 2004, Lein *et al* 2001, Scott *et al* 2002). Perhaps, this can also be connected to Trudka's decision to re-connect with Dymek, when she failed to find employment and knew her time at the refuge was running out. Purvin's (2007) research, for example, indicates that some women remain in violent relationships not because they accept the abuse, but because staying seemingly outweighs the starker insecurities and dangers that alternative courses of action might engender.

Principally, Trudka's story documents how a lack of economic autonomy, exacerbated by domestic violence, can generate greater risks and constrain individuals' abilities to respond to and escape abuse (Davis 1999, Brandwein 1999, Raphael 2015). This is not to deny Trudka's agency; throughout, she deployed numerous tactics to resist abuse and improve her situation - by migrating to the UK, by seeking multiple forms of employment, and by reaching out to her landlord, the police and the domestic violence organisation for assistance. Nevertheless, her limited access to resources restricted her help-seeking options, which inhibited her ability to evade her abusive partner. This in turn, increased her vulnerability to experiencing further violence (Scott *et al* 2002).

The insecurity of Trudka's situation can clearly be connected to Trudka's inability to access welfare support - which could have funded sustainable, safe accommodation for her. This proved to be a similar issue for Crina, as I describe below. As I outline in her vignette, Crina also encountered difficulties in accessing welfare support after experiencing domestic violence, specifically because of her EU migrant status.

Crina

Crina speaks English almost fluently, and as a young woman she studied mathematics at a university in Bucharest. Upon graduating, she struggled to find a well-paid, secure job in Romania. Concerned by a lack of viable employment options, Crina anticipated that she would find better economic opportunities abroad.

Crina worked in several temporary and seasonal positions across Europe, before finding permanent work at an airport in Spain. She worked there for several years, and was eventually promoted to working on airport counters. However, with the economic collapse in Spain leaving the country reeling, Crina's shifts were drastically cut and she was told it was likely she would lose her job. At this time she was in a relationship with a Romanian man, Ion, who regularly came to Spain to visit his brother, who was an acquaintance of Crina's. Ion lived and worked in the North East of England, and told her the economic situation was much better in the UK.

> He asked me to come to live with him… said that we could build a life together. Things in Spain were not good…and I could see it was getting worse. I was alone…Spain was in a bad situation… I felt it was a good option for me.

Crina left her job and moved to England in early 2013, approximately 14 months before I met her in Edinburgh. The reality of her life there was not what she expected. Crina described that Ion's behaviour towards her was drastically different to what it was in Spain, and their relationship went downhill. Crina had planned to get a job as soon as she moved over. With her strong command of English and Romanian translators being in short supply, she had hoped to get work as an interpreter.

However, Ion unexpectedly announced he no longer wanted her to work. Rather, he wanted her to stay at home and tend to their house. Although Crina disagreed, she initially complied. Ion threatened if she did not do as he wanted, he would *'kick her out'* and she would be *'left with nothing.'* Ion became aggressive and critical of her, and controlled their scant finances. Crina became dependent on his monetary hand-outs, and Ion insisted she supplied him with receipts for everything she bought. Additionally, Ion would not let her make friends, and discouraged her from leaving the house. Crina said he started to intimidate her, and she began to feel trapped, isolated and depressed. She had no one to turn to and worried there was no way out of her situation. During this time she found out she was pregnant with Ion's child.

> [After arriving in England] I regretted my situation so much. I hated how stupid I had been…like, really hated myself for it. I felt so stupid at getting myself stuck like this... I just kept on thinking, "How did I get here - how?" …And now, I am pregnant? Unbelievable.

> …Slowly, I realised I needed to do something. Things [at home] got ugly…really ugly... I knew I couldn't raise my daughter there. I was really scared at how things were going… I did not want him anywhere near her.

> *...I went to the Citizen's Advice Bureau, desperate [for their help.] For anything…
> They suggested I go to the Council and apply for [emergency housing], so I could get
> out of my situation. So I went, and I told them everything. Ev-er-y-thing… I explicitly
> said I was experiencing abuse… I know some women are shy and don't know about
> their rights, or are not sure about leaving or whatever... But that is not me. By this
> point I was sure…determined. But the Council, they kept looking at my passport…
> Always my passport. "But what does that have to do with it?" I thought, "I am an EU
> citizen, I have a right to live and work here no? What is the problem?"*

The Council said they could not help Crina because she had no income, and said she
needed to apply for benefits at the Job Centre before they could process her application for
accommodation. Immediately, Crina went to the Job Centre. She explained that she was
experiencing domestic violence, that she was pregnant and wanted to leave her partner - but
had no job, no access to finances and knew no one in the country. Following an
assessment, a Job Centre employee concluded that Crina was entitled to access Job
Seeker's Allowance (JSA), which would provide her with £73.10 a week (or approximately
£317 a month). He signed her up to receive this benefit. Crina described to me that she did
not fully understand what JSA was, or the conditions attached to it, but gratefully accepted.

> *Then I went back to the Council and showed them I had [JSA] but they then said my
> income was still too low. They said there was nothing they could do to help me. I was
> really stunned…. They did not say this to me before! I had waited weeks for getting
> the [finances through], still staying in that horrible [situation] - for nothing… I just sat
> there and cried and cried. I felt so lost…I was desperate, I would have happily stayed
> anywhere [to escape the domestic abuse]…slept on a floor, shared a room with
> many people – anything.*

Crina said that at this time her situation was so bad she felt she could no longer stay in the
same house as Ion any longer.

> *I went on the internet, very anxious, searching for information. As soon as I typed in
> 'domestic abuse', all of this information started coming up about these charities…
> There was even one in the city where I lived …Why had no one mentioned this to me
> before? When I had told so many people my experience…*

> *I called the charity number and spoke to a woman on the phone. I couldn't believe it
> when she told me about these places, these refuges for women experiencing
> domestic abuse… No matter of [income]…they would accept me. I felt so hopeless at*

this point I thought she had made a mistake – I asked her 100 times to make sure, "Are you sure, can you really help me?" And she said, "Of course, I wouldn't lie to you." …So when I felt sure it was real, I went directly there... When they took me to the refuge I had a two bedroom flat all to myself – I asked, "When are the others coming?" But the whole apartment was just for me… I couldn't believe it.

When Crina left, Ion reacted badly. He threatened her, harassed her and she feared he was stalking her.

He couldn't accept the relationship was over. He would send me hundreds of vile messages, and was calling every time. It was scary, how crazy he was… I didn't know what was coming next from him… I knew it was a dangerous situation…

Although Crina had left Ion, she still did not feel safe. The city that Crina lived in has a small town centre, and her refuge accommodation was only one street away from Ion's place of work. Crina became very worried that Ion or one of his co-workers might spot her walking to or from the refuge, and discover where she was living. Staff at the domestic violence charity shared her concerns, and suggested she transferred to a refuge in a different city. This is how Crina came to Edinburgh. A domestic violence organisation there confirmed they had space for her, and she used the little money she had saved from her JSA to buy a train ticket north.

The train was so expensive… the ticket cost basically all I had left. I was so nervous and confused going… I had no idea what to expect. With just me, my baby inside me and my suitcase, and so much unknown… it was a very intense experience, turning up alone… even for someone as independent as me… Very intense. I had so much on my mind, constantly… I felt sick with it, exhausted.

After Crina arrived in Edinburgh and moved into the refuge, Ashley was assigned as her domestic violence support worker. Ashley took her to see a benefits advisor at a local Job Centre, to apply for the Housing Benefit that would cover the cost of her refuge rent. Seeing that Crina was then heavily pregnant, the Job Centre advisor assessed her situation and signed her up to receive Housing Benefit and Income Support (IS). This meant Crina could stay in refuge, and had a small income to support herself and the baby. Crina said she felt '*so relieved and grateful, really… I really thought it was going to be OK, that I could work myself out of this.*'

However, the Job Centre employee had erroneously signed Crina up for these benefits. Since Crina was an EU national, who had not been in the UK and worked for a required

period of time (it was, at that point, several years) - she was in fact ineligible to receive these supports. Some six weeks after her appointment at the Job Centre, Crina received a letter from the UK Government's Department of Work and Pensions. It informed her she was illegally claiming benefits that she was not entitled to. Consequently, her support payments were stopped with immediate effect and she was told she was required to repay the £2000 that had been provided to her so far. Staff members at the domestic violence organisation were shocked, since Ashley had heard first hand from the Job Centre employee that the welfare measures put in place were correct. Crina described her reaction:

> *I was really stunned. I had no idea that if you are in refuge you need benefits for houses - I had no idea what they were talking about. I thought [this domestic violence organisation] was a charity, so you didn't have to pay… that's how a charity works, no? Then I thought [the government] must be wrong, because no way did I receive £2000… but then I realised it was all going to [the charity] directly, to pay for the house... Benefits like this don't exist at all in Romania… When the people [at the Job Centre] doing their jobs, who work with this every day don't know - how am I supposed to, when my mind is so frazzled with the stress of everything going on in my life?*

In response, Ashley went with Crina to see another benefits advisor at the Job Centre, to try and resolve the situation. They were informed that the letter Crina had received was correct: she was not entitled to the benefits she had been signed up for, and she would have to pay back the money she had received. Further, the Job Centre employee explained that, since Crina had first arrived in England and signed on to the JSA, the government had introduced new regulations which required her to pass a Habitual Residency Test (HRT), before she could receive any further funding.

Crina was unable to take the test without booking another appointment, so she scheduled a meeting at the Job Centre next to the hospital, where she would be attending a pre-natal appointment the following day. There, Crina took the lengthy test and was told she had passed, but was informed that she needed to register with the Job Centre office closest to her home address. The next morning Crina went to her local office, but was advised that she needed to take the HRT again in order to register. She did, but this time she was told she had failed - that she had not adequately evidenced her habitual residence. Domestic violence staff protested the ruling, citing that Crina had passed this same test only the previous day. However, their concerns were dismissed and Crina was told that she did not qualify for any form of benefit, apart from JSA. Moreover, because of further legislation introduced after Crina had been signed up to JSA in England, Crina was told that EU

nationals were now limited to receiving six months of the JSA allowance. As Crina had been on JSA during her pregnancy, during the process of her leaving Ion, she could only claim JSA for six weeks more before her entitlement to claim any form of state benefit ran out entirely.

Crina was distraught at this unanticipated news, and deeply concerned for her and her baby - due in a matter of weeks. Staff at the domestic violence organisation said they could support Crina in the short term, while she had her baby and appealed the benefit rulings. However, unless they found a way to pay for her refuge accommodation, Crina would unfortunately be unable to stay much longer.

The organisation's case notes about Crina during this time describe her as being 'very anxious and depressed.' Crina had no money and was subsisting on dry and canned goods from local food bank charities, and occasional supermarket vouchers. Crina was upset that she was living off poor quality, tinned food, when nutrition is so important during pregnancy. She had low iron levels, and no regular access to fresh vegetables or meat. A short time later, Crina went in to labour.

> It all got really stressful… and then there was an underlying infection. I was really weak. I was hardly there during [the labour]… I was so disoriented and unwell. But the nurses helped me through it...

***

When I first met Crina, her baby daughter Ola was just six weeks old. We were sitting in the refuge living room, having a cup of tea with her caseworker, Ashley. Crina was very straight talking and keen to tell me about her experiences. With Ola asleep in her arms, Crina and Ashley gave me a recap of her case. They had appealed the benefits decision and she had been granted an extra couple of weeks of funding, but she had been told that there were no further options available to her.

As a last resort, the organisation had approached the local social work department, who sometimes provided financial support to non-EU migrant women experiencing domestic violence, who have children and no recourse to access welfare. However, the social worker they spoke to said they were unable to offer Crina assistance. He had told Ashley that, because Crina was a EU citizen, technically she did have *recourse* to public funds, even if she was not eligible to receive them. Moreover, because Crina had failed her HRT (despite having lived in the UK for over 15 months by this point) he intimated that the likelihood of her receiving any emergency funding was significantly decreased. Ashley explained to me,

> *The only thing social work offered to do was to pay for a bus ticket for Crina and Ola to London …where they could catch a free bus run by the Romanian Embassy, that repatriates people who can't get home…*

She glanced at Crina, whose face had darkened, *'But we told them that wasn't appropriate,'* she added quickly.

'No,' Crina confirmed,
> *It would take more than 50 hours to get [to Romania] by bus, and I have absolutely nothing…not even money for a bottle of water. And with a new born baby? ... And then what, I arrive in Bucharest with nothing, nowhere to go? …It would be much harder to survive there, like that, than living on the streets here.*

'And that's not an option,' Ashley quickly interjected, *'… But we really need to sort something out soon…'*

After a muted goodbye, Ashley and I left the house. Outside, she expressed her frustration,
> *Ah! It's all about money, money, money! I hate it so much… It's so hard sitting there, telling her there is nothing we can do without benefits, that we might have to ask her to leave… These women [from the EU] are being totally penalised… Crina is in such a difficult spot, but she is only trying to build a life for herself and her daughter… I mean, she wants to work... to not live off benefits…and I genuinely think she could find something. She just needs some time, to get her back on her feet…*

I tentatively asked if Ashley had spoken to Crina about what would happen if she did have to return to Romania. Ashley paused, then responded,
> *I have spoken to her about this, and you know, I get the sense that she has had a very hard and draining life, that she has fought hard to get away from. Now she is completely detached from her roots… no belongings, no family… She is completely alone… I mean, she's not lived in Romania for over 12 years - it's hardly home, is it? And there's basically [no welfare provisions] there to support single mothers… she would have absolutely no security… I know, if I was in her situation, I would be doing everything I could to secure my future [in the UK].*

<div align="center">***</div>

As the weeks progressed, I visited Crina regularly and kept up to date with her case. She was struggling to find potential job options that could fit around a new-born baby. Furthermore, as a newcomer to the area, Crina did not know anyone who she might ask to

care for Ola and, as she was not entitled to subsidised childcare, private services would cost her at least £40 a day. Without an income, she could not pay for even half a day of childcare up front. It became increasingly distressing to see Crina coming up with more and more desperate, far-fetched plans to try and earn the required money. Several times Crina called Ashley, panicking because she did not have enough money to buy milk or nappies for Ola, having used up her limited allowance of food bank vouchers.

Ashley and the rest of the organisation's staff were clearly worried for Crina, as it became apparent that she had few options left. Despite the many months of work that employees had put in to try and resolve Crina's situation, at the end of my fieldwork placement, there was an unspoken disquiet in the office: it was likely that Crina would have to leave soon. Before I left, several staff members took me aside and said they wanted to emphasise just how wrong they thought it was that Crina was being put in this situation. One employee, Sara, told me,

> Before all of [these welfare reforms] came in, there's no way we would have considered putting a woman with a new-born baby out on the streets… These policies are racist and sexist, because they are putting European women [experiencing domestic violence] at significantly more risk…there are no alternatives for them… this is another type of violence they are experiencing, as European women. They are coming to us and we can't offer them anything…and they have some of the least social capital of all of the women we see, so they are especially in need of services like ours… Actually, we could be putting them in more danger by helping them leave, when they have nothing to support themselves with when they do…

<div align="center">***</div>

The last time I went to visit Crina before I left Edinburgh, she was exhausted and angry.

> I was forced to ask for help, because I was in a really dangerous situation… And because I was from a different country, I couldn't get help. Who would have thought that would happen? [The statutory agencies] got it wrong and really messed it up for me. A little [forewarning] before I left [Ion]… or before I signed up to JSA would have made a big difference to how I acted. I would have been more prepared. I would have planned differently, acted differently. I wouldn't be here that is for sure.

> I trusted too much... You feel so vulnerable when you are in [a situation like mine], when everything is so unclear… And everything takes so long. You get so tired... I've spent all of my time worrying about forms, only so I can feed my baby and so we can sleep somewhere… This is not what I was expecting when I wanted to get help for

domestic abuse… And I am sharp… and resilient… What it must be like for women that have experienced years and years of abuse, who are old or disabled, or who can't speak English? I can't imagine... I've spoken to some of these women, and they are talking about giving up everything… suicide … and I can understand them feeling like that… In a situation like this, how can you not feel like that?

…I understand politicians being scared about migrants, of course... But there are many of us that do work… and want to give to society… and I see myself doing that, fitting in like this. On a personal level, it's too much – they push a person to dangerous situations for this fucking 'austerity'…it is the same with the Africans being thrown in the sea in Italy… We are all human, but it's like it doesn't matter.

Several months later, while writing up my thesis, I got an email from Crina. She told me things had got *'very ugly'* at the domestic violence organisation and she had left. She said her situation was improving - she was living with a man she had met, and was hoping for a brighter future for her and Ola.

<div align="center">***</div>

Crina explained that her initial migration from Romania was underpinned by her search for greater economic security. Once Crina arrived in the UK, like Trudka, the domestic violence she experienced prevented her from working. Ion subjected Crina to financial abuse, closely regulating their expenses, which made her dependent on his hand-outs and inhibited her access to economic resources. Without such capital, she was unable to find means that would permit her to leave the relationship and live independently. Pregnant and concerned for her safety, with no alternative support networks, Crina sought advice from local agencies. Her descriptions of her help-seeking efforts reveal how little she knew about the supports available to her: she was unaware that domestic violence organisations existed, and did not understand the workings of the benefits system and its interrelation to refuge. This parallels my analysis in Chapter 4, as well as other domestic violence literature, which emphasises that migrant women can encounter additional difficulties when leaving an abusive relationship, because of their social isolation and unfamiliarity with institutional supports (Bauer *et al* 2000, Malley-Morrison and Hines 2007, Salcido and Adelman 2004).

Moreover, the inconsistent welfare information that Crina received throughout her engagement with services compounded her difficulties. A core theme that can be drawn from Crina's vignette is the arduousness of her encounters with welfare policies, and the agencies that administered them. Upon ending her relationship with Ion, Crina was signed up to JSA as she entered into refuge accommodation. However, her departure escalated

Ion's abusive behaviour and, in fear for her safety, Crina left the city she was living in and transferred to a refuge in Edinburgh. This resonates with Bowstead's (2015) description of 'forced migration', a term she uses to encapsulate the complex interplay between coercion and agency implicated in domestic violence victims' movement away from their areas of residence in search of protection. In Scotland, Crina thought she had found security when she was signed up to IS and Housing Benefit at the Job Centre. However, this move proved erroneous and unexpectedly placed Crina into thousands of pounds of debt. Returning to the Job Centre to amend the situation, Crina then had to take the newly introduced HRT, which she passed. Then, the following day, having to take the test again, she was told she had failed. This was because, despite living in the UK for over a year, the Job Centre employee deemed that Crina had not paid enough financial contributions to the state or definitively proved her 'habitual residence' to qualify for benefits. Certainly, these events affirm O'Brien's (2015) criticisms of the HRT, for its inconsistent and seemingly arbitrary assignment of outcomes.

As a result of the HRT outcome, Crina was only eligible to receive the small JSA stipend, which would not cover the cost of her refuge rent. This was notwithstanding her then being heavily pregnant, which inhibited her ability to seek and retain employment. Furthermore, additional welfare legislation had been introduced which limited the time that Crina, as a EU national, could receive JSA. This further jeopardised Crina's ability to fund her stay in refuge and pay for basic daily necessities such as food. As a last attempt, Ashley approached the social work department, where employees confirmed they could not help Crina because of her technical recourse to access welfare, despite her not receiving benefits in actuality.

Crina's prolonged welfare encounters can be compared with Weiss and Gross-Horowitz's (2012) 'Kafkaesque' portrayal of domestic violence victims' engagement with bureaucratic divorce mechanisms in Israel (*cf.* Adelman 2017). Kafkaesque, in this context, refers to Kafka's (1981, 1998) depiction of the prolonged, uncertain, oppressive and nightmarish qualities of engaging with complex bureaucracies – connotations which are singularly apt in Crina's case. Certainly, her account challenges the imagined linearity and orderliness of bureaucratic organisation, wherein policies tend to be viewed as neat, logical processes that move, rationally and systematically, from formulation to execution (Stone 1988, Wedel *et al* 2005, Gupta 2012).

This vignette also emphasises the significance of Crina's EU migrant status in both complicating and shaping her bureaucratic encounters. As Crina described, '*they kept looking at my passport... Always my passport.*' Echoing the example of Trudka, the salience

of Crina's passport here reinforces the notion of her 'carrying the border' with her as she interacted with welfare agencies, in both England and Scotland. Like Trudka, despite the extensive efforts of the domestic violence organisation, Crina was left unable to access benefits, which would have enabled her to feed herself and her daughter, and to stay in refuge. Once more, paralleling Trudka's experiences and my analysis in Chapter 4, Crina was offered the chance to 'go home' – to Romania by bus, to a country that she had not lived in for over a decade. With no economic or social resources there, Crina felt she and Ola faced almost certain destitution were she to return.

Domestic violence organisation employees expressed their dismay at Crina's situation, and at the welfare legislation that underpinned her case. Coinciding with O'Brien's (2015) arguments, Ashley and Sara emphasised that these new welfare policies were to the detriment of EU women specifically, placing them at further risk of harm. Indeed, Sara worried that Crina's interactions with domestic violence organisations had put her in more danger, because she had been helped to leave Ion despite having no viable means to support herself. Of course, my analysis here does not aim to erase the agency of Crina – throughout this vignette she consistently demonstrated and verbally reinforced her resilience and autonomy: '*I know some women…are not sure about leaving or whatever... But that is not me…I was sure…determined.*' However, in the face of the uncertainties engendered by her encounters with welfare agencies, Crina described how her agency was constrained: 'a *little [forewarning] before I left …would have made a big difference to how I acted… I would have planned differently, acted differently.*'

Ultimately, like Trudka, Crina faced being left homeless and penniless, with few options through which she could improve her circumstances. Yet, at the end of this vignette, Crina reported that her situation was improving – that she had established a relationship with a new partner and felt hopeful for her future. While this may have been a positive outcome for Crina, it remains important to consider research perspectives which warn that restrictive welfare policies can propel women into dangerous forms of private attachments (Hays 2003, Cherlin *et al* 2004, Purvin 2003, 2007, Scott *et al* 2002). These works argue that if women fail to achieve financial autonomy their intimate relationships may involve financial dependency, and thus an inequitable distribution of power. This literature emphasises that for women like Crina, who have little economic capital and who have fallen victim to domestic violence, this financial dependency can further exacerbate their marginalisation, and therefore vulnerability to additional abuse.

Reflecting on Crina and Trudka's Experiences

Crina and Trudka's cases comprise just two of many examples I encountered during fieldwork, where European women were unable to access welfare supports. While both ethnographic vignettes reveal each woman's individual circumstances and experiences, collectively their cases demonstrate the difficulties that Polish and other EU women can encounter when attempting to access financial support as victims of domestic violence. Although I have described the agency exhibited by both Crina and Trudka in my analysis, I have also highlighted the ways in which their actions and choices were constrained as they tried to leave their abusive partners. This analysis emphasises the importance of considering the situated nature of women's agency, as they interact with statutory institutions and policies, and as they experience gender-based violence (Vera Grey 2016). As Abu-Lughod argues, in exclusively focusing on agency in analysis, there is a risk of romanticising and thus exaggerating the scope of resistance within oppressive contexts (1990: 52, also Farmer 2004). Rather, she asserts that anthropological analysis both can and should be used to attend to the workings of power imbalances – examining their interconnection to non-local systems and their implications, as they converge in local ethnographic settings (1990: 42). Consequently, in this analytical section I will consider the immediate, practical and theoretical significance of these welfare practices, within the present ethnographic context. I do this firstly by describing the impact that these restrictive welfare policies had on domestic violence service engagement, before proceeding to reflect upon their wider, existential implications.

Service Engagement Uncertainties

As Ashley's engagement with Job Centre and Council staff in Crina's and Trudka's examples emphasise, the process of identifying whether an EU woman was entitled to financial support was not straightforward. Rather, because of the constantly changing and narrowing criteria for EU welfare eligibility, it proved time-consuming, arduous and unpredictable (O'Brien 2015). As I observed in the cases of many women, staff in both the statutory and voluntary sectors struggled to keep up to date with legislation changes that deemed welfare eligibility. Ultimately however, the burden of anticipating and negotiating these vicissitudes in welfare policy were placed upon women individually, and their domestic violence advocates, as they formulated safety plans. Within Crina's vignette, for example, we saw how a statutory employee's error left her personally in thousands of pounds of debt. This individualisation of welfare accountability made it more difficult for European women to navigate the benefits system independently, and thus increased their reliance on domestic violence organisations (also Yeatmen *et al* 2008, Daly *et al* 2008).

Additionally, welfare regulations made it more difficult for the organisations to support Polish and other European women. As one staff member, Myra, described to me,

> *When we get Polish women now, their situations are so complex, we end up spending all of our time just trying to cover the basics…trying to get their benefits sorted so that they can live [independently]… We only have so much time we can give each woman… and each time we're having to learn everything all over again. It's impossible to keep track of all the changes… so once all of [their benefits are] sorted, if it gets sorted, we don't have time to support them emotionally… and help them move on. And that is what we [as an organisation] are here for really, we aren't benefits specialists. But without our input they'd get nowhere…*

Myra's quote reflects the sentiment that many staff shared with me: that opaque welfare policies, deployed by government, extended the time staff spent on trying to meet the basic survival needs of Polish women. Because of the organisation's finite resources, focusing on this fundamental support came at the expense of Polish women receiving other therapeutic interventions, which could assist recovery in the longer term. The additional demands placed upon staff practices are particularly salient, given the constraining context of funding cuts and austerity in which staff were operating (Ishkanian 2014), as I outlined in the previous chapter. My analysis in this chapter therefore further illuminates the role of the state in both shaping and constraining domestic violence service provider practices (Adelman 2017, Wies and Haldane 2011), to the detriment of Polish and other European migrant women.

Furthermore, as a result of the constantly narrowing welfare eligibility criteria, when European women approached the organisation for advice, staff members were unable to confidently outline what support they might receive if they left their abusive relationships. This is perhaps best encapsulated by the situation of another Polish woman, Lena, when she first approached the organisation for assistance. As her case worker, Aja, told me:

> *Lena's really worried about [her children being taken into care] if she leaves her partner [and can't provide for them financially]. I've told her that I don't think this will happen, that from the sound of her case I think she'll be OK [to receive benefits], and that we will do our absolute best to help her… But I can't give her any firm answers yet, because nothing is sure, not until we can confirm what [benefits] she can get... So she's not sure what to do… it's very stressful for her, obviously.*

Aja's description of Lena's concerns reflects a fear I heard many Polish women articulate during stages of initial service contact: that their children might be taken into care if they left their abusive relationship but were unable to support themselves independently. This fear

was not unfounded, as social work departments do accommodate children facing extreme destitution. Several professionals I interviewed could recall cases where Polish women, fleeing domestic violence and unable to meet their children's needs, had their children taken into state care.[71] Although I did not observe such cases during my ethnography, the issues of child custody and welfare add further dimensions to the fundamental uncertainty that Polish women faced as they attempted to respond to domestic violence. As a result of such uncertainties, Polish women were presented with ambiguous futures in their contact with service providers - their social protection and welfare were rendered *liminal*. This once more reinforces Weiss and Gross-Horowitz's (2012) portrayal of domestic violence victim's 'Kafkaesque' bureaucratic encounters - as Kafka's works, Szakolczai (2016) argues, ultimately depict the oppressive liminality implicated in statutory bureaucratic engagement.

In practice, this liminality made the prospect of engaging with services and leaving an abusive relationship all the more perilous. Due to the uncertainty surrounding welfare provision, Polish women could not be assured basic means of survival or sustainable safeguarding from an abusive partner. As we saw in the disturbing case of Trudka, restricted access to welfare supports in the context of domestic violence can jeopardise women's physical safety (Davis 1999, Brandwein 1999, Raphael 2015). The potentially grave costs of this should not be under-estimated, as Dudley evidences in her analysis of British Domestic Homicide Reviews (2014: 202-224). In her research, she connects the homicides of three migrant women to their inability to access welfare assistance and secure accommodation. In two of the three cases, the women murdered by their partners were recent migrants from Central Eastern Europe. Beyond destabilising women's physical safety, as the ethnographic examples identify, this uncertainty had extensive ramifications: engendering distress, threatening homelessness, and even women's guardianship of their children. This supports Kleinman *et al*'s (1997) assertion: that bureaucratic responses to social violence can intensify individual suffering. Moreover, these dimensions point to Polish women being 'doubly-victimised' – to their being subject to further harm, through the liminality implicated in the help-seeking process. As I described in Chapter 2, the notion of 're-victimisation' is raised in domestic violence literature, particularly in the context of ethnic minority and migrant women engaging with services (Belur 2008, Gill 2004, Gupta 2003, Thiara and Gill 2010).

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[71] From my conversations with these service providers, it was unclear if there were other factors that contributed to these outcomes. However, the example of child guardianship here again reflects the impossible positions in which Polish and other European women can be placed when experiencing domestic violence and when unable to achieve self-sufficiency; children are at risk of being taken into care if they are in a state of destitution, but so too are they, if they are exposed to domestic violence.

As I have argued, the welfare encounters depicted in this chapter are connected to Crina and Trudka's migrant intersectionalities – particularly, to opaque welfare policies that were specific to and hostile towards their legislative status as EU nationals. This ethnography therefore reinforces that a woman's migrant status can complicate her ability to respond to domestic violence and engage with services, which in turn engenders vulnerability to further marginalisation and abuse (Erez *et al* 2009, Raj and Silverman 2002, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005, Menjívar and Salcido 2002). Relevantly, as Purvin argues, this can occur through the imposition of targeted institutional constraints, and through migrant women falling 'through the cracks' of inadequate social welfare nets (2007: 206, also Crenshaw 1991, Richie 2000, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005, Raj and Silverman 2002). Within the context of Polish migrants specifically, we might connect this analysis to Garapich's (2010) depiction of Polish migrants experiencing 'structural exclusion' from the British welfare system.

Structural Violence and Existential Precariousness

More broadly, EU welfare uncertainties, and their implications, can be expressed as a form of structural violence (Farmer 1996, 2004, 2005). As I outlined in Chapter 2, structural violence is a term Farmer uses to describe the systemic ways in which patterns of regularity, embedded in human social activity and organisation, converge to cause harm or disadvantage to certain populations. Farmer writes,

> *Structural violence is one way of describing social arrangements that put individuals and populations in harm's way… The arrangements are structural because they are embedded in the political and economic organization of our social world; they are violent because they cause injury to people … neither culture nor pure individual will is at fault; rather, historically given (and often economically driven) processes and forces conspire to constrain individual agency (2004: 306).*

Thus, the concept of structural violence implicates political economic forces in individuals' constrained agency, and in differential demographic exposure to poverty, disease, violence and suffering. This paradigm proves relevant here, given the detrimental effects of the UK government's welfare regulations for EU women specifically. As Sara stated, '*These policies…are putting European women [experiencing domestic violence] at significantly more risk … this is another type of violence they are experiencing, as European women.'* O'Brien further supports this, when she argues that British welfare policies create 'an intricate series of trapdoors, so that one by one the welfare floors fall through for EU migrants, with distressing outcomes' (2015: 121). As we have seen from the vignettes in this chapter, for Crina and Trudka, the outcomes of their welfare encounters were indeed distressing. Trudka was left with no financial reserves and facing homelessness, while

Dymek was out looking for her on the streets of Edinburgh. Crina similarly had no access to financial resources, and had to grapple with the possibility of her and her new-born daughter being evicted, leaving them destitute and homeless. Therefore, as welfare policies converged with domestic violence in these women's lives, we can see the liminality in which Crina and Trudka found themselves - where their lifeworlds were inflected with uncertainty and instability (Waite 2009). This liminal insecurity reflects an embodied product of structural violence with which both women, as EU nationals, had to contend uniquely.

The situations of Crina and Trudka may be elucidated through articulating their conditions as being *existentially precarious*. Although I return to consider the broader theoretical uses of precarity in Chapter 7, here I use the term precariousness in its most literal sense: to describe an individual's existential contingence upon circumstances largely beyond their control – a term that is aptly imbued with connotations of danger, insecurity and risk. Precariousness in this context proves particularly fitting, given that it moves beyond situational vulnerability, to additionally encapsulate the existential uncertainty fostered by aspects of political economy (Waite 2009, Lewis *et al* 2015). This depiction echoes O'Brien's (2015) characterisation of EU nationals as they interact with UK welfare uncertainties and hostilities. She describes European migrants experiencing job insecurity as being emplaced upon a 'precipice' – teetering precariously between economic security and hardship, with only opaque state welfare legislation discerning which way they might fall. Once again, the iconography of EU migrants treading the cusp of insecurity connotes their in-between, precarious status, with danger and peril implicit.

Further, my depiction of Crina and Trudka's precariousness closely parallels Lavie's (2014) portrayal of Mizrahi women as they similarly seek support from the Israeli state when experiencing domestic violence. As she describes,

> *The success [a Mizrahi single mother] finds as she moves through bureaucratic time-space is dependent upon the Divinity of Chance, the serendipity overseeing any bureaucratic encounter. If she accomplishes any of her goals at a bureau, it is akin to a miracle. The mother does not know, and has no way of knowing, which actions correlate with success or failure (Lavie 2014: 82, cf. Adelman 2017).*

Adelman observes that Lavie's descriptions echo a metaphor often evoked to portray the realities of living in an abusive relationship: of victims' walking on eggshells - carefully trying to avoid their partner's domestic violence, but never being sure of when the shells might crack (2017: 206). This analysis then, further reinforces my depiction of existential precariousness – with women in this ethnography experiencing precarity through their

subjection to domestic violence, but also through their encounters with seemingly unfathomable, oppressive welfare policies and provisions.

Bureaucratic Arbitrariness and Ambivalent Governance

Lavie's (2014) invocation of the 'Divinity of Chance' in the above passage also emphasises the import of 'serendipity' in shaping women's help-seeking outcomes. While I have already the salience of happenstance in Chapter 4, in my examination of Polish women's encounters with the UK border, it also applies within the present context of welfare. This is because not *every* Polish or European woman I encountered during fieldwork failed to receive welfare provision. Ewka, for example, who featured in Chapter 4, is a Polish woman who received a fully funded place in refuge, and was awarded Income Support. These provisions undoubtedly ameliorated her situation and her ability to sustainably leave her abusive partner, Tomasz. Ewka received these provisions because she applied for benefits at a time when her period of residence in Britain and her previous financial earnings deemed her an eligible EU welfare recipient.[72] However, her situation was not drastically different to that of Crina and Trudka. Ewka, as a EU national with little economic capital, had applied for welfare after leaving her abusive partner, when she had been living in the UK for three years, working intermittently as a part-time cleaner. The differences between Crina, Trudka and Ewka's welfare interactions reflect Purvin's (2007) analysis of social policies in the US, where she emphasises that the influence of state interventions on women's risk of domestic violence is not clear-cut. Rather, in her research she highlights that policies provided protection and security for some, but exacerbated vulnerability to abuse for others, despite there being similarities amongst individuals' social positionings.

Considering Purvin's (2007) reflections, and in light of the ethnography I have presented here, British welfare policies in the present research context can be characterised as *protean* - as readily variable in both form and effect. This protean characterisation perhaps problematises my depiction of welfare policies exerting structural violence, particularly in light of criticisms levelled at the concept, for the homogenisation and linear determinism implicit in its analytic paradigm (Wacquant 2004, Green 2004). This is an argument Gupta (2012) also makes in his research of the bureaucratic processes involved in the inconsistent

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[72] In Chapter 4, Gosia and Szarlota were also able to stay in refuge. All three women had applied for benefits during the earlier stages of fieldwork, before the full breadth of welfare cuts were instituted. However, a number of complex factors were involved in discerning women's welfare eligibility, many of which I do not have the scope to cover here. For example, if a woman was married to her partner, her husband's previous financial contributions to the state were factored into her welfare assessments. This coincides with Adelman's (2017, 2004) observations about states exerting normative family ideologies through welfare policies, at the expense of un-married women seeking support for domestic violence.

provision of care in India. Therein, Gupta argues that structural violence is too blunt an instrument to explain why welfare policies generate uneven and erratic outcomes for clients in 'similar structural locations' (*ibid*: 24). He concludes that it would be wrong to portray Indian policies as being consistently ineffectual, or policy-makers and service providers as having abject indifference towards the suffering of impoverished people. Rather, he suggests that the sharp divergence between bureaucratic outcomes can be attributed to 'violence enacted at the very scene of care' (*ibid,* also Merry 2006).

This violence, Gupta argues, is constituted by the systematic, bureaucratic production of *arbitrariness* – 'produced by the very mechanisms that are meant to ameliorate social suffering' (2012: 24). To bolster this assertion, Gupta draws upon the arbitrary ways in which eligibility criteria were set and managed at a pension camp, to order the distribution of aid to elderly clients. Moving beyond this ethnographic context, Gupta argues that 'the production of arbitrariness is not peculiar to Indian bureaucracies but is a feature of any complex bureaucratic organisation' (2012: 24). Certainly, arbitrariness was apparent in UK welfare bureaucracy in this ethnography – for instance, through the criteria deployed in the HRT, and the test's inconsistent assignment of outcomes (O'Brien 2015), exemplified by Crina's case.

Therefore, in consideration of Gupta's (2012) thesis, the protean nature of UK welfare policies can be conceived as being influenced by bureaucratic arbitrariness. This supports Adelman's (2017) depiction of the 'ambivalent governance' of domestic violence – a term she uses to encapsulate the contradictory fluctuations in state responses to abuse, and their synchronous adverse and beneficial implications for victims seeking support. However, coinciding with Adelman's arguments, while Gupta contends that bureaucratic mechanisms produce arbitrary, ambivalent outcomes, he does not argue that the processes that forge these outcomes are necessarily arbitrary: 'some forms of discrimination are consistent, systemic and institutionalised' (2012: 24). Consequently, Gupta encourages anthropologists to consider the nature and particular distribution of suffering and risk amongst populations, to enrich understandings of bureaucratically-driven violence (also Heyman 1998).[73]

The present ethnographic context additionally summons Bauman's (2013) works on liquid modernity, and Beck's (1992) 'risk society' – which argue that individualised risk and uncertainty are fundamental characteristics of the contemporary era. For both authors, risk and uncertainty are understood to converge most sharply upon those who have the least

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[73] This reasoning foregrounds my subsequent analysis in Chapter 7.

social and economic capital, which further accentuates individual vulnerabilities. Bolstering my depiction of existential precariousness, Beck's (1992) work on risk emphasises the precarious subjectivities engendered by reflexive modernisation (also Beck *et al* 2003).[74] However, Beck has been criticised for failing to attend to intersectionalities involved in the patterning of risk - for failing to account for social and spatiotemporal specificities, such as place, gender and ethnicity, which are implicated in individual, existential precariousness (see also Waite 2009: 420, Bulkeley 2001). This is a criticism that has similarly been extended to Bauman's work (Yuval-Davis 2015).

As I have argued, the policies described in this chapter, and their distressing consequences, applied to EU migrant women specifically. Analysis therefore, must attend to the intersectional effects of welfare policies for the EU migrant *body politic*, as well as for individual bodies (Hautzinger and Scandlyn 2014, Hautzinger and Johnson 2017, *cf.* Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987). In employing such an analytical frame, once more the relevance of structural violence - as the systemised, *demographic* distribution of disadvantage - emerges within the present ethnographic context. Yet, given the breadth of liquidity, uncertainty and unpredictability that underpins the bureaucratic encounters I have described, I suggest we should expand our conception of structural violence, by highlighting its *nihilistic* dimensions. Although Rapport (2000) uses nihilism in a different theoretical context, there are parallels that can be drawn between his definition and the present ethnographic setting. As he argues, nihilistic violence disorientates those that experience it, such that:

> *'Stable expectations with regard to it, are prevented… [It] denies the possibility of a civil relationship of mutual predictability and orientability by violating any practicable norms of exchange' (ibid: 53).*

This definition coincides with my characterisation of the disorienting and unpredictable, yet still destructive dimensions of structural violence, and further supports my depiction of the precariousness of European women in this ethnography. Moreover, with the salience of European migrant women's intersectionalities again encapsulated within analysis, we can once more attribute the engendering of their precariousness to their situation *within the British borderlands*.

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[74] Reflexive modernisation and 'ontological insecurity' (see also Laing 1962) are additionally core themes in Giddens' (1991, 2013) work, and my critique of the applicability of Beck's work within this ethnographic context similarly applies.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the ways in which Polish and other European women's individual experiences of abuse and service engagement can be shaped by the legislative regulation of their welfare entitlement. I have identified the 'wave upon wave' of bureaucratic changes (O'Brien 2015) that have limited European women from accessing often-indispensable benefits, as they attempted to evade domestic violence. This was exemplified through the experiences of Crina and Trudka, whose stories reflect their uncertain and arduous welfare encounters. Ultimately, both Crina and Trudka were left with no access to economic support and faced homelessness, which I argued constrained their domestic violence service engagement, and increased their marginalisation and risk of further abuse. Paralleling my arguments in the previous chapters, this analysis once again asserts the salience of state practices in fashioning both domestic violence and its service provision, in Edinburgh (Adelman 2017).

Drawing on Crina and Trudka's stories, I suggested that prohibitive and opaque welfare policies converged with domestic violence to render women's safety and welfare liminal. I articulated this to be a form of *existential precariousness*. I described this precariousness to an embodied product of structural violence (Farmer 1996, 2004, 2005) with which European women - as a result of their specific legislative identity - had to uniquely contend. However, in my analysis I have also emphasised the protean nature of welfare policies and the importance of happenstance – revealing the arbitrariness within European women's bureaucratic outcomes (Gupta 2012). Thus, given the liquidity of welfare policies, I suggested the structural violence depicted in this chapter exhibited unpredictable, *nihilistic* dimensions (Rapport 2000).

In the following chapter I proceed to 'study up' (Nader 1972, 1980) from the existential precariousness that I have depicted here, to explore interconnections between the local context and non-local systems of state power. I do this to reflect further upon the bureaucratically-driven violence and insecurity exerted upon the EU migrant body politic, which has emerged within this chapter. Particularly, I consider the significance of neoliberalism, sovereignty, and the ambivalent governance (Adelman 2017) of domestic violence, in the context of Polish migrant welfare entitlement. Therein I argue that the nihilistic dimensions of Polish women's interactions with the state continues to prove relevant, as I connect extra-legal British state practices to women's precarious legal subjectivities.

Chapter 7. Domestic Violence, Statecraft and Citizenship

The previous chapter revealed the struggles of some Polish and other EU women to access or retain social securities and protection from the British state when experiencing domestic violence. Ultimately, I argued that prohibitive and opaque welfare policies converged with domestic violence, to render Polish women *existentially precarious.* I identified this to be a product of nihilistic, structural violence, with which European women had to contend uniquely. In this chapter, I focus on the macro-level processes implicated in these struggles: the ways in which the practices of the British state forged Polish women's precarious, collective subjectivities. This is a perspective we might connect to the governance of the Polish migrant 'body politic' (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987 *cf.* Hautzinger and Johnson 2017), or Fassin's (2001) conception of the 'biopolitics of otherness'. Accordingly, I explore ways in which markers of difference, engendered by the British state, compounded the borderlands in which Polish women were emplaced (Anzaldúa 1987). In doing so, I explicitly engage with 'strategies of statecraft', which spearhead Adelman's (2017) political economic paradigm.

Here I consider how UK welfare economics – a key area of statecraft – forged structural inequality and rendered Polish women vulnerable to domestic violence. From the ethnography presented in Chapter 6, two key themes can be drawn from the welfare techniques deployed by government: the bordering practices embedded within the welfare system, and the financialisation of women's 'deservingness' of protection. Therefore, I argue that nationalistic and neoliberal ideologies were mobilised through the financial and political regulation of Polish domestic violence victims, within bureaucratic mechanisms of welfare.[75] Through this analysis, articulations of statecraft become apparent - the economic priorities, policies and practices of the British state, and the political rationalities embedded within (Adelman 2017). I trace the emergence of these political rationalities and the citizenship norms they forged within welfare processes, considering the 'deepening' neoliberalisation of the British welfare state (Ginsburg *et al* 2012), amidst concerns over British sovereignty and

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[75] My analysis in this chapter again relates to Polish women's European legislative identity, and therefore is relevant to other European migrant women living in the UK. However, I concentrate my analysis on Polish women in particular, given that this is the primary focus of this research and, as I describe in the final sections, that there are salient intersectional issues that relate particularly to Polish and other Accession migrant contexts.

its membership of the EU. The outcome of these factors, I argue, was the restriction and de-legitimisation of welfare provision for Polish women experiencing domestic violence.

My analysis then extends to consider how these welfare laws and policies are indicative of Polish women's wider relationship with the state – the quality of their citizenship or 'political membership,' and their legal subjectivities (Benhabib 2004: 1). I argue that articulations of statecraft embedded within welfare policies forged a 'latent distance' (Adelman 2017: 186) between state protections and Polish women experiencing domestic violence. This was despite Polish migrants, at the time of research, being 'secure' EU citizens in the UK, and theoretically possessing rights that protected them from abuse. As I describe, these rights are instituted by various transnational legal conventions, to which the UK is cosignatory. Thus, with the state failing to provide Polish women with adequate protection against abuse, I characterise Polish women's constitutional rights as being eroded in the name of state building. I emphasise the extra-legal aspects of these welfare policies, which accentuates the relevance of nihilism and sovereignty, in authoritarian form. Consequently, I highlight the sovereign dimensions implicit in the governance of Polish domestic violence victims, which I suggest engendered a precarious form of legal subjectivity (Butler 2004, Agamben 1998).

I contend that the 'latent distance' between the theoretical rights afforded to domestic violence victims and Polish rights enjoyed in practice in the UK, is indicative of differential citizenship (Adelman 2017). I argue that through the political rationalities that forged their precarious subjectivities, Polish women were rendered 'undeserving,' *liminal* citizens. Although scholarship has suggested the importance of national citizenship has declined with the rise of globalisation (an argument often substantiated with reference to the transnational effects of the European Union and Human Rights Law) this chapter attests to its continuing salience in this specific context. However, through examining the differential rights and protections afforded to European women, citizenship is revealed as multifarious - as a site of continuum (Standing 2014). As Chapter 6 attests, Polish migrant women experiencing domestic violence and in need of welfare support often found themselves at the hard end of this continuum, where spaces of inhumanity (Butler 2004: 69, Agamben 1998) or indifference (Herzfeld 1992) reside.

I suggest Polish women's liminal citizenship stems from their precarious legal subjectivities, both of which are implicated in the existential precarity discussed in Chapter 6. While precarity for scholars is understood to be a feature shared across populations in the contemporary era, I close this chapter by suggesting that the precariousness to which Polish women were subject was distributed inequitably, through gendered and ethnic frames. Thus,

I contend that Polish women were rendered especially precarious because they were Polish, and because they were women. Collectively, this chapter reinforces the 'ambivalent governance' of domestic violence (Adelman 2017) within the British context. Further, it emphasises the role of the state in fashioning Polish women's precarious subjectivities, experiences and options, as they experienced and responded to domestic violence *in the British borderlands*.

Battering States and Statecraft

In her most recent work, Adelman (2017) argues that domestic violence is a phenomenon that is interconnected to strategies of statecraft - that it is a product of, and informed by, political concerns that relate to the governance and building of states. Adelman describes that her approach connects the 'ethnographically visible' manifestations of domestic violence to the 'social machinery of oppression' - in her case, the decision-making related to the establishment and maintenance of the state of Israel (*ibid*: 25). Consequently, Adelman argues that her political economic, 'battering states' paradigm 're-socialises' Farmer's conception of structural violence (1996, 2004, 2005) by bridging macro and micro analysis of the cultural life of violence, and examining the quotidian embodiment of the state (2017: 38).

Through her analysis, Adelman (2017) reveals several articulations between domestic violence and statecraft. Of particular relevance to this chapter is Adelman's consideration of Israel's application of neoliberal economic principles, and state policy responses to large-scale migration. In this context, Adelman argues that economic tensions mirror cultural tensions, with both resting upon questions of what it means to be Israeli and who deserves a share of the state's resources. She connects these tensions to a shift in the Israeli welfare doctrine - where welfare has transformed from being a means of national formation and state building, to being aligned with global capital interests, centered on individual success. These reconfigurations, she argues, have further polarised the distribution of wealth and poverty in Israeli society, and have brought about starker distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate social dependency.

Adelman (2017) contends that the accumulation of wealth and distribution of sociolegal resources is patterned within a culturally and economically constituted hierarchy, which effects some populations within the polity more than others. This, she conceives, equates to a differential or disjunctive form of citizenship operating within Israel, which is distinguished by boundaries of gender, religion, nationality, geography and social class. She claims that this stratified access to state resources structures the lives of domestic violence victims, and in turn stratifies their vulnerability to further abuse and destitution. Therefore, despite

provisions to address domestic violence increasing in Israel in recent years, Adelman considers how some women are left behind by these policies, and instead are rendered more at risk of abuse.

Certainly, Adelman's (2017) arguments have great deal of relevance in the ethnographic context I attend to in this thesis. In this chapter, like Adelman, I argue that Polish women's ineligibility for state support should not be viewed as an arbitrary by-product of policies gone awry (Gupta 2012), but rather as an articulation of the political economic ideologies and priorities, predominant in UK governance. However, while Adelman's (2017) work usefully conceptualises the ambivalent governance of domestic violence[76] and the existence of differential citizenship, there are elements of her analysis that remain under-theorised. In particular, she does not consider the dimensions or quality of power exercised through statecraft, and experienced by domestic violence victims. Furthermore, while she documents the impact that state strategies have on the lives of those that experience abuse, she does not explicitly elaborate on this process, beyond recognising the role of the state in engendering domestic violence and individuals' subjectivities. Paralleling my analysis in the previous chapter, Adelman does argue that domestic violence victims can be left in impossible, 'precarious' economic situations and in 'legal limbo' (*ibid*: 189, 227). However, through extending Adelman's political economic paradigm and applying it to British statecraft in the context of Polish women, I demonstrate here that the forging of these uncertain positions requires further conceptual attention.

The Neoliberalisation of the Welfare State

As Adelman describes, the management of welfare economics comprises a central component of statecraft, involving the construction and maintenance of the state, and the prioritisation and allocation of resources (2004, 2017: 238). In this section I first delineate what I mean by welfare in a brief discussion of the 'welfare state'. I then consider ways in which the significance and nature of welfare in the UK has developed since the 2008 financial crises, focusing particularly on the 'deepening neoliberalisation' of the British welfare system (Ginsburg *et al* 2012).

The 'welfare state' essentially describes a concept of government wherein the state conceives of social welfare investment as a means of national formation and state building (Grinberg 2014). Although this term applies to a variety of forms of political economic organisation, in practice it commonly involves state financing and provision of common

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[76] See also Chapter 6 (p183).

public services, as well as the redistributive transfer of money to individuals in need (Hayward 2012: 3). The notion of the welfare state is described as having emerged at the end of the Great Depression in the 1930s, and took purchase across many European countries following the end of the Second World War. Founded upon the principles of equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities, and public responsibility for those in insecure and impoverished positions, the welfare state was seen as a means of approximating greater social justice, through correcting inequalities between differential human capabilities (Goodin 2003: 2002, Sen 2009: 254–60, Hayward 2012). Therefore, with the rise of the welfare state, risks to wellbeing and capacity for self-sufficiency that were previously regarded as personal issues - such as illness, disability and unemployment – became politicised, and subject to the purview of the state (Hayward 2012: 4).

Consequently, welfarist rationalities emphasise the state's responsibility for protecting and promoting the social and economic rights and wellbeing of its citizens. As Fraser (2009) explains, welfarism has a long and established history in UK political economics. Indeed, post-war Britain, with its organised labour, public education and healthcare, and state-funded safety net for the unemployed, at one time was described as embodying the ideals of the welfare state (e.g. Lowe and Butcher 1994, Lowe 1990, Sullivan 1996, Harris 2004, Fraser 2009, Adelman 2017: 188). However, although we continue to refer to the existence of the welfare state in British society, it has not remained a static entity since its conception (Hayward 2012). Rather, the British welfare state has proved dynamic, changeable across different points in time, and molded by the material and ideological forces implicated in its governance. As I will outline in this section, most recently neoliberalism has been associated with the gross restructuring of the British welfare state, redefining its priorities and narrowing its responsibilities and provisions.

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism[77] has proved a popular topic within anthropological scholarship within recent decades. As Laidlaw (2012) highlights, across myriad ethnographic contexts neoliberalism is often used to index the current global political-economic order, and is subsequently implicated in the reconfiguration of diverse social and political lives (*cf.* Eriksen *et al* 2015). Ganti identifies that this scholarship can be divided into three broad themes, which conceive of neoliberalism as: a structural force that affects people's lives and life-chances; an ideology of governance that shapes subjectivities; and the sites and agents of neoliberal practice (2014: 90). However, authors such as Larner (2000) emphasise the inter-relation

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[77] See Chapter 5 (p141) for a provided definition of neoliberalism.

between these themes, arguing that neoliberal policies and ideologies are mutually reinforcing, with political discourse both informing and being informed by practice. Accordingly, Larner conceptualises neoliberalism as both a political rationality of the nature of rule, and as a set of practices that facilitate the governing of the polity from a distance (*ibid*: 6). In this vein, Larner draws attention to the work of Neo-Foucaldian theorists, such as Dean (1999), Hindess (1999) and Rose (1999), who have analysed neoliberalism through the lens of governmentality.[78] Importantly, this Neo-Foucauldian literature emphasises that neoliberal arrangements emerge out of political struggle, rather than from a hegemonic imposition of a coherent, discrete logic, by political decision makers in power (Larner 2000: 9-14).

Despite the different ways in which neoliberalism may be theorised, Ganti (2014) notes that the conclusion of most anthropological studies featuring neoliberalism is that inequalities rise sharply under neoliberal agendas. Swathes of anthropological literature argue that more people become marginalised, dispossessed and disenfranchised as public resources are privatised, welfare protections slashed, and the livelihoods of those with the least economic capital are incorporated into market economies.[79] Consequently, neoliberalism serves predominantly as a term of critique in anthropological literature (Ganti 2014), eliciting, as Ortner (2011) describes, a 'darker, bleaker narrative' of modern political life.

However, the popularity of neoliberalism within anthropological scholarship has elicited a fair share of criticism (Ganti 2014: 90). Some anthropologists have questioned what the term neoliberalism actually captures, if anything: whether it describes a 'new' political order, or whether it is used as a 'sloppy synonym' (Ferguson 2010) for other established forms of political economy, such as late capitalism, liberalism, or globalisation (Laidlaw 2012, Mair 2012 *cf.* Eriksen *et al* 2015, also Clarke 2008, Elyachar 2012, Schwegler 2009). Others have warned that recourse to neoliberalism, particularly as a reified, monolithic global political rationality, can obscure ethnographic particularities and foreclose pertinent avenues of

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[78] Focault's (1977) concept of governmentality encapsulates the 'art of government', and attends to the ways in which political rationalities and techniques are used to create and govern subjects. It has concisely been described as the 'conduct of conducts', capturing how governance influences human conduct, for the furtherance of political aims, within populations who are 'free' in the sense that they are not being physically constrained to comply (Foucault 1977, 1991: 48, Burchell *et al* 1991, Rose 1999:3).

[79] These criticisms are perhaps most marked in the context of neoliberal fiscal austerity policies, which have proved particularly detrimental for those living in the 'Global South', where the International Monetary Fund widely imposed stringent Structural Adjustment Policies upon states (for example, Adepoju 1993, Ferguson 2006, Canak, 1989). However, Ganti (2014) references an extensive body of anthropological literature to bolster this argument (e.g. Bourgois 2011, Comaroff and Comaroff 2000, Greenhouse 2010, Mains 2007, Ruben and Maskovsky 2008, Aiyer 2008, Amouroux 2009, Sampat 2010, Smith-Nonini 1998, Babb 1999; D´avila 2004; Guano 2002, Kingfisher and Goldsmith 2001, Morgen 2001, Yazici 2012, Elyachar 2005, Hairong 2003, Han 2011, Karim 2011, Powell 2008, Thomas 2013).

inquiry (Eriksen *et al* 2015, Gershon et al 2011, Kipnis 2008). However, these criticisms, while valid, are drawn with broad strokes, and overlook the nuanced ways in which neoliberalism can be incorporated into ethnographic analysis. That is, that anthropological scrutiny can attend to the complexity, specificity and potential hybridity of neoliberal imaginaries and projects, and the differential implications these may have for individuals living within particular localities. Therefore, I concur with Martin (2012), who argues that, if approached reflexively, neoliberalism still remains a valuable 'part of the picture' - especially when it proves important in the lives and perspectives of interlocutors, and the ethnographic contexts in which they are situated (*cf.* Eriksen *et al* 2015.).

Neoliberalism and Austerity in Britain

Certainly, neoliberalism proves relevant in the context of British welfare reform over recent decades, where welfare retrenchment policies have been described as the 'ultimate' example of the British state's neoliberal (re)structuring (Chang 2011). Neoliberal rationalities underpinning British welfare are not necessarily 'new.'[80] However, Clarke and Newman (2012) argue that the contemporary invigoration and significance of neoliberal welfare policies can be derived from the multiple and multi-layered crises of the financial system, which rocked Britain and the wider global economy in 2007-8. The authors suggest that political discourse following 2007 rhetorically worked to shift the financial crisis from being:

> … [A]n economic problem (how to 'rescue' the banks and restore market stability) to a political problem (how to allocate blame and responsibility for the crisis): a reworking that has focused on the unwieldy and expensive welfare state and public sector, rather than high risk strategies of banks, as the root cause of the crisis' (Clarke and Newman 2012: 300).

Clarke and Newman argued that this reworking was used to legitimise the roll out of widespread neoliberal policies for managing the UK economy, particularly following the inauguration of the 2010 Coalition and subsequent Conservative governments.

Within this political context, welfare austerity was deployed - rationalised by claims of economic 'necessity', and advocated in the name of retaining British economic security and its hegemony in the global market (Ginsburg *et al* 2012). Put simply, austerity was presented as a necessary measure to 'fix broken Britain' (Wiggan 2012). As Ginsburg *et al* argue, these austerity policies equated to a deepening neoliberalisation of British welfare policy, which resulted in the 'the most profound assault' on the welfare state since its inception

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[80] Fraser (2009), for example, traces the emergence of neoliberal rationalities within British welfarism from the 1970s onwards.

(2012: 297). This assault, the authors claim, was detrimental to both public services and social security benefits, and manifested through the increasing use of retrenchment strategies, the stiffening of welfare eligibility criteria, the reduced 'generosity' of welfare provisions, and the privatisation of large parts of the public sector. However, as I will go on to discuss, moral and social discourse also featured within the rhetoric of austerity, which championed the imperatives of individual responsibility and interdependence (Clarke and Newman 2012, Wiggan 2012). This is perhaps best captured within the 'Big Society Agenda' (*cf.* Chapter 5), which aimed to increase the 'capacities' and responsibilities of civil society, and simultaneously reduce the scope of central government intervention (Ishkanian 2014).

This deepening neoliberalisation of the British state, and the institution of austerity measures, has been described as a form of statecraft. As Gamble (2015) argues, these rationalities, rhetorics and practices served to reconfigure the political economic landscape of post-financial crash Britain (also Buller and James 2012, Hayton 2014.) Gamble (2015) emphasises that in doing so, this statecraft also reconfigured the relationship between the British state and those residing within the polity. In the following sections, I will examine this reconfiguration, attending to the neoliberalisation of citizenship norms through the site of welfare. Here I return to the stories of Crina and Trudka (*cf.* Chapter 6) to consider how European women's welfare entitlement in the context of domestic violence was inflected with neoliberal citizenship values. Additionally, I highlight the nationalistic ideologies embedded within welfare bureaucracy, and suggest that welfare policy deployment, or adherence, can be conceived as a form of 'bordering' practice.

Welfare and Neoliberal Citizenship

The welfare state and notions of citizenship have a long and interconnected history. For example, Parekh argues that classically a welfare state involves the state accepting responsibility for the welfare of its citizens, but also, citizens collectively accepting responsibility for each other's welfare (2012: 52). Contemporarily, an array of citizenship values and norms are implicated within British welfare policies, which discern the form welfare takes and which individuals may access it (Hayward 2012: 3). Citizenship is a term that can be used to describe a number of related phenomena surrounding the relationship between the individual and the state (Rubenstein and Adler 2000). Citizenship is often understood as being synonymous with nationality (Soysal 1994) – a construction in Britain that Hampshire (2005) connects to the political tactics involved in British statecraft and the development of the welfare state in the post-war era. However, citizenship is also understood to extend beyond the confines of ethnic descent or passport ownership. It is something that Benhabib equates to 'political membership' (2004: 1) - a term that relates to

the rights, protections and obligations afforded to individuals, living within a particular polity. Accordingly, Arendt (1951) conceptualises citizenship as 'the right to have rights,' and in the modern era, rights have been depicted as 'melting' with citizenship (Bobbio 1990, *cf.* Standing 2014: 3). Citizens therefore are situated as members who belong to a political entity, with their entitlement to rights seen as a function of that belonging, regardless of their primordial ties to the national collectivity (Soysal 1994: 3, Standing 2014).

Considering this, we can see that citizenship is concerned with processes of inclusion and exclusion: it delineates who has political membership and who does not (e.g. Fassin 2001, Van Houdt *et al* 2011). Consequently, citizenship has been described as a 'dividing practice,' as it dichotomises access to social and political rights (Dean 1999: 133). This aspect of citizenship is played out within welfare policies; welfare state boundaries, distinct from national boundaries, serve to reflect who is ideologically included and excluded from national and civic identity (Dudley 2014: 34). More broadly, welfare policy boundaries have been described as symbolising 'the meaning of the nation, and the moral fundament of the community' (Bommes and Geddes 2000: 252). Therefore, it is clear that welfare and citizenship are intimately intertwined. Both are tied to social, political and moral discourse about who 'belongs,' and thus who should be afforded the rights and protections that come with political membership. Welfare policies then, are dialogically informed by social and moral discourses that relate to citizenship. Indeed, as a core function, welfare policies differentiate between those who are 'deserving' and 'undeserving' of participating in the welfare state and receiving public aid (Hayward 2012). Steensland argues these differentiations reflect 'cultural categories of worth,' which he claims are central to the ideological foundation of welfare, and consequent welfare policy development (2006: 1273).

These aspects of analysis are significant for this chapter because, as highlighted in the previous section, austerity in British welfare provision has been justified not only by macro-level economic rationalities, but also through a moral and social vocabulary of individual responsibility and interdependence (Clarke and Newman 2012). Henman and Mitchell refer to this discourse as leading to a neoliberal 'remoralisation' of welfare in Britain (2004: 1). Wiggan (2012) concurs with this argument, arguing that the concept of fairness has been used to manufacture a dichotomy between those who monetarily contribute to the British economy, and those who 'detract'. Moral entitlement to welfare therefore, has become financialised, dependent upon fiscal contributions and the individuals' value to the British market economy. These developments in welfare policies parallel a growing literature on the neoliberalisation of citizenship in Britain and the associated 'social contract' involved; namely that citizenship has become something that must be earned (*financially*), with neoliberal

values prescribing the duties, responsibilities and moral capacities of citizens (e.g. Van Houdt *et al* 2011, Ballie Smith and Laurie 2011, Waite 2012, Bell 2016, Parekh 2012, Hayward 2012).[81]

Revisiting Crina and Trudka

Returning to the ethnography in the previous chapter, the above analysis is clearly reflected in the lives of Crina and Trudka. As I described, during fieldwork the welfare eligibility criteria to which European women were subject was increasingly narrowed - funnelled towards a focus on the time women had worked and spent in the UK. We can see then, how the welfare policies in this context were subject to an increasing neoliberalisation, wherein values of fiscal austerity mobilised to restrict the supports available, particularly on the basis of women's participation in the labour force. In this sense, women's eligibility for support (which is indicative of their political citizenship) was *financialised* - based not upon their vulnerability to domestic violence but on the basis of their previous and potential value to the market economy. As the support worker, Ashley, described, *'It's all about money money money!'* Accordingly, despite Crina and Trudka's extensive efforts to comply with welfare criteria that would render them eligible to stay in refuge, they were unable to meet the legislative thresholds required of them. A key factor in determining this outcome was that both women had not contributed enough financially to the state, and thus they were deemed 'undeserving' of welfare support.

Moving beyond the financial rationalities embedded within the bureaucratic mechanisms described in the previous chapter, Crina and Trudka's welfare encounters can also be connected to the homogenising effects of moral, neoliberal citizenship discourses. The neoliberal moral discourse applied to British welfare provision, deployed as part of the austerity regime, has been associated with the construction of a hostile, unempathetic welfare environment, for all of those who rely on social security. Wiggan (2012) for example, argues that within this discourse welfare recipients were presented as work-shy but 'work-ready' actors, who 'chose' to rely upon 'overly generous' state 'hand-outs.' Out of work benefits, and those who claimed them, were thus portrayed as morally corrosive, and a threat to British society and its economic security (Ginsburg *et al* 2012). Within this discourse, the complexity of social security and the situations in which individuals might require state support were overlooked. For example, Wiggan (2012) argues that individuals with disabilities, those experiencing temporary income interruption, or who required support

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[81] The arguments in these works parallel anthropological literature that attends to the neoliberalisation of citizenship in other settings, such as Ong (2006), Kipnis (2008), Lukose (2005), and Muehlebach (2011).

to care for dependents, or to recover from ill health, were flattened within a polarised immoral class of 'dependency' and 'worklessness'.

Wiggan's (2012) arguments are relevant to the stories of Crina and Trudka, which therefore extends his analysis to include the flattening of domestic violence victims within the category of 'worklessness'. Both women had an extensive history of employment before coming to the UK, but their working ability was hampered by their experiences of domestic violence. For Trudka, this was because Dymek turned up to her work and was abusive, causing her to lose her employment, and then because he stole her identity documents, which impeded her ability to find another job. Additionally, as Crina described, Ion unexpectedly blocked her from seeking employment, as part of his abusive behaviour. Although she then left Ion, her late stages of pregnancy, followed by her sole guardianship of new-born Ola, complicated her ability to seek and retain employment. As I argued in the previous chapter, Crina and Trudka's experiences parallel literature that argues domestic violence interferes with women's abilities to both work and comply with welfare policy requirements (Lein *et al* 2001, Josephson 2002, Riger and Staggs 2004, Purvin 2007). Yet, in Crina and Trudka's welfare encounters, these aspects were not recognised or accommodated for in their welfare applications. Despite their applications being interrelated to domestic violence victimisation, and motivated by the stark, precarious situations they were in, Crina and Trudka were similarly subject to contributions-based tests that all unemployed European recipients had to undergo when applying for welfare. Moreover, neither woman wanted to live off benefits as an alternative to employment. Instead, they required benefits in order to stay in refuge, for protection against and to recover from the domestic violence they had experienced, and to restabilise their lives so that they could find employment and support themselves independently in the longer term.

Therefore, this ethnographic analysis can be tied to Wiggan's (2012) claim: that the outcome of homogenising, neoliberal citizenship discourses in Britain has been the de-socialisation of unemployment and poverty, and the de-legitimisation of those who access welfare supports (also Walters 1996, Rose 1999). Nowhere has this been more of an issue in the UK than in the context of migrants accessing state benefits. Although the issue of immigration in the context of welfare receipt has been a long-standing issue, in the following section of this chapter, I will attend to the ways in which nationalistic welfare rationalities have been heightened since EU enlargement in 2004.

Everyday Bordering Practices
Research on welfare states in general suggests that migrants are often viewed as being

amongst the least deserving recipients of welfare support (Wolfe 2002: 111, Van Oorschot 2006). In the context of the UK, the figure of the immigrant 'welfare scrounger' and concerns of 'welfare parasitism' are well-worn tropes that have fuelled anti-immigration rhetoric and welfare austerity for decades (see e.g. Hampshire 2005: 79, Craig 2007). However, over recent years EU migrants receiving welfare has become an issue of intense contestation, in UK public, media and political arenas (Saggar, 2004, Goodman and Speer 2007, Charteris-Black 2006). This contestation can be related to heightened concerns over British sovereignty and economic security, particularly in the context of their being undermined by Britain's membership of the EU.[82] These concerns heightened following the enlargement of the EU in 2004, which gave rise to an unprecedented number of Accession migrants coming to work and live in the UK (Saggar 2004, Goodman and Speer 2007, Charteris-Black 2006, Spigelman 2013).

Since European enlargement there have been fears that, in allowing the unregulated movement of migrants from the relatively poorer Accession countries to the UK, there would be large numbers of migrants coming to exploit the welfare system, rather than to seek work (Drinkwater and Robinson 2013:102). These concerns are perhaps best epitomised in the oft-used neologism of 'benefit tourism' (Balch and Balabanova 2016). This is despite extensive evidence suggesting that these fears are unfounded – that conversely, Accession migrants have proved net contributors to the UK economy and have claimed relatively fewer benefits than British citizens (Dustmann *et al* 2010, Dustmann and Frattini 2014). Nevertheless, 'Eurosceptic', anti-migrant rhetoric has remained prominent in public and media discourse, and has coincided with a resurgence of conservatism and right-wing politics in Britain, particularly since the inauguration of the Coalition government in 2010 (Emerson 2015).

As a result, even though EU migrants have been eligible to access British welfare under EU legislation, for some, the exercising of this entitlement became tautologically illegitimate. As Polish migrants comprise the largest Accession migrant population, they have come to the fore of this debate. Spigelman (2013) for example, describes that in the media Polish migrants have been constructed as the 'intrusive other', who threaten British national identity and culture, as well as the UK's 'in group resources' (see also McLaren and Johnson 2007: 710, Lynn and Lea 2003, Kempny 2011, Balch and Balabanova 2016). This 'otherisation', Spigelman (2013) claims, amounts to a 'moral panic' (Cohen 1980) and has resulted in the dehumanisation and demonization of Poles, who have been posited:

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[82] These concerns are best encapsulated within 'Brexit' debates, which increased in intensity following the completion of fieldwork (*cf.* Addendum).

> *[…] as outsiders who are less deserving of our country's help, and as individuals who need not be granted the same rights and generosity (particularly in terms of welfare support) as the British 'us' (Goodman and Speer 2007: 167-8, cf. Spigelman 2013: 99).*

Moving beyond the media, this stance is well encapsulated in a speech the then Prime Minister, David Cameron (2014), made on the issue:

> *…EU jobseekers who don't pay in will no longer get anything out…Our welfare system is like a national club. It's made up of the contributions of hardworking British taxpayers. It cannot be right that migrants can turn up and claim full rights to this club straightaway. This has got to change…*

From this statement, we can see how welfare is deployed as a political right, only admissible to hardworking 'deserving' British citizens who, by their financial contribution, have moral access to the exclusive (and exclusionary) 'national club' of welfare. This statement again attests to the neoliberal rationality of financial merit driving benefit entitlement, but it also emphasises the nationalistic ideologies implicit in British welfare. Moreover, Cameron articulates that it is unfair for recently arrived EU migrants to claim benefits, which bolsters the depiction of migrant welfare recipients as morally corrosive agents or, as O'Brien describes, 'mischief' to be tackled (2015: 112). Again, paralleling Wiggan's arguments (2012), migrant claimants in this speech are rhetorically homogenised within the catchall category of 'worklessness'; there is no recognition of the complex or difficult circumstances that may cause migrants to require benefits - including domestic violence.

The neoliberalisation of migrant entitlement, and the flattening of 'worklessness', is further reinforced by the following government statement excerpt:

> *This government has introduced a number of measures to make sure that the benefit and tax credit system for EU migrants is increasingly focused only on those who contribute through* work (DWP 2015).

Both the above excerpt and Cameron's statement serve to explain the 'wave upon wave of regulatory change' that the government had executed to narrow EU migrant entitlement within welfare law (O'Brien 2015, *cf.* Chapter 6). Moving beyond neoliberalism, these welfare policies can be conceived of as enacting and defending the territorial borders of the British state. This relates to the notion of 'everyday bordering' – a concept that describes the social and political economic enactment of state borders, through attitudes, ideologies, discourses and wider domestic governance (Yuval-Davis 2013, Yuval-Davis *et al* 2017, also e.g. Balibar

1998, Rumford 2006).[83] Everyday bordering entails the production and reproduction of state boundaries, which reflect shifting relations between the state, other global political entities, and politicised identities (Scott and Van Houtum 2009, Van Houtum *et al* 2005, Kapur and Pickering 2012). In this ethnographic context therefore, welfare governance emerges as a means through which the state enacts its sovereignty, and bolsters the 'fairness' or 'security' of its economy, through denying benefit access to EU jobseekers.

My invocation of everyday bordering here again reflects the ubiquity of borders in everyday life, paralleling my analysis in previous chapters, where I have articulated Polish women 'carrying the border' with them, as they experienced domestic violence *within the borderlands* (cf. Chapters 4,5 and 6). Accordingly, Wemyss and Cassidy (2016) describe the everyday bordering practices implicit in media representation of EU migrants since European Accession. This ties in to Spigelman's (2013) analysis of the construction of Polish migrants as the 'intrusive outsiders' within press discourse. However, the paradigm of everyday bordering also captures the ways in which ordinary citizens reproduce the border, for example through compliance with governmental legislation (Yuval-Davis 2013).

Apurva

The far-reaching effects of the bordering within welfare policies proved relevant in the context of domestic violence organisations in Chapter 6. As I highlighted, supports such as refuges were often dependent upon women's receipt of welfare provisions. Staff members' performance of 'everyday bordering practices', as they complied with the British welfare regime, was well encapsulated by Apurva:

> *Women see our advertisements [offering support for domestic violence] and they come to us for help… But [because of government policies] our first question has to be what is your immigration status?... How long have you lived here?…What is your employment history?… And we have to turn away those who don't fit the government's criteria, because we are not allowed to support them… We have now become immigration enforcers, carrying out the discriminatory work of the British Border Agency… This is unacceptable…The pain and anger we feel at having to do this…*

Apurva's statement reflects that, in restricting migrant women's support and complying with governmental legislation, she saw herself as involuntarily enacting border enforcement. This

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[83] The notion of everyday bordering is encapsulated within my analysis of bordering practices in Chapter 4, although here I explore the significance of the political rationalities implicated in 'bordering'.

parallels the concerns voiced by Pragna Patel (2016), the director of a large domestic violence organisation in the UK. In a recent speech, she used the term 'everyday bordering' explicitly to describe the coercive normalisation of anti-immigration sentiments and procedures across state institutions and, by extension, organisations that rely on statutory funding. This coerced normalisation, she argued, reflects a widening disparity of power in the relationship between the state and agencies funded by it, and between the rights and protections offered to British and foreign national women.

Patel's (2016) speech once more emphasises the ways in which state practices inhibited and shaped domestic violence service provision, paralleling my arguments in Chapters 5 and 6. Moreover, it reflects ways in which everyday bordering practices can reconstruct citizenship: altering migrant rights, their access to welfare, and their legal protections (Yuval-Davis 2013, Kapur and Pickering 2012). Reintroducing the financialisation of EU migrant citizenship, O'Brien (2015) argues that neoliberalism and nationalistic ideologies have converged within welfare policies and, in unison, have fundamentally re-written EU migrants' political membership to the state:

> *The classic citizen-state contract of generalised reciprocity…is being replaced with an individualised, contingent contract…the UK-EU membership contract is being re-written, creating an atomistic membership, instrumentalising and de-humanising other Europeans, reaping the economic benefits of migrant work while offering more hostility and less security (ibid: 112).*

O'Brien concludes that in practice, these political rationalities entrenched bureaucratic 'xenoscepticism', and reflect a decreased state resistance to destitution – collectively indicating the erosion of principles of human rights and equality, within British welfare law. I build upon these dimensions of her argument, specifically in the context of Polish women subject to domestic violence, in the proceeding sections of this chapter.

But first, to summarise my arguments so far: I have described how the neoliberalisation of the British welfare state and the citizenship norms which underpin it, are implicated within welfare policies, as well as the moral de-legitimation of individuals that require welfare support. As I have argued, the issue of de-legitimation particularly relates to European migrants, who encountered 'everyday bordering' practices as they applied for and were denied welfare support. These xenosceptic welfare policies (O'Brien 2015), imbued with nationalistic sentiments, can be conceived of as an assertion of British sovereignty, executed amidst concerns over waning British power and its membership of the EU. Fundamentally, in practice these strategies of statecraft resulted in the increased economic

conditionality of state benefits and decreased the provisions available - for all British citizens, but especially for EU migrants (Ginsburg *et al* 2012: 297, Wiggan 2012). This particularly affected European women experiencing domestic violence, where the complexity and starkness of their situations were homogenised into the catchall bureaucratic category of 'worklessness' (Wiggan 2012). Several authors have described these policy shifts as being indicative of a move towards a more 'punitive' mode of welfare, which detrimentally affects those who are unable to conform to the demands placed upon welfare entitlement (Barker and Lamble 2009: 330, Graham and Smith 2010: 85). Although here I have considered the role of political rationalities in the governing and fashioning of individuals as citizens – as Henman and Mitchell (2010) write, the authoritarianism involved in the governance of this 'punitory' welfare regime should not be overlooked.

Welfare Authoritarianism and Sovereignty

When examining the neoliberalisation of welfare reform, issues of individualisation and governmentality regularly come to the fore of analysis. However, as Henman and Mitchell (2010) argue, such an approach is at risk of overlooking the coercive and punitive elements embedded within welfare systems. For example, Dean (2002) highlights that the neoliberal idea of 'governing through freedom' can manifest as a set of binding obligations that are enforced by *coercive instruments*. In doing so, he draws upon the work of Valverde (1996) and Hindess (2001), who both examine how despotism is applied to those who have not, or are unable to, achieve extant liberal versions of self-governance. In this vein, welfare policies and practices that restrict and limit the benefits available to individuals, can be seen as authoritarian (also Henman and Mitchell 2010, Hindess 2001, Dean 2002). As Purvin (2007) highlights, it is ultimately welfare bureaucracy that deems who receives what; a determination that those in need of welfare but denied support are unable to immediately challenge or change. In the present ethnographic context, as I highlighted in the previous section, this determination was made upon the premise of a nationalistic, neoliberal conceptualisation of citizenship. As we saw in the cases of Crina and Trudka, those who were unable to conform to criteria that rendered them eligible or 'deserving' of welfare ultimately failed to receive state protection and support, to their detriment. Accordingly, Dean (2002) argues that such coercive dimensions of welfarism should be conceptualised as a form of sovereign power.

In the previous section, I invoked the notion of sovereignty in the Westphalian sense: to express an act or quality of a state's self-determination or territoriality (e.g. Joffe 1999, Biersteker 2002). However, here I use sovereignty to describe supreme or authoritarian power, as depicted by Foucault (1977) in his consideration of monarchic 'displays of

spectacular violence,' such as public executions in 18th Century France. Foucault theorised that this form of sovereign power was largely and chronologically superseded by disciplinary power and biopower, which coincided with the rise of governmentality and the health of the population becoming a governable concern of the state (Foucault *et al* 2003, Foucault 1977, 2007, 2008, Burchell *et al* 1991, also Singer and Weir 2006, Butler 2004, Agamben 1998). While both understandings of sovereignty involve questions of statehood and statecraft, and indeed are interrelated, as this section will attest, these distinctions have different implications for analysis.

Returning to Dean's (2002) argument, his attention to the sovereignty implicated in British welfare bureaucracy closely echoes the analysis of Butler (2004), whose work has important implications for my arguments in this chapter. I will outline her arguments briefly here, before considering them in the context of Polish women and their encounters with the state, when attempting to access protections against domestic violence. In her work, Butler considers the resurgence of sovereign power in the context of state bureaucratic processes in post-9/11 America. Particularly, she draws upon the case of Guantanamo Bay and the indefinite detention to which its inmates were subject, to exemplify how the state attains an indefinite power to suspend and fabricate the law. While law may be used as a tactic of governance within the field of governmentality, Butler argues that when the rule of law is suspended or fabricated to advance or preserve the interests of the state, this equates to a resurgence of sovereign power. She writes,

> *The act of suspending law… brings a contemporary configuration of sovereignty, or more precisely, reanimates a spectral sovereignty within the field of governmentality* (*ibid*: 61).

Therefore, Butler conceives of a re-integrated notion of power and governance,

> *If the self-preserving and self augmenting aims of the state are once more linked with sovereignty it can be mobilized as one of the tactics of governmentality, both to manage populations, to preserve the nation state and to suspend the question of legitimacy (ibid:* 96).

Butler (2004) describes that the exercise of sovereignty takes place for the purposes of constraining or monitoring a given population, through an elaboration of administrative bureaucracies that are not fully inaugurated, controlled or accountable. She reasons that one way of managing a population is to constitute them sovereignly as less than human, or without entitlements to rights. In reference to Guantanamo, Butler writes that extra-legal, indefinite detention suspended life to produce a non-subject who was nonetheless subject to state power. This she connects to Agamben's conceptions of 'homo sacer' and 'bare life'

(1998, 2002) and draws upon his paradigm of 'the state of exception' (2005) to contextualise the extra-legal ways in which indefinite detention was deployed and justified. This occurred, she argues, through the de-subjectification of Guantanamo prisoners in the name of pressing threats to US national security. Agamben's arguments are also relevant to this chapter, as his recent work attends to states exercising sovereign power through creating a 'state of exception', to justify the erosion of constitutional rights in modern, neoliberal contexts (2005). Indeed, one of his contemporary examples involves the internment of asylum seekers within French detention camps, which he depicts placed them at the threshold of the political community (Agamben 1998).

However, Butler's (2004) attention to bureaucracy in her analysis remains of central importance to the present research context.[84] Butler highlights the 'extraordinary power' that bureaucratic institutions and government officials possess: the power to 'deem' (*ibid*: 59). Through this exclusionary process of 'deeming', she conceives that individuals are differentially allocated human value, or placed within sovereignly ordained categories of worth; these are arguments that connect to the works of Steensland (2006) and Purvin (2007), in the context of welfare bureaucracy. Butler (2004) thus equates the erosion or suspension of an individual's political and legal rights through mechanisms of bureaucracy to 'capricious proceduration'. It is through this proceduration, she argues, that spaces of inhumanity are forged. She contends these spaces of inhumanity are interconnected to the production of precariousness, within targeted populations. Butler asserts populations are rendered precarious because of the lack of social structure and protection they are afforded - as a result of the (lack of) value their lives and rights are ascribed. Importantly, Butler attributes this precarity with rendering populations more vulnerable, and at heightened risk of poverty and violence.

Butler's (2004) arguments are of continuing significance in this present research context. She considers how bureaucratic powers diffusely manage populations, through practices of

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[84] Additionally, Butler's framing of precarity, which is prominent in my subsequent arguments, provides scope for a *range* of precarious subjectivities, which is why I centralise her work in this chapter. I find this range, to a degree, to be lacking in Agamben's (1998) work; it does not immediately offer scope for intersectionality or analysis of varying 'shades of gray' (see also Tyner 2016, Barkan 2009). Nevertheless, I do proceed to highlight parallels between Agamben's (1998) analysis and the present ethnographic context, particularly in terms of Polish women's liminal citizenship, given the liminality inherent in homo sacer's positionality (Shewly 2013: 26). However, while I contend that Polish women's rights in the context of domestic violence were eroded through welfare governance, I note that women still retained protection in some instances (*cf.* Chapter 6), and via other means. This perhaps makes the notion of bare life, akin to my consideration of structural violence (Farmer 1996, *cf.* Chapter 6), too 'blunt' a paradigm to foreground my analysis of Polish women's subjectivities (also Gupta 2012).

governmentality. As I have discussed, the British welfare state was re-worked through political rationalities and techniques, fashioned into a neoliberal system imbued with ideologies of the nation, economic conditionality, austerity and 'worth'. However, Butler also considers how tactics of sovereignty are deployed to trump established law, through unaccountable bureaucratic processes that invest in the discretionary fabrication of law (*ibid*: 93). Through this argument she theorises that individuals, although technically covered by rights and laws, have these rights eroded through extra-legal and bureaucratic means. This is relevant here because, as I have suggested, at the time of fieldwork Polish women experiencing domestic violence technically had recourse to state securities. Yet, as the cases of Crina and Trudka emphasise, their ability to enact these rights was constrained in practice, by coercive bureaucratic processes and policies. Scholars have suggested that these prohibitive welfare policies contravened established EU and human rights laws, which theoretically endowed Polish women with the right to receive state provisions, and protection against domestic violence. As I will argue in the following section, because of their extra-legality, these statutory welfare practices can thus be posited as an exertion of sovereign, nihilistic power*.*

The Illegality of UK Welfare Policies

This section considers the legal protections that scholars argue Polish victims of domestic violence should have been afforded at the time of fieldwork, in light of the UK's consignment to transnational human rights and EU law. This section draws upon Dudley's (2014) legal analysis of the British government's restrictive welfare protections for all migrant women, but especially those with *No Recourse to Public Funds* (NRPF) status, in the context of domestic violence victimisation.[85] Additionally, I refer to analysis conducted by the AIRE Centre (2014), which criticised the lack of protections in place to support European women experiencing domestic violence in Britain. Both works argue that law and practice in the UK fell short of the international obligations the government had undertaken to protect victims of domestic violence.

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[85] Dudley (2014) interrogates the legality of the British Government's NRPF rules. At the time of writing, individuals subject to immigration control (e.g. non-EU migrants) can be granted entrance to the UK and leave to remain on the basis that they do not access public funds. This status applies to a range of different visa holders - students, workers, spouses etc. - but also to individuals who are in the UK 'illegally'. For non-EU migrant women experiencing domestic violence, their NRPF status means they are unable to access refuge, ECH, or financial supports (such as JSA). While there are alternative funding options for NRPF women living in the UK (although only for those with spousal visas), these protections are both sparse and piecemeal, and can severely constrain women's options when they attempt to evade domestic violence (*ibid*). At the time of fieldwork, EU women did not have NRPF status because they had technical recourse to claim public funds, by virtue of the EU membership.

As I demonstrated in Chapter 2, domestic violence was not traditionally viewed as falling within the purview of international human rights protections (Thomas and Beasley 1993). However, with growing attention to the endemic issue of violence against women, understandings of domestic violence shifted, towards it being conceptualised as a worldwide, political and gendered issue. As a result, domestic violence is now frequently legislated within human rights frameworks, most commonly through two articulations: where domestic violence is posited as either a form of discrimination, or as a wider violation of individual human rights (Thomas and Beasley 1994, Dudley 2014: 69). In terms of discrimination, this articulation reflects the reasoning that, if a state fails to prosecute or address domestic violence, with women being much more likely to experience domestic violence than men, women will be affected disproportionately. Therefore, a state that systematically fails to respond to domestic violence can be in violation of the human right to equality and equal protection under the law. This right is outlined in Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (UN General Assembly 1948), among others, and is also protected within the UK's Equality Act 2010 (Dudley 2014).

Domestic violence is additionally articulated as being in violation of individual human rights. Frequently cited in reference to this argument are Articles 3 and 5 of the United Nation's UDHR (1948): the right to life, liberty and security of the person, and the right to freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.[86] Thomas and Beasley (1994) argue that the framing of domestic violence in this way reflects a conceptual expansion of state responsibility to obviate human rights violations. While states have traditionally been obliged to address human rights abuses that occur directly as a result of state action, they must now additionally interpose in violations that are committed by other institutions and private actors. Thus, although the state may not directly commit domestic violence, its systemic failure to prosecute perpetrators or protect victims can now amount to it having complicity in the perpetration of abuse.[87]

In her legal analysis of the UK's NRPF laws, Dudley (2014) found that, through the British state's failure to provide safety and support for domestic violence victims, the fundamental rights of women – to life and to freedom from torture – were being violated. Accordingly, Dudley argued that human rights protections, enshrined within many of the transnational legal conventions the UK was consigned to, were not being met. She concluded that, in failing to provide protection to victims of domestic violence, the British state was failing to

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[86] Dudley (2014) primarily draws upon these two rights in her legal analysis but also highlights several other relevant UDHR Articles.

[87] This reasoning is reflected within Adelman's (2004, 2017) paradigm of the 'battering state', which I discussed in Chapter 2.

meet obligations imposed by CEDAW, the ICCPR, ICESCR, UNCRC and the EHRC.[88] For example, she argued that excluding women experiencing domestic violence from receiving state-funded supports such as refuge meant the UK was in danger of breaching Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13 and 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights (Council of Europe 1950, *cf.* Dudley 2014: 241). Through this analysis, Dudley argues that human rights standards were being subordinated by nationalism and protectionism in British immigration law (2014*:* 252) – an observation that I have built upon in this chapter.

Closely echoing Dudley's (2014) findings, the AIRE Centre (2014) published a report that criticised the UK for failing to meet its obligations to support and protect EEA and EU migrant victims of domestic violence. Like Dudley, the AIRE Centre suggested that, in failing to provide benefits to domestic violence victims, the UK was in contravention of its human rights commitments. However, the report also explored the legality of UK provisions for European domestic violence victims within the context of EU legislation. Particularly, it considered the legality of limiting social security rights to European nationals generally, and the impact this had on victims of domestic violence. The report argued that EU nationals' unclear residence status (compounded by the Habitual Residency Test that featured in Crina's vignette) and restricted access to benefits were in conflict with EU legislation that encapsulates EU freedom of movement and citizenship principles. Under Article 21 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (EU 2008), all EU and EEA nationals are granted rights of entry and residence to the UK. Furthermore, the report highlighted legislation that outlines the 'fundamental status' afforded to EU citizens (Directive 2004/38/EC 2004), which dictates that EU citizens must be afforded the same rights and protections as British nationals, when they live in the UK. By failing to grant European nationals residency and access to the same benefits as British nationals, the AIRE Centre (2014) argued the UK was in contravention of its legal obligations to the EU.[89] This argument was in concordance with the view of the European Commission who, following the passing of the welfare reforms that limited EU migrant access to benefits, repeatedly requested that

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[88] Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; Equality and Human Rights Commission.

[89] This analysis therefore suggests the violation of Polish women's rights were twofold: both their human rights and their rights as EU citizens were not being met. This parallels my arguments in the previous chapter, where I considered Polish women being 'doubly-victimised' in their welfare encounters (p179).

the UK cease its 'discriminatory' practices against European citizens (European Court of Justice 2016).[90]

As O'Brien argues, the issue of unequal and uncertain welfare provision affected all EU nationals living in the UK, but it was particularly detrimental to victims of domestic violence (2015: 130). This is a stance supported by the AIRE Centre report, which concludes by stating that the unclear protections afforded to European victims of domestic violence meant that they were 'in a much more precarious situation than British victims of domestic violence' (2014: 4). This was a position, they argued, which was compounded by European women's inability to apply for the domestic violence supports available to non-EU migrant women, subject to immigration control (*ibid*: 5). A report on violence against women and girls by the UK's Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights (2015) also echoed the AIRE Centre's (2014) findings, and expressed concern that European nationals who fall victim to domestic violence were being left in unsupported situations. The Committee noted that exclusion from refuges and benefit supports represented a serious, systemic threat to European women's lives and wellbeing, and trapped women in abusive relationships, or enforced homelessness and destitution. Certainly, this is a narrative observation that parallels the situations of Crina and Trudka, who both faced homelessness and impoverishment. The Parliamentary report (2015) concluded its observations by warning that the UK government's overseas work on tackling violence against women and girls was not translating into its own domestic violence policy and practice.

Thus, despite UK consignment to legislation that ensured the protection of European women experiencing domestic violence, bureaucratic mechanisms and welfare policies still curtailed European women's access to social security and protections. This was despite the contravention of these legal obligations having been brought to light - for example, through the AIRE Centre (2014) report, Dudley's (2014) analysis, and the findings of the Parliamentary Committee (2015). This is not to mention the extensive activism enacted within the third sector, which lobbied the British government to improve migrant women's protections. For instance, to tackle the bureaucratic obfuscation of migrant welfare entitlement, the No Recourse to Public Fund Network repeatedly called upon the

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[90] The European Commission took its case to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in a bid to enforce EU migrants' equal access to UK social security benefits. At the time of writing, the ECJ had responded by stating that although restricted EU migrant benefits 'amount to indirect indiscrimination, it is justified by the need to protect the finances of the host Member State' (2016:1). Essentially, the ruling acknowledged that EU welfare inequalities equated to discrimination, but upheld British sovereignty over its EU obligations. It is important to emphasise though, that this ruling relates to the legality of stratified welfare rights for EU migrants generally - not specifically in the context of domestic violence, where the rights and protections that Dudley (2014) and the AIRE Centre (2014) highlight still apply.

government, from 2006 onwards, to provide up-to-date guidance that delineated migrant eligibility. Yet these demands were not met and, as the previous chapter attests, negotiating the opaque vicissitudes in welfare policy remained the responsibility of domestic violence victims and the resource-poor third sector (also Dudley 2014: 243). As I argued, this made women's social protection even more difficult to achieve in practice, and impeded Polish women's wider domestic violence service provision.

Several domestic violence organisations have campaigned to raise the profile of and challenge the gap in welfare provisions for European women experiencing domestic violence. This includes Scottish Women's Aid, who presented evidence (2015) to the Scottish Parliament's Welfare Reform Committee on Women and Welfare.[91] Mary, a staff member who was involved in compiling the report to lobby for EU welfare reform, explained the outcome to me:

> *We got to table the issue at Parliament, saying that welfare rules were disproportionately impacting European women…that this was increasing their risk [to destitution and domestic violence] and violating their rights… We lobbied for changes that would let European women apply for [funds open to non-EU migrant women]…so [these proposed changes] would not have even been that comprehensive… but still an improvement…but they came back to us saying there was no 'political appetite' to address the issue, that they weren't going to take it forward. We were very disappointed… we had evidence from member organisations from all across Scotland. [Our evidence] was very powerful, there were lots of case studies… but still nothing.*

As Mary described, despite presenting compelling evidence to the Scottish government about the detrimental impact that welfare policies were having on European women's rights and vulnerability to abuse, there was no political 'appetite' to institute ameliorating reforms. Returning to my arguments earlier in this chapter, I contend that this lack of 'appetite' reflects the austerity and nationalism inflected within British welfare governance, and a growing intolerance towards statutory financial assistance for European migrants.

Therefore, through the analysis presented in this section, the structural violence that Crina and Trudka experienced (*cf.* Chapter 6) can be connected to their rights being violated through British welfare policies. As I have argued, this is a specific form of structural violence with which European women experiencing abuse had to uniquely contend. However, despite

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[91] I quote excerpts from this report at the beginning of Chapter 6 (p151).

this violence having been rendered visible to the state and its policy makers, British welfare economics and European women's legislative identities continued to be prioritised over victims' safety, wellbeing and constitutional rights. This raises questions of the British state's 'wilful neglect' of Polish and other European migrant victims. Additionally, this parallels anthropological works that assert that, while transnational legal conventions such as human rights may protect all individuals in the abstract, the study of migrants' everyday lives highlights the many great or relative difficulties they encounter when attempting exercise these rights (e.g. Dembour and Kelly 2011: 5, Das and Poole 2004).

In the context of anthropological domestic violence scholarship, Lazarus-Black discusses how a state can create 'an illusion that it is representing the common interest by passing legislation to protect persons who experience domestic abuse while in reality it provides them with very little protection' (2007:91, 2001, *cf.* Adelman 2017: 27). This can be connected to Hautzinger's notion of 'purplewashing' - a term she uses, drawing upon the domestic violence purple ribbon emblem, to capture how states can present as being dedicated to tackling domestic violence, while doing little to ameliorate abuse (for certain political collectivities) in actuality (*cf.* Hautzinger and Johnson 2017). Such discrepancies in statutory responses to domestic violence can also be described as amounting to the 'ambivalent governance' (Adelman 2017, *cf.* Chapter 6) of domestic violence. Relevantly here, Adelman describes this ambivalence to be a deliberate tactic and outcome of statecraft, which reflects governmental ideologies and priorities, at the expense of domestic violence victims.

However, it remains important to emphasise the coerciveness of the statecraft at play in this ethnographic context; that the British state was exercising sovereign power through mechanisms of welfare bureaucracy, which trumped established law and eroded the rights afforded to Polish women experiencing domestic violence. In Chapter 6, I depicted the nihilistic dimensions of the structural violence that European women experienced, to emphasise the disorienting and unpredictable qualities of bureaucratic encounters (Rapport 2000), which intensified suffering for individual women. However, here nihilism once again proves relevant, in the sense that the structural violence Polish women experienced involved the rejection or usurpation of established laws, at the political level. Therefore, we can articulate that the citizenship of Polish women was being eroded to further national interests, through nihilistic, authoritarian means. Applying Butler's work (2004), we can see how this sovereign mode of governance within welfare bureaucracies involved both the 'deeming' and diminishing Polish women's political lives and entitlements, pushing them towards the periphery of the political community. Thus, we can conceive of Polish women as possessing

precarious legal subjectivities; that is, a subjectivity of uncertain and diminished legal protection, subject to nihilistic, sovereign governance.

In parallel to Butler's analysis, the 'capricious proceduration' of Polish women can be implicated in forging spaces of 'inhumanity' - where human rights 'fall out of reach' (2004: 69). It is these spaces of inhumanity, or indifference (Herzfeld 1992), that Crina spoke of:

> '*On a personal level, it is too much – they push a person to dangerous situations for this fucking austerity…it is the same with the Africans being thrown in the sea in Italy… We are all human, but it's like it doesn't matter.'*

In keeping with Butler's analysis, Crina's comments can also be connected to Agamben's (1998, 2005) notion of 'bare life'. Here the term may be invoked in the sense that Polish women experiencing domestic violence possessed an 'in-between' legal subjectivity: they were subject to sovereign governance, which possessed the power to place them at the margins of the British polis. This parallels Hansen and Stepputat's observations of contemporary migrant experiences of governance, wherein they suggest that migrants have emerged as the 'bare life' of our times, 'that is, a form of life upon which the sovereignty of states….can be performed and 'natured'' (2005: 35, also Comaroff and Comaroff 2005, Das and Poole 2004).

Nevertheless, I must restate that women's welfare encounters did not *universally* deny women their right to support and protection from domestic violence (*cf.* Chapter 6). Rather, European women's rights were subject to targeted, (extra-legal) economic conditionality. Moreover, welfare provisions comprised just on of the ways in which the British state could protect or support victims of abuse. Polish women could still achieve protection and support through other means – for example, through healthcare provision, or policing, and the criminalisation of many forms of domestic violence. Therefore, while my analysis here emphasises the inequity and ambiguity of Polish women's legal subjectivities, it precludes a dichotomous assertion of their non-political membership of the UK. Instead, the erosion of Polish women's rights, and their precarious legal subjectivities, can be articulated as a form of *liminal* citizenship.

Liminal Citizenship

With rapid globalisation, scholars have noted dramatic changes in the role, meaning and implications of citizenship. Authors such as Soysal (1994) and Jacobson (1996) for example, have forecast the decline or obsolescence of individual nation states, and subsequently of nation-based citizenship. Consequently, they argue that we have entered an age of *postnational* citizenship. Soysal (1994) argues that the global expansion and intensification

of human rights discourse has led to a form of transnational citizenship, wherein states are compelled to extend political membership rights to non-nationals. She claims that human rights have given rise to a new logic and praxis, where rights that were previously territorialised become entitlements legitimised on the basis of personhood, regardless of an individual's primordial ties to a particular polity. Soysal envisages the rise of this transnational citizenship particularly in the context of Europe; she foregrounds her analysis in the rights afforded to migrants working within various European countries. Indeed, the relevance of transnational or supranational citizenship is regularly invoked in the context of the EU. As Balibar describes, the idea of European transnational citizenship, and the free movement, protections and non-discrimination that this political membership affords, is inscribed into the very founding texts of the EU (2004: 161). However, other scholars have disagreed with the salience of transnational legal protections, and their weakening of national citizenships. Joppke for example, in his critique of Soysal's (1994) work, argues that like the 'soft' reach of many transnational laws, the idea of postnational citizenship appears to have more discursive currency than practical applicability (2001: 57, also Merry 2006, Dembour and Kelly 2001: 6, Obiora 1993: 352).

Others scholars argue that, while states are being transformed by globalisation and neoliberalism, citizenship is being reconstructed but not erased (Sassen 2000, 2002, Rodriguez and Rubio-Marin 2011: 75). Standing, for example, asserts that neoliberalism has generated a 'tiered membership' model of society, and that resultantly citizenship should be conceptualised 'as a continuum, with many people having a more limited range of rights than others, without any simple dichotomy of citizen and non-citizen' (2014: 8, see also Turner 1990, Adelman 2017). Substantiating his argument, Standing (2014) draws attention to the rise of denizenship in all Western societies, although he situates his analysis primarily in the context of the UK. He describes denizens to be individuals living within a polity who are afforded only a limited range of citizenship rights, or who struggle to obtain and retain political, legal and social rights relative to others (*ibid*: 7). Standing credits Hammer (1994) with reintroducing the term 'denizen' into contemporary citizenship discourse, but highlights that the term has a long history, dating back many centuries; a denizen was traditionally a non-citizen granted citizenship rights upon demonstration of worthiness, relevantly here, at the discretion of the *ruling sovereign*.

Other scholars have since taken up the term 'denizen' in their analysis, emphasising the 'in-between' nature of the concept (Oger 2003, Walker 2008). As Standing (2014) argues, this 'in-between' aspect has traditionally been associated with progress: an individual moving towards the acquisition of rights. However, he warns that in the current era, with certain

individuals having their rights eroded, denizenship should be recognised as involving *regress* as well (2014: 8, also De Genova 2015). Accordingly, Standing (2014) cites migrants as a prime example of contemporary, 'regressive' denizens in the UK. This is an argument that echoes the work of several authors, who have drawn attention to the stratification of migrants' rights within British immigration governance (e.g. Morris 2001, Craig 2007). In light of this analysis, it becomes clear that this conception of denizenship closely parallels the disempowering, precarious characteristics of liminality, which I have highlighted throughout this thesis in the context of Polish migrant women's experiences.

Certainly, Standing's (2014) conceptualisation of citizenship as a continuum speaks to the rights and protections differentially afforded to European domestic violence victims, through both the arbitrary and systemic mechanisms of welfare bureaucracy. As the stories of Crina and Trudka attest, European migrant women experiencing domestic violence and in need of welfare provision, often found themselves at the hard end of this continuum - without entitlement to state support and protection, despite the transnational obligations imposed on the British state. Polish women in this context then - as legally entitled citizens, but who struggled or were unable to exercise their rights in practice - can be described as denizens. This construction clearly manifests through the 'latent distance' (Adelman 2017: 186) between state protections and EU citizens experiencing domestic violence. This stratified access to protections and rights therefore can be articulated as a differentiating relationship, between the British state and its Polish citizens - as a form of denizenship (Standing 2014) or differential citizenship (Adelman 2017). However, I contend that the appellation of *liminal citizenship* is more appropriate in the context of Polish migrants, given that their denizenship stems from their in-between legislative status: European citizens, but not quite British citizens.

As Standing writes, denizens can be blocked from attaining rights by the non-accountable regulations and actions of state bureaucracies – thus occurring in a *de facto* but not *de jure* manner (2014: 9). This re-emphasises the importance of Butler's observations (2004) on sovereign modes of governance, operating extra-legally to produce precarious subjectivities. Through the marrying of these theories, the existential (*cf.* Chapter 6) and subjective precariousness of Crina and Trudka, and other European women experiencing domestic violence, emerges as being intertwined with their liminal citizenship. Through combining these arguments together, this analysis parallels Wilson's work, wherein he provides existential narratives of human rights violations, 'to restore local subjectivities... as well as analyzing the wider global social processes in which violence is embedded' (1997: 157). As Rapport (1998) highlights, this approach permits anthropologists to incorporate into analysis

the richness of subjectivities that are often omitted in legalistic accounts, thus providing a valuable contribution to human rights reporting and research. As I have argued thus far, Polish women's liminality was generated through the neoliberal and nationalistic rationalities of 'deservedness', deployed within the welfare structures of Britain. However, it was also engendered by the sovereign power implicit within welfare bureaucracy, which 'deemed' Polish women's legal subjectivity 'betwixt and between' (Turner 1967) - uncertain and diminished (Agamben 1998, 2005, Butler 2004).

Distributions of Precarity

As I have described in this chapter, a key theme underpinning Butler's (2004) analysis is her emphasis on the oppressive dimensions of everyday governmentality, which produces precariousness. Beyond Butler's work, the notion of precariousness – both subjective and existential – has taken purchase in academia in recent years. Most commonly this analysis has been applied in the context of labour markets, to describe the insecurities experienced by workers living in contemporary market economies (e.g. Waite 2009, Barbier 2002, Kalleberg 2009, Neilson and Rossiter 2008, Tsianos and Papadopoulos 2006, Lewis *et al* 2015, Standing 2014, 2016).[92] However, in this final section I argue that there is value in extending the notion of precariousness to the context of domestic violence. As I contended in Chapter 6, the concept of precariousness aptly captures the phenomenological uncertainty and risk implicit in experiences of abuse and help seeking, echoing the oft-used iconography of victims' 'walking on eggshells'. However, as I have argued here, precariousness also proves relevant in the context of domestic violence victims' political and legal subjectivities, when they seek protection from the state in the midst of domestic violence. Particularly here, this argument applies to Polish and other European women, given that their access to protection and support were both deemed and diminished by sovereign, nihilistic bureaucratic processes, in processes that lay primarily beyond women's control.

As I asserted in the previous chapter, conceptualisations of precariousness can be connected to the existential and subjective effects of 'liquid modernity' (1992, 2013), Beck's (1992, 2006) 'risk society' and 'reflexive modernisation'. Advocates of precarity stress that the paradigm similarly encapsulates dimensions of political economy (Waite 2009, Lewis *et al* 2015). Further, several works on precariousness broadly identify precarity to be ubiquitous - a condition all individuals (particularly workers) might experience, if they are situated in the

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[92] Although there are some notable exceptions (for example see Tyner 2016, Dolson 2016, Hamdy 2012, Stewart 2012, Al-Mohammad 2012, Muehlebach, 2012, Gibney 2009, Sigona 2012).

same political economic context (Butler 2004, Ettlinger 2007, Waite 2009, Tyner 2015). Yet, despite this ubiquitousness, theorists attending to precarity emphasise that precarious subjectivities do not constitute unified collectivities. Instead, analysis is foregrounded by the perspective that precarity is lived and experienced varyingly, by individuals in different institutional, social and political economic contexts (Waite 2009, Waite *et al* 2015, Tsianos and Papadopoulos 2006, Tyner 2015). Lewis *et al* (2015) for example, demonstrate that factors such as gender, class, race, age and other categories of social difference mediate the influence of neoliberal policies in engendering precariousness. Consequently, paralleling Standing's (2014) arguments about citizenship, Lewis *et al* (2015) suggest that precarity should be conceptualised as a continuum (also O'Neill 2011, Standing 2016). The authors (2015) describe migrants as experiencing 'hyper-precarity', which they argue emerges from interplays between neoliberal labour markets and restrictive immigration regimes (also Skrivankova 2010, and Waite *et al* 2014 in the context of asylum seekers). Examining the issue of exploitative and forced migrant labour, Lewis *et al* reason that hyper-precarity is:

> *…[T]he best way to conceptualize multidimensional constraints resulting from compromised labour market position, socio-legal status, transnational social reproduction and gender relations that combine to structure migrants' entry into and continuation in forced labour situations (2015: 582).*

Lewis *et al*'s (2015) considerations tie in to my analysis in this final section, where I attempt to weave together the arguments I have made in both the preceding and current chapter, by returning once more to the issue of intersectionality. The authors' notion of precarity as a continuum echoes Butler's work, where she emphasises that precarity is both distributed and imposed unevenly, across populations: 'there are ways of distributing vulnerability, differential forms of allocation, which make some populations more subject to arbitrary violence than others' (2004: xii). As vulnerability and value are ascribed differentially, Butler encourages reflection on the processes involved in the distribution of precariousness - through gendered and ethnic frames (*ibid:* 93). I attend to this issue explicitly in this final section. Here I contend that political rationalities embedded within welfare governance converged with Polish women's gender and migrant status, to render Polish women especially precarious - with increased vulnerability to marginalisation and abuse. Thus, I argue Polish women experienced heightened precarity because they were Polish, and because they were women.

As Adelman asserts, states are not experienced homogenously; governance (including authoritarian governance) is experienced differently, depending on an individual's social positioning and the context of their encounter with the state (2017: 17). This serves to

remind us that European women's experiences and subjectivities are neither homogenous, nor solely determined by the mechanisms of the state. However, Adelman's observation additionally reflects how different aspects of an individual's identity, be they social or legislative, can intersect with existing political and economic structures. This coincides with the works of authors such as Walby (1994) and Chari (2009), who have emphasised the importance of intersectionality, particularly in relation to gender, class and ethnicity, in shaping constructions and experiences of citizenship. Walby (1994) for example, argues that women have a different relationship to citizenship than men; they do not have the same access to citizenship rights, because of their different life experiences and structural positions as women in society. In constructing her argument, Walby references the gender-specific assumptions within the public sphere, and the nexus of the market and the state, which she argues renders citizenship a partial and gendered project (1994: 379). This analysis is bolstered by several other feminist authors who have also considered the gendered nature of citizenship, considering how gender shapes access to social, political and economic rights, as well as to infrastructure, housing and livelihood (Lister 1990, 1992, Nelson 1984, Pateman 1988, Okin 1989, Chari 2009, Orloff 1993).

As many feminist theorists have written, citizenship has historically been bound to participation in the public, rather than private, sphere (e.g. Eisensten 1981, Okin, 1989, Pateman 1988). However, women both were and are more likely to perform the informal labour that takes place within the private realm, for example caring for children or family members (Abel and Nelson 1990, Finch and Groves 1983, Collins 2003, Wyness 2013, Bennett *et al* 2017). As Lister (1990) and Nelson (1984) note, this places women at a disadvantage in terms of political and social citizenship. As I have outlined in this research, access to welfare support – a key aspect of citizenship rights – was underpinned by neoliberal, economic rationalities, and was primarily conditional upon the basis of waged work and financial contribution to the British state. Therefore, those who did not fit this set financialised criteria failed to receive equal provisions. Consequently, because of women's relatively higher private-sphere labour participation, this welfare structuring disproportionately affected women.[93] This observation is echoed in other research, which emphasises that the ever-increasing restrictions and conditionality placed upon benefit receipt has unduly and asymmetrically affected the lives of women in the UK (e.g. Women's Budget Group 2010, Kingfisher 2013, Edmiston *et al* 2017). This work once more draws upon the 'feminization of poverty' thesis (Kingfisher 2013, Abercrombie and Hastings 2016

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[93] Moreover, structural inequalities and the increased likelihood of women engaging in informal work means that women are also more likely to occupy part-time, insecure and low paid jobs, further decreasing their financial contributions to the state and thus their equitable access to welfare (Walby 1994).

cf. Chapter 6) and echoes Orloff's argument: that the structuring of the British welfare system is 'distinctly male oriented' (1993: 328, also Sainsbury 1994). Accordingly, Kingfisher (2012) argues this bureaucratic orientation, and the asymmetric effects of restrictive welfare policies, coerce women who are unable to access economic securities from the state into private forms of dependency, such as intimate relationships (also Lister 1990, Nelson 1984). As I identified in the previous chapter, authors have argued that the differential power distributions implicit in relationships marked by financial dependency increase individuals' vulnerability to further marginalisation and abuse (Hays 2003, Cherlin *et al* 2004, Purvin 2003, 2007, Scott *et al* 2002).

Returning to the specific context of this research: women are predominantly much more likely to experience domestic violence than men (Walby and Allen 2004, Hester 2009), and the subsequent economic disparities, employment and income disruption that may ensue (Walby 2009). During fieldwork, while there were welfare policies in place to ameliorate the gendered inequalities that manifest in and through domestic violence, as I have argued, these often failed to protect Polish and other European migrant women. This was because of the nationalistic ideologies embedded within British welfare mechanisms, which restricted European welfare access, because of the perceived moral illegitimacy of their receiving financial support. Furthermore, as I described above, the male-oriented, neoliberal system of welfare - where welfare receipt was rendered conditional by migrants' public labour participation – was also complicit in forging Polish women's limited access. This was despite migrants necessarily encountering greater market inequalities, relative to indigenous inhabitants, when attempting to achieve gainful employment (Gibney 2009). As Erez *et al* (2009) emphasise, women migrating from relatively poorer economies, such as Polish women and others from the Accession states, are even more likely to have fewer personal resources. Thus, Polish migrant women experiencing domestic violence were less likely to be able to respond to abuse independently and, subsequently, were more likely to require welfare support (Dasgupta and Eng 2003, Josephson 2002, Crenshaw 1991, *cf.* Chapter 6).

Therefore, systemic, gendered inequalities – manifest through women's differential experiences of domestic violence and citizenship, particularly in the context of the British male-oriented, neoliberal welfare system – intersected with Polish women's situational and legislative positionings, to heighten the precariousness they encountered. This emphasises that gender inequality can be modified as it intersects with other inequalities (Sokoloff and Dupont 2005) within welfare mechanisms, to produce 'new landscapes of inequality' (Theodoropoulou and Watt 2011, Clarke and Newman 2012). This analysis adds important dimensions to our understandings of the precariousness depicted in Crina and Trudka's

stories. While individual agency, and the 'divinity of chance' (Lavie 2014) proved important for understanding their welfare encounters,[94] here I have also identified the relevance of the patterning of the British political economy. This patterning was complicit in forging Crina and Trudka's precariousness, which permeated in their stark situations – where they faced homelessness and destitution, and were unable to exact their human rights. Therefore, we can see that systemically, but not systematically, Polish migrant women 'lost out' (Adelman 2017) when they experienced domestic violence and sought protection from the British state. This was because of various ways in which aspects of British statecraft converged to compound Polish women's situation *within the borderlands*.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the interrelationship between configurations of British statecraft and the political economic regulation of Polish and other European women experiencing domestic violence. I have reflected upon neoliberal and nationalistic rationalities embedded within British welfare policies, deployed amidst heightened concerns over British sovereignty, its economic security, and membership of the EU. Advancing previous work in the field (e.g. O'Brien 2015, Dudley 2014), I argued these political rationalities converged to reconstruct the citizenship rights afforded to European migrant women. I identified this reconstruction to be a result of European women's legislative identity, and the moral and economic value this was afforded, within welfare policies.

Connecting my analysis to the previous chapter, I contended that Polish and other EU women subject to abuse were systemically afforded fewer protections than British nationals, through bureaucratic mechanisms of welfare. As we saw with Crina and Trudka, these dimensions of the British political economy had stark implications, increasing some women's vulnerability to further marginalisation and abuse. I suggested these welfare practices equated to the British state's 'ambivalent governance' of domestic violence (Adelman 2017). Moreover, I emphasised the nihilistic, sovereign dimensions of this governance - the state's knowing disregard of established international law, in the name of economic and national interests, and state building.

Consequently, I conceived of Polish women as precarious, liminal citizens, who were legally entitled to protection and support when experiencing domestic violence, but often unable to exercise these rights in practice. As Adelman (2017) found in her analysis of migrant women in Israel, Polish migrant women contended with domestic violence uniquely, because of their

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[94] *Cf.* Chapter 6, p181.

liminal citizenship, and the uncertain and diminished protections this afforded. From this, we can see how they 'very construction of the nation and the state is implicated in vulnerability and victimization, and even the emergence of new categories of victims' (Adelman 2017: 231). Here, the practices of the British state are implicated in forging the liminal and precarious subjectivities of Polish and other European women experiencing abuse. This analysis has emphasised how British welfare policies created 'new landscapes of inequality' (Theodoropoulou and Watt 2012). As I have argued, these inequalities were mapped onto already existent disparities: the political and economic marginalisation of migrants, of women, and of migrant women in particular. Therefore, this chapter has highlighted the interrelation between state practices, and existential, situational and coercively-constituted dimensions of precarity. Through this analysis, I have identified the heightened precarity with which Polish and other European women had to uniquely contend, as they experienced and sought help for domestic violence *in the British borderlands*.

8. Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined Polish women's experiences of domestic violence and associated service engagement in Edinburgh. In this context, my analysis has focused on the salience of political economy (Adelman 2004, 2017). In particular, I have attended to political economic practices of British statecraft, and their interrelation to Polish women's migrant identities and experiences. As I asserted in the introduction, I have combined this political economic focus with my attention to women's migrant intersectionalities, by foregrounding this thesis within the paradigm of *borderlands* (Anzaldúa 1987). In adopting this perspective, I have demonstrated ways in which markers of difference, engendered by nation states, can shape migrant women's experiences of abuse and help seeking. Indeed, the central argument of this thesis is that Polish women's specific migrant status intersected in varying and complex ways with expressions of abuse, and service provider interactions and practices. Throughout this analysis, I have attended ethnographically to participants' lived experiences of these intersections, and have reflected upon their practical, existential and subjective implications. Predominantly, this work has served to create a critical discourse - elucidating how political economic factors can engender greater marginalisation and risk of domestic violence for Polish women.

In this conclusion, I weave together the arguments that I have made in the body of the text to underline the original contributions made to both the study of domestic violence and to the discipline of anthropology. In doing so, this chapter demonstrates that this thesis has responded to the research questions posed in the Introduction, and highlights the applied and theoretical significance of this work. I reflect first upon this project's anthropological methodology, and its interrelationship with the knowledge this research has produced. I then assert some of the ways in which my analysis has provided a response to aspects of the 'problem statement,' which first instigated this research, and highlight the applied policy implications of this work. Following on from this, I emphasise the importance of liminality and precarity in enriching understanding of the experiences of the Polish women in this thesis, and their situation within the *British borderlands*. I close this chapter by identifying further

ways to develop this text, and by underlining how my analysis has also contributed to anthropological discourses, which move beyond the issue of domestic violence. As I will argue, this work has also provided unique perspectives on subjects such as borders, ethnicity, neoliberalism and subjectivity, in the context of British statecraft.

Anthropological Perspectives in Domestic Violence Research

As I revealed in Chapter 2, there has been much debate about how domestic violence might be researched and represented, without recourse to essentialist discourses that can homogenise the phenomenon, and obscure the significance of context and lived experience. This has been an issue particularly in the context of ethnic minority and migrant women, who, research suggests, encounter differential complexities and obstacles when they experience and seek help for abuse (Erez *et al* 2009, Raj and Silverman 2002, Menjívar and Salcido 2002). Consequently, intersectionality has proved a popular paradigm in such domestic violence research. The strength of intersectionality, I have argued, lies in the perspective's ability to attend to the complexity of distinctive lives and selves, while still situating multi-dimensional processes that pattern collective inequalities within individual domestic violence realities (Crenshaw 1991, Mann and Grimes 2001, Sokoloff and Dupont 2005, McCall 2005).

Drawing Chapter 2 to a close, I argued that anthropology can and does offer a great deal to domestic violence research. Therein I identified many approaches in anthropology that might inform understandings of domestic violence, and highlighted the discipline's grounding in the inherently intersectional epistemology of lived experience. In Chapter 3, I proceeded to demonstrate the benefits of an anthropological perspective in domestic violence research, as I reflected on the methodology I adopted in my research: an applied, feminist, multi-sited ethnography, examining women's experiences of domestic violence and service provider interactions across various locations in Edinburgh. I argued that the depth and breadth of the research methods I used permitted me to identify and trace constellations of significance for different individuals across time and space - producing data that moved beyond orthodox responses and representations. However, I contended that adopting this methodology did not come without its challenges; focussing on the issue of participant safety, I highlighted some of the ways in which ethical and practical methodological complexities are heightened in applied ethnographic domestic violence research. These complexities, I argued,

shaped my fieldwork practices, my writing, and ultimately the knowledge this thesis has produced.

Nevertheless, while my focus on political economic regulation in this thesis attends to certain patternings of experience, by grounding my analysis in ethnography - in women's stories and voices - the salience and idiosyncrasy of lived experience has been centralised in this work. Therefore, this ethnographic approach has permitted an intersectional understanding of how political economic processes configure and coalesce within individual lives, without relying on them solely to contextualise subjectivity (Marcus 1995:96, Falzon 2016: 2). Certainly, as I will discuss below, my analysis has moved away from determinist depictions, by emphasising agency, and the ways in which political economic processes have vacillating (Chapter 4), nihilistic, and protean (both Chapter 6) effects.

Identifying the Contributions of this Text

As Strathern writes, the value of anthropological, ethnographic research lies in its ability to present perspectives from which the world can be apprehended anew (1990: 91). As I will demonstrate in the rest of this conclusion, this doctoral research provides original contributions and perspectives, which inform understandings of both domestic violence and anthropology. Firstly, my primary focus on political economic processes foregrounds the ways in which political concerns not typically associated with domestic violence can intersect with women's experiences of abuse (Adelman 2004, 2017). This paradigm brings new perspectives to UK domestic violence research, and moves beyond oft-used individual-scale explanations, where dysfunction is allocated to individuals or particular social groups. Moreover, this analysis comprises the first research, to the best of my knowledge, to focus squarely on Polish women's experiences of domestic violence and service engagement in the UK. Given the new and significant demographic of Polish migrants currently living in Britain, this thesis therefore directly addresses a concerning lacuna in the present domestic violence literature.

However, as I described in the introduction, this thesis encompasses an applied anthropological study, which stemmed from service provider perspectives that were gleaned from consultations conducted before fieldwork commenced. As I explained in my delineation of the 'problem statement' (p6), service providers had expressed concern that they were encountering an unprecedented volume of domestic violence cases involving Polish families, which were possibly disproportionate in both

prevalence and severity. Additionally, some professionals were concerned that their service interventions were failing to adequately manage and reduce Polish women's risk of abuse. This, it was suggested, might have been connected to Polish clients' reluctance to engage with services, or their facing additional service complexities, engendered by their migrant status. In the following section I reflect upon the ways in which this thesis has elucidated significant threads through analysis, which could be used to inform aspects of the problem statement that first motivated this research.

Responding to the Problem Statement

As I highlighted in Chapter 5, because of the methods through which domestic violence data was collected and represented in the UK, it proved impossible in this research to identify whether there was a disproportionate prevalence of domestic violence, 'high-risk' or otherwise, occurring within Polish families. This was because data pertaining to Polish women was homogenised within racialised, pan-ethnic statistical categories, which obscured the extent and nature of the domestic violence occurring. Similarly, as I described in Chapter 2, practical and ethical methodological complexities prevented the inclusion of individuals within this study who had not engaged with local domestic violence organisations. Consequently, this research has been unable to explore the experiences of Polish women who did not seek formalised help, to garner an understanding of their perspectives on contacting services.

However, in the body of my four ethnographic chapters (4,5,6 and 7), analysis revealed several significant, constellational issues that are relevant to the problem statement. Certainly, these chapters demonstrated that there are many ways in which Polish women's migrant status can intersect with their experiences of domestic violence and service interactions. Paralleling other migrant domestic violence research, in Chapter 4 I identified that situational factors related to women's migrant status shaped the abuse that Polish women experienced and impeded their attempts to seek help. Salient factors included language difference, women having few local support networks, or their being unfamiliar with domestic violence services. I argued that the significance of these factors stemmed from Polish women's previous situation, *extraneous* to the UK border.

Yet, this thesis has also identified that more diffuse political economic factors can both affect and be implicated in Polish women's experiences. Analysis drew attention to the salience of UK border performances (particularly Chapter 4), ethnic

categorisation (Chapter 5), and welfare governance (Chapters 6 and 7). I argued that political economic practices of British statecraft relating to these phenomena were key to engendering Polish women's migrant status, and intersected with abuse and service provider practices to forge specific domestic violence realities.

In Chapter 4, I presented ways in which the effects of the UK border reached far beyond its territorial demarcation, and permeated women's experiences of domestic violence and their engagement with services. I showed that the perceived porosity of the border posited Polish migrants as 'itinerant', 'repatriatable' residents, which expedited the narrative that Polish women experiencing abuse could simply 'go home.' I suggested that in some instances this perception negated statutory service provision. This was an issue that also proved relevant for Crina and Trudka, in Chapter 6. Moreover, I described how the physical permeability of the border facilitated perpetrators in their execution of transnational domestic violence, and obstructed both service providers' and Polish women's efforts to anticipate and respond to abuse. Conversely, I emphasised the legislative rigidity of the border, drawing attention to jurisdictional boundaries that complicated service provision, and provided means through which abusive ex-partners could entrap women in the UK, by prohibiting the transnational mobility of their children.

Collectively these ethnographic examples reveal that the UK border, in its conceptual, physical and legislative dimensions, can create additional uncertainty and marginalisation, and increase Polish women's risk of further abuse. Analysis emphasised the variability and ambiguity of border encounters, and their differentiating yet uncertain implications. This reinforces the importance of anthropological works that depict borders as complex, overlapping, disjunctive orders, which vacillate in both significance and effect (Appadurai 1990: 5, Balibar 1998: 216). Given the border intersectionalities that permeated women's experiences in Chapter 4, I suggested that Polish women 'carried the border' with them - as they carved out their social worlds in Edinburgh, and as they experienced domestic violence. This imagery besets this thesis' *borderlands* paradigm, which framed my analysis throughout the rest of the text.

In Chapter 5 the salience of borderlands continued, as I examined how state practices - particularly those that engender unnatural ethnic boundaries - were implicated in forging Polish women's help-seeking options in Edinburgh. Coinciding with Verdery's (1994) analysis, I highlighted that ethnic constructions deployed by the

British state emerged as boundaries, serving to differentiate yet simultaneously homogenise populations. This homogenisation proved an issue within but also across ethnic groups, principally through the state's use of racialised, pan-ethnic categories (Aspinall 2002). I argued that Polish women's identities were flattened into the 'white' pan-ethnic classification, which rendered their ethnic minority status ambiguous and concealed the heterogeneity of their migrant positions. Therefore, I suggested that Polish women's differential relationship to the border – that is, the additional complexities they encountered, engendered by their migrant status (Chapter 4) – was obscured by their extrinsic, equivocal categorisation within British ethnic minority nomenclature.

In the context of domestic violence, as mentioned above, I argued that the statistical extent and nature of the abuse experienced by Polish women was obfuscated by their pan-ethnic situation. I suggested this impeded the identification of any particular service needs Polish women might have. Fundamentally, my analysis traced how ethnic constructions inhibited the funding and execution of targeted service provision for Polish women, both nationally and locally. These constructions, I argued, raised questions of 'injustices of recognition,' (Fraser 1996) and are interconnected to the sometimes 'overlooked' or 'invisible minority' status of Polish migrant women.

However, I also highlighted the influence of the problematic funding relationship between the state and domestic violence organisations within this ethnography (Ishkanian 2014). More specifically, I argued that a coercive, neoliberal climate drove scarcity, competitive marketisation and liquidity, which constrained service provider practices in Edinburgh. Therefore, paralleling seminal works on ethnicity in anthropology (Barth 1969, Cohen 1965), I suggested that service providers' economic insecurities intertwined with the significance of ethnic identity to forge Polish women's inequitable access to domestic violence service provision. Ultimately, my arguments in this chapter implicated the practices of the state, inclusive of its ethnic governance, in forging women's help-seeking options.

In Chapters 6 and 7 my analysis of legislative categorisation extended, as I examined how Polish women's experiences of abuse and service engagement were mediated through the site of welfare provision. In Chapter 6, I described the shifting, restrictive and opaque welfare regulation to which Polish women were subject as a result of their European legislative identities. I evidenced how these policies complicated and at times obstructed European women's access to refuge and basic

means of subsistence – provisions that prove essential for many low-income women who wish to exit abusive relationships. Particularly through documenting the stories of Crina and Trudka, I traced the implications of British welfare policies for European women seeking protection from abuse. I argued that Crina and Trudka's ambiguous and differential welfare entitlement constrained their individual experiences of domestic violence service engagement, and left both women facing homelessness and without access to any economic support.

While I used Crina and Trudka's accounts to depict the lived experience of arduous welfare encounters, I emphasised that these vignettes comprised but two examples that I encountered during fieldwork, wherein European women struggled to access welfare provisions as they sought to respond to abuse. Consequently, I argued that British welfare policies increased European women's collective reliance on domestic violence organisations, and placed them in heightened positions of uncertainty and risk. This, I contended, complicated European women's domestic violence service provision, and further jeopardised their physical safety, livelihoods and wellbeing. Given the inequity and the harm these policies engendered, I asserted that British welfare practices comprised a form of structural violence (Farmer 1996, 2004, 2005) with which European women - as a result of their legislative identities – had to contend uniquely.

In Chapter 7, I proceeded to reflect upon the macro-level production of Polish and other European women's structural inequality and increased vulnerability to domestic violence, by examining the political rationalities embedded in UK welfare economics. I highlighted that European nationals at the time of fieldwork technically had recourse to access British welfare support, and were endowed with a multitude of rights that obliged the British state to ensure their protection from domestic violence. However, I argued that the welfare techniques deployed by government were imbued with nationalistic ideologies, which were hostile to European migrants. I framed this as a form of 'everyday bordering' practice (Yuval-Davis 2013), which reinforced once more the significance of *borderlands*. Indeed, I examined how nationalist rationalities combined with neoliberal ideologies, to forge European women's differential, financialised 'deservingness' of protection from abuse. I contended that these rationalities and practices meant European migrants were systemically and extra-legally afforded fewer protections from domestic violence than British nationals, through bureaucratic mechanisms of welfare. I closed my arguments in this chapter by emphasising that these welfare policies intersected with gender and specific

migrant intersectionalities, particularly to the detriment of Polish and other Central Eastern European women experiencing domestic violence.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Collectively, the ethnography in this thesis has elucidated some of the difficulties and corresponding service complexities that Polish women can encounter when they experience and respond to domestic violence. The arguments that I have made point to a patterning of experience that centres on Polish women's situational and systemic marginalisation, engendered by their migrant identities and interconnected political economic practices of British statecraft. Ultimately, this thesis argues that political economic factors shaped Polish women's experiences of abuse and service engagement, and varyingly increased their risk of further marginalisation and abuse. This analysis informs dimensions of the problem statement that first instigated this thesis. Moreover, it supports the reported service provider perspectives: that Polish women faced additional service complexities because of their migrant status, which impeded the management and reduction of their risk of abuse. Although this thesis has focussed predominantly on Polish women's experiences, at various points my analysis has centred on Polish women's *European* status. Therefore, I have suggested that other European women could also experience the constellations of issues highlighted, and consequently have similar service needs. This extends both the theoretical and applied significance of this work. Certainly, this proved true for Julija and Crina, women from Lithuania and Romania respectively, whose stories also featured in this text.

Thus, while the issues that I have highlighted in these chapters may not be unique to or uniform among Polish women, my analysis does indicate that Polish women may require additional supports or resources, in order for their particular service needs to be met (Thiara 2011, Sidhva 2007). Namely, this research has highlighted the need for women to be made aware of the domestic violence services available to them, and the importance of women being able to access comprehensive services in their own language. Additionally, coinciding with Julija's Domestic Homicide Review (Goose 2013), my arguments have emphasised the necessity of service provision that identifies and responds to transnational dimensions of domestic violence, and the prevailing risk posed to women whose partners have left the UK (Chapter 4). The stark insecurities and uncertainties that women faced in Chapter 6 also press the fundamental imperative of women being able to sustainably access refuge and means of subsistence, when exiting abusive relationships. Analysis in this chapter

also revealed the need for clear, concise and accessible welfare policy information, and for the further standardisation of welfare processes to reduce inconsistent outcomes. Fundamentally, this research stresses the importance of funding and instituting services that recognise and accommodate women's specific migrant intersectionalities, and the differential marginalisation and risks they can engender (Chapter 4, 5, 6 and 7).

Arbitrariness, Liminality and Precarity

Nevertheless, in my analysis I have consistently emphasised that, for individual women, the marginalising effects of political economic practices were not uniform, linear or determined. In Chapter 4, I emphasised the importance of happenstance and capital in shaping women's encounters with borders, highlighting that while borders can prove troubling sites of vulnerability (Adelman 2017), they can also harbour protective and salutogenic dimensions. This similarly echoes my analysis in Chapter 6, where I noted the protean nature of welfare policies, which create security for some but stark insecurities for others (Purvin 2014). This observation further relates to my analysis in Chapter 5, as I highlighted the potential of ethnic categorisation for informing targeted policy responses, but simultaneously, the detrimental effects of categorical obfuscation. All of these observations can be connected to Gupta's (2012) thesis of arbitrariness, wherein he highlights the inconsistent and ambivalent effects of bureaucratic processes. In this thesis I have extended his argument, and presented the arbitrariness of Polish women's wider encounters with the state. However, this text has also elucidated that the processes implicit in forging Polish women's inconsistent encounters were by no means arbitrary. Indeed, throughout this thesis, the salience of liminality and precarity has proved a central theme that permeated my analysis.

Throughout the ethnographic chapters, I have emphasised that women's 'insider-outsider' status as white, Polish-European migrant citizens (but not quite British citizens) proved crucial in mediating their experiences. I articulated this through the paradigm of liminality, which elucidated analysis of Polish women's 'in-between' positionings, across situational, conceptual and categorical fields. In Chapter 4, I suggested that Polish women were situated 'betwixt and between' (Turner 1967) the vacillations of the UK border, amidst its myriad significance, performances and effects (Balibar 1998). Moreover, in Chapters 5 through 7, I argued that Polish women fell between and outwith established categories of belonging, across contexts of ethnicity, welfare and citizenship. I observed that consequently, Polish women

could emerge as 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1966), as they engaged with services and sought support for domestic violence.

As I highlighted in Chapter 4, liminality is a well-established paradigm in anthropology. However, my analysis in this thesis contrasts the neutral lens through which this concept has historically been viewed. Echoing the works of other scholars (e.g. Menjívar 2006, Hautzinger and Scandlyn 2014: 74) my arguments attended to the disempowering, unstable and potentially dangerous effects of liminality. Throughout this thesis I implicated Polish women's liminal political economic positioning to the constraining liminality they encountered in their attempts to seek help and evade abuse. I built on this analysis in Chapter 6 by explicitly invoking the notion of precariousness. As I explained, precariousness is a term that can be used to describe an individual's existential contingence upon circumstances largely beyond their control – a term that aptly encapsulates the influence of political economy, and which is imbued with connotations of danger, insecurity and risk. My analysis attended to how women's liminal migrant status intersected with domestic violence, to inflect their lifeworlds with differential insecurity and uncertainty (Butler 2004, Waite 2009). For example, through the stories of Crina and Trudka, I characterised their arduous, liminal welfare encounters as engendering a form of existential precariousness, where their safety and futures were rendered ambiguous and at risk.

As I foregrounded my focus on liminality in Chapter 4, I argued that analysis must be situated within the webs of unequal power relations (Malkki 1992: 34) that are implicated in forging both the manifestations and consequences of political economic liminality. This perspective proved most significant in Chapter 7, as I explored the character of protections and provisions afforded to Polish victims of domestic violence, which elucidated Polish women's wider political subjectivities and their relationship to the state. Therein I highlighted the categories of 'worth' implicit in welfare entitlement, imbued with nationalist and neoliberal sentiments. I argued that Polish women's ambiguous situation within this schema posited them as 'mischief' (O'Brien 2015), to be tackled through the restriction of their welfare entitlement. This analysis reinforces the moral significance implicit in liminality and delineations of 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1966). I proceeded to analyse how these moral, political economic rationalities converged within Polish women's political membership to the British state. I noted particularly that Polish women's 'right to have rights' (Arendt 1951) protecting them from domestic violence were eroded through coercive,

sovereignly-instituted welfare governance (Butler 2004). Consequently, I conceived of Polish women as being liminal citizens with precarious legal subjectivities, who were legally entitled to protection and support when experiencing domestic violence, but often unable to exercise these rights in practice. Echoing Adelman's (2017) analysis of migrant women in Israel, I argued Polish migrant women thus contended with domestic violence uniquely - because of their liminal citizenship, and the uncertain and diminished protections this afforded.

Indeed, I implicated Polish women's precarious, liminal citizenship in the existential precariousness that I depicted in Chapter 6. In doing so, my arguments re-socialised the significance of the structural violence to which Polish women were subject, and emphasised its nihilistic dimensions (Rapport 2000). That is, the structural violence women experienced was nihilistic because of its capriciousness, but also because of its extra-legality - exerted outwith the scope of law and the 'traditional' scope of citizenship. I contended that this analysis was indicative of the British state's ambivalent governance of domestic violence (Adelman 2017) – where domestic violence is criminalised its service provision is funded, but where Polish women are knowingly and extra-legally offered inequitable protection from domestic violence, in the name of state building.

Developing this Research

Given the multidimensionality of domestic violence and associated service engagement, alongside the breadth of theoretical perspectives employed in this thesis, there remains much scope to develop the work presented in this text. In many respects, the research topic and the methodology that underpins this work could have produced several different theses. For example, I could have focused more, discretely or comparatively, on notions of culture, difference and belonging; on understandings and expressions of domestic violence; or on the significance of kinship and gender. However, as I asserted above, my analysis has concentrated on political economic aspects because they proved prominent during data collection and to date remain underexplored – situated in the margins of existent domestic violence research. Nevertheless, within my considerations of Polish women's encounters *in the British borderlands*, there are further ways in which my arguments could be enriched and expanded upon. For instance, while I have maintained an applied focus in this text – consistently centering my analysis on the 'problem statement' and women's experiences of domestic violence and service engagement - this research

could engage more broadly with notions of Polish 'marginality', 'Britain' 'Europe' and the 'EU'.

As Ballinger highlights, debates about migration and the status of national identities require a discussion of historical antecedents (2007:739) – in this context, of the continuities and transformations in relations between EU, European, and nation state citizenships. The diversity of states and positionalities within contemporary Europe emphasises the 'profoundly uneven histories' interwoven into the fabric of both the territorial continent, and the organisation of the EU (De Genova 2016: 90, also e.g. Applegate 1999, Bhambra 2009, Green 2013). Therefore, I could have explored further the relationships between Poland, Britain and the EU, and considered the role of Cold War legacies in rendering Polish nationals a (sometimes 'unwelcome') 'reserve of migrant labour' (De Geonva 2016: 90, Feldman 2009, Spigelman 2016). Coinciding with De Genova's (2016) findings, I anticipate such an engagement would highlight the ways in which the notion of 'Europeanness' serves to obfuscate profound differences and inequalities, within and between states (see also Modood and Werbner 1997, Hansen 2000, Paasi 2001, Mbembe 2011, Green 2013).

My analysis could additionally extend to entail a more explicit interrogation of the EU, to reveal its fragile and volatile dimensions (De Genova and Tazzioli 2016). Echoing De Genova's reflections on the 'European question,' throughout this text I have repeatedly invoked the notion of the EU as a coherent, singular entity, but then proceeded to 'persistently destabilise that same figure' (2016: 89, also Anidjar 2012, Green 2013). Consequently, while my analysis has served to problematise the notion of EU citizenship in implicit and refracted ways, there is further scope to connect the adversity faced by the women in this ethnography to the 'displacing and de-centering of Europe on the level of everyday life' (Mezzadra 2010, also Chakrabarty 2009, De Genova 2010, Klatt 2016). Such a consideration could serve to highlight the ambiguous and uncertain signification of the EU - revealing it to be a 'deeply contradictory and fundamentally incoherent' project (De Genova 2016: 77). This analysis would add further dimensions to the liminality and precarity considered in this thesis, and perhaps extend the relevance of the overarching paradigm invoked in this text - exposing Europe to be 'one big borderland' (Balibar 2009 *cf.* De Genova 2016: 77).

Essentially, as Balibar argues, analysis of migrant identities, inequalities and experiences within Europe must also consider what ''Europe' means and what it will

signify tomorrow' (1991: 7 *cf.* De Genova 2016: 76). This assertion proves particularly relevant in light of the 'Brexit' referendum, which transpired after my doctoral fieldwork ended. Accordingly, in the addendum to this thesis I reflect on the relevance of this text in relation to recent political economic developments, and consider the how this work may be used to inform future research of gender-based violence. However, I first draw this conclusion to a close by tying together the core themes and arguments I have discussed in this chapter, to reflect on the overarching significance of this thesis.

Domestic Violence in the British Borderlands: Concluding Remarks

Collectively, my analysis highlights the ways in which Polish women were situated 'betwixt and between' markers of difference, engendered by nation states. This pointed to the inherent liminality of Polish women's lives within the *British borderlands*, and the constraining, perilous precariousness this can foster in the context of domestic violence. Therefore, this text has elucidated understanding of Polish women's experiences of abuse and service engagement, but it has also produced knowledge of the British borderlands in which Polish women were emplaced. This work has also contributed, then, towards the study of both the borderlands and the anthropology of Britain. Additionally, beyond highlighting the salience of liminality, migrant intersectionality and precarity in the political economic governance of domestic violence, this thesis has also contributed to scholarship that attends to political and legal anthropology. This has occurred through my analysis that has highlighted the continuing significance of existent anthropological works in this present ethnographic setting. However, my arguments have also subverted core discourses in anthropological literature. Particularly, my analysis has problematised works which attend to the openness and securitisation of European borders for European nationals; the nature of ethnicity as juxtaposed to race; and the primary salience of 'governing through freedom' in the context of neoliberalism.

Throughout this work, the paradigm of intersectionality has proved key. It has permitted analysis of how Polish women's shared migrant identities intersected with wider political economic practices and systems of power, within individual domestic violence realities. Furthermore, through presenting the voices and stories of both service providers and Polish women, this thesis has examined Polish women's lived experiences of abuse and service engagement in Edinburgh. Together, this analysis has highlighted salient political economic dimensions that have not previously been explored in UK domestic violence research, and examined their intersections with

Polish women's liminal migrant identities and experiences of abuse. I have emphasised the myriad ways in which the border, ethnic categorisation and wider practices of governance increased the precariousness that Polish women faced, and impeded their service interactions. Therefore, I have implicated political economic practices of statecraft in engendering the situational and systemic marginalisation of Polish women, which varyingly increased their risk of further domestic violence.

In providing this contextualisation of the problem statement that first instigated this research, this thesis has demonstrated the value of anthropology – epistemologically and methodologically - for informing understandings of domestic violence and service provision in the UK. Moreover, this thesis has demonstrated the latency of domestic violence research for contributing to applied and theoretical perspectives in anthropology. The two-way potential of this text suggests that research attending to domestic violence and its service provision can be significant for informing our wider understanding of governance, agency, identity and power (also Snajdr 2007, Lazarus-Black 2001). I close this thesis by suggesting that the study of domestic violence within the paradigm of *borderlands* paves the way for exploring further how political economic governance and intersectionalities mediate relationships and experiences. That is, this perspective permits exploration of how political economic practices shape relationships between individuals and states, but also in intimate contexts - between individuals' relationships with each other.

Addendum: 'Brexit' and Beyond

As asserted in the body of this text, fieldwork for this doctoral research ended in 2015. Since this time there have been significant developments in British politics, which continued to unfold as the writing of this work came to an end. I will briefly discuss these developments in this addendum, and reflect upon their potential implications for European nationals, for domestic violence service provision, and for future directions in anthropological research.

Over the past two years, concerns about in-movement European migration, British sovereignty and its membership of the EU have further heightened in political and public discourse. This culminated in the 'Brexit' referendum, followed by the triggering of Article 50, which instigated Britain's withdrawal from the Union. In some respects, these developments have remained the 'elephant in the room' in the body of this work. However, my analysis has not extended to cover Brexit because, at the time of data collection, the prospect of a EU referendum (let alone Britain leaving the Union) seemed a remote speck on the UK's political horizon. Indeed, during fieldwork interlocutors were more focused on the 2014 Scottish independence referendum, and its implications following the 'remain' result.[95]

Exactly how the UK's withdrawal from the EU will affect the residency and citizenship rights of the approximately 3 million European nationals living in Britain (ONS 2011b, 2015c) remains to be seen. Certainly, this issue is taking centre stage in ongoing Brexit debates and negotiations. For many, there remains concern that Britain leaving the EU will result in the further diminution of the rights afforded to European nationals. This only heightens uncertainty for European individuals and families currently living in the UK. In the context of domestic violence, organisations have expressed apprehension that European victims of abuse will face further restrictions in accessing appropriate services once Britain has left the EU (Women's Aid 2016,

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[95] The Scottish referendum is also absent from my analysis, largely because its significance amongst participants, particularly Scottish service providers, centred on hopes for reforms that could have been generated through a transition towards fully-autonomous Scottish governance. Therefore, predominantly during fieldwork the salience of the referendum lay in its imagined potential, rather than in its direct effect on domestic violence and service provision. However, the Scottish independence referendum does, like the developments I proceed to discuss in the rest of this addendum, further emphasise the liquidity and uncertainty of the British political economic climate in which this thesis is situated.

Women's Aid Northern Ireland 2016). This raises the question of whether Brexit will increase the precariousness of European migrants that I identified in this thesis – generally but also especially in the context of domestic violence.

More broadly, the 'post-Brexit' future for the domestic violence sector is also uncertain, since organisations will no longer be able to seek sources of funding from the EU. Additionally, given the political economic instability engendered by Brexit, organisations expect that statutory funding constraints will continue for domestic violence services (Women's Aid 2016, Price 2016, Acevo 2016). As Women's Aid noted, these anticipated financial limitations are likely 'to have a range of different, and damaging, implications' for domestic violence service provision, especially for smaller organisations like Mandela that provide specialist services to ethnic minority and migrant women (2016: 3). However, Women's Aid emphasise that Brexit also offers opportunity for improvements; policies and funding structures may be re-written in the process of Britain's withdrawal, and limitations and gaps existent in the present service landscape can be addressed.

Optimism may also be found in the promise of further political and policy reforms. Particularly, this year politicians set in motion the UK's ratification of the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention. This convention has been upheld as a landmark international treaty, and institutes legally binding measures that oblige cosignatory states to take robust steps to prevent and tackle domestic violence, and to protect and support victims of abuse. However, it remains unclear how the ratification of the Istanbul Convention will intersect with Brexit and continuing anti-immigration sentiments to affect the lives and rights of migrant victims of domestic violence in the UK.

In the face of such uncertainty, in this addendum I can only conclusively speak of the ways in which some of the issues identified in this thesis have proved ongoing, if not precipitated, since data collection ended. Since 2013, the government has slowly phased in its new system of welfare, 'Universal Credit', which comprises a significant overhaul of the benefits structures that featured in this thesis. However, Universal Credit has received much denigration since its installation - for its lack of transparency, increased bureaucratic complexity, and for its further constriction of provisions available to some applicants (Child Poverty Action Group 2017, Butler and Asthana 2017, the House of Commons 2017). Thus, organisations such as the AIRE Centre argue that Universal Credit is generating further 'insecurity, hardship and

injustice' for those who find themselves most in need of welfare assistance (2013: 3). As with the welfare reforms that featured in Chapters 6 and 7, these new Universal Credit policies affect all welfare recipients, but particularly European nationals experiencing domestic violence. Under the new Universal Credit rules, migrants' eligibility criteria have further hardened and emphasis has moved to only providing welfare support to European nationals who have contributed to the British economy through paid work (the AIRE Centre 2013). Currently, European applicants are unable to apply for any housing support – and thus finance refuge accommodation – until they have lived and worked in the UK for more than two years. These new welfare policies, which are instituted solely on the basis of nationality, therefore have extended the differential criteria to which EU domestic violence victims are subject.

Furthermore, *No Recourse to Public Funds* policies continue to apply to non-European migrant women, excluding many from receiving any form of welfare assistance. As research has shown, these policies coerce stark options – forcing women to choose between remaining in an abusive relationship, or facing destitution and deportation (Dudley 2014, Anitha 2008, 2010, 2011, Southall Black Sisters 2011). Organisations have also highlighted the government's increasing hostility towards migration in general, evidenced by the deployment of policies that broaden the reach of everyday bordering practices, and constrain the actions of private citizens, the third sector and healthcare providers (Smith 2016, Corporate Watch 2017).

These developments only serve to extend the salience of borderlands, in both scope and effect, for all migrants currently living in Britain. In the context of this thesis, these changes have further restricted European women's help-seeking options when they experience abuse, and raise concerns about the deepening, systemic marginalisation of European nationals in Britain. Therefore, it is clear that coercive political economic practices continue to be significant in fostering migrant women's precarious situations, as they experience and seek protection from abuse in the UK.

However, the political economic regulation of victims of gender-based violence is an issue that extends beyond the context of migrant women in Britain. Most recently, the government introduced its unprecedented 'two child' Child Tax Credit policy which limits families to receiving welfare assistance for only two children, regardless of however many children they have. This rule, the Child Poverty Action Group (2017) estimates, will automatically push some 200,000 families into poverty. However,

even more contentiously, a so-called 'rape clause' is built into this new policy, which states that children conceived without the mother's free consent – i.e. who are conceived through rape - may be exempted from this rule. In order to be eligible for this exemption, women must disclose and evidence their rape to statutory officials, name their child to be a product of rape, and must no longer be in a relationship with their abuser. This new welfare policy is but one further example of how the coercive governance of victims of domestic and sexual violence continues, affecting women's livelihoods, and their relationships: with their bodies, their abusers, their children, and the state.

In light of the concrete developments that I have described in the latter part of this addendum, it appears that the ambivalent, coercive governance of domestic violence is continuing in Britain. This indicates the enduring salience of governance in the political, legal and social lives of victims of gender-based violence - from Poland, Europe, Britain, and beyond. However, it is only through researching individuals' lived experiences that the effects of political economic practices can be identified and socialised, through the voices and stories of those they affect. Moreover, it remains important to remember that, like domestic violence, while the marginalising effects of political economic practices are widespread and insidious, they can still be addressed. This heightens the need for future research that investigates how practices of statecraft intersect with victim's experiences, options and subjectivities - to produce further critical discourses and actionable knowledge. Clearly, the politics of gender-based violence remains a pertinent issue that we must continue to research, highlight, and challenge.

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