Understanding attitudes towards non-Maltese live-in care workers in Malta

Claire Vella Aquilina

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master of Gender, Society and Culture

Department of Gender and Sexualities
Faculty for Social Wellbeing
University of Malta

June 2025

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

FACULTY/INSTITUTE/CENTRE/SCHOOL_____

DECLARATIONS BY POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

(a) Authenticity of Dissertation

I hereby declare that I am the legitimate author of this Dissertation and that it is my original work.

No portion of this work has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or institution of higher education.

I hold the University of Malta harmless against any third party claims with regard to copyright violation, breach of confidentiality, defamation and any other third party right infringement.

(b) Research Code of Practice and Ethics Review Procedures

I declare that I have abided by the University's Research Ethics Review Procedures. Research Ethics & Data Protection form code _____.

As a Master's student, as per Regulation 77 of the General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards 2021, I accept that should my dissertation be awarded a Grade A, it will be made publicly available on the University of Malta Institutional Repository.

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to understand perceptions and attitudes of Maltese individuals towards non-Maltese live-in care workers, with a specific focus on the power dynamics involved in this relationship. This study also seeks to understand how these perceptions and attitudes in turn influence the inclusion of foreign live-in care workers in Malta.

A qualitative approach was adopted, whereby data was collected through twelve semi-structured interviews which were carried out with Maltese nationals who required the services of a paid non-Maltese live-in care worker for a family member in the past four years. The data was analysed using reflexive thematic analysis, through which key themes emerging from participants' responses were identified and interpreted. This study adopted a feminist epistemology, drawing on Black Feminist thought, which acknowledges that social positions are rarely absolute, as individuals may simultaneously experience both privilege and disadvantage through intersecting systems of oppression.

This study highlights how certain stereotypes around live-in care work are prevalent in Malta, particularly the gender and racial connotations related to paid care work. This study also reveals the difficulties Maltese nationals experience when recruiting live-in carers. This study also sheds light on the significant level of trust required when entrusting family members to the care of strangers. The participants also pointed out that they shared common cultural elements with the foreign live-in carers, and although initially the cultural differences were more notable, with time, they were more likely to focus on those that they shared. This helped influence the quality of their relationship.

This study delineates the power dynamics inherent in the live-in care relationship in Malta and reveals the interdependent nature of this relationship between Maltese employers and their family's live-in carers. While employers hold power at the macro-level as citizens, live-in carers hold powerful positions at the micro-level in domestic spaces, particularly due to the intimate and emotional nature of the labour involved in care work. This study has identified how the dependence on foreign care fosters sustained interpersonal contact with migrant workers, which gradually improved perceptions and attitudes towards migrant

workers in Malta. Therefore, this study concludes that the interdependent nature of this relationship contributes to the integration of migrant workers in Maltese society, as with time these '*barranin'* (outsiders) become insiders via caring.

Keywords: live-in carers, migrant workers, perceptions, power, attitudes, reflexive thematic analysis, Black Feminist thought, Malta.

DEDICATION

Għall-għażiża ommi Michelle, li għalkemm ix-xorti ma tantx daħqitilha fi tfulitha, lili u lil ħuti rabbietna bl-ikbar għożża u mħabba, mingħajr ebda mibegħda. Grazzi Ma.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to everyone who supported me throughout the course of this study.

Firstly, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all the participants of this study for their invaluable contributions. Their willingness to share personal experiences made this research possible, and I am truly grateful for their trust and openness.

Special thanks are due to my dissertation supervisor, Prof. JosAnn Cutajar, for her continuous support and guidance throughout the compilation of this study.

I would also like to thank all the lecturers from the Department of Gender and Sexualities, as well as my classmates, for making this experience truly memorable.

Finally, my deepest appreciation goes to my family and friends, especially my husband Luke for his continuous support and motivation throughout the course of this degree, as well as my parents Michelle and Mark.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BFT	Black Feminist thought
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EU	European Union
ILO	International Labour Organization
MIPEX	Migration Integration Policy Index
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NSO	National Statistics Office
SWB FREC	Social Wellbeing Faculty Research Ethics Committee
TCNs	Third Country Nationals
UoM	University of Malta
US	United States

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the study, delineates its main objectives, and explains why this topic was chosen. This is followed by a section which will give some information about the local context, and an outline of the layout of this dissertation.

1.2 THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Care work, or as sometimes referred to as 'intimate labour', consists of the care of children, sick or elderly people, conducted in conjunction with other domestic work such as housekeeping and housework (Gündüz, 2013). In the recent past, female family members carried out these unpaid tasks. Nowadays, live-in carers are performing these essential duties - albeit for money - in some private households. In Malta, services provided by live-in carers have become popular among the elderly who opt for home-based care arrangements (Cutajar et al., 2025). Trends in Malta indicate a strong preference to receive care in one's home (European Commission, 2021), as the option for care in long-term care facilities continues to become less popular among the Maltese (Simmons et al., 2022).

The number of individuals requiring care is projected to increase in the coming years, due in part to longer life expectancies and better access to pension benefits (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2024). This demographic change together with the increased participation of women in the labour market, has created a gap in caregiving roles within communities (ILO, 2018). Many countries have developed a structural reliance on migrant domestic workers to address critical care shortages. This trend has established domestic work as a crucial employment sector for migrant workers, which tends to be gendered, as women make up the majority of the domestic work sector, with 76.2% of domestic workers being women (ILO, 2021).

This is also evident in Malta, where the country continues to grapple with an ageing baby boomer population, leading to an increased demand for services catering for this age group (Eurostat, 2024). As the Minister for Active Ageing of the time, Dr Jo Etienne Abela underlined in the National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2023 - 2030, "An ageing population is expected to affect the labour market, social protection, housing, leisure,

transportation, lifelong learning, as well as family and intergenerational ties" (Ministry for Active Ageing, 2022, p. 7).

Traditionally, female relatives bore the responsibility for elder care in Malta (Simmons et al., 2022). However, women now have to cope with earning a living, raising their children, and in some cases their children's children (European Institute for Gender Equality [EIGE], 2019). This has left them with little time to devote to the elderly. Therefore, as more Maltese women join the workforce (EIGE, 2023), there has been a corresponding rise in demand for live-in care workers to support the increasing care needs of the elderly. As a result, the recruitment of international care workers, particularly from the Philippines (Vassallo and Debono, 2020), has become essential to address the shortage of available care services in Malta. Indeed, statistics show that 93.2% of live-in carers in 2023 in Malta were foreign, with only 6.8% being Maltese (Cutajar et al., 2025).

A study conducted by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions found that Malta had the highest proportion of long-term care migrant workers (43%) in the European Union (EU), with most being non-EU migrants (Eurofound, 2020). This trend was further encouraged by government policies with the introduction of subsidies for live-in care workers. Those aged sixty and above who qualify for this subsidy can receive up to 8,500 Euro per annum (Cutajar et al., 2025). This subsidy was primarily introduced to reduce waiting lists for state-run retirement homes (Vassallo & Debono, 2020).

This study seeks to explore and deepen the understanding of how Maltese citizens who pay for this service perceive non-Maltese live-in care workers. This research investigates how the family members of individuals requiring care feel about having 'outsiders' living in their homes or the homes of their relatives, a site where the private and public spheres converge. Furthermore, this study also seeks to explore the gender implications involved around live-in care work, particularly since domestic labour often reinforces gendered and racialised stereotypes (Anderson, 2001).

1.3 AIMS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

While a handful of studies have been carried out on foreign care workers in Malta, the majority of which are Third Country Nationals (TCNs) (see Buttigieg et al., 2018; Cassar, 2019; Farrugia, 2018; Mifsud, 2016), the research available on live-in care workers specifically is limited, and that which is available focuses on the direct experience of the non-Maltese care worker (see Vassallo & Debono, 2020). Having said that, little importance has been given to study how the Maltese feel towards non-Maltese live-in care workers. No research has yet sought to understand the dynamics between Maltese clients and these live-in carers. Clients in this dissertation refers to the persons who oversee the care being done, rather than the person receiving the care. This dissertation will focus on how the Maltese deal with 'outsiders' living in their homes, particularly how they navigated and negotiated the 'insider-outsider' relationship.

This study addresses the following objectives:

1. Explores how the Maltese perceive non-Maltese live-in care workers.
2. Investigates the perceived power dynamics within the household between the family members who employ them and the non-Maltese live-in carers.
3. Identifies how their perceptions and attitudes have an impact on non-Maltese live-in carers' inclusion in Maltese society.

1.4 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 introduces this dissertation, namely the topic and objectives, while delineating the primary factors that led the Maltese to depend on foreign live-in carers. Chapter 2 presents an overview of the existing local and international literature on 'care' and migrant inclusion, while Chapter 3 discusses the methodology adopted, including the ontological, epistemological and theoretical foundations of this study, together with the research design and tools used to collect the data. This chapter also outlines the ethical considerations involved in this study. Chapter 4 presents the findings, while Chapter 5 discusses the main findings which emerged from the data. Chapter 6 then concludes this study.

The following chapter presents a review of the existing literature, with a focus on discussions around domestic care work. Thereafter, this chapter will also delve into migrant belonging and inclusion, and its relevance in the Maltese context.

CHAPTER 2
CONTEXT AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes a review of literature relevant to the research topic, and it is structured in two main sections. Section 2.2 explores the intersectionality of migrant status, working conditions, gender, ethnicity and race in shaping domestic care work. Section 2.3 then relates to migrant inclusion.

2.2 THE INTERSECTIONS OF DOMESTIC CARE WORK

Globally, relations of care are constructed by relations of power which are determined primarily by the intersection of gender with class and race. These intersecting factors create hierarchies and inequalities in care work, within and across national boundaries (Robinson, 2011). For this reason, the aim of this section is to explore the key intersecting factors that shape the experiences of live-in care workers, with a specific focus on the case of Malta. It also highlights the power imbalances embedded in live-in domestic care arrangements, shedding light on the broader systems of inequality embedded in the global care economy.

2.2.1 Migrant Status

Migrants account for a disproportionately large share of domestic workers in Europe, with over 50% of domestic workers in Northern, Southern, and Western Europe being migrants (ILO, 2015). Their status as migrants poses several challenges in foreign labour markets. Indeed, migrants face more obstacles than citizens in securing decent employment, and these challenges vary depending on the specific work environment or context in which the job takes place (Debono, 2021). In Europe, TCNs face greater challenges in the labour market when compared to their European counterparts. They are more likely to work with temporary contracts and in jobs for which they are overqualified (OECD & European Commission, 2023).

Migrant workers face similar issues in Malta's labour market, where individuals are often valued differently based on their gender and nationality. Distinctions are frequently made between male and female workers, as well as between Maltese citizens, EU nationals, and TCNs. A person's nationality and gender can significantly influence the types of employment opportunities available to them, as well as their corresponding pay structure (Cutajar, 2021).

Furthermore, immigration policies and controls also influence migrant labour, as they act as a "tap regulating the flow of workers to a state" (Anderson, 2010, p. 312). In this regard, the Maltese legal framework on labour migration has faced criticism for its unequal treatment of TCNs compared to Maltese citizens (Cauchi, 2018). It has been argued that this legal framework was intentionally designed to align with the government's goal of sustaining a "demand-driven immigration system", allowing TCNs entry only when there is a specific need for them in the country (Debono, 2021, p. 278).

Case in point, the ten-day rule which requires TCNs to secure employment within ten days of termination of their current employment has raised concerns among various stakeholders for its inflexible approach. This narrow timeframe creates undue stress and uncertainty for workers, limits their ability to find suitable employment in a short timeframe, and increases their vulnerability to exploitation (Bonnici, 2021). Additionally, the recent policy change in the visa application process further limiting access to TCNs seeking work in Malta has been criticised by members of the legal community in Malta (Carabott, 2024). Such immigration controls are not effective in protecting migrants' employment rights; instead, they often create uncertainty and dependency on employers, leaving migrant workers in a state of precariousness (Anderson, 2010). After all, migration policies inherently emphasise the distinctions between a country's nationals and migrant populations, perpetuating and reinforcing the "logic of differentiation" by categorising individuals into different groups (Gutierrez-Rodriguez, 2014, p. 48).

The added administrative burdens in place for TCNs in Malta's job application process further increases the obstacles they face in accessing the Maltese labour market. TCNs encounter significantly higher administrative requirements and application fees to obtain employment in Malta compared to EU workers and asylum seekers (Suban & Zammit, 2019). Such bureaucratic processes have been criticised for functioning as a form of social organisation, where power is exercised through administrative procedures to discipline and control certain parts of society (Collins, 2022) – in this case, by limiting the extent to which the Maltese labour market is accessible to TCN migrant workers.

2.2.2 Working conditions

As mentioned above, in the EU, domestic work has become somewhat of a niche sector for migrant workers (Triandafyllidou, 2013). Having said that, there is no specific reason why live-in carers need to be migrants. Locals can also provide these services, yet live-in domestic work tends to be unpopular among the 'native' population, particularly due to the hours involved, living arrangements, privacy issues and so on (Anderson, 2001; Cutajar et al., 2025). On the other hand, migrants, specifically newly arrived migrants, tend to find live-in domestic work advantageous since they do not have to find lodging (Anderson, 2001).

Live-in domestic workers can be particularly vulnerable to poor working conditions. Eight out of every ten domestic workers worldwide are informally employed, lacking suitable labour and social protection (ILO, 2021). The constant overlap of the work and home life balance creates very particular circumstances for live-in workers. The fact that care work takes place in the home of the employer, away from the structure of a 'formal' workplace, increases vulnerability and allows space for more abuse (Triandafyllidou, 2013). Furthermore, the dependence of live-in workers on their employers for lodging and essential commodities, creates a unique power dynamic. This dependency often leads to a heightened vulnerability to exploitation and abuse, as the workers' access to basic needs is directly tied to their employment (Anderson, 2007). Indeed, live-in care work leads to the blurring of the line between professional and personal life, as the constant overlap of home and work environments leaves little room for workers to have a private or personal life. This lack of separation creates a situation where personal boundaries are nearly non-existent (Vassallo & Debono, 2020).

Emotional Ties

Care work requires a high level of intimacy between employer and employee, as it involves deeply personal tasks, even when such intimacy is undesired or unreciprocated (Triandafyllidou, 2013). Live-in care workers often go beyond their contractual duties, as they form strong emotional attachments with their employers. These emotional attachments blur the boundaries between their professional and personal lives. Indeed, care work encompasses both labour and emotion, and it is very difficult to disentangle the two (Anderson, 2000). The distinction between labour and emotion is also difficult to maintain

when seeking care workers, as employers often prioritise not only their skills as labourers, but also personal traits such as the ability to be affectionate or compassionate (Anderson, 2000).

These emotional bonds are key to understanding the labour dynamics for live-in care workers, where labour is often based on patronage rather than the conditions outlined in contractual obligations between the care worker and their employer (Xypolytas et al., 2017). For instance, research on live-in care workers in Malta suggests that their quality of life is "shaped by the temperament, moods and exigencies of the family rather than by the clauses laid out in employment contracts*"* (Vassallo & Debono, 2020, p.211). While each situation is unique, the continuous overlap of work and emotion generally creates conditions where the care worker's well-being largely depends on the attitudes and treatment of their employer.

2.2.3 Gender

Women migrate across borders to work in various sectors, particularly domestic work and sex work (Akkoyun & Dalaman, 2024). This phenomenon, combined with other social and demographic factors such as ageing populations, and a shortage of care services, has contributed to the feminisation of migration, with increasing numbers of women migrating across continents to take on caregiving responsibilities in Western countries (Castles et al., 2020; Gündüz, 2013).

To put this into perspective, there are around 75.6 million domestic workers worldwide, and women dominate the sector as they comprise 76.2% of the sector, representing 4.5% of global employment among women (ILO, 2021). The gender implications here are significant, not only in terms of perpetuating women's traditional caregiving roles, but also because native women shift the burden of care on immigrant workers in a bid to balance their family and work responsibilities (Triandafyllidou, 2013). Migrant female workers are often concentrated in precarious, low-paying, and unskilled jobs. This results in double marginalization, as they face discrimination based on both their gender and migrant status. Consequently, their disadvantaged position in the labour market persists, limiting opportunities for upward mobility (Akkoyun & Dalaman, 2024).

Hochschild's groundbreaking work (2000, 2003, 2012) has outlined how the feminisation of migration has resulted in a *"*care drain*"*, whereby women who generally are the main carers for children and the older generations in poorer countries, leave 'home' to care for children and the elderly in richer countries, leaving their children and families behind to be cared for by others. Such transnational redistribution of care work starkly reveals the deep inequalities between women, shaped by race, ethnicity, and class, further entrenching their unequal positioning in the global labour systems (Hochschild, 2003, p. 35).

"Part of the family"

On this note, while these workers are often described as being 'part of the family', the literature shows that this is not generally a good thing, at least for the workers in question (Anderson, 2000; Parreñas, 2014). Migration means that they sideline the needs of their own family, to cater for the needs of others (Anderson, 2000). Furthermore, being treated as 'part of the family' means that these workers take on some other woman's unpaid caring load, enabling this woman to work outside the home. Although these workers are seen as 'part of the family', they are still household labourers, dependent on their employers for their livelihood (Parreñas, 2014).

2.2.4 Ethnicity / Race

As members of racialised groups, the employment opportunities available to migrant workers not only depend on their status as immigrants, but also on their race and gender (Anderson, 2000). Indeed, some research has shown that the demand for these types of workers is influenced by racial factors (Anderson, 2000; Bakan & Stasiulis, 1995). A perceived difference in race may motivate a person to hire someone (Anderson, 2007).

When it comes to domestic care work, certain nationalities might be specifically sought after, such as for example Filipinos (Gündüz, 2013). Furthermore, employers tend to prefer foreign women to perform caring or domestic roles (Gündüz, 2013). While domestic work is clearly gendered, the "dirty work" is often reserved for a specific group of women. Consequently, gendered and racial/ethnic identities are reinforced through domestic labour when different jobs are assigned different social meanings (Anderson, 2001, p. 24).

When it comes to the live-in domestic service sector, non-citizen workers often face systemic disadvantages due to their legal and social status, in contrast to their citizen employers. These disparities do not only exist in terms of legal status but are also deeply embedded in societal norms and state policies, leading to unequal relations (Bakan & Stasiulis, 1995).

2.3 INCLUSION

This section of the literature will explore key themes related to the inclusion of migrants in host societies, with a particular focus on the concept of belonging. The last theme of this section will also discuss issues emerging in the European and Maltese landscapes.

2.3.1 Belonging

Belonging plays an important role in shaping migrants' health and overall wellbeing (Mattes & Lang, 2021). Indeed, migration and health are inextricably linked, both at a personal level of the person experiencing migration, and on a broader public level (El-Shaarawi & Larchanché, 2022). When immigrants or refugees experience feelings of exclusion or a lack of belonging, their health and wellbeing are negatively impacted (Mattes & Lang, 2021). Therefore, addressing and improving the factors that shape migrants' sense of belonging can positively impact their social, emotional, and physical health, along with their overall wellbeing and that of their communities (El-Shaarawi & Larchanché, 2022).

Understanding migrant inclusionary and exclusionary practices necessitates an exploration of the politics of belonging, as power dynamics and political processes shape who is deemed to belong or be acceptable within a community and who is not (Yuval-Davis, 2006). The question of belonging also involves contesting who does not belong (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Perceiving someone as *"*not belonging, as being out of place" within a space which we consider home (Ahmed, 2000a, p. 49), is not simply a personal or emotional attachment to a place, group or community, but rather is deeply embedded in structures of power and privilege (Yuval-Davis, 2011). This takes place through an overarching narrative which works by othering "those who are 'not us', and who in not being us, endanger what is ours" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 1).

2.3.2 Racism

Racism and racial exclusion hinder belonging, whereby race as a concept is used as a mechanism to stigmatise migrants who are labelled as outsiders (Ahmed, 2014). The concept of biological differences on the basis of race has been challenged as being a social construct. Nowadays this prejudice towards different groups is seen as a learned behaviour emerging through historical and social processes rather than biological determinants (Allport, 1979).

Bonillo-Silva's work (2015) highlights that racism is systemic and rooted in global power dynamics. Sara Ahmed (2014) also explores this notion, particularly how emotions such as hate, fear and disgust are often mobilised in the process of racialisation. She argues that racialised bodies are frequently experienced as "bod[ies] out of place" (Ahmed, 2000b, p. 39) provoking emotional reactions which are socially and culturally constructed to establish and sustain the others' outsider status. These emotions are crucial to power relations and help to sustain boundaries between 'us' and 'them', positioning migrants and people of colour as strangers who are not fully welcome within the social fabric, impacting negatively on their sense of belonging (Ahmed, 2014). Therefore, belonging is indeed political, as it relates to encounters with other individuals and the process of determining whether they are considered to fit "inside or outside the imaginary boundary line", as well as the maintenance and reinforcement of these imagined boundaries (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 204).

Systematic racism takes place intentionally and unintentionally, consciously and unconsciously. It is an enduring phenomenon based on the notions of racial differentiation and inequality between different groups of people, passed on from one generation to the next (Banaji et al., 2021). While overt forms of racism may be less common, colour-blind racism is an issue which remains unaccounted for, where subtle forms of racism deny the existence of systemic racial inequality. The concept of race neutrality masks structural discrimination and justifies present-day inequalities (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). This colour-blindness obstructs white individuals from acknowledging and understanding the persistent racial realities and inequalities in society (M. I. Norton & Sommers, 2011).

As Peggy McIntosh highlights in her groundbreaking essay on white privilege, acts of discrimination are manifested in both visible and hidden forms. McIntosh explains that

members of dominant groups are "taught to recognize racism as only individual acts of meanness by members of [their] group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on [their] group from birth" (McIntosh, 1989, p. 12). She powerfully describes white privilege as "an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was "meant" to remain oblivious*"* (McIntosh, 1989, p. 10). Therefore, as long as members of dominant groups remain "clueless about race", the harder it is to detect and drive effective change. Increased exposure and knowledge, as well as decision making based on reliable evidence is essential to effectively challenge these ingrained biases and drive meaningful change (Banaji et al., 2021, p.17).

2.3.3 Social Capital

Several factors influence migrants' sense of belonging in host communities, such as legal, cultural, social, linguistic, and racial aspects (Soto Saavedra et al., 2023). Other factors are also implicated in demarcating the "distance", the difference, between the host community and migrants. These can include ethnic markers such as skin colour, wealth, religion, educational background, values and so on (Jonsson et al., 2018, p. 9). The greater the distance between the host community and the migrant group, the more challenging it becomes for migrants to achieve integration into host societies, as it amplifies the cultural shock experienced (Kim, 2017).

A migrant's cultural background and their knowledge of the host country's culture can serve as cultural capital, which can help in their integration into the local culture (Soto Saavedra et al., 2023). To mention an example, existing literature suggests that religion plays an important part for integration, but this depends on the context (Alba & Foner, 2015; Kivisto, 2014). Studies in the United States (US) often highlight religion as a key factor for migrant integration, since religion can help overcome exclusion and fosters inclusion. In contrast, in Western Europe religion is sometimes considered as a source of division, rather than a tool for integration (Sarli & Mezzetti, 2020). Indeed, in Europe, religion is often perceived as a source of cultural conflict that divides societies (Alba & Foner, 2015). In Malta, both dynamics appear to be at play. A study on refugee integration found that religion serves as a key tool for fostering social cohesion, offering refugees a sense of home and belonging

within the host community. However, the same study also pointed out that some refugees experience discrimination due to their religious differences (JRS Malta et al., 2016).

Other factors, such as discrimination and racism, act as barriers to immigrants' sense of belonging and inclusion in host societies (Tyrberg, 2024). In fact, perceived discrimination in the host country is one of the primary sources of stress that significantly impacts immigrants' well-being. It not only undermines their mental and emotional health, but also hampers their ability to integrate in host societies (García-Cid et al., 2020). When immigrants are treated as equals in host societies, this indicates that they are recognised as part of a valued group within that society. This acknowledgement fosters a sense of belonging and encourages trust in the political institutions of that country (Tyrberg, 2024).

2.3.4 Inter-Group Contact Theory

Allport's (1979) contact hypothesis holds that contact between people reduces prejudice between them. This theory has laid the groundwork for an extensive body of research which explores how contact reduces inter-group conflict. Contemporary research on inter-group contact theory has moved beyond direct and face-to-face contact and considers other forms of indirect contact which contributes to less negative attitudes towards members of different groups (Dovidio et al., 2017). In contexts with limited exposure to diversity, individuals are more likely to rely on and reinforce rigid stereotypes about groups that are different from their own. The absence of meaningful contact often strengthens the perception that such groups are fundamentally different (Bai et al., 2020).

Such findings reinforce that much of prejudice is driven by emotional reactions rather than rational, cognitive evaluations (Banaji et al., 2021). Emotions are shaped by social, historical, and cultural forces that impact on how we engage with the world. Contact is central to the development of emotions as it "involves the subject, as well as the histories that come before the subject", implying that emotions are situated in social and cultural contexts (Ahmed, 2014, p. 6). Therefore, emotions not only impact explicit attitudes towards different groups, but also implicit attitudes which influence how we perceive and react to others. Implicit attitudes are shaped by repeated exposure to social norms, cultural narratives and historical patterns of interaction (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

Individuals with a higher degree of contact generally have less skewed implicit attitudes towards groups who are considered to be different from them. This suggests that cumulative exposure, or inter-group contact, helps to mitigate unconscious biases (Turner et al., 2007). Furthermore, while explicit attitudes are more influenced by recent positive contact experiences, implicit attitudes are less responsive to short-term positive interactions. This implies that implicit attitudes are deeply entrenched and change at a slower pace, therefore emphasising the importance of sustained and meaningful contact between groups to reduce biases at both explicit and implicit levels (Dovidio et al., 2017).

As time passes, and people have more opportunities for meaningful interaction, this helps stereotypes to gradually diminish, leading individuals to identify as being part of a group. This has a positive impact on the well-being of both members of the host society and members who are new to the society (Banaji et al., 2021). Positive group contact, especially when it involves collaboration or highlights shared goals and similarities across different identities, can lead to "recategorization". This process shifts perceptions from an "us" vs "them" dynamic to a more holistic "we". Such recategorization promotes more favourable attitudes towards individuals previously considered as members of an outgroup, fostering greater social unity and reducing inter-group biases (Dovidio et al., 2017).

2.3.5 Integration and the local context

Integration is only possible when the host society is open to cultural diversity. This requires "mutual accommodation*"* where all groups within that particular society recognise and respect each other's right to live as culturally distinct communities. Such an approach ensures that cultural differences are not only tolerated but embraced, allowing for meaningful interactions and relationships across diverse groups (Berry, 2011, p. 2.6). Therefore, integration requires a two-way adaptation process, rather than one-sided acculturation, fostering equality (Sole´ & Parella, 2003).

Recent discussions on integration have increasingly focused on the concept of super-diversity, reflecting the complex and multifaceted nature of modern migration patterns (Vertovec, 2007). This approach moves beyond traditional multicultural frameworks, which some argue have failed (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). Super-diversity acknowledges

intersecting variables such as ethnicity, language, legal status, and socioeconomic factors in shaping diverse societies. Super-diversity highlights the need for more nuanced policies and practices that cater to the varied experiences of migrants while fostering inclusive, cohesive communities (Vertovec, 2007). Public debates on integration often overlook the connection to super-diversity, placing the responsibility for integration disproportionately on ethnic minorities and migrants, while neglecting the role of long-settled populations. This imbalance fails to address the reciprocal nature of integration necessary for cohesive and inclusive societies (Wessendorf & Phillimore, 2019).

What about Malta?

As the migrant population in Malta increases exponentially (National Statistics Office [NSO], 2024), the Maltese community is becoming increasingly diverse, with people from various countries of origin and ethnic and religious backgrounds settling in Malta over the past decade (NSO, 2023). At the same time, Malta stands out as one of the world's most urbanized and densely populated countries in the EU, which poses several challenges for integration in the country (A. Azzopardi et al., 2021).

The international Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) highlights that Malta has only recently begun addressing its integration policies, and these policies continue to pose as many challenges as opportunities for integration (Solano & Huddleston, 2020). An 'us' and 'them' dichotomy ensues in public discourses, and migration continues to be a main concern for Maltese nationals as indicated in the latest Eurobarometer surveys (European Commission, 2024). The Maltese are characterised as an insular nation (R. Sultana, 1994), with lingering ″fear of invasion" embedded in their historical consciousness (Holicza & Stone, 2016, p. 96). This wariness towards outsiders persists even though the country depends significantly on tourism (Debono, 2021).

While tourism is viewed as an economic necessity, migration is defined as a crisis in the local narrative, which in turn affects the integration of migrant communities in Malta (A. Azzopardi et al., 2021). After all, migration, integration, and belonging are shaped by local community dynamics alongside national policies. The framework of community-conditioned belonging, as proposed by Soto Saavedra et al. (2023), highlights how local resources, norms, and relationships can significantly influence or override national markers

like legal status. Communities play a crucial role in fostering inclusion and wellbeing, with belonging directly impacting health and quality of life. This mutual interest highlights the importance of supportive environments for both migrants and host communities.

2.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter addressed two primary themes aligned with the research question and research objectives laid out in the first chapter of this dissertation. The next chapter will outline the methodology adopted to tackle the research question.

CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As underlined in Chapter 1, the purpose of this research project is to explore the perceptions of Maltese nationals and understand their attitudes towards non-Maltese live-in care workers.

This chapter outlines the methodology adopted for this research. Section 3.2 addresses the ontological, epistemological, and theoretical foundations underpinning the study, while Section 3.3 discusses my positionality as the researcher. Section 3.4 details the research design, while Section 3.5 covers ethical considerations, and Section 3.6 provides the chapter's conclusion.

3.2 ONTOLOGICAL, EPISTEMOLOGICAL & THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

3.2.1 Ontology

The ontological stance of this research is grounded in social constructivism, which asserts that reality is not a fixed, objective entity but is instead constructed through social interactions and shared understandings among individuals and groups (P.L. Berger, 1966). Reality is therefore relative, and constructed "socially and experientially", meaning that different individuals may experience different realities, and so, multiple perspectives can coexist (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110).

3.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology lays out why we believe something to be true or not true. Epistemology is not neutral, rather "it points to the ways in which power relations shape who is believed and why" (Collins, 2022, p. 320).

Feminist epistemologies highlight the importance of social, historical and cultural contexts in the production of knowledge (Poole, 2021). They allow discussions which move beyond traditional pluralist discourses, and which consider the influence of different power structures on knowledge development (Haraway, 1988). Feminist epistemologies

acknowledge that understanding social realities, particularly those involving systems of oppression, requires active political commitment and engagement (Harding, 1991).

Haraway (1998) famously coined the term 'situated knowledge', whereby she argues that all knowledge is partial and is influenced by the knower's standpoint. This is a direct critique to traditional epistemology which seeks to separate the knower from their context in search of objectivity. On the contrary, feminist epistemologies argue that knowledge is situated, whereby an individual's social position, including their gender, race, class, sexuality and so on, shapes their perspective and access to knowledge (Haraway, 1998; Harding, 1991).

A feminist epistemology will be employed in this study to prioritise the situated knowledge and lived experiences of Maltese nationals (Poole, 2021), emphasising how their social positions and identities shape their perceptions of non-Maltese live-in care workers. Furthermore, at the heart of feminist epistemologies is the will to address social justice claims (Launius & Hassel, 2022), which this study also seeks to achieve by shedding light on the inclusion of non-Maltese live-in care workers in Maltese families, and as a consequence, society.

3.2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study seeks to better understand the relationship between Maltese individuals and non-Maltese live-in care workers from the perspective of Maltese nationals. Live-in care worker arrangements typically involve multiple power dynamics, as they encompass various relationships, such as employer/employee, tenant/landlord and interdependence for care between the parties involved (Anderson, 2007; Triandafyllidou, 2013). On this note, this study will be informed by Black Feminist thought [BFT], which offers a nuanced analysis of power. Particularly, this framework recognises that power is not something which an individual person or group holds, but rather, power operates within a larger "matrix of domination", which does not impact everyone equally (Collins, 2022, p.24).

While BFT is commonly used to analyse the experience of marginalised groups, since one of its main epistemological stances is to give voice and space to "subjugated knowledge"

(Collins, 2022, p. 13), this framework also provides deep insights into how systems of oppression shape dominant ways of knowing and the behaviours of privileged groups.

Intersectionality serves as a foundational framework or lens through which BFT is developed and understood (De Sousa & Varcoe, 2022). Intersectionality recognises how various social categories - such as race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and ability - intersect at an individual level, which in turn reveal how multiple, interconnected systems of privilege and oppression operate at the broader, structural level (Launius & Hassel, 2022). Intersectionality is not solely concerned with individual identities, rather, it is a matter of how institutions leverage identity to create exclusion and maintain systems of privilege (Crenshaw, 2015). Therefore, intersectional analysis was applied in this study, with a particular focus on how the intersections of race, gender, class, age and ethnic divisions contribute to the maintenance of power and privilege within non-migrant communities in Malta.

Furthermore, another key principle of this framework is the concept of "lived experience as a criterion of credibility″ (Collins, p. 327). In this research, BFT will guide the approach, emphasising that centring individuals' lived experiences is crucial for generating and validating knowledge (De Sousa & Varcoe, 2022). Indeed, this research specifically focuses on the perceptions and attitudes of Maltese persons towards non-Maltese live-in care workers, based on their first-hand experiences.

BFT provides researchers with tools on how to study inequitable power relations from an intersectional perspective. This theory acknowledges that in a matrix of domination, there exist very few complete victims or oppressors. Instead, everyone experiences varying degrees of disadvantage and privilege due to the multiple systems of oppression that shape their lives (Collins, 2022).

3.3 POSITIONALITY OF THE RESEARCHER

A researcher's background influences how they perceive and interpret the world, and therefore it directly impacts the study's findings and conclusions (Kacen & Chaitin, 2006). A researcher's positionality is important because it not only influences their relationship with

the research participants, but also the questions they choose to ask, what they choose to focus upon and how they interpret the interactions and data collected (R. Berger, 2015). Reflecting on one's positionality is crucial in conducting ethical research, as it enables researchers to evaluate their position within power structures and understand how this affects their methods, interpretations, and the knowledge they produce (F. Sultana, 2007).

I am a 30-year-old Maltese woman, an accountant by profession, and have a keen interest in gender and human-rights issues, which is why I have decided to pursue a Master of Gender, Society and Culture. Throughout different stages of my life, I have encountered and experienced varying sentiments on migration in Malta, from the fearful arrivals of the *klandestini* (colloquial term for migrants who arrive irregularly by boat from Africa) to the current situation of *Malta mimlija Indjani* (translated as 'Malta is full of Indians') (See Ellul, 2024). As racism and xenophobia continue to pervade Maltese society, migrants often find themselves in a precarious position, where they are "needed but not wanted" (M. Pisani, 2022, p. 147). This highlights the contradictions within a system that relies on migrant labour while resisting their full inclusion (Pace, 2021).

As a Maltese national, conscious of Malta's colonial past, its geographical position between Africa and Europe, as well as our history of emigration, I find it hard to understand where racist sentiments in Malta truly stem from. For much of our history, it was we who were considered the 'foreign other', yet it seems this has surpassed our collective memory. As I struggle with our inability as a nation *"*to make connections between the Maltese experience of mass emigration and the plight of immigrants arriving in Malta*"* (King, 2009, p. 72), I would like to better understand Maltese perspectives towards migrant workers in our society, specifically the perspective of Maltese households which were 'forced' to depend on 'foreign' help to take care of family members.

While I have not personally gone through the process of recruiting a foreign live-in care worker for a member of my family, my decision to pursue this research stems from a desire to understand Maltese perspectives towards the 'foreign other,' particularly within the intimate and personal space of the home.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.4.1 Qualitative Research Rationale

A qualitative research approach was considered most appropriate for this study since qualitative studies aim to understand social phenomena by focusing on individuals' perspectives, while emphasising the importance of the situational context in shaping these experiences (Denzin et al., 2023). Furthermore, qualitative research deepens our understanding of particular narratives, allowing us to find meaning in experience, ultimately contributing to enhanced knowledge and more informed approaches towards various social issues (Clemons, 2019). Contrary to quantitative research methods, a qualitative research approach allows for the collection of rich, in-depth data, where participants can bring up issues that extend beyond the researcher's initial scope. This flexibility enables a broader exploration of social phenomena (Denzin et al., 2023).

3.4.2 Research Method

When a researcher's aim is to understand a person's lived experiences and the meaning they make of those experiences, asking questions directly to the source by means of interviews is often a common approach used to collect research data (Trainor, 2013). Indeed, in-depth interviews aim to understand an individual's lived experience, with a strong focus on uncovering the subjective interpretations and insights they bring to a particular situation (Hesse-Biber, 2014).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data for this research project. This approach offers flexibility, as the interviewer has pre-set questions but can adapt the sequence and explore topics more spontaneously during the conversation (Hesse-Biber, 2014). This flexibility allows for deeper engagement and encourages participants to elaborate on their responses, fostering a richer dialogue that can uncover insights that go beyond the issues raised by the researcher (Denzin et al., 2023).

A list of pre-set questions, or an interview guide, was prepared in advance to direct the flow of the conversation (Appendix A) and ensure that the key themes to be discussed during the

interviews were covered (Hesse-Biber, 2014). The interview guide was prepared in both Maltese and English, allowing participants to use the language they preferred.

The interview guide was structured in four main sections. Section A dealt with collecting some socio-demographic data about the participants. Section B focused on the recruitment process of the live-in carer, while Section C focused on the participant's experience with employing a live-in care worker. The last section, Section D, delved into the relationship of the participant with their live-in carer.

A feminist approach towards interviewing was adopted in this study. As an interviewer, I created space for conversation, allowing depth to prioritise the interviewee's perspective (DeVault & Gross, 2012). Furthermore, I maintained reflexive awareness of my relationship with the participants. Before the interviews, I clearly explained the goals of the project to encourage an open dialogue and foster a collaborative environment (Hesse-Biber, 2014). I also implemented active listening, to mitigate power dynamics and ensure that participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences (DeVault & Gross, 2012). Additionally, after the interviews, the transcripts were sent to the participants for verification and data checking (Glesne, 2016). This member checking process was implemented to ensure that participants' voices and ideas were accurately represented in this study, and to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Clemons, 2019).

3.4.3 Research Population

A purposive sampling technique was employed to recruit participants for this study. Purposive sampling involves selecting a particular cohort because they are likely to provide relevant and valuable insights for the study (Kelly, 2010). Furthermore, purposive sampling allows for an in-depth understanding by focusing on a more detailed exploration rather than a broad overview of the subject (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Ten interviews were carried out with twelve Maltese nationals who were relatives of persons being cared for by paid non-Maltese live-in care workers. Two of the interviews were carried out with two family members of the respective individuals requiring care. The participants were required to be knowledgeable about the recruitment process of finding a live-in carer.

Initially, my intention was to interview individuals that had made use of the services of a live-in care worker for a family member from 2022 onwards. However, during the research process, a few participants who had made use of the services of a non-Maltese live-in carer from 2021 onwards wanted to speak about their experience. The Social Wellbeing Faculty Research Ethics Committee (SWB FREC) was informed accordingly of this change (Appendix F).

Participants were mainly recruited through social media platforms. A Facebook advert (Appendix B) was posted on my personal Facebook profile, and on three Facebook groups, including *Women for Women (Malta)*, *The Salott* and *Caregiver Malta*. Interested individuals could opt in by contacting me personally via the contact details provided. An Information Letter (Appendix C) was sent to interested participants including more details about the study and what their participation would entail. Snowball sampling was also utilised to identify further participants. In snowball sampling, participants are not recruited directly by the researcher. Rather, they are recommended by other participants who had initially been recruited to participate in the research, as they are deemed to share similar characteristics relevant for the purpose of the research (Henry, 2009).

3.4.4 Data Collection

Participants were given an option to hold the interview either in person or online. Eight interviews were held in person, while two interviews were held online. Interviews were held at a time and place comfortable to the participants. Six of the interviews which were held in person took place at the participants' residence, another interview was held at the University of Malta (UoM), and another was held at the researcher's residence. Interviews held online were held via the UoM Zoom online platform.

When interviews were held in person, participants were provided with a copy of the consent form (Appendix D) at the beginning of the interview, which was explained to them. For interviews held online, the consent form was sent to the participants ahead of the interview. In the consent form, participants were asked whether they would be willing to be audio-recorded for transcription purposes. All participants agreed to have the interview audio-recorded. Participants were also asked whether they preferred the interview to be held in

Maltese or English. Only one interview was held in English and the rest (nine interviews) were held in Maltese. The interviews lasted between forty minutes and ninety minutes. An open space for discussion was allowed during the interviews where interviewees could raise other issues relevant to the research topic.

After the interviews took place, these were transcribed accordingly. During the interview, participants were asked how they preferred to receive the transcript for their review and feedback. Six of the participants did not require the transcript to be sent for their review. For the other six participants, the transcripts were sent via email. The files were encrypted for security purposes and participants were asked to state if any changes were required within fifteen days of receipt. Four of the participants did not provide any feedback, while the other two stated that they did not require any changes to be made to the transcripts.

3.4.5 Data analysis

Reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected. This method allowed for the identification and exploration of key themes and patterns in the participants' responses, while acknowledging my active role as a researcher in identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Reflexivity requires the researcher to be conscious of their different social locations, and how these intersecting identities influence and shape their role throughout every stage of the research process (Pillow, 2003).

Therefore, reflexive thematic analysis acknowledges that the themes identified are interpretive in nature, "produced at the intersection of the researcher's theoretical assumptions" (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 594). This approach emphasises the researcher's active and thoughtful engagement with the data, rather than adhering to rigid procedures or standard processes among coders. The focus is on the researcher's reflexivity and the depth of their involvement in the analytical process (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Approval to perform this research project was granted by the SWB FREC at UoM (Appendix E). The recruitment and interview processes took place once ethics clearance was obtained.

Participation in this research project was entirely voluntary. No compensation was provided to the individuals interested in participating in the research. Participants were informed of their rights and asked to sign a consent form (Appendix D). Participants were informed that they could withdraw from taking part in the research at any time, or refuse to answer any questions, for any reason, without any repercussion. They were also informed that if they agreed to be audio-recorded, the audio-recordings would be used solely to assist me as a researcher to transcribe and analyse the data. They were also informed that all data would be treated with strict confidentiality and that participation was anonymous. Pseudonyms were to be used and any identifying information was excluded to ensure anonymity. They were also informed that soft copies of data files were to be saved in encrypted folders on a password protected laptop, while hard copies were kept in a locked cabinet in a safe place accessible only to me as the researcher.

For interviews held online, the UoM Zoom's encryption for third party endpoints and the sip/h-323 function were activated to protect from any unauthorised access or interruption. Furthermore, in the case of interviews held online, the video recording document which is automatically generated by Zoom once the recording is stopped was immediately deleted, and only the audio recording was retained. During the interviews it was clarified that the transcripts themselves would not be part of the final study, although anonymised quotations from the transcripts might be included in the presentation of the study's findings.

Furthermore, as this study focused on personal experiences with live-in care workers, I recognised that participants might experience emotional distress when reflecting on deceased or ill relatives. To address this, the participants were provided with a list of support services offering emotional and psychological assistance to help mitigate any potential distress (Appendix G).

These measures were implemented to ensure adherence to ethical principles such as non-maleficence (not doing harm) and beneficence (maximising benefits and minimising harm).

3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have outlined the research methods and tools used to address the research question and main objectives. Additionally, I have discussed my epistemological and theoretical stance as a researcher, as well as my positionality within the research. I have also described the approach taken to analyse the data and how I remained reflexive throughout the entire research process to minimise bias and enhance the credibility of my findings.

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an analysis of the findings elicited from the ten semi-structured interviews carried out with Maltese nationals who were relatives of users of services provided by non-Maltese live-in care workers.

Section 4.2 of this chapter presents the demographic data of the participants and the live-in care workers. This section also provides a general overview of why the families required a live-in carer. Thereafter, Sections 4.3 to 4.8 of this chapter will outline the main themes emerging from the analysis of the interviews as summarised in Table 1 below. These themes were identified from the data elicited from the interviews, based on the steps discussed in Section 3.4.5 in the previous chapter. Hereinafter, the term 'carer(s)' will also refer specifically to live-in care workers.

Table 1

Main Themes and Subthemes

Main Theme	**Subtheme**

1. Stress	● Balancing Commitments
	● The Recruitment Process
	  o Why not a Maltese carer?
	  o Use of Intermediaries
	  o The Agencies

2. Family	● Duty of Care ● Leaving families behind ● "Part of the Family"
3. Blurred Boundaries	● Trust o Word of mouth ● Employer-Employee Relationship
4. Money	● "They come here to earn money"
5. Culture	● Ethnicity ● Language ● Food ● Religion
6. Foreigners in Malta	● Agency ● Community

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

4.2.1 Research participants

The details of the participants of this study are included in Table 2. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant and details were left to a minimum to protect their identity and ensure anonymity.

Table 2

Participants' Socio-Demographic Data

Pseudonyms of relatives of person in need of care	Gender	Age Range (years)	Educational Level	Employment Status	Family Status
Eve	Female	55 – 60	Tertiary	Employed	Married & parent
Jade	Female	25 - 30	Tertiary	Employed	Single
Sharon	Female	55 – 60	Tertiary	Employed	Married & parent
Belle	Female	25 – 30	Tertiary	Employed	Single
Rachel	Female	55 – 60	Higher Secondary	Employed	Married & parent
Michaela	Female	30 – 35	Tertiary	Employed	Married
Tania	Female	80 – 85	Tertiary	Retired	Married & parent
Edward	Male	75 – 80	Secondary	Retired	Married & parent
Jane	Female	50 – 55	Tertiary	Unemployed	Married & parent
Abigail	Female	35 – 40	Tertiary	Employed	Married & parent
Miriam	Female	55 – 60	Tertiary	Employed	Married & parent
Dorothy	Female	65 – 70	Secondary	Retired	Married & parent

Sharon and Jade were a mother and daughter who discussed their experience about a live-in carer recruited for Sharon's mother, that is Jade's grandmother. Tania and Edward, on the other hand, were a married couple who discussed their experience about a live-in carer recruited for Tania's sister.

Most participants in this study were female, which may reflect findings from other research in the field of care which support the view that care in Malta has a gendered dimension, with women making up the majority of caregivers - paid or unpaid (EIGE, 2021; Simmons et al., 2022). In this case, the participants were sharing the caring responsibilities with the live-in carers, although the latter did the bulk of the work. Furthermore, a recent study on long-term care in Malta has highlighted barriers when it came to the affordability of long-term care where the elderly were concerned (Simmons et al., 2022). The fact that the bulk of the participants had a relatively high level of education may indicate that the option of live-in care may be available to only a portion of the population with a certain level of income.

4.2.2 Need for a live-in carer

Participants were asked which family member required the service of a live-in carer. Table 3 overleaf includes more detail in this respect.

All the individuals requiring care were female. This might be linked to the fact that women have a longer life expectancy in Malta (NSO, 2024). Furthermore, the clients requiring a live-in carer were mostly elderly family members, except for Michaela and her family who required the services of a live-in carer for her mother who suffered from a chronic neurological disorder.

Table 3 also includes details on the number of live-in carers the participants recruited, and whether they needed to change the carer. In this respect, the focus was on the long-term live-in carer, and not the temporary replacements needed when the live-in carers were on some type of leave. Table 3 also includes the duration of the care period conducted by a live-in carer.

Table 3

Need for a Live-in Carer

Pseudonym of relatives of person in need of care	**Family member(s) requiring care**	**Number of Live-in Carers *(throughout care period)***	**Change in live-in carer *(Permanent Nature)***	**Period of care**
Eve	Mother & Father	2	Yes	2021 - Present
Jade	Grandmother	1	No	2024 - Present
Sharon	Mother	1	No	2024 - Present
Belle	Grandparents (same household)	1	No	2018 – 2021
Rachel	Mother	1	No	2017 – Present
Michaela	Mother	1	No	2020 – Present
Tania	Sister	1	No	2020 – 2022
Edward	Sister-in-law	1	No	2020 - 2022
Jane	Aunty	1	No	2024 - Present
Abigail	Grandparents (same household)	3	Yes	2022 - Present
Miriam	Mother	2	Yes	2020 - Present
Dorothy	Mother-in-law	2	Yes	2022 - 2023

Change in carers

As Table 3 demonstrates, four of the participants changed their live-in carer throughout the care period. Eve and Dorothy had to recruit another carer when their first carers decided to return to their home country for family reasons. Miriam also had to recruit another carer since the first carer decided that she would not renew her contract. In Abigail's case, the first carer her family recruited was asked to leave when the carer did not carry out the duties outlined in the contract. Abigail's family employed two live-in carers simultaneously to care for both her grandparents, but they had to let one go as they were not satisfied with the service of this carer.

Termination of care

At the time of the research, four of the participants were no longer making use of the services of a live-in carer. In Belle's case, when her grandparents passed away, the contract was terminated. In Tania and Edward's case, the carer cared for Tania's sister until she was moved to a long-term care facility when she became bedridden - she later passed away.

As for Dorothy, the second carer left to pursue a different career. Following this, Dorothy and her family attempted to recruit another carer for her mother-in-law but were unsuccessful as her condition worsened. As a result, her mother-in-law was transferred to a home for the elderly.

4.2.3 Live-in care workers

Table 4 overleaf outlines the demographic data of the live-in carers recruited by the participants of this study. This table also indicates whether the carers were qualified and whether they were recruited locally or from abroad.

Table 4

Live-in Care Workers

Pseudonyms of relatives of person in need of care	**Carer** ***(in the case of more than one carer)***	**Nationality**	**Gender**	**Qualified**	**Recruited from abroad**
Eve	First carer	Filipino	Female	Yes	No
	Second carer	Filipino	Female	Yes	No
Jade & Sharon	N/A	Filipino	Female	Yes	No
Belle	N/A	Filipino	Female	Yes	Yes
Rachel	N/A	Filipino	Female	Yes	Yes
Michaela	N/A	Filipino	Female	Yes	Yes
Tania & Edward	N/A	Filipino	Female	Yes	Yes
Jane	N/A	Filipino	Female	Yes	No
Abigail	First carer	Filipino	Female	Yes	Yes
	Second carer	Filipino	Female	Yes	Yes
	Third carer	Indian	Female	Yes	No
Miriam	First carer	Filipino	Female	Yes	Yes
	Second carer	Filipino	Female	Yes	No
Dorothy	First carer	Filipino	Female	Yes	No
	Second carer	Filipino	Female	Yes	Yes

As the data in Table 4 demonstrates, all the live-in care workers were female. When commenting on why they opted for a female live-in carer, Michaela, Jane, Dorothy and Jade commented that they preferred a woman since they were taking care of female family members. As Michaela underlined:

> *Aħna li xtaqna tkun mara iva, għax il-*mummy *peress li jieħdu ħsieb il-*washing *tagħha,* non-stop *magħha ... dejjem xtaqet mara. U meta fittixna* reliever*, dik naħseb l-unika* requirement *li jkun hemm, li hija mara. Bħal speċi għax ma tħosshiex* comfortable *taf kif.*
>
> We wanted her to be a woman, because the carer has to wash mummy, and she always wanted a woman to keep her company. And when we need a reliever, we seek a woman. This is the main requirement, that she is a woman. Because she (her mum) doesn't feel comfortable, you know.

Miriam said that "it never occurred to [her] to get a male*"*. Eve said that her family also preferred a woman even though initially the carer was recruited to assist with her father. She also commented on how, "*qatt ma daħal f'moħħna li jkun raġel"* (we never even considered that it could be a man). Belle on the other hand mentioned that her family had recruited their live-in carer on the basis of her reputation as a good carer. Tania mentioned that her family didn't specifically request a female carer, but ended up with one since the independent agent they approached always recruited women.

As Table 4 demonstrates, all the live-in care workers recruited were Filipino, except for the one recruited by Abigail's family. Abigail commented, "*L-ewwel waħda morna għal Filippina għax qishom l-iktar* carers *li jkun hawn ... dak iż-żmien kienu Filippini ... kienu jiġu ħafna mill-*Philippines*, so riduha mill-*Philippines" (With the first one we opted for a Filipino because it's like most of the carers there were in those days were Filipinos, many came from the Philippines, so they wanted her to be from the Philippines).

Miriam also stressed that for her "it was the person rather than the nationality, which is why [she] wanted to recruit her [herself]*"*. However, she also mentioned that when she started looking for a live-in carer for her mother, she looked for a Filipino carer:

> I think I fell into that culture no of having … of like looking for a Filipino. Looking back, I would say I was influenced by the fact that in Malta, like if you have a carer, it has to be a Filipino.

So Filipino has become synonymous with live-in carer in Malta. Sharon explained how her mother always referred to a carer as a Filipino, "*Allura din dejjem tgħid il-kelma Filippina. Jiġifieri setgħet kienet minn Sri Lanka, setgħet kienet min-Nepal, imma fhimt fl-opinjoni t'ommi dejjem il-kelma Filippina titla' fil-konverżazzjoni.* She doesn't know any better" (She always mentioned a Filipino. She could have been from Sri Lanka or from Nepal, but in my

mother's opinion when she mentions Filipino she is referring to a carer. She doesn't know any better).

4.3 STRESS

A recurring theme which emerged from the interviews was stress. Stress was mentioned in different contexts and was used in particular when referring to caring for a family member who requires constant care and assistance. Furthermore, stress was also mentioned in relation to the recruitment process of the carers.

4.3.1 Balancing Commitments

It was pointed out that providing 24/7 care for a family member was very stressful, not only when you were providing it yourself, but also when you needed to make arrangements for that care to be provided by someone else.

In fact, Jade, who was responsible for washing her grandmother daily among other things, expressed how this in conjunction with a full-time job was becoming too much, so they had no other option but to find help: "*bilfors kellna nsibu lil xi ħadd ieħor għax kemm jiena u kemm ommi u z-zijiet, peress li kulħadd jaħdem* full-time*, naqra diffiċli"* (we had to find a carer because all of us, myself, my mum and my aunties and uncles work full-time, so it is difficult).

Dorothy, who took care of her mother-in-law who suffered from dementia and required 24/7 care, also mentioned the personal impact this had on her and other family members: "To keep sane *... biex tibqa' sana fil-ħajja tiegħek, ma tistax tagħmel* 24 hours *magħha. Ħadd ma jista' jagħmel* 24 hours *għax* you need your breaks*. Għax inkella inti ma tibqax kalma, issir nervuża. Probabbilment tibda tgħajjat magħha.*" (To keep sane, to maintain your sanity, you can't spend 24 hours with her. No one can spend 24 hours because you need a break. Otherwise, you won't stay calm, you'll become nervous. You would probably end up raising your voice).

Miriam also underlined that beyond the stress of providing the proper care to your loved ones, there is also the emotional toll caregiving has on the carer:

> Very, very stressful I would say … yes on me. Because I want to continue my stuff, it's important to me as a person, but of course it doesn't come without stress. Taking care of the elderly is always stressful, whether they're at home with a carer, at home alone. You see them degenerating day by day … I'm witnessing that now. It is very … emotionally it is very tough, even though I know I've done my best, it's very difficult.

Having said that, opting for a live-in carer generally reduced the stress of caring for a family member on a full-time basis. With the recruitment of a carer, family members felt reassured that their relatives were receiving around-the-clock care with the collective input of both the carer and family members. In fact, peace of mind played a significant role in the decision to hire a live-in carer. Bringing in outside help also helped the participants to reach a balance in their personal, family and work commitments. Eve commented how *"kienet* worth it *żgur. Jien dejjem kont inkun ix-xogħol b'ċertu biża', li jew se jaqa'…"* (it was definitely worth it. When I was at work, I was constantly fearful that he might fall or injure himself …).

Similarly, Michaela said that "financially, it might add up to more. *Imma fil-verità qed ittik ħafna iktar serħan tal-moħħ, sewwa. Jiġifieri dik, dik waħda mill-affarijiet li naħseb jiena hija bżonjuża li tara meta tikkunsidraha*" (So financially, expenses will ratchet up. But in reality, the care provided by the live-in carer leads to a greater peace of mind. I believe that is one of the factors to consider when deciding on a live-in carer).

4.3.2 The Recruitment Process

Why not a Maltese carer?

Recruiting a live-in carer proved rather challenging for some of the participants. The participants were specifically asked why they opted for a foreign carer, rather than a Maltese one. All of the participants noted that there were very few, if any, local options for live-in carers. Miriam explained that part of the process of recruiting a foreign live-in carer involved first confirming that a local carer could not be hired. She mentioned that she had published a job advertisement, but "nobody applied". Eve and Sharon specifically commented on how

difficult it was to find someone to sleep with the relative who needed care, especially when they had a family of their own to take care of.

Rachel, whose mother suffered from dementia noted that if they had opted for Maltese carers, they would have had to recruit several carers who would have had to work different shifts. The rotation of different carers would have destabilised her mother. She also added that this would have also proved to be more costly.

Michaela explained that her family explored every possible alternative before ultimately deciding to hire a live-in carer. As her mother's condition worsened, the need for continuous care became more urgent. For a while, they relied on various government-provided services and hired part-time caregivers, but it wasn't enough. She described the service as "*imlaqqat"* (patched together and inconsistent), as it lacked the stability needed for quality care. She also mentioned how the only option was to opt for a foreign carer, and how *"fil-verità mnalla jkun hawn in-nies,* carers *barranin li jiġu u jgħinu. Fis-sens, ma naħsibx li hawn biżżejjed għajnuna Malta li biex persuna li għandha bżonn l-għajnuna, tgħix ħajja komda"* (In reality, thank goodness that there are these foreign carers who come and help out. In the sense that, I don't think there are enough carers in Malta to provide the assistance needed for those who need help to live a comfortable life).

Use of Intermediaries

When it came to the recruitment of live-in carers, not all the participants used an intermediary such as an agency or middlemen. Of the twelve participants, only Abigail's family used the help of a care services agency to recruit the live-in care workers. Five other participants, namely Tania and Edward, Eve, Dorothy and Rachel sought out help from independent agents who generally were Filipinos living in Malta who would recommend other Filipinos for the job of a live-in carer. These independent agents helped recruit live-in carers both locally, and also assisted in the relocation of individuals from the Philippines. These would also assist in the paperwork needed - such as visas or private health insurances. Interestingly, it seems that these independent agents did not charge the Maltese individuals a fee for their assistance, however they charged the Filipino live-in carer a fee.

Rachel, for example, found it strange that her family was not charged a fee, while her carer was charged a rather hefty one. Tania shared a similar experience, "*Ġibna żewġ aġenti qabel, għax hawn l-aġenti daż-żmien. Imma kienu se jżommulna ħafna. Imbagħad xi ħadd qalilna b'din ... din ma kinitx iżżomm flus imma mbagħad tajnieha aħna minn jeddna*" (We had already contacted two agencies, because nowadays there are agents. But they were going to charge us a lot. Then someone told us about this person, she didn't charge us a fee but we still gave her a gratuity).

The other six participants did not resort to agents, companies or middlemen when it came to recruit the live-in carers. Miriam described recruiting the first carer a "nightmare" as she encountered multiple barriers throughout the process. Miriam emphasised how stressful the whole process was, to the point of saying that "looking back, if I had to give advice to somebody, I'd say listen it's either money or your mental health - money. Because it was, enormously stressful.*"*

Jane also expressed how stressful the process was. Jane recruited the carer locally and was also assisted by an acquaintance who was knowledgeable about the process and the paperwork involved. However, she also expressed that if she had to, she wouldn't go through it again because "it was too much", she said "*ikkumplikata imma. Jiġifieri waqt li kont qed nagħmilha, kont ngħidlu lir-raġel, 'kieku kont naf, ma kontx nagħmilha'. Kont inħalliha miegħi u mbagħad* every now and then *insibilha lil xi ħadd għar*-respite" (it's complicated though. While I was going through the process, I used to tell my husband 'If I knew, I wouldn't have gone through with it'. I would have taken care of her [her aunty] myself and every now and then I would have found someone for respite).

The Agencies

Jade and Sharon's family also had a hard time recruiting a live-in carer. Their family initially tried to recruit a live-in carer directly from another country but were unsuccessful despite going through the right channels. Sharon expressed her frustration with the unfairness of the situation, describing the ordeal as a "racket":

Dawn wara sirna nafu li jekk inti ma ġġibx din through *l-aġent, u jieħu l-fee l-aġent, no way li xi darba ħa jirnexxilek iġġibha* on your own steam*. Hemm il-korruzzjoni fin-nofs.* It is corruption*. Aħna ppruvajna nġibuha bħal ma jġibha xi ħadd ieħor … l-aġent tipo. Hemm għalfejn inħallas il-*fee *lill-aġent jien? Jekk l-aġent qed jgħaddi minn dawk iċ-*channels *u jien applikajt* the same channels *... Wara sirna nafu li ovvjament inti tipprova tagħmel l-istess li qed jagħmel hu, imma jġibulek skuża banali biex iqaċċtuk 'l barra ħalli dawn japplikaw* through *l-aġent. Ħalli l-aġent tat-*Thailand *jew tal-Filippini jieħu sehmu, l-aġent ta' Malta jieħu wkoll, imbagħad miegħu jieħdu ovvjament nies oħra ... ma rridx dan. Imma hekk kienet tidher l-affari,* it was crystal clear.

Later we realised that if you do not recruit the carer through an agent and the agent gets paid the fee, there is no way that you will manage to recruit her through your own initiative. There is corruption involved. It is corruption. We tried to recruit her in the same manner that others recruit … like the agencies. Why should I need to pay the agency a fee? If the agencies are using the same channels I did … Later we realised that obviously when you try to do the same thing that they are doing, they will find a trivial excuse so that you will have to apply through an agency. In that way, the agency in Thailand or the Philippines will take their cut, and the agency in Malta also takes its cut, then obviously with the agency someone else takes a cut … I don't want to imply. But that's how it looked, it was crystal clear.

This process to recruit a live-in carer directly from another country took Sharon and Jade's family around a year, yet they still didn't manage to get one. The whole experience made them feel "desperate". Thankfully, they managed to recruit a live-in carer who was looking for a job locally.

Jane also commented on this issue:

*U qed jagħmlu ħafna flus minn fuqhom e. Qed jagħmlu ħafna flus minn fuqhom. Għax ma nafx min qalli ... pereżempju jġibuhom dawn ... Din il-ħabiba tagħha, ġiet mill-Filippini, ġabha xi ħadd ... ma nafx kemm tatu, eluf ta jiġifieri, biex tiġi Malta. Imbagħad trid taħdem miegħu, isibilha l-*job*, imma mbagħad trid ittih kważi nofs il-paga ta.*

And they are making a lot of money off them. They are making a lot of money. Because someone told me, for example they bring them here. The carer's friend came from the Philippines, someone brought her here. I don't know how much she paid, thousands, to come to Malta. Then, she has to work for them, they find her a job, but she has to pay them around half her salary.

U għandhom kuntratt e… kuntratt ta' ma nafx kemm, sentejn jew ma nafx kemm qaltli ... Għax jien għidtilha 'why doesn't she change the job?' bħal speċi. Qaltli ma tistax, [...] unbelievable *hux.*

And they have a contract for a period of two years … I'm not sure for how long. I asked her, 'Why doesn't she change the job?'. She told me she cannot […] it's unbelievable.

4.4 FAMILY

The family was another common theme which was brought up by the participants for different reasons. Some of the participants mentioned how their live-in carers' family culture is similar to that of the Maltese. Dorothy said that "In their character *jixbħu ħafna lill-Maltin, u l-familja jħobbuha"* (culturally, they are very similar to the Maltese, and they love their family), an issue also commented upon by Abigail. She emphasised how well they bond and treat the young children in her family, which made a difference and an impact in their relationship with the carers, as they "make you feel at home".

4.4.1 Duty of Care

The responsibility, or the duty of caring for relatives was an issue which was raised by a number of participants, particularly when talking about their parents. For instance, Sharon said, *"Naf li huwa d*-duty *tiegħi* to care after my mother*, speċjalment meta hi għenitni ħafna meta kelli t-tfal għadhom żgħar. Però hemm* limit*"* (I know it is my duty to care for my mother, especially since she helped me a lot with raising my kids. But there is a limit). Miriam also expressed a similar sentiment. As an only child, she felt an "added responsibility". However, she also acknowledged that she was "trying to pass on some values of care and compassion" to her children.

Adult children often assumed that it was their duty to take care of their older parents. Rachel said that she made sure that her mother "*ma ridthiex tkun nieqsa kemm jista' jkun minn xejn*" (had everything she needed). Dorothy, when speaking about her mother-in-law who suffers from dementia and struggles to recognise them, stated that "*inti fil-kuxjenza tagħmillek differenza. M'intix ħa tabbandunaha"* (you cannot abandon them, because you feel guilty about it).

4.4.2 Leaving families behind

The issue of the family was also raised when it came to the live-in carers. A few of the participants mentioned that they found it difficult to understand how their carers could leave their families behind, particularly those with young children. Miriam shared how:

> I was very surprised with the first one because she had young children believe it or not. She had three children the first one I got, and the youngest was three. And I said you know, 'how can she do that?' you know what I mean, because they're really young. Not as in a judgemental mummy how can she do that, *messha tistħi ta* (she should be ashamed of herself) … not that way. How can she do that like the emotional toll on her. Because children are brought up, even if you die you know what I mean.

Similarly, Jane who was also a mother, found it hard to understand how the carers could leave their families behind:

Tiskantani, għax kieku jien ma naħsibx li nagħmilha. Tgħidli jekk tiġi dahrek mall-ħajt, tagħmilha. Imma kieku naħseb neħodhom miegħi lit-tfal, speċjalment at a tender age. *Dawn qishom ... taf kif hemm xi ħadd qed jieħu ħsiebhom ... diffiċli,* very much so. *Jiġifieri anke jekk huma mdorrijin fiha, xorta hi diffiċli għax il-bniedem hu li hu. Jiġifieri l-*emotions *nimmaġina jiena ta' kulħadd l-istess, hux vera?*	It amazes me, because I don't think I would be able to do it. You might tell me, if you didn't have any other option, you would do the same. But I think in that case I would take my children with me, especially when they are a tender age. There's someone taking care of them …. still it's difficult, very much so. So even if they're used to it, it's still difficult because we're talking about people here. So, I would imagine everyone has the same emotions, right?

Dorothy sustained that since the live-in carers sacrificed so much to be able to find employment outside their country, they made an extra effort to make them feel at home:

She's looking after an old lady … she cannot look after her family and she is looking after an old lady. *Ħeqq jgħaddu minn diffikultà kbira wkoll hux. Qegħdin jagħmlu,* for the sake of earning money to help the family. *Jiġifieri trid tifhem it-tbatija tagħhom wkoll imsieken hux, mhux tittrattahom bħala* employees *biss hux. Naħseb jiena ...* you need to love them as well *... ħalli l-familja li qed jimmissjaw, isibu familja oħra Malta hux, mhux hekk?*	She's looking after an old lady, but she cannot look after her own family, yet she is looking after an old lady. They go through a great deal of hardship as well. They are doing it for the sake of earning money to help their family. So, you have to understand their struggles too, poor things, and not just treat them as employees. I think you need to love them as well so that they can find another family in Malta, right?

4.4.3 "Part of the Family"

Practically all the participants regarded their live-in carers as *part of the family*. Only Jane did not do so.

In general, the participants were grateful that the carers carried out their duties with care and appreciated their effort in this endeavour. Tania confessed that they never considered their live-in carer as an employee, rather "*konna nirringrazzjawha hux ... għax aħna għamlitilna pjaċir hux, kbir hux"* (we used to thank her because she did us a huge favour). Tania and her family also appreciated that their carer went the extra mile, even on her off days. Tania also mentioned how their carer visited her sister, her charge, even when the latter was admitted to a long-term care facility, when technically she was no longer her employer.

Belle mentioned how touched she felt when their family's carer cried at her grandmother's funeral, saying how "she really cared", and how she felt that she was an integral part of her grandmother's life. Sharon and Jade described their carer as a "god sent". Rachel also expressed how lucky she was to have found their carer:

> *konna xxurtjati e ... ħafna, ħafna, ħafna, ħafna xxurtjati. Għax ma għandi xejn xi ngerger minnha. U vera* caring *u tieħu ħsiebha ... qas naf x'naqbad ngħid. Naħseb il-Bambin ippremjaha lill-*mummy*, għax il-*mummy *kienet ħadet ħsieb lill-ġenituri tagħha, kienet ħadet ħsieb lill-kunjata. Jiġifieri jien nemmen li ġiet ippremajata f'dan il-każ.*
>
> But we were lucky … really, really, really, really lucky. I have nothing bad to say about her. She's really caring and she takes care of her. I really don't know what to say. I think God rewarded my mummy, because my mummy took care of her parents, her mother-in law. So, I think she was rewarded in this case.

Dorothy also spoke about the bond they shared with their first carer, similar to that of a family member. She described the sadness they felt when their carer returned from a visit to the Philippines, how they "cried with her":

Għax you could feel her pain, you know what I mean. *Għax kif qegħdin ngħidu ... dik kienet parti mill-familja tagħna ġiet,* you know. *Allura meta konna rajnieha* sad *għax ħalliet lill-familja,* she was very upset ... *il-ħin kollu ċċempel lir-raġel, il-ħin kollu tibki u hekk ... bdejna ngħidu ... inħossu li ma baqgħalhiex ħajja ħafna magħna din,* you know. *Qed tifhem? Għax kif qegħdin ngħidu ... issir familja. Kulħadd kien iħobbha ... kulħadd, kulħadd.*	Because you could feel her pain, you know what I mean. Because as we are saying, she became part of our family, you know. So when we saw how sad she was because she left her family behind, she was very upset … calling her husband all the time, always crying … we started saying … we felt that she wouldn't stay with us much longer, you know. You understand? As we are saying, she becomes part of the family. Everybody loved her, everyone.

4.5 BLURRED BOUNDARIES

The interviews also highlighted how the boundaries between employer-employee and family life were often blurred when it comes to live-in carers. This was because the carer, the person they cared for and family members formed an attachment, with the person receiving care at the centre of these relationships.

4.5.1 Trust

The participants emphasised their relationship with the carer was based on trust - they had to trust in the fact that the carer would take care of their family member without being directly supervised since the majority worked. Rachel expressed how you go into this relationship blindly as you do not really know what to expect. Sharon mentioned how the designation is more of a "person of trust", as there needs to be a lot of trust that the person employed did their duties. Eve mentioned that in the beginning, she often worried and questioned whether they had made the right decision.

Word of mouth

Those who used the Maltese grapevine to find a live-in carer were more likely to know about the calibre of the carer in question. They had the possibility of questioning previous employers about the respective employee. In the case of Michaela, her grandparents' live-in carer recommended somebody she knew. As she pointed out, "*qisek taf lil min ħa ġġib"* (it's like you know who you're going to recruit).

Miriam, on the other hand, wanted to choose the carer herself. Initially she had met with someone in Malta and asked them for help, but had little success in finding a carer. She located her first carer through a relative living in Australia who had contacts in the Philippines. Sharon and Jade tried to recruit a relative of an acquaintance of theirs who was living in Malta, someone who had been recommended to them. Jane's family had hired a carer who was an acquaintance of her brother. Dorothy's family decided to hire a live-in carer who had previously worked for a relative of a family friend, although they had approached an independent agent initially. Incidentally, when the families approached independent agents, these were referred to them by other Maltese persons who had successfully recruited a live-in carer via the said agents.

4.5.2 Employer-Employee Relationship

Participants were specifically asked how they navigated the employer-employee relationship with their carers. As underlined in section 4.4.3, almost all the participants mentioned that they considered their live-in carers as part of the family. The participants also noted that it was still important to maintain certain boundaries within the relationship. Therefore, while live-in carers were considered as part of the family by many, there were still clear limits as to how far this familial status could be extended.

For instance, Michaela shared how her family saw their carer "like a member of family", especially her mother who was the person receiving care. There were even situations when her mother put her carer's needs before hers. Michaela felt that at the end of the day, certain boundaries still needed to be kept since "you're paying for a service":

*Però, nemmen li xorta jrid ikun hemm dak il-*little line *li tidentifika li fl-aħħar mill-aħħar hija xorta ħaddiema, li l-*mummy *vera ma tagħmilhiex din il-ħaġa. Fis-sens, ma nafx kif ħa nispjegaha ... qisu kultant imbagħad ... tgħid iva ... iva, iva rrid noħroġ dakinhar, iva, iva hekk u ġieli forsi tant tkun trid forsi tgħidilha iva biex tkun* happy*, li forsi ma tagħtix kas in-*needs *tagħha, u jiena dik iddejjaqni daqsxejn.*	But I still believe that there still needs to be that little line which underlines that at the end of the day, she is still an employee, which is something that my mum doesn't do. In the sense that, I don't really know how to explain it, but sometimes then … she says yes … yes … yes I want to go out that day, yes yes this and maybe sometimes, she wants to tell her yes to make her happy, that at the same time she doesn't consider her needs, and that bothers me a bit.

Eve expressed a similar sentiment, that boundaries were also required in terms of personal space and privacy:

Qisna aħwa ta' kważi ... imma differenti still*. Ma taqsamx kollox, mhux ħa ngħidilhom kollox. Jiena t-tifla ta' min qed tikkura, imma fl-istess ħin mhux se niddejjaq biex ngħid jekk hemm xi ħaġa li qed iddejjaqna jew hekk. Imma anke ma noqgħodx insaqsi. Pereżempju din nafu li għandha* boyfriend*, imma ma toqgħodx issaqsi ħafna taf int, għax ma narahiex etika. L-ispazju tagħha trid tħallihulha.*	We're like siblings … but it's still different. You don't share everything, I wouldn't tell them everything. I'm the daughter of the person receiving care, but at the same time I'm not going to shy away from discussing something which is bothering me or something of the sort. But I'm not going to ask. For example this one has a boyfriend, but I'm not going to ask about the relationship you know, because I don't see it as ethical. You have to give her her space.

Miriam also felt that certain boundaries needed to be retained, as in any other employer-employee relationship:

> I'm not on Facebook with them, I'm not on social media with them, just like I'm not with my boss at work. You know because the relationship has to be there, the employer/employee. You know I'm not over friendly, I don't hug her. You know what I joke and we share, but I wouldn't put my hand on her shoulder or things like that. Because yes, I know that I need to keep boundaries just like you keep everywhere, no?

On the other hand, Sharon had a different opinion on boundaries arguing that due to the intimate nature of the relationship, this breaks down the standard employer-employee relationship:

Inti jekk din qed tgħix miegħek, qed taħsilha lill-mamà, qed teħdilha l-pressjoni, qed ittiha l-mediċina ... kif tista' tgħidilha employee? Jekk inti fl-istess ħin qegħdin jaraw it-televixin flimkien, xħin waranofsinhar hemm ir-rużarju minn ta' Lourdes*, in-nofs siegħa tar-rużarju jaraw u jitolbu flimkien ... għax hi* Catholic *... allura hi x'tiġi? X'tiġi jien* employer *u int* employee*, jekk qegħdin fuq is-sufan ras ma' ras, spalla ma' spalla naraw ir-rużarju flimkien? Imbagħad filgħaxija jkun hemm ma nafx xiex, naraw it-TV flimkien ... taqa' dik il-*border ... you have to erase the border *ta'* employer*,* employee*. Jien hekk fil-fehma tiegħi biex jaħdmu l-affarijiet.*

If she's living with you, washing my mother, checking her blood pressure, giving her medicine … how can you call her an employee? If at the same time, they're watching television together, and in the afternoon, there's the rosary from Lourdes, and you spend that half hour watching and praying together … because she's Catholic … then what does that make her? Am I the employer and you're the employee when we're sitting on the sofa, head-to-head, shoulder to shoulder, watching the rosary together? Then in the evening, we watch something else on TV together … That boundary disappears. You have to erase the border between employer and employee. That's my belief for this to work out.

4.6 MONEY

Money was also brought up by the participants. All the participants mentioned that they applied for and received the *Carer at Home* subsidy. The Government of Malta subsidizes up to 8,500 Euro per annum to assist persons who employ a full-time live-in carer. Eve, Miriam and Rachel praised this initiative, and commented on how this subsidy makes the service affordable.

Money was also discussed in the context of trust. For instance, Eve mentioned that while her mother trusted their carer, she did not reveal to her where she kept her money. Jane provided the carer with a small wallet which contained enough money to cover the daily expenses. This step was taken to ensure that her aunt did not harbour any suspicions that the carer was helping herself to money or anything else, something she was concerned about.

Money was also linked to conflict. Miriam shared that within her first week of employment, the first carer asked her to employ her husband. This "chipped" their relationship:

> So she came here with an ulterior motive the first one, because they do that. And I told her, "No I can't employ your husband, in any capacity". She told me; "You don't have to pay him". So *ħa nibdew* (so it started), you know what I mean?

The same carer also asked for a raise which she also refused. Miriam felt that a raise should be given when the employee deserved it, and not when a person "ask[s] for more money to perform better*"*. She made it a point to underline that she gave her current carer "pocket money" because she deserved it, "for the extra care and for her joviality".

Abigail alluded to the fact that their carers ask her and other family members for money, specifically on special occasions like birthdays, Easter and Christmas. She said that this is over and above the pay they get, and sometimes it's too much:

*Li ninnutaw hi li jagħmlu ħafna għall-flus. Fis-sens huma għandhom il-paga. Mill-paga ma jonfqu xejn dawn. Imbagħad eżempju ... jien naf ... ikun ġej il-*birthday *tat-tfal tagħhom, jgħidulna tistgħu tagħtuni xi ħaġa, xi flus eżempju, għax it-tifel għalaq żmienu. U ma titlobx lin-nanna biss, titlob lilna kollha, lill-*family *kollha.*	What we notice is that they do a lot for money. In a sense, they have their pay. They don't need to spend anything from their pay. Then, for example … I don't know … when it's their children's birthdays, they ask us if we can give them something, some money, for example, because their child is celebrating their birthday. And they don't just ask my grandma, they ask all of us, the whole family.

4.6.1 "They come here to earn money"

Tania, Edward, Rachel, Miriam, Dorothy and Michaela explained how their carers chose to work extra for additional payment. Some of the carers opted to work during their off days, or for example only took twelve hours off instead of the full twenty-four hours. Tania said, "*Ma tiħux* off. *Kienet qaltilna, iva. Għax huma jkunu ħsiebhom biex jaqilgħu l-flus."* (She wouldn't take the day off. She had told us, yes. Because they think about making more money). Others preferred working on feasts and public holidays. Some also opted not to take their annual leave entitlement and be paid for it instead. Sharon and Jade's carer also did extra work, generally cleaning services, during her daily break to earn more money.

Abigail noticed a difference in carers with and without families—those with families were more careful about keeping their job: *"*they came here to Malta to earn money for the family, so their job *huwa sacru sant għalihom"* (their job is sacred for them). Making money was important, since as Dorothy pointed out, "*Faqar kbir għandhom hux"* (They're really poor). Eve felt that they should have provided the carer with better accommodation, but "*għaliha ma kinitx problema. Għax imbagħad tinduna kemm ... biex jiġu hawn dawn il-ħajja tagħhom, bilfors hija differenti"* (for her it wasn't a problem. Because then you realise how… for them to come here, their life must surely be different).

4.7 CULTURE

Commonalities and differences in culture were also mentioned in the interviews. Participants underlined that their relationship with the carers was based on the cultural aspects they both shared, such as their religion, their love for their family, among others. Eve shared how her family's first carer like them was into husbandry. In fact, she was allowed to plant and cultivate Filipino long beans in the family's field. Tania mentioned that on her birthday, their carer would organise a party and would invite not only her friends, but also her and her siblings. The next sections will explore different aspects which had both a positive and negative impact on the relationships with the live-in carers.

4.7.1 Ethnicity

Ethnic differences were also touched upon in the discussions with the participants. Only one participant mentioned that the skin colour of the carer was initially a cause of concern for her grandparents. Abigail underlined that the younger generations were less impacted by the difference in skin colour:

U anke eżempju, peress li n-nanna tiegħi naqra xiħa, u anke n-nannu, l-Indjana, peress li naqra skura qisha … mhux dan ta, għax huma xorta jħobbuha u hekk. Imma eżempju n-nannu ma jkunx iridha tmisslu l-ikel, għax jitqażżiżha jgħid insomma. Imma lilna, il-ġenerazzjoni tagħna ma tagħmlilniex differenza. Eżempju lil dan [it-tifel ta' Abigail] *taqbdu, tbusu … jien mhux ħa toqgħod tagħmilli differenza għax naqra skura jew hekk taf kif.*	And even for example, since my grandma is a bit old, and even my grandpa, the Indian carer, since she is a bit daker like … not like because they still love her and what not. But for example, my grandpa doesn't want her to touch his food because he says he is turned off. But for us, our generation, it doesn't make a difference. For example she hugs, and kisses my son … it's not going to make a difference to me because she's a bit darker and what not you know.

On the other hand, Miriam, who acknowledged that she is "in a position of power in the relationship with the carer", concluded that it is "the value of the person" that matters:

> I wouldn't say '*dik Filippina*' (she's a Filipino) and I would … like *nagħmel li rrid biha* (do what I want with her) or this sort of thing. You know like she's my employee, I'm gonna make her do these things. Because I've had, and I've heard of like carers who are made to do gardening, who are made to wash cars, and who are made to do a lot of other things. No, we respected the fact that she's here and trusting her actually with a lot of things and that she should be respected as a person.

A few of the participants highlighted that in the end, it boils down to the character of the individual, rather than their cultural background. For instance, when commenting on her carer's work ethic, Michaela said:

Imma once *mbagħad tkun ilha biżżejjed hawn, tidra l-kultura tagħna u aħna nidraw il-kultura tagħhom.* So *qisek fil-verità, ma nistax ngħid li Malti u barrani, wieħed agħar mill-ieħor, għax fil-verità ġieli ħa ssib Maltin li mhux se jaqduk sew xejn. Ġieli kellna carers tal-gvern li jagħmlu xogħol veru ta' kafkaf, ħeqq u ġieli kellna barranin.* So*, ma naħsibx li hija kwistjoni ta' minn fejn int, naħseb hija kwistjoni tal-persuna u ... milli dan. Ovvjament ikun hemm dawn il-*cultures *differenti, imma kif tneħħi l-kultura ... jiġifieri dawn il-formalitajiet, ma nħossx li hemm differenza.*	But once they've been here long enough, they get used to our culture, and we get used to theirs. So it's like in reality, I can't say that a Maltese person or a foreigner is better or worse than the other, because in reality sometimes you'll find Maltese people who won't serve you well at all. We've had government carers who did a really poor job, and we've also had foreign carers who did the same. So, I don't think it's a matter of where someone is from, I think it depends on the individual. Of course, there are different cultures, but once you set aside cultural differences and formalities … I don't feel like there's much of a difference.

Belle respected their carer for her work ethic and emphasised that a person's origin does not really matter. Rather, she pointed out that what truly makes a difference is an individual's attitude toward their job, and "not necessarily *għax tkun Maltija tkun aħjar*" (not necessarily because you are Maltese, you are better).

Jane also commented on how, culturally, the carer is 'obviously' different, having been raised in the Philippines, just as Maltese people retain their cultural identity even when living abroad. However, beyond that, she feels that "*qisha Maltija, ħa ngħid hekk*" (she is like a Maltese person, so to speak), highlighting how well the carer has integrated into their daily life, and the fact that they accept her for who she is.

4.7.2 Language

Good communication was a prerequisite for many of the participants when it came to choosing their family's live-in carer. Some participants mentioned that they experienced challenges when it came to communication. Eve pointed out that the language barrier led to some challenges, as her mother sometimes struggled to understand the carer. Eve also mentioned how her mother only had a basic, primary-level understanding of English. Jane commented that they were lucky that their carer understood some Maltese, and that her aunty could communicate in English. She mentioned how she knows of cases where either the person receiving care, or the carer themselves, did not have a good command of the English

language, which proved to be a problem because the elderly and their carer could not communicate.

Michaela underlined that carers working with the elderly need to at least have a basic level of English. While she felt that they're "lucky" that their carer communicates very well in English, they had a hard time communicating with relievers who replaced their carer:

> Unfortunately*, eħe jkun hawn carers li ma jkunux jafu Ingliż. Relievers li ġibna ... nassigurak li anke jien bdejt inbati biex nispjega ruħi. Ma nistax nimmaġina kif dawn il-*carers *ikunu ma' anzjan ngħid id-dritt. Naħseb hemm naqra nuqqas ta'* checking *ta' kemm vera taf Ingliż. Issa naf li ħa jimplementaw xi ħaġa, però ma nimmaġinax carer man-nanniet tiegħi li ma tafx Ingliż. Ġa li ma tafx Malti ... hija ... imma Ingliż, għal grazzja t'Alla, ħafna anzjani jafuh. Imqar* basic words.
>
> Unfortunately, yes there are carers who cannot speak English. Some of the relievers we hired … I assure you that even I had a hard time to explain myself. I cannot imagine how these carers work with an elderly person to tell you the truth. I think their level of English needs to be assessed. I know that they're (the authorities) going to implement something, but I cannot imagine a carer who is taking care of my grandparents who cannot speak English. They already can't speak Maltese … but English thank God, a lot of the elderly people can communicate in that language. At least basic words.

Michaela also commented on the fact that as a Maltese speaking family, they needed to speak English at home when the carer came. Belle also commented on the adjustment she needed to make, not only to get used to the carer, but also to speak in English at her grandparents' house, "*Għax niftakar l-ewwel darba li mort u kienet hemm. Qisek qed tara din il-persuna barranija,* I mean *ma tifhimx Malti, mhux għax għandi problema nitkellem bl-Ingliż, imma qisek tmur għand in-nanna kulħadd bil-Malti, taf kif?*" (Because I remember the first time I went to my grandma's house and she was there … It was like you're meeting this foreign person, I mean she doesn't understand Maltese, not because I have an issue with speaking in English, but when you go to grandma's, everyone speaks in Maltese, you know?).

Both Eve and Tania mentioned that their carers were learning Maltese. Tania's carer attended private lessons on her day off, and Tania would help her with her homework. Eve's second carer was learning Maltese by watching television daily with Eve's mother.

4.7.3 Food

Food was also often mentioned during the interviews. Some of the participants mentioned that they had a slight issue with the smell of the food their carers cooked for themselves, but they found ways around it. Belle said, "it's not a big deal", and Michaela said "*dawn affarijiet li qisek fil-verità, jgħaddu vera* easily*"* (these are things which in reality do not count that much).

The main concern with food was that the carers did not cook the food their family members liked, or which could be detrimental to their health, as in the case of oily food. Having said that, many of the participants mentioned how their carers either knew how to cook Maltese dishes, or they learnt along the way and so they didn't really have an issue. For example, Sharon said that their carer, who had lived in Malta for some time, told her "I can do anything*. Brodu qaltli. Bil-Malti qaltli ta, Brodu!"* (I can do anything. *Brodu* (broth) she told me in Maltese, broth!). Rachel also said that her family's carer learnt to cook traditional Maltese dishes; *"Illum tgħallmet tagħmel qarabagħli mimli, il-qassata tal-qargħa aħmar, u tagħmilha tajba. Jien naf ... soppa, brodu ... hekk, minn kollox"* (Nowadays she learnt how to cook stuffed marrows, pumpkin pie, and they really taste good. I don't know … soups, broth … like a bit of everything). Miriam added that while her mother still has some issues about certain food the carer cooks, her children love it - a "*xalata*" (feast) for her kids.

4.7.4 Religion

Religion was also discussed by some of the participants. Eve mentioned how her mother had an issue with their first carer who was not Roman Catholic and who would refuse to attend mass with her. In Abigail's case, both their carers were Catholic, which was a bonus. At the same time, she pointed out that they had different traditions when it came to Easter and Christmas.

Jade also felt that the fact that her grandmother's carer was Catholic "helped" get the carer accepted by the latter. As she pointed out, "*ma nafx kemm kienet taċċettaha mhux l-istess reliġjon*" (I don't know whether she would have accepted her if she had been practising a different religion). Jane also said that for her personally, religion doesn't make a difference, but for her aunt it was important.

4.8 FOREIGNERS IN MALTA

At different points of the interviews, a number of participants also touched upon the local economic climate, particularly the growing need of foreign workers in Malta. Dorothy expressed how contrary to public sentiment, she feels that the latter are needed in Malta:

> *Ħa ngħidlek, jgħidu x'jgħidu n-nies, ma nistgħux ngħaddu mingħajrhom ta.* And it's not true that they are taking our jobs. *Jien għalija mhux veru, għax ħadd ma jrid jagħmlu dan ix-xogħol* [...] *ħadd ma jrid jagħmlu. Naħseb mingħajrhom ... jikkrolla l-pajjiż jiena naħseb. Forsi hawn* too much *... u wkoll tgħallmu, jiġifieri mhux ħa joqogħdu jaħdmulek biċ-ċiċri, u hekk għandu jkun ... għax hija ...* human right *dak ... li jekk inti qed tagħmel xogħol, għandek titħallas daqs li kieku wieħed minn tal-pajjiż hux, mhux veru?*
>
> Let me tell you, whatever people say, we cannot do anything without them (economically speaking). And it's not true that they are taking our jobs. For me it isn't true, because no Maltese person wants to do this job […] no one. I think without them … the country would collapse, that's what I think. Maybe there are too many … and they also learnt their rights, so they're not going to work for peanuts, and that's how it should be, because that, that's a human right … that if you are working, you should be paid just as much as a local, isn't that so?

Jane also commented on the need of foreign workers in Malta, saying how her aunt would probably have had to be sent to a long-term care facility if it were not for the possibility of hiring a foreign live-in carer. She also commented on the unfortunate reality that foreign workers are not treated fairly, while at the same time, it is very difficult to recruit a Maltese person for the job. In this paradoxical situation, she struggles to understand how racist individuals deal with the issue: *"X'tagħmel allura dawn li jkunu razzisti, x'jagħmlu jgħidulhom tidħlux?* You know *ma ssibx. Ma ssibx ... għax il-Maltin ma nafx fejn qegħdin jien, ma nafx"* (So what do these people who are racist do? Do they tell them that they cannot go in their homes? You know, you won't find … you won't find … because I don't know where the Maltese are, I really don't know).

Rachel also expressed her concerns about the racism mobilised against foreign workers in Malta, saying how she prefers to stay clear from social media to avoid seeing hateful comments. Racism is something that worries her, and she also commented on how people who hold such sentiments fail to recognise that foreign workers are needed, as certain jobs

would not be done without them. She also remarked that when foreign workers break the law, these should be seen as exceptions rather than the norm:

> *U ħafna minnhom ma jaqilgħux inkwiet. Dan ikun hemm il-waħdiet, bħal ma hawn il-Maltin. U bħal ma Maltin li marru l-Awstralja u qalgħu l-inkwiet hemm. Imma jkunu waħdiet ... dawk l-eluf kollha. Le, naħseb aħna l-Maltin, kemm ngħidu li m'aħniex razzisti, naħseb ħafna minna razzisti.*
>
> And the majority of them do not cause any trouble. There will be one every now and then, just as in the case of the Maltese. And just like some Maltese troublemakers who went to Australia and caused trouble there. But they are one offs … out of thousands. No, I think that the Maltese, no matter how much we claim not to be racist, I think most of us are racist.

4.8.1 Agency

Some of the participants also mentioned how their live-in carers had agency. Eve mentioned how foreign workers know their rights, and that they make informed decisions. Tania and Edward also commented that they know how things should be done since they were familiar with local legislation. Edward maintained that they derive this information from the Filipino community in Malta: "*Għax huma jitkellmu bejniethom. Komunità* informative *ħafna xħin jiġi għas-si u n-no, ma kien jfallilhom xejn"* (Because they communicate between themselves. It's a very informed community where legislation is concerned, and they don't miss a thing). Jane, who had worked in a local hospital where different groups of migrant workers find employment, mentioned that Indian nationals were more "submissive", which could lead to their being exploited because "*iktar jagħmlu bihom li jridu bħal speċi*" (people do what they want with them). However, she said that Filipinos are different, because "they know their rights".

Sharon and Jade confessed that the live-in carer they had hired had plenty of options to choose from when they were trying to recruit her. Since she was good, "*kulħadd jagħmlilha l-ilma jiżfen"* (everyone bent over backwards for her) so that she would choose them. Sharon described the ordeal as "*tar-redikolaġni"* (ridiculous). Jade explained that the carer chose them, rather than the other way round. Both commented on how their carer laid down her terms and they had to "*kellna naċċettaw kollox*" (accept everything), especially after what they had been through to find one. The carer not only determined the salary, but she also

asked for part of the salary to be paid in cash, so that only the minimum wage was declared for tax purposes.

In some instances, the live-in carers' agency was not always welcomed. Both Sharon and Dorothy mentioned that on some occasions, they had issues with their carers taking decisions independently, particularly regarding their relatives' health, such as when they administered medication without consulting a medical professional or the family members.

4.8.2 Community

The participants also highlighted that there was a sense of community especially among Filipino workers in Malta. For instance, Eve, Sharon and Rachel mentioned that their carers attended prayer groups or masses, which were organised by their respective ethnic community. Belle also mentioned how her family's carer attended mass every week together with members of her family who were also living in Malta. Sharon said that in some parishes, there are masses organised specifically for the Filipino and the Indian communities. She felt that this is important as *"jekk ma timxix hekk, inkella jkun hemm ir*-rifts*. U meta jkun hemm ir*-rifts*, imbagħad ikun hemm* anger issues *... ħaġa* leads to another*"* (if you don't allow this communion, there would be rifts. And where there are rifts, there are anger issues … one thing leads to the other).

Tania and Rachel also mentioned how their carers would organise events or gatherings with their friends or family members who also lived in Malta. Tania stated that their carer had friends living close by, and they would sometimes meet in her sister's home, which was possible since her sister didn't have any other family living with her. Sharon and Jade declared that their carer, *"tant integrat*" (integrated so well), that she helped in organising bingo in the local parish.

Michaela maintained that her family's carer had noticed a change in the local community as more foreigners started living in Malta. As she pointed out, she felt more at home since she was not the only foreigner living in the area.

4.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the main findings emerging from the interviews with the participants of this study. The following chapter will present a discussion and analysis of these findings.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter interprets the main findings that emerged from this study in relation to the research questions and the literature review. As discussed in Chapter 4, a number of recurring themes came up in the interviews. These included:

a. the practical challenges linked with finding a live-in carer;
b. 'part of the family' vs employee;
c. money, and;
d. cultural differences.

This chapter will critically analyse how these main themes intersect with discourse on perceptions, power and belonging inherent in care relationships.

5.2 GENDER IMPLICATIONS

While all the carers employed happened to be women (section 4.2.3), there were different reasons as to why this was the case. As outlined in Section 4.2.2, all the participants of this study required a carer for a female relative. In cases where a male relative required care, a female relative also needed care. Therefore, a predominant reason for requesting or finding a female carer was the fact that the persons being cared for were also women. This was in line with similar studies which found that patients prefer to be cared for by health professionals of the same gender (Sharifi et al., 2021).

Having said that, the participants' responses demonstrate that they believe that women make better carers. The participants never considered hiring a male carer (Section 4.2.3). Indeed, the act of caring is "heavily gendered" and is primarily considered to be women's work (Anderson, 2000, p. 115). Therefore, the automatic assumption of recruiting a woman as a carer was unsurprising, reflecting deep-rooted cultural and social norms that associate caregiving with women (Bubeck, 1995). Societal expectations and gender roles position women as the primary caregivers for older relatives (Simmons et al., 2022).

As discussed in Section 4.4.1, the participants felt duty bound to take care of their older relatives, particularly parents. With the increase in women's participation in the labour market, Maltese women are resorting to the paid help provided by migrant women (see

Section 1.2). This '*servant problem'*, as Cox (2006) refers to it, is a recurring issue rooted in the global social order. In Malta, we are more likely to refer to these as helpers - they help Maltese women shoulder some of the burden linked with caring. As Maltese society continues to shift away from family-based caregiving, demand for caregiving services, which in most cases are provided by migrant workers, has increased. Therefore, as discussed earlier in section 2.2.3, with the growing reliance on migrant care labour - which reflects broader global care chains - caregiving responsibilities are being shared with women from economically disadvantaged countries.

5.3 DEMAND AND SUPPLY

As discussed earlier (Section 1.2), Malta is heavily dependent on foreign care workers in providing elderly care, an issue raised by the participants (Section 4.3.2). The low supply of carers leads to undue stress and pressures on both institutions providing care for the elderly, but more so for families. Finding a carer is fraught with issues (see Section 4.3.2). The bureaucratic processes and expenses involved make it extremely difficult for individuals living in Malta to recruit a live-in care worker, especially if the latter is a TCN. As discussed in Section 2.2.1, power is sometimes exercised through administrative procedures to discipline and control society, particularly through the implementation of bureaucratic processes making things harder for certain groups. In this regard, the recent clamp down on the provision of job permits for TCNs is not only affecting migrants seeking employment, but also Maltese families recruiting live-in carers for family members.

As a result, many are left with no choice but to rely on agencies, adding to the cost. In this regard, one must also consider the fact that hiring a live-in carer is not an option available to every family, particularly since the service is still relatively expensive. While the government does subsidise a substantial amount of the carer's wage, the balance payable may still not be affordable for those with minimum pensions (Vassallo, 2018). The participants commented on how recruiting or employment agencies defrauded the foreign workers they brought over to Malta (Section 4.3.2). Vassallo and Debono (2020) described these agencies as "exploiters" (p. 203). Recruitment agencies have also made headlines in Malta for cheating TCNs of thousands of Euros, abusing their vulnerable status as migrants looking for jobs in Europe (Carabott, 2022; Ellul, 2023).

Given the limited availability of local live-in carers and the bureaucratic and financial challenges associated with recruiting foreign ones, it is unsurprising that participants often found themselves in what they described as “desperate” or “nightmare” situations (Section 4.3.2). The dearth in live-in carers meant that the employers who paid the most and provided the best working conditions could chip into this limited pool of human resources. To retain the carer, participants were more likely to give in to the demands of the carer, knowing that they would find it difficult to replace them with another if they left. This led to more lucrative employment contracts for the carer (Section 4.8.1). This reversal of power hierarchies highlights how structural shortages in care provision can inadvertently empower workers.

Therefore, one may question whether the state should assume greater responsibility in assisting local families to find viable care options and support the process of recruiting a carer. The lack of carers makes it challenging for families to manage this on their own, despite the fact that by opting for home-based care, they are effectively alleviating some of the burden from state-run elderly care services (Cutajar et al., 2025). Yet it seems that the main alternative lies with agencies or other intermediaries, whose priorities may not necessarily be to ensure accessible and affordable solutions for families. This dynamic raises important questions about equity, accessibility, and the role of the state in regulating and supporting the care sector, particularly as demographic pressures continue to mount.

5.4 NEGOTIATING POWER

Throughout the interviews, participants shared mixed feelings about their relationship with their live-in carers. Most participants expressed how they considered their carers to be part of the family (Section 4.4.3), but at the same time they acknowledged the importance of maintaining certain boundaries with their carers, recognising that the relationship was ultimately rooted in a transactional agreement (Section 4.5.2). These perceptions provide a better understanding of the strong interdependence in care relationships (McDaniel & A. Pisani, 2012), whereby families need caregivers to provide care to those near and dear to them, while live-in carers need their employers as they navigate employment in foreign countries as migrant workers (Cohen-Mansfield & Golander, 2023).

5.4.1 Employer's Power

The participants' responses in this research clearly illustrate how power in live-in care relationships is fluid and dynamic. The participants in this study acknowledged that carers come to Malta to earn money (Section 4.6.1), demonstrating the carer's dependency on their employment which puts employers in a position of power. Some of the participants also acknowledged the sacrifice the carers made when they left their families and country behind to earn their living (Section 4.4.2). This narrative, in which money is central to the relationship, underscores the employer's power over the carer—not only through the carer's economic dependence, but also through the employer's broader control over the relationship. This power can be exercised in multiple ways, particularly given that the carer's place of residence is also their place of work (Regev-Messalem, 2020).

5.4.2 Carer's Power

On the other hand, participants acknowledged their dependency on the carer, often expressing a sense of gratefulness for their service (Section 4.4.3). Carers had power over the person they took care of, family members and the space they lived in. Families often found themselves with limited control over the space where they 'worked', some fearing abuse or neglect of the person they were in charge of. In such situations, caregivers held both practical and emotional power, as their presence became essential yet difficult to monitor or replace (Regev-Messalem, 2020). At the same time, some Maltese families prefer hiring foreign carers due to concerns about keeping family secrets and goings-on safe from public scrutiny (Cutajar et al., 2025). This also highlights how, at the micro-level, carers can hold a degree of power within the private domestic space.

5.4.3 Interdependent Care

Therefore, the participants in this study clearly recognised the codependent nature of their relationship with their live-in carers. While they acknowledged that carers hold a certain degree of power at the micro-level within the household, they themselves benefit from macro-level privilege as citizens who can access affordable labour through the globalised care market (Regev-Messalem, 2020). These findings thus portray a relationship that is

"deeply interdependent" (Regev-Messalem, 2020, p. 9), shaped by both emotional dynamics and structural inequalities.

This was evident in the way participants made efforts to support their carers and make them feel at home (Section 4.4.3), extending gestures of goodwill that go beyond the terms of their contractual agreements. As discussed in Section 2.2.2, emotional bonds are a distinct feature of care work, frequently resulting in relationships that resemble patronage more than purely contractual arrangements. Notably, this dynamic applies not only to the carers but also to the employers themselves. For instance, Tania and Rachel shared how they allowed their carers to organise events with friends in their relative's homes (Section 4.8.2). Abigail also shared how her family gave monetary gifts to their carers on special occasions (Section 4.6). Eve described how her family allowed their carer to cultivate Filipino long beans in their family's field (Section 4.7). Sharon and Jade also mentioned how they would financially compensate their carer for performing cleaning services which she opted to do during her time off. Tania helped her family's carer with her homework when she was learning Maltese (Section 4.7.2). These are some examples of how participants in this study sought ways to empower their carers on a micro-level. Furthermore, the fact that some participants acknowledged both their reliance on foreign workers in Malta and the issue of racism (Section 4.8), reflects an awareness of the unequal circumstances and an intention to foster a more balanced relationship despite these challenges.

5.5 ETHNICITY, STEREOTYPES AND RACISM

As discussed in section 4.2.3, all but one of the live-in carers recruited by the participants of this study were Filipinos. It seems that for the Maltese, Filipino is synonymous with live-in carers. Some of the participants stated that they specifically wanted a Filipino carer, while others took it for granted that the carer would be a Filipino national. This trend is synonymous with the "superworker" stereotype of Filipinos across the Global North (Guevarra, 2014, p. 143), particularly the perception that Filipinos possess "naturally caring" abilities, stems from their strong family values and work ethic (Guevarra, 2014, p. 140).

As stated earlier (Section 2.2.4), research has shown that the demand for particular domestic workers is also influenced by racial factors. Filipinos are globally marketed through

racialised and gendered tropes, as both state bodies in the Philippines and private employment agencies benefit from the essentialist and racialised discourses which promotes the Philippines as a leader in the global labour export market (Guevarra, 2014).

Vassallo and Debono (2020) also found that the Maltese prefer Filipino women when it comes to the caring professions. Miriam admitted that she specifically sought a Filipino carer because it was the prevailing trend in Malta (Section 4.2.3). The underlying stereotype of the Filipino worker ultimately reinforces an essentialist narrative that associates certain ethnic groups with specific caregiving roles.

Furthermore, while skin colour was explicitly mentioned only once, specifically with reference to the Indian carer (refer to section 4.7.1), it is notable that, despite the fact that both the carers employed by Abigail's family were from Asian countries, the Indian carer was perceived less favourably, particularly due to her darker skin tone. Indeed, as Abigail shared, her grandfather refused to let the Indian carer prepare his food (Section 4.7.1). As discussed earlier (Section 2.3.2), emotions like disgust often play a role in the process of racialisation. Therefore, this behaviour suggests a racial hierarchy (Anderson, 2000), wherein the Filipina carer was ranked higher than the Indian carer.

It is possible that Filipinos are preferred, as their status as the largest group of TCN migrants in Malta (Debono & Vassallo, 2019) has facilitated a process of assimilation into local communities, fostering a sense of familiarity and trust (discussed in more detail in Section 5.7). This nationality preceded South Asians by a number of years, so they are more established as a community in Malta. However, it may also be possible that skin colour positions certain groups of migrants at lower ends of the food chain. Anderson (2000) discusses how in domestic labour, "Filipinas [are] generally at the top and black Africans at the bottom" (p .152).

5.6 CONTACT AND PERCEPTIONS

It was interesting to note that some of the participants brought up the issue of foreigners in Malta, and racism directed towards them (Section 4.8). As the participants pointed out, although the Maltese grumble at the incursion of a foreign workforce, foreign workers are

deemed as essential to the economy. This recognition may stem from their own experiences of relying on migrant labour.

As discussed earlier (Section 2.3.4), Turner et al. (2007) argue that individuals who have more contact with individuals perceived as different from themselves have less implicit attitude bias, as inter-group contact plays a crucial role in mitigating unconscious bias. In the context of this study, the participants felt obliged to their carers; they were influenced by the frequency and intimacy of these interactions within domestic and care settings. Indeed, some participants also remarked that, over time, they came to understand each other's cultures, and that it eventually became more a matter of individual differences than of nationality or ethnicity (Section 4.7.1). These findings are synonymous with other research conducted in Malta, which suggests that racist attitudes in employment relationships tend to diminish over time as colleagues become friends, highlighting how employment can be a fundamental way in which migrants can integrate into Maltese society (Attard et al., 2013).

5.7 FILIPINOS IN MALTA AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

As stated earlier, Filipinos were specifically sought out as live-in carers by the participants in this study (Section 4.2.3). This was also corroborated by other data, specifically data from 2019 which indicates that out of 209 domestic care workers employed in Malta, 174 were from the Philippines (Eurofound, 2020). Furthermore, data from 2020 presented in the Maltese parliament indicates that almost half of the foreign care workers employed in Malta are Filipinos, followed by Indian care workers (Parliament of Malta, 2021). While, as discussed in section 5.5 of this chapter, an ethnic stereotype appears to be at play in the association of Filipinos with caregiving roles, this preference may also indicate that the Maltese associate Filipinos with a particular form of social capital. This gives Filipinos a head start in this sector.

On the other hand, Vassallo and Debono (2020) found that Filipina live-in care workers found the Maltese environment less stressful to integrate into, contrary to literature on the subject from other host states. The main reasons for this include the fact that Malta is predominantly Roman Catholic, as well as the prevalent use of English which facilitates cross cultural communication. Interestingly, the participants of this study also mentioned

language (Section 4.7.2) and religion (Section 4.7.4) as two main factors which helped them to bridge the cultural gap between them and their live-in care workers. As discussed earlier (Section 2.3.3), cultural capital, particularly sharing the same religion, can foster a sense of belonging for migrant groups, playing a key role for migrant inclusion on the part of host communities. The participants in this study highlighted how religion facilitated their carer's inclusion in the community, while they highlighted the importance of supportive communities for migrant groups (Section 4.8.2). On this note, Vassallo and Debono (2020) also found that Filipino community groups and non-governmental organisations [NGOs] are imperative for the integration process of Filipina care workers.

5.8 BRIDGING THE GAP – LANGUAGE, BELONGING & INCLUSION

Several participants mentioned communication barriers. This emerged when the carers lacked basic English language skills (Section 4.7.2). Communication is crucial where care is concerned. When the client and the carer cannot communicate, mistakes happen. This has pushed the government to provide free Maltese language classes for foreign workers working in elderly homes (Magri, 2023). Furthermore, this difficulty has led to a proposal mandating Maltese language proficiency for foreign carers (M. Azzopardi, 2024). Nonetheless, some participants expressed that despite these initiatives, difficulty in communication remained an issue.

Some of the participants underlined that the carers were willing to learn Maltese (Section 4.7.2). Similarly, Vassallo and Debono (2020) observed that many participants in their study had either begun learning Maltese or expressed an intention to do so, recognising that acquiring the local language would support their integration into the host community. After all, language proficiency plays a critical role in the development of social capital and inclusion for migrants in receiving states (Zorlu & Hartog, 2018). This "investment" in committing to learn a host country's language shows the willingness of migrants to increase their cultural capital and improve their social position in a foreign country (B. Norton, 2016, p. 476). The motivation to learn a language often stems from a desire to become more involved in a community, and to foster an increased sense of belonging (Rydell et al., 2025).

On another note, some of the Maltese speaking participants in this study underlined that they had to adjust to speaking English on a daily basis to ensure that the carers felt more included. Therefore, these efforts to improve communication by both the migrant workers and local employers reflected a process of mutual accommodation (Berry, 2011), where cultural differences were acknowledged and embraced, enabling more meaningful interactions between different communities (see Section 2.3.5). This pattern of mutual accommodation was also evident in the participants' references to food, as many carers adapted to preparing traditional Maltese dishes, while some of the participants' and their family members welcomed and appreciated the exchange of cross-country culinary traditions (Section 4.7.3).

5.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented a discussion of the main findings of this research project. The next chapter will conclude this dissertation.

CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this study was to understand perceptions and attitudes of Maltese individuals towards non-Maltese live-in care workers. As the need for foreign help in Malta's care sector continues to grow, this study aimed to better understand relationships between Maltese families and live-in carers employed in private households. Particularly, this study focused on understanding perceptions towards foreign live-in carers, as well as the power dynamics at play in these types of care arrangements. Ultimately, these insights aimed to deepen the understanding of care relationships and how they can influence the inclusion of foreign workers, particularly foreign live-in carers, in Malta.

To achieve these objectives, a qualitative research design was adopted, whereby in-depth interviews were carried out with twelve Maltese nationals who were relatives of persons being cared for by paid non-Maltese live-in care workers. This study is grounded in the ontological stance of social constructivism. By adopting a feminist epistemology and drawing on BFT as a theoretical framework, it enabled a nuanced analysis of the power dynamics involved in this relationship (Collins, 2022). This approach also helped centre the voices of the participants, prioritising the situated knowledge and lived experiences of Maltese nationals (Poole, 2021).

This chapter will conclude this study and present a summary of the main findings. It will also outline the main strengths and limitations of this study and identify recommendations and areas for further research.

6.2 MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study highlight how certain stereotypes around live-in care work prevail, particularly the gender and racial connotations where care work was concerned. This study also shed light on perceptions that TCNs working in Malta are poorer, relatively speaking. The participants of this study acknowledged that their carers deprived themselves of their family in order to earn a more lucrative salary than the one they earned back 'home'. These factors meant that they appreciated more the work they did with their relatives, which was often expressed in monetary gifts and other gestures of goodwill.

As discussed earlier (Section 3.2.3), BFT acknowledges that in a matrix of domination, there are very few complete victims or oppressors, rather everyone experiences a varying degree of disadvantage and privilege due to the multiple systems of oppression which operate in society (Collins, 2022). Indeed, this study shed light on the power dynamics in the live-in care relationship in Malta.

On the one hand, Maltese employers held power stemming from their status as citizens and their social position, which enabled them to afford care. By employing the carers, they enabled them to stay in Malta; if they terminated the contract, this would jeopardise their sojourn here. However, the participants also experienced a form of vulnerability. They had to blindly trust that the carer did not take advantage or abuse of their relatives. As the participants underlined, they had to ensure that the carer was happy with them, otherwise if they left, it meant having to go through the process of finding someone suitable.

This vulnerability in turn empowered live-in carers to make special requests in a market where demand for care exceeds the available supply. At the same time, while live-in carers held powerful positions in domestic spaces, particularly due to the intimate and emotional nature of the labour involved in care work, they also experienced vulnerability as migrant workers in a foreign labour market, as has been underlined.

With time, these *'barranin'* (outsiders) became insiders via caring. Mutually caring for the relatives led to the surmounting of communication and cultural bridges. Both sides learnt to respect each other. For these participants, the carers were no longer outsiders, but more insiders - esteemed family members. As they pointed out, the link with the carer continues even after the relative dies or goes to a home. This made the participants of this study question why some Maltese query the 'incursion' of foreign workers. As they underlined, the economy, families, women especially, need help with their caring responsibilities for their financial and emotional wellbeing. Foreign workers fill the labour shortages across various sectors, especially in the caring professions. Necessity pushed them to question the racist rhetoric which prevails in certain circles, and to welcome these workers.

When it came to the carers, they became steeped in the Maltese culture on an almost 24/7 basis. Those who could not tolerate this constant exposure to a different culture, had to

leave. Those who remained were treated with kid gloves, since good carers were hard to find.

This dissertation confirms the interdependent nature of the relationship inherent in live-in care work, and how the need for care may contribute to the integration of migrant workers in a host society. As the public responsibility of elder and vulnerable care is increasingly transferred to the private domain—where families must find their own care solutions—the reliance on migrant workers becomes more pronounced. This everyday dependence fosters sustained interpersonal contact with foreign carers, which can gradually improve perceptions and attitudes towards migrants. In turn, such interactions contribute to a greater sense of belonging and social inclusion for migrant workers within host societies like Malta (See Attard et al., 2013).

6.3 STRENGTHS & LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

6.3.1 Strengths

Given the limited research on live-in care workers in Malta, this study contributed valuable insights to an existent body of knowledge. Furthermore, adopting a feminist epistemology not only allowed for a more balanced perspective on understanding the relationship between live-in carers and their employers, but also gave space to participants who voiced their concerns on other issues, such as the bureaucratic processes involved with recruiting live-in carers. Furthermore, the absence of a language barrier, since participants could select their preferred language (Maltese or English), facilitated clearer communication and mutual understanding during the interviews.

On another note, all the steps taken in the research process were described in detail to ensure that this study could be followed and assessed by others, thereby supporting its dependability. These efforts also enable readers to evaluate the potential transferability of the findings to similar settings.

6.3.2 Limitations

The researcher's perspective was integral to this study. However, reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. This method allowed for a systematic approach where as the researcher I continually reflected on my own influence on the data and the interpretation process. This dissertation emanates from my own take of this relationship. Other researchers might come to different conclusions. The perusal of the limited local literature on the topic however demonstrates that other researchers came to similar conclusions.

Reflexive thematic analysis promotes transparency and helps to identify and manage biases, ensuring that the themes generated are grounded in the data rather than the researcher's preconceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This is why whatever steps that were taken are meticulously delineated.

Due to timing and wording constraints, the sample size was limited to twelve participants, which means that this study is representative of a few experiences. Nonetheless, it offers valuable insights into the current experiences in settings with non-Maltese live-in care workers, highlighting important realities in an area with limited existent research.

Furthermore, in this study all the participants required care for a female family member, even when the care was required for a male family member. The participants' live-in carers were also women. Therefore, the findings may not fully capture the experiences of male caregivers or male family members in similar situations and any ensuing gender specific issues which might arise.

Additionally, the experiences shared in this study were generally positive, which may have contributed to the participants' willingness to share their stories. The participants of this study shared the challenges which they encountered with their carers, but overall they were generally satisfied with the service provided. Future research should explore a more diverse range of perspectives, including those who may have been overall unsatisfied with the service provided by foreign live-in care workers, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS & AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

6.4.1 Recommendations

This study shed light on the barriers faced by Maltese nationals when recruiting foreign live-in carers. The bureaucratic processes involved make recruiting a foreign live-in carer very difficult. Given that families managing care privately help alleviate pressure on the state to provide elderly care, the government should extend its support beyond wage subsidies to also include assistance with the administrative burden of recruiting carers. While financial aid is already in place, further help with navigating recruitment processes would ease the strain on families and improve access to care. Moreover, the government should also consider the possibility of increasing the financial aid offered as such an initiative would make the service more affordable to a wider portion of the population.

The participants of this study also shed light on potential abuse by recruitment agencies in Malta. There should be more monitoring by the state and relevant authorities on agencies recruiting TCNs to Malta and harsher penalties for those who exploit migrant workers. The lack of regularisation of the provision of such services leaves scope for abuse and exploitation of foreign workers, as well as users of such services. The state should therefore aim to better regulate the provision of such services or provide it itself.

On this note, while this study did not specifically delve into the monitoring of live-in care arrangements, monitoring is required to ensure that live-in carers execute their duties well. Inspections are also required to ensure that employers uphold their obligations, both in terms of working conditions and the state of living conditions. It seems though that no one is taking up the onus of such monitoring, leading to potential abuse on both ends (Cutajar et al., 2025; Vassallo & Debono, 2020). Therefore, greater efforts should be made in this area, as it would promote the overall well-being of both the patient and the carer.

6.4.2 Areas for Further Research

As mentioned in Section 6.3.2 above, it would be interesting to see the male perspective on live-in care arrangements. Specific research focusing on this perspective may raise other interesting findings, particularly where gender and care related stereotypes are concerned.

Furthermore, as mentioned above (Section 6.3.2), the participants of this study also had overall positive experience with their live-in carers. Further research is needed in contexts where live-in care arrangements with foreign nationals may result in negative experiences on both sides.

Further research can be conducted with recruitment agencies. Such research will help identify the extent of abuse, if any, since this is lacking. Such research will also allow better identification of the grey areas in this sector.

6.5 CONCLUDING REMARK

Recognising the contributions of foreign carers not only strengthens social cohesion but also lays the groundwork for a more just and compassionate society—one where diversity is embraced as a strength, not a challenge. As Egan (2021) argues, every individual bears a responsibility in addressing the systemic oppression faced by vulnerable groups, including migrant workers. This process begins with an awareness of one's own privilege and a recognition that such privilege is often sustained through the marginalisation or disadvantage of others.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, S. (2000a). Who Knows? Knowing Strangers and Strangerness. *Australian Feminist Studies, 15*(31), 49–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/713611918

Ahmed, S. (2000b). *Strange encounters : embodied others in post-coloniality.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203349700

Ahmed, S. (2014). *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2nd ed.). Edinburgh University Press.

Akkoyun, D. B., & Dalaman, Z. B. (2024). Exploring the Intersection of Legal Regulations and Feminization of Migration: A Focus on Migrant Women Working in Domestic Services in Türkiye. *Migration and Diversity*, *3*(1), 11–27. https://doi.org/10.33182/md.v3i1.3175

Alba, R., & Foner, N. (2015). *Strangers no more: Immigration and the challenges of integration in North America and Western Europe.* Princeton University Press.

Allport, G. W. (1979). *The Nature of Prejudice: 25th Anniversary Edition.* Basic Books

Anderson, B. (2000). *Doing the Dirty Work? The Global Politics of Domestic Labour.* Zed Books.

Anderson, B. (2001). Why Madam Has So Many Bathrobes: Demand for Migrant Domestic Workers in the EU. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie, 92*(1), 18–26. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9663.00136

Anderson, B. (2007). A Very Private Business: Exploring the Demand for Migrant Domestic Workers. *The European Journal of Women's Studies, 14*(3), 247–264. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506807079013

Anderson, B. (2010). Migration, immigration controls and the fashioning of precarious workers. *Work, Employment and Society, 24*(2), 300–317. https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017010362141.

References

Attard, S., Cassar, C., & Gauci, J. P. (2013). *ENAR shadow report 2012-2103: Racism and related discriminatory practices in employment in Malta.* European Network Against Racism. https://www.pfcmalta.org/uploads/1/2/1/7/12174934/enar-sr2012-2013.pdf

Azzopardi, A., Pisani, M., & Farrugia, P. M. (2021). *Embracing Super-Diverse Communities: 'Migrant Inclusion' on the Maltese Policy Agenda.* https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/bitstream/123456789/94516/1/25%20Migrant%20Inclusion.pdf

Azzopardi, M. (2024, January 5). Foreign carers will need skills card and knowledge of Maltese. *Newsbook*. https://newsbook.com.mt/en/foreign-carers-will-need-skills-card-and-knowledge-of-maltese/

Bai, X., Ramos, M. R., & Fiske, S. T. (2020). As diversity increases, people paradoxically perceive social groups as more similar. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences - PNAS, 117*(23), 12741–12749. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2000333117

Bakan, A. B., & Stasiulis, D. K. (1995). Making the Match: Domestic Placement Agencies and the Racialization of Women's Household Work. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 20*(2), 303–335.

Banaji, M. R., Fiske, S. T., & Massey, D. S. (2021). Systemic racism: individuals and interactions, institutions and society. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications, 6*(82), https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-021-00349-3

Berger, P. L. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge.* Penguin Books.

Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 15 (2), 219–234. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112468475

Berry, J. (2011). Integration and Multiculturalism: Ways towards Social Solidarity. *Papers on Social Representations, 20*(1), 2.1-2.21.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2015). More than Prejudice: Restatement, Reflections, and New Directions in Critical Race Theory. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity, 1*(1), 73–87. https://doi.org/10.1177/2332649214557042

Bonnici, J. (2021, June 26). 10 Days Or You're Out: Non-EU Workers Are Being Kicked Out Of Malta Over Slight Delays In Finding New Work. *Lovin Malta*. https://lovinmalta.com/news/10-days-or-youre-out-non-eu-workers-are-being-kicked-out-of-malta-over-slight-delays-in-finding-new-work/

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 11*(4), 589–597. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806

Bubeck, D. E. (1995). *Care, Gender, and Justice.* Oxford University Press.

Buttigieg, S. C., Agius, K., Pace, A., & Cassar, M. (2018). The Integration of Immigrant Nurses at the Workplace in Malta: A Case Study. *International Journal of Health, Migration and Social Care, 14*(3), 269-289. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJMHSC-06-2017-0024

Carabott, S. (2022, October 24). Workers promised application 'fast-track' if they pay thousands. *Times of Malta*. https://timesofmalta.com/article/workers-promised-application-fasttrack-pay-thousands.989681

Carabott, S. (2024, August 21). Lawyers urge Identità: 'Halt policy change harming TCNs seeking work in Malta'. *Times of Malta*. https://timesofmalta.com/article/lawyers-urge-identita-halt-policy-change-harming-tcns.1097009

Cassar, S. (2019). *Pakistani Nurses Working at Mater Dei Hospital: A Case Study [Master's thesis, University of Malta]*. OAR@UM. https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/50889

Castles, S., Haas, H. d., & Miller, M. J. (2020). *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World (6th ed.).* Bloomsbury Academic.

Cauchi, A. (2018). *Labour immigration of third-country nationals to Malta: a critical appraisal of the current regulatory framework [Master's thesis, University of Malta*]. OAR@UM. https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar//handle/123456789/38712

Clemons, K. M. (2019, August 28). *Black Feminist Thought and Qualitative Research in Education.* Oxford Research Encyclopedia for Education. Retrieved October 19, 2024 from https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.1194

Cohen-Mansfield, J., & Golander, H. (2023). Bound in an Imbalanced Relationship: Family Caregivers and Migrant Live-In Care-Workers of Frail Older Persons in Israel. *Qualitative Health Research, 33*(12), 1116–1130. https://doi.org/10.1177/10497323231186108

Collins, P. H. (2022). *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (30th anniversary ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003245650

Cox, R. (2006). *The Servant Problem: Domestic Employment in a Global Economy.* I.B. Tauris.

Crenshaw, K. (2015, September 24). Why intersectionality can't wait. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-theory/wp/2015/09/24/why-intersectionality-cant-wait/

Cutajar, J. (2021). The imbrication of gender and nationality where the pay gap is concerned: the case in Malta. In A. Ssjostedt, K. Giritli- Nygren, & M. Fotaki (Eds.), *Working Life and Gender Inequality: Intersectional Perspectives and the Spatial Practice of Peripheralization* (pp. 135-155). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Cutajar, J., Tabone, V., Vella, J., Gravina, J., & Bondin, K. (2025, March 24). *Key Findings from the Mobilecare Project* [Public talk & Panel discussion]. Inequality and discrimination in Swedish elderly care work, University of Malta.

De Sousa, I., & Varcoe, C. (2022). Centering Black feminist thought in nursing praxis. *Nursing Inquiry*, *29*(e12473). https://doi.org/10.1111/nin.12473.

Debono, M. (2021). Migrants and the challenge of decent work in Malta. *e-Revista Internacional de la Protección Social, 1*(2), 272 - 293. https://dx.doi.org/10.12795/e-RIPS.2021.i02.12

Debono, M., & Vassallo, M. T. (2019). An Analysis of Working Conditions of Filipinos in Malta. *European Scientific Journal, 15*(26), 64-88. https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2019.v15n26p64

Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S., Giardina, M. D., & Cannella, G. S. (Eds.). (2023). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

DeVault, M. L., & Gross, G. (2012). Feminist Qualitative Interviewing: Experience, Talk, and Knowledge. In S.N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis* (2nd ed.). (pp. 206-236). SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483384740

Dovidio, J. F., Love, A., Schellhaas, F. M., & Hewstone, M. (2017). Reducing intergroup bias through intergroup contact: Twenty years of progress and future directions. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations, 20*(5), 606–620. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430217712052

Egan, M. S. (2021). Structural Injustice and Labour Migration – From Individual Responsibility to Collective Action. *Theoria, 87*(5), 1153–1174. https://doi.org/10.1111/theo.12335

EIGE. (2019). *Gender Equality Index 2019: Work-Life Balance.* Publications office of the European Union. https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/gender-equality-index-2019-work-life-balance?language_content_entity=en

EIGE. (2021). *Gender inequalities in care and consequences for the labour market.* Publications office of the European Union. https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/20204948_mh0220888enn_pdf.pdf

EIGE. (2023). *Gender Equality Index 2023: Malta*. Publications office of the European Union. https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2023/country/MT

El-Shaarawi, N., & Larchanché, S. (2022). Introduction. In N. El-Shaarawi, & S. Larchanché (Eds.), *Migration and Health: Challenging the Borders of Belonging, Care and Policy* (pp. 1-26). Berghan Books. https://doi.org/10.3167/9781800735019

Ellul, D. (2023, June 13). Foreign workers fleeced by agencies, but Identity Malta can do nothing about it. *Times of Malta*. https://timesofmalta.com/article/foreign-workers-fleeced-agencies-identity-malta-nothing.1037057

Ellul, D. (2024, April 30). 'Racist' and 'repugnant': NGOs react to Justin Schembri's 'Indian' comment. *Times of Malta*. https://timesofmalta.com/article/racist-repugnant-ngos-react-justin-schembri-indian-comment.1091748

Eurofound. (2020). *Long-term care workforce: Employment and working conditions.* Publications Office of the European Union. https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/publications/2020/long-term-care-workforce-employment-and-working-conditions

European Commission. (2021). *Long-term care report – Trends, challenges and opportunities in an ageing society. Volume II, Country profiles*. Publications Office of the European Union. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2767/183997

European Commission. (2024). *Flash Eurobarometer 539 - Public opinion in the EU regions. January - February 2024. National Report: Malta.* Publications office of the European Union. https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3218

Eurostat. (2024, March 7). *How many children were born in the EU in 2022?* https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20240307-1

Farrugia, C. (2018). *Migrant Care Workers and Maltese Older Persons in Long Term Care Homes: Experiences, Attitudes and Relationships [Master's thesis, University of Malta]*. OAR@UM. https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/40377

García-Cid, A., Gómez-Jacinto, L., Hombrados-Mendieta, I., Millán-Franco, M., & Moscato, G. (2020). Discrimination and Psychosocial Well-Being of Migrants in Spain: The Moderating Role of Sense of Community. *Frontiers in Psychology, Frontiers in Psychology, 11*(2235). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.02235

Glesne, C. (2016). *Becoming Qualitative Researchers - An Introduction* (5th ed.). Pearson.

Greenwald, A. G., & Banaji, M. R. (1995). Implicit social cognition: Attitudes, self-esteem, and stereotypes. *Psychological Review, 102*(1), 4–27. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.102.1.4

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 105-117). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Guevarra, A. R. (2014). Supermaids: The Racial Branding of Global Filipino Care Labour. In B. Anderson, & I. Shutes (Eds.), *Migration and Care Labour* (pp. 130–150). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137319708_8

Gündüz, Z. Y. (2013). The feminization of migration: Care and the new emotional imperialism. *Monthly Review, 65*(7), 32–43. https://doi.org/10.14452/MR-065-07-2013-11_3

Gutierrez-Rodriguez, E. (2014). Domestic work–affective labor: On feminization and the coloniality of labor. *Women's Studies International Forum, 46*, 45–53. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2014.03.005

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575-599. https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066

Harding, S. (1991). *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives.* Cornell University Press.

Henry, G. T. (2009). Practical Sampling. In L. Bickman, & D.J. Rog (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of applied social research methods* (2nd ed.) (pp. 77 – 105). SAGE.

Hesse-Biber, S. N. (Ed.). (2014). *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071909911

Hochschild, A. R. (2000). Global care chains and emotional surplus value. In W. Hutton, & A. Giddens (Eds.), *On the edge: Living with global capitalism* (pp. 120 - 146). Vintage Books.

Hochschild, A. R. (2003). Love and Gold. In B. Ehrenreich, & A. R. Hochschild (Eds.), *Global woman : nannies, maids, and sex workers in the new economy* (pp. 15 - 30). Metropolitan Books.

Hochschild, A. R. (2012). *The managed heart commercialization of human feeling.* University of California Press.

Holicza, P., & Stone, A. M. (2016). Beyond the headlines: Economic realities of migration and the labour market in Malta. *Journal of International Studies, 9*(3), 88–98. https://doi.org/10.14254/2071-8330.2016/9-3/7

International Labour Organization. (2015). *ILO Global estimates of migrant workers: results and methodology. Special focus on migrant domestic workers.* International Labour Office, Department of Statistics. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_436343.pdf

International Labour Organization. (2018). *Care Work and Care Jobs: For the Future of Decent Work.* International Labour Office. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/%40publ/documents/publication/wcms_633135.pdf

International Labour Organization. (2021). *Making Decent Work a Reality for Domestic Workers: Progress and Prospects Ten Years after the Adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).* International Labour Office. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_protect/%40protrav/%40travail/documents/publication/wcms_802551.pdf

International Labour Organization. (2024). *From global care crisis to quality care at home: The case for including domestic workers in care policies and ensuring their rights at work.* ILO Policy Brief. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_protect/%40protrav/%40travail/documents/publication/wcms_916326.pdf

Jonsson, J. O., Kalter, F., & Tubergen, F. v. (2018). Studying Integration: Ethnic Minority and Majority Youth in Comparative Perspective. In F. Kalter, J. O. Jonsson, F. v. Tubergen, & A. Heath (Eds.), *Growing up in Diverse Societies The Integration of the Children of Immigrants in England, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden* (pp. 1-39). Oxford University Press.

JRS Malta, aditus foundation, & Integra Foundation. (2016). *Dari? Refugee voices on making Malta home.* https://integrafoundation.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/dari-joint-publication-pisani.pdf

Kacen, L., & Chaitin, J. (2006). “The Times They Are a Changing”: Undertaking Qualitative Research in Ambiguous, Conflictual, and Changing Contexts. *The Qualitative Report*, *11*(2), 209–228. 10.46743/2160-3715/2006.1671

Kelly, S. E. (2010). Qualitative Interviewing Techniques and Styles. In I. Bourgeault, R. Dingwall, & R. De Vries (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Methods in Health Research* (pp. 307-326). SAGE Publications, Limited. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446268247

Kim, Y. Y. (2017, August 22). *Cross-Cultural Adaptation*. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication. Retrieved Decemeber 7, 2024 from https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.21

King, R. (2009). Geography, Islands and Migration in an Era of Global Mobility. *Island Studies Journal, 4(1),* 53–84. https://doi.org/10.24043/isj.228

Kivisto, P. (2014). *Religion and immigration: Migrant faiths in North America and Western Europe.* Polity Press.

Launius, C., & Hassel, H. (2022). *Threshold Concepts in Women’s and Gender Studies Ways of Seeing, Thinking, and Knowing* (3rd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003041986

Magri, J. (2023, November 28). Maltese evening courses to be provided for foreign carers. *Times of Malta.* https://timesofmalta.com/article/maltese-evening-courses-provided-foreign-carers.1070040

Mattes, D., & Lang, C. (2021). Embodied Belonging: In/exclusion, Health Care, and Well-Being in a World in Motion. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry, 45*(1), 2–21. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11013-020-09693-3

McDaniel, S., & Pisani, A. (2012). Family Dynamics and Caregiving for People with Disabilities. In R. C. Talley, & J. E. Crews (Eds.), *Multiple Dimensions of Caregiving and Disability: Research, Practice, Policy* (pp. 11-28). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3384-2_2

McIntosh, P. (1989, July/August). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Peace and Freedom Magazine*, pp. 10–12. https://www.nationalseedproject.org/key-seed-texts/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack

Mifsud, S. (2016). *Working from the Heart: A Study of Filipino Care Workers in Malta [Bachelor's thesis, University of Malta]*. OAR@UM. https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar//handle/123456789/22041

Ministry for Active Ageing. (2022). *National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing 2023 - 2030.* Government of Malta, Ministry for Active Ageing. *https://activeageing.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/NSPActiveAgeing2023-30.pdf*

Norton, B. (2016). Identity and Language Learning: Back to the Future. *TESOL quarterly, 50*(2), 475–479. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.293

Norton, M. I., & Sommers, S. R. (2011). Whites See Racism as a Zero-Sum Game That They Are Now Losing. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 6*(3), 215–218. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691611406922.

NSO. (2023). *Census of Population and Housing 2021: Final Report: Population, migration and other social characteristics (Volume 1).* https://nso.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/Census-of-Population-2021-volume1.pdf

NSO. (2024, January 26). *Population and Migration: 2012-2022 (including intercensal revisions)*. https://nso.gov.mt/intercensal-population-revisions-2012-2021/

OECD & European Commission. (2023). *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023: Settling In*. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/1d5020a6-en

Pace, R. (2021). Malta: A Janus Faced Migration and Integration Policy. In T. Joensen & I. Taylor (Eds.), *Small States and the European Migrant Crisis* (pp. 133–163). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-66203-5

Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, M., S., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, K. (2015). Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, 42*(5), 533–544. 10.1007/s10488-013-0528-y

Parliament of Malta. (2021). *Dokument imqiegħed fuq il-Mejda tal-Kamra tad-Deputati fis-Seduta Numru 458 tal-10 ta' Mejju 2021 mill-Ministru għall-Finanzi u x-Xogħol: Carers Barranin fid-djar Maltin.* (P.L. 6550). https://www.parlament.mt/media/112240/06550.pdf

Parreñas, R. S. (2014). Migrant Domestic Workers as 'One of the Family'. In B. Anderson & I. Shutes (Eds.), *Migration and Care Labour: Theory, Policy and Politics* (pp. 49–64). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137319708_4

Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 16*(2), 175–196. https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839032000060635

Pisani, M. (2022). 'Race' to the Bottom?: Critical Reflections on Race Relations in Malta over the Past 20 Years. *Journal of Mediterranean Studies, 31(2),* 135-154. https://doi.org/10.1353/jms.2022.a912066

Poole, M. C. (2021). Feminist Epistemologies. In B. C. Barnett, & C. Hendricks (Eds.), *Introduction to Philosophy: Epistemology.* The Rebus Community. https://press.rebus.community/intro-to-phil-epistemology/chapter/feminist-epistemologies/

Regev-Messalem, S. (2020). Stories of Dependency and Power: The Value of Live-In Elder Care in Israel. *Socius : Sociological Research for a Dynamic World, 6*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023119893207

Robinson, F. (2011). *The Ethics of Care: A Feminist Approach to Human Security.* Temple University Press.

Rydell, M., Colliander, H., Dahlstedt, M., & Gruber, S. (2025). Language as a Key to Society? Perceptions of Language, Belonging, and Responsibility among Migrants in Sweden. *Nomadic Journal of Migration Research, 15*(2), 1–18. DOI: 10.33134/njmr.668

Sarli, A., & Mezzetti, G. (2020). Religion and Integration: Issues from International Literature. In L. Zanfrini (Ed.), *Migrants and Religion: Paths, Issues, and Lenses* (pp. 433 – 463). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004429604_014

Sharifi, S., Valiee, S., Nouri, B., & Vatandost, S. (2021). Investigating patients' attitudes toward receiving care from an opposite-gender nurse. *Nursing Forum, 56*(2), 322-329. https://doi.org/10.1111/nuf.12556

Simmons, C., Ilinca, S., Lucius, A., & Fenech, M. A. (2022). *Attitudes, experiences and expectations on long-term care in Malta, Policy Brief 2022/11.* European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research. https://www.euro.centre.org/publications/detail/4542

Solano, G. & Huddleston, T. (2020). *Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020*. CIDOB & MIPEX. https://www.migpolgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Solano-Giacomo-Huddleston-Thomas-2020-Migrant-Integration-Policy-Index-2020.pdf

Sole´, C., & Parella, S. (2003). The labour market and racial discrimination in Spain. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 29*(1), 121–140. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183032000076759

Soto Saavedra, C., Lopez, J. L., Shaw, S. A., & Gibbs, B. G. (2023). “It Happened When I Was Connecting to the Community…”: Multiple Pathways to Migrant (Non)Belonging in a New Destination Setting. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 20*(3), 2172. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20032172

Suban, R., & Zammit, D. E. (2019). Promoting the integration of third-country nationals through the labour market : combating discrimination in employment : the case of third-country nationals in Malta. *Mediterranean Human Rights Review*, *1*, 98-117.

Sultana, F. (2007). Reflexivity, positionality and participatory ethics: Negotiating fieldwork dilemmas in international research. *ACME an International E-Journal for Critical Geographies, 6*(3), 374–385. https://doi.org/10.14288/acme.v6i3.786

Sultana, R. (1994). Perspectives on class in Malta. In R.G. Sultana & G.Baldacchino (Eds.), *Maltese society: A sociological enquiry* (pp. 27–53). Mireva.

Trainor, A. A. (2013). Interview Research. In A.A. Trainor & E. Graue (Eds), *Reviewing qualitative research in the social sciences* (pp. 125 - 138). Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203813324

Triandafyllidou, A. (2013). Irregular Migrant Domestic Workers in Europe: Who Cares? In A. Triandafyllidou. (Ed.), *Irregular Migration and Domestic Work in Europe: Who Cares* (pp. 1 - 12). Routledge.

Turner, R. N., Hewstone, M., & Voci, A. (2007). Reducing explicit and implicit outgroup prejudice via direct and extended contact: The mediating role of self-disclosure and intergroup anxiety. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 93*(3), 369-388. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.93.3.369

Tyrberg, M. (2024). The impact of discrimination and support on immigrant trust and belonging. *European Political Science Review, 16*(1), 18-34. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773923000139

Vassallo, M. (2018). *ESPN Thematic Report on Challenges in long-term care: Malta.* European Commission. https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=19860&langId=en

Vassallo, M. T., & Debono, M. (2020). Labouring Behind Closed Doors: The Working and Living Conditions of Filipino Live-in Care Workers in Malta. In Özen, E. and Grima, S. (Eds.), *Uncertainty and Challenges in Contemporary Economic Behaviour* (pp. 195–215). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80043-095-220201015

Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 30*(6), 1024–1054. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870701599465

Vertovec, S., & Wessendorf, S. (Eds.). (2010). *The multiculturalism backlash : European discourses, policies and practices.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203867549

Wessendorf, S., & Phillimore, J. (2019). New Migrants' Social Integration, Embedding and Emplacement in Superdiverse Contexts. *Sociology, 53*(1), 123–138. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038518771843

Xypolytas, N., Vassilikou, K., & Fouskas, T. (2017). Migrant Domestic Workers: Family, Community, and Crisis. *Journal of Modern Greek Studies, 35*(1), 89–110. https://doi.org/10.1353/mgs.2017.0004

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice, 40*(3), 197-214. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331

Yuval-Davis, N. (2011). *The politics of belonging: intersectional contestations.* Sage Publications Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446251041

Zorlu, A., & Hartog, J. (2018). *The Impact of Language on Socioeconomic Integration of Immigrants. IZA Discussion Paper No. 11485.* IZA Institute of Labour Economics. https://repec.iza.org/dp11485.pdf

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE (*English)*

Section A – Socio-Demographic Information

- Age;
- Gender;
- Educational level;
- Employment status & occupation;
- Family status – single/married/parents;
- Contact with foreigners or foreign workers – what type (such as employment – if any)?

Section B – Recruitment Process

- Why did you need to recruit a carer?
- How did you decide that you required a *live-in* type of carer?
- Who was involved in making this decision for your family?
- Why did you decide to opt for a foreign carer rather than a Maltese carer?
- How did you go about the process of recruiting the carer?
- Did you use the assistance of an intermediary, such as an agency to recruit the carer? If yes, how was that experience?
- Did you have any preferences/attributes which you were looking out for when it came to selecting the carer, such as qualifications, gender, nationality, age and so on? If yes, why?
- How did you meet the first time? Was there some sort of pre-recruitment interview with the carer?
- What was your and your family's first impression of the carer?

Section C – Employment

- How many carers did you employ? What were their gender, nationality, and qualifications?
- Did you ever have to change carer? If yes, why?
- Were any adjustments required to the home to accommodate the carer?
- Were other preparations/adjustments required ahead of the carer moving in?
- What type of responsibilities did the carer have? How were these communicated to/ agreed with the carer?
- Did you agree on some '*house rules'* with the carer? If yes, what type of rules?
- Does your carer take time off to visit family? How do you navigate this? Does your family cover the expenses?
- How do you handle the carer's off day? What arrangements, if any, are in place?
- Does the carer have any personal commitments, such as attending mass/religious meetings? If yes, are you involved in any way in helping them fulfil these commitments? Additionally, did these commitments have any impact on the family's behaviour?
- How did you adjust to a 'non-family member' living in your home? Did it take long to get used to each other?
- What are your thoughts on your carer's work ethic? Is it different from the Maltese one?

Section D – Relationships

- How did you navigate the employer-employee relationship with the carer?
- How did you navigate the work/life relationship with the carer since their residence is also their place of work? Was privacy an issue?
- Were there any cultural issues? If so, how did you address them?
- Regarding cultural issues, if any, did these issues increase or decrease over time? And why?
- In your opinion, who had to adjust the most culturally? You and your family, or the carer?

- Did any common factors between you help bridge the differences between cultures? If yes, in what way?
- Were there any other issues / misunderstandings, with any of the family members and the carer, including the patient? If yes, please explain.
- Do the carers join you on family events / outings?
- How would you describe your and your family members' relationship with your carer?
- Can you mention any other positive and/or negative experiences which you had with your carer?
- Do you feel that you are more accepting of the carer and members of their community now that you have had the opportunity to work/live in such proximity?
- Did you learn about their country, culture, and family?
- Are there any other issues that you want to raise?

GWIDA TAL-INTERVISTA *(Maltese)*

Taqsima A – Informazzjoni Soċjodemografika

- L-Eta';
- Il-Ġeneru;
- Il-Livell ta' edukazzjoni;
- In-Natura tal-impjieg;
- L-istatus tal-familja – single/miżżewġin/ġenituri; u
- X'tip ta' kuntatt għandhom ma' nies barranin jew ma ħaddiema barranin.

Taqsima B – Proċess tal-għażla tal-Carer

- Għalfejn kellek bżonn tfittex l-għajnuna ta' *carer*?
- Kif iddeċidejt li għandek bżonn *carer* li tgħix id-dar mal-membru tal-familja tiegħek?
- Min ħadha din id-deċiżjoni għall-membru tal-familja tiegħek?
- Għalfejn iddeċidejt li tfittex *carer* barrani/barranija u mhux Malti/Maltija?
- X'kien il-proċess biex sibt *carer*?
- Użajt l-assistenza ta' xi aġenzija jew intermedjarju ieħor biex issib carer? Jekk iva, kif kienet din l-esperjenza?
- Kellek xi preferenzi li kont qed tfittex meta ġejt biex tagħżel il-*carer,* bħal kwalifikazzjonijiet, jekk hux mara jew raġel, in-nazzjonalita', eċċ? Jekk iva, għaliex?
- Kif iltqajtu l-ewwel darba? Saret xi forma ta' intervista' mal-*carer* qabel iddeċidejtu?
- X'kienet l-ewwel impressjoni tiegħek u tal-familja tiegħek dwar il-*carer*?

Taqsima Ċ – L-Impjieg

- Impjegajt iktar minn *carer* wieħed/waħda? X'kwalifikazzjonijiet kellhom? X'nazzjonalita kienu? U x'kien il-ġeneru tagħhom?
- Qatt kellek bżonn tibdel il-*carer*? Jekk iva, għaliex?
- Saru xi bidliet fid-dar biex takkomodaw lill-*carer*?
- Kellkom bżonn xi preparamenti oħra qabel ma daħlu jgħixu magħkom il-*carers*?
- X'responsabbiltajiet għandhom il-carers? Kif ftehmtu dwar dawn ir-responsabbiltajiet?
- Ftehmtu fuq xi regoli tad-dar mal-carer? Jekk iva, x'tip ta' regoli?
- Il-carers għandhom xi ġranet ta' vaganza biex iżuru lill-familja tagħhom? Jekk iva, kif tagħmlu fin-nuqqas tagħħom? U l-ispejjeż min ikoprihom?
- Kif tagħmlu meta l-*carers* ma jkunux xogħol? Hemm xi ftehim f'dan l-aspett?
- Il-*carers* għandhom xi impenji personali, pereżempju jattendu quddies jew attivitajiet reliġjużi oħra? Jekk iva, inti kif tgħinhom biex ikunu jistgħu jattendu? Dawn l-impenji jaffettwaw l-imġieba tal-familja lejn il-*carers*?
- Kienet diffiċli li tgħix ma' xi ħadd li mhux membru tal-familja tiegħek f'darek? Kif sibtu tarf?
- X'taħseb dwar l-etika tax-xogħol tal-carer tiegħek? Taħseb li differenti minn tal-Maltin?

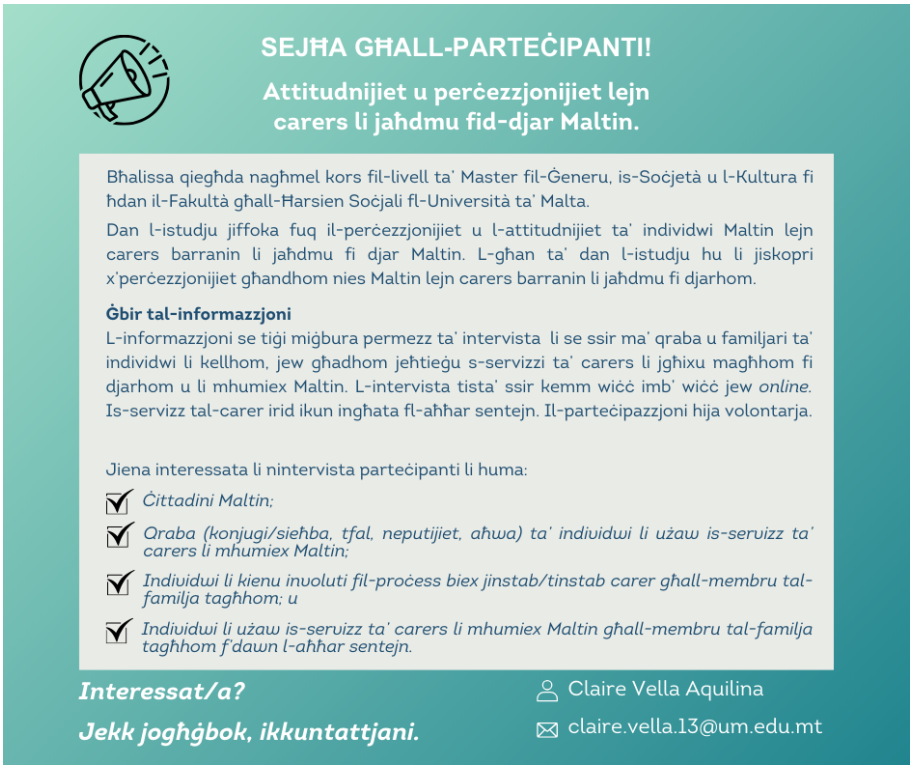
Taqsima D – Relazzjonijiet

- Kif tiddeskrivi r-relazzjoni tiegħek bħala persuna li tħaddem fil-konfronti tal-*carers* li huma impjegati tiegħek?
- Peress li l-post tax-xogħol tal-carers huwa wkoll ir-residenza tagħhom, qatt ħassejtu li kellkom nuqqas ta'privatezza? Jekk iva, kif? U x'għamiltu biex issolvu din il-problema?
- Kien hemm xi problemi kulturali bejnietkom? Jekk iva, x'għamiltu biex irranġajtu s-sitwazzjoni?
- Jekk kien hemm xi problemi kulturali, dawn naqsu jew żdiedu maż-żmien? U għalfejn?

- Fl-opinjoni tiegħek, min kellu jagħmel l-iktar kompromessi fejn tidħol il-kultura? Int u l-familja tiegħek, jew il-*carer*?
- Kien hemm xi fatturi komuni bejnietkom li għenu jegħlbu d-differenzi fil-kultura bejnek u l-familja tiegħek u l-*carer*? Jekk iva, kif?
- Kien hemm xi problemi oħra jew diżgwid mal-*carer*? Jekk iva, kif?
- Il-carers jiġu magħkom meta jkollkom attivitajiet tal-familja?
- Kif tiddeskrivi r-relazzjoni tiegħek u tal-familja tiegħek mal-*carer*?
- Tista' ssemmi xi esperjenzi pożittivi u/jew negattivi li kellek mal-*carer* (li ma semmejtx diġa')?
- Tħoss li l-*carers* saru parti mill-komunita' tiegħek wara li kellek iċ-ċans issir tafhom aħjar? U x'taħseb dwar membri oħra tal-komunita' tagħhom?
- Tgħallimt dwar pajjiżhom, il-kultura tagħhom, u l-familja tagħħhom?
- Hemm xi affarijiet oħra li tixtieq issemmi?

APPENDIX B

SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERT



APPENDIX C

INFORMATION LETTER

Claire Vella Aquilina
189995M

September 2024

Information letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Claire Vella Aquilina and I am a student at the University of Malta, presently reading for a Master of Gender Society and Culture. I am presently conducting a research study for my dissertation titled *Understanding attitudes towards non-Maltese live-in care workers in Malta;* this is being supervised by Prof. JosAnn Cutajar. This letter is an invitation to participate in this study. Below you will find information about the study and about what your involvement would entail, should you decide to take part.

The aim of my study is to explore the perceptions of Maltese nationals and understand their attitudes towards non-Maltese live-in care workers. The main objective of this study is to focus on perceptions towards non-Maltese live-in care workers by Maltese nationals, and to identify how these perceptions and attitudes might impact the inclusion of non-Maltese live-in care workers in Maltese society. Your participation in this study would help contribute to a better understanding of perceptions of and attitudes towards non-Maltese live-in care workers in Malta. Any data collected from this research will be used solely for purposes of this study.

Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interview, face-to-face or online, depending on your preference. This means that the interview questions will consist of a few closed-ended questions, while most questions will be more open-ended, allowing you to express your thoughts in your own way.

Interviews are expected to last between 40 minutes and one hour, depending on the natural flow of the conversation. Interviews will be conducted in English or Maltese, whatever is convenient for you. The interview will take place at a time and location that are convenient and comfortable for you, ensuring a setting where you can share your experiences safely and privately. The aim is to engage in conversation with you rather than to conduct a rigid interview, creating a collaborative and secure space for open dialogue. As a researcher, my focus is on understanding your personal experiences, without judgement.

Should the interviews need to be held online, the Zoom online platform through the University of Malta will be used. The University of Malta Zoom's encryption for 3rd party endpoints and the sip/h-323 function is activated. This protects from unauthorised access or interception. Once the Zoom interview is over and the recording is stopped, the UM Zoom system will automatically provide me with an audio-only and video recording document on my computer. I will destroy the video recording immediately after the data collection session.

Data collected will be treated confidentially. Pseudonyms will be used to ensure that participants are non-identifiable. Data (audio-recordings and transcripts) will be stored securely on a password protected laptop in an encrypted folder. Access to data and any information concerning your personal details will only be available to me as a researcher and my supervisor.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary; in other words, you are free to accept or refuse to participate, without needing to give a reason. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any time, without needing to provide any explanation and without any negative repercussions for you. Should you choose to withdraw, any data collected from your interview will be erased as long as this is technically possible (for example, before it is anonymised or published), unless erasure of data would render impossible or seriously impair achievement of the research objectives, in which case it shall be retained in an anonymised form.

If you choose to participate, please note that there are no direct benefits to you. Your participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks.

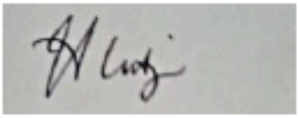
Please note also that, as a participant, you have the right under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation to access, rectify and where applicable ask for the data concerning you to be erased. All data collected will be erased 6 months following publication of results, i.e. February – March 2026.

A copy of this information sheet is being provided for you to keep and for future reference.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt; you can also contact my supervisor over the phone: +356 2340 2296 or via email: josann.cutajar@um.edu.mt.

Sincerely,

Claire Vella



Claire Vella Aquilina
claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt

Prof. JosAnn Cutajar
josann.cutajar@um.edu.mt
+356 2340 2296

Claire Vella Aquilina

189995M

Settembru 2024

Ittra ta' Tagħrif

Għażiż/a Sinjur/a,

Jiena Claire Vella Aquilina, studenta fl-Università ta' Malta, u bħalissa qed insegwi Master fil-Ġeneru, is-Soċjeta' u l-Kultura. Ir-riċerka għad-dissertazzjoni tiegħi jisimha: Attitudnijiet u perċezzjonijiet lejn *carers* li jaħdmu fi djar Maltin; it-tutur tiegħi hi Prof. JosAnn Cutajar. B'din l-ittra nixtieq nistiednek tipparteċipa fir-riċerka. Hawn taħt issib aktar informazzjoni fuq l-istudju li qed nagħmel u fuq xi jkun l-involviment tiegħek jekk tiddeċiedi li tieħu sehem.

L-għan tal-istudju hu li nesplora l-perċezzjonijiet ta' ċittadini Maltin u kif ukoll nifhem aħjar l-attitudnijiet tagħhom lejn *carers* barranin li jaħdmu fi djar Maltin. L-għan ewlieni ta' dan l-istudju hu li jiskopri x'perċezzjonijiet għandhom nies Maltin lejn carers li m'humiex Maltin bħalhom, u kif dawn il-perċezzjonijiet u attitudnijiet jistgħu jaffettwaw l-inklużjoni ta' dawn il-ħaddiema barranin fis-soċjeta' Maltija. Sehmek jgħin biex ikun hawn iżjed għarfien dwar perċezzjonijiet u attitudnijiet lejn *carers* barranin li jaħdmu fi djar Maltin. L-informazzjoni kollha li tingħabar fir-riċerka tintuża biss għall-fini ta' dan l-istudju.

Jekk taqbel li tipparteċipa, tintalab tipparteċipa f'intervista' semi-strutturata, wiċċ imb'wiċċ jew *online*, skond il-preferenza tiegħek. Bażikament l-intervista' tieħu xeħta informali, fejn il-mistoqsijiet tal-intervista' se jkunu jikkonsistu f'xi mistoqsijiet qosra, filwaqt li l-biċċa l-kbira tal-mistoqsijiet ser jagħtuk spazju li tesprimi l-ħsibijiet tiegħek kif tixtieq. L-intervista' tieħu madwar 40 minuta u siegħa, skont kif tiżvolġi l-konversazzjoni. L-intervista' tista' ssir kemm bl-Ingliż u kemm bil-Malti, skont x'inhu komdu għalik. L-intervista' se ssir f'ħin u post li jkunu konvenjenti u komdi għalik, f'ambjent fejn tista' tħossok liberu/a taqsam l-esperjenzi tiegħek b'mod sigur u privat. L-għan hu li jkun hemm djalogu informali flimkien, aktar milli ssir intervista' riġida, fejn nistgħu noħolqu spazju kollaborattiv u sigur għal djalogu miftuħ. Bħala riċerkatriċi, l-enfasi tiegħi hi fuq li nifhem l-esperjenzi personali tiegħek, mingħajr ġudizzju.

Jekk l-intervista' sseħħ online, se tintuża l-pjattaforma *ZOOM* tal-Universita' ta' Malta. Il-pjattaforma ta' *ZOOM* tal-Universita' ta' Malta għandha l-faċilita' ta' *Encryption for 3rd party endpoints SIP/H-323*, li tipproteġi minn aċċess jew interċezzjoni mhux awtorizzata. X'ħin titlesta l-intervista' fuq Zoom u titwaqqaf milli tkompli tiġi rrekordjata, is-sistema ta' *ZOOM* tal-Universita' ta' Malta se tipprovdi recording kemm bl-awdjo u kif ukoll bil vidjo. Jien se nħassar ir-rekording tal-vidjo mal-ewwel wara li tkun inġabret l-informazzjoni.

L-informazzjoni miġbura se tiġi trattata b'mod kunfidenzjali. L-informazzjoni se tkun psewdonimiżżata sabiex jiġi aċċertat li l-parteċipanti ma jkunux identifikabbli. Id-dejta ser tinżamm b'mod sigur u, f'file kodifikat fuq il-kompjuter tar-riċerkatriċi, protetti b'password. Aċċess għad-dejta u kwalunkwe informazzjoni dwar id-dettalji personali tiegħek ser ikunu disponibbli biss għalija bħala riċerkatriċi u għat-tutur tiegħi.

Il-parteċipazzjoni tiegħek f'dan l-istudju tkun għalkollox volontarja; fi kliem ieħor, inti liberu/a li taċċetta jew tirrifjuta li tieħu sehem, mingħajr ma tagħti raġuni. Inti wkoll liberu/a li twaqqaf il-parteċipazzjoni tiegħek fl-istudju meta tixtieq, mingħajr ma jkollok tagħti spjegazzjoni u mingħajr ebda riperkussjoni. Jekk tagħżel li tirtira mir-riċerka, l-informazzjoni li tkun laħqet ittieħdet fl-intervista miegħek titħassar dment li dan ikun teknikament possibbli (ngħidu aħna, qabel ma tiġi anonimizzata jew ippubblikata), u sakemm l-għanijiet tar-riċerka jkunu jistgħu jintlaħqu u ma jintlaqtux serjament. F'dak il-każ, l-informazzjoni tiegħek tintuża u tinżamm anonima.

Jekk tagħżel li tipparteċipa, jekk jogħġbok innota li m'hemm l-ebda benefiċċju dirett għalik. Il-parteċipazzjoni tiegħek ma fiha l-ebda riskju magħruf jew mistenni.

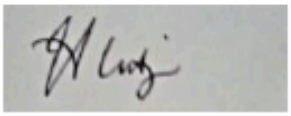
Bħala parteċipant/a, għandek id-dritt, skont ir-Regolament Ġenerali dwar il-Protezzjoni tad-Data (GDPR) u l-leġiżlazzjoni nazzjonali, li taċċessa, tikkoreġi u fejn hu applikabbli, titlob li l-informazzjoni li tikkonċernak titħassar. L-informazzjoni kollha li tingabar fl-istudju se titħassar wara li joħorġu r-riżultati f'temp ta' 6 xhur.

Qed ngħaddilek kopja ta' din l-ittra biex iżżommha bħala referenza.

Grazzi tal-ħin u l-kunsiderazzjoni tiegħek. Jekk ikollok xi mistoqsija, tiddejjaqx tikkuntattjani fuq claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt; tista' tikkuntattja wkoll lit-tutur tiegħi fuq: +356 2340 2296 jew elettronikament fuq: josann.cutajar@um.edu.mt.

Tislijiet,

Claire Vella



Claire Vella Aquilina
claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt

Prof. JosAnn Cutajar
josann.cutajar@um.edu.mt
+356 2340 2296

APPENDIX D

CONSENT FORM

Claire Vella Aquilina
189995M

Participant's Consent Form

I, the undersigned, give my consent to take part in the study conducted by Claire Vella Aquilina. This consent form specifies the terms of my participation in this research study.

1. I have been given written and/or verbal information about the purpose of the study; I have had the opportunity to ask questions and any questions that I had were answered fully and to my satisfaction.

2. I also understand that I am free to accept to participate, or to refuse or stop participation at any time without giving any reason and without any penalty. Should I choose to participate, I may choose to decline to answer any questions asked. In the event that I choose to withdraw from the study, any data collected from me will be erased as long as this is technically possible (for example, before it is anonymised or published), unless erasure of data would render impossible or seriously impair achievement of the research objectives, in which case it shall be retained in an anonymised form.

3. I understand that I have been invited to participate in a semi-structured interview in which the researcher will explore the perceptions of Maltese nationals and understand their attitudes towards non-Maltese live-in care workers. I am aware that the interview will take approximately forty minutes to one hour. I understand that the interview is to be conducted in a place and at a time that is convenient for me.

4. I understand that my participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks.

5. I understand that there are no direct benefits to me from participating in this study. I also understand that this research may benefit others by: raising awareness among the wider audience and prompting policy makers to reflect on the issues explored.

6. I understand that, under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation, I have the right to access, rectify, and where applicable, ask for the data concerning me to be erased.

7. I understand that all data collected will be erased within six months of completion of the study.

8. I have been provided with a copy of the information letter and understand that I will also be given a copy of this consent form.

9. I am aware that, by marking the first-tick box below, I am giving my consent for this interview to be audio recorded and converted to text as it has been recorded (transcribed).

   MARK ONLY IF AND AS APPLICABLE

   ☐ I agree to this interview being audio recorded.
   ☐ I do not agree to this interview being audio recorded.

10. I am aware that extracts from my interview may be reproduced in these outputs, either in anonymous form, or using a pseudonym [a made-up name or code – e.g. respondent A].

1

11. I am aware that if the interview will be held online; the researcher will use the Zoom online platform through the University of Malta. The University of Malta Zoom's encryption for 3rd party endpoints and the SIP/H-323 function will be activated. This protects from unauthorised access or interception. Once the Zoom interview is over and the recording is stopped, the UM Zoom system will automatically provide the researcher with an audio-only and video recording document on the researcher's computer. The researcher will destroy the video recording immediately after the interview. Furthermore, if the interview will be held online, the researcher and I will have our cameras on to see each other for better conversation. The researcher has also provided instructions before the interview to assist me to change my Zoom name to display my pseudonym on the day of the interview.

12. I am aware that my data will be pseudonymised; i.e., my identity will not be noted on transcripts or notes from my interview, but instead, a code will be assigned. The codes that link my data to my identity will be stored securely and separately from the data, in an encrypted file on the researcher's password-protected computer, and only the researcher and academic supervisor will have access to this information. Any hard-copy materials will be placed in a locked cabinet/drawer. Any material that identifies me as a participant in this study will be stored securely for six months following the completion of study and publication of results.

13. I am aware that my identity and personal information will not be revealed in any publications, reports or presentations arising from this research.

14. If I feel that the interview has distressed me in any way, I may make use of the support services information that Claire Vella Aquilina will give me at the beginning of the interview. I am aware that this document comprises a list of free services. The document also includes fee-paying services which I understand I will have to pay for should I decide not to use free services.

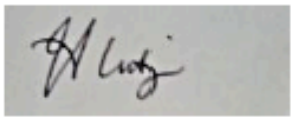
I have read and understood the above statements and agree to participate in this study.

Name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Claire Vella



Claire Vella Aquilina
claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt

Prof. JosAnn Cutajar
josann.cutajar@um.edu.mt
+356 2340 2296

3

Claire Vella Aquilina
189995M

Formola tal-Kunsens tal-Parteċipant/a

Jiena, hawn taħt iffirmat/a, nagħti l-kunsens tiegħi li nieħu sehem fl-istudju ta' Claire Vella Aquilina. Din il-formola tal-kunsens tispjega t-termini tas-sehem tiegħi f'din ir-riċerka.

1. Ingħatajt l-informazzjoni bil-miktub u/jew bil-fomm dwar l-iskop tar-riċerka; kelli l-opportunità nagħmel il-mistoqsijiet, u kull mistoqsija ngħatajt tweġiba għaliha b'mod sħiħ u sodisfaċenti.

2. Nifhem ukoll li jiena liberu/a li naċċetta li nieħu sehem, jew li nirrifjuta, jew li nwaqqaf il-parteċipazzjoni tiegħi meta nixtieq mingħajr ma nagħti spjegazzjoni jew mingħajr ma niġi penalizzat/a. Jekk nagħżel li nipparteċipa, jaf niddeċiedi li ma nweġibx kull mistoqsija li ssirli. F'każ li nagħżel li ma nkomplix nieħu sehem fl-istudju, l-informazzjoni li tkun laħqet inġabret mingħandi titħassar dment li jkun teknikament possibbli (ngħidu aħna, qabel ma tiġi anonimizzata jew ippubblikata), u sakemm l-għanijiet tar-riċerka jkunu jistgħu jintlaħqu u ma jintlaqtux serjament. F'dak il-każ, l-informazzjoni tiegħi tintuża u tinżamm anonima.

3. Nifhem li ġejt mistieden/mistiedna nipparteċipa f'intervista' u l-persuna li qed tagħmel ir-riċerka se tesplora l-perċezzjonijiet ta' ċittadini Maltin u kif ukoll tifhem aħjar l-attitudnijiet tagħhom lejn carers barranin li jaħdmu fi djar Maltin . Jiena konxju/a li l-intervista' se ddum bejn wieħed u ieħor erbgħin minuta u siegħa. Nifhem li l-intervista' se ssir f'post u f'ħin li huma komdi għalija.

4. Nifhem li l-parteċipazzjoni tiegħi ma fiha l-ebda riskju magħruf jew mistenni .

5. Nifhem li bil-parteċipazzjoni tiegħi f'dan l-istudju, m'hemm l-ebda benefiċċju dirett għalija. Nifhem ukoll li din ir-riċerka jaf tkun ta' benefiċċju għall-oħrajn għax: tqajjem kuxjenza dwar is-suġġett fis-soċjetà u tista' tħeġġeġ lill-politikanti jirriflettu fuq is-sitwazzjoni li qed tiskopri din ir-riċerka.

6. Nifhem li, skont ir-Regolament Ġenerali dwar il-Protezzjoni tad-Data (GDPR) u l-leġiżlazzjoni nazzjonali, għandi dritt naċċessa, nikkoreġi u, fejn hu applikabbli, nitlob li l-informazzjoni li tikkonċernani titħassar.

7. Nifhem li l-informazzjoni kollha miġbura se titħassar f'temp ta' 6 xhur minn meta jitlesta l-istudju.

8. Ingħatajt kopja tal-ittra ta' tagħrif biex inżommha u nifhem li se ningħata wkoll kopja ta' din il-formola tal-kunsens.

9. Konxju/a li, jekk nimmarka l-ewwel kaxxa t'hawn taħt, inkun qed nagħti l-kunsens tiegħi biex l-intervista' tiġi rrekordjata bl-awdjo u maqluba f'kitba fl-istess waqt (traskrizzjoni).

   IMMARKA BISS DAK LI JAPPLIKA

   - ☐ Naqbel li l-intervista' tiġi rrekordjata bl-awdjo.
   - ☐ Ma naqbilx li l-intervista' tiġi rrekordjata bl-awdjo.

10. Konxju/a li siltiet mill-intervista tiegħi jistgħu jiġu riprodotti b'mod anonimu jew bl-użu ta' psewdonimu [isem ivvintat jew kodiċi - eż. parteċipant A].

11. Jiena naf li jekk l-intervista' se ssir *online*; u r-riċerkatur/ir-riċerkatriċi se j/tuża l-pjattaforma *ZOOM* tal-Universita' ta' Malta. Il-pjattaforma ta' *ZOOM* tal-Universita' ta' Malta għandha l-faċilita' ta' *Encryption for 3rd party endpoints SIP/H-323*, li tipproteġi minn aċċess jew interċezzjoni mhux awtorizzata. X'ħin titlesta l-intervista' fuq Zoom u titwaqqaf milli tkompli tiġi rrekordjata, is-sistema ta' *ZOOM* tal-Universita' ta' Malta se tipprovdi recording kemm bl-awdjo u kif ukoll bil vidjo. Ir-riċerkatur/ir-riċerkatriċi se j/tħassar ir-rekording tal-vidjo mal-ewwel wara li tkun inġabret l-informazzjoni. Barra minn hekk, jekk l-intervista' ssir online, kemm ir-riċerkatur/ir-riċerkatriċi kif ukoll jien se nkunu bil-kamera mixgħula sabiex inkunu nistgħu naraw lil xulxin għal fini tal- konversazzjoni. Ir-riċerkatur/ir-riċerkatriċi ipprovda/iet wkoll struzzjonijiet qabel l-intervista' biex j/tgħinni nibdel ismi fuq Zoom biex b'hekk jidher l-psewdonimu tiegħi flok ismi fil-ġurnata tal-intervista'.

12. Jiena konxju/a li l-informazzjoni tiegħi se tkun psewdonimizzata, jiġifieri l-identità tiegħi mhix se titniżżel fit-traskrizzjonijiet jew fin-noti tal-intervista, imma minflok, se niġi assenjat/a kodiċi. Il-kodiċijiet li jorbtu l-informazzjoni dwari mal-identità tiegħi se jinżammu b'mod sigur u separat mill-informazzjoni, f'file kodifikat fuq il-kompjuter tar-riċerkatur/riċerkatriċi, protetti b'password, u r-riċerkatur/riċerkatriċi u t-tutur biss se jkollhom aċċess għal din l-informazzjoni. Kwalunkwe materjal stampat se jitqiegħed f'armarju msakkar. Kwalunkwe materjal li jidentifikani bħala parteċipant/a f'dan l-istudju se jinżamm b'mod sigur għal 6 xhur wara li jitlesta l-istudju u jiġu ppublikati r-riżultati.

13. Konxju/a li l-identità tiegħi u d-dettalji personali tiegħi mhux se jiġu żvelati f'xi pubblikazzjoni, rapport jew preżentazzjoni li tista' toħroġ minn din ir-riċerka.

14. Jekk inħoss li l-intervista' b'xi mod iddisturbatni, nista' nirreferi għat-tagħrif dwar is-servizzi ta' appoġġ li Claire Vella Aquilina se tgħaddili fil-bidu tal-intervista'. Naf li d-dokument bit-tagħrif jinkludi lista ta' servizzi bla ħlas. Id-dokument fih ukoll xi servizzi bil-ħlas, li jkolli nagħmlu minn buti f'każ li ma nagħżilx is-servizzi bla ħlas.

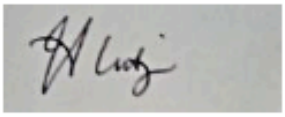
Qrajt u fhimt l-istqarrijiet t'hawn fuq, u naqbel li nipparteċipa f'dan l-istudju.

Isem il-parteċipant/a: _____

Firma: _____

Data: _____

Claire Vella



Claire Vella Aquilina

claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt

Prof. JosAnn Cutajar

josann.cutajar@um.edu.mt

+356 2340 2296

APPENDIX E

FREC APPROVAL

L-Università ta' Malta

Claire Vella Aquilina <claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt>

Research Ethics Application - Approved by FREC, no UREC decision needed

1 message

SWB FREC <research-ethics.fsw@um.edu.mt> 30 September 2024 at 12:49
To: claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt
Cc: "Prof. JosAnn Cutajar" <josann.cutajar@um.edu.mt>

REDP Application ID: SWB-2024-00835

Dear Claire Vella Aquilina,

Since your supervisor has confirmed that the changes have been carried out AND/OR the gatekeepers' permissions have been obtained and uploaded (as per email below), your ethics application regarding your research titled *Understanding attitudes towards non-Maltese live-in care workers in Malta* has been **approved**.

Faculty Research Ethics Committees are authorised to review and approve research ethics applications on behalf of the University of Malta, except in the case of sensitive personal data. In this regard, your ethics proposal **does not need to be sent to UREC-DP**. Hence, **you may now start your research**.

***Disclaimer:** The research team should note that only the English versions of the documents submitted have been reviewed by FREC. It is the duty of the research team to ensure that all documents in Maltese (or any other language) are faithful translations of the English version.*

Regards,

L-Università ta' Malta

Faculty Research Ethics Committee

Faculty for Social Wellbeing
Room 113, Humanities A Building
+356 2340 2237 / 3220 / 3625

Website: www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing/students/researchethics

The contents of this email are subject to these terms.

APPENDIX F

FREC AMENDMENTS

L-Università ta' Malta

Claire Vella Aquilina <claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt>

REDP Application ID: SWB-2024-00835
4 messages

Claire Vella Aquilina <claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt> 11 November 2024 at 09:05
To: SWB FREC <research-ethics.fsw@um.edu.mt>
Cc: Josephine Ann Cutajar <josann.cutajar@um.edu.mt>

To whom it may concern,

Regarding my FREC application SWB-2024-00835, please note that I would like to affect the following change in relation to the target participants:

As per FREC application:
The target participants are adult Maltese nationals who are relatives of individuals who require/d the services of non-Maltese live-in care workers within the past two years, and who were involved in the recruitment of non-Maltese care workers for their family members.

Proposed Change:
The target participants are adult Maltese nationals who are relatives of individuals who require/d the services of non-Maltese live-in care workers within the past FOUR years, and who were involved in the recruitment of non-Maltese care workers for their family members.

Thanks and kind regards,
Claire Vella Aquilina

SWB FREC <research-ethics.fsw@um.edu.mt> 20 November 2024 at 10:29
To: Claire Vella Aquilina <claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt>
Cc: Josephine Ann Cutajar <josann.cutajar@um.edu.mt>

Dear Claire Vella Aquilina,

Noted with thanks.

Regards,

L-Università ta' Malta

Faculty Research Ethics Committee

Faculty for Social Wellbeing
Room 113, Humanities A Building
+356 2340 2237 / 3625 / 3220

Website: www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing/students/researchethics

[Quoted text hidden]
The contents of this email are subject to these terms.

Claire Vella Aquilina <claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt> 28 February 2025 at 08:39
To: SWB FREC <research-ethics.fsw@um.edu.mt>
Cc: Josephine Ann Cutajar <josann.cutajar@um.edu.mt>

To whom it may concern,

Regarding my FREC application SWB-2024-00835, please note that I would like to affect the following change in relation to the target participants:

As per FREC application and update on 11.11.2024 (same thread of emails):
The target participants are adult Maltese nationals who are relatives of individuals who require/d the services of non-Maltese live-in care workers within the past four years, and who were involved in the recruitment of non-Maltese care workers for their family members.

Proposed Change:
The target participants are adult Maltese nationals who are relatives of individuals who require/d the services of non-Maltese live-in care workers within the past four years, and who ***ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT*** ~~*were involved in*~~ *the recruitment of non-Maltese care workers for their family members.*

The reason being is that although participants were not directly involved in the recruitment process, they were still knowledgeable through discussions with other family members (such as siblings, parents) about the process which is enough for the scope of this study since the main focus is on the relationship with the live-in carers.

Thanks and kind regards,
Claire Vella Aquilina
[Quoted text hidden]

SWB FREC <research-ethics.fsw@um.edu.mt> 4 March 2025 at 15:35
To: Claire Vella Aquilina <claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt>
Cc: Josephine Ann Cutajar <josann.cutajar@um.edu.mt>

Dear Claire Vella Aquilina,

Noted with thanks.

Regards,

L-Università ta' Malta

Faculty Research Ethics Committee

Faculty for Social Wellbeing
Room 113, Humanities A Building
Room 115, Humanities B Building
+356 2340 2352

Website: www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing/students/researchethics

[Quoted text hidden]

APPENDIX G

LIST OF SUPPORT SERVICES

FREE & FEE-PAYING SUPPORT SERVICES

Name of student researcher:	Claire Vella Aquilina
Course:	Master of Gender, Society and Culture
Student's contact email:	claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt
Student's contact number:	+356 79933309
Research supervisor:	Prof. JosAnn Cutajar
Supervisor's email:	josann.cutajar@um.edu.mt
Supervisor's contact number:	+356 2340 2296
Title of Research Study:	Understanding attitudes towards non-Maltese live-in care workers in Malta

Dear Participant,

I hope this email finds you well.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation in this study. I appreciate your involvement and cooperation throughout this entire process.

I would like to remind you of the aims of this study; namely to explore the perceptions of Maltese nationals and understand their attitudes towards non-Maltese live-in care workers.

This study was not anticipated to cause distress and the interview questions were formatted in as sensitive a manner as possible. However, if your participation has led you to experience any distress or discomfort for whatever reason, then overleaf I have included some information about services that offer free and fee-paying professional support that you might find helpful.

Kindly do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries. If you require any additional information or wish to report any concerns about this study, please do not hesitate to contact both myself, on **+356 79933309** or my research supervisor on **+356 79261040**.

Kind regards,
Claire Vella Aquilina

FREE SERVICES

Richmond Foundation

info@richmond.org.mt +356 21224580/ 21482336/ 21480045

Supports both individuals who are experiencing mental health problems as well as those around them. Apart from supporting individuals by offering therapeutic help, Richmond Foundation also guides individuals by teaching the necessary skills to live and work independently. Their services include support groups, assisted living solutions, educational programmes, as well as counselling services.

Supportline 179 (24/7 access)

This is Malta's national helpline acting to provide support, information about local social welfare and other agencies, as well as a referral service to individuals who require support. It is also a national service to individuals facing difficult times or a crisis. Their primary mission is to provide immediate and unbiased help to whoever requires it.

fsws.gov.mt

Kellimni.com (24/7 access)

http://kellimni.com/ +356 21244123/21335097

kellimni.com is an online support service in which trained staff and volunteers are available for support 24/7 via email, chat and smart messaging. This service is managed by SOS Malta.

Crisis Resolution Malta crisismalta@gmail.com/ +356 99339966

Offers immediate care. Crisis resolution 24/7. The team of volunteers who answer the phone are all professionals, and the consultation service is free.

Crisis Intervention Mater Dei +356 25453950

Supports in various crisis situations related to mental health. Monday to Friday 7am-5.30pm.

PAID PROFESSIONALS

Counsellors:	Malta Association for the Counselling Profession (MACP)	www.macpmalta.org
	Council for the Counselling Profession (CCP)	ccp.msfc@gov.mt
Family Therapists:		www.ift-malta.com
Psychologists:	Malta Chamber of Psychologists	mcp.org.mt
	Malta Psychology Profession Board	mppb.msfc@gov.mt

Malta Association of Psychiatrists:	map.org.mt
Psychotherapists:	www.facbook.com/MaltaAssociationForPsychotherapy

LISTA TA' SERVIZZI TA' SAPPORT B'XEJN JEW BI ĦLAS

Isem tal-istudent/a riċerkatur/a:	Claire Vella Aquilina
Kors:	Master of Gender, Society & Culutre
L-imejl tal-istudent/a riċerkatur/a:	claire.vella.13@um.edu.mt
Nru tat-telefon tal-istudent/a riċerkatur/a:	+356 79933309
Isem tas-superviżur tar-riċerka:	Prof. JosAnn Cutajar
L-imejl tas-superviżur tar-riċerka:	josann.cutajar@um.edu.mt
Nru tat-telefon tas-superviżur tar-riċerka:	+356 2340 2296
Titlu ta' l-Istudju/Riċerka:	Attitudnijiet u perċezzjonijiet lejn *carers* li jaħdmu fi djar Maltin

Għażiż Parteċipant,

Nittama li dan l-imejl isibek tajba.

Nixtieq nieħu din l-opportunità biex nirringrazzjak tal-parteċipazzjoni tiegħek f'dan l-istudju. Napprezza l-involviment u l-kooperazzjoni tiegħek matul dan il-proċess kollu.

Nixtieq infakkrek fl-għanijiet ta' dan l-istudju; li bażikament huma li nesplora l-perċezzjonijiet ta' ċittadini Maltin u kif ukoll nifhem aħjar l-attitudnijiet tagħhom lejn *carers* barranin li jaħdmu fi djar Maltin..

Dan l-istudju ma kienx antiċipat li jikkawża diffikultà u l-mistoqsijiet tal-intervista ġew ifformattjati bl-iktar mod sensittiv possibbli. Madankollu, jekk id-diskussjoni wasslitek biex tesperjenza kwalunkwe tbatija jew skumdità għal kwalunkwe raġuni, fil-paġna ta' wara jien inkludejt xi informazzjoni dwar servizzi li joffru appoġġ professjonali b'xejn jew bi ħlas li tista' ssib utli.

Ġentilment toqgħodx lura milli tikkuntattjani jekk għandek xi mistoqsijiet. Jekk teħtieġ xi informazzjoni addizzjonali jew tixtieq tirraporta kwalunkwe ħassib dwar dan l-istudju, jekk jogħġbok toqgħodx lura milli tikkuntattja kemm lili stess, fuq **+356 79933309** jew is-superviżur tar-riċerka tiegħi fuq **+356 79261040**.

B'xewqat tajba,
Claire Vella Aquilina

SERVIZZI B'XEJN

Richmond Foundation

info@richmond.org.mt +356 21224580/ 21482336/ 21480045

Tappoġġja kemm individwi li qed jesperjenzaw problemi ta' saħħa mentali kif ukoll dawk ta' madwarhom. Minbarra li tappoġġja individwi billi toffri għajnuna terapewtika, Richmond Foundation tiggwida wkoll inidividwi billi tgħallem il-ħiliet meħtieġa biex jgħixu u jaħdmu b'mod indipendenti. Is-servizzi tagħhom jinkludu gruppi ta' appoġġ, soluzzjonijiet ta' għajxien assistit, programmi edukattivi, kif ukoll servizzi ta' pariri.

Supportline 179 (24/7 access)

Din hija l-linja ta' għajnuna nazzjonali ta' Malta li taġixxi biex tipprovdi appoġġ, informazzjoni dwar il-benesseri soċjali lokali u aġenziji oħra, kif ukoll servizz ta' riferiment għal individwi li jeħtieġu appoġġ. Huwa wkoll servizz nazzjonali għal individwi li qed jaffaċċjaw żminijiet diffiċli jew kriżi. Il-missjoni primarja tagħhom hija li jipprovdu għajnuna immedjata u imparzjali lil kull min ikun jeħtieġha.

fsws.gov.mt

Kellimni.com (24/7 access)

http://kellimni.com/ +356 21244123/21335097

kellimni.com huwa servizz ta' appoġġ *online* li fih persunal imħarreġ u voluntiera huma disponibbli għall-appoġġ 24/7 permezz ta' imejl, *chat* u messaġġi intelliġenti. Dan is-servizz huwa amministrat minn SOS Malta.

Crisis Resolution Malta crisismalta@gmail.com/ +356 99339966

Joffri kura immedjata. Riżoluzzjoni ta' kriżi 24/7. It-tim ta' voluntiera li jwieġbu t-telefon huma kollha professjonisti, u s-servizz ta' konsultazzjoni huwa b'xejn.

Crisis Intervention Mater Dei +356 25453950

Jappoġġja f'diversi sitwazzjonijiet ta' kriżi relatata mas-saħħa mentali. Mit-Tnejn sal-Ġimgħa 7am-5.30pm.

PROFESSJONISTI MĦALLSA

***Counsellors*:**	Malta Association for the Counselling Profession (MACP)	www.macpmalta.org
	Council for the Counselling Profession (CCP)	ccp.msfc@gov.mt
Terapisti tal-Familja:		www.ift-malta.com
Psikologi:	Malta Chamber of Psychologists	mcp.org.mt
	Malta Psychology Profession Board	mppb.msfc@gov.mt
Assoċjazzjoni Maltija tal-Psikjatri:		map.org.mt
Psikoterapisti:		www.facbook.com/MaltaAssociationForPsychotherapy