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Bachelor's thesis
Spring semester 2011
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Are you Hungry or Danish?

- Migrant dishwashers in Copenhagen restaurants

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Abstract

This bachelor's thesis is based on interviews with male migrants from South Asia working as dishwashers in Copenhagen restaurants. Throughout the text it is illustrated how the structural conditions affect the dishwashers and what strategies they use to react upon the structures. It is described how the dishwashers perceive their jobs, how they are employed and valued by the employers, and how their attitudes are towards the members of their social networks. This data is explored in the context of the theoretical framework regarding structure, social networks and social capital. Specific focus is put on the relevance of the structural conditions in the receiving country, their legal statuses, which laid the basis for a typology that emphasizes the division as well as the unity between the dishwashers. Additionally it is exemplified that the dishwashers make extensive use of their social networks and social capital to manage their everyday lives in the business of dishwashers. However, it is concluded that they by helping each other end up reproducing and recreating structural conditions. Subsequent it is argued that the dishwashers have a social hierarchy within their social networks, and that these social networks both have contradictions within them, and processes that tighten them.

Keywords: migrant labor, dishwashers, structure, social network, legal status

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1. Introduction

In the back of a restaurant a man is hurrying around with stacks of plates, trays with glasses, boxes with cutlery, and in between he opens the industrial dishwashing machine, takes out the tray of shiny tableware, and puts in the one he just rinsed with water. He is the dishwasher, and if you ever get the chance to get backstage in a restaurant in Copenhagen, you will most likely find a dishwasher who is dark-skinned, and often from South Asia.

Since 2005 I have been working as a waiter on and off in restaurants around Copenhagen. Shortly after I started I realized that the majority of restaurants in Copenhagen have migrants to work as dishwashers. The dishwashers always had my attention, because I had this curiosity about how they “landed” next to this dishwashing machine of all the places in the world. In time, I discovered that some of the dishwashers had a BA or MA degree, which puzzled me and aroused my attention to find out more about them. It is these dishwashers – their motivations, their practices, their life projects – which are the focus of this thesis.

1.1 A night in the footsteps of a dishwasher

When the time turns five pm, and cooks have been cooking and preparing all day for the restaurant to open, the dishwasher starts his workday.

The dishwasher of the day arrives at the restaurant and walks through the main room. He is skinny, dressed in jeans, a The North Face jacket, and a knitted Calvin Klein scarf with an iPhone in his pocket – everything on him from the dark hair to the sneakers look neat as a new pin. Rapidly he changes into some worn out clothes from a locker in the dressing room, he puts on his clogs and a disposable plastic apron, and gets into his dishwashing room in the back of the restaurant.

At first he has to clean up all the pots and pans that have been used during the day, and while he works in highest gear the cooks come out to him one by one with extra cookware. He struggles just to lift the heavy pots and pans. Besides the cookware, dirty dishes fill up the table in stacks, and several trays are filled with dirty glasses and cups from the hours the restaurant was open for lunch. Then even more dirty dishes come out to him, and some leftovers are put on the table – the staff just had dinner before “service”. While the dishwasher is starting to get sweaty from all the damp the dishwashing machine produces,

the waiters start demanding him to clean the cutlery and glasses so they can get the restaurant ready for the guests to arrive.

The temperature and humidity in the room has reached unbearable heights, so he quickly drinks a glass of tap water. After some time the restaurant is filled up with people using several pieces of cutlery, plates and glasses each. He is making a great effort to get his things done, but sometimes the waiters just leave a tray full of dirty plates, without cleaning the chunks of food off and stacking them by size and put the cutlery in a box with soap water, so he has to do their job. Then the chef comes out to him with two steaming hot pans and wants him to clean them as fast a possible. A few hours pass like this, and then the restaurant manager comes by with five glasses of soda that he hands out to the four cooks and keeps one for himself. The manager wants him to change the water in the dishwashing machine so he will be able to clean the glasses and cutlery for the second seat of guests. Out of the building escapes the manager with a glass of ice-cold soda and a cigarette in his mouth, and shortly after the cooks follow his lead and take a break.

In the restaurant, the guests from the first seat are leaving, and out into his dishwashing room come all of the used glasses from the 80 guests. One of the waiters just leaves a tray full of glasses, and then comes back shortly after leaving another one on the table, without sorting each piece by putting them in the big dishwashing trays. Next time the dishwasher tries to get the waiter to put the things in place, but the waiter simply responds that she is too busy, because they have a lot to do in the front area of the restaurant. Once again he empties her tray, and stares at all the work with a depressing look in his eyes for a few seconds. The cooks and the manager come out to the dishwashing room with empty glasses to put on the table, they are all smiling and joking about something, but he does not understand what they say to each other in Danish. Next time a waiter comes out with dirty dishes he asks her to bring him a coke, and she responds with an "ok". She comes back several times, but do not bring a coke, so he asks her again, asks another waiter several times, and after more than an hour one of them finally brings him a bottle of coke.

Around 12 o'clock the cooks have left the kitchen a few hours ago, and the waiters are clearing the restaurant after second seat. The dishwasher still has a lot of work to do. He runs around and puts things in place, while trays go in and out of the dishwasher every fifth minute. When everything is clean, shiny and put in place he walks to the bar where some of the staff has gathered for after-work beers. He tells the restaurant manager he is done for the day, and on his way out he brings the garbage as the restaurant manager reminded him to do. In the locker room he throws out the plastic apron, and puts the clogs

on the floor. He has had nothing to eat and has not had time to go to the toilet since the minute he started working earlier in the evening. At 1.30 am he walks out the back door of the restaurant heading for the buss stop.

1.2 Defining the field

This bachelor's thesis is an anthropological study about migrant dishwashers. The dishwashers I interviewed were all male migrants from South Asia, who work, or have worked, as dishwashers in Copenhagen based restaurants. The setting for this thesis is the story about young and hopeful men who come from countries far away with a great educational level, however they eventually find themselves working as dishwashers in the back of the restaurants, and so I strive to enlighten the lives of these persons. I focus on what brought them to Denmark, their social networks, the work conditions, and how they became dishwashers. Moreover, the research questions that laid the ground for this thesis are:

How do the dishwashers deal with the job and structures they are subject to, and to what extent do they react upon the structures?

What part does the social network play in their life as a migrant, and how is their relation to the social network?

The conceptual point of departure for this thesis is in the field of migrant research, social networks and the relation between structure and actors. And I will use these traditions in order to describe the situation of the dishwashers in a broader context. In particular, I will emphasize how the legal status of the individual dishwasher is an indication on his relation to his social network and his status within this. Moreover I will put focus on their social networks and show that there are both uniting procedures as well as contradictory actions present in these. The research of Ruth Gomberg-Muñoz (2010, 2011) on undocumented Mexican migrants working in a restaurant in the United States has been my foundation to this study. In particular Gomberg-Muñoz focuses on how the migrants create a “workers’ agency” and a culture of hard work as a response to the structural conditions, and how they thereby gain control over their somewhat vulnerable and insecure situation. I have chosen to use this particular study because the scenario she describes caught my attention prior to my research. As I went along with the interviews I

found several similarities, and decided to use her study of the migrants' response to the structural conditions as a framework for my own study, as I found that this could bring out interesting aspects of my empirical data.

This question is not just relevant to South Asian men washing dishes in Copenhagen. The question of original strategies, altered plans, and migrants who “land” somewhere, is a common occurrence in the migrant literature. Situations like these pushes the migrants to reflect upon the structures that affect them, and the resources they have to transcend these structures, their social capital. This study is one example of this kind of human struggle.

1.3 Outline of the thesis

In the following chapter I describe the method used to conduct the research, the limitations and considerations about the process. I present the relevant research on migrants and labor in the West in chapter 3, as well as theories of the relation between structure and actors, and an outline of social networks and social capital. Chapter 4 contains of ethnographic descriptions split in four sections. At first I outline the informants with some personal data on them, and then I lead on to a portrayal of the dishwashers concerning how and why they came to Denmark, and how they perceive their jobs. In the following section I examine the dishwashing labor system as seen by Danish restaurateurs, where I describe how the dishwashers are organized with cleaning companies, and how the employers judge on whether the persons are good or bad dishwashers. The social networks in both Denmark and their home countries form the basis of the last section, with focus on how they help each other, and their use of social capital. In chapter 5 I put together the theory and empirical data to do an analysis on how the dishwashers react upon the structures and use the legal status, social networks and social capital to deal with their situation. Moreover I argue that these actions can be seen as a way to manage the structural conditions it brings for them to live in Denmark and work as dishwashers. Eventually I use chapter 6 to conclude the findings in this thesis. In chapter 7 I add a discussion of the typology as well as ideas for further research.

2. Methodology

Here I will address the methodological issues concerning the process of collecting data that I have found relevant for my study.

2.1 Methodological approach

This study is primarily based on data collected through interviews. I have not done any traditional anthropological fieldwork in the way that Bronislaw Malinowski (1922) described that one should be performed almost a century ago. Instead I have used what I found as a suitable approach for this study by doing my research based on informal interviews. The reason I found this appropriate was that it seemed more manageable considering the timeframe of the thesis. Additionally I was also insecure about whether any of the dishwashers even would have let me into their lives and social networks if I had done participant observation, as I had a sense that illegal acts would be involved and that they would be afraid to get revealed. Moreover, I felt confident about that I would be able to collect useful data that suited my research topic through interviews. However, my own experience from the field from working as a waiter is supplementing the data I collected through the interviews, and can be seen as another sort of participant observation or just a long-term preparation. The section that I have named “A night in the footsteps of a dishwasher” in the introductory chapter is thereby a reconstruction of how a regular workday is for a dishwasher, and the text is information drawn together from interviews I have conducted, and my knowledge from working as a waiter.

2.2 Doing the interviews

Five dishwashers, two restaurateurs and one person runs a cleaning company, were interviewed for this thesis. The informants were recruited with the snowball effect sampling (Denscombe 2000:24; Ryen 2004:83), which I found as a suitable solution to get in contact with the informants in an informal way. In addition, this is a beneficial sampling method that gives an insight in certain network structures, why it is also called network sampling by some (Grønmo 2006:104,106). Starting in my own network and working out into three lines became the pattern of how I collected my informants. Because of my job as a waiter I knew some people in the Copenhagen based restaurant industry, so I started out by contacting two restaurateurs I knew personally. I interviewed them about the use of foreign dishwashers, then they handed me some names and phone numbers that would be useful, and thereby I got in contact with a dishwasher and one person who runs a cleaning company. After interviewing the latter two they both gave me one new informant each. Besides that, a friend of mine who worked in a restaurant handed me the information on

the dishwasher he worked with, and this dishwasher also helped me get in contact with another dishwasher.

One of the obvious forces of using the snowball effect sampling is that the informant who has gone through an interview serves as a reference to the next one (Denscombe 2000:24). When an informant recruits a new informant they can openly talk about how the interview went and if I was perceived as trustworthy. This way of getting to the informants through their own network was one of the facts that even made this study possible. All of the dishwashers mentioned in passing that the reason they agreed on meeting me was because the one that recruited them had talked good about me and wanted them to help me. Had they not heard about me in this way, they would not have said the same things or even met with me, they revealed to me.

When getting my informants to lead me on to a new dishwasher I had two criteria: (1) that he should be working as a dishwasher in or around Copenhagen, and (2) that he should be from a country outside of the EU. The reason that all of them were men was not a criteria but simply a fact in the business, as I will elaborate later on.

It took some effort to set a date and time for every one of the interviews. I had spoken on the phone with all of them prior to the interviews, and they all said they were busy with work or studies, so I had to push every single one of them a bit to get them to agree on a date to meet with me.

All of the dishwashers interviewed told me in one way or the other that they at some point had been suspicious about my purpose with the interviews, but then had been convinced to meet me by the informant that had recruited them. They had also spoken to some other friends who had questioned why the dishwasher would want to meet with me, and some friends had made them worried about if I was a cop or a journalist. Everyone I interviewed told me that they had trusted my intentions, because of the one that had recruited them. They also said that they had told their worried friends that they wanted to help me with my research. This is how all of the dishwashers retold me the scenery of how they had argued with their friends about going to the interviews. Despite this, all of the people whom had been recruited met with me, but I am not aware of how many people had rejected to meet with me before I heard about them. Every one of them told me about the dilemma they had been through and how they had decided upon meeting me. One of them also mentioned that I might had been able to help him find a better job, another one called me later to chat, some texted me and added me on Facebook, so I am convinced that they also did it to get a Danish friend in their networks.

The process of doing the interviews took place in Copenhagen during November 2010. I interviewed five foreign dishwashers, one who runs a cleaning company and two restaurateurs. All of my informants were interviewed in places they had decided with me. The two restaurateurs were interviewed in their offices and the rest in public cafés and restaurants. By interviewing the dishwashers separately in their time off I gave them the time to reflect on their life at a distance. They also knew that no boss or colleague would be listening to our conversation, and I believe this made them talk more openly about their situation and background.

In the eight informal interviews (Ryen 2004:44; Grønmo 2006:131) I conducted for my research I asked open questions widely concerning their life story, their contemporary situation and their long-term goals in life. Interview questions were not formed prior to the interviews, but I did have a list of themes that I wanted them to talk about. The interviews did not follow any order, and the list of themes was put away until I felt like I had to check if I had forgotten some of the subjects. All of the informants were aware about how I got in contact with them, and I also told them about where I had worked.

Digital recording was made on the interviews with the two restaurateurs and the first interview I did with a dishwasher. Even though the dishwasher said he did not mind me recording our conversation, I felt like it was limiting him, so in the following interviews I just took notes. Taking notes also contributed to a more peaceful pace were the informants had some breaks to think about what they just said, and this often resulted in an addition to the content. The five interviews made with dishwashers were in English, and the remaining three were in Danish. After the interviews I sat down and typed my notes into my computer, and as I went through the handwritten notes I had done during the interviews I added some text to the notes, based on my memory, to be sure I understood everything, and had not missed any points from the interviews.

2.3 Reflections about the research

Researching in a well-known environment does have both positive and negative aspects. Katrine Fangen (2005:49) justifies that researching without any pre-understanding is impossible, and therefore the researcher must clarify what kind of knowledge she has. With this perspective in mind I will hereby enlighten the circumstances under which I did the research to this thesis. The life and organization of migrant dishwashers in Copenhagen was not something I knew much about before I started my research. As a waiter I had been

working with dishwashers for several years, but I was never part of their group. Working as a waiter taught me little about the life of a dishwasher, and only from the perspective of a waiter, and I never knew anything about how they were organized. Every evening some English-speaking male was cleaning the dishes, handling the dishwashing machine and carrying the heavy gear, however I did not know anything about them. The only thing I knew was the fact that someone else was handling the organization of them and watching over them, and the details or the persons I did not know. Additionally I would like to stress the fact that I have never worked with any of the dishwashers interviewed in this thesis, and I stopped working as a waiter prior to the initiation of this study. My pre-understanding, which in this case is my experience from working with dishwashers, should therefore simply be perceived as an opening to the field. The dishwashers were interviewed about their work life, and when I write about it I support my data from the interviews with my knowledge from working as a waiter. My knowledge has also helped me ask more in-depth questions about their situation and helped me understand their descriptions better, and all in all my knowledge has made me more able to visualize and understand the circumstances at their work.

Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2000:31) observes that the researcher should be aware of the fact that “homeblindness” [my translation for “hemmablindhet”] can appear when conducting a fieldwork in a well-known environment. A fieldwork was not part of my method, but I did do research on a subject somewhat close to my personal sphere, so I believe the details about this process is inescapable. Even though the research subject to some extent was part of my work environment prior to the research, I was not part of the field I studied, and did not know the informants before the research or the answers to my research question, so I am convinced that the “homeblindness” has not been the case in this study.

The major positive part about my experience as a waiter was that it served as a ticket to the field. It did not take much for me to get in contact with the two restaurateurs, and they were more than willing to help me get started because they knew me and trusted me. Every time I met a new informant I let them know that I had been working as a waiter, and soon we found out we knew a lot of the same persons from the business. This was a helpful way to get them started and they all wanted to talk about the people we both knew. Having contacts in common with the informants was mostly something positive. After the interviews I have questioned myself if knowing we had mutual acquaintances, and that I knew their boss or coworkers, held the dishwashers back in saying things, and I cannot be

sure about this. This might have been the case in some of the interviews. In other interviews I believe that the informants felt like they had to tell the truth because they knew that I might have known more about them and their situation from our mutual acquaintances.

2.4 Ethical considerations

Prior to every interview I informed the informants that their participation in the interview would be anonymous, so they did not have to worry about getting their name in my thesis, and this was my goal from the very beginning. Openness about the names and companies would have played a role in what the informants would have told me. Another reason to keep the informants' identities anonymous, was that some of the topics we went over in the interviews have been involving illegal acts, and there was not any reason to put anyone's status or relation to the Danish government at risk. The overall reason for anonymity was raised from an ethical consideration, to protect the persons implied, and secondly to create an atmosphere where they could talk openly.

To keep the record on the names on the informants simple, I have named the dishwashers; A, B, C, D, E, the restaurateurs; X, Y, and the person runs a cleaning company Q. Additionally another cleaning company appears in the thesis as some of the informants employ and are employed by this cleaning company. I was not able to set an interview with this cleaning company, however I have named it CC (abbreviation of "cleaning company") so I was able to mention it in my thesis.

All of the informants willingly told me their stories, and knew that they would be part of my thesis, so they knew what they went into, and allowed me to use the information they gave me. As long as they were told it would be anonymous for them to participate, they did not see any risks for them. However, as the business anthropologist Ann T. Jordan (2003:54-59) suggests, I also thought through the research project myself, both before and after I collected the information, and found that it would not be harmful to the individuals or the companies, as long as their identities are secret. In addition I have deleted the dishwashers as friends on Facebook, to be sure that I will not unintentionally lead people to them.

3. The theoretical framework

The theoretical concepts that will be emphasized here are “structure”, “social networks”, “social capital”, and a study by Gomberg-Muñoz on how a group of undocumented workers react to the structural conditions with the use of a “workers’ agency”. These facilitate to enlighten the research subject and the empirical realities in a theoretical approach, as they put focus on how the dishwashers reflect upon circumstances of their lives in Denmark and their social interactions.

3.1 Research on migrant labor

Many scholars have had their focus on the subject of migrant labor when researching in the field of migration. A typical characteristic about these studies is that the migrants who come to the West seem to be working at places and industries where they get a low pay (Barfield 1997:324). Migrants are often the persons who are at the bottom of the hierarchy in the receiving country’s labor force, and those who do the difficult jobs in society, regardless of their high education in the home countries. They work for a low pay even though they are jeopardizing their health under demanding conditions. Besides that, they are usually in job positions that give them few benefits, if any at all (Lamphere et al. 1994:18-19). Additionally Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller (2009:68) express that the undocumented workers are likely to be chosen by employers as a calculated choice, since their circumstances make them easily exploited.

The field of migrants in the service sector is a subject that has been widely researched in anthropology. However, most of the studies on the subject have been conducted in the United States focusing on undocumented Latin American immigrants, and only few of them on their work in restaurants (e.g. Gomberg-Muñoz 2010, 2011; Stepick et al. 1994; Lamphere et al. 1994; Adler 2005; Fine 2009; Waldinger & Lichter 2003). Some of the studies of migrants working in restaurants show how they are confronted with the structural vulnerability it brings to be undocumented, without union protection, insecure about their personal economic situation due to temporary contracts and cut down on the hours, and even target of racialization as well as social stigmatization (Stepick et al. 1994; Gomberg-Muñoz 2010, 2011).

According to Alex Stepick et al. (1994) the managers in the restaurant do everything they can to push the limits of immigrant workers, using their dependency of the job to keep lowering the weekly total of hours and the wage. A process that makes the coworkers stand

together and help each other to put up with the structural conditions set by the managers (Stepick et al. 1994:190). On the issue of the significance of the structures in the workplace, Louise Lamphere et al. (1994:18) express that, in their studies of immigrants in three different cities in the United States, they found that the “labor process”, as well as the “structure of management control”, take an essential part in “shaping workers’ experience and responses”.

Rachel H. Adler (2005) presents in an article a rather descriptive study about immigrants from the Yucatan area in Mexico who work in restaurants in Dallas. She describes how the restaurants can be divided into two separate areas with different and independent hierarchies where the dishwashers are at the bottom of the hierarchy at “Back of the House” (Adler 2005:231). According to Adler (2005:232) the dishwashers are the immigrants with limited job experience and English language skills, and thereby they start out as the lowest in the hierarchy in the back of the restaurant. In both “Back of the House” and “Front of the House” the Yucatecan men are present in all of the levels in the hierarchies, except for the top level in both areas (Adler 2005: 231-236).

3.2 The “workers’ agency” approach

Gomberg-Muñoz (2010:295-297) illuminates the situation of undocumented Mexican immigrants working as busboys in a restaurant in Chicago by discussing the relation between structure, agency and culture. She argues that the undocumented workers use a “workers’ agency” to create a culture of “hard work” and “willingness” as a reaction to the structures that form their job and situation. The structural vulnerabilities that the undocumented immigrants are exposed to are financial insecurity, racialization, and social stigmatization.

Gomberg-Muñoz (2010:297) describes how the undocumented workers do what they can to control how they are perceived at the restaurant by doing extraordinary moves, like throwing boxes to each other, which is analyzed with Erving Goffman’s theory on “impression management” (see also Goffman 2006). The undocumented workers present themselves as the stereotype of Mexican workers who stand for “hard work” and “willingness”. In this manner the workers show that they are willing to do what is expected from them, they do extra work, and show that they are better than a white person, which makes them attractive for the employers. These actions also accumulate respect for them, and give them more freedom and autonomy to do the work. Further on she describes how

the undocumented workers create a social identity amongst themselves with norms and work ethics about how Mexicans work. This creates a culture of work that indicates within the group how the individuals should do the work. This phase is where they as a worker's agency create the culture to manage and react on the structures, and subsequently this process ends up reproducing them as stereotypes that are hard-working and subordinate to the regular American worker.

Additionally she argues that the undocumented Mexican workers negotiate their identity, how they perform the work, and how they act, based on the options they have within the national structures (Gomberg-Muñoz 2010:301). It is this process concerning the manner in which migrants use the actions they are able to use and try to manage the structures, in order to better their situations. To do this they form a team and try to move the boundaries – no matter if the eventual output brings negative effects. These actions are what I use in the analysis to give a better understanding of the circumstances, actions, and the output in the dishwashers' working lives.

3.3 Structure

A more theoretical view on the term structure will now be introduced to further illuminate the subject in a clearer form than in the above section.

“The society” and “the person”, are two expressions that have been a popular topic in anthropology and social sciences for decades, and it has been the basis for many discussions as to what forms what (Macionis & Plummer 2008:47-48). The answer is often that the person is somewhat the product of the society, and then again, that the society is the result of the persons and their actions (Hylland Eriksen 2000:78). Another way of analyzing this subject is by using the words “structure” and “action”, which Anthony Giddens (1979, 1984) has evolved a theory of structuration around.

With the theory of structuration, Giddens (ibid) focuses on both structure and action, and how they to some extent work simultaneously and present the duality of structure. Structure is the rules and resources, and is produced by the people and their social actions. Moreover, the structure is maintained as well as changed over time by these social actions, and it is in basic the structures that give meaning to the actions in the society. Thereby the actions, performed by the people, in some way form the overall structural conditions. Furthermore these same structures additionally form the preconditions for social actions, as they supply the conditions for actions to be performed.

The fundamental in Giddens' view on structure is therefore an explanation on how people in one way chose their own actions, but simultaneously are led on to do certain actions by the social structures.

3.4 Social networks and social capital

Hylland Eriksen (2000:83) points out, when he illustrates social networks, that the term has become an obvious part of the everyday vocabulary in many societies. Social networks, informal networks, or just networks, are all names for the same, and I believe this underlines how much talk there has been about the subject, and how a lot of people use the word and know the advantages of “networking”. The fact that more and more “normal people” use the term does not make it less interesting, as it invites to study and analyze how people actively use it, and in this case how it is a tool and strategy for some migrants.

“Informal networks”, “transnational social networks”, “chain migration”, and “social capital”, are terms that are repeatedly used as the theoretical framework, by anthropologists and other social scientists, when researching on, and analyzing international migration on the micro level (Castles & Miller 2009:28; Brettell & Hollifield 2008:16). Likewise I also want to use this aspect in analyzing the lives of the migrant dishwashers.

The sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, originally created the term social capital, and it was described as following:

“Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.”
(Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:119)

In the study of migration, social capital is the connections the migrant has from kinship, informal networks, and transnational communities (Hollifield 2008:194). Additionally Castles and Miller (2009:28) clarify:

“Informal networks provide vital resources for individuals and groups, and may be analysed as *social capital* [...], which includes personal relationships, family

and household patterns, friendship and community ties, and mutual help in economic and social matters.” (original italics)

Thereby, the study of social capital is often put together with the role of networks, to examine how these networks provide social capital (Brettell 2008:124-125).

4. The dishwashers, employers and social networks

This chapter contains of ethnographic descriptions of the dishwashers, the dishwashing labor system and their use of social networks, based on the empirical data I collected through the interviews. I initiate the chapter with a section that presents an outline of the dishwashers, to let the reader get an idea of the individuals who form the basis of this thesis, with data concerning their country of birth, how they entered Denmark, and how they were recruited to the interviews.

4.1 The informants

To present the informants to the reader in a short and concise manner, I have gathered the dishwashers in a table (see Table 1 on page 18), to show some personal information about every one of them, were it at the same time is possible to compare them. The arrows (→) in some of the fields in the table show a development by time. As an example, informant C entered Denmark on a tourist visa, but after that visa had expired he stayed illegally in Denmark for several years until he obtained a work permit.

Additionally I will make a short description of the remaining three informants. Both informant X and informant Y are restaurateurs who run several restaurants in Copenhagen. They both have migrant dishwashers working at each of their restaurants, and have had different cleaning companies employed over the years. At the time of the research informant X employed the cleaning company that informant Q runs – with the help from former dishwasher informant D. The other restaurateur, informant Y, employed another cleaning company, CC, whom I was unable to interview.

4.2 Being a dishwasher

The dishwashers are in this section presented by introducing a typology that I use throughout the thesis, to show how these dishwashers both differ and are comparable in the

different aspects of their lives. Moreover I illustrate how the dishwashers perceive their jobs.

Table 1: Informants

| Informant: | A | B | C | D | E |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|---|
| Type: | The Student | The Student | The Illegal → The Legal Resident | The Illegal → The Legal Resident | The Green Card Holder |
| Country: | Nepal | Nepal | Pakistan | Bangladesh | Pakistan |
| Legal status: | Student visa | Student visa | Tourist visa → Illegal → Work permit | Illegal → Asylum | Green card work permit |
| Year of entrance: | 2008 | 2010 | 2005 | 2006 | 2008 |
| Civil status: | Girlfriend in Nepal | Single | Fiancée in Pakistan | Single | Single |
| Educational level: | BA and AP degree from Nepal → Taking a BA in DK | AP degree from Nepal → Taking a BA in DK | High school education from Pakistan | Master of Business Administration from Bangladesh | Master in Software Engineer from Sweden |
| Recruited to me by: | A friend of mine | Informant A | Informant X (his boss) | Informant Q (his boss) | Informant C |
| Works for: (cleaning company) | CC | None (works direct) | Informant Q → None (works direct) | Informant Q | Unemployed |
| Workplace: | Dishwasher at restaurant (run by informant Y) | Dishwasher at cultural institution | Dishwasher/cook at restaurant (run by informant X) | Dishwasher at restaurant (run by informant X) → Barista at café + Runs a cleaning company with informant Q | Dishwasher at different places → Unemployed |

4.2.1 The four types of dishwashers

When hearing about male migrant dishwashers working in the restaurants of Copenhagen they might appear as a homogenous group. However, the research made it clear to me that they differ, and not all came with the same experiences, backgrounds and plans for their futures. Subsequently I understood that the way they enter Denmark is an indication of their life in Denmark. Not because the entry defines the person, but moreover because the way they entered Denmark illuminates who they are, in terms of what possibilities they had and have. The four types of dishwashers based on their legal statuses in Denmark are: (1) *The Student*, (2) *The Illegal*, (3) *The Legal Resident*, and (4) *The Green Card Holder*. The four types described below are characterizations of dishwashers, and they are not meant as groupings, as it is my perception that they interact and network across the types. The typology was in some manner originally emic. When I conducted the interviews I learned, that one of the first things the dishwashers mentioned about their friends, when they told me about them, was their legal status, which made me realize that the dishwashers could be put together in a typology using their legal status. I am aware of the fact that I have only interviewed a limited amount of dishwashers, even though, I believe that these types form a general picture of the many persons from South Asia that come to Denmark and eventually find themselves working as dishwashers in restaurants all over Copenhagen.

The Student

If a person from a country outside Europe wants to study in Denmark, he has to pay a considerable amount of money. When he has been admitted to an international program at a school in Denmark, and paid the tuition fee most importantly, he can apply for a student visa, which implies a temporary residence permit in Denmark. The student visa allows the person to live in Denmark in the period estimated to finish the study or program, and furthermore he is allowed to work 15 hours a week (nyidanmark.dk – 1). The schools these persons attend are different types of business colleges located in rural areas of Zealand, where they take a BA degree in business related subjects.

The Student has used the policy regarding foreign students to enter Denmark, but containing the student visa is not simply a way to enter Denmark for him. The classes he is following at the international schools in Denmark have been carefully selected out of personal interests and career opportunities. In order to get admitted he needs to have some kind of experience with the subject he wants to study, and then it takes a lot of paper work

and visits to the Danish embassy to be able to start at a school in Denmark. Many of the students already have a degree of some sort from their homeland, had a study related job and good career opportunities. In other words, this procedure takes a lot of dedication, and the persons also have great references and opportunities in their home countries. Some of the students even receive economic help from their parents while finishing their studies in Denmark – a detail that says a lot about their economical and social status in their homelands.

Eventually, when *The Student* has arrived in Denmark, and gotten familiar with the classes he takes, the country and the infrastructure, he uses his social network to get a job as a dishwasher. Like the case of informant A, who first spent six months settling in Denmark and studying, and then he got his friends to set him in contact with some persons who could give him a job. When the persons in this type realize how much money they can earn by working in Denmark they start working many hours a day. First of all, the money that they earn are for paying for the costs for their stay and the tuition fee, but secondly they save the money and occasionally send them as remittances for their families back home. They mostly skip the classes, and only do a minimum of schoolwork, so they have time to work as much as possible. The entire month they work six to seven days a week, and only the persons who are very dedicated to their studies just work in the weekends. Working this amount of hours is more than what they are allowed to, so they note the legal 60 hours, that they are allowed to work a month on a student visa, and pay tax from them. The remaining hours they get paid in black money at a lower hourly pay. The nights the persons who live far away from Copenhagen are working, they sleep on the couch at friends' places nearby their work. Some of the persons that live in dorms by their schools do not even stay there, and instead they use the entire week at friends' places so they can work all week.

The Illegal

The illegal dishwashers do not remain illegal, as they strive to get legal residency in one way or the other, but this type describes them in the period they are staying illegally in Denmark. They have various methods to enter the country and a range of tactics to become legalized over time. Entering Denmark is usually a long and lonesome journey that they preferred not to talk about in the interviews, and instead they told general stories about how people migrate illegally to Denmark.

When they have settled in Denmark, with a dishwashing job and a place to stay, they start the process of getting legalized. Lying their way through the Danish legal system and using their creativity, they get the legal permission to stay in Denmark. In example a dishwasher (informant C) was working for a cleaning company (informant Q) in a restaurant, and after a couple of years of working there the dishwasher went to the restaurateur (informant X) to get some help. He told the restaurateur that his work permit had expired, despite the fact that he had never had one, and that he had been staying illegally in Denmark since the day his tourist visa expired, years prior to this event. The restaurateur wanted to help him, and knew how hard-working he was, and how he always did extra things like helping the cooks, so he decided to hire him. The dishwasher got employed as a cook, since the Danish government would not allow for him to stay in Denmark if they had just employed him as a dishwasher. After getting the contract and a work permit he still works as a dishwasher, but now he has legal residency and gets paid 32.000 DKK a month, which is a lot more than any other dishwasher in Copenhagen. Another example is a dishwasher (informant D) who gained Danish citizenship after several years in Denmark. He went to seek asylum by pretending he was from Burma and did neither knew any English nor the alphabet, while the truth was that he was from Bangladesh, had a Master of Business Administration, and spoke English fluently.

When cleaning companies hire an illegal immigrant as a dishwasher they require that the dishwasher pays tax of a certain amount of hours so they avoid a zero in the accountings. The total of hours the illegal dishwashers pay tax of is around 50, and the remaining hours they work a month they get paid in black money, at a smaller amount per hour. In order to pay tax, the illegal dishwasher gives up the information of a friend who is staying legally in Denmark and has a work permit, so he pays tax in his name and gets the salary on his banc account, which then is forwarded to the dishwasher.

The Legal Resident

This type, *The Legal Resident*, represents the development of *The Illegal*. Which means, that when *The Illegal* one day gets legalized, then he changes into *The Legal Resident*. I have done this division of the same persons over time based on the shift in their legal status, because I found that they change how they act when they get legal residency. *The Legal Resident* is thereby a person that entered Denmark illegally, and then in some way has obtained a legal residency, and therefore he once was *The Illegal*. The type, *The Legal Resident*, contains of people who have permanent or temporary residency. In some cases,

when they for example get a work permit, their legal residency is temporary, and in other cases the residency is permanent, because they get asylum or the like. Regardless of the timeframe in Denmark the persons in this type have with their legal status, they act similar towards their job situation and their social network, as I will return to and elaborate in the later sections and chapters.

The Green Card Holder

The third type of dishwasher is the person who holds a Green Card Work Permit to Denmark. A Danish Green Card is given to people who wish to come to Denmark to seek jobs. In order to qualify for the above-mentioned legal status, the candidate has to have the skills to seek jobs that are on an official list with professions that request employers in Denmark. This means they need to have the right educational and language skills to obtain the points that are required to get the job seeking permission and work permit. The duration of a green card is usually three years (nyidanmark.dk – 2).

The persons that end up in this position are ambitious and have some kind of university degree from their home countries, Denmark or other European countries. They came to Denmark to get a good job with the use of their education, and had high expectations to themselves and the job market. They had been told that the job market for whatever jobs they were aiming for was growing and in need of workforce. Months pass, and then they realize the nonexistent chances of getting a job as a migrant, when they are competing with rising numbers of unemployed Danes. Knowing that more months can pass without getting a good job, they turn to their social networks and get them to help find a job for them, regardless of what kind of job. Soon they have a dishwashing job to pay the monthly expenses, while they use their spare time to get the job they are dreaming of, where they can make use of their education.

The Green Card Holder often stops working for weeks as a dishwasher, because he feels he is too good for the job. For example informant E told me that he works as a dishwasher in periods, but keeps quitting, and then when money are short he starts working as a dishwasher once again, then he stops again after a while, and then comes back to work again when he faces the lack of money once again. A lot of dishwashers with a green card work permit have also studied in Denmark on a student visa prior to their current situation, so the new legal situation is a way to extend their stay in Denmark and try to reach a higher level; getting a good job.

4.2.2 *Selecting Denmark and planning the future*

All of the informants expressed to me that the choice about going to Denmark was a personal choice they had made. There was not anyone who had told them they had to go to Denmark, or forced them to leave in order to send back remittances for the remaining persons. The majority of the informants even told me that their family had tried to keep them from leaving. For example the student, informant A, explained to me that his parents did not see any reason for him to travel across the globe and settle in Denmark, and that his girlfriend was not happy about the idea, so they had tried to convince him to stay.

Initially, persons in the type *The Student* told me that the reason for choosing Denmark, instead of any other European country, was because it had an education that they wanted to follow. However, further along in the interviews with the persons that characterize *The Student* I got to hear another side of the story. I was told about how they already had transnational social networks of considerable size before they even left their homelands, which made me understand the importance of the social network in the decision-making. Those people in their transnational social networks who had already gone to Denmark were the major reason to why they chose to leave, and why the choice came upon Denmark. For example informant B, who was to become *The Student*, had heard several stories about the good life in Denmark and had been encouraged to come himself by this transnational social network containing of classmates, cousins and friends who had migrated to Denmark. Besides this, the persons in the type *The Student* also told me that they had no futures in their home countries, and this was despite the fact that they had good and study related jobs before they left. They could not satisfy with the premises of their countries and were therefore striving for a life in an advanced country. What kind of jobs they expected to get, and how they saw their futures in Denmark before they came, I could not get them to talk about. I have a sense that they were not aware that they would end up as a dishwasher, as I learned that it is customary to lie to everyone in the home country about what kind of jobs they have.

The reason *The Illegal* and thereby also *The Legal Resident* ended up in Denmark seems more like the story of a tourist that ends up staying in a country he has fallen for. Starting in Southern Europe, *The Illegal* travels around on a journey to find a suitable place to settle. Traveling his way up north through Europe he eventually found himself in Denmark, where he settled because he preferred this country and the capital to the others. For example informant C explained to me that he had found Denmark attracting, as he

liked the peaceful and laidback atmosphere, and how the capital was spacious and less crowded than what he came from in his homeland and had experienced in other European capitals. As for why *The Illegal* even left his home country, it was to try to build a life in an advanced country, but it was neither in this case possible for me to find out what expectations they had come with. To find out if they had come for economical reasons I asked whether they send remittances, and I was told that it was only for special occasions like at times of festivals in their home countries, but nothing they were obligated to do.

The persons that portray *The Green Card Holder* decided on going to Denmark, or staying in Denmark after taking an education, because they found the job market good and attractive for people with their educations. Their decisions about coming to Denmark were partly based on that they knew persons in Denmark who had encouraged them to come, and partly because it was a country with a promising job market, so these two aspects overruled the choice of other European countries. Informant E explained to me, that he had left his homeland to chase the dream of getting a good job in the West, as he was not willing to settle for a good job at home when he had the opportunity of working in a place like Denmark. In addition, *The Green Card Holder* has the same attitude towards choosing Denmark as *The Student* had. He did not see a future for him in his home country and wanted a good job in the peaceful country of Denmark, where jobs are easy to get – but the reality turned out to be a different story.

All the dishwashers I interviewed expressed to me that they came from the middle class, had good educations in their homelands and most of them even had good jobs. In other words, they could have managed pretty well if they had stayed in their homeland. Instead they traveled across the globe to chase a dream about getting a good life in an advanced country.

Getting a scholarship to a university like Copenhagen Business School, Niels Brock or British universities is what *The Student* dreams of in the future. But in the far future he does not have any exact plans, except that his future does not lie in his home country. He just wants to live anywhere in Europe, where he can get a good job on the basis of his education.

As for goals for the future *The Illegal* and *The Legal Resident* want to stay in Denmark and form a future in the country. In the near future they want to be part of a union, so they have the same rights in the labor system as Danish born citizens. They dream of meeting a Danish girl, or bringing a wife from their own countries, and start their own business to support their families, but most of all they just want to stay in Denmark.

The Green Card Holder dreams of a future in Denmark, and to fulfill the goals he came with – to get a good job, settle in Denmark and get a wife.

The dishwashers who hold the legal rights to re-enter Denmark travel back to visit the family in their country of birth with widespread frequency. This also depends on the civil status of the dishwasher, and if he has a girlfriend it is more often than the ones who are single. Additionally, the dishwashers who have partners in their home countries dream of getting her to Denmark, but as the girls do not want to settle in Denmark, the dishwashers just plan on getting her to come visit, and then when she is in Denmark they will make her fall for the life in Denmark, just like they did as informant C and informant A expressed to me.

All of the dishwashers spoke fluently English, and managed their way through the day in English, but they all had a wish and a plan to attend a language school and learn Danish, to make it easier to communicate with Danes both professionally and to get easier incorporated into the Danish society.

4.2.3 Scaling the jobs

The dishwashers are aware of the fact that working as a dishwasher is hard work. And when it comes to hard work, the dishwashers have an internal hierarchy or scale of better and worse workplaces for dishwashers. At the bottom of the scale are the hardest jobs and then the easier and more laid-back jobs are at the top. However, all of the jobs are hard work, it is just a matter of the degree of hard work. One way the dishwashers compare their jobs and scale the level of hard work is by telling about how many cooks the dishwasher is cleaning for. The frightening example is a Michelin honored restaurant in Denmark that has 18 cooks for one dishwasher, and he has to handle three machines at the same time to get the work done.

That being said, they do not compete with each other on who has the hardest job, because they all want something more comfortable. The dishwashers always want to avoid the hardest jobs, but at the same time they just want to get whatever is available at the beginning of their stay in Denmark. When they hear about certain places that are extra tough, they are thankful for the job they have, and at the same time they feel pity for the one who does the work. If a dishwasher tells the other dishwashers about how hard his job is, he is most certain to gain empathy and make them feel pity for him, as they all know how hard a dishwashing job can be, and they have all heard the stories about the worst places to work.

Extra hard work is when the dishwasher has many dishwashing machines to manage at one time, if the restaurant is a place that gives the guests a lot of cutlery and glasses to use, or if the restaurant has extra heavy pots and pans. It is also when there are a lot of cooks for one dishwasher, because they provide a lot of dirty cookware each, and if the restaurant manager complains too much about the time the dishwasher uses to do the job. Yet another thing that can make the restaurant a place for extra hard work is the floor plan of the restaurant. If the distance between the kitchen and the dishwashing room is too long, if the space in the dishwashing room is too little or if it simply is poorly equipped. The list is long, and another bullet is, that a restaurant that has too much cutlery to be polished as well qualifies in the category of extra hard work.

On the other hand a good job is a place where they are allowed to work in a more humane speed, but moreover it is a place where they are seen as a person and preferably as an equal coworker. The dishwashers that have the best jobs, where they have a good relationship with the staff and the boss and do not have to do too hard of a job, almost have heroic status between fellow dishwashers. Informant C is an example of this, as he is well paid, friendly with his coworkers and has a relatively easy dishwashing job. The job might be tough and hard work at some times, but the fact that he is respected, employed on full time and allowed to take breaks in his work time overweighs the hard work. He is famous in the dishwasher circles for his achievement in getting this job.

The list of bad and good jobs is not just black and white, as some of the factors that weigh down can be overruled by the positive properties of a restaurant – which makes the scale somewhat subjective for most of the dishwashers, as the main factors are the work pace, and the personal relation between the dishwasher and the bosses or the remaining staff.

All of the dishwashers I interviewed seemed satisfied with their workplaces, given the circumstances, and they all told stories about places they had been in the beginning of their stay, or places they had heard of, where it was extra hard work. They all had a feeling that they were privileged compared to other dishwashers' workplaces and felt happy with the conditions.

4.3 Going for the hungry ones

This section focus on the dishwasher labor system and the use of migrant dishwashers from the perspective of the employers, and I show how the employers value the dishwashers with the terminology of *hungry* and *Danish*.

4.3.1 *The use of cleaning companies*

Most dishwashers in Copenhagen are working for cleaning companies who then supply dishwashers to restaurants. The cleaning company works as a middleman between the restaurants and the dishwashers, in other words, the cleaning company cooperates with certain restaurants and make sure they have a good dishwasher at each restaurant.

In the interview with informant Q he told me that he, in the cleaning company he runs, only has a handful of dishwashers in his staff. The demand on dishwashers vary, so he keeps it limited to be sure he does not have to lay off anyone, and in this way he only has people in his staff he knows are good and reliable. Further on he told me that he mostly has a demand on dishwashers that is bigger than the size of his staff, so he has an agreement with a temp agency that helps him provide the dishwashers needed.

When restaurants use a cleaning company it is helpful for them in many ways, the two restaurateurs described to me. The responsibility lies on the cleaning company, so if the restaurant is dissatisfied with a dishwasher they contact the cleaning company, and then they make sure they have another dishwasher at the restaurant as soon as possible. Additionally the restaurants do not have to deal with dishwashers calling in sick, as the job of finding a temporary dishwasher is the responsibility of the cleaning company. In practice though, the dishwashers do the job handling by themselves, and send a friend as stand-in when they cannot come to work. Both restaurateurs explained that the greatest reason for a restaurant to hire a cleaning company, instead of having the dishwashers employed directly, is putting the organizational responsibility aside for someone else.

The restaurants pay the salary to the cleaning company, who then takes some of the money and pays the remaining salary to the dishwasher. The restaurateurs told me they pay 130 DKK pr. hour, and informant Q, from the cleaning company, specified that 100 DKK of the salary go to the dishwasher per hour, including holiday allowance.

Whether the dishwashers have a residence permit or not, is not always something the restaurants go into. One of the restaurateurs said to me that he came into trouble with the first cleaning company he employed. After the cleaning company had been working for him for several years, the tax authorities made a raid in his restaurants to figure out some

things about the cleaning company and dishwashers he had employed. That night four dishwashers were working in the different restaurants the restaurateur runs, and when the tax authorities came to the restaurants, three dishwashers disappeared, and the fourth did neither know his name nor whom he worked for. This incident made the restaurateur start paying attention to, if the dishwashers had work permit, so he hired a new cleaning company he had been recommended to use, and asked them to make sure the paperwork always was legal. Now the restaurateur has had several cleaning companies employed, and since then it has been part of the cooperation that they check up on the paperwork. The other restaurateur told me the same thing about how he employs cleaning companies, and both of the restaurateurs made notice that they do not check whether or not the dishwashers do have work permits, they simply trust the cleaning companies to keep everything on track.

In the interviews with the dishwashers, as well as the employers, I discovered that various illegal acts are performed in the business of dishwashers. A lot of dishwashers work without a work permit, and the persons who have a limited work permit from a student visa exceed the permitted monthly hours. Consequently, black money and legal offenses form part of the job for the majority of the dishwashers. However the cleaning companies make the dishwashers pay tax to a certain extent. If the dishwashers are illegal and do not hold a tax card, they will have to borrow one from a friend, so they are able to pay tax of a quantity of the hours they work. This is basically a kind of cover. In this way the cleaning company will have some hours to put in the accountings, so they at least have some hours from the dishwashers to report for the tax authorities instead of a zero.

4.3.2 A good dishwasher

A restaurateur told me that he, for a short period several years ago, had Danish students functioning as dishwashers at his restaurant. He specified to me how they had a great deal of trouble with Danish dishwashers. They felt the job was too hard, they wanted breaks, complained about the expectations, the work environment, the workload, and every time they called in sick the restaurant managers had trouble finding a stand-in. After turning the subject with his friends from the restaurant business, the restaurateur found out that employing male migrant dishwashers would eliminate all of the problems they had with the Danish dishwashers, and soon he initiated doing business with a cleaning company. With this solution he had the organizational benefits of hiring a cleaning company with migrant dishwashers, so he would get better dishwashers to work for him.

As well as the dishwashers have ways of scaling the workplaces; the cleaning companies also have a clear understanding of what makes a good dishwasher. In the interviews with the persons that organize the dishwashers in a cleaning company, I learned that they in the business of dishwashers look at how *Danish* or *hungry* [my translation for “sulten”] a person is when they determine if one would be a good dishwasher in the recruitment of hard work. This valuation of dishwashers is not a typology, but rather a scale valuing how the dishwashers approach the job, and thereby the product of their labor. *Hungry* is a term informant Q who runs a cleaning company used in his interview to state what makes a good dishwasher. In addition, he told me, that the more *Danish* a person is, the worse he will be at the dishwashing job.

At the top of the scale is what they call the *hungry* person. Being *hungry* defines people who are industrious and willing to do the hard work. They work fast, do whatever they are told to, and do not complain about the circumstances. According to the informant that introduced me to this scaling of dishwashers, he is able to see by the looks of people whether they will be good dishwashers or not, and he clarified that the more skinny and literally hungry they are, the better a work they perform. He even said that good and *hungry* dishwashers only come from certain regions like South Asia, as those people come from poor countries and are starving and longing after a better and wealthier life. According to this informant, the most *hungry* persons are the most illegal immigrants who just arrived to Denmark and wish to work as much as possible to earn loads of black money. Therefore, a *hungry* dishwasher is one that requires the least money to do the job, since they get paid by the hour, and because it is cheaper to employ a dishwasher that requests black money at less per hour.

Danish is the opposite of *hungry*. A dishwasher who is *Danish* is one who works slow, and refuses to work under the conditions of hard work in the business of dishwashers. The degree of being *Danish* rises somewhat simultaneously with how much work experience the dishwasher has from Denmark, and how much knowledge he has about the rights in the Danish labor system. The longer a migrant stays in Denmark and achieves this knowledge and legal residence, the worse a dishwasher he becomes. Likewise, the more *Danish* a dishwasher is, the more expensive he is, as he works leisurely and therefore requires more working hours to do the exact same job as a dishwasher who is *hungry*.

Women are in no place working as dishwashers, and the reason for this is the preconception that women cannot handle the hard work and heavy lifting. This conception is both created by the employers, and the fact that no women – Danish or foreign – have

ever tried to get jobs as dishwashers in the restaurants I studied. Informant Q who runs a cleaning company informed me that he has a few women working for him, although they are used as regular cleaners in offices and restaurants.

The physical expectations to a dishwasher are considerable in that they have to work at a high pace for several hours straight without any breaks, so employers prefer dishwashers who know little about their labor rights or Danish work environment policies.

4.4 Using the network

Networking has a great impact on the lives of the migrant dishwashers, however the four types of dishwashers also have different attitudes towards the social networks.

The Student has a preexisting network in Denmark when he arrives, since numerous friends and relatives from his country of origin are living in Denmark. Persons who attended the same schools, acquaintances from the hometown or family members instantly form the social network, and soon they are part of those people's social networks as well. As mentioned in "The four types of dishwashers" the student dishwashers that live far away from Copenhagen are relying on friends who live closer to the city, so they can stay overnight. *The Student* does not have any Danish friends, but wish to get some, so he could get to know the Danish culture, and have someone to speak Danish to, so he has a reason to learn Danish, as both informant A and B explained to me.

A similar story applies to *The Green Card Holder* who also has a preexisting network prior to arrival in Denmark. In his case the network also contains of different sorts of connections from his home country. Additionally, the networks quite effortlessly become a national network for *The Student* and *The Green Card Holder* given that it is founded in the connections they have gathered throughout their life in their home countries. However, by time both of the types get further migrant friends from other parts of the world when they study with people or meet them in other ways. *The Green Card Holder's* attitude towards the network is alternative though. He uses the network of fellow migrants when needed and live with friends in a position similar to his own, who contain a student visa, green card or work permit, but he does not satisfy with this. Facing his struggles in getting a job, and being aware of the fact that a lot of people get a good job through networking, he is eager to expand his network to Danes. Getting Danish friends would make it possible for him to use them as references, or the dream scenario, which would be that they knew someone who was searching for a new employee with the exact same education that he

had. Last, but not least, this Danish friend might even be able to get him an internship so he could show the company how excellent an employee he is, and get them to hire him, or at least write him a recommendation letter. All this if he could just get some Danish friends.

Both *The Student* and *The Green Card Holder* have tight bonds in their social networks, which they feel they have to help no matter what. This is due to the fact that they have known these persons for a long time, as it is a transnational social network, and therefore they cannot just abandon these persons.

The Illegal and *The Legal Resident* arrive to Denmark alone without any significant connections, and if they got to know some on the way, they are in the same illegal situation as them without a job or a place to stay. They start to get in contact with random people who recommend them to try out different ways to get jobs. For instance, informant C contacted some migrants on the train, who then helped him get started. Soon *The Illegal* knows people around Copenhagen and has a big network of people, both illegal immigrants and legal residents, who have for instance helped him get a job, but also people who depend on him to help him. Most importantly, *The Illegal* is relying on migrants with work permits so he can work in their names and with this method pay tax from some of his income.

When *The Illegal* by time evolves into *The Legal Resident* he changes his attitude towards the network. He skips the illegal friends and replaces them with other migrant persons who are legally in Denmark, such as persons with a work permit, green card, student visa. In this context, one of the persons in the type *The Legal Resident*, informant D, told me that after he got asylum, he did not like to hang out with the illegal persons he used to be friends with, so he cut off all the illegal friends in his network. Moreover, *The Legal Resident's* attitude towards the illegal immigrants are based on, that he does not want to use time helping the illegal friends. Now that he has become a legal resident he wants to use the benefits from the life he has worked several years to obtain. For example, informant C who obtained a work permit and a good dishwashing job is famous in the circles of migrant dishwashers, and many admirers turn to him for advice. Nevertheless he just wants to live his life and enjoy his legal status, so he does not like to have illegal friends, as they always want him to help obtain the same status. As well as *The Legal Resident* wants to get rid of the illegal friends and replace them with legal residents, he also prefers to limit his friends and keep it down to a few close friends, instead of the big network with many connections. Additionally informant C explained to me that he had cut

it down to three or four friends, so he just had few friends he saw often, instead of the big groups he used to be around when he was illegal. Besides, *The Legal Resident* wish to have Danish friends, however they never seem to be as close as the migrant friends he has, and are therefore more of connections than close friends.

One thing all of the three types have in common is the attitude towards the network when it comes to the dishwashing labor. They have all used the social networks to get jobs as dishwashers. When one of the students, informant B, had been in Denmark for a month he asked a few of his connections who already had jobs to help him get a job, and within a week he found himself employed as a dishwasher. Informant D, who holds a green card, had contacted another dishwasher, informant C, because he knew that he had helped many persons to get a job as a dishwasher, and so informant D helped informant C at his work for two weeks to learn how to do the job as a dishwasher. It is common that a newly arrived migrant will go to work with one in the network to learn the routines from a trained dishwasher. This way the dishwasher-to-be acquires some experience and will be able to go into the business of dishwashers a lot easier than one without any practice. Moreover, the dishwashers also use their social networks to get someone to be substitute for them at their work, when they are not able to come themselves. Furthermore, the dishwashers get friends to come and help them do the job, to make the work easier for them. With this solution they do not have to hurry as much to get the things done in the timeframe the restaurant manager has set for them to do the job. Afterwards, the employed dishwasher splits the paycheck with the extra dishwasher who has been helping him.

Most of the dishwashers do not even tell the truth to their families about their occupation. They do not want their families to feel shame or to be concerned. Instead they lie about their employment and tell their family that they have better and more advanced occupations. As mentioned before, *The Green Card Holder* often quits his job as dishwasher when he cannot take the humiliation anymore, but the regular story to tell the family in this situation is that he simply has temporary employments. In this way he explains why he spends a lot of time without employment, and at the same time convinces them that he has the sort of jobs he is qualified for with his educational skills. These lies are collectively kept, and everyone covers for each other. The girlfriends back home do not get to hear the truth until they arrive in Denmark. Brothers and sisters might by time get to know the reality, but by no means will the parents get to know, as all of the dishwashers I interviewed did not want their parents' hearts to be broken at any time. However, this

collective lie also tightens the strings in the social networks when they have to cooperate to not reveal their occupations to the persons in their home countries.

5. The structural conditions

I will now review the information I have gathered from the interviews in the perspective of the theoretical concepts presented earlier in the thesis.

5.1 The legal status

Other studies conducted about migrant labor in the service industries are, as I have exemplified in chapter three, mainly focusing on undocumented Latin American immigrants in the United States, and they are often described as homogenous groups (Gomberg-Muñoz 2010, 2011). My study has another geographical view on the subject, both regarding the sending countries as well as the receiving country. Moreover, the dishwashers I interviewed were not identical, as I have illustrated by using the typology with the four types; *The Student*, *The Illegal*, *The Legal Resident*, and *The Green Card Holder*. This typology shows how some of the dishwashers are similar and can be grouped in types according to the legal status. Additionally, the typology is used to show a pattern in how the persons with different legal statuses differ in particular aspects of their everyday lives. I therefore argue, that it is important to pay notice to the different legal statuses and the different visas the migrants make use of. I have found that the specific structural conditions in the receiving country are significant in my research, to help reach an understanding of the migrants' personal choices, and to be able to see a pattern in the choices they make in their everyday lives. The different ways to enter Denmark are important in determining the different types of dishwashers, because national structures in the receiving country define the possibilities the migrants have, and add a dimension that differentiates the types of migrants. Therefore I put a special focus on the exact legal status of the dishwashers, and encourage other anthropological scholars to do the same, if the migrants who are subject to the research make use of different visas and legal statuses.

5.2 Status in the social network

The legal system marks each of the dishwashers with a different label, for example "student visa", "undocumented", "green card", "work permit" or "asylum" when they are

in Denmark. But the legal status seems to be more than a name in a database. I experienced during the interviews, that these legal statuses in a manner form how the dishwashers are identified in their social network in Denmark. The dishwasher's legal status defines how the other members in his social network perceive him as a migrant, as the legal status is an indication of what he has achieved in Denmark, and how much knowledge he has about the life in Denmark. In example, *The Illegal* requests someone more experienced to help him, and preferably someone who has done what he strives for and obtained a legal residency. *The Illegal* is therefore eager to get *The Legal Resident* to help him get legalized. In this way the legal status can also be seen as a sort of status in a hierarchy, where *The Illegal* is at the bottom, as he does not have much knowledge about the life in Denmark to give others, and at the top of the hierarchy is the most desirable to have in the social network; *The Legal Resident*. This means, that these legal statuses give them a certain position in their social network. An example of this is that informant C, who is classified as *The Legal Resident*, told me that many illegal migrants turn to him, because they admire his success by getting employed with the highest salary in town for a dishwasher.

Nevertheless, the legal status also defines the dishwashers the other way around. Their identification with the legal status not only accumulate special needs, it gives them some freedoms too. A way of putting it could be that the legal status legitimates the dishwasher to have a certain attitude towards the persons in his social network. Therefore, the way he treats the other persons depends on where he is positioned in the hierarchy I introduced above, as well as where the other members of the social network are positioned. An example is, that informant D, in the type *The Legal Resident*, does not like to hang around the illegal persons, as they constantly need advise and help to get a job, get a better job, or get legalized. Since he already has a good job and a Danish residency, he does not need the persons classified as *The Illegal* in his social network. Therefore he skips the friendships with *The Illegal* and focuses on just having legal friends like *The Student*, *The Green Card Holder*, and persons like him; *The Legal Resident*.

Consequently, if the dishwashers have a specific legal status, they act in a way that the legal status allows them to do, and if the legal status changes, they also change their attitude towards the members in their social network. For instance *The Legal Resident* once was *The Illegal*, and these two persons accumulate different relations to the social networks regarding their legal status, in terms of who wants to be friends with them, and whom they do not want to be friends with. If they have a specific legal status, they act in a

way that the status allows them to do, and if the legal status changes, they also change their attitude towards the social network. The legal status defines the dishwashers in that it brings some needs, like some of the statuses make them very dependent of specific persons in the social network.

The hierarchy of the dishwashers' social statuses based on their legal statuses, that I just presented, is more complex though. It is important to pay notice to how long the dishwashers have been in Denmark too. The ultimate connection *The Illegal* can have in his social network is *The Legal Resident*. However, if *The Illegal* is newly arrived, then the help from another *The Illegal* that has been in Denmark for longer can also be valuable, and the later would therefore be positioned higher in the hierarchy than the newly arrived who would be at the very bottom. Additionally I can conclude that the newly arrived migrants, in each of the types are not at much help to anyone, but even though, they manage to have a social network after all.

The Student and *The Green Card Holder* do not exactly fit into the aforementioned hierarchy of dishwashers. Both of these types have a legal status that they are satisfied with at the moment, so they do not need anyone to help them get legalized. Then again, they do need help to get a job. If *The Student* and *The Green Card Holder* are newly arrived, then they want anyone with work experience and knowledge about how to get a job to help them. Furthermore, *The Green Card Holder* is more complicated. He strives for a good job where his educational background can be useful, and to help him get this job, he wants Danish friends, so they can be his reference, as informant E described to me. However, the reality is that informant E has difficulties in getting any Danish friends because, as he expressed to me; the Danes are very reserved. The same contradiction that I described in the relation between *The Illegal* and *The Legal Resident*, is thereby present in the social life of *The Green Card Holder* as the persons he wants in his social network to aid him, do not want to form part of his social network.

The legal status that the dishwasher has, combined with his experience from Denmark, then defines his social life in some matter. Regarding the dishwasher's legal status and experience from Denmark, he uses the social network in a specific way. He requests persons with a certain status in the hierarchy, and at the same time he has a specific attitude towards the other persons, based on his own status in the hierarchy.

Subsequently the dishwasher's relation to the members in the social network changes if he rises in the hierarchy by obtaining a better legal status, like going from *The Illegal* to *The Legal Resident*. Likewise his status in the hierarchy rises if he simply stays in

Denmark for a period and obtain work experience, even though he remains the same legal status.

What I have explained in this section also means, that the dishwashers are very much aware of social capital. They might not know the term social capital, but they unquestionably know what benefits there is in having the right social capital in their social network. For the dishwashers in my research it was common knowledge, that it is their friends, and in academic terms their social capital, that can help them and lead them to a better life in Denmark. This has nothing to do with their situation and goals in Denmark. However, they all depend heavily on the social networks to help them advance in the hierarchy and reach their goals.

5.3 Uniting and dividing

Gomberg-Muñoz (2010) argues that the undocumented immigrants in her research cultivate an agency to manage, and deal with the structures they encounter at their work. I will not indicate that the dishwashers in my study create an agency, but instead I will show and discuss how they make explicit use of the social network, to get to Denmark, manage their job situation, as well as try to get legalized. The individual dishwashers make use of the social network in many regards to manage and transcend the structures as I argue throughout this chapter.

As I described in chapter four, *The Student* and *The Green Card Holder* were most likely part of a transnational social network before they migrated, and partly made the decision on going to Denmark based on recommendations and encouragements from persons who were already in Denmark. Apart from the encouragements, they also had help to figure out the Danish work or educational system, and *The Student* got help to find a suitable school and a place to live. As an example, one of the students, informant A, explained to me that he had talked to about ten friends living in Denmark about going, and they told him that the educational system in Denmark was good, so he decided to come. For *The Green Card Holder* and *The Student*, the importance of the social network in their migration process already started before they even arrived in Denmark.

Secondly the migrants help each other when they are in Denmark. When, informant A, whom I mentioned above, arrived in Denmark he moved in with some of the persons in the transnational social network, and eventually he went to work with some of his friends so they could train him to become a dishwasher, and help him get a job. These migrants are

conscious about, that to get a job they need help from the social network. Even though the persons in the social network are not able to give them a job, they can still help the migrant get a job, by both setting him in contact with the right people, and to train him for the job as a dishwasher. Hence, the network both provide the right social capital, and can help them achieve the knowledge and training it takes for a newly arrived migrant to get a job as a dishwasher. Additionally, they help each other by letting the other members in their social network move in with them, or let them stay a couple of nights each week. For example, another student, informant B, explained that he sleeps at his cousin's place in the weekends, because the dorm he lives in is too far away from Copenhagen for him to get there after work. Moreover, informant E, who holds a green card, moved in with some persons from his transnational network when he arrived in Denmark, and still lives with them.

The structures that concern the legal and illegal matters are also something a lot of the dishwashers have to deal with. As I describe in chapter four, it is not only *The Illegal* that is forced to deal with the situation of him being an illegal migrant, as the unity in the social network forces the members to help each other – for better and for worse. Like in the case where *The Illegal* needs a tax card for him to use. This strategy for *The Illegal* depends heavily on that the remaining persons in the network do not reveal the true identity of *The Illegal*, which makes it a group effort. Although, they do not only have to cover for the dishwashers, they also have to cover for the cleaning companies, in front of the restaurateurs and managers so it does not show that a dishwasher is illegal, or that there simply is paid tax from part of the salary. In the end, they cover to protect both *The Illegal*, so his legal status is not revealed, and the cleaning company so it does not show that they are employing illegal immigrants. Further, *The Student* depends on that the members of the social network are able to keep his secret from the employers, as he is only allowed to work a certain sum of hours monthly, and therefore do not pay tax from the remaining hours.

These ways of getting away with the illegal matters are therefore a group effort. It both makes the dishwashers who are involved in these illegal matters very dependent on people in the network who can help them and keep their secrets, yet this also tightens the bonds between the migrants in the social network. Additionally, the collective lie all of the dishwashers hold for the persons in their home countries, where they do not tell them the truth about their occupations, also tightens the social network, because they stand together and cover for each other in order to maintain a positive picture of their lives in Denmark.

At the beginning *The Illegal* just wants to be friends with everyone, as they all know more about how to get a work and get legalized than he who has just arrived to Denmark. He asks for help from the more experienced dishwashers, to help him improve his situation, by providing him a job and getting him legalized. At the same time, when *The Illegal* has learnt enough, advanced from *The Illegal* to *The Legal Resident*, or gotten a better job, he seems to become more selective in terms of who he has in his social network. Like in the case of informant C who got legalized by getting hired as a cook, and following cut off all his illegal friends. Or, as informant D described to me, that when he got a good job where his coworkers respected him (on the contrary to earlier jobs), he preferred to hang out with Danish acquaintances than with the illegal persons who used to be his friends. Instead *The Legal Resident* basically wants persons in his life that are equal to him in legal status, like *The Student*, and *The Green Card Holder*, or *The Legal Resident* whom is similar to him – since they do not demand as much help as *The Illegal*. This means that he withdraw from the dishwashers who are *The Illegal* like he used to be. Additionally *The Legal Resident* limits the amount of friends he has, so he only has a few close friends, and I believe this is a sign that he thinks that he for now has achieved everything he could with the help of the social network. He came alone to Denmark, obtained a big social network to help him, and now that he has reached a final stage, to become legalized, he cuts of the majority of connections.

On the other hand, this process of withdrawal does not seem to be the case for *The Student* and *The Green Card Holder*. Their social networks are tighter, as many of the members they have in their social networks are long time friends, family members or even just faint connections and relatives from their country of birth. This collective history has the effect that they keep together in these rather national social networks, by which I mean that they primarily consist of persons from their homeland. In these social networks it is still the case that the newly arrived migrants heavily depend on the ones who have been in Denmark for a long time. Except, contrary to the relation between *The Illegal* and *The Legal Resident*, there did not, from the interviews I conducted, appear to be anyone who wanted to cut off some of the members of the social network based on their social status.

However, it was the case that both *The Green Card Holder*, *The Student*, *The Illegal*, and *The Legal Resident* wished to have Danish friends in their social networks, a thing that seemed difficult for all of them, given that even though they had tried for years, none of them had any close Danish friends. Yet, this also reflects that the dishwashers always strive for someone with more experience and knowledge about being in Denmark, and if

there are not any migrants with more knowledge about the life in Denmark, then the next step is a real Dane.

It is thereby apparent that as much as the dishwashers rely heavily on the social networks, and use this network to manage the structural conditions, it is also a social network that has tensions within it. These tensions reflect the contrasting needs, resources and aspirations of the members in migrant networks.

5.4 Acting *hungry*

The dishwashers are in some manner subject to that the employers exploit their situation. Even though, at the same time, these dishwashers are not victims, as they chose the life as a migrant themselves. The employers take advantage of their situation, since the dishwashers are having difficulties in finding a better job. Thereby the dishwashers simply have to put up with the demands to a certain degree. Low wage, the risk of getting replaces, hard work and being at the bottom at the hierarchy at their work places are the thing they get confronted with, likewise many other migrants in the United States, as I pointed out in chapter three. These terms are what I refer to as the structures, as these are the circumstances they deal with when they work as dishwashers.

Like Stepick et al. (1994:190) and Gomberg-Muñoz (2010, 2011) describe that the migrants in their studies help each other in different aspects of the work process, I also found the same processes evident in my study. Even though the dishwashers are employed individually, they, to some extend, use teamwork to deal with the workday and the structures. As I described in chapter four, the dishwashers train each other to be able to do the job and handle the pressure, by going to work with each other before they get a job. Nevertheless, dishwashers who have a job themselves, even help other dishwashers do the dishwashing job on their leisure time. By helping each other in this way, they manage the structural conditions, which in this case is the workload and the work conditions, in their own way. Informant D described to me that when they help each other do the dishwashing labor, so two persons do the job one dishwasher is supposed to do, they feel that the job gets easier. Thereby, they feel that the workload end expectations for the individual dishwasher is minimized by getting someone to help them do the labor. When the dishwasher is able to work in a slower pace, and do not have to carry all of the heavy cookware by himself, he feels like his job is better – and when his job is better, he rises on the scale of good and bad jobs the dishwashers have, because his job gets easier when he

has help. This is despite the fact that they are only paid half of the salary when they get someone to help them, as is gets split, and that the help they get only is temporary. Getting someone to help them do the job makes them able to work more leisurely than on nights when they are alone, and thereby they feel that they have a better job.

This leads me to conclude that the scale the dishwashers have amongst themselves is very similar to the scale the employers have to value a dishwasher as *Danish* or *hungry*. When the dishwashers have a good job they are able to work in a leisurely pace, but the persons who work in this pace are termed as too *Danish* by the employers. It seems like the dishwashers want something that is similar to what the employers call *Danish*. This means in my interpretation that the dishwashers want to be *Danish*, but the employers do not want any *Danish* dishwashers, because they cost too much – so the dishwashers try to give the impression that they have the opposite attitude than what they really strive for. By helping each other do the dishwashing job, they can act *Danish* when working, but with the decreased sum of hours used to do the work, they seem *hungry* to the employers. The employers want someone with the least *Danish* attitude, however, the dishwashers want to become *Danish* – and eventually be independent, by getting another and better job where they are employed as a person in the staff, equally with the other employees, instead of being treated as a migrant at the bottom of the hierarchy at the workplace. Yet, the fact is that these dishwashers have limited possibilities at the job market, as migrants who do not speak Danish. Therefore they temporarily chose the life as a dishwasher, and as a strategy to be the most *Danish* at their work, they use the help from other dishwashers. In this way they manipulate the contradictions between how they want to be able to act at their work, and how the employers want them to do the job. The dishwashers want to be *Danish*, and to get a job they need to be as little *Danish* as possible, so this became their strategy. These actions can thereby be perceived as a way in which these dishwashers negotiate a middle way between trying to be *Danish*, while they are acting *hungry*. This is an aspect that can be compared with the analysis Gomberg-Muñoz (2010:297) does where she argues that they use impression management in order to control how their employers perceive them in order to get more control and autonomy. Even though the case with the dishwashers not is the exact same scenario, I believe that they contain the same concepts; to give the employers what they want in order to maintain a control. In both cases the control implies that the workers get a certain job security by giving the employers what they want, and a little more.

Additionally I found that being *hungry* or being *Danish* is not a constant state, but a situation, which the dishwashers can fall into or move out of as it depends on their needs and willingness, or if they are one or two persons to take the burden the given day. The two categories are mutually exclusive. The more *hungry* one is, the less *Danish*, and being or becoming more *Danish* means that you are less *hungry*. However, as I described above, they can pretend to be very *hungry* by getting someone to help them do the dishwashing job and cut some hours off the workday. I following conclude that the processes of acting *hungry* are all part of a strategy to keep their jobs, get a certain job security, and make sure that the employers find them attractive on the labor market.

In this section I have illuminated how the dishwashers put up with the structural conditions at their workplace, where they keep the sum of hours to a minimum, by making use of the social network and thereby the social capital. Moreover it seems that these dishwashers not only attain control by these acts but following recreate the stereotypes. Like in the study of Gomberg-Muñoz (2010), they recreate the stereotypes, because they act *hungry*, and thereby give the employers what they want, and legitimate the employers to ask for the most *hungry* dishwashers. In an attempt to act upon and manage the structures they actually confirm or even recreate the structures, because when they act *hungry* by getting help from another dishwasher they end up with only half of their already low wage.

6. Conclusion

Male migrant dishwashers from South Asia who work, or have worked, as dishwashers in restaurants around Copenhagen are the research subjects for this bachelor's thesis.

Using a typology throughout the text, I have divided the dishwashers up in four types based on their legal status; *The Student*, *The Illegal*, *The Legal Resident*, and *The Green Card Holder*. I have described how their work as a dishwasher is a temporary step on the way for them, and how they have a high educational level from their home countries. Further I have explained how these dishwashers scale their jobs amongst themselves and go after the easiest jobs where they can work in a somewhat leisurely pace, compared to other and worse workplaces. Additionally I have clarified how the employers value the dishwashers using a scale with the two mutually exclusive factors *hungry* and *Danish*. The preferred dishwashers are the *hungry* since they work fast without complaining. At the contrary end of the scale is the *Danish* dishwasher who works slow, and complain about

the circumstances. Finally I have illustrated their attitudes towards the members in their social networks.

Moreover, I have argued that the dishwashers identify themselves out of the aforementioned legal statuses and that these are a main factor in their social interaction with the members of their social networks. Thereby, I have concluded that they utilize the networks in specific manners, and are utilized by the members of the network in specific manners depending on their legal status. Further, I have argued that there can be put up a hierarchy in their social networks, based on the dishwasher's legal status in addition to the duration of his stay in Denmark, and subsequent how much he has accomplished during his stay. I have argued that the dishwashers use the legal status and the structural conditions in their lives in Denmark, and illustrated why it is important to pay notice to the structural conditions in the receiving country as they indicate the migrants' possibilities and their attitudes towards their social networks.

I have argued that the dishwashers help each other in different aspects of their lives in Denmark and make extensive use of their social networks to manage the structural conditions at their work, as they help each other do the job and thereby ease the workload and working pace. Moreover I have argued that the dishwashers want to be *Danish*. But given the fact that the employers want the dishwashers who are the least *Danish*, the dishwasher help each other do the job to manage these structural conditions that the employers set up for them, by pretending to be *hungry*. They thereby give the employers what they want with this strategy that recreates and confirms the stereotypical demand on good dishwashers in order to keep their jobs, and additionally they create new economical structures when they settle with half of the salary. Furthermore, I have concluded that the scale of *hungry* and *Danish* is mutually exclusive, and that the dishwashers can manage where they are put in the scale depending on how they act at their work.

Finally I have come to the conclusion that there are both uniting and dividing processes present in the social networks depending on the situations and the legal status the persons have within it.

7. Discussion

When using a typology to categorize the informants it can be beneficial to explain some paths in their behavior, and I hope that this has helped the reader to find out how these dishwashers both differ and are alike in their stories and behavioral patterns. Nevertheless,

I am aware that a typology can be causing problems in the presentation of the informants, since it puts the informants in boxes that can be unsuitable. However, I find that the distinction I have done did not leave out any information or “squeezed” informants into categories they did not fit into. Additionally this typology form an important part of my thesis, as it is used throughout the text to illustrate my argument, that their legal status says more about them than just what kind of paperwork they have done to come to Denmark, or if they have done any.

I am aware that the limited number of informants in this study is a product of the sample method used to get in contact with them, and if I had used another sample method I would probably have gotten informants that were more widespread, or even more similar, depending on how I had come in contact with them. Regarding further research, it would be interesting to do the research with more informants, to explore if there are more types of dishwashers than the ones I have presented throughout the thesis.

Another appealing research project within this field is the study of what becomes of these dishwashers. What happens when the ones who have temporary residency find their time in Denmark have run out? Do they go back to their home countries again, or do they find another solution to be able to stay in Denmark? Do any of them get integrated in a Danish social network, get married to a Dane, or learn Danish as they dreamt of? The questions are many, and I would find it interesting to meet these persons again in a couple of years and interview them about their lives, to find out what has changed, and what has remained the same. This study just presents a single step on their way, and therefore it could be beneficial to focus on if the progress in time also means progress in their situation – the future always brings something unexpected.

Finally, a study in the tradition of business anthropology focusing exclusively on the work in the restaurants, with cooks, waiters and dishwashers would be interesting. Here a study of the impression management, teamwork and front stage/backstage by Goffman (2006) would be of use to analyze the social interaction between the coworkers. In this study it would also be illuminated that both the cooks and the waiters are squeezing the dishwashers, as the making of the meals and the social interaction with the guests are the priority by the staff in the restaurants, and then the dishwasher gets left in the middle as he is the easiest to give the extra work.

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