

POLAND FOR POLES:
NATIONALIST IMAGINARIES AND THE REPRODUCTION OF SEXUAL AND
RACIALIZED OTHERNESS

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the complex relationships between both sexual (LGBTQI and otherwise) and racialized (subjects who are read as neither white nor Catholic) others and nation | empire-building. It theorizes Poland as concept (meaning sociological entity shaped by multiple competing actors with shifting degrees of definitional power) and method (meaning process and reading theory) while also seeing it as a site of experimentation of power relations (where these actors are vying for different projects) in order to trace its multiple social reproductions (as transitional; postcolonial; fascist; eastern other within) which are theorized in co-production with EUropean global order (Jasanoff, 2004). It argues that doing so allows us to understand the (necro)political significance these social reproductions hold for the nation-state (on a global scale) and its O/others. This project brings together and in conversation transnational feminist and queer and postcolonial scholarship and Edward W. Said's (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading, Reiner Keller's (1993) sociology of knowledge approach to discourse (SKAD) with Teun A. van Dijk's (1993) critical discourse analysis (CDA) while engaging in-depth interviewing and participant observation. In doing so, it shows how centering post-socialist Poland moves us to question tensions between national and transnational as well as local and global political and economic forces, and, in this particular space and time (meaning current geopolitical moment as interconnected to my understanding of the site of Poland), LGBTQI | racialized subjectivity and Polish national identity which is framed against these O/others by the (far-)right.

Dedication

For my parents and my love.

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This would not have been possible without the community that held me throughout this process.

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Introduction:

Poland as Concept and Method

Framing Poland, Regulating Otherness, Or, Not Another Case Study

Poland is at the forefront of shifting dynamics of regional and global power – race and sex(uality) are embedded within various scales of power struggles and play a key role in all political debates in the nation-state. This power is embodied and in its transitional state – which is not a given but rather a social reproduction or framing that I plan to engage further throughout the dissertation – Poland is critical to shedding light on relations between state and capital, relations between subjects and state, and lastly, relations between state and region. Its co-production with the region, capital, and its subjects is what this project grapples with and engages systematically in order to trace the emergence of these power dynamics. In bringing together transnational feminist and queer and postcolonial scholarship, my project shows how centering post-socialist Poland moves us to interrogate tensions between national and transnational as well as local and global political and economic forces, and in this particular space and time, LGBTQI as well as racialized subjectivity and Polish national identity which is framed against these O/others by the (far-)right (Kulpa, 2009). My project centers the Polish nation-state in ways that understand “[w]hiteness is inherently unstable, heterogeneous, and impure [just like] ‘eastern Europe’” (Böröcz & Sarkar, 2017, p. 307) and critiques the western inclination to reduce abstract theoretical musings from elsewhere to regional case studies. It also challenges the framing of Poland (and East-Central Europe) as transitional which is a categorization used to reproduce eastern backwardness and western progress narratives propagated within both transitology which is a comparative study of democratization processes and western area studies which is an interdisciplinary approach to studying particular regions (see Chapter Two and Chapter Four).

My dissertation employs post-communist Poland as concept and method while also recognizing it as a site of experimentation to examine its multiple social reproductions (as transitional; postcolonial; fascist; eastern other within) which are theorized in co-production with European global order (Jasanoff, 2004). I draw upon Sheila Jasanoff's (2004) edited book, *States of Knowledge: The Co-Production of Science and Social Order*, to think through co-production which she understands as an idiom by which she means "a way of interpreting and accounting for complex phenomena so as to avoid the strategic deletions and omissions of most other approaches in the social sciences" (p. 3). Jasanoff (2004) states that "we gain explanatory power by thinking of natural and social orders as being produced together" (p. 2). For her, "co-production is shorthand for the proposition that the ways in which we know and represent the world (both nature and society) are inseparable from the ways in which we choose to live in it" (p. 2). She continues, "[k]nowledge and its material embodiments are at once products of social work and constitutive of forms of social life; society cannot function without knowledge any more than knowledge can exist without appropriate social supports" (pp. 2-3). Jasanoff (2004) offers co-production "as a critique of the realist ideology that persistently separates the domains of nature, facts, objectivity, reason and policy from those of culture, values, subjectivity, emotion and politics" (p. 3). Co-production "offers new ways of thinking about power, highlighting the often invisible role of knowledges, expertise, technical practices and material objects in shaping, sustaining, subverting or transforming relations of authority" (Jasanoff, 2004, p. 4). Her thinking on co-production allows me to articulate the complex relation between Poland (particularly in its transitional production and white imaginary) and European global order which depends upon internal and external others (Balogun, 2018; Böröcz, 2006; Hall, 1992). In her article, "Neoliberal Geopolitical Order and Value: Queerness as a Speculative Economy and Anti-Blackness as Terror," Anna M. Agathangelou (2013) draws upon Jasanoff's (2004) work on co-production and engages two LGBTQI human rights archives in order to trace the co-production of the United States of America and certain European nation-states and

their attempts to reproduce a neoliberal global order which calls upon slavery and queerness in the creation of value(lessness) which also informs my thinking on the co-production of Poland (and its others) and European global order (Jasanoff, 2004; Kyungwon Hong & Ferguson, 2011). I also draw upon Agathangelou's (2018) work, "What Suicide and Greece Tell Us about Precarity and Capitalism," in my understanding of Poland as a site of experimentation. In this article, Agathangelou (2018) writes about Greece and labouring bodies as sites of experimentation of capitalism and racial violence.

I theorize Poland as concept (grappling with it as a sociological entity shaped by multiple competing actors with shifting degrees of definitional power)¹ and method (meaning process and reading theory) while seeing it as a site of experimentation (where these actors are vying for different projects). This is not about a unified Poland or a homogeneous one; rather, it is about understanding the nation-state as an unfinished project taken up by different social actors in an attempt to redress social problems and create power on a regional and global scale. Poland is not only European or post-Soviet and theorizing it beyond these imaginaries (while not subscribing to exceptionalism narratives) is what this project intends. Instead of defining Poland, I am interested in grounding it in (or as) method. I understand the nation-state as a process (always in the making as different from forever and always in transition) and reading theory (meaning a method of studying East-Central European geopolitics).

My approach is informed by Kuan-Hsing Chen's (2010) book, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*, which advances a geocolonial historical materialist framework, inspired by Takeuchi Yoshimi's (1961/2005) "Asia as Method" and Mizoguchi Yūzō's *China as Method* (1989/1996) which propose inter-referencing places closer in geographical proximity and historical experience, in order to ask different questions about local and global histories. In dialogue with postcolonial studies, globalization studies, and the emerging field of Asian studies in Asia, Chen (2010) studies modern East

¹ I name Poland as both post-socialist and post-communist not because I consider these demarcations interchangeable but because I want to acknowledge it as a concept shaped by multiple competing actors and signal (while also blurring the lines between) east|west understandings of the nation-state. See Chapter Two for definitions.

Asian history, centering Taiwan by shifting points of reference, and stresses the urgency for simultaneous movements for decolonization, deimperialization, and the undoing of the Cold War or what the scholar calls 'de-cold war' (p. 208). Chen (2010) argues that centering Taiwan "is a strategic choice, one that draws out the transnational dynamics of the region, allowing us to go beyond the limits of national and nationalist historiography" (p. xii) while using Asia as an anchoring point "is also an attempt to move forward on the tripartite problematic of decolonization, deimperialization, and de-cold war" (p. 212). For Chen (2010), this method is about working outside a west/rest framework and may allow "societies in Asia [to] become each other's points of reference so that the understanding of the self may be transformed and subjectivity rebuilt. On this basis, the diverse historical experiences and rich social practices of Asia may be mobilized to provide alternative horizons and perspectives" (Chen, 2010, p. 212). My dissertation draws upon Chen's (2010) method in order to intervene in East-Central European spaces by centering Poland as a strategy to destabilize Cold War imaginaries about the region. For me, employing Poland as an anchoring point is about understanding the ways in which "the historical processes of imperialization, colonization, and the cold war have become mutually entangled structures, [and] shaped and conditioned both intellectual and popular knowledge production" (Chen, 2010, p. 212) and is employed as a strategy to de-universalize the west, particularly given the historical complexities which shape East-Central Europe.

Poland as (concept and) method is about understanding the nation-state as but one reference point (neither superior nor inferior) and shifting the horizon (meaning where we orient) but it is also about understanding the role different social actors play in the social reproduction of the nation-state (as transitional; postcolonial; fascist; eastern other within amongst other demarcations) in an attempt to address social issues and create power on multiple scales. My understanding of the latter is informed by Michel Foucault's (1980) *dispositif* which the French philosopher historian and literary critic defines as "a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural

forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid” (p. 194) and each analytic chapter considers different social actors and the method(s) by which they exercise power. I argue that Poland is in the making and unmaking deployed as a method (and vied for) by multiple social actors like scholars who reproduce eastern backwardness and western progress narratives in writing on post-socialist sexualities (see Chapter Four); a queer artist whose short film (re)imagines folk history and speaks back to Cold War imaginaries (see Chapter Four); Chairman Kaczyński who employed mourning rituals in order to reproduce the image of a postcolonial nation as a body under threat and drive a Eurosceptical and ultra-Catholic political agenda (see Chapter Five); and lastly, the Law and Justice Party and the (far-)right who employ the contemporary abortion law, sex education mandate, 500plus child benefit program, and migration policies as methods by which to reproduce Poland for Poles (see Chapter Six).

I argue for a more expansive understanding of Poland – one that challenges hegemonic and Orientalist legacies of western political agendas and academic institutions which position it as forever and always in need of catching up (i.e., transitology and western area studies); contests portrayals of a Catholic Poland to include memories and imaginaries beyond the mainstream (i.e., the women’s strike and sex education advocacy); confronts the hardening of Polish national(ist) identity through particular populations (i.e., LGBTQI, Muslim); unsettles narratives which position the Polish nation-state on a continuum between the USSR and EUrope; and destabilizes Cold War imaginaries of Poland through a transnational feminist and queer and postcolonial framework. I argue that theorizing Poland as both concept and method allows us to interrogate these tensions and understand the (necro)political significance these reproductions hold not only for sexual and racialized others but also for the nation-state itself on a global scale.

I am interested in the ways Poland is lived beyond dominant narratives of church-abiding conservatives and (far-)right politicians, remembered and hoped for by sexual and racialized others. Poland as concept and method is tied to critical scholarship that points to the ways in which sexualized and racialized practices critique uneven power structures, transnational flows, and colonial and imperial formations. Poland of the *other* can retain its critical edge so long as it works to undermine its own power effects (i.e., subscription to exceptionalism narratives) in politics and in the academy.

Study Objectives and Key Questions

My main study objectives are twofold. First, I want to conceptualize the Polish nation-state as both concept and method in order to show how it speaks to theory and allows us to read through it regional and global emerging dynamics. This is significant as it allows me to problematize notions of periphery (reproduced as regional case study) which center statehood and (over)emphasize economic factors in ways that do not account for transnational flows (see Aldcroft, 2006; Zarycki, 2011). I problematize these notions in ways that decenter not only western scholarship but also whiteness (defined in this time and space against racialized communities forever marked by their foreignness and ethno-religious minorities – considering Romani, Jewish, and Muslim subjects in particular here) by recognizing citational politics and racial discourses in textual omissions (Chow, 2002; El-Tayeb, 2005). Second, I want to investigate the relationships between the nation-state and its O/others by considering Poland's transition from communism to neoliberal capitalism and western democracy and EU accession. My objective here is to expose the ways in which the nation-state's push (under the Law and Justice Party) to construct itself as Poland for Poles which is about claiming and preserving an imagined purity (whiteness) allows it to enact certain violences, which are, despite appearances, in line with (and not against) EU values and visions. My overarching questions are:

- How can transnational feminist and queer as well as postcolonial theories theorize and deploy Poland as concept and method? What insight can this site provide into the complex relationships between nation | empire-building and sexual and racialized others?
- How do emergent Polish nationalism(s) (incorporating cultural, social, psychic, political, and economic forces) complicate colonial | postcolonial, east | west, and communist | neoliberal democratic and capitalist delineations?
- How are various nationalist and EUropean discourses implicated in shaping, promoting, and/or othering LGBTQI bodies and practices?
- How do (non-normative) identities and sexualities critically relate to discursive and material (re)productions of nations and nationalisms, governmentality and otherness, as well as borders and empires?

My transnational feminist and queer as well as postcolonial framework grounds my dissertation and informs my study objectives and key questions. I address these objectives and questions by engaging qualitative interviewing and participant observation as well as analyzing textual materials with the use of Edward W. Said's (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading, Reiner Keller's (2006) sociology of knowledge approach to discourse (hereafter SKAD), as well as Teun A. van Dijk's (1993) critical discourse analysis (hereafter CDA). Contrapuntal reading is about (re)reading the cultural archive "with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts" (Said, 1993, p. 51). Keller's (2006) SKAD is a conceptual and methodological research program and "an original social science approach to analysing discourse based on the sociological traditions of the interpretive paradigm, the sociology of knowledge and Foucauldian research" (Hornidge, Keller, & Schünemann, 2018, p. 2). van Dijk's (1993) CDA is a critical approach to studying text and talk that is rooted in

“critical linguistics, critical semiotics and in general from a socio-politically conscious and oppositional way of investigating language, discourse and communication” (van Dijk, 1995, p. 17).

The textual materials I focus on in this dissertation include scholarly works on East-Central European post-communist sexualities; a queer short film (*Niulam Ja Se Kochaneckie*); East-Central European postcolonial scholarship (Ewa Thompson’s analyses); political discourses (Kaczyński’s Smolensk commemoration speeches); religious texts (Solo Dios Basta Foundation statements); governmental discourses (abortion law; sex education mandate; 500plus child benefit program; and migration policies); national magazine covers (*wSieci*); and far-right extremist rhetoric (National Radical Camp and All-Polish Youth texts). My examination or contrapuntal reading of these textual materials concerns locating both sexuality and race (in spoken and written word as much as in what has been withheld from the discourse) and the ways they do work and the kind of work they do to maintain and (re)produce a particular kind of nationalism (religious and right-wing) and EUrope (white supremacist) as entangled with neoliberal global capitalism.

Theoretical Framework

My dissertation draws upon transnational feminist and queer as well as postcolonial scholarship in order to articulate my theoretical framework through which I read and position my work and make sense of the complex relationships between East-Central European nations and nationalisms, genders and sexualities, races and racisms, and neoliberal colonial and imperial projects. In particular, my theoretical framework considers a) social reproduction as reconceptualized by feminist political scholarship in order to understand Poland and its geopolitical framing (as transitional; postcolonial; fascist; eastern other within) (see Armstrong & Armstrong, 2010; Bezanson & Luxton, 2006; Bhattacharya, 2017; Ferguson, n.d., 2008, 2016; Vogel, 2013), b) Achille Mbembe’s (2003) necropolitics as further developed by transnational queer scholarship in order to understand the relationship between the nation-state as co-produced with EU global order and its O/others (see also Haritaworn, Kuntsman,

& Posocco, 2014; Puar, 2007), c) transition from the perspective of East-Central European postcolonial studies in order to trace its racialized instrumentalization (see Böröcz & Kovács, 2001; Melegh, 2006), and lastly, d) post-socialist racial exceptionalism in East-Central Europe in order to “articulate the complexities of ‘race’ in the region” (Baker, 2018a, p. 760, see also Baker, 2018b; Imre, 2005).

My dissertation engages social reproduction as reconceptualized by feminist political scholarship considering it a significant concept that makes it possible to understand Poland in its so-called transitional state. The concept of social reproduction is employed in order to theorize Poland as concept (considering its identity crisis and potential as a site of experimentation) and Poland as method (meaning process and reading theory) as co-produced with EUropean global order and grasp the complex relationships between the nation-state and its O/others (Jasanoff, 2004). The concept of social reproduction, which has its origins in Karl Marx’s (1867/2004) *Capital. Volume 1: The Process of Production of Capital*, refers to the reproduction of the capitalist system and places “emphasis on the structures and activities that transmit social inequality from one generation to the next” (Doob, 2013, p. 10). Marx (as cited in Luxton, 2006) says that “[w]hatever the social form of the production process, it has to be continuous...When viewed, therefore, as a connected whole, and in the constant flux of its incessant renewal, every social process of production is at the same time a process of reproduction.” He explains that “[t]he capitalist process of production, therefore, seen as a total, connected process, i.e. a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capital-relation itself; on the one hand the capitalist, on the other the wage-labourer” (Marx as cited in Luxton, 2006). In her chapter, “Feminist Political Economy in Canada and the Politics of Social Reproduction,” Meg Luxton (2006) builds on Marx’s sociological insights stating that “the production of goods and services and the production of life are part of one integrated process” (p. 36) which according to social reproduction feminism speaks to oppression (gender and sexuality; class and disability; race and colonialism) occurring in relation to, and being shaped by, capitalism.

Susan Ferguson (2016) traces how intersectionality feminism has pushed the social reproduction feminism paradigm beyond its narrow focus on gender and class relations in order to “articulate and explain the differentiated-yet-unified experience of multiple oppressions” (p. 39). In “Intersectionality and Social-Reproduction Feminisms: Toward an Integrative Ontology,” Ferguson (2016) argues that “in historicising the work it takes to reproduce human labour-power, and positing it as essential to capital’s existence but not directly under capital’s control, social-reproduction feminism broadens and complicates our understanding of labour...” (p. 39). She states that social reproduction feminism sees labour “as a ‘concrete unity’, an ontological category that captures – and a lived experience that mediates and produces – a richly differentiated, historical, and contradictory totality” (Ferguson, 2016, p. 39). She argues that “[t]his multi-dimensional concept of labour (or human practical activity) invites a *dialectical* understanding of the social...” (Ferguson, 2016, p. 39). In expanding upon the notion of labour to understand it as an embodied, socially differentiated, and spatially located practice which is diverse in its gendered, sexualized, and racialized form, social reproduction feminism is making a claim about the crucial and incongruous internal relationship between reproduction and production. Social reproduction feminism “provokes us to examine the ways in which seemingly independent sets of relations (those that play out in racial, gendered, sexualised, colonized ways) are part and parcel of a capitalist class dynamic of dispossession and accumulation” (Ferguson, n.d., para. 11).

The concept of social reproduction helps me articulate the co-constitution of “social formations as the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class...” (Ferguson, 2004, p. 379) and East-Central European nationalisms considering labour and categories of value(lessness) within Poland (Kyungwon Hong & Ferguson, 2011). It allows me to address the labour question by thinking through the labour involved in the biopolitical reproduction of the nation-state and the state’s role in upholding the white heterosexual family (see Chapter Six). The concept of social reproduction also helps me make sense of Poland’s positioning within EUrope. Ferguson (2016) says that “labouring bodies are differentially

spatialised in both a geographical and social sense. We are all born and all work to reproduce the world in socio-historically, geographically specific locations...these locations are unequally caught up in capitalism's ever-expanding, uneven, dynamics" (pp. 52-53). She continues, "the capitalist drive to dispossess and accumulate unfolds within and between nations that are already hierarchically ordered, reinforcing, reproducing and reshaping that ordering in the process" (Ferguson, 2016, p. 53). I argue that the concept of social reproduction helps me understand the hierarchical ordering of Poland (for Poles) as Europe's scapegoat and eastern other within and the (necro)political consequences it holds for the nation-state and its O/others globally (see Chapter Six).

This foregrounds Achille Mbembe's (2003) concept of necropolitics which is understood as an extension of Michel Foucault's (1978) biopower meaning "a power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death" (p. 138). In drawing on this concept in relation to notions of sovereignty and the state of exception found in the death camps but also in the plantation and colony, Mbembe (2003) inquires, "[i]s the notion of biopower sufficient to account for the contemporary ways in which the political, under the guise of war, of resistance, or of the fight against terror, makes the murder of the enemy its primary and absolute objective?" (p. 12). He provides nuance to the Foucauldian critique arguing that the violence of German Nazism was in genealogical relation to the experiments and violences in Africa under colonialism. Mbembe (2003) says that in the colonial space "the generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations" (p. 14) were the experimental precursor for the extermination camps in Europe. He states, "[w]hat one witnesses in World War II is the extension to the 'civilized' peoples of Europe of the methods previously reserved for the 'savages.'" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 23). For Mbembe (2003), necropolitics attends to more than the sovereign right to kill (Foucault's *droit de glaive*) considering it "account[s] for the various ways in which, in our contemporary world, weapons are deployed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the creations of *death-worlds*, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations

are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living dead*” (p. 40, emphasis in original).

Jasbir Puar (2007) elaborates upon this concept in her discussion of queer necropolitics and says that she “want[s] to keep taut the tension between biopolitics and necropolitics” (p. 35). She says that “[t]he latter makes its presence known at the limits and through the excess of the former; the former masks the multiplicity of its relationships to death and killing order to enable the proliferation of the latter” (Puar, 2007, p. 35). She continues, “[t]his bio-necro collaboration conceptually acknowledges biopower’s direct activity in death, while remaining bound to the optimization of life, and necropolitics’ nonchalance toward death even as it seeks out killing as a primary aim” (p. 35). In her book, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, she mobilizes queer necropolitics in order to understand the shifts in liberal gay politics disentangling its complicities within the US war on terror while arguing that “it is precisely within the interstices of life and death that we find the differences between queer subjects who are being folded (back) into life and the racialized queernesses that emerge through the naming of populations, thus fueling the oscillation between the disciplining of subjects and the control of populations” (p. 35). My dissertation engages with this concept in ways also inspired by the work of Jin Haritaworn, Adi Kuntsman, and Silvia Posocco (2014) who queer necropolitics by laying bare everyday death worlds and noting that “the distinction between war and peace dissolves in the face of the banality of death in the ‘zones of abandonment’ (Biehl 2001; Povinelli 2011) that regularly accompany contemporary democratic regimes” (p. 2). In their edited book, *Queer Necropolitics*, the scholars use diverse methodologies across disciplines to center “...the unremarkable, the ordinary and the mundane...” (Haritaworn, Kuntsman, & Posocco, 2014, p. 2) in attending to “the geopolitics of violence, abandonment, and death” (Haritaworn, Kuntsman, & Posocco, 2014, p. 2) by examining the unexceptional violence of gender and sexual normativities, racism, and the market. This concept helps me articulate “...the unremarkable, the ordinary and the mundane...” (Haritaworn, Kuntsman,

& Posocco, 2014, p. 2) violence of gender and sexual normativities in Poland which are simultaneously raced and classed.

My theoretical framework also builds on the idea that transition, as a concept-metaphor crucial to geopolitical conceptualizations of Poland and the moments in history marked by the restructuring of communism and EU accession, is racialized in its instrumentalization. In “Chapter Two: Literature Review,” I theorize transition by considering scientific knowledge production in both transitology and western area studies as our understanding of the process has been shaped by these bodies of literature and in “Chapter Four: In Transition,” I analyze the relationship between transition and discourses on post-socialist sexualities whereas here, I engage East-Central European postcolonial studies because it addresses a critical gap within the aforementioned literature regarding conversations on transition and race|racism and racialization. I draw upon Attila Melegh’s (2006) book, *On the East-West Slope: Globalization, Nationalism, Racism and Discourses on Central and Eastern Europe*, in which he writes about an old/new civilizational discourse he names the East-West slope that re-emerged in the 1980s “providing the main cognitive mechanism for reorganizing international and socio-political regimes in the Eastern part of the European continent” (Melegh, 2006, p. 9). He continues, “[i]n this radical ‘normalization’ and ‘transition’ process almost all political and social actors ‘East’ and ‘West’ identify themselves on a descending scale from ‘civilization to barbarism,’ from ‘developed to non-developed’ status” (Melegh, 2006, p. 9). He argues that the scale operates as cultural or functional racism and “always assumes some kind of axis with two end points: ‘East’ and ‘West,’ ‘white’ and ‘not white,’ ‘cleanliness’ and ‘dirt,’ ‘emerging’ and ready or ‘fully developed,’ ‘nationalist’ and ‘post-nationalist’ aspects...” (Melegh, 2006, p. 14) which speaks to scholarship in transitology and western area studies on East-Central European transitions.

Melegh (2006) shows how the civilizational discourse is employed by different social actors such as Italy’s former prime minister Giuliano Amato who criticized the EU for wanting to quarantine

East-Central European nations during eastern enlargement – nations understood as “European, but only of mixed blood” (as cited in Melegh, 2006, p. 9); a Walloon professor who in an interview spoke about her Russian husband as “un petite Slav” (as cited in Melegh, 2006, p. 10) – white but lower on the scale; Hungary’s prime minister Viktor Orbán who in responding to the economic turmoil in late 1990s Russia stated that he was “quite confident that investors realize the difference between NATO and soon-to-be European Union members – such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland – and Russia” (as cited in Melegh, 2006, p. 10); the director of the Centre of Russian and East European Studies at University of Wales and his co-author who in writing about post-communist transformation wrote that “East European states are still in a ‘state-building’ and ‘nation-building’ phase...” (as cited in Melegh, 2006, p. 11) amongst other examples. The discourse employed by these social actors reveals a racial descending scale and the use of racist markers to describe temporal-spatial difference.

For Melegh (2006) the slope implies “ongoing transition [...] to an ideal social form postponed into the indefinite or localized out of the reach of the ‘locals’” (Melegh, 2006, p. 20) which again speaks to the ways in which scholarship, predominantly in transitology and western area studies but also in political science, describes the moments in history marked by the restructuring of communism and EU accession. In József Böröcz and Melinda Kovács’ (2001) edited collection, *Empire’s New Clothes: Unveiling EU Enlargement*, scholars speak to the slope (or a civilizational discourse) through postcolonial analyses of the eastern enlargement. The scholars analyze discursive articulations of othering in official documentation produced by various EU bodies. In his introductory piece, “Empire and Coloniality in the ‘Eastern Enlargement’ of the European Union,” Böröcz (2001) employs empire and coloniality as conceptual tools “to address the contemporary process of geopolitical re-division...” (p. 10). He states that the process of eastern enlargement, the name of which can be understood as an orientalizing tool

given that the term eastern implies inferiority, resembled empire expansion more than it did integration reproducing candidate states as the Other (Böröcz, 2001). These postcolonial analyses provide a frame for understanding the racialized instrumentalization of East-Central European transition.

The final issue my theoretical framework grapples with is post-socialist racial exceptionalism in East-Central Europe. I draw upon Catherine Baker's (2018b) *Race and the Yugoslav Region: Postsocialist, Post-Conflict, Postcolonial?* which situates the Yugoslav region in global histories of coloniality and race. Baker (2018b) weaves critical race theory with contemporary south-east European studies to investigate popular music and the connections between race and identity-making; histories of ethnonationalism and migration; transnational formations of racialized difference before and during state socialism; and post-Yugoslav racialized discourses on borders and security. In her introduction, she states "[t]he racial exceptionalism of south-east European, east European and Soviet studies lies not only in extricating these regions from globally connected historical analysis but also in conflating race with ethnicity on one hand while defining eastern Europe as a space where identities are defined by ethnicity *rather than* race on the other" (Baker, 2018b, p. 39). She notes, as Gloria Wekker (2016) states, that "... one can do postcolonial studies very well without ever critically addressing race" (p. 175) commenting on its adoption by regional studies to explain eastern and southern peripheralization. Baker (2018b) also notes the ways in which race is collapsed into ethnicity and nationhood. She draws upon Anikó Imre's work in her analysis of racial exceptionalism. In her chapter, "Whiteness in Post-Socialist Eastern Europe: 'The Time of Gypsies, The End of Race,'" Imre (2005) studies Eastern European media representations to show the relevance of discourses on colonization and race. In centering the 'shifting positionalities' (Haritaworn, 2008b) of the Hungarian Romani and understanding their marginalization as racism, she shows how the failure or refusal to disentangle race from ethnicity diminishes racialized state violence. Imre (2005) argues that race and racism continue to be understood as irrelevant to the region by citing white Hungarians warning her not to compare the experiences of the Romani in

Eastern Europe with those of Black people in the United States. She addresses this racial exceptionalism by showing “how whiteness has been called upon to provide legitimacy to the post-socialist nation-state” (Imre, 2005, p. 95) with nationalist aspirations of returning to Europe. Imre (2005) says “the ‘return to Europe’ ... allows discourses of imperialism and racism to remain unexamined within nationalism” (Imre, 2005, p. 82). She claims that “East European nations’ unspoken insistence on their whiteness is one of the most effective and least recognized means of asserting their European-ness” (Imre, 2005, p. 82).

In locating East-Central Europe in global histories of coloniality and race, an understanding of whiteness is in order. József Böröcz and Mahua Sarkar (2017) say “whiteness is inherently unstable, heterogeneous, and impure. So is ‘eastern Europe.’” (p. 307). I understand whiteness as “a location of structural advantage, of race privilege... it is a ‘standpoint,’ a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others and at society... a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed” (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 1); “a background to experience... an ongoing and unfinished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they ‘take up’ space” (Ahmed, 2007, p. 150); a “mythical norm” (Lorde, 1984, p. 114); and lastly, a global political system of domination and structure of ignorance (Mills, 1997, 2015). The region is located in these global histories of coloniality and race by East-Central and Southern European scholarship which merges postcolonialism and postsocialism, or as Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery (2009) say is “thinking between the posts” (p. 6), and makes whiteness visible (see also Baker, 2018a, 2018b; Imre, 2005, 2014; Koobak & Marling, 2014; Mayblin, Piekut & Valentine, 2014; Murawska-Muthesius, 2004; Owczarzak, 2009; Velickovic, 2012). I contend that “thinking between the posts” (Chari & Verdery, 2009, p. 6) in ways that account for race | racism and making whiteness visible within East-Central Europe helps me articulate Poland for Poles and the movement against internal and external O/others (Romani; Muslim citizens and refugees; LGBTQI people; women; Jewish people).

The scholarship that joins postcolonialism with postsocialism while addressing questions about whiteness makes visible the racial exceptionalism in East-Central Europe. In “Welcome to Slaka: Does Eastern (Central) European Art Exist?” Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius (2004) contests the division between the socialist and colonial stating that “[r]eturning to the question of affinities between ‘post-communist’ and postcolonial, the ideological construction of the racialised Other and the ‘undeservingly white’ East European (br)Other in the dominant Western discourses reveal too many points in common to be ignored” (p. 26). In her article, “Belated Alliances? Tracing the Intersections between Postcolonialism and Postcommunism,” Vedrana Velickovic (2012) speaks to these affinities by considering the construction of South-Eastern Europe connecting the Enlightenment with the Cold War and post-communist period. She asks “[w]hile eastern Europeans may be racialized when abroad as not-quite-white, how does eastern European whiteness operate at home?” (Velickovic, 2012, p. 171) – a question which is key to understanding the (far-)right and its efforts to make Poland for Poles, and Poles alone. In their exchange, “Bridging Postcoloniality, Postsocialism, and ‘Race’ in the Age of Brexit: An Interview with Catherine Baker,” Baker (2021) responding to Redi Koobak speaks about the importance of articulating postcoloniality *with* race, considering the ‘shifting positionalities’ (Haritaworn, 2008b) of Eastern Europeans in global structures of whiteness. She states “[o]bviously, those positions shift, and they’re particularly ambiguous and contingent for people from central and eastern Europe, who as they travel often find themselves negotiating very different racial formations” (Baker & Koobak, 2021, p. 41). She continues, “[t]he xeno-racism, to use Liz Fekete’s term (Fekete 2009), that has been levelled in the UK against Polish workers and anyone else whose accent makes them legible as ‘eastern European,’ all the more so since the Brexit referendum, is a case in point” (Baker & Koobak, 2021, p. 41). While noting these contingencies, she emphasizes the importance of grasping that while “the same formations of race don’t exist everywhere, [...] the structures that give rise to them do” (Baker & Koobak, 2021, p. 41).

In her article, “Postcolonial Media Studies in Postsocialist Europe,” Imre (2014) brings together and in conversation postcolonialism and postsocialism through the study of (post-)socialist television and film. She articulates racial exceptionalism in East-Central Europe by writing:

In these narratives, *race* is generally occluded by *ethnicity*, a term used almost synonymously with *nationality* with reference to linguistic and cultural identity markers. While these identity markers are understood to be as powerful as genetic codes, *race* itself is not part of the vocabulary of nationalism. It has a hidden trajectory in Eastern Europe because the region’s nations seem themselves outside of colonial processes and thus exempt from post-decolonization struggles with racial mixing and prejudice. As a result, Eastern Europe may be the only, or the last, region on Earth where whiteness is seen as morally transparent, its alleged innocence preserved by a claim of exception to the history of imperialism (Imre, 2014, p. 130).

Imre (2014) draws upon postcolonial scholarship in order to speak to the disavowal of race and racism in Eastern Europe. She argues further that this disavowal is facilitated by the framing of the Romani in ethnic rather than racial terms. She continues:

This racial exceptionalism, the East’s function as an unapologetic reserve for unbridled because mostly unconscious white supremacy, serves as proof of Europeanness, a way to disavow the colonial hierarchy between Western and Eastern Europe and to make up for the region’s long-standing economic and political inferiority. While the kinship ties that guarantee national bonds in the East are officially understood to be the result of shared languages and cultures, the implied cohesiveness and hegemony of these ‘cultural nationalisms,’ in fact, rest on a racial agenda shrouded in the invisibility of whiteness. The organicity and ethical transparency of shared ‘cultural’ values are guaranteed by the unspoken but taken-for-granted superiority of whiteness. It is hard to miss the contradiction

that whiteness as a moral category, itself a product of imperialism and racism, provides immunity to charges of imperialism and racism (Imre, 2014, p. 130).

Imre (2014) argues that Eastern European claims to whiteness work as an assertion of Europeanness which complicates Poland for Poles as racial agenda considering it is framed against European global order.

To sum up, my theoretical framework draws upon transnational feminist and queer as well as postcolonial scholarship and centers social reproduction in order to understand Poland and its geopolitical framing (as transitional; postcolonial; fascist; eastern other within) which helps me articulate social inequality over time. It centers (queer) necropolitics to trace the complex relationships between the nation-state and its sexual O/others which are both raced and classed (see Mbembe, 2003; Puar, 2007; Haritaworn, Kuntsman, & Posocco, 2014). My theoretical framework also considers the racialized instrumentalization of transition and racial exceptionalism within post-socialist East-Central Europe (see Baker, 2018a, 2018b; Böröcz & Kovács, 2001; Imre, 2005; Melegh, 2006). Understanding transition as a racialized concept helps me articulate Poland's geopolitical positioning vis-à-vis Europe while emphasizing post-socialist racial exceptionalism in East-Central Europe is key to grasping Poland for Poles as nationalist agenda and fascist rallying cry.

A Brief History of Poland

In theorizing Poland as concept and method and investigating relationships between the nation-state and its O/others, a brief national history is in order. This historical timeline is an incomplete snapshot which centers key moments that speak to the foundational and ongoing significance of Catholicism, the social and political impacts of the partitions and annexations, the role of the Solidarity movement in restructuring communism, and the rise of the Law and Justice Party, all of which are critical to understanding the contemporary nation-state and the re-emergence of (far-)right politics. Poland is an (East-)Central European nation-state “located at a geographic crossroads that links the

forested lands of northwestern Europe to the sea lanes of the Atlantic Ocean and the fertile plains of the Eurasian frontier” (Hutchinson Dawson, 2020, para. 1) – bordered by the Baltic Sea, Lithuania, and Kaliningrad to the north, Belarus and Ukraine to the east, Slovakia and the Czech Republic to the south, and Germany to the west. Hutchinson Dawson (2020) writes, “Poland has waxed and waned over the centuries, buffeted by the forces of regional history” (para. 1). It is now marked as “a relatively homogenous and largely conservative country [where m]ore than 90 per cent of Polish society shares one race, one nationality, one language and one religion” (Szulc, 2011, p. 159) but this has not always been the case. “For most of its history, Poland was a diverse society, inhabited by people belonging to different ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups (Davies 1984)” (Balogun & Joseph-Salisbury, 2021, p. 236).

The foundation of the Polish nation-state begins with Mieszko I’s baptism. On Holy Saturday of 966, the nation and the prince who would become its first ruler were baptised into Christianity. The event which was influenced by Mieszko I’s wife Dobrawa of Bohemia marks the beginning of Polish statehood. In 1025, Poland became a kingdom whose Queen Jadwiga married Lithuanian Grand Duke Jogaila (Davies, 2005; Zubrzycki, 2011). The marriage founded the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth which collapsed in 1795 when partitioned by the Habsburg Monarchy, Kingdom of Prussia, and the Russian Empire. The partitions led to a long period of Polish and Lithuanian statelessness that birthed a god complex cultivated by Polish Romantic poets who equated the annexations with crucifixion. In her article, “History and the National Sensorium: Making Sense of Polish Mythology,” Geneviève Zubrzycki (2011) states that “[m]essianism... gave not only a narrative structure to the situation of Poles under the Partitions, but a framework for interpreting Polish history in its entirety” (p. 28). She continues, “Poles were a chosen people, ‘the spiritual leaders of mankind and the sacred instrument of universal salvation’ (Walicki 1990, pp. 30-31), innocent sufferers at the hands of evil oppressors”

(p. 28). This god complex has significant material and symbolic consequences for sexual and racialized others and the nation-state itself in the contemporary moment (see Chapter Five).

Following WWI, Poland regained its independence – the rebirth of the state. In his book, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, Norman Davies (2005) writes “[t]he Polish Republic came into being in November 1918 by a process which theologians might call parthenogenesis. It created itself in the void left by the collapse of three partitioning powers” (p. 291). It experienced twenty years of independence which was lost during WWII when it was occupied by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.

The post-war period was marked by nationalist (re)construction influenced by ideologues such as Feliks Koneczny who was a Polish historian and social philosopher and Roman Dmowski who was a Polish politician. In his book, *On the Plurality of Civilizations*, Koneczny (1935) formulated his “science of civilizations” which advocates for civilizational purity and positions Poland as a defender of Latin (Christian) civilization against the internal threat of the Jewish civilization and the external threat of Turanian Russia, Byzantine Germany and “other ‘Oriental’ civilizations that might dilute its purity” (Wise, 2010, p. 290). His works on race and racism framed as civilizational purity inspired many Polish nationalists (Koneczny, 1935, see also Balogun & Joseph-Salisbury, 2021; Wise, 2010).

Roman Dmowski who was the leader of the National Democracy and named the father of Polish nationalism was also instrumental in the post-war restoration of Polish independence (Davies, 2005). He advocated for purity – meaning ethnic homogeneity – unlike the multicultural state of the early twentieth century (Auer, 2004). Dmowski envisioned nationalism marked by xenophobia and anti-Semitism and waged war on “half-Poles ...defined ...as those people who ‘lost their attachment to the aspirations of the nation...’ (Walicki 1997b: 46)” (Auer, 2004, p. 65). On August 23, 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact which partitioned Poland between them. The Second World War, during which six million people – half of whom were Polish Jews – died, together with population expulsions and transfers of Germans, Ukrainians

and Poles left the nation resembling Dmowski's vision of ethnic homogeneity (Auer, 2004). At the war's conclusion, Poland experienced territorial losses in the east and was compensated with territorial gains in the west which resulted in its borders moving 300km westwards (Auer, 2004; Davies, 2005).

Following WWII, the Soviet Union instituted a communist government in Poland much like in the rest of the Eastern Bloc and it became a satellite state that was one of the main signatories of the Warsaw Pact (Davies, 2005). These years were marked by a rise in living standards; access to education and free healthcare; urbanization; and rapid industrialization on the one hand and economic hardships and social unrest on the other hand. There were massive factory strikes influenced and supported by "the Polish Catholic Church [which] functioned as the main vehicle of Polish national identity and defender of national survival" (Auer, 2004, p. 69). The strikes led to the formation of Solidarity, an independent trade union led by Lech Wałęsa, which (for the most part) operated underground with financial support from the Vatican and the United States (Auer, 2004; Davies, 2005). The communist government attempted to destroy the union and its recognized leaders with the imposition of martial law – period between December 1981 and July 1983 – and political repression that saw the communist government reverse mandates that ensured Solidarity's legal status and arrest (and in some cases murder) the working-class opposition (Penn, 2005). Auer (2004) writes:

When General Jaruzelski proclaimed martial law in December 1981 in order to suppress the political might of Solidarność, the people once again tried to reclaim their national tradition (returning to the romantic, messianic ideas of a Polish nation destined for freedom and independence). Women in Poland started wearing jewellery that had been popular after the defeat of the 1863 uprising against Russia: the Polish eagle mounted on a black cross (Johnson 1996: 130). This powerful religious symbol highlighted the influence of the Catholic Church, which had been seen as the only reliable institution supporting

the cause of the Polish nation for almost 200 years (since 1795). Roman Catholicism distinguished a nation occupied by German Protestants, then Russians who were Orthodox, and later controlled by communists who were atheists (pp. 68-69).

Solidarity remained underground for seven years only to re-emerge in the context of nationwide labour strikes which first broke out in Gdańsk shipyards during the summer of 1988. These strikes led to the Round Table Talks between the communist government and the banned union which took place from February to April of 1989. These talks which the communist party hoped would lead to a limited form of power-sharing resulted in significant changes that included the re-legalization of Solidarity and the opening of thirty-five per cent of the Sejm and all seats in the Senate to free election (Davies, 2005). The election of June 4, 1989 resulted in a landslide victory for Solidarity which won ninety-nine per cent of all the seats in the Senate and all of the possible seats in the Sejm. Jaruzelski whose name was the only one allowed on the ballot for presidency won by a single vote (Davies, 2005).

On August 24, 1989, Tadeusz Mazowiecki became the first non-communist prime minister and as Davies (2005) states, “[a] Catholic country had a Catholic premier for the first time in exactly fifty years” (p. 504). On January 1, 1990, a shock therapy program of economic reform was implemented. The Balcerowicz Plan was introduced to support Poland’s quick transition from state ownership and state planning to a capitalist system of free markets. Davies (2005) writes that, “[p]rivatization was encouraged at all levels, but first in the financial and industrial sectors. Hyperinflation stopped. Confidence returned. Foreign investment began. International assistance... became possible. Hard times, of course, continued. Productivity was still falling. Unemployment was increasing... Living standards slumped” (p. 505). On December 22, 1990, in the context of growing impatience over the state of affairs, Lech Wałęsa who was an electrical technician and leader of Solidarity became the first democratically elected president of Poland (Davies, 2005; Penn, 2005). The following year, Poland became

a member of the Visegrád Group and joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1999 (Davies, 2005). By May 1, 2004, Poland was a member of the European Union.

In November of 1995, Poland held its second free elections which saw SLD (Democratic Left Alliance) leader Aleksander Kwaśniewski defeat Wałęsa by a narrow margin. In April of 1997, a highly contested democratic constitution was passed which “reduced the powers of the President as practised since 1989 and strengthened the Sejm and the Premier. It de-politicized both the army and the judiciary. Most importantly, it set up a principled, parliamentary democracy” (Davies, 2005, p. 512). In 2000, Kwaśniewski who was vocal in his support of EU accession was re-elected. In 2005, a Law and Justice Party led coalition government came into power headed by conservative right leader Lech Kaczyński who ruled until his death in 2010 (see Chapter Five). Bronisław Komorowski who was the oppositional candidate of the Civic Platform became the head of state following the president’s death. In 2015, he was succeeded by the Law and Justice Party candidate Andrzej Duda who is still in office. The Law and Justice Party, founded by twins Lech (now deceased) and Jarosław Kaczyński, is known as a Eurosceptic party which combines social conservatism with economic liberalism in its politics. It is also known for undermining democracy and the rule of law in its approach to judiciary reforms that have devastated the independence of courts; media which has been turned into a right-wing mouthpiece for the government; and LGBTQI people and refugees who are understood as unwelcome and foreign evils (Cienski, 2015; Roache, 2019a, 2019b; Sifferlin, 2018; Zerofsky, 2018).

Chapter Outline

My dissertation engages a “deviant chronopolitics” (Freeman, 2005, p. 58) that imagines bonds across both spatial and temporal boundaries which in turn upset western developmental narratives on history in order to investigate the complex relationships between both sexual and racialized others and nation | empire-building. This introductory chapter theorizes Poland as concept and method while also recognizing the nation-state as a site of experimentation which affords us insight into these complex

relationships and dynamics of power contestations. It outlines my transnational feminist and queer as well as postcolonial framework as well as my study objectives and key questions. It concludes with a brief history of the nation-state and my chapter outline.

Chapter Two traces critical scholarship on the relationships between (East-Central European) nations and nationalisms, genders and sexualities, races and racisms, and other neoliberal colonial and imperial projects. I begin with scholarship on nations, nationalisms, and identity politics while situating post-socialist Poland and constructions of otherness. Secondly, I consider transitological and western area studies scholarship on transition which provides a frame for my contrapuntal and inter-referencing reading and critical discourse analysis of East-Central European post-socialist sexualities. Thirdly, I trace the adoption and what I name as the misappropriation and whitewashing of postcolonialism by East-Central European scholarship. Lastly, I map post-communist Poland by defining key concepts which enable a critical understanding of East-Central European space and situate sexual and racialized otherness within this particular space and time.

Chapter Three sketches my epistemological and methodological frameworks and outlines my qualitative research methods including in-depth interviewing and participant observation which are informed by my transnational feminist and queer as well as postcolonial framework. These chapters underpin my work and the words which follow.

Chapter Four theorizes (and problematizes) transition within an East-Central European space considering Poland's so-called 'return to Europe,' signaled by the restructuring of communism and EU accession. It considers the ways in which these events are defined in the scholarly imagination and how they relate to the social reproduction of the Polish nation-state as forever and always in transition. It shows how this framing relies on sexual freedom and other western progress narratives which are racialized in unnamed ways in order to create and maintain space and time between the nation-state and western modernity as embodied by Europe. This transitional framing is shaped by Cold War

imaginaries which understand East-Central European spaces as backwards and in need of catching up to the west and plays a significant role in shaping thinking on sexualities in the region. This chapter engages with scholarship on East-Central European post-socialist sexualities while interrogating transition in order to question whether this approach can provide us insight and yield generative knowledges that challenge our thinking on the Polish nation-state (as co-produced with EU global order) and on sexualities as sites of dialogue, quotation and translation in cutting hegemonic reproductions as well as colluding with them (Jasanoff, 2004). This chapter offers Katarzyna Perlak's (2016) film essay, *Niulam Ja Se Kochanezkie* [*I Once Had A Lover*], as a site of dialogue and translation of a (utopian) world otherwise. This film allows me to read the reclamation of Eastern European folk songs as a queer method for speaking back to Cold War imaginaries.

Chapter Five weaves conversations about a plane crash (and more importantly) its aftermath in with critiques of scholarly and political understandings of the nation-state as postcolonial in order to make sense of the geopolitical role that sexual and racialized others play within the nation-state itself and the region. It traces the adoption and what I argue is the misappropriation and whitewashing of postcolonial theory by (some) East-Central European scholars and its subsequent or simultaneous misuse by Polish right-wing politicians who used the crash and its aftermath as a platform for the co-optation of postcolonial terminology deployed in the fight to keep Poland for Poles (and Poles alone). This chapter uses Poland as concept and method in order to explain how its social reproduction as a postcolonial nation struggling against European domination holds (necro)political significance not only for sexual and racialized others but also for the nation-state itself globally while addressing the ways in which its transition (1989-) shapes and informs thinking about this reproduction.

Chapter Six speaks to the emerging transnational by looking at the role that sexual and racialized others play in geopolitical struggles within Europe, complicating and unraveling tensions between the Polish nation-state and the EU. It interrogates the ways in which Polishness (backward and intolerant

but somehow always tolerated) is conjucted with EUropeanness (progressive and open) by theorizing the social reproduction of Poland for Poles as EUrope's eastern other within and scapegoat which in juxtaposition positions the EU as the beacon of human rights. This chapter analyzes the contemporary abortion law; sex education mandate; 500plus child benefit program; and migration policies in order to theorize the biopolitical reproduction of the white nation-state. It argues that Poland (for Poles and Poles alone) which is framed in opposition to what the religious right name as EUropean 'perversion' and 'permissiveness,' evoking Orientalist discourses on sexual modernity and the penetration of the EU's borders by racialized migrant others, positions the nation as EUrope's eastern other within and works as border control.

The concluding chapter provides a summary while speaking to the insights which emerge from employing Poland as concept (reproduced as transitional; postcolonial; fascist; eastern other within) and Poland as method (process and reading theory) regarding the complex relationships between sexual and racialized others and emergent Polish nationalism(s) as co-produced with EU global order.

Chapter Two:

Literature Review

This chapter situates my dissertation within critical scholarship which addresses sexual and racial difference within the context of neoliberal colonial and imperial projects like the nation-state. I begin with a critical study of nations and nationalisms, tracing scholarship in anthropology, history, political science, postcolonial studies, sociology, and transnational feminism to articulate the intersections of social formations (sexuality and race, amongst others) and colonial and imperial logics including the nation-state and empire-building. The scholarship on nations, nationalisms, and identity politics offers an overview of canonical writing while situating (post-socialist) Poland and its O/others. Secondly, I theorize transition which is central to understanding East-Central European spaces and the moments in history marked by the restructuring of communism and EU accession. I trace knowledge production in both transitology and western area studies which provides ground for my contrapuntal reading and critical discourse analysis of scholarship on East-Central European post-socialist sexualities (Chapter Four). Thirdly, I examine the ways in which postcolonial studies is taken up in East-Central European scholarship which offers a framework for understanding the relationship between postcolonialism and religion as well as its impacts upon sexual and racialized others (Chapter Five). Lastly, I map post-socialist Poland by defining key concepts that are necessary to understanding my subsequent analysis.

Polish Intersections, Or Nation(alism)s and Identity Politics

My dissertation engages various disciplinary approaches to nations and nationalism(s) reflecting upon scholarly works in anthropology, history, political science, postcolonial studies, sociology, and transnational feminism while recognizing that nationalism can only take us so far in conversations on

racialized sexual politics and nation | empire-building (see Anderson, 2006; Davies, 2005; Enloe, 2000; Grewal & Kaplan, 2006; Kristeva, 1993; Mayer, 2000; McClintock, 1995, 1997; McClintock, Mufti, & Shohat, 1997; Mosse, 1985; Özkırmı, 2010; Parker, Russo, Sommer, & Yaeger, 1992; Pateman, 1988; Smith, 2008; Tolz & Booth, 2005; Yuval-Davis & Anthias, 1992; Yuval-Davis, 2004). My dissertation moves beyond methodological nationalism “conceptualized by Ulrich Beck (2005) as the distinctive mark (and limitation) of any production of knowledge that deploys and reproduces the nation-state as a privileged epistemic framework...” (Colpani & Habed, 2014, pp. 73-74) which it does by employing Poland as a tool or method (instead of focal point or regional case study) in ways that decenter it and distinguish it from other sociological entities. The scholarship on nations, nationalism(s) and identity politics is used solely as an entry point into these conversations to show the demands that this project makes for sexuality and race to do work for it. I point to this scholarship’s accounts of how hegemonic power gets reproduced and social difference gets enacted (whether articulated or denied) which is vital to thinking through complex relationships between nation | empire-building and (sexual and racialized) otherness.

My work theorizes nations and nationalism(s) but does not provide a comprehensive overview of the scholarship which is impossible considering its extent. Instead, it speaks briefly to the canonical writing on nations and nationalism(s) as it relates to my work, weaving in scholarship particular to East-Central European nations and (Polish) nationalisms. My overview begins with the current stage in the study of nationalisms (1989-present) which moves beyond the classical debate characteristic of the previous period in order to ask new questions and challenge previous assumptions made in the field (Özkırmı, 2010). This stage has promoted the rejection of (Eurocentric) “grand narratives” (Smith, 2008, p. 564) and demanded that the gendered, sexualized, and racialized workings of nations and nationalisms be addressed (see Enloe, 2000; Grewal & Kaplan, 2006; Kristeva, 1993; Mayer, 2000;

McClintock, 1995, 1997; Mosse, 1985; Özkırımlı, 2010; Parker, Russo, Sommer, & Yaeger, 1992; Pate-man, 1988; Smith, 2008; Tolz & Booth, 2005 for critiques).

I want to highlight here the complex and intimate relationships between nationalisms, genders, and sexualities which are simultaneously raced and classed, considering the specificities that speak to (post-socialist) Poland. The state which is understood as an organized political entity ruled by one civil government within a certain marked territory depends upon and reproduces identities and the nation acts as “a site for the enactment of the great drama of origins, loyalty, belonging, betrayal; in short, of identity and identification” (Mufti & Shohat as cited in McClintock, Mufti, & Shohat, 1997, p. 2) which speaks to the racialized instrumentalization of Polish national origin stories about intrinsic Catholicism and martyrdom (see Chapter Five). In her article, “Liberalism and the Construction of the Democratic Subject in Postcommunism: The Case of Poland, Janine P. Holc (1997) studies competing discourses on statehood and citizenship highlighting a nationalist understanding rooted in “family, community, and nation...” (p. 422) which (re)emerged in debates on abortion in the 1990s. The critical scholarship pertaining to the East-Central European nation-state notes this nationalist understanding is rooted in heterosexual family, Catholic community, and ethnically homogenous (often code for white) nation (see Chetaille, 2011; Czarnecki, 2007; Graff, 2007, 2009; Kulpa, 2012; Narkowicz & Pędziwiatr, 2017; Warمیńska, 1997; Wise, 2010). In her chapter, “Poland: Sovereignty and Sexuality in Post-Socialist Times, Agnès Chetaille (2011) likewise writes about a nationalist discourse that “defines Polishness as being Catholic and considers the heterosexual family as the pillar of the nation” (p. 119) while Robert Kulpa (2012) calls “the site of heterosexual family a nest of Polishness” (p. 95). In his doctoral thesis, “Nation Queer? Discourses of Nationhood and Homosexuality in Times of Transformation: The Case of Poland,” he weaves threads between “family, community, and nation...” (Holc, 1997, p. 422) by exploring the role of Matka Polka (Mother Poland and Polish mother) framed in the image of the Black Madonna known for her sacrificial holiness and (sexual and racial) purity (see Chapter Five).

In Poland, "...the great drama of origins..." (Mufti & Shohat as cited in McClintock, Mufti, & Shohat, 1997, p. 2) is told by national mythologies which maintain that Catholicism dates back to the foundation of the state which has been "...guarded by its defender, the Roman Catholic Church, and shielded by its Queen, the miraculous Black Madonna, Our Lady of Częstochowa" (Zubrzycki, 2011; p. 25) ever since. The historical and socio-political role that religion (the Catholic Church in particular) plays in the nation-state is significant (Korolczuk, 2020; Narkowicz & Pędziwiatr, 2017; Warmińska, 1997; Zubrzycki, 2011). In their article, "Saving and Fearing Muslim Women in 'Post-Communist' Poland: Troubling Catholic and Secular Islamophobia," Kasia Narkowicz and Konrad Pędziwiatr (2017) articulate the relationship between Catholicism and the modern nation-state arguing that:

It stems from the fact that Catholicism is a key element of the modern Polish national identity which initially developed in the absence of the state (1795-1918) and in opposition to occupying foreign powers viewed as religiously alien (especially Orthodox Russia and Protestant Prussia). After the re-emergence of Poland on the maps of Europe the apparatus of the state became actively involved in popularization of the Pole-Catholic identity, that survived the Communist repressions and particularly strongly revived around 1989 when the Church, then aligned with the Solidarity movement, celebrated victory over Communism (Janion 2006; Łuczewski 2012) (pp. 290-291).

Katarzyna Warmińska (1997) also articulates Polish religious nationalism noting that the marriage of church and state was consolidated through struggles for independence. In her chapter, "Polish Tatars: Ethnic Ideology and State Policy," she argues that "[r]eligion is strongly connected with the idea of sovereignty of the Polish nation. The course of historical events has been such that Poles fought for independence with enemies alien in a cultural as well as a religious sense (Protestant Russia, Orthodox Russia, Islamic Turks and Mongols) ..." (Warmińska, 1997, p. 350) – noting that racialized difference is subsumed into culture and religion (see Baker, 2018b). These struggles for independence speak to

national mythologies of martyrdom and a racialized inferiority complex in relation to Germany (and the West) and a racialized superiority complex in relation to Russia (and the East). These complexes are addressed by Attila Melegh's (2006) work on a dominant civilizational discourse of an East-West slope which sets the terms of geopolitical positioning and "invites a grotesque chain of racisms or Orientalisms between different public actors, depending on the position and perspective they adopt on the above slope" (p. 5) (see also Balogun, 2018; Graff, 2009; Kulpa, 2012; Rzepnikowska, 2019; Zubrzycki, 2011).

This "...great drama of origins..." (Mufti & Shohat as cited in McClintock, Mufti, & Shohat, 1997, p. 2) is "sustained through invention and transmission of various symbolic 'border guards' that separate members of a given nation from others" (Tolz & Booth, 2005, pp. 2-3). John A. Armstrong (1982) writes about the role of symbolic border guards in "maintaining ethnic distinctiveness" (p. xvi) which Nira Yuval-Davis and Marcel Stoetzler (2002) state "are closely linked to specific cultural codes of style of dress and behaviour as well as to more elaborate bodies of customs, religion, literary and artistic modes of production, and, of course, language" (p. 334). In *Racialized Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-Racist Struggle*, Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval Davis (1992) write on the role of women as biological reproducers of nations and their future citizens (nationalist wombs); reproducers of ethnic and national boundaries; active transmitters and reproducers of national culture; and as signifiers of national differences (our women are pure narratives). These gendered experiences are also sexualized and racialized as heterosexuality and whiteness play a central role in the biopolitical and cultural reproduction of nation-states and nationalisms which is instrumentalized through Poland for Poles (see Chapter Six). These border guards also become relevant to my contrapuntal reading and critical discourse analysis of Katarzyna Perlak's (2016) film which queers traditional folk customs (style of dress and language) (see Chapter Four). In his article, "Postcolonial Anxiety in Polish Nationalist Rhetoric," Andrew Kier Wise (2010) writes about symbolic border guards defending rural space which

the film speaks back to through the representation of queer and racialized women defying traditional roles and singing about queer love. In studying postcolonial nationalist rhetoric, Wise (2010) remarks on “the imperative to preserve Polish rural life as a repository of *polskość* [Polishness] and values of Latin civilization” (p. 295) – meaning traditional family values and civilizational purity which is code for religious homogeneity and whiteness. Perlak’s (2016) film undermines this postcolonial nationalist rhetoric and its conceptualization of Polishness by locating queer and racialized bodies in rural spaces (see Chapter Four).

Nationalisms which according to Anne McClintock (1997) are gendered and invented not to mention dangerous are based upon the exercise of internal hegemony and the exclusive empowerment of members who share a sense of belonging to the nation or what Benedict Anderson (2006) calls the “imagined political community” (p. 6). Maria Janion (2004) writes about Polish nationalist ideologies that flourished during Romanticism which involve fantasies about O/others – Jews, Muslims, Roma, and gays (see also Balogun & Joseph-Salisbury, 2021; Czarnecki, 2007; Goldberg, 2006; Graff, 2009; Kulpa, 2012; Law & Zakharov, 2018; Narkowicz and Pędziwiatr, 2017; Shibata, 2009). In his article, “Racial Europeanization,” David Theo Goldberg writes “Jews and Gypsies and homosexuals were Europe’s other, its own strangeness, its own crippling limb it sought to amputate” (p. 337). In “The Fantasmatic Stranger in Polish Nationalism: Critical Discourse Analysis of LPR’s Homophobic Discourse,” Yasuko Shibata (2009) writes about the fantasmatic stranger by drawing parallels between homophobic and anti-Semitic discourses which Gregory E. Czarnecki (2007) also does in his chapter, “Analogies of Pre-War Anti-Semitism and Present-Day Homophobia in Poland,” by studying current and past discourses which position homosexuals and Jews as mentally ill while concurrently perceiving them as a threat to the nation.

Narkowicz and Pędziwiatr (2017) “conceptualise Islamophobia in relation to racism and anti-Semitism, recognizing that Jews and Muslims were throughout history imagined together and Othered

as part of an Orientalising discourse” (p. 290). In their chapter, “‘Worse than Communism and Nazism Put Together’: War on Gender in Poland,” Agnieszka Graff and Elżbieta Korolczuk (2017) write about the mobilization against gender ideology which has become a stand-in for feminists; pro-choice and reproductive rights movements; the homosexual lobby; sex education; and “a foreign body that is Western and Eastern at the same time” (p. 176). In her article, “The Fight against ‘Gender’ and ‘LGBT’ Ideology’: New Developments in Poland,” Korolczuk (2020) shows how this nationalist discourse is taken up by the right. She states that “[w]hile the right-wing populist Law and Justice party has made attacks on ‘gender ideology’ a key element of the critique of individualism and neoliberal globalisation, anti-gender rhetoric is also today being adopted by neo-fascists, who combine a desire to maintain a gender hierarchy and hatred towards ‘sexual degenerates’ within anti-European Union (EU) sentiments and Islamophobia” (p. 165). These nationalist discourses show how the Polish nation is reproduced against its O/others.

McClintock (1997) states that “nations are not simply phantasmagoria of the mind; as systems of cultural representation whereby people come to imagine a shared experience of identification with an extended community, they are historical practices through which social difference is both invented and performed” (p. 89). In Poland, these historical practices manifest as mourning rituals which focus on distinguishing Poles from threatening neighbours to the East (Russia) and the West (Germany) as well as the ‘Rosary to the Borders’ event which saw Catholics line borders to protect the nation against a Muslim incursion (see Chapter Five). According to McClintock (1997), “[n]ationalism becomes in this way constitutive of people’s identities through social contests that are frequently violent and always gendered” (p. 89). Yuval-Davis (1997) likewise states that this sense of belonging (that moves beyond legal conceptualizations of citizenship) is not universal and is in fact dependent on gendered, sexualized, and racialized inclusions and exclusions which is evidenced within Poland in both struggles for reproductive (abortion; contraception; IVF) and sexual (gay marriage and adoption) rights as well

as racial histories (anti-Semitism as related to Islamophobia and anti-Roma racism) (see Baker, 2018b; Balogun, 2018; Balogun & Joseph-Salisbury, 2021; Goldberg, 2006; Imre, 2005; Law & Zakharov, 2019) (see Chapter Six). Tamar Mayer (2000) concurs that this sense of belonging which is entangled with this notion of “fictive ethnicity” (p. 3), or “horizontal comradeship” (p. 6) is gender, sexuality, race, and class specific. According to her, nation-states are dependent upon inclusions and (more importantly) exclusions and internal hierarchies which often occur along lines of gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, and class and (dis)ability regardless of nationalist discourses which espouse unity (Mayer, 2000) – Poland for Poles is about unity, but it is also about exclusion (see Chapter Six).

Norman Davies (2005) states that “[n]ationalism...is a doctrine shared by all political movements which seek to create a nation by arousing people’s awareness of their nationality, and to mobilize their feelings into a vehicle for political action” (p. 8) which becomes relevant in conversations around the mourning rituals (see Chapter Five). In her chapter, “No Longer in a Future Heaven’: Gender, Race and Nationalism,” McClintock (1997) considers the everyday reproduction of the “imagined political community” (Anderson, 2006, p. 6) and nationalism, noting its fetishistic features. She writes:

...nationalism inhabits the realm of fetishism. Despite the commitment of European nationalism to the idea of the nation-state as the embodiment of rational progress, nationalism has been experienced and transmitted primarily through fetishism – precisely the cultural form that the Enlightenment denigrated as the antithesis of reason. More often than not, nationalism takes shape through the visible, ritual organization of fetish objects (flags, uniforms, airplane logos, maps, anthems, national flowers, national cuisines, and national architectures) as well as through the organization of collective fetish spectacle (in team sports, military displays, mass rallies, the myriad forms of popular culture, and so on). Far from being purely phallic icons, fetishes embody crises in social value, which are

projected onto, and embodied in, what can be called impassioned objects (McClintock, 1997, p. 102).

Discussing nationalism as fetishism will become particularly relevant within the context of Poland in conversations on the mourning rituals (both ritual and spectacle) which manifest as method, that is analytics or political categories that speak and display fetish objects such as the national flag and Chairman Kaczyński's black attire as a symbol of his grief over the death of his twin brother. These analytics also point to the changing social and political context. These mourning rituals address what Kaczyński and the conservative right view as a crisis in social values in the context of EUropeanizing and globalizing neoliberal capitalist worlds (see Chapter Five). The nation inhabits the realm of fetishistic symbols and historical dramas attached to particular territories which becomes legitimated by the state and its political power – the mourning rituals serve as a stage for these dramas. Nationalism as fetishism will also become relevant to discussions on *kibole* (ultra-nationalists who use football matches as a platform to produce and disseminate a homophobic and racist anti-immigrant nationalist rhetoric (see Chapter Six).

Political science and transnational feminist scholarship offer critical analyses of nation-states and their claims to “universal” citizenship (see Chetaille, 2011; Enloe, 2000; Graff, 2010; Grewal & Kaplan, 2006; Kristeva, 1993; Mayer, 2000; McClintock, 1995, 1997; Mosse, 1985; Parker, Russo, Sommer, & Yaeger, 1992; Pateman, 1988; Tolz & Booth, 2005; Yuval-Davis & Anthias, 1992; Yuval-Davis, 2004). The scholarship makes evident the ways in which nations and nationalisms are gendered and how sexuality plays a key role in nation-building and national identity. In her article, “Looking at Pictures of Gay Men: Political Uses of Homophobia in Contemporary Poland,” Graff (2010) considers how sexuality became a national boundary marker and “reference point for political self-definition and national pride” (p. 584) during EU accession. She states, “[n]ot only were gays and lesbians being stigmatized in the name of patriotism, but national sentiment was now regularly expressed through

the exclusion of the sexual (rather than the ethnic or cultural) other” (Graff, 2010, p. 590). She continues, [t]hus it is not just that homophobia was becoming politicized, or that politicized homophobia was displacing other existing forms of gay bashing (discourses of aversion, religious outrage, or the slippery-slope argument), but that homophobia was becoming the new discourse of patriotism” (Graff, 2010, p. 590) – patriotism predicated on the preservation of Poland for Poles (heterosexual family; Catholic community; and white nation). Chetaille (2011) likewise writes about how “nationalist political parties [turned] resistance to sexual rights [and abortion] into a symbol of Polish sovereignty...” (p. 131) – framed against the EU which is imagined as the hub of modernity (see also Chetaille, 2013; Graff, 2006; Kulpa, 2012).

Carole Pateman (1988) writes about the eighteenth-century foundations of modern western European political systems, democratic and national in character, and challenges the notion put forth by social contract theorists (like Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau) that the state does not infringe upon the freedom of individuals because it is founded upon their consent. She argues that the social contract is predicated upon a sexual contract (meaning the subordination of women) and the foundations of these political systems are built upon divisions between the private (apolitical domain of white women) and public (political domain of white men) to the disenfranchisement of all women (Pateman, 1988; see also Tolz & Booth, 2005) which speaks to ongoing struggles for reproductive rights that see Polish women striking by refusing to participate in unpaid domestic labour and paid labour (see Chapter Six). In Poland, struggles over reproductive rights are about preserving the racial purity of the nation (see Balogun & Joseph-Salisbury, 2021; Chari & Verdery, 2009; Law & Zakharov, 2019).

McClintock (1995) contributes by stating that imperialism and the invention of race are central to modern nation-building and “to the policing of the ‘dangerous classes’: the working class, the Irish, Jews, prostitutes, feminists, gays and lesbians, criminals, the militant crowd and so on” (McClintock, 1995, p. 5). She states that the nation which is figured as a familial unit can also be framed as a historical

practice through which racialized gender and sexual difference is reproduced and institutionalized. In Polish nationalist discourses, the nation is figured as Polonia (a mother defined by her sexual and racial purity) whose role it is to reproduce the nation (see Kulpa, 2012). Cynthia Enloe (2000) argues that “nationalisms have typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope” (p. 44) which speaks to the role that women (and Polonia) play within the reproduction of nation-states and nationalisms. George Mosse (1985) argues that sexuality serves as a domain that is central to the construction of respectability (with bourgeois whiteness serving as a marker of civility) where national ideologies are upheld and/or contested. In Poland, it is the imagined purity of the Virgin Mary that acts as a marker of civility (see Chapter Five). Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger (1992) examine the construction of gendered, sexual, racial, and/or class identities in relation to the construction of national identities while considering the impacts of colonial and postcolonial projects. In her article, “The Land of Real Men and Women: Gender and EU Accession in Three Polish Weeklies,” Graff (2007) shows how the “transition to democracy established itself in collective consciousness as the re-masculinization of national culture, allegedly feminized by state socialism” (p. 10). Julia Kristeva (1993) considers the origins of nation-states and illustrates their ethnic, religious, social, and political configurations throughout subsequent centuries. As such, the scholarship on nations, nationalisms, and identity politics points to how nation-states and nationalisms are “hetero-male projects” (Mayer, 2000, p. 6) troubled by gendered, sexual, racial, and class hierarchies. The scholarship also points to how Polish nationalisms depend extensively on gender, sexuality, race and class to unfold as these social formations are co-constitutive with the nation-state (Graff, 2007; Kristeva 1993; Kulpa, 2012; Mayer, 2000; McClintock, 1995; Melegh, 2006; Mosse, 1985; Parker, Russo, Sommer, & Yaeger, 1992; Tolz & Booth, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2004).

Theorizing Transition(s)

Transition is a concept-metaphor that is central (albeit contentious and uncertain) to geopolitical conceptualizations of East-Central European nation-states and the moments in history marked by the restructuring of communism and EU accession. Pero Maldini understands transition “as a set of radical transformation processes” (p. 7) which Michael Burawoy and Katherine Verdery (1999) believe “connec[t] the past to the future” (p. 4). The scholars argue that the organizing principle of transition (whether it be cultural or social, psychic or political, economic or otherwise) by definition assumes a shared beginning and common end point – using the west as a barometer of progress. This subscribes to a polarizing developmental model that understands the west (and neoliberal global capitalism and democracy) as the end goal toward which the east is always transitioning. Yet, a transition is neither rooted in the past nor tied to an imagined future considering it is a process that is forever suspended in between the two which is why I plan to theorize it as it unfolds (Burawoy & Verdery, 1999). Ulrika Dahl (2012) maintains that transition “can refer to a change from one political or economic system to another, a movement from one gender category to another, or quite simply to a state of change, a movement from one point to another” (p. 13). She states that “...as a description or an experience, the idea of transition also reflects both epistemological and geopolitical perspective and points of departure” (p. 13). In signaling a constant state of change, transition is defined by tensions between national and transnational as well as local and global political and economic forces, and in this particular space and time, LGBTQI | racialized subjectivity and Polish national identity and will be theorized in co-production with sexuality itself (Kulpa, 2009).

In Ernest Gellner’s (1983) book, *Nations and Nationalism*, John Breuilly writes that: “[a]s Gellner recognises, transitions are times of fundamental conflict, when incompatible practices oppose one another, when people project competing visions of an uncertain future. Only after some sorting process (revolution, reform, warfare) can something settled emerge” (p. 11). This statement implies that

fundamental conflicts or (violent) sorting processes (which target racialized others) are not typical and opposed to the everyday state of things. It also subscribes to a particular racialized notion of progress which is based upon (Western European) Enlightenment values and remains unspoken.

To understand transition or the framing of “postsocialism as a one-way road: from the Soviet economic system of social planning toward the capitalist system of free market[s], and from the Communist Party dictatorship toward liberal democracy” (Navickaitė, 2016, p. 121) we must inter-reference scientific knowledge production in transitology and western area studies (see Bova, 1991; Bunce, 1995; Carothers, 2002; Dale, Miklóssy, & Segert, 2015; Di Palma, 1990; Ekiert, 2015; Gans-Morse, 2004; Geddes, 1999; Holc, 1997; Linz & Stepan, 1996; Lipset & Bence, 1994; Maldini, 2007; McFaul, 2002; O’Donnell & Schmitter, 1986; Pridham, 1994; Rustow, 1970; Saxonberg & Linde, 2003; Schmitter & Karl, 1994; Stenning & Hörschelmann, 2008; Szanton, 2004). In doing so, I will be able to also show how Poland itself can be read as a site whose production of specific knowledges and from different vantage points, the “method” can contribute to “transformation” now monopolized by a certain dominant understanding of the western universal.

Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou and Timothy D. Sisk (2013) know transitology to be “a body of literature that has comparatively and through case-study analysis examined common patterns, sequences, crises and outcomes of transitional periods” (p. 7). This literature emerged from analyses of democratizing transitions in Southern Europe in the 1970s and Latin America in the 1980s and contemplates “the pathways of transition, including likely triggering events, collective action in social movements and patterns of revolt, regime repression and escalating political violence” (Mohamedou & Sisk, 2013, p. 7). Gareth Dale, Katalin Miklóssy and Dieter Segert (2015) describe western area studies as “a congeries of disciplines – linguistics, cultural studies and history” (p. 6) that examines particular geographic regions and expanded in response to the pressures of the Second World War and the subsequent Cold War.

The transitological approach is grounded within comparative democratization studies which are informed by the modernization paradigm (and the belief that west is best) whereas western area studies is grounded within multidisciplinary research funded by western political wartime agendas (Bideleux & Jeffries, 2007; Bunce, 1995; Gans-Morse, 2004; Maldini, 2007). Thomas Carothers (2002) names core beliefs which inform transitology which include the assumptions that countries moving away from dictatorial rule are moving toward democracy; democratization unfolds in a particular manner; social actors in elections are of determinative importance; the underlying conditions of nation-states (meaning their economic situation; sociocultural and political history; ethnic make-up; among other factors) do not impact the transition process; and that transitional states are functioning ones. The initial assumption is perhaps informed by Francis Fukuyama (1989) who argued that the end of the Cold War would mark “the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government” (p. 1) constituting the end of history. Chetaille (2011) undermines these core beliefs by arguing that transitology has a “normative dimension and a-historical standpoint, including its conception of democracy as growing on empty ground, and following the same stages whatever the nature of the earlier regime and social organization” (p. 121). Merje Kuus (2004) concurs that transitology is not grounded in empirical material and effaces national agency because it does not account for the underlying conditions of nation-states which enable and frame East-Central European transitions.

Steven Saxonberg and Jonas Linde (2003) argue that transitology “set[s] out to explain, and with any luck, guide the transitions from dictatorship to democracy by ‘applying a universal set of assumptions, concepts, and hypotheses’ derived from the study of earlier democratizations” (p. 4). Valerie Bunce (1995) and other western area specialists critique this universal approach stating that East-Central European post-socialist transitions must be regarded as unique considering their economic,

political, cultural, social, and ideological particularities. The methodological debate between transitologists who employ a universal approach and western area specialists who subscribe to what is referred to as the uniqueness paradigm is emphasized in the following exchange (Saxonberg & Linde, 2003). Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl (1994) believe that Eastern European democratizing processes can and should be compared with democratizing processes in Southern Europe and Latin America. In response, Bunce (1995) asks, “[a]re we comparing apples with apples, apples with oranges (which are at least varieties of fruit) or apples with, say, kangaroos?” (p. 112).

Saxonberg and Linde (2003) remark that while the transitological approach is rich in theory it is poor in empirical material whereas the western area studies approach is rich in empirical material but poor in theory. Bunce (1995) agrees that transitological research pertaining to Eastern Europe is “rich in description but relatively poor in testable hypotheses” (p. 122). Whereas Dale, Miklóssy and Segert (2015) note that western area studies is “resistant to innovative methodologies.... [considering] [i]t is a congeries of disciplines ... heaped together without a theoretical or methodological toolkit to call their own” (p. 6). There is a new generation of political scientists who are incorporating western area studies empirical knowledge with a comparative methodological approach. Bunce (1999) herself does this in her book, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State*, which looks at the collapse of socialism and why Yugoslavia fragmented through war when the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia disintegrated in a peaceful manner.

The discourses on East-Central European transitions produced in transitology and western area studies are critiqued for multiple reasons significant for our understanding of post-communist Poland and its geopolitical positioning vis-à-vis EUrope. These discourses are critiqued for their colonial and imperial motives and conceptualizations of the region. Schmitter and Karl (1994) maintain that “[t]he neophyte practitioners of transitology and consolidology have tended to regard the implosion of the Soviet Union and the regime changes in eastern Europe with ‘imperial intent’” (p. 177) while Miklóssy

(2015) notes the relationship between western area studies and colonial state agendas. She claims that in order “[t]o take full advantage of the resources of a distant territory and be able to apply suitable methods to govern” (Miklóssy, 2015, p. 61) states require “knowledge of its geography, ethnography, politico-economic systems and culture” (Miklóssy, 2015, p. 61). Jordan Gans-Morse (2004) engages critiques which address the colonial and imperial perspectives which shape our understanding of East-Central European transitions. He speaks to critiques which claim that the transitological approach subscribes to a teleological perspective that understands liberal democracy as the end goal. Kuus (2004) critiques transitology for its linear premises while Alison Stenning and Kathrin Hörschelmann (2008) write about its reductionist tendencies considering how it equates difference with backwardness or lagging temporality. Both the transitological approach and western area studies approach frame East-Central European nation-states as transitional states striving to catch up to the west in social and material terms.

Robert Bideleux (2015) argues that centering western area studies in examining East(-Central) Europe “represents nothing but the consequence of an abiding ‘orientalism,’ one that encourages a tendency – doubtless less pronounced among scholars than policy-makers – to lump East Europeans together as a cultural civilizational Other” (Dale, Miklóssy, & Segert, 2015, p. 6). This centering leads to “[t]he need ... for ‘a thorough ‘de-Orientalization’ of (pre)conceptions, perceptions, attitudes and mindsets with regards to ‘Eastern Europe’ ... in order to help the inhabitants of post-Communist states to escape or throw off the injurious, essentialist and ethnocentric caricatures and straightjackets which have limited their opportunities and potential for too long” (Bideleux as cited in Dale, Miklóssy, & Segert, 2015, pp. 6-7). Both the transitological and western area studies approach reproduce western progress narratives that conceptualize East-Central European difference (from the west) as a lag “... which not only redeploys the teleological construction of progress from east to west but also embeds the teleology (spatial and temporal) itself ...” (Stenning & Hörschelmann, 2008, p. 321).

For this reason, theorizing East-Central European transition(s) requires a turn toward time and temporality which are co-produced with spatiality (Agathangelou & Killian, 2016). In grappling with time “as a force, a set of discourses, a device, an ontology, and an institution of governance ...” (Agathangelou & Killian, 2016, p. 4) we can understand political and economic transition as a process that positions East-Central European spaces “on the developmental scale that measure[s] the distance between civilization and barbarism” (Wolff, 1994, p. 13). Time functions as a colonial mechanism that is deployed to reproduce Poland (among other nation-states within the region) “as permanently ‘post-communist’, ‘in transition’ (i.e. not liberal, yet, enough), and, last but not least, homophobic” (Kulpa, 2014b, p. 432) which is done through the use of sexual freedom and other racialized western progress narratives. East-Central European transitional permanence is articulated alongside (the promise of) an end point that is forever moving away – in transition, if you will (Agathangelou & Killian, 2016).

Anna M. Agathangelou and Kyle D. Killian (2016) “... insist that *the fiction of time* as a force coproduces subjectivity or competing histories or is deployed within a dispositif of regulatory power, be it colonial, neocolonial, imperial or otherwise” (p. 14). Joanna Mizielińska and Robert Kulpa (2011) engage time and temporality in their work on Central and Eastern European sexualities in pertinent ways. The scholars contemplate “temporal disjunction” (Mizielińska and Kulpa, 2011, p. 14) between eastern (en route) and western (progressive) subjectivities by centering the “time of the other” (Agathangelou & Killian, 2016, p. 14). Mizielińska and Kulpa (2011) read and understand communism and capitalism as separate geopolitical-temporal modalities running parallel until the fall of the wall when one ends and the other becomes universal. The scholars theorize this moment by knotting and looping time(s) and theorize the end of communist time as western “time of sequence” (Mizielińska & Kulpa, 2011, p. 15) and eastern “time of coincidence” (Mizielińska & Kulpa, 2011, p. 15). They maintain that “for the West the continuity was preserved and the ‘end of communism’/1989 may be placed as another event in the sequence of events. For CEE [Central and Eastern Europe], this change was much

sharper and more abrupt, literally bring[ing] the collapse of one world and the promise of a ‘(brave?) new world’ much more coincidentally – ‘everything at once’” (Mizielińska & Kulpa, 2011, p. 15). Rasa Navickaitė (2016) employs a feminist and postcolonial critique in order to claim that this geopolitical-temporal difference works to reinforce the east|west dualism it seeks to disrupt while also replacing backwardness narratives with “East European exceptionalism and radical difference” (p. 130) narratives. My work employs a transnational feminist and queer and postcolonial framework in order to theorize and problematize transition(s) within an East-Central European space as they unfold and in co-production with sexualities and a certain neoliberal global order (see Chapter Four).

East-Central European Postcolonial Studies

“Can a story about Slavdom and about Poland be told from a postcolonial critique?”
(Janion, 2006, p. 10)

Attending to racialized sexual politics and nation|empire-building requires critical approaches that move us beyond the narrow confines of analytics produced and co-constituted through the state and global order. Bringing together and in conversation queer and postcolonial scholarship allows me to articulate the production of subjects as well as the production of institutions and knowledge (Jasanoﬀ, 2004; see also Agathangelou & Killian, 2016). In this way, I can then organize how these productions are entangled with one another and in the co-production of a state and global order. Postcolonial scholarship is made significant here considering it becomes a methodological tool (or neocropolitical weapon) adopted and misappropriated by conservative scholars² and (subsequently or simultaneously) misused by right-wing politicians within an East-Central European space (considering Poland in particular) in ways that shape the nation-state itself (always in the making) as well as the

² My use of the term “conservative” gestures toward scholars aligned with the Law and Justice party’s illiberal democratic, populist, nationalist, and EUrosceptic politics which are marked by the marriage of left-wing economics (i.e., 500plus; tax cuts; increased pensions) and right-wing traditionalism (i.e., anti-abortion, anti-LGBTQI, and anti-migrant rhetoric and policies). See Cavanagh, 2004; Skórczewski, 2014; Thompson, 2000, 2010, 2014; Ziemkiewicz, 2011.

lives of sexual and racialized others in bound although uneven ways (see Cavanagh, 2004; Skórczewski, 2014; Thompson, 2000, 2010, 2014; Ziemkiewicz, 2011 for examples of these misappropriations). These scholars and politicians frame Poland as well as other nation-states within the region as the (forgotten) “other others” (play on Ahmed, 2002, p. 558) of postcolonial scholarship and center on particular key themes and concepts either formulated or propagated by postcolonial studies and then re-imagined by post-communist (or post-socialist) studies.

Yet, such a positioning of Poland misses the ways Poland can act as an inter-European and inter-modernity referencing and as an imaginary anchoring point of world conjuring sexual projects. In this sense, Poland plays a key role in negotiating, challenging and shifting the dominant Eurocentric values with its active participation in co-producing insights and understandings about the region and the world.

There exists an emergent body of critical scholarship about East-Central and Southern Europe which adopts and not only misappropriates but also whitewashes postcolonial theory. This scholarship is mostly comprised of historical and literary revisionism and reinterpretations which address relations between nationalism and racism; class and racialization; east and west dichotomies; colonialism and eastern backwardness; state transition and sexual politics; southern borders and differential belonging; subalternity and peripheralization; and overlaps between post-communism (or post-socialism) and postcolonialism (see Bakić-Hayden, 1995; Bakula, 2014; Cavanagh, 2004; Cervinkova, 2012; Chari & Verdery, 2009; Colpani & Ponzanesi, 2016; Cooke, 2005; Dainotto, 2007; Gosk, 2012; Imre, 2014, 2016; Janion, 2006, 2014; Kledzik, 2015; Kołodziejczyk & Sandru, 2012; Koobak & Marling, 2014; Kuus, 2004; Lindstrom, 2003; Mayblin, Piekut, & Valentine, 2014; Melegh, 2006; Moore, 2006; Parvulescu, 2016; Snochowska-Gonzalez, 2012; Stenning & Hörschelmann, 2008; Thompson, 2000, 2010, 2014; Tlostanova, 2012; Todorova, 1997/2009; Wolff, 1994 for examples and critiques thereof). This scholarship considers Europe at (or from) its borders by addressing the “shifting positionalities”

(Haritaworn, 2008b) and cultural as well as geopolitical and economic precarity of nation-states that could (to varying degrees) be demarcated as “white but not quite” (Agathangelou, 2004, p. 4).³

The adoption of postcolonial theory by scholars of East-Central and Southern Europe who use it as a conceptual tool and historical as well as political marker of difference in order to (re)produce the region as postcolonial coincides with the restructuring of communism (1989-) and is said to fill a theoretical void and address a missed opportunity (Kołodziejczyk, 2014b). The scholarship notes so-called second world absence in postcolonial analyses which is attributed by some to historical and ideological differences between post-communism and postcolonialism (Kołodziejczyk & Săndru, 2012; Thompson, 2010). American Slavist Claire Cavanagh (2004) writes about the inconspicuous and self-evident absence of the second world from postcolonial studies and not unlike other scholars who study the region highlights its omission within seminal postcolonial texts. She notes that Edward W. Said’s (1993) critical work, *Culture and Imperialism*, includes but a few passing references to Soviet and Russian empire-building. American Slavist Ewa Thompson (2010) writes about Poland’s colonization by Russian and German imperial powers as an undertheorized proposition. Thompson (2014) argues that this speaks to East-Central European postcolonial studies being plagued by timid scholars “submitting to the gaze of the surrogate hegemon [western Europe and the United States] at every attempt to establish theoretical frameworks” (p. 69). Dorota Kołodziejczyk and Cristina Săndru (2012)

³ In *The Global Political Economy of Sex: Desire, Violence, and Insecurity*, Anna M. Agathangelou (2004) conceptualizes “white but not quite” (p. 4) states and their subjects in examining the movement of domestic and sex workers entering Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey and demonstrating their gendered and racialized experiences within desire economies which are in turn informed by neoliberal restructuring. According to Agathangelou (2004) “white but not quite” (p. 4) refers to the “peripheral economic states whose upper and middle-classes can never be ‘white’ because race is also about class” (p. 4). Despite their inability to hold political and economic dominance, these upper and middle-classes utilize | endorse capitalist strategies to gain profit and “reconstitute themselves as bourgeois subjects” (Agathangelou, 2004, p. 4) – the “wannabes” (Matsuda in Agathangelou, 2004, p. 4) of capitalism. This concept also refers to the “sex workers who possess white skin and yet economically are not ‘white’” (Agathangelou, 2004, p. 4). These women whose bodies and labour are treated as desirable commodities are subject to political and economic subordination making them “white but not quite” (Agathangelou, 2004, p. 4) with regard to their “gendered class (i.e., they may be considered stateless in the sense that their states sell their labor and their bodies at fire prices in order to generate profits for its propertied and middle-class)” (Agathangelou, 2004, p. 4).

also argue that “...losing the anti-imperialist, liberating moment of eastern European transformation from its horizon, postcolonial studies contributed to the conceptual co-option of the region to the Eurocentric model of western modernity” (p. 114). This presumed rectification begs the theoretical and political question posed by Gianmaria Colpani and Sandra Ponzanesi (2016) who ask “[d]oes ‘postcolonial Europe’ – as analytical framework and object of inquiry – simply amount to a recuperation of a radical, critical disposition in the service of yet another project of Eurocentric knowledge production?” (p. 7).

The scholarship which considers the co-constitution of Europe with its eastern and southern borders accounts for the peripheral positioning of nation-states considered “...European but always precariously so” (Colpani & Ponzanesi, 2016, p. 9). It is in part based upon overlaps between post-communism (or post-socialism) and postcolonialism. These overlaps speak to particular key themes and concepts either formulated or propagated by postcolonial studies and re-imagined by post-communist (or post-socialist) studies such as centre | periphery dichotomies and conceptualizations of liminality and in-betweenness; hybridity; configurations of nationalism; alterity and processes of othering; collective experiences of trauma which involve collective remembering and forgetting; ambivalence and mimicry; agency and resistance practices; dislocation and subalternity; orientalizing and self-colonization (Kołodziejczyk & Sándru, 2012). Larry Wolff (1994) maps the cultural and intellectual construction of Eastern Europe which according to him is the invention of eighteenth-century Enlightenment. In his book, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment*, he maps this construction by noting the ideological and philosophical reorientation of the dichotomy between barbarism and civilization which shifted from a north-south axis (associated with the Renaissance) to an east-west axis. Wolff (1994) traces this shift by studying travelogues and autobiographies; personal communications and memoirs; atlases and maps; philosophical treatises and political dispatches; as well as encyclopedias and dictionaries which framed the eastern region as uncivilized and

backward. He contends that “[o]ne might describe the invention of Eastern Europe as an intellectual project of demi-Orientalization” (Wolff, 1994, p. 7).

Maria Todorova (1997/2009) considers Southern Europe and differential belonging in her book, *Imagining the Balkans*, in which she writes about a discourse she names Balkanism. This discourse which she also traces through a historiographical account has been reproducing the region as backward and barbarian since the sixteenth century to present day. Milica Trakilović (2016) states “...Balkanism shifts the traditional Self-Other dichotomy characteristic of colonial and orientalist discourses into a more complicated configuration of ‘the other within’ or the *failed Self*” (p. 224). Roberto M. Dainotto (2007) likewise pens a historiography of modern European identity (or Eurocentrism) tracing its discursive reproduction to eighteenth and nineteenth century political and philosophical thought. In *Europe (In Theory)*, he states that modern European identity is reproduced against its own south which “becomes the sufficient and indispensable *internal* Other: Europe, but also the negative part of it” (Dainotto, 2007, p. 4). Paul Cooke (2005) contemplates the usefulness of postcolonial theory in theorizing German unification and the positioning of east Germans during the 1990s transitions. In *Representing East Germany Since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia*, he outlines how “unification has been presented as a quasi colonial ‘subjugation’ of the east by the west” (Cooke, 2005, p. 2). Milica Bakić-Hayden (1995) presents the concept of “nesting orientalisms” (p. 917) to denote the East-Central European practice of reproducing the east|west dichotomy upon which Orientalism is posited. In “Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia,” Bakić-Hayden (1995) shows how nation-states within the region appropriate the very same Orientalist discourse used to other them to distinguish themselves from their eastern neighbours and secure a more stable position within Europe’s economic, geopolitical, and racial hierarchy.

In writing about such overlaps, Madina Tlostanova (2012) centers global coloniality in its Russian|Soviet variant. She employs the concept of coloniality coined by Anibal Quijano (2000) and further developed by the decolonial collective which refers to “the indispensable underside of modernity, a racial, economic, social, existential, gender and epistemic bondage created around the 16th century, firmly linking imperialism and capitalism, and maintained (though reconfigured) since then within the modern/colonial world” (p. 132). In her article, “Postsocialist ≠ Postcolonial? On Post-Soviet Imaginary and Global Coloniality,” she illustrates how imperial and colonial discourses particular to Russia have changed over time from “romantic orientalism, through quasi-scientific positivist racism, to commodity racism and to Soviet pseudo-internationalism with its underside of transmuted racism and, finally, to the post-Soviet revenge of bio-racist discourses grounded in the purity of blood and the colour of skin” (Tlostanova, 2012, p. 136). She continues by stating that “race functioned in the Soviet Union in transmuted forms: class and ideological overtones were translated into racial and ethnic ones” (Tlostanova, 2012, p. 137).

Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery (2009) propose thinking between postcolonialism and post-socialism which they believe integral to ethnographic and historical studies of imperialism and colonialism. In their article, “Thinking between the Posts: Postcolonialism, Postsocialism, and the Ethnography after the Cold War,” the scholars argue that thinking between these posts challenges the three-worlds ideology and makes space to “ask how each framework treats the making and unmaking of state-sanctioned racisms that rely not necessarily on biological conceptions of race but on institutional and biopolitical mechanisms, which differentiate populations into sub-groups having varied access to means of life and death” (Chari & Verdery, 2009, p. 12). These scholars, much like Tlostanova (2012), consider racialized biopower and “...the racializing aspects of assigning people to *class* categories” (Chari & Verdery, 2009, p. 26). They employ Étienne Balibar’s (1991) theorizations of “class racism” (p. 204) which they define as “...the naturalization of class inequality through conceptions of

sub-humanity...” (Chari & Verdery, 2009, p. 26) in order to make their argument. These overlaps are written about in relation to the entanglement between colonialism and nationalism as well as the transmutation of race into class which must be complicated (Chari & Verdery, 2009; Thompson, 2010; Tlostanova, 2012).

The literature (scholarly and otherwise) which considers the Polish nation-state in particular as postcolonial emerged in the 1990s when Said’s (1978) *Orientalism* was first translated into the language but did not gain significant traction until Cavanagh wrote in *Second Texts* that “the entire Second World, as a further mutation of the Russian Empire along with its satellite partners, is a Conradian ‘blank space’ awaiting inscription into the postcolonial paradigm” (as cited in Kledzik, 2015, p. 88). Thompson (2005) also contributed to inciting a postcolonial awakening when she wrote an article for a popular newspaper which explains the premises of Saidian Orientalism and its relevance to Poland. Kolodziejczyk and Śandru (2012) added to the field by framing Eastern Europe as double postcolonial considering it addresses past colonizers (eastern occupiers) by reclaiming its agency while simultaneously approaching the west (complicit then and peripheralizing now) with postcolonial ambivalence. Lucy Mayblin, Aneta Piekut and Gill Valentine (2014) consider Polish national identity in terms of a triple relation to eastern and western neighbours. In their article, “‘Other’ Posts in ‘Other’ Places: Poland Through a Postcolonial Lens?” they discuss Poland in relation to Russia understood as former colonizer, the west understood as the other ideological hegemon, and lastly to, “eastern and third world ‘others’ including those living in the pre-war Polish territories in the near East, who are often viewed in civilizational terms” (Mayblin, Piekut & Valentine, 2014, p. 4). Cavanagh (2004) argues that Poland’s vanishing act, a result of its division between three imperial powers, the Russian Empire, Kingdom of Prussia, and the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy, in the late eighteenth century and its occupation by both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in the twentieth century are what constitute its postcolonial status here. Thompson (2010) subscribes to this argument and names these partitions

and occupations as forms of colonialism. She states, “they included a violent conquest and subsequent efforts to exploit and reeducate the locals who differed from the conquerors linguistically, religiously, and politically” (Thompson, 2010, p. 2). She continues by stating that “...colonialism is not necessarily grounded in racism; it can also be grounded in nationalism, with Russia being a prominent example” (Thompson, 2010, p. 2) – the implications of which comprise the collapse of social formations and erasure of racial undertones of colonial violence.

Claudia Snochowska-Gonzalez (2012) critiques the reduction and equation of one hundred and twenty-three years of partitions, six years of war, and forty-four years of political dependence with a postcolonial experience. She shows how Poland’s “postcolonial” status is often discussed in relation to the Soviet Union (understood in terms of eastern backwardness) and critiques the ways in which such postcolonial critiques evoke Orientalist discourses and anti-Russian phobias. She questions the productivity (potential problematics) of equating eastern and western empires and speaks to the ways in which Poland becomes exceptional “as a bulwark of civilisation...Poland defends the European civilisation against the spate from the East: be it Haydamaks, Turks, Bolsheviks, or illegal immigrants. It becomes a border between European law, order, and reason and Eastern (Russian) lawlessness, disorder and irrationality...” (Snochowska-Gonzalez, 2012, p. 717). She argues that framing Poland as a postcolonial nation defined by martyrdom and shaped by its relationship to the eastern empire obscures its current privileged position within Europe’s economic, geopolitical, and racial hierarchy.

This emergent body of scholarship grapples with postcolonial theory in order to make sense of the geopolitical positioning of eastern and southern nation-states within Europe but in doing so unequivocally divorces it from critical analyses of race and racism or distorts racialization by collapsing it into other processes of othering (Parvulescu, 2016). This scholarship also ignores the geopolitical imperial divisions and the ways in which these divisions differ. It is comprised of historical and literary revisionism and reinterpretations that are plagued by substantial omissions and silences as they do not

name race or the central role that notions of racial inferiority and otherness play within colonial relations or postcolonial theorizing which supplants race with class. This scholarship studies race and racism in transmuted form by making comparisons between the working classes of the second world and the ‘savages’ of the colonial third world (Mbembe, 2003). The effects of such theorizations include the collapse of social formations (class into race or race into class) and disavowal of the role that the politics of race plays in processes of othering and ultimately the politics of death (Mbembe, 2003).

The comparison between Slav life and ‘savage’ life is what constitutes the misappropriation and whitewashing of postcolonial theory here. While theories travel and “[c]ultural and intellectual life are usually nourished and often sustained by this circulation of ideas, [...] whether it takes the form of acknowledged or unconscious influence, creative borrowing, or wholesale appropriation...” (Said, 1982/2000, pp. 195-196) we must consider what happens when postcolonial theory is employed to define what it was meant to decenter (Parvulescu, 2016). Parvulescu (2016) asks “[i]f the word ‘post-colonial’ designates various forms of resistance and agentive transformation in the aftermath of colonialism and neocolonialism and if ‘Europe’ is almost synonymous with colonialism, is ‘postcolonial Europe’ an oxymoronic formulation, with potentially regressive overtones?” (p. 25) – a question which collapses Europe and does not account for eastern and southern peripheralization. She continues, “[o]n its journeys to Europe, as Said might wonder, does postcolonial theory risk ossification and domestication or is it likely to be reinvigorated?” (Parvulescu, 2016, p. 25).

Mapping Poland and its Concepts

The East-Central European nation-state is a sociological entity always in the making shaped by divergent actors vying for divergent (at times, utopian) productions (i.e., Poland for Poles; EUropean; queer) that are spatial (and temporal) imaginaries constituted through and against what they exclude as other and so mapping it requires engagement with scholarship which can provide a framework for

understanding its multiple social reproductions. In order to map the nation-state, considering its reproduction which is regional and transnational and somehow always spoken as transitional which Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) in turn states is also translational by which he gestures toward a meeting of two worlds and a historical (re-)imagining through the lens of capitalist modernity, my dissertation engages transnational feminist and queer and postcolonial scholarship which makes space for multiple and opposing and simultaneous knowledges by disrupting normative taxonomies that serve colonial and imperial agendas.

The concepts below facilitate my understanding of post-socialist space (considering Poland and its multiple social reproductions as transitional; postcolonial; fascist; eastern other within in particular) theorized in co-production with EUropean global order (Jasanoff, 2004; see also Agathangelou & Killian, 2016). They enable a critical understanding of East-Central European space (beyond narrow conceptualizations of east | west and transitional moments) and situate sexual and racialized otherness within this particular space and time which is necessary to understanding my project.

East-Central Europe: A geopolitical conceptualization of the region between Germany and Russia and between the Baltic and the Aegean seas. The region is understood to be situated (in a cultural, social, psychic, political, and economic space) between opposing worlds, stages, and futures.

EUrope: I use Shannon Woodcock's (2011) concept of 'EUrope' to make visible (and perhaps visual) the geopolitical positioning of the European Union (made synonymous with Western Europe) and the power (epistemic and otherwise) it holds in defining Europe itself (Kulpa, 2014b). I use this concept in thinking about Stuart Hall's (1992) west/rest discourse and the ways in which East-Central Europe is "often framed as the European (homophobic) Other in the emerging discourses of 'homoninclusive EUropean Nationhood'..." (Kulpa, 2014b, p. 431) but also in thinking about the ways in which Poland (in particular) complicates what Hall (1992) discusses as an over-simplified dichotomy.

Nationalism: I define nationalism as an ideology and organizing principle of citizenship (meaning legal and otherwise) which is not universal and is in fact dependent upon gendered, classed, sexualized, and racialized inclusions and (more importantly) exclusions (Yuval-Davis as cited in Grewal & Kaplan, 2006, p. 219).

Post-Communism: I draw upon the work of Kasia Narkowicz and Konrad Pędziwiatr (2017) in thinking through this ‘geo-temporal’ concept which they theorize beyond the geographical and chronological seeing it instead as an epistemological category which informs the ways in which East-Central Europe is framed as subordinate to the west (p. 290). I use this concept in ways that signal its permanence as this region is always understood to be “catching up on an uneven slope of progressive distance/proximity from the peak of the West/Europe ideal” (Kulpa, 2014b, p. 432). I afford Poland’s post-communist status no end date (writing 1989-) referencing this supposed permanence and signaling the nation-state’s delayed arrival and participation in democratizing and globalizing neoliberal capitalist worlds but also how contemporary political discourses (and not only in transitology and western area studies) frame it as liminal and always already or forever in-between.

Post-Socialism: I draw upon Stenning’s (2005) work in thinking through what she names “as a conceptual, rather than simply descriptive and/or transitory, category” (p. 113). In wondering about a post-socialist condition, she recognizes “...that the particular experiences of socialism, its construction on a particular set of nascent capitalist societies and its replacement through a period of rapid and widespread ‘transition’ shape a common condition” (Stenning, 2005, p. 114). She recognizes uneven histories and geographical differences while attuning to commonalities which shape this condition. Stenning (2005) argues that “any post-socialism must be seen as a partial and hybrid social formation, existing in combination with contemporary others – ‘Western’ capitalism, the post-colonial – and founded on older forms – pre-socialism and socialism” (p. 114) which aligns with my theorization of Poland as concept and method.

Racialized Others: Within the EU (considering post-communist Poland in particular) this concept refers to those subjects who are read as neither white nor Catholic (nor heterosexual or cisgender for that matter) forever marked as outsiders or as some right-wing nationalists would say ‘invaders’ who according to Jarosław Kaczyński carry “all sorts of parasites and protozoa” (as cited in Cienski, 2015, para. 3) and are not entitled to the rights associated with national belonging (El-Tayeb, 2011; Murray, 2009; Puar, 2007). These racialized others include (among others) a racialized native population (Roma) living in every single European nation-state since the Middle Ages who number roughly ten million people at present (El-Tayeb, 2011).

Sexual Others: I use this concept to denote LGBTQI genders and sexualities but also those that do not fall in line with what John P. Elia and Gust A. Yep (2012) discuss (and I contextualize and build upon) as racial (meaning white) and class (meaning working class) and religious (meaning church-going Catholic) and sexual (meaning not only heterosexual but also monogamous, long-term, and married) and gender (meaning culturally appropriate gender performances) and body (meaning biologically and/or economically reproductive) normativities (p. 885).

Transition: I use this concept-metaphor because it is central (albeit contentious and uncertain) to geopolitical conceptualizations of both the Polish nation-state and the moment in history marked by the restructuring of communism. The organizing principle of a transition (whether it is a cultural, social, psychic, political, and/or economic one) by definition assumes a shared beginning and a common end point – using the west as a barometer of progress. It subscribes to a polarizing developmental model which understands the west as the end goal toward which the east is transitioning. Yet, a transition is neither rooted in the past nor tied to an imagined future as it is a process that is always already suspended in between the two which is why I plan to theorize it as it unfolds (Burawoy & Verdery, 1999). Transition signals a constant state of change and is defined by tensions between national and transnational as well as local and global political and economic forces, and in this particular space and

time, LGBTQI | racialized subjectivity and Polish national identity and will be theorized in co-production with sexuality itself (Kulpa, 2009).

In Ernest Gellner's (1983) book, *Nations and Nationalism*, John Breuilly writes that: "[a]s Gellner recognises, transitions are times of fundamental conflict, when incompatible practices oppose one another, when people project competing visions of an uncertain future. Only after some sorting process (revolution, reform, warfare) can something settled emerge" (p. 11). This implies that fundamental conflicts or (violent) sorting processes (which target racialized others) are not typical and opposed to the everyday state of things. It also subscribes to a particular racialized notion of progress which is based upon (Western European) Enlightenment values and remains unspoken.

Conclusion

This chapter provides theoretical grounding for my dissertation as it traces scholarship which allows me to articulate the relationships between (East-Central European) nations and nationalisms, genders and sexualities, races and racisms, and neoliberal colonial and imperial projects. I outlined the conversations on nations and nationalisms as interconnected with social formations (meaning gender, sexuality, race, and class) within anthropology, history, political science, postcolonial studies, sociology and transnational feminism. Secondly, I theorized transition by examining scholarship in transitology and western area studies. Thirdly, I outlined the adoption and what I argue is the misappropriation and whitewashing of postcolonial studies within East-Central European scholarship. The scholarship examined in these three sections is key to my conceptualization of the nation-state as concept and method as well as site of experimentation. Lastly, I defined key concepts necessary to understanding the post-socialist space and articulations of sexual and racialized otherness there within.

Chapter Three:

Methodology and Methods

This chapter uncovers the scaffolding upon which my dissertation is built as it maps both my epistemological and methodological frameworks and outlines my qualitative research methods. Firstly, I sketch the transnational feminist and queer as well as postcolonial epistemologies and methodologies which provide a framework for my dissertation project and inform my study objectives and research questions. Subsequently, I describe the ways in which I collected and analysed my data and make an argument for the significance that both qualitative interviewing and participant observation hold for a study on the nation-state and its O/others. Thirdly, I discuss my assembled textual materials which I analysed employing Edward W. Said's (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading, Keller's (2006) SKAD as well as van Dijk's (1993) CDA which allowed me to deconstruct my data by accounting not only for what was included but also for what was excluded. I then write about my own positionality in an attempt to make my role in the research visible while simultaneously working to de-center myself and my (western) ways of knowing. I conclude the chapter by writing about the ethical considerations and research limitations of my (field)work.

Epistemological and Methodological Frameworks

My dissertation is grounded in transnational feminist, queer and postcolonial epistemologies and methodologies which recognize knowledge production and circulation as political and embedded within (western) European imperial and colonial practices (see Ahmed, 2006; Alcoff & Potter, 1993; Browne & Nash, 2016; Haritaworn, 2008b; Puar, 2007; Said, 1978; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). These epistemologies and methodologies destabilize (western) European (or Eurocentric) discourses which reproduce Europe as the sole creator (or Creator) of modernity and standard by which to measure

(civilized) humanity and progress (Said, 1978; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). These epistemologies and methodologies build upon critical scholarship which locates ethnographic research practices (i.e., participant observation) in the anthropological discipline and its historical advancement of western colonial and imperial governance which occurred throughout much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (see Jackman, 2016; Pels, 1997; Rooke, 2009). They recognize how hegemonic western discourses and constructions of the O/other (whether official and pedagogical, imaginative and fantastical, anecdotal and conversational, ethical or otherwise) are entangled within research practices demanding that researchers (including me) be accountable and engage with the anti-racist feminist principle of positionality which recognizes gender, sexuality, class, (dis)ability and race (amongst other identifying categories) as contingent and contested markers of relational positions based on different social locations vis-à-vis global power relations (Alcoff, 1988; Haritaworn, 2008b; Puar, 2007; Said, 1978; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). The epistemologies and methodologies which ground my work recognize relations of power as not only complex and productive or multiple and pervasive but also interlocking while understanding subjectivities and social locations as unstable and always shifting much like partial conceptualizations of Poland (Haraway, 1988). This makes it difficult to privilege a disembodied universal position from which words can be spoken to a singular truth. My dissertation is grounded within epistemologies and methodologies that recognize that this privileging may be difficult (if not impossible then surely unwise) and as such draw on Haraway's (1988) notion of 'situated knowledges,' as it honours what is partial and particular as well as relational and embodied. This notion allows me to map Poland as concept and method as it recognizes knowledge as multiple and grounded within the social relations and power structures of different places (Code, 1993; Haritaworn, 2008b).

I also employ Dorothy Smith's (1990) concept of 'ruling relations' which builds upon Marxian thought and examines the role discourse (objectified and claiming universality) plays in mediating and organizing social relations. Smith's (1990) work names these disembodied and abstracted relations as

those which “designat[e] the complex of extra-local, relations that provide in contemporary societies a specialization of organization, control, and initiative” (p.13). She states that they include “those forms that we know as bureaucracy, administration, management, professional organization, and the media. They include also the complex of discourses, scientific, technical, and cultural, that intersect, interpenetrate, and coordinate the multiple sites of ruling” (Smith, 1990, p.13). Smith’s (1990) work names these relations and looks for what falls inside (and what falls outside) the frame by noting both the gaps and conceptual leaps in order to make space for the particular and embodied knowledges (Agathangelou, 2020). My engagement with Smith’s (1990) concept of ‘ruling relations’ is aligned with my use of Said’s (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading which works as a deconstructive practice and critical reading theory that allows us to unpack the west as concept by insisting that we pay attention both to processes of imperialism and its resistances; Keller’s (2006) SKAD which builds upon a Foucauldian approach to analysing discourses as “practices of power/knowledge and meaning production [but also] introduces a more sociological conception of actors and practices in discourse theory and research” (p. 224); as well as van Dijk’s (1993) CDA which is a multidisciplinary approach which “focuses on the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of *power abuse (dominance)* in society” (van Dijk, 2015, p. 467, emphasis in original).

My work honours knowledge as partial and embodied and multiple and shifting by accounting for the ways in which the theoretical and methodological inform one another (Ahmed, 2006; Browne & Nash, 2016; Haritaworn, 2008b; Puar, 2007). This speaks to what Hesse-Biber (2006) calls ‘emergent methods,’ flexible methods that allow scholars to move beyond disciplinary boundaries in order to form and address new theoretical questions that arise throughout the research process. Puar (2007) captures this queer epistemological and methodological approach when she writes that “[q]ueerness irreverently challenges a linear mode of conduction and transmission: there is no exact recipe for a queer endeavour, no a priori system that taxonomizes the linkages, disruptions, and contradictions

into a tidy vessel” (p. xv). My own queer approach “engages a range of different theoretical paradigms, textual materials, and tactical approaches...” (Puar, 2007, p. xv) to address my research questions.

My epistemologies and methodologies also inform the ways in which I approach the matter of translation. Karpinski (2012) who employs translation studies as an entry point into analyses of immigrant women’s life writing argues that hegemonic languages reinforce socio-political and cultural as well as gendered hierarchies and as such writes that “[t]ranslation is ... a function of meaning making ... and writing in general can be viewed as translatable” (p. 4). Translation is also in the making (much like the Polish nation-state) and requires scholars to make known translational intertextuality while noting the tensions. My dissertation recognizes the ways in which translation can produce meaning and reinforce western knowledges and ‘chronopolitics of development’ (Freeman, 2005) and makes a point to center (noting the problematics with representation) not only the gaps and tensions but also the knowledges of my research participants and other non-western sources.

My transnational feminist, queer and postcolonial epistemological and methodological approach recognizes queer(ness) as a contested concept-metaphor which is simultaneously framed as a political contestation; a marker of (sexual) identity; a methodology; and a theoretical standpoint (Haritaworn, 2008b). Queer(ness) as a western political movement and theoretical approach is rooted within AIDS activism and emerged as a destabilizing and subversive reaction to the quasi-ethnic essentialist and assimilationist reactionary protest model offered by the mainstream gay (and lesbian) liberation movement (Browne & Nash, 2016; Halberstam, 2005). Queer(ness) as a western identity marker is an unapologetic reclamation taken up by those who reject (or exist beyond) normative gender and sexual constructions (Edelman, 2004). Yet, queer(ness) as an (un)translatable identity marker is used as a mask or closet within Poland where it works as an empty signifier (Kulpa, Mizielińska, & Stasińska, 2012). To reclaim queer(ness) in such a way whether one is loud and proud or in hiding can run counter to the work that queer politics does to undermine mainstream identity-based movements.

Lastly, queer(ness) as methodology is a (de)constructive practice that makes intentional disciplinary boundary crossings and the subversion of research practices that uphold oppressive heteronormative (and homonormative one hopes) power structures (Browne & Nash, 2016; DeVault, 1990; Puar, 2007). Queer(ness) as a methodology is in process, forever and always in transition, as it works to destabilize and subvert dynamic normative logics which shape knowledge production and circulation.

The transnational feminist and queer as well as postcolonial epistemologies and methodologies which ground my dissertation and inform my decision to use qualitative research methods also include Ferguson's (2004) queer of colour critique; Nagar and Lock Swarr's (2010) understanding of critical transnational feminisms; McLeod's (2000) work on postcolonialism; Anzaldúa's (1987) wild tongues; Jarratt's (1998) analyses of representation; and lastly, Spivak's (1988) work on voice and reflexivity. This decision is informed by Ferguson's (2004) articulation of queer of colour critique which is an epistemological intervention and comparative method(ology) that interrogates relationships between social formations (sexuality and race for instance) and nation|empire-building. It creates (linguistic) possibilities to name what has been rendered unknowable and devalued and explains how social categories of politico-economic value and valuelessness under neoliberal global capitalism ground racialized necropolitical violence (Kyungwon Hong & Ferguson, 2011). As the focus of my project is to articulate and experiment with Poland as concept and method, I centralize participants and scholars who have been systematically devalued and marginalized within Poland (i.e., LGBTQI and racialized people) and to explain how value(lessness) is assigned and how it shapes necropolitical violence. More so, I draw on these works as anchoring points and critical analytics that put pressure on the dominant narratives and region specific knowledges that usurp power to contribute to neoliberal and colonial projects. This decision is also informed by Nagar and Lock Swarr's (2010) conceptualization of critical transnational feminisms as unstable praxis grounded within activist communities across the globe

which allows us “to interrogate all forms of implicit and explicit relations of power (e.g., racist/classist/casteist), and to contest those power relations through ongoing processes of self-critique and collective reflection” (p. 5). These (self-)reflexive processes underscore “the limits and possibilities of writing, as well as positionality, intellectual and political accountability, and representation” (Nagar & Lock Swarr, 2010, p. 6). I address these limits and possibilities by drawing upon feminist scholars who recognize subjectivities and social locations as “constituted and negotiated in and through the process of knowledge production itself” (Nagar & Lock Swarr, 2010, p. 7); employing representational experiments which incorporate multiple voices while recognizing how such a practice can reproduce power relations between researcher and research subjects; and enacting accountability by sharing interview transcriptions and engaging with critical questions regarding representation as well as translation.

I also draw upon John McLeod’s (2000) work, *Beginning Postcolonialism*, in which he writes about postcolonialism as an enabling concept that refers to “historically situated forms of representation, reading practices and values which range across both the *past* and *present* (p. 5) not meant to mark a particular historical moment. McLeod (2000) argues that “[p]ostcolonialism...in part involves the *challenge* to colonial ways of knowing, ‘writing back’ in opposition to such views” (p. 32). My project challenges the western developmental model used to discuss the East-Central European nation-state and its LGBTQI subjects and formations and writes back by incorporating the words of these subjects. McLeod (2000) writes:

So, the term ‘postcolonialism’ is *not* the same as ‘after colonialism’, as if colonial values are no longer to be reckoned with. It does *not* define a radically new historical era, nor does it herald a brave new world where all the ills of the colonial past have been cured. Rather, ‘postcolonialism’ recognises both historical *continuity* and *change*. On the one hand,

it acknowledges that the material realities and modes of representation common to colonialism are still very much with us today, even if the political map of the world has changed through decolonisation. But on the other hand, it asserts the promise, the possibility, and the continuing necessity of change, while also recognising that important challenges and change have already been achieved (p. 33).

In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria E. Anzaldúa (1987) writes that “wild tongues can’t be tamed, they can only be cut out” (p. 54). She asserts that the normalized privileged position toward minority subjects is inherently violent and (western) researcher-(non-western) research subject relationships which build across difference risk ideological knowledge imposition which disregards the wishes and needs of the community. This, in effect, silences the multiple competing voices within community. In “Beside Ourselves: Rhetoric and Representation in Postcolonial Feminist Writing, Susan C. Jarratt (1998) addresses “the problem of speaking for others by looking at how ‘others’ speak” (p. 57). She employs metaphor and metonymy in order to analyze representation which does not reinforce the colonial gaze. Jarratt (1998) “analyze[s] the ways three postcolonial feminists open up the workings of representation – of the self, groups, and audiences – such that participants are no longer disposed in the classical rhetorical position, a single subject facing an audience, but rather, ‘beside themselves’” (p. 57). Her methodology “create[s] a narrative or contextualized understanding of the word without displacing or blocking out the word itself. Applying metonymy to identity politics suggests that differences can be spoken of not in terms of exclusive categories but rather as places, descriptions, or narratives of relation” (pp. 59-60). In this way, Jarratt (1998) encourages reflexive representation that acknowledges historicity and context. Her methodology encourages multiplicity as a way of opposing knowledge that “reduces, generalizes, or subsumes to a universal” (Lindner & Stetson, 2009, p. 46). Spivak (1988) argues against a singular ‘native voice’ and demonstrates that there exists a multiplicity of voices within every culture. She proposes that when representing the other,

scholars employ a method of ‘speaking to’ a particular community through imagined dialogue in order to stay ethically reflexive. This approach encourages identification of my own ‘shifting positionalities’ (Haritaworn, 2008b, para. 2.5) and transparency around the construction of the O/other.

My transnational feminist, queer, and postcolonial epistemological and methodological approach works to destabilize and subvert normative and western framings (and social reproductions) of Poland while questioning “unmarked and unnamed” (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 1) white racial and citizenship privilege (held by so-called real Poles) and refusing any stable or fixed notions of sexual and racial identity as well as nationhood.

Data Collection

Methods

Informed by these epistemologies, I carry out qualitative research. Methods such as in-depth interviewing and participant observation enabled me to grapple with the rich and dynamic data about how participants understand themselves with regard to the social relations and power structures of Chairman Kaczyński’s Poland. In addition, I drew extensively on primary sources. In analyzing those sources, I deployed Said’s (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading in conjunction with Keller’s (2006) SKAD and van Dijk’s (1993) CDA. I deployed these approaches to further analyze and deconstruct my secondary sources. My approach is guided by transnational feminist and queer and postcolonial epistemes which focus on power relations between researchers and research subjects and recognize multiple speaking positions.

Firstly, in-depth interviews make space for marginalized knowledges suppressed by conventional positivist research practices which reinscribe western European imperialism and colonialism (DeVault & Gross, 2012; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). These interviews destabilize universal and objective truth claims made within traditional positivist research which is critiqued for being informed and

shaped by epistemological and methodological assumptions which prioritize those in power (Brim & Ghaziani, 2016; Browne & Nash, 2016; DeVault & Gross, 2012; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Secondly, in-depth interviews make space for knowledge that is partial and particular as well as relational and embodied and as such provide rich and dynamic data which honours multiplicity and contradiction which in turn allows us to question social concepts and categories rather than reify them (Brim & Ghaziani, 2016; Browne & Nash, 2016). My in-depth interviews made space for queer knowledges and possibilities which challenge the western developmental model used to discuss East-Central European spaces and the Polish LGBTQI movement. My in-depth interviews also made space for participants to share knowledge they believed pertinent to my project that did not get addressed by my questions.

The transnational feminist and queer as well as postcolonial epistemologies and methodologies which ground my dissertation also inform my critical (and somewhat cautious) approach to participant observation. These epistemologies and methodologies recognize participant observation as rooted in the anthropological discipline which has an exploitative imperial and colonial history. Pels (1997) states that “[t]he discipline descends from and is still struggling with techniques of observation and control that emerged from the colonial dialectic of Western governmentality” (p. 164). Jackman (2016) writes about this struggle as it relates to ethnographic approaches to studies of sexuality in particular. He says that these approaches are characterized by problems related to representation and authoritative voice. Jackman (2016) writes that “[t]he move towards a global perspective has brought to the fore some of the deeply held colonial and ethnocentric assumptions about the categories of analysis deployed in studies of sexuality that have pervaded and shaped anthropological enquiry and much of the social sciences” (p. 115) – significant to my understanding of LGBTQI subjectivities. The anthropological discipline as embedded within the expansion of colonial governance produced knowledge based upon observations made by anthropologists, missionaries, colonial officials and voyageurs who constructed people (their objects of study) as primitive and exotic others (Uddin, 2011). My approach to participant

observation which was neither immersive nor long-term but situational (meaning spontaneous protest gave rise to my participation) is informed by epistemologies and methodologies which recognize this imperial and colonial history and critique ways of observing and documenting that (re)produce otherness. My participant observation which involved me witnessing and participating within political protests was concerned with producing relational and embodied (not rational and objective) knowledges about political resistance practices.

I adopted Said's (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading deployed in conjunction with Keller's (2006) SKAD and van Dijk's (1993) CDA which informed my discourse analysis of textual materials but also my approach to in-depth interviewing and participant observation as these methods are attuned to power relations. I adopted Said's (1993) method(ology) in order to unpack what Stuart Hall (1992) names as the west and the rest discourse. Hall (1992) who weaves Foucault's understanding of discourse with Said's study of Orientalism argues that the west is a historical construct and states that "[o]ur ideas of 'East' and 'West' have never been free of myth and fantasy, and even to this day they are not primarily ideas about place and geography" (p. 276). He understands the west as a concept that signals a type of society – one "that is developed, industrialized, urbanized, capitalist, secular and modern" (Hall, 1992, p. 277). Hall (1992) names the multiple ways in which it functions as: a mode of characterization and classification; a system of verbal and visual representation; a mode of comparison; and lastly, an evaluative measure which produces knowledge and has real effects upon global power relations. Said's (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading is a deconstructive practice and critical reading theory concerned with reading hegemonic and peripheral texts alongside one another while "according neither the privilege of 'objectivity' to 'our side' nor the encumbrance of 'subjectivity' to 'theirs'" (p. 259). In Said's (1993) words:

[one must] take account of both processes, that of imperialism and that of resistance to it, which can be done by extending our reading of the text to include what was forcibly

excluded... In reading a text, one must open it out both to what went into it and to what its author excluded. Each cultural work is a vision of a moment, and we must juxtapose that vision with the various revisions it later provoked... (pp. 66-67).

Said's (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading helps me articulate the way in which post-socialist Poland acts as a site of dialogue, quotation and even translation or what Chen (2010) calls "method" of possible regional and world projects. First, Poland complicates colonial | postcolonial and east | west demarcations thereby putting pressure on how we understand the region, Europe | west and the world. Second, in this process I read Poland to contradictorily generate new values as dominant practices end up participating often in coded claims to whiteness. Third, and even in contradictory ways reading Poland as a site of contestation of modernity's values changes the ways in which we understand Europe and the world itself. This deconstructive practice relates to Agathangelou's (2020) work on framing and materially organizing and ordering the world and considerations of "what falls inside and what falls outside the frame itself" (meaning what was included and what was excluded) and my own examination of textual materials.

Keller's (2006) SKAD is both a conceptual and methodological research "approach to analysing discourse based on the sociological traditions of the interpretive paradigm, the sociology of knowledge and Foucauldian research" (Hornidge, Keller, & Schünemann, 2018, p. 2). In their edited book, *The Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse: Investigating the Politics of Knowledge and Meaning-Making*, sociologists Reiner Keller, Anna Katharina Hornidge and Wolf J. Schünemann (2018) describe SKAD as a framework and approach concerned with "revealing power/knowledge relations, processes and effects in socio-historically specific settings" (p. 5). In his introduction to the approach, Keller (2018) states that "SKAD aims to provoke thinking 'about the roles that knowledge, knowledge production, knowledge hierarchies and knowledge institutions play in [...] social transformation' (Smith 2012 XII). It is about what feminist theories call the situatedness of knowledges (Haraway, 1988), its effects and

dynamics” (p. 18). My aim is to situate knowledges on the Polish nation-state and its O/others which I do, in part, by employing “SKAD [which] heeds Walter Mignolo’s plea to study the social starting from *many worlds* and thereby diversity, rather than from one assumed *universal*, reference frame” (Hornidge, Keller, & Schünemann, 2018, p. 5). This is crucial to understanding the shifting geopolitical positionings of Poland which requires challenging discourses that collapse EUrope ignoring eastern and southern peripheralization and those that view the nation-state solely through the lens of state transition.

Keller (2018) introduces SKAD as a sequential approach that includes step-by-step coding and mapping practices meant to identify interpretative schemes or frames, argumentation clusters, classifications, and phenomenal and narrative structures which organize meaning-making and social action. The aim is to demonstrate how different social actors and collectivities interpret and perform any given social concern. I code and map “discourses [which] are realised through the communicative actions of social actors” (Keller, 2018, p. 20) analyzing written textual materials (newspaper articles; regional scholarship; religious texts; governmental policies; far-right extremist texts); oral performances (speeches at demonstrations and commemoration ceremonies; interviews); visual artefacts (a queer short film; magazine cover); and observable practices (social actors and collectivities at demonstrations). I code and map these discourses thinking about “the invisible speakers, implied speakers, excluded speakers or silent voices, actors that you might expect to show up but who don’t” (Keller, 2018, p. 35) within this particular socio-historical context. In doing so, I analyze interpretive schemes or frames (i.e., collective meaning-making with regard to the Smolensk crash); argumentation clusters (i.e., Law and Justice mobilization of anti-LGBTQI and anti-migrant rhetoric during election periods); classifications (i.e., real Poles and national O/others); phenomenal structures (i.e., competing discourses on LGBTQI subject positions); and narrative structures (i.e., martyrological narratives which

position Poland as Christ of nations). I analyze these discourses in order to reveal the relations of power/knowledge articulated through struggles to claim Poland.

Lastly, I employed van Dijk's (1993) CDA which is a "special approach to the study of text and talk, emerging from critical linguistics, critical semiotics and in general from a socio-politically conscious and oppositional way of investigating language, discourse and communication" (van Dijk, 1995, p. 17). This critical approach considers "the role of discourse in the enactment and reproduction of social dominance and resistance" (van Dijk, 1995, p. 19) studying "the relations between discourse, power, dominance, social inequality and the position of the discourse analyst in such relationships" (van Dijk, 1993, p. 249) while focusing on the elite. It allowed me to analyze the (far-)right's (considering the Law and Justice party here) discursive dominance over defining who is a real Pole by "exam[in]g patterns of access and control over contexts, genres, text and talk, their properties, as well as discursive strategies of mind control" (van Dijk, 1995, p. 24). I am thinking here of the Law and Justice party's control of media and their uninterrupted platform at the Smolensk crash commemoration ceremonies (see Chapter Five). In employing CDA, I paid attention to argumentation (i.e., Kaczyński's assessment of the Smolensk crash); rhetorical figures (i.e., hyperbolic statements about LGBTQI people's role in destroying the family); lexical style (i.e., we, Poles vs. them, LGBTQI and racialized people); and structural emphasis (i.e., headlines conflating LGBTQI people with pedophiles and Muslims with parasites) (van Dijk, 1993, 1995). This approach is aligned with both Said's (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading and Keller's (2006) SKAD as they are all attuned to relations of power/knowledge.

These deconstructive approaches recognize power|knowledge as complex and relational and made space within my research for competing knowledge claims about sexualities, race|racism, and nationhood. This becomes significant considering knowledge about LGBTQI bodies has historically

been produced by researchers who lack embodied experience and subscribe to pathologizing and othering practices. These approaches much like the in-depth interviews made space for knowledges that challenge western progress narratives which frame East-Central European spaces like post-socialist Poland (and its LGBTQI movement) as in transition and needing to catch-up with Europe which is further expanded upon in the fourth chapter (Kulpa, 2014b).

Poland as Site(s)

I investigate the complex relationships between sexual and racialized others and emergent Polish nationalisms. In using Said's (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading, I consider how Poland is reproduced (eastern and backward or western and developed; forever and always post-communist or postcolonial; peripheral to the union or heart of the continent) to account for its hegemonic and peripheral framings. I interviewed and carried out participant observation in Poland, a nation-state defined by liminality and its 'shifting positionalities' (Haritaworn, 2008b) which speaks to Agathangelou's (2020) notion of framing and "what we acknowledge and what we don't..." My fieldwork took place in (predominantly) one location but in multiple contexts which speaks to my understanding of Poland as a concept which is defined by multiple competing actors with shifting degrees of definitional power. The nation-state is simultaneously reproduced as East-Central Europe; Central Europe; Eastern Europe; the EU (or periphery thereof); eastern enlargement; post-communist Poland; post-socialist Poland; heart of Europe; free and democratic Poland; Christ of nations; Chairman Kaczyński's Poland; illiberal democratic Poland; Christ of Europe; Poland for Poles; among other demarcations which impact its geopolitical positioning in global power relations.

The research process unfolded in the capital city of Warsaw during a time of political unrest as people were flooding in from all regions of the country to voice their disdain against the Law and Justice party's attacks on democratic rights. The interviews took place throughout December of 2016

in cafés (mainstream and otherwise); university offices with students interrupting our conversations and (re)negotiating long past due deadlines; riverside restaurants with starched linens; run-down back alley LGBTQI non-governmental organization offices located near far-right nationalist headquarters (Trans-Fuzja was located near National Movement in which the All-Polish Youth play a major role); hotel lobbies overrun by business men and screaming children; and in my aunt and uncle's home office located in my hometown of Szczecin over skype. The observations took place in the capital city centre streets outside the presidential palace and the parliament during political protests.

Primary Sources

I conducted twelve in-depth and semi-structured interviews and will outline my processes here, speaking about the interlocutors and interview structure while detailing my criteria for choosing these research participants and approaches. I conducted interviews with key informants affiliated with (or representative of) political parties, LGBTQI organizations, governmental bodies, nationalist (youth) groups, anti-racist organizations, universities, and migrant|refugee support services. The interviews were semi-structured, and in-person save for one. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for both structure and flexibility. My key ideas and questions were outlined within an interview guide which allowed me to practice my language in a non-familial context which serves as the only context in which I currently speak Polish (see Appendix C for guiding interview questions). The interview guide with its open-ended questions grounded both me and the interviews but also provided the circumstances for rich and dynamic conversations by making space for new questions to emerge throughout our conversations (DeVault & Gross, 2012). The interviews lasted anywhere from an hour to two hours and were recorded by me on a tape recorder and both translated and transcribed at a later date.

The interviews focused on questions about identity|subjecthood formation (in relation to sexuality and nationhood) and LGBTQI and migrant|refugee justice organizing practices as they relate

to the nation-state and its official policies and informal (at times illegal) regulations. My skype interview with a spokesperson from All-Polish Youth (Catholic nationalist youth group) yielded a deeper understanding of their anti-LGBTQI and anti-migrant (read here as all racialized bodies) political agenda which speaks to the broader struggle to keep Poland for Poles (and Poles alone). This interview also made apparent the long-standing networks this group (perhaps the term organization better describes their structure and influence) has fostered with government officials. My interviews with key interlocutors from Campaign Against Homophobia (most public LGBTQI organization in Poland) and Open Republic (prolific anti-hate organization) grounded my research in the lived experiences of actors struggling to get government officials and the mainstream to recognize the humanity of those deemed to be O/others.

The research participants that I conducted semi-structured interviews with represent (some of) the main actors in struggles between the nation-state and LGBTQI | migrant human rights advocates. These interviews made me reflect upon Haritaworn's (2008b) work in which they argue that research participants "are not merely raw, pre-theoretical sources of 'experience,' but active producers of their own interpretations, which compete with those of the researcher" (para. 2.4) and other peoples within their own communities and allowed me to also acknowledge how knowledge itself is in the making or in 'transition.' Knowledge is not static but rather articulates and challenges and speaks to multiple registers simultaneously. My research participants (in collaboration with other actors) are the people behind the protests and counter-protests, government policies, federal laws, equality marches, and nationalist rallies which speak to the complex negotiations surrounding human rights, democratic values, and nationalist agendas. They are, like previously mentioned, affiliated with (or representative of) political parties (Poland Together); LGBTQI organizations (Campaign Against Homophobia, Lambda Warsaw, and Trans-Fuzja); governmental bodies (parliament); nationalist youth groups (All-Polish Youth); anti-racist organizations (HejtStop and Open Republic: Association against Anti-Semitism

and Xenophobia); universities (University of Warsaw); and migrant | refugee support services (Fundacja Ocalenie). The participants included one trans woman; five cisgender women; one trans person; and five cisgender men all of whom identified as white (and Polish) and were between the ages of twenty and sixty with most being in their thirties (see Appendix B for the list of research participants and their affiliations).

I recruited interview participants using purposive (or subjective) sampling and the snowball technique making queer decisions about which (and how many) subjects to include in this study. I contacted multiple actors via email and telephone affiliated with (or representative of) current political parties (Civic Platform; Democratic Left Alliance; Law and Justice Party; Modern Party; National Movement; Polish Liberty; Polish People's Party; Poland Together; Right Wing of the Republic; Union of European Democrats; and United Poland); former political parties (Greens 2004; League of Polish Families; Palikot's Movement; and Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland); LGBTQI organizations (Campaign Against Homophobia; Lambda Warsaw; and Trans-Fuzja); governmental bodies (parliament – lower chamber and senate); nationalist (youth) groups (All-Polish Youth; National Radical Camp; and Widzew); anti-racist organizations (HejtStop; Monitoring Center on Racist and Xenophobic Behavior; Never Again; and Open Republic: Association against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia); universities (University of Warsaw); and migrant | refugee support services (Association for Legal Intervention; Fundacja Ocalenie; and Polish Migration Forum). I contacted these particular political and social bodies considering particular actors affiliated with them as years of preliminary research (scanning academic scholarship and journalistic sources not to mention personal connections) led me to understand the significant role they play in creating (counter-)discourses on women's (reproductive) rights, LGBTQI rights, migrant | refugee rights, and nationhood. I crafted personalized emails in Polish (and English) asking for interview participants and met with all who came forward (see Appendix A for the template call for research participants). My interview participants also suggested actors

(whose names were not necessarily accessible to me as someone living and working elsewhere) for me to interview and on several occasions connected us via text and social media during our conversations.

I conducted twelve in-depth and semi-structured interviews throughout my (field)work for particular epistemological and methodological reasons. These queer | feminist reasons speak to the political climate within the nation-state in that particular moment in time | space and to my own theoretical grounding. The number of subjects who find themselves at the intersection(s) of national politics and LGBTQI | migrant advocacy work is limited and those who do locate themselves there have been engaged in the struggle whether for or against the official and informal (at times illegal) regulation of sexual and racialized others. The current government (the representatives of which were not interested in speaking with me once they understood my research interests) has been working hard to impede the educational and political work that LGBTQI | migrant non-governmental organizations do by cutting financial support and scheduling unexpected inspections which lead to bureaucratic clogs at best and complete organizational shutdowns at worst. These organizations have in turn been busy strategizing new political approaches and securing other (often western European and American) funding sources – i.e., Trans-Fuzja is funded by multiple sources including Mama Cash [Netherlands]; ILGA-Europe [Belgium]; Open Society Foundations [Global] (W. Dynarski, personal communication, December 12, 2016).

As I was concerned with, and wanted to subvert, disciplinary research practice(s) which uphold oppressive power structures by questioning and reworking representation and generalization, I made my positionalities and commitment to accountability clear with participants; I centered conversations over sample size; and made space for theory to emerge from the data (DeVault, 1990). Queer | feminist epistemological and methodological approaches and critique thereof have led me to understand that neither representation nor generalization are objective processes which can be disentangled from colonial and imperial power and constructions of the O/other (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2000;

DeVault & Gross, 2012; Spivak, 1985). Both representation and generalization (as conceptualized in quantitative research) can be employed to reinforce oppressive power structures (DeVault & Gross, 2012). Both representation and generalization (especially as related to researcher-research subject relationships which build across difference) can be dangerous and lead to epistemic violence which in turn can translate into (or come alongside) material violence. These queer|feminist critiques of both representation and generalization have demanded re-workings of methodological approaches and introduced me to theoretical generalization which is more about theory and less about sample. It is about working with the process and themes that emerge in relationship rather than generalizing from one population to another which is important for tracing the process through which my interlocutors make meaning and articulate their own visions about Poland.

Gobo (2008) argues that theoretical generalization's "...aim is not to generalize to some finite population but to develop theoretical ideas that will have general validity" (p. 200). This makes significant my small sample size which made space for rich in-depth conversations and met theoretical saturation which refers to the point at which no new themes or dimensions are observed in the data. The focus on theoretical generalization also speaks to my own epistemological commitment to conceptualize the nation-state as concept and method which can produce rich and meaningful theoretical material which in turn ruptures the hegemonic social reproduction of periphery as regional case study or takes for granted the nation-state or the periphery as givens.

My fieldwork coincided with political unrest in Poland (apparently reminiscent of struggles to end communism) which afforded me with the opportunity to partake in several political protests. I attended anti-PiS (Law and Justice Party) rallies, martial law commemorations, and protests which spoke out against what is now being called the Polish Senate Crisis. I also partook in the eightieth monthly commemoration of the Smolensk crash (10-12-2016) in which then-president and other distinguished political and religious leaders were killed. This commemoration was met with resistance

from citizens (sexual and racialized others included) exhausted by the Law and Justice Party's political interventions and conspiracy theories and is addressed in detail in the fifth chapter. I listened to Chairman Kaczyński provide his (brief) monthly speech with only a couple journalists standing between us while his supporters cheered, and detractors raised white roses which I learned symbolize peaceful opposition to injustice and fascism. I attended an anti-PiS rally (12-12-2016) led by the Committee for the Defense of Democracy (KOD) that centered around hope and a call for democratic futures dissimilar to the vision presented by the current government. The following day (13-12-2016), I attended a civil strike which was joined by the women's strike (made me wonder about gendered public|private distinctions) that warned citizens of parallels between present democratic times and past fascist times by arguing that the current political climate was reminiscent of life under martial law (1981-1983). That evening, I participated in the celebration of the tenth birthday of the Polish Society for Anti-Discrimination Law (PTPA) during which Ewa Siedlecka, an infamous feminist journalist, was given an award for her commitments to social justice and in particular disability and women's rights. Lastly, I attended a mass protest (17-12-2016) which criticized media censorship as well as unconstitutional voting practices.

My participant observation “engag[es] with the struggle to recognise the permanent instability of researcher-researched relationships, insider/outsider status as well as the intersubjective political and social processes in the research process” (Browne & Nash, 2016, p. 20). I refused to take on the role of the all-knowing and objective (western) expert. Instead, I remained conscious of my ‘shifting positionalities’ (Haritaworn, 2008b, para. 2.5) – meaning my speaking position(s) as a queer Pole whose queer emergence and formal education are situated in the Global North. My observations were based upon my moderate to active participation as there were moments during which I weaved between people protesting and watched events unfold in silence and other moments during which I held banners in support of women's reproductive rights, sang protest songs, and asked people why they were

participating and what they were fighting (for or against). I kept field journals in which I took descriptive and reflexive notes about my own observations concerning actors and groups (seeing some on multiple occasions); political speeches about the end of democracy; political chants and songs heard during the Solidarity protests; leadership (seeing men affiliated with KOD taking on these roles); the use of symbolism in protest (like white roses which paid homage to anti-Nazi opposition); and my own positionalities as someone with a research agenda and a personal|political stake in the protests. My participation not only allowed me to analyse the ways in which struggles for democratic rights (i.e., women's rights and freedom of the press) are framed within East-Central European spaces but also the ways in which political resistance practices are even organized and the dynamics of how they unfold all the while working to remain cognizant of my own 'shifting positionalities' (Haritaworn, 2008b) and need to decenter western knowledges.

Figure 1

Fighting Fascism in the Streets of Warsaw



Note. KOD Protests, Presidential Palace, Warsaw, Poland. December 13th, 2016.
Photo by Rogula, W., 2016.

Secondary Sources

I have assembled various often disjointed (while at times mimetic) textual materials making queer decisions about what falls inside (and what falls outside) the frame but also about what will serve to help me articulate my project and frame my work (Agathangelou, 2020). These textual materials include scholarly works on East-Central European post-communist sexualities; a queer short film (*Niulam Ja Se Kochaneckie*); East-Central European postcolonial scholarship (Ewa Thompson's analyses); political discourses (Kaczyński's Smolensk commemoration speeches); religious texts (Solo Dios Basta Foundation statements); governmental discourses (abortion law; sex education mandate; 500plus child benefit program; and migration policies); national magazine covers (*wSieci*); and far-right extremist rhetoric (National Radical Camp and All-Polish Youth texts).

I have assembled these disjointed textual materials (many of which are produced by those read as unintelligible by the nation-state) in the following way: weaving threads between government texts, mainstream and alternative media sources, art and activism materials; regional scholarship; and kitchen table conversations in ways that disrupt state and western conceptualizations of the nation-state. These textual materials entangle in ways that construct a political assemblage or multiplicity which allows for multiple and competing knowledge claims which in turn cannot be extracted from the social and historical processes which reproduce East-Central European spaces such as post-socialist Poland (Nail, 2017). These assembled textual materials make up neither part nor whole but a process of deconstruction as well as reassemblage that helps make sense of the complex relationships between the nation-state and its' O/others. My transnational feminist and queer and postcolonial framework facilitates not only this political assemblage or multiplicity but also reading what falls inside (and what falls outside) the frame by focusing on what is in-between (meaning conversations between hegemonic and peripheral texts (Agathangelou, 2020; Nail, 2017; Said, 1993). This political assemblage or multiplicity and my (de)constructive reading thereof disrupt the onset of (hetero)normative scripts most

readily available for consumption and speak to the multiple and shifting and other(ed) realities that define the current political moment (Butler, 2001).

These textual materials include dominant knowledges put in conversation with projects which challenge certain positions (Agathangelou, 2020; Nail, 2017; Said, 1993). These textual materials, while seemingly disjointed, are connected with the broader material conditions and struggles over LGBTQI and refugee | migrant issues and the configuration of projects otherwise and beyond what the nation-state wants to generate or create in reproducing Poland for Poles.

Data Analysis

Discourse Analysis

My discourse analysis speaks to a queer epistemology and methodology considering it borrowed from multiple theoretical paradigms and engaged multiple tactics in order to make sense of my primary and secondary sources (Puar, 2007, p. xv). It centred on the complex relationships between sexual and racialized others and emergent Polish nationalism(s) keeping in mind that “[i]n the empirical world, we can’t collect anything but disparate elements or utterances, occurring at different instances in time and social as well as geographical space” (Keller, 2006, p. 228). I performed the analysis using the deconstructive practice which Said (1993) developed as a method(ology) of contrapuntal reading; Keller’s (2006) SKAD which is sequential in its analysis of discourses that are understood as “structured and structuring structures” (Keller, 2006, p. 223); as well as van Dijk’s (1993) CDA which analyses the ways in which discourses reproduce and resist socio-political inequities under capitalism by mapping spoken and written texts. In its attention to power relations, this approach allowed me to conduct my discourse analysis by making space for competing knowledge claims about sexualities, race | racism, and Polish nationhood while looking for repetition in both content and structure and remaining cognizant of the “enactment and reproduction of social dominance and resistance” (van Dijk, 1995, p.

19, see also DeVault & Gross, 2012). This analysis focused on the narratives conveyed through and between these disjointed textual materials while recognizing narrative structures and the meanings held in the gaps and silences and codes (DeVault & Gross, 2012; Said, 1993). This practice becomes significant when considering narratives as “fundamental to identity and to the ways that people make sense of their worlds” (DeVault & Gross, 2012, p. 219). My discourse analysis provided me with the opportunity to read these textual materials by looking for what falls inside (and what falls outside) the frame noting not just the gaps and silences but also the various (often racial) codes which have symbolic and material consequences for sexual and racialized others (Agathangelou, 2020).

Positionality

My dissertation takes seriously the anti-racist feminist principle of positionality which I believe to be critical to a queer epistemology and methodology. This principle demands self-reflexivity which is vital in creating emancipatory knowledges about sexual and racialized others that resist epistemic violences as it requires that I take account of my own ‘shifting positionalities’ (Haritaworn, 2008b) as a researcher. Haritaworn (2008b) writes that “an empirical project which takes seriously the question of positionality can enable us to directly ‘touch/interact/connect’ with our subjects, in ways which are less exploitative, less objectifying, and more politically relevant” (para. 2.3) which is central to my work. They continue by stating that “[t]he call to positionality urges us to reflect on where we stand, to define our speaking positions and how they relate to others, especially those whom we claim to speak for” (Haritaworn, 2008b, para. 1.5). This self-reflexive practice has me reflecting upon my own positionalities in relation to my research participants as my (gender)queerness and (dis)connections to Poland have led me to this work. My whiteness has also led me here and much like my Global North upbringing impacts the ways in which I enter conversations about sexuality and race | racism. My work is shaped by my positionalities as a queer Pole and Canadian researcher studying sexual and racialized

otherness within a space that is both home and unknown to me considering Canada's global power in neoliberal global capitalism as first world which poses tensions with(in) Poland which is attempting to restructure its power as a second world satellite to be a part of EUrope on its own terms.

This was made evident to me during preliminary revisions when I was critiqued for centring western knowledges about race | racism while ignoring the nuances of my East-Central European connections. This was also made evident to me in re-reading my own field journals and noting my own political leanings and western positions when it comes to LGBTQI movements which centre struggles for inclusion and equality. I have attempted to remain self-reflexive in order to keep these positions and their effects in check and gain a better understanding of the complex relationships between sexual and racialized others and emergent Polish nationalism(s).

Ethical Considerations

My dissertation and queer epistemological and methodological approaches are guided by ethical considerations which address the complex, multiple, and interlocking relations of power at play when conducting research about sexual and racialized others not from the Global North as their experiences are and are not my own and Poland (defined by liminality) is in many ways foreign to me. My aim here is to subvert the intention of western scholars such as myself to represent the O/other. Transnational feminist and queer as well as postcolonial critiques of positivist approaches which assume the existence of universal and objective truth exist, yet knowledge production and circulation continue to be embedded within (western) European imperial and colonial practices (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). This upholds an over-simplified dichotomy between the Global North (geopolitical concept which collapses Western Europe) as producer of universal knowledge and elsewhere as objects of experience reproduced as regional case studies (Mohanty, 2003). My dissertation undermines such a dichotomy by theorizing Poland as concept and method but also as a site of experimentation which affords us insight

into the complex relationships between sexual and racialized others and nation|empire-building instead of a regional case study which may provide empirical knowledge to be used (perhaps exploited) by dominant Western paradigms to support the construction of theories. My dissertation also centers the knowledges of my research participants (many of whom identify as LGBTQI) in order to disrupt the hegemonic while my engagement remains committed to self-reflexivity and mutual accountability.

My fieldwork addresses particular ethical considerations relevant to working with sexual and racialized others. It received ethics review and approval from the Human Participants Review Subcommittee and York University's Ethics Review Board and was also conducted in accordance with the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. The central ethical considerations were related to recruitment and voluntary participation; informed consent; potential harms and risks; privacy and confidentiality; and translation. My research participants, located through purposive and snowball sampling, were provided with an informed consent form in Polish (also available in English upon request) which outlined the purpose of the research, risks and discomforts, potential benefits while making it clear that participation was voluntary and confidential.

The informed consent form stressed the fact that participation was completely voluntary and that research participants could stop participating at any time for any reason with no consequence. My research participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study or refuse to answer any questions which would not impact their relationship with me or the university. Withdrawal from the study would result in the immediate destruction of all associated data that had been collected. There were no requests to withdraw. My research participants were also asked to provide informed verbal consent to participate (see Appendix E for the script of oral informed consent) which was noted but not recorded. The risks and discomforts (no greater than those faced by participants in their everyday lives) which involved the potential disclosure of information whether direct or incidental to state institutions such as government or police or social institutions such as workplaces or family were

made clear and addressed by having participants choose interview locations which made them feel comfortable and by ensuring confidentiality. This was ensured by my commitment to hold interview data in a safe environment and store it in a password protected digital account for five years after the completion of my dissertation at which time it would be destroyed. My fieldwork ensured privacy and confidentiality but in fact all my research participants who were all well-known by media wanted to be named within my work as long as quotations were approved by them.

The final ethical consideration which warrants noting is the matter of translation. My fieldwork unlike my thinking through and written dissertation was completed in Poland and most conversations (save for one interview and one panel question and answer) were held in Polish. Fieldwork data was translated from Polish (my first language) to English (my second but more used language) and so crossed not only linguistic boundaries but also cultural and geopolitical ones (Baer & Kaindl, 2018). Translation as a slippery and dynamic process by which knowledge is (re)produced and shared brings up tensions regarding social difference and transfer; representation and otherness; exploitation and distortion; authenticity and assimilation; as well as binaries and essentialist ideas (Bhabha, 1994; Baer & Kaindl, 2018; Epstein & Gillet, 2017; Karpinski, 2012). These translational|transnational tensions became apparent when considering the geopolitical specificities which shape complex relations between the nation-state and its' O/others and how otherness itself is defined in different places. Polish LGBTQI struggles for marriage and adoption rights cannot be understood (solely) as homonormative and need to be translated without subscribing to a western developmental model that defines the west as a barometer of progress whereas race discourse needs to be located in silences and omissions and codes considering colloquial references to blackness refer to white people with dark features while racial epithets used to describe and address people of colour are offensive.⁴ In these interviews there

⁴ In Polish schools, children are taught Julian Tuwim's 1935 rhyming poem, *Murzynek Bambo*, which infantilizes and others Black people. While there is much debate amongst linguists about the connotation and translation of the term 'murzynek'

were also tensions that pointed to issues related to linguistic boundary crossing as the political humour integral to identity formation and particular not only to a generation or community but also a geopolitical moment is difficult (if not impossible) to translate in a way that honours the nuances. In paying attention to these tensions, I was able to remain critical and accountable in translating not only the words of my research participants but also any knowledge crossing multiple boundaries.

I approached the matter of translation and the tensions which arose throughout my (field)work by remaining committed to accountability which involved multiple back-and-forth conversations with participants to ensure that they felt understood and reflected by my words and translations; choosing not to translate certain terms (i.e. kibole) which would lose their meaning and tone; and explaining use of certain language (i.e. equality marches which here would be read as pride parades) thereby diffusing nuance as it emerges through multiple struggles in this space and time (current geopolitical moment as interconnected to my understanding of the site of Poland).

Research Limitations

Although my dissertation contributes to queer knowledges about contemporary East-Central European spaces and the construction of otherness, some limitations must be noted. Firstly, my sample size was small which made both representation and generalization (as understood in positivist quantitative research) difficult but made space for rich in-depth conversations and allowed me to focus on theoretical generalization which in turn problematizes conceptualizations of Poland as periphery reproduced as a regional case study. There were also limitations inherent to conducting one-time interviews. Secondly, my research participants were all (save for one) politically aligned advocating for LGBTQI and migrant|refugee rights through their anti-hate work meaning that my understanding of

(diminutive of 'murzyn') which is translated as black, negro and pickaninny, there is an emerging movement of Black Poles campaigning against the racial slur under the hashtag #DontCallMeMurzyn.

right-wing nationalist movements was gained not from primary sources but secondary ones instead. Thirdly, my (field)work coincided with political unrest within Poland reminiscent of struggles to end communism and so many people did not want to be interviewed as they were in the streets (many for the first time since those days) while those I was able to speak with were impacted by that particular political moment.

Conclusion

My dissertation considers Poland as concept and method but also as a site of experimentation which affords us insight into the complex relationships between the nation-state and its construction of otherness and this chapter outlines the processes engaged in order to come to such conclusions. This chapter outlined my queer epistemological and methodological frameworks and qualitative research methods. It also discussed the transnational feminist and queer as well as postcolonial epistemologies and methodologies which frame my dissertation and study objectives and research questions. It described both my data collection and analysis processes making an argument for queer methods which honour multiple and shifting and other(ed) realities. I wrote about my own complex and 'shifting positionalities' (Haritaworn, 2008b) and the ethical considerations as well as the research limitations of my (field)work. This chapter centred on my commitment to honouring multiple knowledge claims (always complex and partial and relational and contextual and shifting) which I hope is made evident in the pages that follow.

Chapter Four:

In Transition

This chapter theorizes (and problematizes) transition within an East-Central European space by considering Poland's so-called 'return to Europe,' signaled by the restructuring of communism and EU accession. It considers (and critiques) the ways in which these moments are marked in the scholarly imagination and how they relate to the social reproduction of the Polish nation-state as forever and always in transition. It shows how this reproduction relies on gender and sexuality discourses (western progress narratives) which are racialized in "unmarked and unnamed" (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 1) ways to create and maintain space and time between the nation-state and western modernity as embodied by Europe. This reproduction is shaped by Cold War imaginaries (and their racialized instrumentalization) as articulated by transitology and western area studies. It understands East-Central European spaces as backwards and in need of catching up to the west and plays a significant role in shaping thinking on sexualities in the region which I show fails to interrogate race in substantive ways. This chapter engages transition and considers it from the vantage point of sexualities asking whether this approach can provide us insight and yield generative knowledges which challenge our thinking on the Polish nation-state (as co-produced with EU global order) and on sexualities (Jasanoff, 2004).

I employ Poland as concept (meaning a sociological entity shaped by multiple competing actors with shifting degrees of definitional power) and method (meaning process and reading theory which centers the nation-state in order to highlight the transnational dynamics of the region) in order to trace the social reproduction of the nation-state as transitional (Chen, 2010). In his cultural studies project, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*, Chen (2010) stresses the urgency for simultaneous movements for decolonization, deimperialization, and the undoing of the Cold War or what he calls "de-cold war" (p. 208) which speaks to my aim in analyzing the intersections between East-Central European nations and nationalisms (forever and always in transition) and sexualities.

In the first part of this chapter, I build upon Rasa Navickaitė's (2013) work, *Sexuality in Eastern European Scholarship: Thinking Backwardness and Difference Through the Lens of Postcolonial Theory*, in order to trace the social reproduction of the nation-state as transitional by considering scholarship on East-Central Europe that addresses questions concerning post-socialist sexualities. I mobilize Poland as concept and method by drawing upon transnational feminist and queer and postcolonial scholarship and by employing Said's (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading and van Dijk's (1993) CDA in order to analyze five edited collections that consider sexual (mainly LGBT) realities within the region. I analyze Aleksandar Štulhofer and Theo Sandfort's (2005) edited collection, *Sexuality and Gender in Postcommunist Eastern Europe and Russia*, Judit Takács and Roman Kuhar's (2007) edited collection, *Beyond the Pink Curtain: Everyday Life of LGBT People in Eastern Europe*, Robert Kulpa and Joanna Mizielńska's (2011) edited collection, *De-Centering Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives*, Koen Sloomaeckers, Heleen Touquet, and Peter Vermeersch's (2016) edited collection, *The EU Enlargement and Gay Politics: The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on Rights, Activism and Prejudice*, and lastly, Radzhana Buyantueva and Maryna Shevtsova's (2020) edited collection, *LGBTQ+ Activism in Central and Eastern Europe: Resistance, Representation and Identity*. Through my analysis, I argue that these edited collections reproduce eastern backwardness and western progress narratives through an uncritical understanding of transition (as a racialized concept) as tied to LGBTQI subjecthood and movements which are also not addressed in racial terms.

In the second part of this chapter, I consider Poland as concept and method (as visualized by a queer artist) by drawing on transnational feminist and queer as well as postcolonial scholarship and by employing Said's (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading and van Dijk's (1993) CDA. I explore Katarzyna Perlak's (2016) film essay, *Niulam Ja Se Kochanezke* [*I Once Had A Lover*], which reclaims Eastern European folk traditions and provides a queer method for speaking back to Cold War imaginaries which it does by multiple means: (a) situating and destabilizing queerness; (b) making queerness

provisional and expansive at once; (c) honouring multiple and shifting and other(ed) realities; (d) making queer and racialized Polishness legible (e) questioning concepts and associations without reifying them; (f) using self-invention; (g) refusing to understand the west as referent which the scholarship aforesaid does; and lastly, (h) playing with time instead of subscribing to notions of linear progress (Ahmed, 2016; Brim & Ghaziani, 2016; Browne & Nash, 2010).

A Temporal Disjunction

The notion of disjunction signals a sharp cleavage (meaning disconnection or being out of joint) and Mizielińska and Kulpa (2011) discuss “temporal disjunction” (p. 14) in order to theorize transition which I consider in co-production with sexualities by analyzing five edited texts. I analyze Štulhofer and Sandfort’s (2005) edited collection, *Sexuality and Gender in Postcommunist Eastern Europe and Russia*, which is the first theoretical and empirical study to examine the effects of economic and social transformation on gender and sexuality within the region; Takács and Kuhar’s (2007) edited collection, *Beyond the Pink Curtain: Everyday Life of LGBT People in Eastern Europe*, which centers on the lived experiences of LGBT people within the region; Kulpa and Mizielińska’s (2011) edited collection, *De-Centering Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives*, which questions western knowledge production on sexualities and provides local perspectives attuned to temporal-spatial specificities; Sootmaeckers, Touquet, and Vermeersch’s (2016) *The EU Enlargement and Gay Politics: The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on Rights, Activism and Prejudice*, which studies LGBT politics within the context of the EU’s eastern enlargement; and lastly, Buyantueva and Shevtsova’s (2020) edited collection, *LGBTQ+ Activism in Central and Eastern Europe: Resistance, Representation and Identity*, which traces the emergence and development of LGBTQ+ movements in Central and Eastern Europe.

This selection of research objects is informed by my interest in examining emergent scholarship on post-communist (or post-socialist) sexualities written by scholars who hold local perspectives. My

interest lies in understanding how Eastern European social formations (race and sexuality for instance) are articulated by scholars within the region whose aim is to challenge western knowledge production. These edited collections represent the small yet emergent body of work that interrogates the relations between moments of transition (or transformation) and sexual realities. As aforementioned, Štulhofer and Sandfort's (2005) edited collection, *Sexuality and Gender in Postcommunist Eastern Europe and Russia*, is the first interdisciplinary study that moves beyond shifting gender norms to address sexuality which it does without addressing race | racism. The collection grapples with gender and sexuality in times of transition by analyzing changing gender roles and sex norms; media representation; sexual behaviour; gay and lesbian rights; sex trafficking; health issues (meaning HIV/AIDS); and sex education which it does by drawing on political science studies which rely on statistical analyses but also cultural studies perspectives. The collection emerged from the *Sexualities in Transition: Sexuality in Post-Communist Eastern Europe* conference that was held in Dubrovnik, Croatia in 2001 whereas Takács and Kuhar's (2007) edited book, *Beyond the Pink Curtain: Everyday Life of LGBT People in Eastern Europe*, emerged from the *Intimate/Sexual Citizenship* conference that was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 2005.

Takács and Kuhar's (2007) edited book brings together scholars writing about "the everyday life experiences of LGBT people regarding the functioning of social, political and cultural boundaries that separate the 'good heterosexual citizen' from the rest" (Takács and Kuhar, 2007, p. 11) characteristic of multiple post-socialist Eastern European spaces ranging from Belarus to East-Germany to Slovenia. The scholars present social scientific research on these LGBT realities in order to uncover what has been hidden by "the pink curtain" (Takács and Kuhar, 2007, p. 12) and name what has been rendered unknowable or "what escapes articulation" (Kyungwon Hong & Ferguson, 2011, p. 16). In writing on the parallels between pre-war anti-Semitism and present-day homophobia in Poland, Czarnecki (2007) is the sole scholar who considers the entanglements between racism and sexuality in demarcating the boundaries of national inclusion.

Kulpa and Mizielńska's (2011) edited book, *De-Centering Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives*, seeks "to critically assess the current state of knowledge about sexualities outside the all-pervasive framings of the 'West', and to focus on their expressions in the 'nearby' and still underexplored region of Central and Eastern Europe" (Kulpa & Mizielńska, 2011, p. 1) through postcolonial queer critique. This book is a call for the de-centralization and de-westernization of queer theory in which the editors ask "[i]f, in a Western context, 'queer' is to somehow relate to (and presumably reject) identitarian politics of the 'Stonewall era', ... what is left of 'queer' in the CEE context, where Stonewall never happened; where it stands as an empty signifier, a meaningless figure, and yet is still a pervasive and monumental reference" (Kulpa & Mizielńska, 2011, p. 2).

Their edited book adopts postcolonial queer critique without contending with race considering there is but one chapter that addresses the role of race in LGBT rights movements (Baker & Koobak, 2021; Wekker, 2016; Woodcock, 2011). In her chapter, "A Short History of the Queer Time of 'Post-Socialist' Romania, or Are We There Yet? Let's Ask Madonna?" Shannon Woodcock shows "how nascent Romanian LGBT movements rely on racist discourses against Roma in order to claim a place for homosexuality in this heteronormative nation" (p. 63). The chapter begins with Madonna's 2009 Bucharest concert during which she spoke out against discrimination of 'gypsies' and 'homosexuals' and builds upon the debate which ensued in order to show how amidst anti-European anxieties about accession Romanian LGBT subjects reproduced anti-Roma racism to solidify their positionalities as legitimate national subjects. Woodcock's (2011) chapter is a departure from the racial exceptionalism exhibited within this edited book.

Slootmaeckers, Touquet, and Vermeersch's (2016) edited collection, *The EU Enlargement and Gay Politics: The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on Rights, Activism and Prejudice*, investigates "the impact of the EU enlargement on the political and legal contexts in which ... LGBT people live and claim rights" (p. 4). The book introduces "new empirical findings – arising from legal and policy analysis, large-scale

sociological investigations, and country case studies” (Slootmaeckers, Touquet, & Vermeersch, 2016, p. 4) in order to analyze the relationship between the nation and its sexual others; the role of the church in anti-LGBT organizing; state responses to EU pressures; and the impact of EU enlargement on LGBT movement building which it does by affording little attention to race | racism. Buyantueva and Shevtsova’s (2020) edited collection, *LGBTQ+ Activism in Central and Eastern Europe: Resistance, Representation and Identity*, traces LGBTQ+ movements in post-socialist space by problematizing the relevance of western knowledge production on sexuality and gender to post-socialist realities; the relationship between the nation-state and queer movements in the region; and lastly, the emergence and development of these movements. This edited collection includes two chapters that mention race. In their chapter, “Beyond Western Theories: On the Use and Abuse of ‘Homonationalism’ in Eastern Europe,” Roman Leksikov and Dafna Rachok (2020) critique the use of homonationalism in Ukraine arguing that applying western queer theory in CEE reproduces civilizational discourses which position the west as progressive and the east as backward. In Ukraine, they argue “it is class conflict and not a racial one that is the main structural force that organizes society” (Leksikov & Rachok, 2020, p. 31) which is lost when western theories and concepts are adopted to explain CEE specificities. The second chapter, “Polish Asexualities: Catholic Religiosity and Asexual Online Activisms in Poland,” written by Anna Kurowicka and Ela Przybylo (2020) offers insights on “asexual articulations with an interest in how they function in conversation with Polish attachments to whiteness, religious subjecthood, and the heteronormative reproduction of the values of state-formation” (p. 291). The scholars focused on online asexual activisms and found that some asexuals express solidarity with LGBTI+ people whereas some understand their asexuality as sexual purity which they show is about whiteness and religion.

In his chapter, “Queer in Poland: Under Construction,” Łukasz Szulc (2011) writes “[g]ay men appeared in Poland for the first time in 1989, after the fall of Communism...” (p. 159) and argues that this amongst other clichés reflects the level of understanding about LGBTQ people held not only by

Polish civil society but also in some instances by the Polish LGBTQ community itself. This particular cliché speaks to the ways in which sexuality is framed in temporal-spatial terms that reproduce eastern backwardness and western progress narratives evidenced in the scholarship examined. These moments of transition (considering the restructuring of communism and EU accession) are discussed in relation to sexuality which is informed by Agathangelou and Killian's (2016) work on time and temporality in world politics and Judith Butler's (2008) meditations on sexual politics and time. Agathangelou and Killian (2016) theorize and problematize universal time and its function in empire-building arguing that it "creates spatial barriers within which a temporally distant other remains carefully classified and ripe for exploitation" (p. 14). They write about "the assemblage of the other and the time of the other, frozen in a 'tableau vivant,' a static, eternal primitive laid out on a graph, 'packed,' as Fabian writes, 'into a spatial matrix' (1991: 58)" (Agathangelou & Killian, 2016, p. 14). This is made visual by Kulpa and Mizielńska (2011) in their contemplations on "temporal disjunction" (p. 14) between east and west which they illustrate with a picture that represents communism and capitalism which they frame as separate geopolitical-temporal modalities discussed further below.

In her article, "Sexual Politics, Torture, and Secular Time," Butler (2008) writes "...that the way in which debates within sexual politics are framed are already imbued with the problem of time, of progress in particular, and in certain notions of what it means to unfold a future of freedom in time" (Butler, 2008, p. 1). She continues, "[t]hat there is no one time, that the question of what time this is, already divides us, has to do with which histories have turned out to be formative, how they intersect – or fail to intersect with other histories – and so with a question of the how temporality is organized along spatial lines" (Butler, 2008, p. 1). Her work is pertinent here as the difference between the east and the west framed in relation to sexuality is articulated in temporal terms (Szulc, 2018).

The (regional and otherwise) scholarship on East-Central European sexualities makes linkages between the restructuring of communism and the emergence of LGBTQI subjects and movements

while EU accession is linked to a heightened public homophobic backlash and greater opportunities for queer organizing (see Chetaille, 2013; Graff, 2006, 2010; Kulpa, 2014; Kulpa & Mizielińska, 2011; O'Dwyer, 2012, 2018; Slootmaeckers, Touquet & Vermeersch 2016; Štulhofer & Sandfort, 2005; Szulc, 2011, 2018; Takács & Kuhar, 2007) which is echoed by my interlocutors. Mateusz Pławski, spokesperson for the All-Polish Youth states with disdain that “all those equality parades have to do with the EU” (M. Pławski, personal communication, December 23, 2016) whereas other interlocutors recognize the positive impacts of accession on sexual others. Damian Wutke, Secretary General of Open Republic Association against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia says that the “EU integration changed everything as it made it possible for people to move outside Poland and encounter people who don't look like them [which] changes mindsets” (D. Wutke, personal communication, December 8, 2016). Kalina Czwarnóg, volunteer coordinator at Fundacja Ocalenie, states that “the EU works as a brake” (K. Czwarnóg, personal communication, December 15, 2016) to activate when Poland attacks (sexual and otherwise) human rights.

Kulpa and Mizielińska (2012) speak to this in stating that “[a]fter years of being kept in history's freezer (a.k.a. ‘communism’) CEE is now, supposedly, catching up with normality (a.k.a. the ‘West’), after coming out of history's closet in 1989” (p. 23). By connecting these transitional (or transformational) moments with LGBTIQI emergence and homophobic backlash respectively, the scholarship is perpetuating “the current Western perspective [in which] the West is imagined as essentially progressive, that is, post-racial, post-feminist and post-gay, and CEE [is imagined] as essentially backward, that is, racist, sexist and homophobic, which is [also] evident, for example, in discourses of the so-called Soviet mindset or Balkan mentality” (Szulc, 2018, p. 5).

In *The EU Enlargement and Gay Politics: The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on Rights, Activism and Prejudice*, O'Dwyer and Vermeersch (2016) trace the trajectory of the Polish gay rights movement which they argue “was initially shaped by transnational pressures associated with Poland's integration

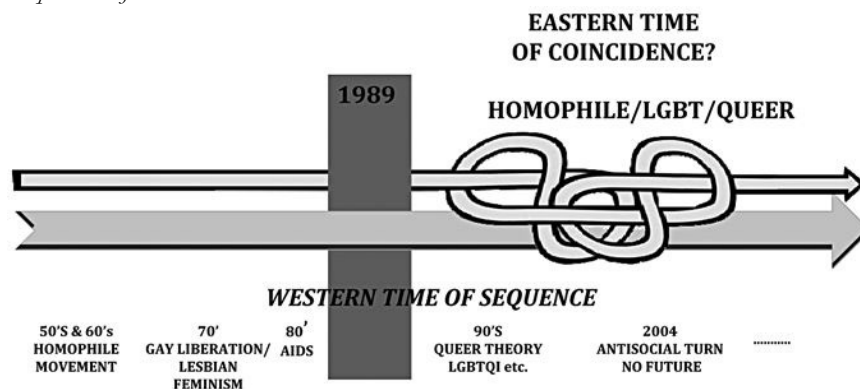
into the EU – and the ways in which these pressures reframed homosexuality as a political issue (O'Dwyer' 2012)” (p. 124). In their chapter, “From Pride to Politics: Niche Party Politics and LGBT Rights in Poland,” the scholars divide the movement’s development into three overarching periods: the social protest and grassroots campaigning stage (1990-1997) which saw advocacy work in the form of support services and public education; the politicization stage (1998-2004) connected to EU membership and transposing EU anti-discrimination legislation; and lastly, the party politics stage (after 2004) which saw a post-accession homophobic backlash spurred by conservative and nationalist parties (PiS-LPR government) campaigning against Euro supporters. This developmental trajectory which is shaped by a western model ties LGBTQI emergence and development to the restructuring of communism and EU accession. In their chapter, “The Latvian LGBT Movement and Narratives of Normalization,” Kārlis Vērdiņš and Jānis Ozoliņš (2020) similarly trace the history of the Latvian LGBT movement since independence and examine its visibility in public discourse by centering the normalization of same-sex relationships. The scholars write that “[i]n the beginning of the 1990s, the Latvian LGBT movement had to be made from scratch...The only way to create such a movement was to use the experience of Western countries and adapt it to the local situation” (Vērdiņš & Ozoliņš, 2020, p. 246). The developmental trajectories offered by these scholars make me wonder what it would mean to consider sexual politics within the region without reproducing the west as referent.

In their introduction to *Beyond the Pink Curtain: Everyday Life of LGBT People in Eastern Europe*, Takács and Kuhar (2007) write that all the authors “had something relevant and well-documented to say about the possibilities to live as LGBT persons in a region that is still haunted sometimes by the past experience of being locked behind ‘the Iron Curtain’” (p. 11). This statement speaks to what Szulc (2018) names as the myth of East-Central European isolation during the Cold War which shapes and informs thinking on gender and sexuality in the region. In their chapter, “‘Contemporary Peripheries’: Queer Studies, Circulation of Knowledge and East/West Divide,” which offers a frame for the book,

Kulpa and Mizieleńska (2011) contemplate “temporal disjunction” (p. 14) between east and west which they illustrate with a picture of two arrows – one thick, one thin – moving from left to right. The arrows represent two separate geopolitical-temporal modalities (communism and capitalism) which run parallel, cut in the middle by a wide bloc(k) which is meant to symbolize the collapse of the Iron Curtain. The thin arrow is covered by the block whereas the thick arrow is not. Before the block, the thick arrow (capitalism) appears to be in motion whereas the thin one (communism) appears static. Following the block, the arrows progress with the thinner one knotting and looping while the other continues in a linear fashion. The thick arrow represents “western time of sequence” (Kulpa & Mizieleńska, 2011, p. 15) and speaks to how in the west the gay and lesbian movement has progressed from homophile to LGBT to queer in a sequential manner whereas the thin arrow represents “eastern time of coincidence” (Kulpa & Mizieleńska, 2011, p. 15) and the queer experience of CEE where everything is happening all at once.

Figure 2

“Temporal Disjunction”



Note. From “‘Contemporary Peripheries’: Queer Studies, Circulation of Knowledge and East/West Divide,” by J. Mizieleńska and R. Kulpa, in R. Kulpa & J. Mizieleńska (Eds.), *De-Centering Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives* (p. 15), 2011, Surrey, England: Ashgate. Copyright 2011 by Robert Kulpa, Joanna Mizieleńska and contributors. Reprinted with permission.

Kulpa and Mizieleńska’s (2011) pictorial representation which they admit is a simplification aims to problematize east | west divisions and reproduces them instead. The representation (thinking about

the forward moving arrows in particular) visualizes Enlightenment notions of progress and linear time and fails to interrogate western time. Considering that before the block (collapse of the Iron Curtain), the thick arrow (capitalism) appears to be in motion whereas the thin one (communism) appears to be static the picture frames eastern time prior to the collapse as “communist no-time” (Szulc, 2018, p. 7) void of queerness or any form of (LGBTQI) movement. Following the block, the thick arrow (meaning capitalism and western time) continues unimpacted by the collapse of the Iron Curtain. The arrows do not connect until after the collapse which also implies that eastern and western geopolitical-temporal modalities did not impact one another until after that moment in history which my father’s stories about crossing borders in order to sell fur coats challenge (Navickaitė, 2013). The knotting and looping of eastern time which speaks to LGBTQI activism within the region following the collapse positions the east as queer and the west as straight which underpins a certain notion of CEE sexual exceptionalism. Puar (2007) says “[e]xceptionalism paradoxically signals distinction from (to be unlike, dissimilar) as well as excellence (imminence, superiority), suggesting a departure from yet mastery of linear teleologies of progress” (p. 3). The representation which the scholars state is meant “to highlight the erotic dimension of time, the oddly erotic experience of identity formation in CEE” (Kulpa & Mizielńska, 2011, p. 16) portrays eastern difference as non-linear and queer (unlike and superior to western time). Furthermore, Szulc’s (2018) analysis of gay and lesbian magazines before 1989 “offers compelling evidence for the fact that Polish homosexuals created their own cultural products and organized themselves already before 1989 and that they were in touch with activists in other countries of the Eastern as well as the Western Bloc during the twilight years of the Cold War” (p. 11).

Štulhofer and Sandfort (2005) consider eastern difference (from the west) by comparing multiple social dimensions which include HIV/AIDS; sex education; LGBTQI rights; attitudes towards sexual minorities; and sex work laws. In comparing these social dimensions, they argue that “...in many respects postcommunist Europe is following the sexual trajectory of the West, probably with a

delay of some two to three decades” (Štulhofer & Sandfort, 2005, p. 16). The scholars subscribe to a transitological approach and frame the comparison in terms of eastern backwardness and western progress. In their edited book, Igor S. Kon (2005) analyzes the changing nature of sexual behaviour amongst urban youth in Russia and argues it is reminiscent of the western sexual revolution of the 1960s. In his chapter, “Sexual Culture and Politics in Contemporary Russia,” Kon (2005) documents the consequences of these changes by writing about the spread of STDs and HIV and pointing toward the need for sex education which has been blocked by an anti-sex crusade led by the Russian Communist Party and the Russian Orthodox Church that have been operational since the late 1990s. He writes about an alternative sex education program and states that “[b]efore it was even born, the project came under fire and was labeled a Western ideological plot against Russian children” (Kon, 2005, p. 117). Kon (2005) critiques the “nationalistic, xenophobic, homophobic, and anti-Semitic” (p. 111) anti-sex crusade and the association made between the alternative sex education program and the west while simultaneously arguing that contemporary Russian sexual trends are reminiscent of trends witnessed during the western sexual revolution of the 1960s. He writes that the overall figures (meaning number of youths engaging in sexual behaviour) are comparable to those in the west but distinguishes Russian sexual trends by naming them “uncivilized and uncontrollable” (Kon, 2005, p. 113) as well as “violent” (Kon, 2005, p. 112) which positions Russia as backward other in need of catching up to the civilized west.

In her chapter, “Down and Out in Belgrade: An Ethnographic Account on the Everyday Life Experiences of Serbian Gays and Lesbians in 2004,” Liselotte van Velzen (2007) interviews thirty-five “not straight” (p. 16) people in order to understand “which social and cultural factors influence the process of self-understanding of young gay, lesbian and bisexual adults in Belgrade...” (pp. 15-16). In writing about the cancellation of a pride parade, van Velzen (2007) shares a fragment of a conversation:

Ana: We've had war for fifteen years and people think we don't have time for the gay and lesbian issues now. Maybe in ten years we do, but now it is all about finding food. People here need more time for other issues. It is a part of Europe that eventually will come to us.

Milica: But until then we are a Balkan country, a communist country, and people here think everything bad comes from crazy Europe, from the West. The "gay problem" is one of the ways for fucking up the population.

Marija: Yes, people here think the US and the West hate Serbs, because of the war etc.

Ana [nods]: Hmm-mmm, we are butchers.

Milica: And Western-Europe brings misery. Having homosexuals in Serbia means we will not have an increasing population, because gays don't give birth. It's a conspiracy theory: gay people all over the world are part of that conspiracy. Accepting homosexual relationships would destroy our culture (p. 32).

Ana: Basically people do not want to deal with homosexuality. We have been in isolation for so long, there are already problems enough. People don't want to deal with one more thing. It is bad for us, but what can we do? If Pride can't even manage to do a Pride parade, then how can they expect us to come out and say: "Hey I am a lesbian?"

In their conversation, we see the interlocutors perpetuate civilizational discourses which position Serbia as homophobic Balkan other juxtaposed with a progressive and gay-friendly west. They frame gay and lesbian issues as a European import and connect the acceptance of homosexual relationships with the demise of Serbian culture (and death of biopolitical reproduction) while framing it as communist space (which I read as backward and in need of catching up).

In their introduction, Slootmaeckers, Touquet, and Vermeersch (2016) write about the need to disentangle symbolism which paints EUrope with a rainbow brush from material advancements made by LGBTQI movements in enlargement countries. They write:

[T]he EU's enlargement has contributed to the reification of an East–West divide (Kulpa and Mizielińska 2011), which has reinforced the notion of Western exceptionalism in LGBT rights. Ammaturo (2015) described this as the ‘pink Agenda’, which creates and promotes a fault line between presumably LGBT-friendly and homophobic countries, and suggests that the EU is unique in its open-mindedness and tolerance of LGBT persons. According to critics, the EU enlargement has contributed to the advancement and popularization of this idea by subjecting candidate countries, through the use of conditionality, to what Kulpa (2014) has called a ‘leveraged pedagogy’ (Kulpa 2014; see also Kulpa and Mizielińska 2011) ... Within this framework, old (Western) EU member states are cast as the ‘knowledgeable teachers of democracy, liberalism, and tolerance’ (Kahlina 2015, p. 74), whilst central and Eastern European countries are rendered as permanently in transition (i.e. not yet sufficiently liberal), post-communist, and—especially important for our discussion—homophobic (see Kulpa 2014; Kahlina 2015) (Slootmaeckers, Touquet, & Vermeersch, 2016, pp. 6-7).

The scholars consider the relationship between LGBT rights and (the idea of) EUrope in rhetoric and the imagination which is not new in the scholarship (Ayoub, 2013; Ayoub & Paternotte, 2014; Kuhar, 2011; Stychin, 2001). Slootmaeckers, Touquet and Vermeersch (2016) write about the role of LGBT rights as symbolic tool used during the EU enlargement process (so-called ‘return to Europe’) in order to reproduce the east as backward other in need of catching up with the west “not only economically and politically but also ethically, adopting more liberal stances towards gender- and sexuality-related issues” (Szulc, 2018, p. 6). This speaks to the role that gender and sexuality discourses

play in the reproduction of few central axes, internalized progress narratives, and discursive tropes on East-Central European spaces – such as that of a lag where difference is positioned as developmental failure (Koobak & Marling, 2014; Kulpa, 2014b; Mizielińska & Kulpa, 2011).

Štulhofer and Sandfort's (2005) edited collection, *Sexuality and Gender in Postcommunist Eastern Europe and Russia*; Takács and Kuhar's (2007) edited collection, *Beyond the Pink Curtain: Everyday Life of LGBT People in Eastern Europe*; Kulpa and Mizielińska's (2011) edited collection, *De-Centering Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives*; Slootmaeckers, Touquet, and Vermeersch's (2016) *The EU Enlargement and Gay Politics: The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on Rights, Activism and Prejudice*; and lastly, Buyantueva and Shevtsova's (2020) edited collection, *LGBTQ+ Activism in Central and Eastern Europe: Resistance, Representation and Identity* represent emergent scholarship on post-socialist sexualities written by scholars who hold local perspectives. These five edited collections consider the relationship between moments of transition (restructuring of communism and EU accession) and sexual (mostly LGBTQI) realities. The collections associate the restructuring of communism with the emergence and development of LGBTQI subjects and movements while EU accession is tied to a heightened public homophobic backlash and greater opportunities for queer organizing. The associations reinforce the role that LGBTQI rights play in upholding European imaginaries and western exceptionalism. These collections do however fail to interrogate post-socialist sexualities in racial terms. Firstly, they fail to interrogate the notion of transition as a racialized concept and the ways in which it is taken up in order to reproduce eastern backwardness and western progress narratives (Böröcz & Kovács, 2001; Melegh, 2006). Secondly, they do not consider how LGBTQI subjectivities or “failed heterosexuality” (Puar & Rai, 2002, p. 117) are tied to European multiculturalism and the racialized O/other. Thirdly, they do not speak to the heightened public homophobic backlash as a movement to preserve racial and sexual purity. In the second part of this chapter, I offer a way of understanding sexualities in the region which addresses questions of race and does not use the west as a barometer.

Understanding Sexualities Beyond Cold War Imaginaries

I offer Katarzyna Perlak's (2016) film essay and fictional documentary, *Niolam Ja Se Kochaneckże* [*I Once Had a Lover*] as a queer method for speaking back to Cold War imaginaries of sexualities. I consider Poland as concept and method as well as site of experimentation (as visualized by Perlak) by drawing on transnational feminist and queer and postcolonial scholarship and by employing Said's (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading and van Dijk's (1993) CDA to explore the film which queers Eastern European folk traditions.

Katarzyna Perlak is a Polish born, London based queer artist, filmmaker, and educator whose mixed media practice is driven by politics and affect and employs video and performance, photography and textile work, sound and installation, as well as sculptural forms. Her work is often autobiographical and influenced by her lived experiences as an Eastern European queer immigrant woman. These lived experiences are related to “inter-subjective dialogues, tapping into ideas of collective memory, desires and shared vulnerabilities” (Perlak, n.d., para. 3). In her practice statement, she writes “[i]nvestigating the healing potential of art and its capacity to move through vulnerabilities [is] an important part of my practice” (Perlak, n.d., para. 5). Her practice explores queer and migrant subjectivities as well as “the potentiality of affect as a tool for registering and archiving both present continuous and past historical moments” (Perlak, n.d., para. 5). It emphasizes “the theoretical and artistic methodologies that make subjugated knowledges (as defined by Foucault) visible and on narratives that explore the potential of re-writing the future through a re-writing of history” (Perlak, n.d., para. 5).

Perlak's current work explores utopian productions and is in conversation with queer (i.e., José Esteban Muñoz), feminist (i.e., Sara Ahmed) and postcolonial thinkers (i.e., Fred Moten). It “look[s] at how notions of utopia change from those based in geographical locations and society order to those based in feelings and temporary spaces. [Perlak is] particularly interested in the image of horizon in

relation to those questions” (Perlak as cited in Brinkman, 2020, para. 24). Perlak’s interest in utopian productions as related to the horizon makes me think of how the west is most often framed as on the horizon (meaning the end goal toward which the east is transitioning with respect to economic but also sociopolitical issues). Perlak’s work “investigate[s] the epistemological transference from ‘utopian visions’ to ‘utopian feelings’ and consequently the shift from the spatially oriented notions of utopia to those that are time oriented and based in ‘utopian experiences’” (Perlak, n.d., para. 9).

Perlak’s queer utopias embody Poland as concept and method and turn it into a site of experimentation. A projection of the west’s spatial imaginary as an ideal order that is constituted through and against what it excludes as other – those identities which naturalize the ideal. Critical to this othering process is the produced difference between heteronationalism (Poland for Poles) and homotransnationalism (rainbow EUrope) with the west producing itself as advanced utopia and its others as the problematic and primitive body.

Perlak’s (2016) *Niolam Ja Se Kochane* is a film essay and fictional documentary which examines relationships between cultural traditions, national(istic) values, and revisionist histories by (re)thinking Eastern European folk songs which it does by employing a feminist queer and diasporic migrant lens. The film examines queer utopias or what Muñoz (2009) names a “...rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world” (p. 1) and offers a contrapuntal reading which questions the absence (meaning erasure) of queer love songs in Eastern European folk history (Said, 1993). Perlak’s (2016) *Niolam Ja Se Kochane* (re)creates the archive by queering love songs and problematizes the heteronormative and whitewashing narratives represented in folk history. The film aligns with my transnational feminist and queer and postcolonial framework by questioning how history is written and “encourag[ing] the viewer to consider and experience history as a discourse made out of multiple, overlapping and contesting narratives rather than a single, fixed entity” (Perlak as cited in Goff, 2018, para. 26).

The film examines the potentialities of queer utopias and “offers a theory of queer futurity that is attentive to the past for the purposes of critiquing a present” (Muñoz, 2009, p. 18) making cinematic my understanding of Poland as concept and method not to mention site of experimentation. The film locates QPoC (Polish and French-Algerian) within an East-Central European rural space “defy[ing] the logic of time and place” (Bacchetta, El-Tayeb, & Haritaworn, 2015, p. 771) which it does by also using markers that signify multiple times. In so doing, it focuses on the reproduction of the nation-state as forever and always in transition (i.e., digital and super8 film; traditional dresses and sparkling lipstick and nail polish).

The film further explores the power of queer love and sexuality across multiple borders – historical and geographic (Alexander & Mohanty, 2010). It was created in collaboration with six multi-racial folk singers, three of whom were from the city of Lublin and three of whom were from the village of Wola Sękowa where the film was shot. These areas are both located in southeastern Poland – a region known as the eastern borderlands or Poland B due to its poverty and underdevelopment in contrast to Poland A which is located west of the Vistula. The east|west divide is marked not only by economic disparity but also a presumed cultural rift (“The Eastern Wall,” 2014). The divide that began in the fifteenth century and re-emerged after the restructuring of communism is framed as a divide between rural and urban; old and new infrastructures; old and young populations; ultra-conservative (pro-Law and Justice and Radio Maryja) and liberal (pro-Civic Platform) politics; backward and progressive; all of these oppositions are complicated by voting data which indicates that young urban populations are leaning (far-)right (“The Eastern Wall,” 2014). The locations and protagonists challenge discourses which reproduce the nation-state and rural space in particular as heterosexual and white space. Similar to a queer of colour critique, which “interrogates social formations as the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and class, with particular interest in how those formations corre-

spond with and diverge from nationalist ideals and practices” (Ferguson, 2004, p. 379), the film addresses the relationship between sexual and racialized otherness and the nation-state by situating multiracial queer women providing words (quite literally by adapting song lyrics) “to describe what has been rendered unknowable” (Kyungwon Hong & Ferguson, 2011, p. 16) and devalued by the nation-state.

Figure 3

Still 1 from Niolam Ja Se Kochanezke



Note. From Katarzyna Perlak’s (2016) film, *Niolam Ja Se Kochanezke* [*I Once Had a Lover*]. Image Credit: Katarzyna Perlak.

The film shows masked women clad in traditional folk dresses (which Perlak distinguishes from costumes to signal the everydayness of queer love) performing traditional roles like sewing and dancing in a bucolic environment. The film further plays with tradition as the women in traditional folk dresses also wear sparkling and vibrant lipstick while dancing not with men (considering there are none in the film) but one another during what appears to be a wedding celebration in their name. The women also wear black balaclavas adorned with a red cross-stitch embroidery pattern of wolf teeth (a pattern which appears throughout the film) which in Slavic tradition signifies wisdom and power the colour of which

signifies the power of love and sexuality (Brinkman, 2020). The women wear balaclavas to maintain their anonymity and gesture to the revolutionary resistance practices of Zapatista women in Mexico and Pussy Riot in Russia (Brinkman, 2020). The red embroidery pattern with which they are adorned weaves threads between Eastern European regions and Slavic cultures and is meant to “function as a symbol of this fictional, feminist, queer movement that [i]s active across Eastern Europe” (Perlak as cited in Brinkman, 2020, para. 9). The traditional dresses (often sold by diasporic institutions as a symbol of nationalistic heritage which I read as code for Poland for Poles) speak to practices of reclaiming and queering what is often claimed by right-wing nationalist governments and movements.

The film works as visual rupture that “challenge[s] the Nationalistic representation of Eastern European history and heritage” (Perlak as cited in Brinkman, 2020, para. 3). In Figure 3: *Still 1 from Niolam Ja Se Kochaneczke*, we see a mixed-race queer woman filming the white filmmaker. I read this moment as one in which she is looking back and challenging authority in “present continuous and past historical moments” (Perlak, n.d., para. 5) not only of the white filmmaker but also of the current government which frames her as an (unwanted) foreign import and of the white and heteronormative oral tradition which erases her as a Pole. In her book, *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, bell hooks (2015) writes about the “oppositional gaze...[which] has been and is a site of resistance for colonized black people globally” (p. 116). She writes, “[t]here is power in looking” (hooks, 2015, p. 115) which creates possibilities of agency and resistance. She continues, “[s]ubordinates in relations of power learn experientially that there is a critical gaze, one that ‘looks’ to document, one that is oppositional” (p. 116). In *Niolam Ja Se Kochaneczke*, the mixed-race queer woman looks back in order to document the (re)imagining of an historical archive.

The women sing two (pre-existing) regional folk love songs. The first recording is sung in Polish while the second is sung in the Rusyn dialect of the Lemkos, a Slavic minority whose homeland lies in the Carpathian Mountains claimed by Poland, Ukraine, and Slovakia. In an interview, Perlak says

“these folk traditions are part of how history was handed from one generation to another, but queer stories are lacking in that oral history” (as cited in Goff, 2018, para. 4). In response to the absence, Perlak (2016) subverts the narrative by having women sing these songs while changing not only the pronouns and verb endings but also names where necessary in order to make clear that these women are singing or lamenting about their love for other women. Polish is gendered and in folk songs there are often only two names used – Jacek [Jack] and Kasia [Kate] whereas in Lemko the use of the plural makes the gender unknown. The women sing:

*Oh moon dear moon
Do not glow just for anyone
Only for her, my beloved, on her way back home.
Only for her, my beloved, on her way back home.
If I were as fair as the aurora bright.
I would be shining for Kasienka
And never take flight
I would be shining for Kasienka
And never take flight
Had I been able to run away
I would have got away
But I fell into a bush of nettles
And burnt my legs, ay!
But I fell into a bush of nettles
And burnt my legs, ay!
Oh Kasiu my dear
Why did you take up the chase
You took my garland away
And left me alone in this place
You took my garland
And left me alone in this place
My legs are burnt and garland gone
I will lament over you as long as I live on
I will lament over you as long as I live on*

*Through the forest and through the hills
Cuckoos sing the whole day
Hey hey, lihyyy
Loving is our great passion
Hey hey, lihyyy
Loving is our great passion
We to cuckoo did not listen
But were making love instead
Hey hey, lihyyy
Loving is our great passion
Hey hey, lihyyy
Loving is our great passion
Through the forest, through the forest
Past the mountains
Let's go, dear girl, after the mushrooms
Hey hey, lihyyy
Loving is our great passion
Hey hey, lihyyy
Loving is our great passion
We the mushrooms did not hunt
But were making love instead
Hey hey, lihyyy
Loving is our great passion
Hey hey, lihyyy*

The film and its (rewritten) folk songs provide commentary on “the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (van Dijk, 2015, p. 466). In situating racialized queerness, Perlak is attending to dominant narratives (what was included) and their resistances (what was excluded) (Said, 1993). van Dijk’s (1993)

approach considers conversational structure and other features such as repairs in mentioning others and pronouns which speaks to Perlak's (2016) rewrite and revision of traditional folk songs meant to honour the existence of queer love over time. The narrative subversion is a repair of a history which has worked to erase racialized queerness in the region (van Dijk, 1993). Perlak's (2016) film provides a revision of the past (and historical archive) and challenges discourses which name queerness as a western import and erase the multiracial national past. In Figure 4: *Still 2 from Niolam Ja Se Kochaneczke*, we see three multiracial queer women looking back and singing about their love for other women in Lemko whose traditional folk dresses signal their East-Central Europeanness. Said (1993) says, "each cultural work is a vision of a moment, and we must juxtapose that vision with the various revisions it later provoked..." (pp. 66-67). The film offers a juxtaposition between a dominant historical archive that reproduces an imagined purity (a white and heterosexual nation) and another world in which racialized queer people are (and have always been) present and passing down traditions.

Figure 4

Still 2 from Niolam Ja Se Kochaneczke



Note. From Katarzyna Perlak's (2016) film, *Niolam Ja Se Kochaneczke* [I Once Had a Lover]. Image Credit: Katarzyna Perlak.

Perlak states that “[q]ueerness is commonly portrayed in Eastern Europe as something that does not belong there. Instead it is portrayed as a contemporary phenomenon that’s creeping in from a ‘deviant’ Western Europe” (as cited in Piotrowska, 2018, para. 30). She continues, “[f]or that reason, I think it is erased/supressed from any tradition or historical heritage, and definitely separated from the Eastern European identity” (Perlak as cited in Piotrowska, 2018, para. 30). Perlak’s (2016) film locates racialized sexual otherness within Eastern European history and speaks back to the Cold War imaginaries reproduced by the scholarship thinking here about Kulpa and Mizielińska’s (2011) “temporal disjunction” (p. 14) which recreates the east and west binary it seeks to dismantle in tying queer emergence to the restructuring of communism. Perlak states:

[My work] is not about combining “old” and “new” — it’s more about reclaiming the old that never got a chance to exist. In Poland and other parts of eastern Europe, queerness is treated as something “new”, something that arrived after communism with neoliberalism, coming from the West” — this is certainly the position adopted by many Polish right-wingers, who posit the rainbow flag-friendly EU establishment as a new occupying force to replace the Soviets of old. “But it’s not. Queer people have always existed, they were just not visible. That’s why I wanted to use something so identifiable as “eastern European” (as cited in Goff, 2018, para. 3).

The film works as visual and auditory rupture challenging conservative right-wing discourses such as those of the Law and Justice Party which frame queer and racialized people as a foreign threat to Poland for Poles; white and heteronormative folk histories that erase queer and multiracial histories; but also, scholarship on East-Central European sexualities which understands LGBTQI realities only within the context of transition (meaning the restructuring of communism and EU accession). Perlak (2016) locates racialized queerness in multiple spaces and times weaving threads between East-Central European spaces (with the red embroidered symbol of wolf teeth) and between past and present (with

old houses and new aesthetics). She not only locates racialized queerness in Eastern European spaces challenging discourses which frame it as western but also in rural spaces challenging discourses which frame it as urban. The film allows us to rethink the racial and colonial imaginaries of Poland (for Poles, and Poles alone) and space in Europe challenging the association between Polishness and whiteness and urban space with queerness. It speaks to Bacchetta, El-Tayeb, and Haritaworn's (2015) joint intervention that understands "Queer People of Colour (QPoC) positionalities as a valuable lens through which to rethink the racial and colonial imaginaries of subjects and space in Europe" (p. 769). It (re)imagines the historical archive and frames racialized queerness as East-Central Europeanness (as Polishness) in a way that makes it mundane and every day.

Figure 5

Still 3 from Niolam Ja Se Kochanezke



Note. From Katarzyna Perlak's (2016) film, *Niolam Ja Se Kochanezke* [*I Once Had a Lover*]. Image Credit: Katarzyna Perlak.

Figure 5: *Still 3 from Niolam Ja Se Kochaneczke* is a photograph of two white women in traditional (read Eastern European) folk dresses and balaclavas embroidered with red wolf teeth embracing under balloon filled tree branches. The photograph is from a scene during which we see the women dancing with one another as music plays and others rejoice – a scene reminiscent of rural wedding celebrations. It speaks to queer existence across time which does not resemble a “rainbow-tinged European threat” (Ayoub & Paternotte, 2014, p. 1).

Figure 6

Still 4 from Niolam Ja Se Kochaneczke



Note. From Katarzyna Perlak's (2016) film, *Niolam Ja Se Kochaneczke* [*I Once Had a Lover*]. Image Credit: Katarzyna Perlak.

Conclusion, Or, Another World Is Possible

My dissertation employs post-communist Poland as concept and method while also recognizing it as a site of experimentation in order to examine its multiple social reproductions (as transitional; postcolonial; fascist; eastern other within) theorized in co-production with European global order.

This chapter began with tracing the social reproduction of the nation-state as forever and always transitional by analyzing five edited collections on East-Central European post-socialist sexualities with Said's (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading and van Dijk's (1993) CDA. These edited collections consider transition a given without addressing its racialized instrumentalization and as such reproduce Poland's geopolitical positioning (or hierarchical ordering) vis-à-vis EUrope, transmitting social inequality over time (Doob, 2013; Ferguson, 2016). I argued that the scholarship, in connecting the restructuring of communism with LGBT emergence and EU accession with greater opportunities for queer organizing coupled with heightened public homophobia, reproduces eastern backwardness and western progress narratives which are raced and classed in unnamed ways thus reproducing racial exceptionalism in East-Central Europe. In thinking about decolonization, deimperialization, and the undoing of the Cold War, I offered Perlak's (2016) film *Niolam Ja Se Kochaneckie*, as an experimental attempt to articulate another sexual world (Chen, 2010). (An)other world which questions Poland's positioning as EUrope's eastern other within and honours multiracial histories and racialized queer movements. The film visualizes Poland as concept (queer utopia) and method (queer process and reading theory) maintaining that another world is (and has always been) possible which it does without subscribing to exceptionalism discourses.

Chapter Five:

Poland the Postcolonial, Or, Theoretical Misappropriations and Their Necropolitical Attachments

[T]o the west from the East and to the east from the West.
-Sławomir Mrożek (as cited in Janion, 2014, p. 13)

We were many, from Jassy and Koloshvar, Wilno and Bucharest, Saigon and Marrakesh ...
-Czesław Miłosz, "Bypassing Rue Descartes," 1980

The Polish state has up to now been ... something post-colonial and soft.
-Jarosław Kaczyński (as cited in Snochowska-Gonzalez, pp. 708-709)

To borrow Said's phrase, Poland became a fact of "imaginative geography" ...
(Mirosław Przyłipiak, 2016, p. 78)

We need to come to terms with our postcoloniality.
-Wiktor Dynarski, Personal Interview, December 12, 2016⁵

This chapter weaves conversations about a plane crash and (more importantly) its aftermath in with critiques of scholarly and political understandings of the nation-state as postcolonial in order to trace the geopolitical role that sexual and racialized others play in the production and unproduction of the nation-state and the region. It traces not only the adoption and the misappropriation but also the whitewashing of postcolonial theory by (some) East-Central and Southern European scholars who as Baker (2018a) argues do "postcoloniality without race" (p. 759) (see Cavanagh, 2004; Skórczewski, 2014; Thompson, 2000, 2010, 2014; Ziemkiewicz, 2011). It also traces the misappropriation and subsequent or simultaneous mis-use (meaning racialized instrumentalization) of postcolonialism by Polish (far-)right politicians which is about claiming and preserving an imagined purity (whiteness) and depends upon the disavowal of sexual and racialized others. This chapter traces how Poland is both used

⁵ I begin this chapter with multiple quotations in order to show how the social reproduction of the nation-state as a post-colonial one crosses cultural, social, psychic, political, and economic boundaries over time as scholars, poets, politicians, and LGBTQI activists alike conceptualize it in this way.

as concept and method to explain how its social reproduction as a postcolonial nation becomes possible. I show how the (far-)right leverages its struggles against European domination (but also sexual and racialized others) by articulating the nation-state as a postcolonial site and (familial and religious) body under threat. I show how Poland's production and unproduction as postcolonial depends upon (necro)political modalities not only for the lives of sexual and racialized others but also the nation-state's global formation while addressing the ways in which its transition (1989-) shapes and informs thinking of this (re)production.

The Smolensk Crash

“Smolensk – lesson, tragedy, or the first Polish fake news”
-Warsaw Bar Graffiti (Santora, 2018)

This chapter begins with a plane crash – one that dominated news headlines, birthed conspiracy theories, and sparked heated debates in Poland and beyond. On April 10, 2010, a presidential plane crashed near Smolensk (western Russia) killing all ninety-six people on board (Zubrzycki, 2011). The crash killed then-president and first lady of Poland, Lech Kaczyński and his wife Maria Kaczyńska, of the Law and Justice Party as well as the former president in exile. The flight contained representatives from all major political parties, senior military officials, government officials, senior security officers, members of parliament, the president of the national bank, senior members of the clergy, leaders of the Solidarity Movement, the flight crew, and relatives of the victims of the Katyn Massacre. The presidential delegation had been on route to attend a memorial at the site of the massacre in order to commemorate its seventieth anniversary when their plane crashed just shy of the runway (Szeligowska, 2014). This site as well as several others in and around the Katyn forest had witnessed Soviet secret police (NKVD) execute over twenty-two thousand Polish officers and intellectuals during World War II (Clancy, 2013; Davies, 2005). The presidential delegation's decision to commemorate the Katyn

massacre is significant. Not only does it hold ethno-national meaning, but many political leaders have used it to revive several nationalist myths.

The plane crashed because of human error and poor weather conditions. Two independent investigative bodies (one Polish governmental commission, the other Russian) have substantiated this claim. They have declared the crash an accident caused by pilot error and dense fog. The cockpit recordings suggested that presidential aides pressured the pilot to land the plane despite having no visibility. The radio communication recordings suggested that the two air traffic controllers working at the rarely used airport had been completely out of their depth and unable to manage an emergency situation (Clancy, 2013). Nonetheless, these important factual points remain contested by Chairman Kaczyński (deceased president's twin brother and current leader of the Law and Justice Party which they founded together). He refused these claims and instead decided to animate certain emotions and national mythologies.

The plane crash and (more importantly) its aftermath mobilized a national mythology (trauma) of pain and suffering and birthed conspiracy theories that are recited to this day (Koczanowicz, 2012). There were parallels drawn immediately between the Smolensk crash which killed the nation-state's political and cultural (religious) leadership and the Katyn Massacre. There have been many who have argued that the massacre of 1940 and the Smolensk crash which happened in the same location seventy years later, two major tragic events, were not coincidental. Poland's first post-communist (or post-socialist) President Lech Wałęsa named the plane crash the "second Katyn" (as cited in Clancy, 2013, p. 10). "Katyn is a cursed place, a terrible symbol," said Tusk's predecessor, former prime minister Aleksander Kwaśniewski, on the day of the tragedy, "it sends shivers down my spine" (as cited in Etkind et al., 2012, p. 1) while others spoke of a possible divine intervention.

These assembled and connective threads led Chairman Kaczyński (and his right-wing followers) to put the blame on Russia. Simultaneously, he insinuated and argued that Donald Tusk, then-Polish

Prime Minister and current European Council President was morally complicit in what he has come to refer to as the political assassination of his twin brother. The Chairman's ongoing accusations are based upon several ever-changing factors including the fact that the airplane was a 20-year-old Russian Tupolev-154M that had been refurbished and upgraded in Russia four months prior to the crash; the Russian government had (initially) refused to hand over the wreckage from the crash; the air traffic controllers gave the presidential plane permission to land despite the weather conditions which is now understood (by some) as a deliberate attempt to cause the crash; bystanders claimed to see the plane explode mid-air and not upon impact; others argued that the plane crashed as a result of Russian cyber-attacks against Polish computers in the days leading up to the crash; investigative reports supposedly did not match the crash site (meaning location of debris and positioning of bodies); and lastly, Tusk declined to travel with the presidential delegation instead choosing to visit Vladimir Putin and partake in the official memorial ceremony a few days prior which the President was not invited to attend (Clancy, 2013; Koczanowicz, 2012).

This plane crash as an event is accorded a significant role in geopolitical struggles within Europe (and the region) and continues to have a profound impact on political discourse within Poland. The crash and (more importantly) its close physical and ideological proximity to the historical event which Tusk referred to as "the founding myth of Free Poland" (as cited in Zubrzycki, 2011, p. 46) because it was made possible to discuss for the first time after the restructuring of communism (1989-) mobilized ancient national mythologies of pain and suffering caused by neighbouring others (Davies, 2005). The Law and Justice Party (and its Chairman in particular) has articulated these national trauma and messianic martyrdom and freedom mythologies along with a rhetoric of fear and hatred for the (un)known (sexual and racialized) O/other. Kaczyński "has nurtured a mythology of martyrdom and aggrieved nationalism around the Smolensk crash, using the tragedy as a narrative to try and reshape Polish identity..." (Santora, 2018, para. 10). He espouses these mythologies in order to create a sense

of national unity which he attempts to cultivate by naming the crash a political assassination and reminding Poles that their beloved nation has once again been harmed by (its former colonizers) Russia and Europe. Santora (2018) states “[f]or years, Mr. Kaczynski’s party has pointed to a host of possible devious scenarios – a thermobaric bomb that blew up the plane without leaving evidence; assassins using artificial fog to obscure the runway” (para. 14). Santora (2018) continues, “[b]ut the heart of the narrative boils down to two basic unproven accusations: The Russians did it, and Polish political opponents of Mr. Kaczynski deliberately conducted an inadequate investigation to cover up their own negligence” (para. 14).

The Smolensk crash “reinforces ancient realities: that Poland still faces a threat from Russia to the east and should remain wary of the great powers to the west that have betrayed Poland in the past. When the governing party declares that Poland’s sovereignty is under threat, the smoking plane wreckage in the Russian woods is considered proof” (Santora, 2018, para. 15). The Chairman’s major focus is on what Poland is experiencing as a current threat to political and social sovereignty such as EU policies which infringe upon Poland’s traditional family values. Kaczyński says EU accession was “the shortest way for Poland to achieve parity when it comes to living standards... [b]ut that doesn’t mean we should repeat the mistakes of the West and become infected with social diseases that dominate there” (as cited in Sobczak & Florkiewicz, 2018, para. 8-9) – social diseases such as LGBTQI rights and refugee relocations which his party has successfully campaigned against (discussed further in Chapter Six). The crash is used as a political platform but also as a political weapon which he aims at any and all opposition whether it be real or imagined. “‘I know you are afraid of the truth, but don’t wipe your treacherous mugs with my late brother’s name,’ Jarosław Kaczyński fumed in the Sejm, Poland’s legislative body. ‘You destroyed him, murdered him. You’re scumbags’” (as cited in Buyon, 2017, para. 2). This in response to his political opposition the Civic Platform Party – understood by Kaczyński as a corrupt post-communist elite the members of which quipped that his late twin brother

would have never accepted his party's unconstitutional judiciary reforms which have devastated the independence of courts and violated the separation of powers by unlawfully replacing Supreme Court judges with government appointees (Easton, 2017). The Chairman's outbursts speak to the ways in which the plane crash is used by the right to reproduce and maintain the image of a postcolonial nation harmed by O/others – one that must defend its traditional heritage at all costs. Kaczyński's aim is to end the "post-colonial concept of Poland as a source of cheap labor" (as cited in Santora, 2019, para. 27) which he believes his opposition is selling to eastern and western neighbours. The crash and (more importantly) how it is framed by the Law and Justice Party fosters a political landscape which holds the rights of sexual and racialized others (women and religious minorities too) hostage to nationalist struggles against European and regional imposition.

Mourning Rituals

The plane crash was followed by a seven-day period of national bereavement during which the nation stood still – sporting events were postponed, concerts were cancelled, and streets were emptied (Kulpa, 2014a). National flags flew at half-mast and people gathered at the presidential palace where the president lay in state⁶ in order to adorn its entrances with candles, crucifixes, flowers, and the national flag. There was a commemoration ceremony in Pilsudski Square that was attended by more than a hundred thousand people wearing black ribbons and waving national flags during which a three-gun salute was fired. The President and First Lady were then flown to Kraków for their state funeral which was held at St. Mary's Basilica and presided over by Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, Archbishop of Kraków (Zubrzycki, 2011). The Cardinal had announced a few days prior that the presidential couple would be buried in the Wawel Cathedral crypt (honouring Jarosław Kaczyński's request) – a sanctuary reserved for national heroes, kings, and poets. The burial divided the nation and disrupted the period

⁶ To lay in state refers to the tradition in which the body of a deceased political official is placed in a state building in order to allow people to pay their respects.

of national bereavement. There were mass protests organized and scathing newspaper articles written which questioned the President's heroism and right to be buried in such a sanctuary. "Despite the controversial nature of his presidency, low political capital and a questionable political legacy, Kaczyński was awarded the honor reserved to few exceptional historical figures, and none whose monumental status had not already been burnished over many years" (Zubrzycki, 2011, p. 46). During a press conference the Cardinal defended this decision arguing that "[s]urely President Kaczyński deserve[d] to be buried at the Wawel since he died in exceptional circumstances – heroically even, one can say, since he was flying to Katyn to honor the nation's martyrs in the name of the nation" (as cited in Zubrzycki, 2011, p. 45). The Cardinal's words (con)fused the tragic plane crash with the massacre by reviving ancient national mythologies of messianic martyrdom and turned the president into a contemporary martyr disturbing or highlighting perhaps political tensions within the nation.

The Law and Justice Party has turned mourning into a spectacle by publicly mourning the plane crash on a monthly basis which they have been doing for the last seven (almost eight) years. The ultra-Catholic illiberal party and its followers gather in front of the presidential palace on the tenth of every month to mourn the crash after attending a church service in the President's honour. The mourners can be seen marching down the cobblestoned avenues of old town Warsaw which are barricaded for this routine occasion. They follow behind a church procession led by Chairman Kaczyński sporting a black suit which he has worn in public since the crash in order to signify his everlasting mourning state. He guides his flock toward the palace which is adorned with wreaths and flowers to make a speech that is familiar to most by now. He speaks about conspiracies old and new and his unending search for the truth about the supposed political assassination of his late twin brother as mourners light candles and protestors stand across the street holding symbolic white roses and demanding an end to the spectacle.

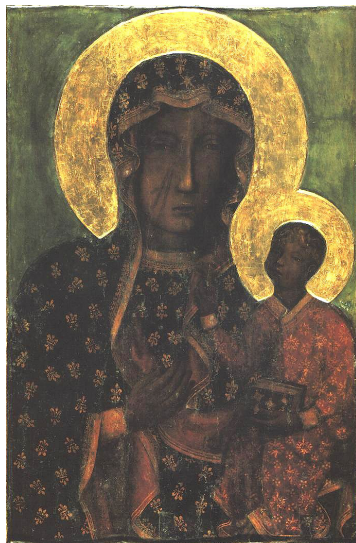
These mourning performances serve as a political platform for the Law and Justice Party (with Kaczyński playing the lead role) to espouse its populist and illiberal ideologies. They are as much about the nation mourning the tragedy and Kaczyński avenging his twin brother's death as they are about the party solidifying (symbolic) power. Karol Ofiara, a LGBTQI community member, believes that “for Kaczyński [these monthly gatherings are] a way of mourning and remembering his brother but [they are] also marketing and pr” (K. Ofiara, personal communication, December 15, 2016). These rituals serve as a platform upon which the party can stand to remind so-called real Poles (meaning the church-going and conservative) that the nation has once again been wronged by imposing and threatening neighbours which they do by misappropriating the language of postcolonialism. Chairman “Kaczyński ...has described the Polish nation under Civic Platform rule as a ‘scandal’ and ‘something weak and postcolonial.’ Kaczyński has even gone so far as to call their Poland a ‘German-Russian condo’” (as cited in Fomina, 2016, p. 22).

Magdalena Środa, philosopher and feminist scholar, states that these rituals are “starting to play an important historical and political role because [they] serve as a monthly renewal of lies and myths while simultaneously strengthening the power of the Law and Justice Party – [they] are the founding myth of its ruling power” (M. Środa, personal communication, December 12, 2016). According to Wiktor Dynarski, Trans-Fuzja's former President and Executive Director, the party has built its populist and EUrosceptic politic upon these mourning rituals. In his words, these rituals are “a cynical and political strategy [that] connects [politics] to religion [and] is ingenious” (W. Dynarski, personal communication, December 12, 2016). Środa argues that the goal of the mourning rituals is “to build a new Poland with a new history so that [the Law and Justice Party] can have their own heroes and villains and myths” (M. Środa, personal communication, December 12, 2016). Chairman Kaczyński has named his desire for Poland to catch up to the west on its own terms stating that “in Poland there will be freedom, freedom not limited by political correctness” (as cited in Cienski, 2019, para. 23). He

has stated that “[t]o achieve that we don’t have to copy those in the West... We don’t have to stand under the rainbow flag, but under Poland’s red and white banner” (Kaczyński as cited in Cienski, 2019, para. 51). Środa says that “Kaczyński wants a Poland that is his own, hard to say what kind of nation he wants to build but we know that he does not want a strong Poland, a European Poland, or a free and democratic Poland” (M. Środa, personal communication, December 12, 2016). These mourning rituals are regarded as absurd by more and more people (and not just on the left) but the ways in which they marketize national and personal loss in order to push a religious-nationalist agenda is significant. These performances, I argue below, have a significant impact upon sexual and racialized others and the nation-state itself.

Figure 7

Black Madonna



Note. Icon of the Black Madonna.
No Image Credits.

The God Complex

There exists a national origin story and this origin story draws on Christianity and becomes embodied (at least in part) as a god complex which was resurrected by the plane crash and subsequently maintained by the Law and Justice Party’s mourning rituals or what Dynarski calls “monthiversaries” (W. Dynarski, personal communication, December 12, 2016). This complex, deep rooted yet faltering, is enmeshed in and co-constituted through Poland as it is connected to myths surrounding the birth of Polish (nation-)statehood (Davies, 2005; Hopkin, 2011).

Zubrzycki (2011) in writing about national identities and mythologies

maintains that “...the myth of Poland’s intrinsic Catholicity starts ‘at the beginning’ – that is, with Prince Mieszko I’s conversion to Christianity and the foundation of the Polish state in 966...” (p. 26). The baptism of the nation and the prince who would become its first ruler mark not only the beginning of Polish (nation-)statehood but also a significant (religious) distinction between Poland and eastern backwardness. The myths which fuse religion (Catholicism) with nation-state (Poland) are as old as

the nation-state itself and resurface during significant historical moments (i.e., wars with O/others). For instance, there are many circulating narratives of how Poland defeated the Ottomans. The story states that the presence of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa or Virgin Mary crowned as the Queen of Poland⁷ made this defeat possible (Zubrzycki, 2011). These myths have overtime morphed into a god complex which I argue has significant material and symbolic consequences for sexual and racialized others and the nation-state itself.

This national mythology plays a significant role within a socio-cultural and historical context in which “the poetic, imaginative, and enthusiastic approach to History is still more common [...] than the critical, reflective, or analytical approach... the historical image has proved far more convincing than the historical fact” (Davies, 2005, p. 18). Zubrzycki (2011) subscribes to this view and makes the claim that:

[t]he most prevalent and pervasive Polish mythology – disseminated in homes, circulated in the public sphere, as well as reproduced in various academic circles in Poland and abroad – paradigmatically goes as follows: essentially and eternally Catholic, Poland is the bulwark of Christendom defending Europe against the infidel (however defined). A nation assailed by dangerous neighbors, its identity is conserved and guarded by its defender, the Roman Catholic Church, and shielded by its Queen, the miraculous Black Madonna, Our Lady of Częstochowa. Christ among nations, it was martyred for the sins of the world and resurrected for the world’s salvation. Last but not least, it is a nation that has given

⁷The Black Madonna is a revered icon within Poland said to have been painted by St. Luke on wood from the Holy Table. This icon has a long and contested history but scholars know that it originated in Ukraine and was brought to Częstochowa by a prince and a band of monks in the fourteenth century. The monks established the Jasna Góra Monastery which now houses the icon credited with thwarting a Protestant Swedish siege in 1655 and curing illnesses (Kubilius, 2019; Menaker, 1990). The Black Madonna has brown skin and scars on her cheek – her skin tone is attributed either to exposure to candle soot or a fire that damaged the monastery but left the painting unscathed save for its discolouration which some argue is a matter of whitewashing whereas the scars are attributed to saber slashes that legend says were inflicted by Hussite robbers (Kubilius, 2019; Menaker, 1990).

the world a Pope – deferentially referred to as the “Pope of the Millenium” – and rid the Western world of communism (pp. 25-26).

The Black Madonna shrouded in legend is credited with performing miracles and thwarting sieges that have altered the history of the region. As history recounts and legend goes, the icon defended Pauline monks and Polish nobility from a Protestant Swedish siege in 1655 which outnumbered them by the thousands. This event led King Jan Kazimierz to name the protective icon Queen of Poland and make the city the spiritual capital of the nation (Hamling, 2017). In 1683, the icon helped King Sobieski’s army liberate Vienna from a Turkish siege (Zubrzycki, 2011). The Black Madonna credited with these events has been enshrined as a powerful national symbol of motherhood – Matka Polka (referring to Mother Poland and Polish mother) framed in her image as a self-sacrificing woman whose role it is to reproduce and protect the nation.

The Black Madonna (and Matka Polka framed in her vision) symbolizes heroic and domestic femininity. Matka Polka is defined by her reproductive roles which include the biological reproduction of the nation “making the site of heterosexual family a nest of Polishness” (Kulpa, 2012, p. 95) and the ideological reproduction of religious nationalism and conservative gender roles. She is also defined by emotional and moral strength; passivity; selfless devotion to others; and her capacity (or duty) to suffer in silence for the good of the nation (Kulpa 2012; Mayer 1999). This icon is mobilized in debates around women’s roles as wives (in heterosexual marriages) and mothers (in nuclear families). It is also used as a framework for the introduction of some of the most restrictive legislation on abortion in the region.

This national mythology which paints the nation-state in a Catholic light as the “bulwark of Christendom” (Zubrzycki, 2011, p. 25) protected by the Black Madonna has a long history which morphed into a god complex which emerged in nineteenth century poetic resistance to foreign rule (Davies, 2005; Zubrzycki, 2011). The god complex was birthed in the nineteenth century when Poland

(the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) was partitioned by the Russian Empire, Austrian Habsburg Monarchy, and Kingdom of Prussia (1795-1918) – a series of annexations which ultimately led to its erasure from the map which in turn led to its questionable postcolonial status (Cavanagh, 2004; Davies, 2005). This complex was cultivated by Polish Romanticism which was not only an artistic and literary period but also an ideological and political movement that fought against foreign imposition. Polish Romanticism was dominated by strong convictions concerning political struggle for national sovereignty and freedom made poignant by the influential works of three men regarded as national poets (claimed by multiple nations) and later named the Three Bards (Trzej Wieszczowie) or prophets | soothsayers for their God-given ability to see the future (Davies, 2005). The Three Bards, Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), Juliusz Słowacki (1809–1849), and Zygmunt Krasiński (1812–1859), wrote national epic poems and dramas while in exile. Their poetry elevated their fatherland to the status of Christ (of nations or Europe itself) for they equated the partitions with crucifixion and believed that the nation was sacrificed for the sins of the world only to rise again in order to save humanity (meaning Europe) from absolutism and other evils (Zubrzycki, 2011). Mickiewicz wrote:

But the Polish nation alone did not bow down...And finally Poland said: 'Whosoever will come to me shall be free and equal, for I am FREEDOM'. But the Kings when they heard were frightened in their hearts, and said... 'Come, let us slay this nation'. And they conspired together...And they crucified the Polish Nation, and laid it in its grave, and cried out 'We have slain and buried Freedom.' But they cried out foolishly...

For the Polish Nation did not die. Its body lieth in the grave; but its spirit has descended into the abyss, that is into the private lives of people who suffer slavery in their country...But on the third day the soul shall return again to the body, and the Nation shall arise, and free all the peoples of Europe from slavery (as cited in Davies, 2005, p. 7).

Mickiewicz's nineteenth century poetic dramas embody the messianic language that was used to make sense of the (body) politic at that time. The nation is understood as a Christian body likened to the body of Christ – “an earthly incarnation of the divine” (Zubrzycki, 2011, p. 27) or “the highest earthly entity” (M. Plawski, personal communication, December 23, 2016) that is eternal and supreme. This language continues to impact the political discourse within Poland as it is adopted by the Chairman who believes his nation-state has been chosen to halt the secularization of the continent because according to him “if Europe is to be strong, it has to be Christian” (Kaczyński as cited in Medek, 2009, para. 1) (spoken against Islam and EUropean secularism) not to mention white and heterosexual.

The god complex which not only upholds a religious nationalism but also portrays Poland and so-called real Poles as God-like saviours is taken up by conservative and religious actors in order to push an illiberal and EUrosceptic (read here as ultra-Catholic and white supremacist) agenda. The Chairman believes in (and fights for) his fatherland which to him is indeed “essentially and eternally Catholic...” (Zubrzycki, 2011, p. 25) as its traditional (family) values are threatened by EUrope which brings with it the so-called incursion of racialized migrants and other unwanted evils like the so-called homosexual agenda. He embodies and projects this hateful mantra that Poland is for Poles (and must remain for Poles alone) stating that Poland has “a full moral right to say no” (as cited in Barteczko & Sobczak, 2017, para. 3) to refugees which is also taken up by other conservative and religious actors such as the Solo Dios Basta Foundation (or God Alone Suffices) – a Catholic organization (supported not only by the clergy but also by several politicians from the ruling Law and Justice Party) that brought this belief to the national borders (Berendt & Specia, 2017).

On October 7, 2017, Solo Dios Basta organized a Polish Catholic congregation to line the national borders with people meeting in churches as well as fields and airports to pray for salvation in a controversial mass demonstration aptly named ‘Rosary to the Borders’ (Berendt & Specia, 2017). An

estimated one million Polish Catholics with rosary beads in hand gathered to pray on the 100th anniversary of Fatima and the 300th anniversary since the coronation of Poland's "Queen, the miraculous Black Madonna, Our Lady of Częstochowa" (Zubrzycki, 2011, p. 25). The event which the organizers asked "...be seen only in the eyes of religion and faith, not politics" (as cited in Giangravè, 2017, para. 2) stirred controversy because it also marked the Battle of Lepanto (1571) during which Christian nations, under orders of the Pope and guidance of the Black Madonna, fought against the Ottoman Empire, effectively putting an end to the Turkish expansion in the Mediterranean (Berendt & Specia, 2017; Giangravè, 2017). The religious congregation tied religion (Catholicism) with nation-state (Poland) by bringing prayers to the borders and seemed to be as much about peace as it was about protecting an imagined pure (meaning white and heterosexual) Poland.

The event, 'Rosary to the Borders,' (considering space and time) was about protecting national borders (and Europe itself) against a refugee (meaning Muslim here) invasion and the spread of Islam (Berendt & Specia, 2017; Giangravè, 2017). Marek Jedraszewski, Archbishop of Kraków in a sermon he presided over that day said "[l]et's pray for other nations of Europe and the world to understand that we need to return to the Christian roots of European culture if we want Europe to remain Europe" (as cited in Berendt & Specia, 2017, para. 11) which upholds this national god complex by presenting the nation as a saviour of Poland and the rest of Europe but also presents a (religiously) homogenous and whitewashed image of the continent that is similar to the national one presented by the right-wing ruling party in Poland.

The event has been criticized for its (not so) subtle statement on the Syrian refugee crisis and European immigration policies. Krzysztof Luft, a former member of the nation's largest opposition party, the liberal-conservative and Christian democratic Civic Platform Party (PO), tweeted that the event was "a ridicule of Christianity on a massive scale. They treat religion as a tool for maintaining backwardness in the Polish backwater" (as cited in Berendt & Specia, 2017, para. 17). The religious

congregation which brought prayers to the national borders (much like the mourning rituals) speaks to how in Poland certain political and religious leadership draws and collates an ancient god complex by reproducing the nation-state as postcolonial and articulating that Poland's prayers can protect (meaning preserve an imagined purity of) not only the nation-state but all of Europe. The event, considering it had Catholics line national borders on the anniversary of a significant battle between Catholic states and the Ottoman Empire, re-animated Poland's role as a defender of Christendom against Muslim incursion (Berendt & Specia, 2017; Giangravè, 2017). It speaks to Poland as site of experimentation where boundaries are being (re)drawn in the rethinking of empire-building in the contemporary moment.

The Postcolonial Nation and its Necropolitical Attachments

Poland's social reproduction as a postcolonial nation struggling against European domination holds (necro)political significance not only for sexual and racialized others but also for the nation-state itself globally and its transition (1989-) shapes and informs thinking on this reproduction. The plane crash which introduced this chapter (considering the death of the head of state and the way in which it has been framed by the right in particular) mobilized national mythologies of trauma and messianic martyrdom which have been taken up by the Law and Justice Party in order to advance a Eurosceptical and ultra-Catholic political agenda. The mourning rituals which were held every month for eight years provided a political platform for the grieving Chairman to reproduce and maintain the image of a postcolonial nation as a body under threat – a nation once again harmed by its past (Russia) and failed by its future (Europe). This framing speaks to how postcoloniality is experimented with and instrumentalized. Instead of the postcolonial analytic that tends to focus on countries colonized by empires (i.e., ranging from India to Cyprus), the (far-)right's notion ruptures a three worlds ideology that associates the first world with capitalism, the second with socialism and the third with postcolo-

nality (Chari & Verdery, 2009). Thus, the postcolonial as an analytic allows for the leadership to experiment with national self-identity in order to assert agency on a geopolitical scale. Thinking the postcolonial in this way allows for those in power to appropriate this notion and leverage it in order to challenge and rupture attachments to imperial power, both European and that of the former Soviet Union. The plane crash and the mourning rituals resurrected an ancient god complex which was birthed during the partitions and continues to frame the nation and its people as saviours and historical martyrs set to rise again to provide the region salvation (Zubrzycki, 2011). This complex is related to the social reproduction of the Polish nation-state as postcolonial as it is both the partitions and occupations that mark it as such (Cavanagh, 2004; Davies, 2005; Thompson, 2010). The nation-state is theorized as a postcolonial one in critical scholarship on East-Central and Southern Europe, a reproduction which is simultaneously deployed in the political arena by the right (referring to the Law and Justice Party in particular here) to mobilize a vision of nationalism that desires to keep Poland for Poles and Poles alone.

The social reproduction of the nation-state as “postcolonial” is rooted in nineteenth century poetic prose and supported by contemporary scholarship which in turn becomes a significant source of positionality for the political right. This social reproduction holds (necro)political significance for sexual and racialized others but also for the nation-state itself globally. The Law and Justice Party (with the Chairman playing the central role here) maintains postcolonial status in order to reclaim national agency and deny European domination. The claim (read here as misappropriation and whitewashing) becomes a weapon which concerns the (unviable) biological reproduction of the nation-state against other reproductions. The Law and Justice Party which is invested in the biopolitical reproduction of the white nation-state frames the idea of Europe (a region which is associated with sexual and racialized otherness and invested in other potential reproductions) as a threat to national sovereignty (Ayoub & Paternotte, 2014). The populist party manages this threat and potential death of the nation (as

the political right imagines it to be) by reproducing the image of a postcolonial nation which must be guarded against (western) European domination. This reproduction holds (necro)political significance for sexual and racialized others whose experiences must be distinguished while we recognize that the (death) logic that guides these violences is the same.

The Law and Justice Party mobilizes the political movement to keep Poland for Poles (meaning white and heterosexual and conservative and religious citizens) by employing multiple strategies which amount to an assault on democracy. The illiberal party and its far-right supporters are recognized on a global scale for their historical uses of political homophobia as evidenced by municipal and national bans on equality parades enacted by among others the late President Lech Kaczyński who stated that “[g]ay people may protest as citizens but not as homosexuals” (as cited in Graff, 2010, p. 584) – a statement which denies LGBTQI people their sexuality and in so doing constitutes them biopolitically as living dead (Mbembe, 2003). The governing party is also recognized for reinforcing legal challenges faced by LGBTQI people who are denigrated for spreading their immoral homosexual agenda and gender ideology (meaning feminism and sexuality discourses) while continuing to be denied the right to marry same-gender partners or adopt children. The ruling party is also famous for attempting to roll back what are already strict anti-abortions laws which devastate (women’s) sexual and reproductive rights. Jarosław Kaczyński has stated that “we will strive to ensure that even in pregnancies which are very difficult, when a child is sure to die, strongly deformed, women end up giving birth so that the child can be baptised, buried, and have a name” (as cited in Davies, 2018, para. 7). The (necro)political consequences of these laws are experienced in the medical operating rooms where forced labours are induced and illegal abortions are performed (Roache, 2019a; Sifferlin, 2018). The nationalist party is also known for refusing to accept refugees from the MENA region and failing to fulfill EU quota requirements which is about preservation of an imagined racial and sexual purity. Kaczyński has stated that accepting refugees would “completely change our culture and radically lower the level of safety

in our country” (as cited in Zerofsky, 2018, para. 22). He believes that accepting refugees (read here as racialized others as the nation-state welcomes migrants from the Ukraine) would lead to the demise of the nation-state as imagined by the right. This refusal has (necro)political consequences for those deemed as racialized others who continue to die at sea. The reproduction of the post-socialist nation-state as postcolonial holds (necro)political significance for sexual others who are denied their sexual and reproductive rights and for racialized others who are denied access to the land or brutalized when they do arrive but also for the nation-state itself which cannot depend upon its biological reproduction in order to survive within the global economy (Cienski, 2015; Roache, 2019a, 2019b; Sifferlin, 2018; Zerofsky, 2018).

Conclusion

This chapter began with a plane crash that revived national mythologies of messianic martyrdom which have been taken up by the Law and Justice party’s Chairman Kaczyński to reproduce the nation-state as a postcolonial body under threat posed by eastern and western imperial powers. I discussed the crash (and its aftermath) while exploring the scholarly and political adoption, which I argued is the misappropriation and whitewashing, of postcolonialism, in order to trace the geopolitical role that sexual and racialized others play in the (un)production of the nation-state and the region. I also discussed how the Chairman orchestrated monthly mourning rituals which provided a platform for him to use fear mongering as a political tactic to build EUroscepticism (Cienski, 2019; Fomina, 2016). I showed how the national mythologies of messianic martyrdom or god complex that were revived by the crash and its aftermath reproduce Poland as postcolonial defender of Catholicism protected by the (selfless and pure) Black Madonna – a social reproduction which reflects racial exceptionalism in East-Central Europe (Baker, 2018a, 2018b; Imre, 201; Zubrzycki, 2011).

This chapter speaks to the use of nationalist memories deployed by the Law and Justice party during mourning rituals that unfolded around a tragic plane crash in ways that contribute to the making

of Polish postcolonial nationalism. It speaks to Chairman Kaczyński's vision of Poland (for Poles) as concept and method articulated through the mourning rituals which stresses particular constellations of sexuality and race which reproduce an imagined purity – meaning a Poland for Poles (and Poles alone) that is white and heterosexual and Catholic. To summarize, this chapter has shown how Poland's (un)production as postcolonial depends upon (necro)political violences leveraged against sexual and racialized others but also the nation-state itself globally.

Chapter Six:

EUrope's Eastern Other Within

This chapter speaks to the emerging transnational by considering the role that both sexual and racialized others play in geopolitical struggles within EUrope, complicating and unraveling tensions between the Polish nation-state and the EU. It considers the ways in which Polish nationalist identities are juxtaposed with EUropean values and argues that the social reproduction of Poland (for Poles and Poles alone) framed against EUrope (open for all) masks that “[a]ll parts of Europe are invested in the reproduction of Europeanness as whiteness” (El-Tayeb, 2011, p. xiv).

In the first part of this chapter, I consider the role that sexual and racialized others play in framing Poland (for Poles) against EUrope (open for all). I trace the social reproduction of Poland for Poles by considering the contemporary abortion law; sex education mandate; 500plus child benefit program; and migration policies that speak to the biopolitical reproduction of the white nation-state. I draw upon Keller's (2006) SKAD and van Dijk's (1993) CDA in particular here to code and map the ways in which the Law and Justice party (among other social actors) interpret sexual and racialized otherness.

In the second part of this chapter, I argue that the social reproduction of Poland for Poles which is peripheral (and framed as backwards) with regard to sexual politics positions the nation as EUrope's eastern other within and scapegoat. This peripheral orientation toward EUrope is one disciplinary and biopolitical mechanism through which EUrope reproduces itself as a beacon of human sexual rights. I argue that Poland's backwardness (tied in this moment to rampant political homophobia and racist anti-migration rhetoric and policies which result in few consequences) works as border control.

Poland for Poles, Europe for “Infertile Erotomaniacs”

On November 11, 2017, sixty thousand people marched through Warsaw to commemorate the reinstatement of Polish national sovereignty at the end of World War I. The Independence Day March was organized by the All-Polish Youth (Catholic nationalist youth group) and National Radical Camp (far-right and ultranationalist organization) and was the largest far-right gathering in Europe in recent years (Specia, 2017; Taylor, 2017). The national(ist) event was preceded by a church service and had as its official slogan “We Want God” (speaking to the marriage between church and state) which is a lyric from an old Polish nationalist song (Specia, 2017). The event was marked by far-right nationalist demonstrators throwing red-smoke bombs and chanting “pure Poland, white Poland,” and “refugees get out” while carrying banners with racist and homophobic phrases and symbols (i.e., “white Europe of brotherly nations,” signs denouncing same-sex marriage and ridiculing queer people) (Selk, 2017; Specia, 2017; Taylor, 2017). The event which has become an important rallying point for transnational far-right extremist groups was attended by (welcomed) foreign guests former English Defence League leader Tommy Robinson, Italy’s New Force party leader Roberto Fiore, Slovak MP Milan Mazurek, as well as multiple members of Hungary’s Jobbik party (Charnysh, 2017). The event was also attended by numerous high-ranking supporters of the Law and Justice party which at first hailed the march as patriotic (Charnysh, 2017).

The event points to the rise of right-leaning populism which is shifting the geopolitical landscape within Europe and (according to some) posing an existential threat to the union and to western liberal democracy itself. The (far-)right is gaining momentum in the streets and power in government which is fracturing mainstream party politics across the continent. The (far-)right has taken office in parts of New Europe and is becoming a strong oppositional voice in Old Europe. The rise of populism (considering here nationalist to far-right and neo-fascist political movements in a historical space of imperialism and colonialism) and the subsequent fall of the centre-left were once understood as political

backlash to the financial crisis spurred on by the recession but economic recovery in Europe and continuous economic growth in Poland have not led to the decline in populist support (Aisch, Pearce, & Rousseau, 2017; Galston, 2018; Holleran, 2018). It is now argued that populism is connected not only to economic inequality but also to mass opposition to the state-manufactured refugee and migrant crisis which has been strengthened by the war on terror as well as to “...cultural liberalization, and the perceived surrender of national sovereignty to distant and unresponsive international bodies” (Galston, 2018, para. 2). The rise of European right-wing populism which is marked by ethno-nationalism (meaning xenophobia and racism) and religious traditionalism (meaning Islamophobia and anti-Semitism) and masked as patriotism reproduces sexual and racialized others as ‘disposable populations’ (Mbembe, 2003).

In Poland, the resurgence of right-leaning populism is tied to economic discontent (speaking to wage disparities across the union) and the refugee and migrant crisis but its historical roots run much deeper (Charnysh, 2017). This notion of Poland for Poles (and Poles alone) is tied to Roman Dmowski who was an influential right-wing ideologue and politician instrumental to the post-war restoration of Poland’s independence (Charnysh, 2017; Davies, 2005). Dmowski, who championed independence and was known as an anti-Semite partial to fascism and a Catholic vision of the nation, has been called “the father of Polish nationalism” and continues to unite people across the ideological and political spectrum (Charnysh, 2017; Davies, 2005). The connection between religion and the nation-state was further sutured in the 1980s with the Catholic Church playing a key role in the Solidarity Movement (anti-communist labour movement instrumental to the restructuring of communism) (Davies, 2005). The fusion between Catholic conservatism and Polishness, which speaks (at least in part) to this notion of Poland for Poles and is further explored in the fifth chapter, is exploited by the far-right and made mainstream by the Law and Justice party.

The notion of Poland for Poles (meaning white and heterosexual and conservative and religious citizens) as nationalist agenda and fascist rallying cry is framed against rainbow Europe (tied to secular LGBT politics by both those who support and oppose sexual freedom) (Ayoub & Paternotte, 2014; Colpani & Habed, 2014; Kuhar, 2011; Ponzanesi & Colpani, 2016). Ayoub and Paternotte (2014) examine the relationship between Europe and LGBT rights and argue that social actors at both ends of the political and ideological spectrum consider sexual freedom a marker of belonging to Europe. The association was first made by LGBTQI activists moved by particular ideas of Europe – democratic values and a commitment to human rights – and later co-opted by right-wing populists who feared “national values and morals were at stake in the face of rainbow-tinged European threat” (Ayoub & Paternotte, 2014, p. 1). Moss (2014) says “[i]n Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), tolerance of homosexuality has been portrayed as a value associated with the idea of Europe (or the West, or America) both by local queers aspiring to attaining rights in their own countries and perhaps even more by nationalists who want to exclude homosexuals from the nation by portraying homosexuality as a foreign import” (p. 212).

Graff (2010) writes about political uses of homophobia in Poland during the fourth republic (right-wing rule following EU accession) and argues that “[n]ot only were gays and lesbians being stigmatized in the name of patriotism, but national sentiment was now regularly expressed through the exclusion of the sexual (rather than the ethnic or cultural) other” (p. 590). She continues by stating, “[t]hus it is not just that homophobia was becoming politicized, or that politicized homophobia was displacing other existing forms of gay bashing (discourses of aversion, religious outrage, or the slippery-slope argument), but that homophobia was becoming the new discourse of patriotism” (Graff, 2010, p. 590). The association between Europe and LGBT rights and Poland and politicized homophobia both become apparent at equality marches (read here as pride parades) where LGBTQI community members and activists wave EU flags whereas far-right demonstrators protest by holding signs

which equate EUrope with Sodom (see Graff, 2010). Kaczyński has also made the association calling on the nation to resist the “travelling theatre” (as cited in Plucinska, 2019, para. 1) which refers to equality marches he understands as a symbol of EUropean imposition whereas the rev. Marek Dziewiecki, a popular priest and educator has stated that “the plus in ‘L.G.B.T.Q.+ stood for ‘pedophiles, zoophiles, necrophiles,’ and that the ultimate goal was to ‘make people into infertile erotomaniacs’” (as cited in Santora, 2019, para. 16). The notion of Poland for Poles (not only heterosexual but also homophobic) reinforces the symbolism of EUrope (if not for all, then) for queers.

The notion of Poland for Poles unites *kibole* (ultra-nationalist football fans who use violence to spread their far-right extremist ideologies) and church-going grandmothers alike. It is explored by my interview participants who speak to its exclusionary nationalist politic. Dynarski states:

I think people who use [Poland for Poles] have a very limited knowledge on what it means to be Polish to be a Pole cause what I have seen in this discourse is that whenever someone deviates from being white from being straight from being cis ... they’re not regarded as Polish anymore which begs the question what is being Polish? Is a Pole somebody who has Polish citizenship? Is [it] someone who was born here and has Polish parents up until whatever generation? Or is it someone who basically just submits to the normalized culture we are living? I have no idea I don’t get that. I think in the majority discourse more like a minority discourse that is being pushed as a majority discourse the whole Poland for Poles neo-fascist kind of thing I feel like I wouldn’t be regarded as a Pole as Polish because I don’t share the same values pushed by the same argument (W. Dynarski, personal communication, December 12, 2016).

Dynarski, responding with exasperation shared by most interlocutors, speaks to Poland for Poles as a site of neo-fascist experimentation while addressing nuance in how it is articulated. He wonders about belonging asking whether inclusion depends upon citizenship or birthright or political leanings while

simultaneously indicating that this notion of a Pole refers to someone who is white and heterosexual and cisgender. He continues:

Poland for Poles is a racist fascist absolutely awful idea. It's the worst thing that could have happened to Poland and honestly one of the things that scares me is that this is the country where the Holocaust happened and forgetting that and actually not forgetting that but twisting this history and memory of massive number of people dying for who they were twisting that into this argument is disgusting I feel nothing but contempt for anyone who thinks this is okay honestly (W. Dynarski, personal communication, December 12, 2016).

Dynarski signals that Poland for Poles has necropolitical consequences for sexual and racialized others and the nation-state itself in relating the nationalist agenda and fascist rallying cry with the Holocaust.

Magdalena Środa, philosopher and feminist scholar also questions the meaning of nationalist identity while referencing a history of war founded upon similar beliefs. She states that "Poland for Poles is nationalist, imprudent, untrue and harmful. It is not known who this Pole is. It is known when we see who speaks it. I do not agree with this kind of definition of Poland as understood by nationalists or kibole. The saying is idiotic and reminds us of the worst moments in our history and Europe's history in general" (M. Środa, personal communication, December 12, 2016). Anna Grodzka, trans organizer and former member of parliament states that "Poland for Poles is some kind of theatre. It goes against my beliefs. This is a fake statement that is meaningless. It's a fabricated thought crafted from a certain take on history, a misguided take on history. What is Polishness? It is not useful for Poland. It's against globalization and not just of the market but also of democracy. Colonialism exists today just in different forms. It's anti-European marching towards war" (A. Grodzka, personal communication, December 15, 2016). These interlocutors point to the tensions concerning this notion of Poland (for Poles) while connecting it to a genocidal history.

Piotr Godzisz, policy, research and advocacy officer at Lambda Warsaw states “Poland for Poles is used by people who very often belong to nationalist and right-wing organizations and it is a saying that is an expression of xenophobia that has a goal of showing non-tolerance for multiculturalism and fear of difference. It is a utopian vision of a nation where there are no non-Poles” (Godzisz, personal communication, December 16, 2016). Contrarily, Mateusz Plawski, spokesperson for the All-Polish Youth states “this saying is very controversial, but we say if not for Poles, then for who? We are the hosts, and this nation belongs to Poles. Luckily Poland is still more or less ethnically homogenous” (M. Plawski, personal communication, December 23, 2016) – a statement which erases a multiracial national history. Ofiara names what Plawski is celebrating by stating that “Poland for Poles is about being a closed nation” (K. Ofiara, personal communication, December 15, 2016). Justyna Kosiec, member of Partia Razem states that “Poland for Poles is a symbol of nationalism that appeals to people on an emotional level. It doesn’t offer much good but could do a lot of bad” (J. Kosiec, personal communication, December 16, 2016).

Magda Świder, programming coordinator at Campaign Against Homophobia states “Poland for Poles worries me. It [includes] a really narrow definition of a Pole. Loving Poland for me is about looking to the future and not backwards. I’m not a white heterosexual Catholic man so I don’t fit into this definition... But I was born here, I speak the language, I have family here. My message to the government is that everyone belongs here and that is okay (M. Świder, personal communication, December 15, 2016). Czwarnóg states “Poland for Poles is racism and sexism ... [by which] they mean a white Catholic born in Poland whose parents are also Poles oh and heterosexual” (K. Czwarnóg, personal communication, December 15, 2016). Joanna Grabarczyk, organizer at HejtStop says that Poland for Poles “is almost as bad as ‘Poland, Only White.’ It’s a disgustingly xenophobic narrative yelled everywhere in Poland that only Poles should live here. In the words of those who yell this I am

not a Pole” (J. Grabarczyk, personal communication, December 17, 2016). The interview participants (save for one) frame Poland for Poles as far-right ideology which most feel excludes them.

I trace the social reproduction of Poland for Poles which is framed against EUrope by reflecting on the role that the contemporary abortion law; sex education mandate; 500plus child benefit program; and migration policies play in the biopolitical reproduction of the white nation-state. Under Poland’s draconian abortion law which is known as the compromise bill (a compromise made between the Catholic Church and the state in the early nineties) terminations are permitted only under three circumstances: if there is a threat to the mother’s life; if there are fetal abnormalities; or if the pregnancy has resulted from rape or incest (Roache, 2019a). In effect since 1993, the (anti-)abortion law is one of the strictest in EUrope.

Even when abortion is permitted, many doctors invoke the “conscience clause” which permits them to refuse care based on personal and religious beliefs whereas access to the morning after pill (which religious conservatives call express abortion) requires a prescription too often denied by doctors and pharmacists alike. These barriers force women to access care on the black market where risks to health and life are high or engage in abortion tourism which many cannot afford.

In 2016, conservative lawmakers tried to impose a full ban on abortion threatening to imprison those seeking and performing the procedure for up to five years. The ban would also investigate so-called suspicious miscarriages (Roache, 2019a). It was met with massive demonstrations of women and their allies marching in thousands. The demonstrations known as Czarny Protest (Black Protest) and Strajk Kobiet (Women’s Strike) led high-ranking politicians to distance themselves from the law which was abandoned by the government days later. In 2018, regressive legislation that would further restrict sexual and reproductive health and rights known as the “Stop Abortion” bill was re-introduced in a less severe form seeking to outlaw abortion in case of fetal abnormalities (Human Rights Watch, 2020). The following year, the “Stop Pedophilia” bill was brought forth seeking to criminalize “anyone

who promotes or approves the undertaking by a minor of sexual intercourse or other sexual activity” (as cited in Human Rights Watch, 2020, para. 5). It was presented by the Pro-Right to Life organization which gathered more than two hundred and sixty-five thousand signatures to outlaw sex education in public space like schools and imprison those providing it for up to three years. The bill was introduced in response to Warsaw’s mayor (along other capital politicians associated with the national opposition) advocating for the integration of sex education and LGBTQI issues into the school curriculum which would adhere to World Health Organization guidelines – a position which garners greater support in major cities over small townships (Noack, 2019). These legislations have since been stalled and many believe that the Law and Justice party will use the coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent ban on mass gatherings as a distraction (and hindrance) in order to push them through (Human Rights Watch, 2020). The restrictions on sexual and reproductive health and rights (in the form of anti-abortion laws and bans on sex education) concern the biopolitical reproduction of Poland for Poles.

Kaczyński has called the LGBTQI rights movement a foreign import that threatens the Polish nation-state and its traditional Catholic values. He stated, “[w]e are dealing with a direct attack on the family and children – the sexualization of children, that entire LGBT movement, gender. This is imported, but they today actually threaten our identity, our nation, its continuation and therefore the Polish state” (as cited in Gera, 2019, para. 13). His government has blocked sex education (understood as “gender ideology” endorsed by the homosexual lobby) and has instead promoted its “Preparation for Family Life” curriculum which “spreads misinformation that can have negative long-term health impacts, perpetuates harmful stereotypes about gender roles and sexuality, and promotes anti-rights and anti-LGBT agenda” (Human Rights Watch, 2020, para. 8). The curriculum promotes abstinence only education and positions the heterosexual family at the centre of social and religious life (Woźniak, 2015). In 2009, Ponton which is a sexuality education advocacy group released an exhaustive report about the “Preparation for Family Life” curriculum. The report, instigated by a seventeen-year-old

boy's letter in which he shared concerns about the curriculum, includes classroom scripts. The scripts include "homosexuals should be isolated and treated, rape is a punishment for promiscuity, and contraception is Satan's invention" (Ponton, 2009, p. 10). The political climate under the current government has led multiple local governments of rural towns which comprise a third of the country to declare their jurisdictions "LGBT-free zones" with stickers issued by *Gazeta Polska* (conservative weekly newspaper) (Noack, 2019). The jurisdictions are not enforceable (in a legal sense) but send a strong message which has been reinforced by the church and state-run media (Noack, 2019).

In 2015, the Law and Justice party campaigned on the promise to provide a government benefit in response to a declining birth rate and high emigration rate. The following year the party, which has been framed as socially conservative and economically liberal in part due to this promise, introduced the 500plus child benefit program in order to increase the birth rate and support (traditional meaning heterosexual and church-going) families. The program began by providing parents with 500 zloty per month per child starting with the second child whereas low-income families and those with disabled children were promised the benefit from the first child. In 2019, the program was extended to include all children under the age of eighteen considering it proved more effective in reducing poverty and driving consumer spending than increasing the birth rate (Sussman, 2019). "The 500 Plus strategy was presented as a patriotic, nation-building solution to Poland's declining birth-rate. It also ticked the Catholic pro-family box and made a point about priorities in a country where same-sex marriage is illegal and gay adoption off the agenda" (Coman, 2019, para. 26).

In Kaczyński's Poland, (anti-)migration rhetoric and policies speak to the social reproduction of Poland for Poles – recognizing the exceptionality of Ukrainian labourers whose bodies do not threaten the national(ist) investment in reproducing Polishness as whiteness (Ciobanu, 2019; El-Tayeb, 2011; Eyre & Goillandeau, 2019). Polish politicians and government officials emphasize shared history and close relationships between Polish and Ukrainian cultures referencing languages and cuisines without

naming “white but not quite” (Agathangelou, 2004, p. 4) geopolitical positionings (Trofimov, 2019). Radosław Sikorski, former parliament speaker and foreign minister aligned with the liberal opposition, has stated that “[i]n Poland, there is a general consensus that we don’t want the kind of postcolonial Western style of immigration... People think Christians [speaking to the Ukrainian influx] are all right, and non-Christians [speaking to Muslim refugees] are not all right, Christians will assimilate and the non-Christians won’t. It’s that simple” (as cited in Trofimov, 2019, para. 13).

The refugee and migrant crisis which began mid-2015 served as a platform for the Law and Justice party’s anti-migrant rhetoric which helped them gain electoral power that year. The crisis also galvanized east|west dichotomies as the Visegrád Group (comprised of Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia) distinguished itself by opposing relocation (Bachman, 2016). The group released a joint statement stating that “any [EU] proposal leading to [the] introduction of mandatory and permanent quota for solidarity measures would be unacceptable” (as cited in Bachman, 2016, para. 1). The refusal to accept mandatory relocation quotas underpinned the opposition between Europe (which distanced itself by threatening to sue those nation-states refusing to take in refugees) and East-Central Europe (Kuus, 2004).

In September 2015, the Civic Platform government under rule of prime minister Ewa Kopacz caved under pressure and voted to accept a proposed relocation plan that would see seven thousand out of one hundred and sixty thousand asylum seekers resettle in Poland (Bachman, 2016). Kaczyński expressed his opposition to the vote by stating that refugees carry “very dangerous diseases long absent from Europe” (as cited in Cienski, 2015, para. 1). He continued saying that refugees carry “all sorts of parasites and protozoa, which ... while not dangerous in the organisms of these people, could be dangerous here” (as cited in Cienski, 2015, para. 3) – a statement that Świder says is “reminiscent of the Third Reich” (M. Świder, personal communication, December 15, 2016) and Wutke says leads to feeling “guilt-free talking about refugees as human garbage” (D. Wutke, personal communication,

December 8, 2016). By October 2015, the Law and Justice party (under his de-facto leadership) won parliamentary elections and shifted the governmental stance which was echoed in the streets by thousands of nationalist demonstrators chanting “Today refugees, tomorrow terrorists!” and “Poland, free of Islam!” (Bachman, 2016, para. 4).

The sentiment was also echoed on the cover of *msieci* (Figure 8) – a mass-market conservative magazine. The cover displays a white woman with a European Union flag draped over her shoulder who is being grabbed by racialized men (represented by their hands) under the headline “Islamic Rape of Europe.” I read this image in this way considering the headline and accompanying article that refers to the New Year’s Eve (2015-16) sexual assault of hundreds of women in Cologne and other German cities. The police investigation which alleged that more than two thousand men were involved in the sexual assaults led to the racial profiling of racialized men and recent migrants from the Middle East and North Africa (Noack, 2016). The article is situated among others on the clash between Christianity and Islam and discusses EUrope’s “suicidal” disregard for issues caused by racialized migrants. The article’s author, Aleksandra Rybińska states “[t]he people of old Europe after the events of New Year’s Eve in Cologne painfully realized the problems arising from the massive influx of migrants” (as cited in Sherwood, 2016, para. 5). She continues, “[t]he first signs that things were going wrong, however, were there a lot earlier. They were still ignored or were minimised in significance in the name of tolerance and political correctness” (Rybińska as cited in Sherwood, 2016, para. 6). The references to rape and EUrope’s suicidal death position Islam and its believers as a sexual threat to the imagined (sexual and racial) purity of the nation-state and the region.

In their article, “Racializing ‘Oriental’ Manliness: From Colonial Contexts to Cologne,” Zuher Jazmati and Nina Studer (2017) situate this and other racist media images within EUrope’s historical context of colonialism. They argue that the sensationalist imagery which emerged in the wake of the New Year’s Eve attacks reproduces anti-Muslim racist stereotypes of men from the MENA region

which they trace back to colonial Maghreb. They state that “[a] lot of the media coverage following the events in Cologne overlapped with right-wing (and colonial) notions of wild and savage North African men, who only come to Europe to sexually harass the white women” (Jazmati & Studer, 2017, p. 90). In “Anti-Muslim Racism and the Racialisation of Sexual Violence: ‘Intersectional Stereotyping’ in Mass Media Representations of Male Muslim Migrants in Germany” Iris Wigger (2019) also analyzes mainstream print media in Germany and the representation of migrant Muslim men. She introduces “the concept of ‘intersectional stereotyping’ to capture media representations where depictions of male Muslim migrants are entangled in multiple narratives of difference that intersect and form a toxic racist conglomerate of ascribed ‘Otherness’” (Wigger, 2019, p. 249). She argues that “[t]his close interweaving of sex, religion and alien status in the intersectional stereotype of the Muslim migrant man racialises sexism and resonates with a wider anti-Muslim discourse within contemporary Germany and Europe and its attempt to ethnicise, islamise and essentialise sexism” (Wigger, 2019, pp. 266-267). The *Wiesci* cover, which was printed during the so-called European refugee crisis, reproduces anti-Muslim racist stereotypes about sexually uncontrollable men who pose a threat to white women and Europe itself.

The *Wiesci* cover (and accompanying article) speaks to the governmental opposition to the plan that would welcome thousands of racialized refugees. Law and Justice prime minister Beata Szydło stated that the country could not accept any refugees under the plan as it had welcomed over one million Ukrainians who are framed as labourers or “visitors” (K. Ofiara, personal communication, December 15, 2016) not refugees (Eyre & Goillandeau, 2019). The government has not welcomed any refugees under the relocation plan to date and while infringement procedures have been launched by the European Commission which has found that the nation-state has failed to fulfil its obligations under EU law no consequences have followed.

Figure 8

"Islamic Rape of Europe"



Note: wSieci Cover. Image Credit: wSieci, February 15-21, 2016.

In governmental leadership, the Law and Justice party suspended a key migration policy which was developed by the previous government in collaboration with experts in academia and civil society (Pędzwiatr, 2019). The government has been working on a new policy document ever since. In 2019, a document entitled “Poland’s Migration Policy” which was presented by the Ministry of Interior and Administration at a parliamentary conference was leaked on the internet. The seventy-page draft policy starts by naming key reasons for the new migration policy including among others suspension of the previous policy; demographic crisis meaning one of the lowest fertility rates in the world and an ageing population; labour emigration; and immigration. The policy acknowledges the need for migrants while simultaneously framing them as a threat to the nation-state and its culture. It focuses on security which is mentioned seventy-six times – three times in the context of religious fundamentalism; seven times in the context of Islam; and eighteen times in the context of terrorism. The word refugee is mentioned

twenty-four times – two times in the context of illegal migration; two times in the context of terrorism; and seven times in the context of security. The word Muslim is mentioned fifteen times whereas Islam is referenced forty-seven times and both always in the context of security threats; terrorism; religious fundamentalism; and inability to integrate. There is a thirteen-page sub-section called “Ensuring Safety in Migration Processes” which focuses on Islam as threat.

The draft policy states that integration and assimilation are key to naturalization while identifying multiculturalism as a “fiasco” (Zespół do Spraw Migracji, 2019, p. 41) witnessed in other western societies which has preceded “the emergence of cultural enclaves, ethnic ghettos, alternative legal and moral systems, an increase in the level of aggression against indigenous people, the negation of the value system in the host country, including values stemming from the dominant religion” (Zespół do Spraw Migracji as cited in Ciobanu, 2019, para. 35). The policy defines assimilation as “a state, in which an integrated foreigner understands and acknowledges values upheld in Poland – including ideological and religious values – accepts them as his/her own and rejects values that would threaten social cohesion and general security in Poland” (Zespół do Spraw Migracji as cited in Pędziwiatr, 2019, para. 11) – code for Poland for Poles. The policy defines the nation by its ethnic and religious homogeneity (a historical erasure) and fails to uphold the constitutional freedom of consciousness and religion. The policy states, “Muslims are often incapable of integration, as they emphasize their own distinctiveness and superiority over the local community, and as a consequence build ‘parallel societies’ in the host countries” (Zespół do Spraw Migracji as cited in Ciobanu, 2019, para. 45).

The policy is entrenched within xenophobia and racism while centering Islamophobic discourse. It outlines an ethnically and religiously based ranking system which favours the Polish diaspora (return and repatriation) followed by migrants from neighbouring countries Belarus, Ukraine and Russia who would be welcomed on a temporary basis in order to do unskilled labour. Eurostat (2018) data reveals that Poland issued six hundred and eighty thousand first residency permits in 2017 which amounts to

more than any other European country. Of these, five hundred and eighty thousand were issued to Ukrainians. The lowest ranking migrants from elsewhere would be forced to participate in integration and assimilation courses at their own cost.

The social reproduction of Poland for Poles (considering here the contemporary abortion law; sex education mandate; 500plus child benefit program; and migration policies) concerns the biopolitical reproduction of the white nation-state and good Poles (meaning church-going conservative citizens).

Ferguson (2016) argues that “[t]he maintenance of capitalist social power thus hinges on finding ways to regulate social reproduction in general, and women’s bio-physical capacities to reproduce the next generation in particular” (p. 50) which speaks to the Law and Justice party’s abortion law and mandate to outlaw the procedure while providing (heterosexual) families with the 500plus child benefit which does this work. These policies assume a certain notion of Poland (for Poles) – an imaginary of a nation that is white and heterosexual made possible solely through biopolitical reproduction. In the words of Richard C. M. Mole (2016) who in his chapter, “Nationalism and Homophobia in Central and Eastern Europe,” writes concisely about this approach:

[a]s the focus on the biological reproduction of the nation presupposes it to be heterosexual, gays and lesbians – by not having children – undermine the idea of the nation as a unified collectivity with a communal future, a view taken to extremes by Lech Kaczyński (who in 2005 would go on to become President of Poland), arguing that ‘widespread homosexuality would lead to the disappearance of the human race’ (Gal 1994, p. 269; see also Brenman and Byrne 2007) (p. 106).

This notion is also embodied and expressed through the sex education mandate. The mandate which teaches children how to be good heterosexual citizens alongside the abortion law and 500plus

benefit which ensure that these future citizens exist and are supported reproduce whiteness while the national migration policies protect the borders from racialized others.

East-Central European Backwardness as Border Control

The social reproduction of Poland for Poles which is peripheral (and framed as backwards) with regard to sexual politics positions the nation as EUrope's eastern other within and scapegoat. This peripheral orientation toward EUrope is one disciplinary and biopolitical mechanism through which EUrope reproduces itself as a beacon of human rights (Foucault, 1980; Ponzanesi & Colpani, 2016; Kulpa, 2014b; Puar, 2007). Poland's backwardness is tied in the contemporary moment to rampant political homophobia and racist anti-migration rhetoric and policies which result in few consequences and works as border control. Poland's peripheral (or hierarchically less powerful) position within EUrope can be traced back to eighteenth-century Enlightenment (Wolff, 1994). Wolff (1994) writes on "the construction of Eastern Europe as a paradox of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion, Europe but not Europe" (p.7). Kuus (2004) says that "it emerged not as irredeemably alien but as a halfway house between Europe and Asia" (p. 474). She continues, "Eastern Europe was not simply backward, but a learner, an experiment, and a testing ground, 'a gigantic specimen to which the most advanced legal and administrative ideas could be applied with a completeness impossible in western Europe' (Neumann, 1999: 78)" (Kuus, 2004, p. 474) – critical to European identity construction.

Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) write about "the productive power of the border – of the strategic role it plays in the fabrication of the world" (p. vii). They continue, "[b]orders play a key role in the production of the heterogeneous time and space of contemporary global and postcolonial capitalism" (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013, p. ix) which makes me think about how "temporality is organized along spatial lines" (Butler, 2008, p. 1) and how the difference (marked by sexual freedom as modernity) between east and west is understood in temporal terms (Szulc, 2018). Colpani and Habed (2014) write that "[i]n Italy, as much as in other European peripheries, LGBT civil rights, or even 'sexual freedom'

broadly understood, are constantly identified with Europe and Europeanness against the conservative domestic space, thereby inflecting sexual freedom with geopolitically specific boundaries and sustaining an idea of Europe as ‘the avatar of both freedom and modernity,’ ‘the privileged site where sexual radicalism can and does take place’ (Butler 2008: 2)” (p. 78). Agathangelou and Killian (2016) explore the relationship between temporality and raciality and temporality and sexuality in building on Spillers’ (1987) work in which she distinguishes between the body (liberated) and flesh (captive) within the context of enslavement. They write, “[t]his distinction between body and flesh (the captive body) is significant for knowledge/power and has a temporal politics in the form of evolutionary notions of flesh, such as throwbacks or ‘remnants,’ with (white) sexuality’s development following a linear trajectory of heterosexual reproduction (Freeman 2007)” (Agathangelou & Killian, 2016, p. 27). This addresses how nation-states frame some subjects (deemed as sexual and racialized others) as “mere flesh outside the dialectical movement of history or capital” (Agathangelou & Killian, 2016, p. 24) but it also speaks to the ways in which temporality is mobilized to frame some nation-states (i.e., Poland) as outside of the spectrum of social relations of power or (sexual) history.

The EU may be without internal borders (keeping in mind Schengen member states have power to re-introduce temporary border control in the event of a threat to security) yet East-Central Europe continues to be framed as “simultaneously in Europe and not yet European” (Kuus, 2004, p. 473). In writing about EU and NATO enlargement processes, Kuus (2004) states “that the double enlargement is underpinned by a broadly orientalist discourse that assumes essential difference between Europe and Eastern Europe and frames difference from Western Europe as a distance from and a lack of Europeanness” (p. 472). The temporal-spatial difference reproduces (western) Europe as liberal ideal of human rights – speaking to the strategic role it plays within geopolitical struggles in the region. This difference reproduces Poland as forever and always post-communist (or post-socialist) and transitional and backward and needing to catch up to the west (Kulpa, 2014b; Kuus, 2004). This difference works

as a border – whether symbolic; ideological; psychic; or geopolitical – which masks investment in the EUropean white supremacist project (Balibar, 2002; El-Tayeb, 2011; Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013) which is seen possessing time (see Agathangelou & Killian, 2016).

In his chapter, “What is a Border?” Balibar (2002) says that borders perform “several functions of demarcation and territorialization – between distinct social exchanges or flows, between distinct rights, and so forth...” (p.79). He continues, “no political border is ever the mere boundary between two states, but is always *overdetermined* and, in that sense, sanctioned, reduplicated and revitalized by other geopolitical divisions. This feature is by no means incidental or contingent; it is intrinsic” (p. 79). I argue that the border which positions Poland as “somehow ‘European enough’ to be ‘taken care of’, but ‘not yet Western’ so as to be allowed into the ‘First World’ club” (Kulpa, 2014b, 432) which is articulated in sexual terms reproduces (western) EUropean imaginaries concerning benevolence toward refugees and migrants (Walia, 2013). Thus, EUropean self-image is constructed to signify (sexual) freedom and modernity (homotransnationalism) and requires the disavowal of East-Central European nation-states like Poland where far-right politics fueled in part by politicized homophobia (unlike the far-right homonationalisms elsewhere in EUrope which use LGBTQI rights as a symbol of their superiority) distinguish the peripheries and work as border control (Graff, 2010; Haritaworn & Bacchetta, 2016; Puar, 2007).

In her chapter, “Whiteness in Post-Socialist Eastern Europe: The Time of the Gypsies, The End of Race,” Imre (2005) examines the ways in which whiteness provides legitimacy to the post-socialist nation-state through an analysis of Romani (self-)representation. She writes that “[t]he ‘return to Europe,’ which has become an indispensable slogan for East European political campaigns (Iordanova, “Balkans,” 2000), allows discourses of imperialism and racism to remain unexamined within nationalism. East European nations’ unspoken insistence on their whiteness is one of the most effective and least recognized means of asserting their Europeanness” (p. 82). El-Tayeb (2011) writes

that “[a]ll parts of Europe are arguably invested in ‘whiteness’ as the norm against which ethnicization is read as a tool of differentiation between insiders and outsiders...” (p. xiv). Therefore, Chairman Kaczyński’s Poland (for Poles and Poles alone) where LGBTQI people are marked as EUropean and racialized refugees and migrants are refused entry – both understood in terms of their otherness – is espousing “not only a discourse *against Europe*, but also *a European discourse*” (Colpani & Ponzanesi, 2016, p. 7). Chairman Kaczyński’s Poland (marked by racist and homophobic nationalist discourses) reproduces a European discourse considering its far-right politics are rooted within EUrope’s imperial and colonial history that structures the present moment in which Poland (for Poles) “works in concert with EU’s practices of migration management and border policing” (Colpani & Ponzanesi, 2016, p. 7; see also Danewid, 2017; El-Tayeb, 2011; Imre, 2005).

Conclusion

This chapter examined the role that sexual and racialized others play in framing Poland for Poles against EUrope for all. I traced the social reproduction of Poland for Poles by considering the abortion law; sex education mandate; 500plus child benefit program; and migration policies. This speaks to the biopolitical reproduction of the white nation-state which is peripheral or hierarchically less powerful and framed as backwards with regard to sexual politics which in turn positions the nation as EUrope’s eastern other within and scapegoat. Poland’s backwardness (transitional state and need to catch up to the west) which is tied in the contemporary moment to rampant political homophobia and racist anti-migration policies works as border control and relies on (necro)political violences leveraged against sexual and racialized others but also the nation-state itself.

The social reproduction of Poland (for Poles) framed against EUrope (for queers) is marked by a racialized temporal-spatial difference and dependence upon racial exceptionalism which erases shared investment in EUropeanness (Polishness) as whiteness.

Conclusion

My dissertation theorized Poland as concept (sociological entity shaped by multiple competing social actors with shifting degrees of definitional power) and method (a process of creating power and a way of reading East-Central European geopolitics) while also understanding it as a site of experimentation (where these actors are vying for different projects) in order to examine its multiple social reproductions as transitional, postcolonial, fascist, and eastern other within considered in co-production with EUropean global order. Poland as concept and method is about shifting reference points and the (un)production of the nation-state which is understood as an ongoing project. It is about multiplicity and understanding the configuration of the nation-state beyond its post-Soviet and EU-adjacent classifications in order to consider how it operates within different (at times utopian) imaginaries (EUropean; Poland for Poles; LGBTQI). Poland as an ongoing project in the (un)making (not to be confused with a linear teleology of progress) of the nation-state, region and world is a site and method deployed and vied for by multiple actors. I read Jarosław Kaczyński's performative grief at the mourning rituals as articulating, conjuring and quoting to remember Chen (2010) here a nationalist and biopolitically white nation-state project whose reproduction depends upon anti-abortion, anti-LGBTQI, and anti-migrant rhetoric and policies as well as on the organizing and ordering of Poland with the (far-)right as its central agent. I read Katarzyna Perlak's use of film essay and fictional documentary as a method that challenges the nationalist and conservative political actors who are vying for Poland for Poles (meaning white and heterosexual). In her envisioning a feminist and queer movement she references the marginalized queer world and articulates (an)other sexual world. In shifting reference points and questioning how different actors create and legitimize power, Poland as concept and method lays bare tensions between colonial and postcolonial; east and west; communist and neoliberal

democratic and capitalist; national and transnational as well as local and global political and economic forces; and LGBTQI and racialized subjectivity and Polishness as framed by the (far-)right.

Poland as concept and method is necessary as it de-universalizes the west and unsettles the few central axes, internalized progress (or backwardness) narratives, and discursive tropes on East-Central European spaces. It destabilizes Cold War imaginaries in contesting the narrow framing of the contemporary nation-state as forever and always in transition and in need of catching up with the west with respect to economic and sociopolitical issues. It shifts the reference points allowing East-Central European spaces to point to one another instead of looking toward the western horizon. It crystalizes the role that Poland plays in the making of EUropeanness (as whiteness). Poland as concept and method likewise understands the geopolitical site as a legitimate site of analysis which contributes to visions of the sexual and (post)colonial.

The introductory chapter, besides introducing Poland as concept and method, also presented my study objectives and key questions. It outlined my theoretical framework which centered a) social reproduction as framed by feminist political scholarship in order to understand the nation-state and its geopolitical positioning, b) necropolitics as developed by transnational queer scholarship in order to examine the relationship between the nation-state and its O/others, c) transition as articulated by East-Central European postcolonial studies in order to understand its racialized instrumentalization, and lastly, d) post-socialist racial exceptionalism in East-Central Europe in order to situate the region in global histories of coloniality and race. This chapter also provided a brief history of the nation-state highlighting key events relevant to the contemporary moment and concluded with a chapter outline.

In Chapter Two, I read and positioned Poland (and my work) in critical scholarship on nations, nationalisms, and identity politics; socioeconomic transition from state ownership, social planning and dictatorship to free markets and liberal democracy; and East-Central European postcolonial studies. I began by tracing scholarship in anthropology, history, political science, postcolonial studies, sociology,

and transnational feminism which addresses the intersections of social formations and nation(alism)s. This scholarship points to the entanglements between nationalisms, genders and sexualities that are simultaneously raced and classed. In reviewing this canonical writing, I situated Poland which is defined against its O/others – Jews, Muslims, Roma, feminists, and gays. This scholarship is pertinent to my work as it provides historical context to contemporary national inclusions and exclusions. Secondly, I traced scholarship in transitology and western area studies which considers socioeconomic transition in East-Central Europe. These bodies of work study democratization, considering common pathways and outcomes, and are critiqued for multiple reasons significant to our understanding of Poland and its geopolitical positioning vis-à-vis Europe. They are critiqued for their colonial and imperial motives and teleological perspectives which frame western liberal democracy as the end goal toward which backwards nations are striving. Thirdly, I noted the adoption (meaning misappropriation and whitewashing) of postcolonial theory by East-Central and Southern European scholarship to explain eastern and southern peripheralization. This scholarship situates the region in global histories of coloniality and is critiqued for doing “postcoloniality without race” (Baker, 2018a, p. 759) while collapsing social formations (race into class and class into race). East-Central and Southern European postcolonial studies (and critiques thereof) is relevant to my work considering its role in framing the so-called second world and its racialized instrumentalization by the right. Lastly, I mapped Poland by defining key concepts that are necessary to understanding my analysis.

Chapter Three mapped my epistemological and methodological frameworks and outlined my qualitative research methods. It discussed the transnational feminist and queer as well as postcolonial epistemologies and methodologies which inform my study objectives and research questions naming Haraway’s (1988) notion of ‘situated knowledges,’ Smith’s (1990) concept of ‘ruling relations’ as well as Hesse-Biber’s (2006) ‘emergent methods’ which honour knowledge as multiple (always partial and embodied and relational and shifting and grounded within social relations and power structures). It

outlined my in-depth interviewing process and participant observation which made space for rich and dynamic data about how participants understand themselves and their struggles for democracy within Chairman Kaczyński's Poland. It also outlined my discourse analysis which relied upon Said's (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading, Keller's (2006) SKAD and van Dijk's (1993) CDA considering these critical approaches are attuned to power relations and made space for oppositional knowledges on Poland and its O/others. This chapter situated me within the work while also addressing the ethical considerations and limitations of the project.

In Chapter Four, I examined the social reproduction of the nation-state as transitional which is shaped by Cold War imaginaries (racialized discourses) which frame East-Central European spaces as backwards and in need of catching up with the west. This reproduction relies on racialized gender and sexuality discourses (among other western progress narratives) which I exhibited by employing Said's (1993) method(ology) of contrapuntal reading and van Dijk's (1993) CDA to analyze five edited books on the relationship between moments of transition (restructuring of communism and EU accession) and sexual (mainly LGBTQ) realities within the region. These edited books argue that the restructuring of communism marks the regional coming out (LGBTQ emergence) while EU accession is linked to a heightened public homophobic backlash and greater opportunities for queer organizing. These links reproduce eastern backwardness and western progress narratives by framing the east as homophobic other in need of catching up with the west which is framed as modern and progressive. I argued that these edited books provide an uncritical understanding of transition which is not studied as a racialized concept and reinforce the role that LGBTQI rights play in upholding western exceptionalism and the image of rainbow EUrope. In the second part of the chapter, I considered Poland as concept and method as visualized by a queer artist. I offered Katarzyna Perlak's (2016) film essay, *Niolam Ja Se Kochanezkie* [*I Once Had A Lover*], as a queer method for speaking back to Cold War imaginaries which it does by situating racialized queerness within East-Central European spaces and playing with time

instead of subscribing to notions of linear progress. The film positions Poland as an experimental site and articulates (an)other sexual world imagined beyond western progress narratives.

Chapter Five traced the adoption or misappropriation and whitewashing of postcolonial theory by (some) East-Central and Southern European scholars while also considering its racialized instrumentalization by the Polish (far-)right with the Law and Justice Party in lead. This chapter employed a plane crash and subsequent mourning rituals as analysis sites to examine the social reproduction of the postcolonial nation arguing that the crash and how it is framed by the Law and Justice Party hold the rights of sexual and racialized others hostage to nationalist struggles against regional and European domination. It argued that the crash mobilized national mythologies of trauma and messianic martyrdom taken up by the Law and Justice Party and disseminated at the mourning rituals. These mythologies or god complex were mobilized in order to reproduce the image of a postcolonial nation as a body under threat and advance a utopian vision of Poland for Poles, and Poles alone. The social reproduction of the postcolonial nation-state was made possible by these mourning rituals that served as a mechanism or method by which the Law and Justice party articulated this imagined purity. Poland as concept and method as it is envisioned by Chairman Kaczyński is about understanding the nation-state as a postcolonial one positioned between east (Soviet Union| Russia) and west (European Union). Framed as post-Soviet and EU-adjacent, Kaczyński's Poland creates its own sovereign power by moving toward fascist authoritarianism and violence against sexual and racialized others.

This chapter speaks to the racialized instrumentalization of postcolonialism by the Polish right that is tied to religious nationalism (god complex) and annexations (erasure from the map) and reflects the racial exceptionalism within East-Central Europe as race and racism are not named in conservative claims to postcolonial status. Baker (2021) writes about how postcoloniality is detached from race and states that “without having to contend with the vectors of violence and oppression that ‘race’ makes visible, the ‘postcolonial’ as a way of thinking about postsocialist Europe becomes very easy to co-opt

in ways that still entrench racist and xenophobic cisheteronormative patriarchy...” (p. 46). She states that in East-Central Europe this “is directed against historic national Others, new migrant minorities, and the targets of anti-gender ideology – the argument that expecting central Europe to accept sexual and gender minorities or Muslim refugees is a colonising act on the part of the West” (p. 46). As Chari and Verdery (2009) argue moving beyond a three worlds ideology that associates the first world with capitalism, the second with socialism and the third with postcoloniality in order to understand these political and economic systems as global conditions can help us rethink state-sanctioned racisms and imperialism.

In Chapter Six, I examined the role that sexual and racialized others play in framing Polishness (backward and intolerant but somehow always tolerated) in opposition to EUropeanness (modern and progressive) by theorizing the social reproduction of Chairman Kaczyński’s Poland (meaning Poland for Poles) as EUrope’s eastern other within and scapegoat. This chapter analyzed the contemporary abortion law; sex education mandate; 500plus child benefit program; and migration policies in order to theorize the biopolitical reproduction of the white (and Catholic) nation-state. It argued that these nationalist discourses understand the nation-state as a religious one; heterosexual families as the pillar; women as biological reproducers (in some cases forced to give birth); and racialized people as outsiders who pose a threat to the nation-state and its cultural traditions. It also argued that the social reproduction of Poland (for Poles and Poles alone) positions the nation-state as EUrope’s eastern other within considered lower on the civilizational scale and works as border control.

My dissertation is grounded within and contributes to emerging transnational feminist and queer and postcolonial scholarship which brings into conversation the entanglements between East-Central European nations and nationalisms, genders and sexualities, races and racisms and neoliberal colonial and imperial projects. It contributes to these ongoing conversations by employing Poland as concept

and method to examine the social reproduction of the nation-state arguing that it's framing as transitional, postcolonial, fascist, and eastern other within is about transmitting social inequality over time. It employs social reproduction in order to expose the ways in which different social actors labour and the method(s) they deploy in order to articulate (and concretize) certain concepts of the nation-state. My dissertation further contributes by employing Poland as concept and method to better understand the (necro)political violences these multiple social reproductions illicit not only for those deemed to be sexual and racialized others but also for the nation-state itself globally. In considering necropolitics, my work articulates "the unremarkable, the ordinary and the mundane..." (Haritaworn, Kuntsman, & Posocco, 2014, p. 2) violence of gender and sexual normativities (as entangled with whiteness) within a nation-state whose leaders consider queerness to be an ideology worse than communism and the ways in which national migration policies expose racialized others to death. It situates the nation-state within transnational feminist and queer and postcolonial scholarship and within global histories of coloniality and race in ways that rupture a Cartesian logic and undermine its framing as forever and always in transition which positions East-Central European spaces on a racialized developmental scale. My dissertation reveals Poland in its multiplicity, articulating its analytic value and the ways in which it opens up questions about the sexual and empire.

My dissertation, much like the nation-state, is a project in the making and while the sociopolitical moment during which I engaged in my (field)work allowed me to witness national anxieties concerning democracy and join movements for change it posed difficulties in accessing more people to interview. It presented Poland as one reference point (amongst multiple) and centered on (far-)right nationalist imaginaries which articulate a utopian vision of Poland for Poles. My intention is to build on my work as that particular historical moment has passed and this nationalist vision has been further cemented. There is now a near-total ban on abortion considering abortions in the case of severe and irreversible fetal abnormalities have been outlawed; President Andrzej Duda, who believes LGBT stands for an

ideology and not an acronym that marks sexual and gender identity, has signed the “Family Charter,” which opposes same-sex marriage and adoption rights as well as sex education in schools; and Poland (alongside the Visegrád Group) continues to oppose potential mandatory EU quotas on the redistribution of migrants – events which are not unique to Poland alone. I intend to further shift the reference points by exploring LGBTQI and queer resistance practices across East-Central European spaces (considering multiple nation-states) and their desires for national belonging which are often articulated as coded claims to whiteness. My intention to build upon this work is about wondering what questions and possibilities emerge when, as Chen (2010) says, our anxieties about the west are tempered. What can we learn about entanglements between nation(alism)s, whiteness and the sexual by shifting reference points and allowing East-Central European spaces to point to one another and not the west?

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Appendix A:

Call for Research Participants

My name is Weronika Rogula and I am a PhD Candidate in the Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies Department at York University working under the supervision of Dr. Anna M. Agathangelou. My work interrogates the notion of 'Poland for Poles' by considering relations between post-communist Poland and the European Union and their impacts upon those marginalized because of their race and/or sexual orientation.

I am looking for research participants from governmental institutions, political parties, and non-governmental organizations to partake in interviews which will take approximately one hour in time in order to speak about their work as it relates to the lived experiences of those marginalized and how it is situated within the nation-state.

My doctoral study has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

I would be happy to provide more information about my work and answer any questions which may arise.

Weronika Rogula
PhD Candidate
Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies
York University

Appendix B:

List of Research Interviews

Research Participant: Damian Wutke
Affiliation: Open Republic: Association against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia
Interview Date: December 8th 2016

Research Participant: Wiktor Dynarski
Affiliation: Trans-Fuzja
Interview Date: December 12th 2016

Research Participant: Magdalena Środa
Affiliation: University of Warsaw
Interview Date: December 12th 2016

Research Participant: Magda Świder
Affiliation: Campaign Against Homophobia
Interview Date: December 15th 2016

Research Participant: Wojciech Woźniak and Karol Ofiara
Affiliation: Independent
Interview Date: December 15th 2016

Research Participant: Kalina Czarnóg
Affiliation: Fundacja Ocalenie
Interview Date: December 15th 2016

Research Participant: Anna Grodzka
Affiliation: Trans Organizer and Former Member of Parliament
Interview Date: December 15th 2016

Research Participant: Piotr Godzisz
Affiliation: Lambda Warszawa
Interview Date: December 16th 2016

Research Participant: Justyna Kosiec
Affiliation: Partia Razem
Interview Date: December 16th 2016

Research Participant: Joanna Grabarczyk
Affiliation: HejtStop
Interview Date: December 17th 2016

Research Participant: Mateusz Pławski
Affiliation: All-Polish Youth
Interview Date: December 23rd 2016

Appendix C:

Guiding Questions for Semi-Structured Interviews

GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTION INTERVIEWEES

1. INFORMATION ABOUT THE GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTION

- a. Can you tell me about your political party?
- b. What role do you play in this political party?
 - i. Can you tell me what you think is important or should be important to the political party's agenda?
 - ii. If you ran the political party how would you organize it differently?
 1. With what effects on the vision and mission of the party?
- c. What is your political party's relationship with the European Union?
 - i. Does your political party support EU integration?
 - ii. Is your political party Eurosceptic?
 - iii. What connections does your political party draw between the EU and LGBT(Q) rights and/or migration policies?
- d. What is your political party's platform on LGBT(Q), migrant, and refugee rights?
 - i. Does your political party see LGBT(Q) rights as connected to migrant and refugee rights?
 1. If so, how? If not, why not?
 - ii. What laws/policies/practices has your political party introduced in relation to LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and/or refugees?
 - iii. What laws/policies/practices has your political party dismantled in relation to LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and/or refugees?
 - iv. What is your political party's platform on the recent Syrian refugee crisis?
 - v. What is your political party's platform on equality marches?
 - vi. What is your political party's position on the Brexit as a major question of migration?

2. POLITICAL CHANGE AND LGBT(Q) PEOPLE AND MIGRANTS/REFUGEES

- a. Can you describe the political climate in relation to LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees?
- b. Do you feel the political climate in the country is changing?
 - i. If so, how? (If no, proceed to section three, if yes, please continue)
 - ii. What impact do you feel EU integration and membership have on LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees and their rights?
 1. How has the LGBT(Q) movement changed post-EU accession?
 - iii. How do the changes impact the lives of LGBT(Q) people, migrants and refugees?
 - iv. Do the changes impact the ways in which LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees organize?

3. REPRESENTATION OF LGBT(Q) PEOPLE, MIGRANTS, AND REFUGEES

- a. In your opinion, what are public perceptions of LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees?

- i. What stories do you most hear about LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees?
 - ii. Do the views of your political party reflect those of Polish society?
- b. In your opinion, how should Polish society see LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees as well as their rights?
 - i. What roles do LGBT(Q), migrant, and refugee communities play in Polish society?

LGBT(Q) ORGANIZATION, NATIONALIST YOUTH GROUP, AND MIGRANT SUPPORT/JUSTICE GROUP INTERVIEWEES

1. INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION/GROUP

- a. Can you tell me about your organization/group?
 - i. How does it fit within Polish society?
- b. How long has this organization/group existed?
 - i. What is its history?
 - ii. How is it funded?
- c. Does it have a goal/mandate? If so, what is it?
- d. What kinds of strategies and actions does your organization/group use to achieve its goals?
- e. What is your role in this organization/group?
 - i. How long have you been a part of this organization/group?
 - ii. Why is it important for you to be a part of this organization/group?
 - iii. Can you tell me what you think is important or should be important for the organization's/group's agenda?
 - iv. If you were the director/leader how would you organize this organization/group differently?
 - 1. With what effects on the vision and mission of the organization/group?
- f. What is your organization's/group's mandate on LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees as well as their rights?
 - i. Does your organization/group understand LGBT(Q) rights and issues as related to those of migrants and refugees?
 - 1. If so, how? If not, why not?

2. POLITICAL CHANGE AND LGBT(Q) PEOPLE AND MIGRANTS/REFUGEES

- a. Can you describe the political climate in relation to LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees?
- b. Can you tell me more about the connections and divergences between the responses and positions of different groups toward LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees?
 - i. Are there tensions/gaps in the ways these groups are approached or responded to?
 - 1. What are those?
 - 2. What do they mean in your opinion?
- c. Do you feel the political climate in the country is changing?
 - i. If so, how? (If no, proceed to section three, if yes, please continue)
 - ii. What impact do you feel EU integration and membership have on LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees and their rights?

1. How has the LGBT(Q) movement changed post-EU accession?
- iii. How do the changes impact the work your organization/group does?
 1. Are there any changes in funding and resources available for your organization/group?
 - a. What impact does it have?
 - b. Does it affect the services that your organization/group provides?
 2. How does your organization/group adapt to these changes?
- iv. How do the changes impact the lives of LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees?
- v. How do the changes impact the ways in which LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees organize?
- d. What is your organization's/group's relationship with the current government?
 - i. Does it support and/or recognize the work your organization/group does?
 - ii. Does it interfere in your work?
- e. What is your organization's/group's relationship to the authorities?
 - i. Do they support and/or recognize the work your organization/group does?
 - ii. Do they interfere in your work?
 - iii. How do you imagine the best response to be toward your own movement/political approaches in the country?
 - iv. Do you have any transnational connections with other groups?
 1. What are those?

What do they bring to your own thinking/organizing?

3. REPRESENTATION OF LGBT(Q) PEOPLE, MIGRANTS, AND REFUGEES

- a. In your opinion, what are public perceptions of LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees?
 - i. What stories do you most hear about LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees?
 - ii. How important is it to change these public perceptions?
 - iii. Does your organization/group do anything to address them?
 - iv. Do the views of your organization/group reflect those of Polish society?
 - v. Why is it important for LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees to be visible and/or organize?
- b. In your opinion, how should Polish society see LGBT(Q) people, migrants, and refugees as well as their rights?
 - i. What roles do LGBT(Q), migrant and refugee communities play in Polish society?

4. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

- a. Do you participate in other types of organizations, groups, and/or activism?
- b. What is the relationship of your organization/group to other types of movements such as religious, ethnic, feminist, youth, artist, LGBT(Q), migrant support/justice?
- c. Does your organization/group collaborate with others who work on similar issues?
- d. Does your organization/group collaborate with any others in the city, region, country, in the EU, and/or internationally?
 - i. If so, with whom?

- ii. Who decided about this connection? Or how did it unfold?
 - iii. If not, why not?
- e. What kinds of other organizations/groups do you encounter at public demonstrations?
- f. What is the relationship of your organization/group to transnational LGBT(Q) and/or migrant support/justice movements?
 - i. What types of collaborations do you partake in?
 - ii. Do you understand your goals as similar and/or different?
 - iii. Can you tell me more about other things that you think I should have asked or considered?
 - iv. Can you tell me more about the struggles that you are facing?
 - 1. From what groups and how do they challenge your security and safety in the country?

Appendix D:

Informed Consent Form

STUDY NAME:

‘Poland for Poles:’ Transitional Nationalisms and Racialized Sexual Politics

RESEARCHER:

Weronika Rogula

PhD Candidate, Department of Gender, Feminist and Women’s Studies
York University

THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:

This research examines the complex relationships between LGBT(Q) people, racialized people, and the Polish nation-state considering the official and informal regulation of these marginalized communities and the ways in which they organize and fight for their rights. The research is based upon interviews and observations in Tricity, Warsaw, and Cracow, Poland. The research is part of my doctoral dissertation and may be published in the future.

WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO IN THE RESEARCH:

You will be asked to take part in a 1.5-2 hour long one-on-one interview during which you will be asked to respond to interview questions regarding identity formation (in relation to sexuality and the nation), and LGBT(Q) and migrant justice organizing practices as they relate to the nation-state and its official policies.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:

While I will do my best to ensure complete confidentiality, you should carefully consider the possible risks which include the potential disclosure of information to police, government, employers, family, or any other interested party. I will address these risks by ensuring that interviews be held in a safe environment and that data is stored in a password protected digital account. I will use pseudonyms and omit identifying information in my dissertation or related work. I will destroy all data five years after the completion of my dissertation.

BENEFITS OF THE RESEARCH AND BENEFITS TO YOU:

This research will benefit from your unique perspective on matters related to the official and informal regulation of migrants and LGBT subjects, while you will benefit by sharing your perspective, contributing to a growing body of knowledge on the links between sexuality and racialization in East-Central Europe, as well as having your concerns heard by a broad academic and activist community.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:

Your participation in the research is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time, for any reason. Request to stop recording and erase all records and notes will not affect your relationship with me or York University now or in the future.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE STUDY:

You may stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researcher, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event that you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

The information you provide during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, I will not use your name or any identifying information (e.g. affiliation with a particular organization) while conducting and recording the interview. I will record your first name or preferred pseudonym; necessary identifying information and a number corresponding to the voice recordings and/or notes in a secure password protected file on a password protected computer. The voice recordings and/or notes will also be transcribed and uploaded to a secure password protected file on a password protected computer. I will keep data on my password protected computer for up to five years after completing the dissertation and then will destroy them. When including data in my dissertation or any related publications (academic journal or a book), I will use a different pseudonym, a number, or a name requested specifically by you. You can ask to withdraw your interview from the study at any point up until I submit any research-related texts to the publisher. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH:

If at any time you have any questions or concerns about the research in general or your role in the study, you may contact me, Weronika Rogula and/or my supervisor Dr. Anna M. Agathangelou. You may also contact the Department of Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies at York University.

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, you may contact the Senior Manager and Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University.

LEGAL RIGHTS AND CONSENT:

By consenting to participate in this study you are not waiving any of your legal rights. If you understand the nature of this project and wish to participate, you may give verbal consent after reading this information sheet and the script of verbal consent.

Appendix E:

Script of Oral Informed Consent

PARTICIPANT (VOICE NOT RECORDED)

I, (use preferred name), have read and understand the information presented in the Information Sheet about this research being conducted by Weronika Rogula of York University. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about this research and this interview. I am aware of the risks involved in my participation.

I understand that my name is changed for confidentiality purposes. All information supplied during the research will be held in confidence and unless I specifically indicate my consent, my name will not appear in any report or publication of the research.

I know that I may withdraw from this research at any point during the interview. Upon withdrawal from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

I understand that all voice recordings and handwritten notes from this interview will be transferred into a digital format within a timely fashion and will be securely stored on a secure password protected file on a password protected computer kept separate from any identifying information. The recordings will be erased from the recorder and the notes will be destroyed after the completion of the dissertation. I understand that data on the password protected computer will be kept for up to five years after completion of the dissertation at which point they will be destroyed.

With this knowledge, I agree to participate in this research on (date).

I agree to have this interview recorded.

RESEARCHER (VOICE RECORDED OR TEXT WRITTEN IN NOTES)

I, Weronika Rogula, believe that this person has agreed to participate in this study voluntarily, and understands the nature of the study and the consequences of participation in it on (date).

This person agrees to have their voice recorded and/or have notes taken.