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Cleaners and clients

A study on the contact between cleaners and clients

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Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	6
1.1 Motivation for research problem.....	7
1.2 Research questioning.....	9
1.3 Aim of the study.....	9
1.4 Outline of the study.....	9
2. Methodology.....	10
2.1 Why qualitative research.....	10
2.2 Self positioning.....	11
2.3 Delimitations.....	11
2.4 The informants.....	11
2.5 The interviews.....	12
2.6 Profiling the informants.....	13
2.7 Ethical considerations.....	14
3. Previous research/ Research so far with focus on Sweden.....	15
3.1 History of domestic work in Sweden, RUT's ancestor.....	15
3.2 Previous research in Sweden.....	16
4. Theoretical framework.....	19
4.1 Intersectionality.....	19
4.1.1 Precariousness.....	21
4.1.2 The Denizen.....	22
4.2 Foucauldian Power.....	23
4.2.1 What Foucauldian Power is Not.....	23
4.2.2 The power of the Individual.....	23
4.2.3 “Panopticism is the Fuel of Power”.....	24
4.3 Why Intersectionality and Foucauldian Power as theoretical framework.....	26
4.4 Connecting theory and analysis.....	27
5. Analysis.....	28
5.1 How a cleaner becomes a cleaner.....	28
5.1.1 Precariat/Denizen.....	29
5.2 Contact.....	30
5.2.1 Panopticism and effects on contact.....	31
5.2.2 Contact and awkwardness.....	32
5.3 Issues of trust and safety.....	33
5.3.1 Cleaner's safety.....	34
5.3.2 The presence of the Cleaner in the household and Client's safety.....	34
5.3.3 Truth, knowledge and mechanisms of power.....	35
5.4 “Where are you from?”.....	36
5.4.1 The power of the individual and ethnicity.....	37
5.5 Dissatisfaction dealt with direct contact.....	38
5.5.1 Dissatisfaction and knowledge-power.....	40

5.5.2 The combination of Time/Work/Money.....	41
5.5.3 The language gap.....	41
5.6 “I don't want to talk about it”.....	42
5.6.1 Clients sharing information.....	43
5.6.2 Fear of being a “snob”, guilts and pride.....	44
5.6.3 “I work as a cleaner”.....	44
5.7 Respect.....	46
5.7.1 Respect according to the cleaners.....	46
5.7.2 Respect according to the clients.....	47
5.8 Cheating.....	49
5.9 The missing gender gap.....	51
5.9.1 Good traits.....	51
5.9.2 Bad traits.....	52
5.9.3 Choice of words.....	53
6. Conclusion.....	54
6.1 Possibilities for future research.....	55
7. Bibliography.....	56
8. Appendix.....	59

Abstract

The domestic cleaning business in Sweden has been controversial over a period of time, raising issues of “black” employment, exploitation and harassment of the cleaners. After 2007 the connection of the cleaning businesses with the state through the tax office, is claimed to have bettered the working conditions for the workers, interpreted through statistics, although qualitative researches are still mentioning cases of mistreatment. All hitherto research known has been having the cleaners on focus. With this study, the effort is to shine light to the dispositions of the other unexplored side, that of the clients. Through the relatively mirrored qualitative research with two different groups, that of cleaners and clients, filtered with the theories of Intersectionality and Foucauldian power it is found that the nature of the contact is colored with stories of shame and embarrassment from both sides which affects up to a certain extent the nature of the relationship. It is also found that both groups trust each other on different levels, and that gender does not play a direct role to how the contact is shaped and developed.

Keywords

Cleaning company, clients, intersectionality, Foucault, power, RUT

1. Introduction

In 2007 the Voucher system based law was introduced in Sweden where the household owners are given the capacity to purchase a certain kind of services, (like house cleaning/caretaking, gardening, child minding just to name a few), in half than the original purchasing price while at the same time -in return- they are getting a certain amount of their taxes refunded. The measure was promoted by the authorities/communities/government (Swedish Confederation of Professional Employees) by creating a series of arguments advocating why the measure is to be purchased and some of them was -amongst others- 1. to promote gender equality amongst the couple of purchasers (since the time consuming process of the household cleaning will not be forced on any part of the couple), 2. diminish unemployment to the lower segments of the working class and 3. diminish as much as possible and keep under control the black-work market.

The measure did not meet the expected popularity so later on in 2008 in order for the measure to be more appealing to the potential buyers, the purchasing price of the companies to be hired for the domestic work could be diminished all the way down to 50 percent of its' original price. Ever since, the cleaning business sector has been gradually growing and for the year 2010 in Sweden the cleaning companies are counted to be 6426 with more than 66000 employees. For the year 2011/2012, the cleaning companies seem to have conjoined gains of 26,1 billion SEK. Almega¹ is shortly profiling the people being occupied in the branch and it is mentioned that more than 50 percent of the employees seems to be jumping into the business from a previous state of unemployment. People who have an immigrant background, but more specifically according to Almega are not born in Sweden and work within the cleaning business constitute approximately 46 percent and the majority of the total amount of employees. The cleaning branch has a strong gender division with the 78 percent being women, which brings the profession of cleaner in the eighth position of most woman occupied professions.

As it was mentioned above, according to Almega's statistical data about domestic workers and overwhelmingly large amount of workers in Sweden are women, they have an immigrant background and they usually come into the cleaning branch from a previous state of unemployment. When it comes to examining domestic work in a Swedish framework, it is important to mention that it is a profession highly systemically involved into the local and national welfare's functions creating connections between the Swedish household, the company providing services and the State through the Tax Office through the RUT tax deduction system.

¹ https://www.almega.se/MediaBinaryLoader.axd?MediaArchive_FileID=068fc376-4ff9-4193-ad85-44153b1174fa&FileName=Branschrappport_2013_A.pdf as accessed in 2015-02

Previous researches based in Sweden have been mainly giving agency to the people working in the cleaning business and for this paper they will be named as “cleaners”. Stories of exploitation and different levels of harassment are often brought up in this previous research (Andersson 2000, Lutz 2011, Gavanoas 2010, Gavanoas & Caleman; 2013).

From the other side, the side of the ones that are buying cleaning services and making use of the RUT deduction, for this paper will be named as “clients” previous research of ORSEU and statistics has shown that people with annual earnings more than 400.000 SEK benefited from RUT tax deduction which consists of 11 percent whereas only 3 percent of the households with annual earning less than 400.000 SEK used the RUT tax deduction².

1.1 Motivation for Research Problem

In order for me to explain the initial idea of how this paper started, I need to say that it was out of plain personal experience working as a domestic cleaner myself but more specifically the first thoughts happened after some rather uncomfortable incidents occurred but also the way that I personally chose to reflect on them. Therefore, in order to be honest to the reader and hopefully assisting to reaching a deeper understanding to the reason why I decided to bring this paper to life using those specific methodological approaches, I will proceed explaining those incidents.

The first incident that occurred was that I was charged with theft. It was close to Christmas and there were a number of presents lying all over the house and so I was accused by the client for having stolen two gift cards worth 2000 SEK. The client went on mentioning through an email to my employer that it is only due to her relatives request that ze³ is not filing a police report against me, although there were no evidence that the perpetrator was me. Eventually, my employer had to pay the amount of money that the client had claimed that the gift cards would cost. This incident made me think that if my company was operating fully legally, they would have possibly handled the subject in a different way. However, the fear of getting the authorities involved into the company made my employees pay the amount of money straight out of their pockets (no insurance company involved) and no other questions were raised.

2 ORSEU, 2013 pg 78

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=9725&langId=en> as accessed in 2015/02/18

3 I choose to use neutral gender pronouns throughout the whole paper. Main reason is that I could not arbitrarily assume the pronoun -the people I am referring to- are using for themselves is a he/she. In respect to everyone's identity ze/zir/zirs will be in use such as in “Ze runs/ I spoke to Zir/ This is Zirs/ Zirself. You can learn more on <http://nonbinary.org/> and http://inside.warren-wilson.edu/~writingcenter/Gender-Neutral_Language.pdf as accessed in 2015/02/12

An other incident, that in my experience was difficult to handle, was when my company signed a new contract with a client who proved out to be notoriously and openly racist, Islamophobic and highly involved into the political scene. Upon first contact, I came to recognize the clients name and understood their whereabouts and I consequently intensely requested from my employers to remove me from the schedule when it would come to this individuals cleaning day. It was only natural for my employers to ask me why and this is the point where I realized that they have no idea who that person is and that ze can be a threat to themselves and their company since the company's owners where both Muslims.

The last incident was in an occasion where I happened to tide up a client's desk, coming across an amount of important documents that would reveal the client's position in a certain level of the government and the respective income and right next to that document, was lying my company's bill to be paid. At that point I realized that I am working in a politicians home, with black money and I am the only one being aware of this combination of situations. I knew too much and not being able to utilize all this knowledge was too overwhelming. This is how the first idea for this paper was born.

Later on, reading through previous researches concerning the private household cleaning business, both in a Swedish but also global level, past and present, I could not help but noticing how the main focus of the whole discourse is solely focusing on the cleaners, as the disadvantaged group of this equation in order to give agency to the cleaners that so often have been, and still are, exposed to unfair treatment. Researchers have been striving to figure out how the cleaning business is being laid out underneath the surface, making a serious effort to expose all the problematic shadowed corners of the subject concerning issues of gender, class, race but also the social and economical extension of the cleaners' situation. All sorts of research techniques have been also used in order to give an even better insight of the subject.

However, a part remaining still completely in the shadows is the other part of this equation; the clients of the cleaning companies. What we usually know about the “privileged” part of this equation is usually deriving through the stories that the cleaners have to tell about their employees, which is a very important part of the previous research, yet not revealing the thoughts or dispositions of the clients.

From the little information we have about the clients, we mainly know their social and financial situation, in other words the answers to the class issue from both sides but more specifically the side of the cleaners, is something that has been answered and in a Swedish context, it is mainly the middle class that hires RUT services, with larger focus on the household cleaning (Gavanas and Mattson

2011, Gavanas and Calleman 2013). In addition, the rest of the information we know about the clients are usually coming from the cleaners' spoken stories, something that can reveal the storyteller's dispositions and thoughts but not the client's.

I am therefore interested to examine both sides dispositions about the meeting and contact with each other. The reason I think this is interesting, is due to the fact that I can not help thinking that if it is possible to make the clients' and cleaners' voices heard on this subject, it is more likely to get a clearer understanding, not only about what happens when the two sides meet, but also what is it, considering the intersectional differences (race, class, gender) that makes the examination of these meetings more interesting. What is more important to that meeting between the two sides, is to try to examine how and why cleaners and clients are making their choices, specially when there are many debates about the domestic cleaning companies that operate with black money but also cases of exploitation and harassment (Andersson 2000, Lutz 2011, Gavanas & Calleman; 2013).

1.2 Research question

The research question of this study is to try to investigate coordinates of the meeting that is taking place between the two parts of this cliental relationship, therefore I mean to investigate; How are those interactions between the clients and the cleaners shaped and on which components, conditions and circumstances are they built?

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of the study would be to shed some light onto this sector using two theoretical tools, intersectionality and the Foucauldian concept of power. Since the research focuses on shedding light to the meeting between the cleaners and the clients, I am hoping to bring up issues of class, race and gender that color this relationship but also give them a further explanatory dimension with Foucault's power discourse that is opposite to Marx's understanding on power, but on that I will elaborate later on.

1.4 Outline of the research

The thesis is divided into five main parts where the issues brought to surface by the contact of cleaners and clients are discussed and analyzed with the analytical tools of intersectionality and Foucauldian power. First I discuss methodological tools and the process of gathering material as well as the problems that I might come upon. I later on continue explaining the theoretical frameworks that are

going to be used in the analysis in order to give a different dimension to the subject of domestic cleaning. It shortly follows the historical background of domestic cleaning as a profession and the previous research that has been carried out about this subject in contemporary Sweden. I then continue in the largest section of this paper putting under critical analysis the empirical material that gathered from 10 informants, which are later summed up in the final part of the paper along with the final discussion, thoughts and proposals for future research.

2. Methodology, methods and material

2.1 Why qualitative research

In order to achieve a better insight about the conditions this meeting is taking place, I think that it would be important to learn what the thoughts and dispositions of the clients are, since there is no previous research that focuses on them, and the best way to retrieve these kind of information would be over an interview. However, it would be equally important to be able to examine if there is any contradictions or simply a different understanding over that relationship from the other side, that of the cleaners and this is the reason why I chose to implement a mirrored qualitative research for both sides. According to Walliman (2006) qualitative research can be carried out, targeting small groups (which in this case I have at hand two small groups of five people each). It does not have to do with numbers but mainly with focusing on words; expressing thoughts, emotions, telling stories, opinions. After the collection of the data, follows the analysis by which we can get some scientific data which Stake (2010) names as “clinical knowledge”, but also according to the same author, qualitative research can yield results which reveal “how things work” (Stake 2010, p. 14-17) and this exactly is the aim of this study; to examine on a deeper level how this client and cleaner relationship works.

Also, according to Charles Tilly (2006, p. 93) there are certain ways we reason, and one of them is the process of story telling by which one could explain baffling, complicated situations with purpose to fill in the gaps to the receiver and therefore make sense. Furthermore, the author chooses also to describe the story telling as social work that can as well challenge social relations. My focus, by choosing qualitative research, would also be to extract stories both from clients and cleaners in order to initiate the challenge of those specific social relations between the two parties but as well as to help confirm, redefine them or even discover new dimensions.

2.2 Self positioning

At this point it would be suitable to position my self as the researcher and author of this assignment. I am a queer, white, European woman and my religious beliefs are not obvious. I am also normatively bodily-abled and for one year and a half I had been working as a domestic cleaner in a company situated in Sweden and I willingly terminated my contract with the company.

2.3 Delimitations

At this point however it would be vital to mention that qualitative research can have its downsides; according to Stake (2010) the author argues and recites what many researchers claim to be the downside of qualitative research and that is its' subjectivity. The results of the qualitative research and the analysis is mainly based on the authors standpoint and understanding, something that removes objectivity from the research. Additionally, the chances of misunderstandings during the story telling process are high, something that can put at risk the general outcome of the research. The fact that I have been working as a cleaner my self might as well involve the risk that I have a biased view on things that could play a role to how the research is carried out. Also, last but not least, the author's(mine) physical appearance alone, can play a more than we would like to think important role in the collection of the data.

Furthermore, according to Flick (2008, p. 10), one of the limitations that characterizes qualitative research, is the fact that it can be political in its' way and that the researcher is usually biased, having picked sides, which in my opinion is one of its' strengths as well, since the researcher is willing to shed light on a topic that has the researcher thinks has been overshadowed. It is also a useful tool for exploring the world and adding to the production of knowledge.

However, a proposal for more concrete results for this research would be a semi-structured questionnaire to both clients and cleaners with the significant difference being that a larger number of informants would be needed. Snowballing technique could be again useful to gaining access to the informants, hoping to get an intersectional variety of informants coming from a variety of "seeds".

2.4 The informants

Seidman (2006, p. 40-42) is pointing out that it is common that researchers turn to their social circle when they are in need for informants, something that can cause complications and affect the

results of the research. In my case, the clients happened to be unknown to me but not the cleaners, whom happened to be my previous co-workers. The author describes how, due to the relationship with the informants, it can be hard to do follow-up questions that might be uncomfortable, in fear that this will have an effect on the future relationship. For this research, I was aware of this risk and tried to avoid it.

The study is based on the qualitative interviews from five cleaners and five clients. The way I have gotten hold of my five informants who are clients of a domestic cleaning company, is through snowballing technique, by informing some contacts of mine about what I am looking for and attaching via e-mail a small description of the papers aim, the papers ethics and my contact information⁴. Bernard (2006, p. 193) has mentioned that the “seed” and its' social position will yield specific results. In my case, knowing from previous research that the users of domestic cleaning services usually have an upper-middle class status and for that reason I chose my “seed” accordingly. The risk however is exactly that; the “seed” will provide a very specific range of informants, and exclude others from the selection (Bernard 2006). The prerequisite in order for the clients to be suitable to the research was that they needed to currently have a cleaning company hired. My contacts forwarded this e-mail to colleagues and friends and the results started coming in over a period of time. Therefore, the first contact would happen via e-mail and then a date to meet and proceed with the interview would be arranged.

The five informants for the cleaners' interviews are former colleagues of mine that have worked or still work in the company that up until some time ago I was working myself. The fact that I am familiar with the cleaner informants I think is giving me a sort of “ethnographical” advantage, hoping to achieve more relevant answers, considering that I, myself knowing how this business works and therefore ask more specific answers.

2.5 The interviews

All of the interviews with the clients were done “face to face”. I have met some at their working place during their break, some of them at a cafe and some of them in their own homes. The interviewees were able to choose which language they would feel more comfortable to talk to me in, and some of them chose Swedish, whereas others picked English. At this point I need to stress that my skills in the Swedish language may not be up to the mother tongue level, which highly involves the risk

4 Appendix

that I might have missed some information, or even misunderstood some of the information I was given. Eventually, it was me who translated the interviews from Swedish to English, and there is also a risk that things might have gotten lost in translation, like linguistic expressions that could better, for example, describe a feeling rather than a situation, yet being vital to the overall meaning of the interview.

The group of interviewed clients seemed rather content to have come in contact with me, since they thought that the subject of the paper is really interesting. Being aware that it is a sensitive subject to talk about, it seems that the theme itself did not hinder the interview's context. I assumed that since the clients had to either speak a language not being their first, either speak Swedish but maybe simplified in order for me to understand, that could create some awkward situation and this is why I chose to “brake the ice” by opening the interview with some simple questions and give information about the whereabouts of my paper. I, on the other side, found myself being somewhat stressed in my first interviews, being suspicious that these people are maybe doing a favor to our common acquaintance and this is why they decided to meet me, something that led me to forget to ask some questions that might have added a bit of more insight. However, the more we would progress into the interview, the more relaxed I would get.

Similarly with the cleaners, most of the interviews where done in a language not being our first, except in one case in which I made the translation myself from my mother tongue to English, so I would assume that in this case there would exist a smaller margin of error. However, the interviewees are acquaintances of mine and this is why I think that it was easier for them to talk to me about thoughts and feelings but also about incidents that maybe they would not have mentioned to an other researcher in order not to expose their clients or themselves. They were relaxed and rather content that we have come in contact after a long time. However, I am aware of that this could have also worked to my disadvantage; there is a chance of me missing follow up questions or even questioning the answers given, the way an other researcher with no experience in the branch would have done, due to the fact that I know these people and that I have worked with them, which leads to the case where some issues are considered to be common sense to us and therefore of no need to elaborate further.

2.6 Profiling the informants

As I will be using intersectionality as one of the theoretical frameworks for the analysis, issues of class, ethnicity and gender will be the focus of this research. Hence, in order to offer to the reader a

better understanding of the papers analysis, I think that I need to provide some information about the intersectional characteristics of the interviewees. As far as the cleaners are concerned, the age range is between 23-39, three out of five (3/5) are coming from countries within the E.U. and the two workers with origin outside of the E.U. would come from developing countries⁵ (Poland, Spain, Greece, Egypt, Ethiopia). When it comes to the educational level four out of five (4/5) would have university education and three out of five (3/5) have had or still are in a higher level of education (masters level). Also the time they have spent in the cleaning business varies from 6 months to 6 years and as long as their skills or position in the company is concerned, all of them have been working as cleaners and only one of them has reached to the point to own her own cleaning company, yet still sometimes maintains her post as a cleaner. When it comes to the social gender⁶ of the cleaners the interviewed group would consist of two males and three females.

As far as the clients interviewed is concerned, the age range is from their 40's to 70's, most of them are highly educated obtaining high status professions. They all have Swedish nationality and their social gender is four females and one male.

2.7 Ethical considerations

As far as the ethical considerations are concerned, I need to mention that I am aware that it is possible that I have my own biases as a researcher and as an ex-domestic cleaner, therefore it could be possible that the way I chose to express myself and the analytical tools I am using could find their reason to my biases and experiences but also expectations.

Additionally, as far as my informants are concerned, the reason I chose to reveal a certain amount of the informants' demographics is due to the fact that I am using intersectionality as one of my theoretical frameworks, thus cutting out information like class, gender and ethnicity would take away the analytical power that intersectionality has. However, all my informants were aware of the subject of this study and it was explained to them verbally after the interviews, what was the aim of this study and how their addition to this research offers a deeper insight on the subject.

5 <http://www.isi-web.org/component/content/article/5-root/root/81-developing> as accessed in 2015/04/25

6 Recognizing myself as a queer theory feminist, I need to mention that I believe that gender is a social construction and a social performance and that there is a difference between social and biological gender that does not necessarily follows the normative gender binary. Therefore I can not arbitrarily assume that my informants have approved the gender pronouns I chose for them. However, being aware that the gender binary construction is the mainstream and the norm in this society, I will be using the pronouns she/he based on the social construction I perceive as he or she and consequently male or female. For further information see: *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory* By Judith Butler, 1988.

3. Previous research/ research so far with focus on Sweden

3.1 History of domestic work in Sweden, RUT's ancestor

Documentations of people working in private households in Sweden goes a long way back in time, but in this case I will focus only on what information is available for the 1900's. For the first half of the century, it is known that it was almost always women of very poor background and origin working for private households or farmers and it was the sole way of maintenance for countless of them. The unionization of the household services at the time was rather expensive, surprisingly more expensive than other professions. The employers would often not contribute to the creation of an official agreement/contract for the worker something that would lead to perpetuating the complete lack of regulations for the profession, leaving the workers utterly unprotected in an unpredictable client relation. As a linked consequence, the lack of regulations shadowed the profession altogether, questioning its existence as a profession in the first place (Calleman and Gavanas 2013, p. 9-10).

Later on in 1944 an effort to recruit more maids led to the creation of legislation around it while hoping to raise the status of the profession. On the contrary the legislation led to worst conditions for the workers leaving them more exposed and unprotected than before.

After WWII a migrational wave hit Sweden where Nordic immigrants would get a general working permit but the rest of the immigrants got permitted to work only in specific areas where working power was mostly needed and the household area was one of them. The job alternatives were also deeply gendered with women's compliance into the domestic area.

The legislation protecting the branch progresses slowly but the demand for household workers remains approximately the same or even higher all the way up until the 1980's where welfare legislation is working on the favor of parental leaves and the branch is getting saturated, something that is changing the more we move further in to 1990's and 00's. The difference here however is that this time there is large offer of care related services, coming from more disadvantaged countries (Calleman and Gavanas 2013, p. 9-10).

As long as the relationships between the clients and the workers are concerned, we are still lacking plenty of insight information. However there have been plenty of anecdotal stories from the first half of the century.

3.2 Previous research in Sweden

There has been little research with focus on the Swedish case of the domestic cleaning business considering that it is one of the most special ones with straightforward connection to the county's taxation system. The effort that previous researchers (Gavanas 2009, 2010, Gavanas & Mattson 2011, Abbastian & Hellgren 2012, Bowman & Cole 2014) have done covering this issue, is focusing mainly on information coming from the cleaners about several subjects. Some subjects, are more visible than others; more specific, issues of gender, class, ethnicity are very often on the table, which in a way seems to have a tight connection to the social inclusion/exclusion cleaners might face based on those characteristics. In addition, the influence of the tax office and state regulation techniques, on the nature of the branch is being examined, not only for the workers, but as well for the clients and company owners. Issues of “black” and “white market” are being often mentioned with focus on how this can also attribute on issues of social inclusion/exclusion.

Gavanas on the research of 2010 is focusing as well in cases of sexual harassment and the dynamics of it, yet the study does not fail to mention that it is not only women who are getting sexually harassed but also men. The fact that most of the workers are involved in the unofficial “black” market just makes process of taking legal measures against the perpetrators stay still. In the same research (2010) the author finds that the tax deduction that is a financial extension of the hired domestic services, has increased the “white” market as well as the “black” one. That alone involves that for some domestic cleaners who are fully and officially occupied the job has been beneficial, handing them opportunities for creating their own business. However, for the ones involved into the black market, social exclusion is an everyday fact not allowing “upwards” class and social movement.

Additionally, the issue of the language gap between cleaners and clients or company is also contributing to issues of inclusion/exclusion; more specifically the lingo used between cleaners who do not speak Swedish has been named as “Städsvenska⁷” (Gavanas, 2010, p. 31). In addition to that Abbastian and Hellgren (2012) stress the importance for the cleaners to know the language (Swedish) since it is mentioned how the lack of it can often be used as an excuse from the employers side to hinder full time employment something that repeatedly pops up in most of studies being done about domestic cleaners in Sweden. Consequently, the lack of language leads to involuntary part time work that according to the authors leads to powerlessness and I could add -based on previous research mentioned above- socioeconomic exclusion.

7 Cleaning-Swedish

The authors (2012) also mention and stress out in their work the subordination, inequalities and powerlessness of the domestic cleaners in Stockholm, seeing their situation in a Socioeconomic level based on discriminatory practices based on gender, class, ethnicity. What in my opinion is interesting with this research is that it puts a gendered perspective on the cleaning sector, pointing out that a large part owners of cleaning companies in Stockholm are men and with a Swedish or Nordic origin. When it concerns the cleaners, not surprisingly 57% of them are women and largest part of this percentage comes from outside Sweden however this is a large part of cleaners being highly educated and as very successfully the authors mention, that shows how the intersection of class, gender and ethnicity is creating a spiraling down movement for the actors; from a middle class in the country of origin to the lowest working class in Sweden

Gavanas (2013) adds the importance of networking (between customers, companies and workers) and how deeply it affects the whole branch, but also how the process of state regulating the cleaning business fails to break the circle of unofficial networking. Therefore attributes such as ethnicity, language skills and gender tend to play a major role to networking which as an extension is immensely connected to the social inclusion/ exclusion, social benefits and exploitation.

It is often that issues of flexibility/disposability, exploitation, discrimination and harassment are often brought up, complementing the global stereotypes that already exist about the domestic cleaning branch and its actors. Last, there is a small part of previous research that wants to explore the cleaners feelings and thoughts about the job and contact with clients (Krifors 2009, Leppänen; 2014). What is important in Leppänen's (2014) research is that it is coming as close as it can to the relationship between domestic workers and clients focusing on cleaners working under fair conditions and therefore the unequal power dynamics mentioned in previous research is lessened. The concept of directness (clients being precise with cleaners work) here is connected with the power relations between the two actors where directness is not as sensitive topic in comparison to when the worker is not working "white". In the contrary, directness as an evaluation of work is being promoted by the domestic workers in a straightforward and professional way and efforts to "educate" the clients are encouraged.

Another interesting research from Leppänen and Dahlberg (2012) that focuses on the cleaners' feelings about their profession, shows that amongst the things that were mentioned workers enjoyed the least, was the interaction with the clients since it could sometimes be difficult and one of the reasons they considered joining the job was the lack of interaction with the clients. Language barriers and power dynamics in form of supervision would contribute to this small percentage. However for the

biggest part the interaction with the clients would be one of the things they would enjoy the most. The factors mentioned the most as the worst things about the profession was stress, they physically heavy nature of the profession and the low pay. A gender aspect of the cleaning services is also provided in the research and it is mentioned that household tasks that are being carried out indoors are mainly performed by women and tasks performed outdoors are carried out by men.

A more recent research by Bowman and Cole in 2014, focuses mainly on the fact that domestic labor has strong intersectional character but adding the concept of commodification of domestic labor and the importance of trying to prevent it. The authors suggest that the full exposure and institutionalization of the branch can offer a greater protection towards the already highly socially vulnerable workers of the business, provide social benefits, diminishes any sort of harassment from the clients' side by giving to the worker the right to deny services and report the case. It is also mentioned that by erasing the stigma of the domestic cleaning, through the institutionalization and non commodification, the companies have more space to expand and therefore higher chances of unionization, best legal protection for the workers but also better working conditions

In Gavanoas' and Mattson's research (2011) is summing up the results, mentioning that the formalization of the domestic cleaning business has created better working conditions, however deminished the “black” market only a little bit, due to popular demand of the cheapest company, regardless if the company is working with “white” or “black” money . When it comes to the relationship with the clients, it sums up that the main reason for dissatisfaction from the cleaners side, is clients demanding more services than what they have paid for. Social networking for all actors involved seems to play a really important part, that furthermore creates safety something that it is an important part for clients, along with flexibility.

Another of Gavana's (2013) research is that the author also mentions how class plays a major part in the client relations of the domestic cleaning branch but also suggests for research to be done in order to explore in deeper understanding of the dynamics between the cleaners, employers and customers. An effort to cover one part of this theoretical suggestion will be done with this paper.

Shortly it is found that intersectional characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, language barriers play a rather large roll on how the domestic cleaning branch is shaped; the more distance the cleaner has from the white market and language skills, the more bound they are to be exploited, harassed and involved into the black market that leads to further social exclusion, whereas, cleaners being involved into the white market are more likely to be socially included both in a micro, meso and macro level.

Also, cleaners working with white money, are more likely to have better communication with their clients and with this way avoiding difficult situations of mutual dissatisfaction. On the same side, the states involvement to the connection between clients and and companies has also played a very important role to the cleaners social inclusion/exclusion and it is suggested that the full state regulation of the branch could drastically aid to erase the stigma that the profession has.

4. Theoretical framework

As far as theoretical frameworks are concerned, I chose to use Foucault's theory on power/knowledge and his interpretation of the Panopticon as a mean of surveillance, in combination with intersectionality, where class, gender, ethnicity intersect and bring to the surface regimes of inequalities. The reason those two theories were chosen, was mainly due to the fact that I think that they complement each other, rather than overlap; I am aware that Foucault is defining power as something different from Marx, whereas the class component in intersectionality very much originates from the Marxist class theories. How those two theories unravel can be seen farther down.

4.1 Intersectionality

A very interesting analytical tool necessary to use is intersectionality, since during the effort of shedding light, as mentioned above to the power dynamics between the two components of this equation, it would be vital to take under consideration various components which constitute the individual, such as race, class and gender, just to name a few.

Feminist scholars created the analytical tool of intersectionality through the constant discourses of class, race and gender in order to show the complexity of combination of social roles in groups and the effects that the social roles have on the individuals on a social and economic level. Inequality, exploitation, oppression and power relations are given a more critical point of view when scrutinized from an intersectional perspective. However, according to Acker and many other feminist scholars, not plenty of attention has been shed on the social aspect of "Class" (Acker 2006, p. 4).

Also, along with the concept of intersectionality, is found in Joan Acker's work that is often mentioned the concept of the "inequality regime", a useful notion that dictates and sheds light on "inequality-producing practices and processes within particular organizations at particular times" (Acker 2006, p.10). The inequality regime is also incorporating other social factors and components that can push individuals in social margins based for example on, sexuality, education, age, different

bodily functions. Bodies, nonetheless as the physical factors that carry all the social roles and are the physical proof of the complexity of all intersections.

Feminist scholars such as Avtar (1997) and Yuval Davis (1995, 2006) and Mohanty (2003) in their work often point out how the feminist discourses of the time were outlining and theorizing middle class white women something that was failing to examine the theoretical cases of women of different class and color also in a non-western theoretical framework. The scrutiny of the existing feminist theories just enriched the social components by which intersectionality as a theoretical framework was molded through.

Williams (1995, p.128) argues that the different social axes that create division and uneven power relations in individuals and groups not only create inequalities in a micro level, but also in a meso, macro level but also affects the relations of the individual/ group with the welfare state. What is pointed out is the importance of an intersectional lens within the welfare state, since the welfare state itself incorporates notions of nation and nationality, sexuality, reproduction and different bodily abilities just to name a few, something that can establish even deeper those divisions by legitimizing them.

Summarizing, the effort of exposing the complicity of inequalities based on different social roles but also taking under consideration different geographical characteristics and time frameworks, creates a discourse of social situations and practices that create and recreate injustice, oppression, inequalities in the lives of individuals and groups. All those different social/economic factors combined, create the analytical tool of intersectionality (Acker 2006, p. 39).

According to Anderson (2000), Gavanas (2010), Mulinari (2007) *Clients' and employers' conceptions of worker characteristics can be based on stereotypes around gender, class and ethnicity and may influence the prospects of migrants on the formal and informal market* (Anderson and Gavanas 2013, p. 58). Since the relationship between the clients and the cleaners is to be examined, it would be important to take under consideration all the social factors that can affect it and if they have a visible influence on these power relations. Therefore, intersectionality can be a useful analytical tool in order to examine at a deeper level what creates and re-creates the foundation for those client relationships.

In relevance to the research's theoretical frameworks, I think that it would be important to incorporate Standing's (2011) discussion about the Precariat/Denizen, hoping to give a better insight to the cleaners profiling but also socioeconomic position. However, I am aware that this involves the risk

that my focus may shift more on subjects of class, rather than a clear-cut intersectional focus and therefore I chose to see the case of precariousness as a subject of a contemporary social situation that a cleaner may find oneself in, rather than an analytical framework. Additionally, it can be argued that precariousness can be seen and analyzed from an intersectional perspective.

4.1.1 Precariousness

As it is mentioned, class is one of the important components of intersectionality and I am aware that if I put my focus only on issues of class, then intersectionality as a theory is being undermined. However, I believe that Standing's (2011) theory of the Denizen and the Precariat could add depth and an additional dimension to the domestic cleaners work situation. That, I understand that can clash with the class understanding of intersectionality, however I can see how it can add a different dimension to the class status of the cleaners, offering a deeper insight but also adding some explanatory power and hence being complementary to the already known socio-economic status of the cleaners.

A new and different emerging class theory inspired from the way the new employment and unemployment patterns are being observed, Standing (2011) has named as the Precariat which is a class where the individuals find themselves in a precarious and not stable employment state, independently from their educational level. Having said that, it can be pointed out that the cleaners of the interview could belong in this class of the Precariat but also that of the Denizen, on which I will explain later on. I think it interesting to examine the cleaners from this point of view since it could possibly justify some of their behaviors, thoughts dispositions.

More specifically, Standing is defining the Precariats class characteristics by mentioning that: *It consists of people who have minimal trust relationships with capital or the state, making it quiet unlike the salariat⁸ and it has none of the social contract relationships of the proletariat⁹, whereby labor securities where provided in exchange for subordination and contingent loyalty [...]* (Standing, 2011, 8). The Precariats are getting their name from they “precarious” financial and socioeconomic situation they find themselves in. They can swing from any class to another at any time, yet with no strong ties to the class that they for the time being belong. Their educational level can give them access to a large part of the labor market, yet with the shrinking character of the labor market will not be able to accumulate them for long term. The more romanticized version of this is that the precariats themselves

8 [...] in stable full time employment, some hoping to move into the elite, the majority just enjoying the trappings of their kind, with their pensions, paid holidays and enterprise benefits, often subsidized by the state (Standing 2011, p. 7).

9 “Welfare systems were built with them in mind” (Standing 2011, p. 8).

are consciously choosing not to have a stable job situation, aiming always not necessarily higher, but also in all sorts of directions.

In addition, the precariats social situation also hinders them from long term planning, career-building plans or other life plans for that matter. Something that according to the author leads to a situation of the four A's – anger, anomie anxiety and alienation (Standing, 2011, 19). The precariat is living under the constant fear of future insecurity and finds themselves in a passive aggressive emotional situation. Furthermore, due to the lack of job stability, the opportunities for deeper learning and experience are getting thinner, something that leads to lessening the opportunities but also possibilities of upward mobility.

4.1.2 The Denizen

Considering that the cleaners that I interviewed, not only belong to the class of the Precariat due to their profession, but also belong to the class of the Denizen due to their ethnical origin. More specifically, Standing (2011) mentions: *Capital welcomes migration because it brings low-cost malleable labor. The groups most vehemently opposed to migration are the old (white) working class and lower middle class, squeezed by globalization and falling into the precariat* (Standing 2011, p. 103). As mentioned before, the group of cleaners I interviewed, most of them belong to a migrational wave that studies in Sweden initiated. However, the job opportunities for some foreigners in Sweden are not easy and in this way they found themselves involved into the domestic cleaning business.

Immigrants that are engaged to a legal or illegal working contract in an other country, constitute one large portion of the precariat, that is named as Denizen. The outline of the people bound to be Denizens seems to gather characteristics such as, undocumented immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, feminized global mobility (usually engaged in illegal labor such as sex work), student mobility, work force for global multinational corporations.

Denizens themselves come in different varieties, but their main principle for the constitution of the existence of the denizen is the understanding that denizens do not have the same rights as a citizen, and the rights that they are being given or taken away differ from denizen to denizen. Usually the civil status of the land of origin in combination with the constitution of the current land can play out an important role of how the civil rights, obligations and status will be handed out.

4.2 Foucauldian power

I will try to examine Foucault's theory on power and knowledge and apply it on this research. The reason behind this choice of theoretical perspective lies to the fact that all previous research done on the domestic business, is analyzing the structures of power from a socioeconomic point of view, where the domestic workers are the ones never being in favor of the situation. It is very often seen in most of the previous research that has come to my attention (Andersson 2000, Lutz 2011, Gavanoas 2010, Gavanoas & Caleman 2013) that the domestic workers are usually described as powerless and position of disadvantage where when examining their incomes, cleaners are seen to create a socioeconomic class, usually lower than the average working class.

4.2.1 What Foucault's power is not

Foucault provides us with a different understanding of what power is and he specifically mentioned that it is a completely different form of power from the socio-economic power that Marx has introduced, that of one class prevailing over the other (Foucault & Gordon 1980, p. 72). In the contrary, Foucault mentions that the individual alone is a vehicle of power and that power is not something that one owns:

[...] power is not to be taken to the phenomenon of the individual's consolidated and homogenous domination over others, or that of one group of class over the others.

[...] in other words , individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application. (Foucault & Gordon 1980, p. 98)

4.2.2 The power of the individual

At this point Foucault brings up the notion that every individual has their own power independently from the socio-economic state they find themselves in, and that power can establish political power, but just to be clear not party-political. The individual, he mentions, with its' unique combination of characteristic is a vehicle of power, but also a product of power based on its' very own characteristic in a regional, geographic and ethnic framework (Foucault & Gordon 1980, p. 74).

Foucault however does not fail to mention the immense connection that power has with knowledge and the later with truth and on this I will elaborate further down. He very specifically mentions :

The exercise of power creates knowledge and controversy and knowledge creates effects of power. [...] knowledge and power are integrated with each other and there is no point in dreaming of a time when knowledge will cease to depend on power (Foucault & Gordon 1980, p. 52).

I have already summed up that the individual is a vehicle of power and not something that one is possessing or exercises over the other. In addition, every individual's power creates clusters of knowledge and that very specific knowledge is immensely producing with its' own turn power. In order to bring this to this research's usage, it can be said that the cleaners, whom have been viewed all this time as powerless, with their existence alone, produce knowledges both in numeric/quantitative past research but also in a qualitative/experience as data type of research. And according to Foucault, that knowledge, is connected to power. He also added that power, the way Foucault understands it, is not hindering knowledge but on the contrary it prompts it (Foucault & Gordon 1980, p. 59).

In connection to how Foucault's idea of power is going to be used as an analytical tool, I think I need to add how Foucault connects power/knowledge with truth. He mentions that the production of truth allows power to be exercised (Foucault & Gordon 1980, p. 93). Therefore it can be said that each individual that carries power, is producing knowledge but also in order to put that power in motion, truth is a prerequisite. I interpret that as a situation where both sides of this research (cleaners and clients) have their own power and produce their own knowledge and therefore both of the sides are producing the truth. That involves that the knowledge produced is the truth for each side individually, and not that one side is lying over the other, exactly the same way the one side does not exercise power over the other.

4.2.3 “Panoptism is the fuel of power” (Foucault & Gordon 1980, p. 71)

Foucault in his scholarship is very often referring to the concept of the Panopticon system which I think applies very well in the domestic business sector. According to Foucault, the Panopticon is a disciplinary practice whilst he also elaborates on the ideological framework of disciplinary power. Foucault is referring to Jeremy Bentham's idea of how Panopticism can be put to action and they later continue mentioning that the Panopticon schema can be used when a group of individuals need to perform specific tasks, or need to fit in certain behavioral frameworks. Therefore when discipline and order needs to be applied over a group of people, the Panopticon is the tool to achieve that (Bentham in Foucault 1979, p. 205).

Shortly, the Panopticon as a theoretical framework is a mean of surveillance in order to correct,

discipline and alter behavior. As a conceptual system of surveillance, the Panopticon does not necessarily involve the fact that there is a physical individual who is supervising the situation. The Panopticon can as well be used as a state of mind when one feels that is under supervision without knowing if there is a person actually performing the process of supervision. According to Bentham in Foucault (1979, p. 201), the major effect of the Panopticon is to create to the subject of the Panopticon, a mental state of constant visibility. It is a mechanism that removes the power from the individual because the power is becoming automatic. More specifically the one who is a subject of the Panopticon and is actually aware of it and of its visibility, plays a double role; the subject of the Panopticon -as just mentioned- but the individual turns into a subject of its own consciousness. In that way the person who is aware of the Panopticon's visibility is putting its own behavior under scrutiny, making sure is not straying away from what sort of behavior is expected of hen.

At the same time, exactly the same way the Panopticon's subject is becoming a subject of its own surveillance, with the same principle the Panopticon itself is a mean to its own scrutiny. Since its own existence envisages the fact that the Panopticon is created from outer social forces (outside from the dyad of observant and observed) like the society, that have expectations from the Panopticon, there are outside factors making sure that the Panopticon is actually being effective, fulfilling its existence by maintaining its effect on its subject (Bentham in Foucault 1979, p. 207).

Additionally, Foucault (1979, p. 204) mentions that the Panopticon can be viewed as the core that produces power, since due to its' surveillance mechanisms, it efficiently affects the subjects' behavior which in retrospect power is inducing the production of knowledge, and with this process new kinds of knowledge are created by the subjects of this power.

At this point it is of great importance to elaborate on how the theory of the Panopticon can be applied in to the subject of this paper. To be clear, I do not intent to present the theory of the Panopticon in order to prove that there is only one part (client or cleaner) who observes or plays the part of the Panopticon. On the contrary both parts are powered with the role of the Panopticon. As mentioned before, the Panopticon is to be used when there is a need for a task to be performed. In this case, it is clear that the domestic cleaners job is purely a physical task performing job. The results of the performance of those physical tasks will be examined by the other part of this equation which in this case it is the client who hired the cleaning services. Therefore, the cleaner is in a constant conscious state of surveillance knowing that their skills and task-performing ability will be judged and evaluated hence the client in this case takes the roll of the Panopticon. Even though the client is not physically

present while the tasks performance is being carried out, yet the worker is conscious of their surveillance, conforming to discipline and performing the tasks.

On the other hand, the client is in the position where as mentioned before, is not physically there while the domestic cleaner is performing their job, and therefore the client needs to rely on the fact that the domestic cleaner will perform their tasks without breaking any “unspoken” rules, and respecting their privacy. At the same time it is expected from the client to give a feedback to the cleaner either by choosing to complain or not. In any case, it alters the clients behavior and since there is action, the reaction to it is expected; this is the part where the client turns into the Panopticon's subject. Therefore, a constant circle of mutual surveillance -as a state of mind- is being created where both parts are playing the role of the Panopticon but also the subjects; creating altering and surveilling behaviors.

4.3 Why Intersectionality and Foucauldian power as theoretical frameworks

The reason why I chose intersectionality is due to the fact that I believe that it is important to examine the nature of the relationship between clients and cleaners from a perspective where the individuals are not seen as just men or women, rich or poor but a combination of social roles that sometimes promote social inclusion/exclusion. Race, gender and ethnicity is the combination of social positions that constitute the individual as perceived by the society and based on this combination of characteristic the individual is being treated accordingly. Of course it is important to mentioned that a big number of the behaviours that reflect on race, gender and ethnicity, are mainly based on social and local stereotypes, however, although they are stereotyped behaviours, that does not mean that they are less real. Therefore, what I am eager to learn from using this analytical framework is how the intersecting traits of the individuals are affecting the relationship and vice versa.

However, based on the race, gender and ethnicity and the stereotypes that may follow them, it is often easy to observe the power dynamics between their bearers where in my case it is already known from previous research that those power inequalities are not on the cleaners' favour. Therefore, I chose to use Foucault's theory of power, hoping to give a different dimension to how, based on the intersectional characteristics, the individuals are interacting with each other, viewed from a Foucauldian perspective, where each individual has its' own power, instead of lacking power.

I therefore think that the two theories are complementary to each other but I need to mention that I am aware that there might be a risk that makes these two theories incompatible; Foucault chooses

to not view power through a Marxist point of view in a socio-economic framework. The problem here is that class, as a component of intersectionality, is viewed from a socio-economic framework and that alone can make those theories clash. However it is a risk that I am willing to take since, as I mentioned above, I believe that Foucauldian power can assist to giving an extra dimension to the already known inequalities.

The idea behind this combination of theoretical frameworks, would be my assumption that the intersectional characteristics both of the clients and the cleaners, as it is so far know, is in a Marxist class understanding (cleaners in a low socio-economic status and clients in a higher one), and exactly this is all it takes for the the gears of Foucauldian power to be put in motion. In order to elaborate farther on this thought, I need to mention that I am aware of the fact that using the Foucauldian theory of power, entails the risk of concealing the already given and known from previous research power asymmetries. However, Foucauldian power lies on the individual, independently from their socio-economic status (therefore not from a Marxist perspective), which brings the discussion to the point where the main reason I chose to combine those two theories boils down to this hypothetical example; the cleaners' low socio-economic status, in combination with all the negative connotations that the profession has, is exactly what could potentially shape and alter the clients' behavior towards them, potentially to their advantage, wanting to avoid proving the old theories about “master and servant” right. Hence, what I am hoping to show with the combination of those two theories is hopefully to stress that the asymmetrical intersectional characteristic of both cleaners and clients, are exactly those components that motion the gears of the Foucauldian power.

4.4 Connecting theory and analysis

The analysis following will be unfolded in 9 different pieces. The reason I chose those thematic units to emerge and be discussed more than others that are not mentioned in the analysis, lies to reason that some subjects are confirming previous research but some others contradict it, or even add more information on the subject and hence it is easier to create a discussion. An equally important reason, was the fact that I chose to bring up issues where intersectionality is emerging rather often. However, in addition to the issues of intersecting characteristics that are shaping the contact, I figured that the same issues could furthermore be analyzed with the Foucauldian concept of power, resulting in a deeper understanding of the subject but also offering a point of view from a different dimension.

5. Analysis

There are a few subjects that keep coming up thematically in the clients interviews and on those I will focus, based on relevance to the research questions (How are the power dynamics shaped, affecting the relationship between the clients and the cleaners, what conditions shapes them and under which circumstances), and try to analyze them with the two theoretical tools that I have mentioned before; Foucauldian power and intersectionality.

The analysis of the empirical material is being divided in nine themed based on my empirical material that I gathered from ten qualitative interviews with five cleaners and five clients. First the discussion of the cleaners' class is mentioned in order to give a better insight on how this part of intersectionality is being perceived. Later on, I continue exploring subjects of contact between the two groups and trust with combination of safety. Further I discuss what kind of role does ethnicity play in this contact, as part of intersectionality. I then proceed in examining the two groups dispositions on having/being a cleaner and subjects of dissatisfaction, shame, respect but also cases of cheating. Lastly, I discuss the dimension of gender and portray the informants' views of what makes a good/bad cleaner/client.

What is found throughout this section is that the intersectional characteristic of the individuals, specially that of class and ethnicity, affect in a large degree the way the contact between the two parts is initiated and how the process is shaped. Gender, on the other side, is found to play not necessarily an active role on the way it impacts the relationship, yet it colors it from within, in a less observant manner. Furthermore, the contact itself, is shown to be a process that seems to bring both parts in a rather uncomfortable position and based on this nature of the contact, behaviors and decisions seem to be stirred in specific way.

It is also found that the intersectional characteristic of the individuals, seem to also play an important role on how the power dynamics between the two parts are shaped, yet escaping the traditional socio-economic Marxist model. Via Foucault's understanding of power, it is shown that the characteristics of the cleaners that usually are factors that attribute to exclusion and marginalization, can affect the relationship in a way that works towards the cleaners' advantage, instead of disadvantage.

5.1 How the cleaner becomes a cleaner

On this section I will elaborate on the processes that makes individuals, with a certain intersectional characteristic, to get involved into the domestic cleaning business, as well as on what is

the aftermath of these certain people joining the branch; the creation of a new double classed identity, that of the Precariat/Denizen but also what effects can that have in the overall understanding of this discourse.

Domestic cleaning as a profession is one of the most low status professions and therefore what makes a good question, is what makes one to start working as a domestic cleaner? Considering that most of the cleaners who are participating in this research are people with high education, it does evoke the question, why that job and not any other job? However, it is known that the modern labor market is open to someone, based on their intersectional characteristic and not necessarily on skills. Hence, it could be said that the individuals' intersectional characteristics contribute to the creation of the new class of the precariat and how that is being put to action we see further down.

One of the things most of the cleaners have mentioned during the interviews was the way they got themselves involved with the cleaning business and that was initiated by two factors: most of them said that they find out about the company through their social circle and only one applied for the job online. It was also a large amount that mentioned clearly that the reason they got themselves engaged into the cleaning business was the acute need for money/work, something that has been mentioned before in most of the researches concerning domestic cleaners in Sweden (Gavanas 2006, 2011).

If we take a look at the demographics listed in the part of Methodology, we can clearly see that the social situation of the domestic cleaners when it comes to class is hard to describe and since I am about to use Intersectionality as a theoretical tool, I would assume that it would be important to mention my point of view of this new class that the interviewees belong to; the class of Precariat/Denizen.

5.1.1 Precariat/Denizen

One on-spot example is the paradigm of the educational background from the country of origin to the current country but also the class shift. It is often met that educational qualifications in one country might not be allowed to be practiced in an other country “simply because there is no mutual understanding of standards” claims the author, therefore being forced to be squished in the brain wasting [sic] jobs of the precariat (Standing 2011, p. 94-95).

More specific one of the domestic cleaners has mentioned:

[when]I've come to Sweden I had to validate my profession but it was really hard so I had to do new training and I had to study 4 more years here and it wouldn't work so well with me cause I had no good Swedish and it was really hard.

Furthermore it is verbally mentioned by most of the interviewed cleaners that they were in *desperate* for a job or money, or in *great need* or that entering the business was *a bottom option*.

At this point it can be said that the cleaners being people with high education, find themselves due to their ethnicity and lack of the local language feeling stuck in the domestic cleaning branch, being the only fast option being suggested by their contacts to them and not really seeking for it. Class-wise then we can see the free fall of the cleaners from the middle-class academical background to the lowest working class precariat in Sweden, something that can play an important roll in how they are met and treated by their clients, but also they way they (the cleaners) comprehend and reflect upon their clients behavior.

However it was only one worker that mentioned that he aimed for that profession when he was in a desperate need for money, being aware that he does not know the language but also wants to take advantage of the flexible nature of the profession, in order to combine it with his studies in the university.

Having said that, it could be pointed out that the cleaners' class shift from middle class to low working class as a precariat and denizen could be a factor that would deeply affect the cleaners dispositions about their profession in a first level but also is something that could additionally reflect upon the contact between them and their clients, something that can contribute to the way the cleaners' dispositions are shaped around their job.

5.2 Contact

On this section, I will elaborate on how the contact between the two parts is created and on the contact's characteristics. It is shown that both parts are putting effort in trying to keep the contact as minimum as possible, since it evokes feelings or surveillance for both parts. Hence, I am connecting the dispositions of surveillance with Foucault's concept of panopticism portraying its' effects on the relationship. I later on elaborate on how certain characteristic of the actors involved, can shape the cliental relationship and therefore the contact.

The contact between the two parts can play a vital role about how the cliental relationship between the two parts of the equation is going to be shaped. Previous research (Gavanas 2009, 2010, Gavanas & Mattson 2011, Abbastian & Hellgren 2012, Bowman & Cole 2014) has mentioned issues of harassment and exploitation, but also cases where cleaners find themselves enjoying that contact a lot, making it an important tool to the cleaners' engagement to their profession (Leppänen & Dahlberg

2012). However, at a very first level the clash in this contact is an issue of class (even before the first contact happens), where one is a cleaner (usually working class) and one is a client (usually middle class). On a second level, after the first contact is initiated, gender and ethnicity can also color in a specific way the contact. In order to examine how Foucauldian power dynamics and intersectional traits are interacting and affecting each other, it is important to investigate what are the clients and cleaners dispositions when they are coming in contact, but also how those traits are coloring the contact.

For that reason, I have asked clients and cleaners about the contact they have with each other and to try to describe the nature of it. What is surprisingly mentioned in all of the interviewed cleaners and most of the clients is that they have very little contact with each other. They clients would usually prefer to book a working pass for the cleaners when themselves are not in the household while the cleaner is there working at the same time. In that way, the contact that is created would usually consist of hastily exchange of very basic information for the cleaning tasks and “goodmornings” and “howareyous” that are usually answered with exchange of basic information about family and daily life. According to most of the cleaners, that is a process they would find enjoyable. However, it was mentioned by all cleaners that they preferred to work alone and all of the clients has mentioned that they preferred not being at home when the cleaners are there. Some would mention they find it “extremely uncomfortable” being around the household while the cleaning is going on. The cleaners on the same subject would often mentioned that the presence of the clients during work was often connected with the experience that clients giving indications (also interpreted as “directness” according to Leppänen 2014) about how the work should be carried out, something that the cleaners would mention that this would be one of the parts that they enjoy the least about the contact with the client. More specifically it was mentioned that the absence of the client in the household would translate for the cleaners as; that they have the *liberty* or *freedom* to work they way they wanted.

5.2.1 Panopticism and effects on contact

At this point having Foucault's reflection on the Panopticon and using it as an analytical tool, it can be said that the presence of the client creates a kind of power that maybe is not applicable directly but later on will carry out the role of inspection. It's the idea that, the actions of the body, the power to put discipline on it, will be put to the test by examining the results. Also its the same means of surveillance that may evoke the fear that in case the body of the cleaner deviates from what its

supposed to be doing (in that case cleaning or poor cleaning skills), will be something that surveillance will later on, upon inspection capture it and that alone will have its repercussions.

Considering that, according to the cleaners, clients who indicate and dictate how things should be done (discipline upon the cleaners body) is the least favorite feature of the clients according to the cleaners, that only strengthens the Panopticism concept that incorporates mechanisms of power. That said, those mechanisms are shaping the client relation between the 2 parts, either with conformity for the situation by any of the sides (cleaner adjusting their skills or client not complaining), either with termination of the contract.

We see however that the mechanism of Panopticism affects mainly the cleaners making them traditionally and physically discipline their bodies into a specific performance; better, faster, specific upon request performance. The question here is how does the Panopticism can affect the client? It can be said that if we assume that when the cleaner becomes the panoptic, it generates power mechanisms that make the client discipline their bodies in a specific way; by leaving the household. The power mechanisms that are generated, are the memories or thoughts connected to the old maid debate. By wanting to avoid any of the two parts (cleaner and client) making this connection, the clients prefer to either leave the household for a walk or choir, or book a time with the company convenient enough to coincide with their working hours.

To put it roughly, it seems that the social gender, origin, language skills of the cleaner do not play an important role when it comes to the initial contact with client and how the cleaning tasks are carried out. However, it seems that due to previous historical connotations that the profession of the cleaner has, it creates connections of the contemporary profession, to the old-time “maid”,(that would usually come from the lowest of the working class, be treated as property and have very little rights) making clients feeling highly uncomfortable being present when the work is carried out, but also creating feelings of guilt wanting to explain why they have hired cleaning help.

5.2.2 Contact and awkwardness

However, it seems that the cleaners age in combination with class can play a role towards how the clients thoughts are shaped around their contact. A client has explained to me that her cleaner is 25 years older than her approximately in her 60's and she elaborates on her feelings on the contact between them two by saying:

It's probably guilts, particularly because I am not going to work for the past 1,5 year because I am ill,

so I am sitting at home, I am not old, but I still have someone who is 25 years older than me with back problems to do the cleaning, while I am sitting at home reading.

It seems that the by description of the cleaner in a socioeconomic framework, one would assume that the cleaner is in a difficult position, since it was also mentioned that she recently became a widow and becoming a cleaner was an outlet. The nearest assumption, would be that this person is rather powerless, evoking emotions of sympathy. Using Foucault's power it is observed that in the contrary, the cleaner with her presence alone creates mechanisms of power working towards her advantage. In order to elaborate on this further, I need to mention that the client said during the interview that the elder worker, due to her back problems is not carrying out her cleaning tasks up to par, but the client would never mention that to the boss. Instead, she would try to tell her directly if it is possible to correct some things next time and she rationalizes her dissatisfaction by saying that her cleaner is a very nice woman and that she enjoys the very little contact they have the most . She later on continues:

I have to learn to be more relaxed. Also the last few cleaners have been a lot younger [...] so now I feel OK about it, I am not uncomfortable around this

It eventually seems that the clients intersectional role with focus one the age difference, has a significant effect on the clients dispositions about how she feels towards her cleaner and how that affects her actions.

5.3 Issues of Trust/Safety

The subject of trust and safety for the two groups will be put under scrutiny on this section, which is split in three parts; the cleaner's safety, the client's safety and the production of truth/knowledge. It is shown that the assumed “whiteness” of the domestic cleaning business and the connection to the state, leaves both clients and cleaners feeling safe being into this social role respectively. Additionally, different kinds of knowledge and truths, yet not less pragmatic, are available to cleaners and clients, that if combined could potentially alter the nature of the branch as we know it.

The issue of trust inside the cleaning business can be a sensitive subject to talk about, considering all the exploitation stories that there are around it. In addition what makes issues of trust and reliability between the two parts a greater issue is the grey zone of the household being a work place for some and a the most private and sensitive place for others, at the same time. Furthermore, someone's household can also be seen as a materialistic extension of someone's life, status or

personality so it can be assumed that it can also reveal issues of intersectionality.

5.3.1 Cleaners' safety

What is interesting about this discussion is that, based on the numbers we have from previous research revealing the social status of the people hiring cleaning help, it can be said that most of them belong into the upper-middle class (Gavanas and Mattson 2011, Gavanas and Calleman 2013). When the cleaners were asked if they trust the clients in combination with the feeling of being safe, what most of the cleaners replied is that they do feel very safe, which only makes me wonder if this safety is safety produced from the clients position (because of their middle-upper class and the stereotypical connotations that this class has) or from the job and the company itself. However, the kind of safety the cleaners referred to was only bodily safety, in reference to the physically heavy nature of the job. What is remarkable, is that none of the cleaners mentioned issues of attack or harassment coming from the clients side, something that is very commonly met in previous research. What was also not mentioned, was that that none of the them refer to social safety in reference to the profession and its connection to the state that offers to the cleaners social benefits and protection such as unemployment office, social security, membership in the working union, pension money just to name a few, something that according to Standing (2011) is a characteristic of the the Precariats and Denizens that most of these clients already find themselves in. One cleaner however mentioned that it is only Sweden she feels safe to perform that job, since the state is predominately involved into the domestic cleaning business.

5.3.2 The presence of the Cleaner in the household and Clients' safety

It seems that the presence of the cleaners inside the household, induces to the clients insecurities about how their existence in the household is perceived by their cleaners, in fear it might be interpreted as surveillance. For that reason some of them decide to actively leave the household while the cleaning is taking place. The household for that moment, takes a double character; that of someone's private domain and that of someone's workplace and the division between private and public lies in the grey zone. Seeing it from this angle, issues of trust and reliability could easily come on the surface, shaping the relationship between the two parts.

Additionally to that, it was mentioned that most of the clients trust their cleaners due to the connection that the cleaning company has immediate connection to the state and the assumed whiteness of the contract in combination with other acquaintances' recommendations. That seems to have a great

impact on the clients since they all mentioned that there is nothing that they feel they need to hide before the cleaner shows up to the household. Some of the clients mentioned that the only preparation being done before the cleaner arrives, is to clear out the to-be-cleaned area. However the clients feel safe with the cleaners presence in the household, even when they are not there.

On the same side, I found the clients being more aware of their social rights (tax deduction/RUT) connected to their cleaning help and when asked if they feel safe and if they trust the company and the cleaners, most of them mentioned that they do. More specifically, there were some cases that mentioned that they trust the company (and in the long run the cleaner) because of the company's obvious connection to the state and tax office through the so-called in Swedish RUT that involves tax deduction. It is interesting, how the company's connection to the state automatically connects to an assumed “whiteness” and therefore creates feelings of trust and reliability to the clients. Particularly this client mentioned:

- *Client: I think its mainly because of the RUT/white there is actually laws that bridges the company and they are registered, they have signed about they key and they have signed about the services, you know about the paper work*
- *Me: Did you investigate before you hired this company did you sort of checked it its black or white?*
- *Client: No no not really.. its sort of self explanatory that its white since we get the RUT, but its something I haven't really looked into and maybe something I should.*

5.3.3 Truth, knowledge and mechanisms of power

At this point I think I need to mention again Foucault and his understanding on the power produced by truth, on a political/ state level; the author claims that individuals are subjected to truth, since it is truth that creates laws and legislation mechanisms but also produces discourses which with their own turn are vehicles of power (Foucault & Gordon 1980, p. 94).

This point above can imply that the presence of the cleaner itself inside the household motions the gears of the state's function and legislation; by the existence of the cleaner and the official contract between the two parts (and as far as the client knows) the state has its own power; it produces truth with the existence of the cleaner and the tax deduction that follows just verifying it. However, the produced truth that is connected to the cleaners power which comes from by their existence alone is this; that the state and client know about their existence because of the RUT yet are not aware of the possibility that half the money the cleaner is receiving is black and therefore half exploited and illegal. The fact that this client relationship is potentially illegal is exactly the same power that the cleaner's truth is producing, and is fully capable of putting in motion a large amount of penal legislation.

And at this point the production of truth/knowledge is being created, by the cleaner's power (physical existence in the household as product of a contract between the 3 parts, client, company, state) but this piece of knowledge is not available to the client. This can raise queries of what would possibly happen if the clients were aware of the half-black state of the contract, how would they react, and which kind of power gears something like that could put in motion; maintain the black market and keep quiet about it or terminate the contract, something that if were to happen in a trend, could lead in a hypothetical termination of the black market as we know it now.

Summing up this section, it can be said that the intersectional position that one belongs to, not only affects the socioeconomic position that one has, but it also creates and gears up different kinds of knowledge that are however equally powerful. It must be taken under consideration that every side of coin has different understandings of the truth which is not less important or insignificant or false, but it is important to examine those understandings of power and truth between the two parts of the equation; The client and the cleaner.

5.4 “Where are you from?”

Stories of discrimination are often heard in previous research about the domestic cleaning branch. In this section, however, it is shown that discrimination can take all kinds of forms and can originate from all possible directions. What is important to notice though, is that the nature of discrimination is characterized not only by someones intersectional traits, but it also depends at a large degree, the geographic framework and more specifically the occasion that this action is taking place.

I am aware that there are connotations and stereotypes that are followings peoples' characteristics, characteristics of their appearance like clothing and body language just to name a few and in this particular research's case, stereotypes can drastically effect the contact between the two parts. More specific, when the first contact between client and cleaner is initiated, it is often that the flow of information between them can assist to creating further ideas or stereotypes based on for example, language skills, education, religion but to put it roughly, based on characteristic of gender/class/ethnicity.

This can be seen in its' application when the cleaner wearing a headscarf mentioned that she has been feeling discriminated many times because of her religion or been looked-down upon because of her profession. So in this case it could be said that the cleaner has faced discrimination based on origin/religion in combination with class but also gender. She specifically mentions that it feels as if the

clients are less happy to meet her and then she adds that it has happened many times the occasion where the clients have picked up a discussion about the headscarf, something that it is interpreted by the bearer as a negative reaction to her overall appearance in combination with the already low classed level of the profession.

5.4.1 The power of the individual and ethnicity

At this point it can be said that Foucault's theory about the power of the individual applies: Foucault mentions how the individual with all of its identity and characteristics, is a product of power mechanisms, and this identity created by power, creates regional identity that can come in clash with the national identity (Foucault & Gordon 1980, p. 74). Of course it is important to point out how the symbol of the headscarf, connected to its connotations, can evoke some comments from the clients side and that in return to cause negative dispositions to the cleaner. From an intersectional perspective; It is that of a not born in Sweden, Muslim woman who is a cleaner, under the comments of the Swedish client who hired the company to clean their house. From a conventional point of view of power, it is more than obvious who is on the point of disadvantage. However, when using the Foucauldian concept of the power of the individual, we need to see where this discussion is taking place; behind the closed doors of someone's home that coincides to be someone else's workplace but also it is someone's "realm" and it is not a public space, making it easier for that individual to engage in a conversation that it would be less likely to initiate in public, let alone in an other country where Islam would be the mainstream religion.

It is though remarkable how some cases of cleaners, mentioned that they were treated in a rather friendly approach exactly because of their specific place of origin. It was mentioned by one of the cleaners who is coming from Greece that they client got very happy hearing that their cleaner is Greek and they starting sharing their interests and knowledge about Greek music and culture. According to the cleaner's sayings, the client offered some coffee to the cleaner, put on some traditional Greek music and starting singing and dancing to the whole song with enthusiasm. It is my assumption at this point that this whole process would have "eaten up" time from the cleaner's work, but without being sure about if it was towards the cleaner's advantage (having to execute a bit less from the arranged tasks) or to the cleaner's disadvantage (having to do all the tasks on an even shorter period of time or even work passed the arranged hour of agreed finish).

To sum up this argument, it can be said that the cleaner's intersectional traits, initiate behaviors

that color the interaction and relationship in a personal but also in a client-relationship level between the two parts. In a power level, the existence of the cleaner, on a geographic, regional and ethnical specific just enlarge those traits making those mechanisms of power more visible and with different repercussions for each individual involved.

However, stereotyping can take all kinds of forms and can possibly originate from every possible direction. The fact that the clients are in the obvious socio-economic power position, does not necessarily mean that they are not stereotyped or discriminated against. A cleaner has voiced her opinion about the clients by mentioning the following:

You know some Swedish [people] are cold-blooded, its not only you as a cleaner its their nature actually, they are really cold and its like they didn't even see you, no hello or good morning or that stuff [...].

In addition to that another client has also mentioned how it is so much easier to have a contact with clients that are not Swedish. All these examples above make me notice that essentialism can take all kinds of forms and embody both negative and positive stereotypes that originate from one's intersectional qualities and how they reflect on the subjects or even targets of essentialism.

5.5 Dissatisfaction; dealt with direct contact

This part of the research is focusing on how cases of dissatisfaction are dealt and what kind of dispositions are evoking. It is found that confronting directly the issue of dissatisfaction (directness) can vary at a large degree on how it is meant by the one who initiate it, yet the aim remains the same; to achieve a better cliental relationship which, however, is not interpreted as such by the receivers. It is also shown that the combination of time/work/money is the key to a successful business relationship which is also interpreted differently from the two sides. The failure to create a common understanding of this combination can lead to dissatisfaction for any of the sides. Last, the language gap between the two groups may create lack of contact, however it seems that is not enough to cause dissatisfaction, since it is shown that dissatisfaction is also task-performance orientated.

Furthermore, it is commonly met that one of the two parts are not satisfied with the cliental relationship that they are engaged in, either temporarily either in a longer term, something that often leads to a brake of the contract. Dissatisfaction however, is dealt in different ways, it takes different forms and extensions, based on the reason that has caused dissatisfaction but also it manifests in different ways based on intersectional characteristics.

More specific, Leppänen (2014) on his latest research with focus on the cleaners with "white" contracts has found that many cleaners prefer and rather promote "directness". That as mentioned above involves the direct contact between client and cleaner when it comes to issues of dissatisfaction and with this method, ventilating an awkward situations and maintaining it or even restoring the cliental relationship between the two. In fact, one of the clients has mentioned during the interview that dealing dissatisfaction with directness seems a more fair thing to do towards the cleaner, instead of contacting the company *higher up*. Another client, also describes a situation where the cleaner speaks no english or swedish and there is just marginal communication between them two. She mentions that in the scenario where dissatisfaction occurs, she would be rather cautious about how this will be brought up towards the company, in fear that the cleaner might get yelled at, or even get fired, since the cleaner is already in a position of disadvantage due to the lack of common language.

Observing those two cases it can be said that the clients have already internalized their position as a critical for the cleaner position. That can only lead me to assume that the old connotations that the old "maid debate" is still an issue that creates feelings of guilt and evokes feelings of fear to the clients that they might be seen as too strict and the reason for the cleaner's misfortune. However that involves that they are aware that they are finding themselves already in a socio-economic power position and due to old "master and servant" connotation, the need to create a superficial equality is coming to the surface. Furthermore the client, in fear that she will be viewed as the "evil" one, takes the company out of the way in hope to create a more familiar relationship between herself and the client and therefore passing the role of being "evil" to the company, the one that could get the cleaner fired.

Examining this case from a Foucauldian perspective of power, the cleaner with their intersectional and vulnerable/powerless social status, is turning into the subject of protection from the client who in a sense "calling the shots". However, it is exactly the same "powerlessness" emerging from the cleaners intersectional characteristic that are considered as low status, that is exactly where the cleaners power lies; being protected from getting fired.

However, the clients' dispositions about having hired cleaning help, their contact with their cleaners and cases of dissatisfaction is found to differ a lot. One client, that has openly mentioned that he is feeling ashamed that he had to hire cleaning help, due to the fact that it evokes feelings of exploitation (due to the heavy history of the "maid system" Sweden once had), he claimed that in the case of dissatisfaction, it was dealt by contacting the company without coming in contact with the cleaner and justified it by claiming: *we thought that we were not her supervisors so it would be not the*

best to talk to her about it.

At this point it can be said that, as mentioned above, the clients are well aware of their position of advantage and are putting effort into eliminating the previous stigma of class gap and exploitation that the profession of domestic cleaning carries along. Dissatisfaction in a client relationship is something common, but since the profession of the domestic cleaner in Sweden has the connotations as it does, it makes issues of dissatisfaction even more awkward and difficult to deal with due to the fact that the power dynamics of one being able to decide over the other are becoming more visible.

The cleaners on the other hand, are experiencing “directness” from the clients side as something negative. Throughout the interviews with the cleaners, it was mentioned by most of the cleaners, that a complaining client, or a client that points and directs and *breaths down your neck* is not a good client, and it is one of the least enjoyed things about the profession¹⁰.

5.5.1 Dissatisfaction and knowledge-power

In order to add more inside information to how dissatisfaction is dealt, I need to mention that one of the cleaners I interviewed happens to also be the owner of the company she works in and consequently receives all the emails/phone calls of complaints. She mentions that the clients can be very aggressive and rude from times to times and how the focus is shifts heavily on the combination of time/work/money. She specifically mentions that she has been noticing a pattern, where when things are more serious than a few technical indications, the clients usually like to send e-mails in order to have everything documented. On this statement, it can be observed how the clients are aware of how to be proactive, and in order to avoid legal turbulence between them and the company, are taking action in order to protect themselves, something that makes me highly think about Foucault's theory about the connection between knowledge and power. Therefore, the clients, whom basically have been raised and currently live in Sweden, speak the language proficiently and mainly belong to the middle/upper class, are very much aware of how to protect themselves in cases of conflict, using knowledge they have around legislation and social rights.

¹⁰ At this point, in relevance to Leppänen's research about directness, I need to point out that most probably all the cleaners that I have interviewed are working and getting paid with some sort of not white arrangement, and that alone could be a factor that contributes to the cleaners' dissatisfaction when directness is taking place, whereas in Leppänen's research, the interviewed cleaners who are promoting directness are working with a fully legal contract.

5.5.2 The combination of time/work/money

As much as the combination of time work and money is concerned, it seems that this thought occupies the cleaners and the clients plenty. It seems that a combination of those three components together from the clients side make a successful combination for the cleaners. According to most of the cleaners, when the client is considerate and offers a spacey combination of those three components, is a quality most appreciated by the cleaners and for some it shows respect towards the work they put on.

However, in the case where this combination is not kept from the cleaners' side, it can be a dissatisfactory factor for the clients. A cleaner gives an example of dissatisfaction from her client's side mentioning how she arrived and left a quarter earlier to the house she was supposed to clean while the client was present. Independently from the fact that she finished all her tasks and up to the desired quality, still the client felt that it was unacceptable and it was the reason to file a complain to the company. Some cleaners mention that a good client relationship also involves that the client will be willing to pay for an “spacey” amount of time for the cleaners to perform their tasks instead for trying to achieve the cheapest price possible with the best of results.

On the same side according to a client, breaking the time/work/money combination was interpreted in a completely different way; The client describes a situations where their cleaner is struggling with finishing the agreed tasks on time, on a framework of time that the company had decided in the fist place. Apparently that caused a lot of internal debate in the family for a large period of time leading to the decision to ask from the company to have their cleaner changed. The client later on justifies their decision by explaining that they (client and spouse) were very well aware of the fact that although the cleaner is working overtime is only getting paid for the agreed hours of work that the company had set for them. That thought made the client feel very uncomfortable, adding up to the already existing feelings of guilt for having cleaning help, “*someone who cleans up My mess*” [sic] as he mentioned, but also to the feeling that he is “exploiting” someone.

5.5.3 The language gap

A subject that was mentioned in previous research is the issue of the domestic cleaners' spoken language and the so-called “städsvenska” (Abbastian and Hellgren; 2012 and Gavanas; 2010). It has been mentioned how the lack of language, Swedish in this case, can assist to the further social exclusion of the cleaners.

In fact, one of the cleaners mentioned how one of the things that he enjoys the best out of the

contact with the client is the fact that he can finally speak some Swedish and get to practice the language. Other than that, it seems that language, attaining it or the lack of it does not affect most of the clients and cleaners with exception to a client who mentioned that the cleaner that is working in the household does not speak any Swedish nor English and that is problematic according to the client, mainly for the reason that it creates a lot of awkwardness. The client mentioned: *I don not even know how to be friendly towards her*. Besides that, no other incidents or dissatisfaction or discontent were mentioned that originate from the linguistic gap between the two parts.

5.6 “I don't want to talk about it...”

In this section, issues of pride and shame will be discussed; the ways cleaners and clients feel about being/having a cleaner are completely polarized into cases of shame and pride, which it is shown that mainly originate from the actors involved intersectional characteristic. Additionally, talking about being/having a cleaner to their social circles, seems to also be a subject that the informants feel very uncomfortable talking about, since the profession is charged with the old heavy connotations of the past.

During the interviews with the clients I came to notice that there is a “taboo” into one having hired a cleaning company. It is considered to be a sensitive subject and very private, something that is understandable since it has to deal with issues of dirt in the private domain. The cleaner, as a third party participant in this cliental arrangement, is the mean that turns the private dirt, into public (Andersson 2000, Lutz 2011). Hence, it is not a surprise that people choose to be discrete about it, considering the connotations that are attached to the profession of domestic cleaning, in retrospect to the historical “maid” issue in Sweden. In that way, some of the clients are being, one could say, secretive about it and chose to talk about it with people that also have domestic help, exchanging knowledge and experiences.

According to Foucault, the truth that is generated through knowledge, is one of the factors that generate power. In this way, not only obtaining information about the cleaning company is important (what kind of information/services each company offers), but also sharing information with other clients, comparing and suggesting companies is equally important due to the reason that based on that knowledge, important decisions can be made when it comes to the company and cleaner (in terms of hiring/firing). Foucault has already stressed the importance of knowledge and how it generates power and how power and knowledge are connected with each other and fuel each other (Foucault & Gordon 1980, p. 52).

5.6.1 Clients sharing information

In order to see what kind of information and knowledge flow is taking action and in what way, cleaners and clients were asked if they are talking about their jobs and cleaners respectively. Two main answers dominated the group of the clients and that would be: the ones who perceive that having hired a cleaning help is rather embarrassing and a sensitive subject and therefore not openly talk about it and the ones that are openly talking about it with their friends. A client who claimed that is talking about the cleaning company mentioned :

I am just asking others what are they getting [cleaning help/company] how is it going for you, how much does it cost, how are you tidying up and stuff, how long time are they there and these stuff, it can be a bit fun to compare

Reading in this statement, it can be said that the exchange of this kind of information can possibly affect the way the client sees the company she has hired, since obtaining information about other companies from other clients is offering a subjective and empirical opinion. However what is important to point out here, is to focus on to where these information are coming from; so in this case potentially from other middle-upper class clients and with a Swedish background. That can raise the issues of trust and mistrust between clients and cleaners/companies affecting directly the contact and client relationship, towards the clients advantage in both occasions (trust: maintain a stable client relationship and mistrust: change the company to another that might be recommended). Also, it is interesting to raise the question why would clients that want to obtain information about other companies do not ask the companies directly instead of exchanging information with each other. But of course I can understand that it can be easier to ask acquaintances for information rather than making contact with each and every single company.

Another client mentioned that is usually talking to her friends about the hired cleaners and company and since she is very satisfied with the provided services, is usually recommending further the company. Additionally it was mentioned by the same client that the fact that most of the people in her social circle have hired the same company, that only strengthens the feelings of trust and reliability that the clients show towards their cleaners and company.

5.6.2 Fear of being a “snob”, guilts and pride

Another very interesting answer from a client was that she understands that it is a sensitive subject and chooses not to talk openly about it in the fear that she might come across as *snobby*, however can not help feeling a bit proud of themselves (client and spouse), having reached that economic state where they can provide this kind of services to themselves and family and *make life easier*. Clearly there is a polarization in the clients dispositions over having hired a cleaning company, however upon critical scrutiny with an intersectional lens, it can be said that both of the client's statements (fear of being snobby yet proud), have mainly to do with issues of class, rather than with gender, ethnicity and whiteness that are coming secondary yet strongly affecting the cleaners dispositions.

The connotations of having cleaning help in a local historical context as mentioned before are heavily charged with stories of exploitation domination and growing inequalities, specially when the narrative would usually be that of a poor woman, performing a wealthy woman's tasks. Having a maid at home would be an issue of commodity, portraying social status (Gavanas: 2006). However, it seems that under the contemporary surface of political correctness, having the possibility to hire domestic cleaning help can still be a commodity, portraying a specific socio-economic status.

On the other side, having hired cleaning help can also be experienced with guilt and shame. A client explains to me, how he has origins from a low income working class family, but finding himself in highly academical and high status profession, yet feeling as an *exploiter* for hiring cleaning help, being aware of the connotations, low status and stigma that exists around domestic cleaning as profession:

I still feel a little bit like an exploiter that someone else is dealing with my mess and I think it is still of a class issue in Sweden.

He later on continues explaining that due to the feelings of guilt, but also being aware of the black market and often exploitation of workforce, pushed the family to actively research the companies legal and tax whereabouts but also its' bindings with the state, making sure that the company is paying white money to their workers and *takes care of them as much as possible*.

5.6.3 “I work as a cleaner”

The answers also vary plenty from the cleaners' perspective, on their dispositions about their profession. Some of the cleaners mention that they feel shame about being a domestic cleaner and keep

it a secret from their social circle, something that Leppänen and Dahlberg (2012) have also previously found in their research. One of the cleaners specifically mentioned that is coming from an upper class family in her origin country and being a domestic cleaner is looked down upon and for that reason talks as little as possible to her family about the profession and the domestic cleaning company she is running. Another cleaner is keeping her profession a secret from both family and friends.

However, in a big contrast, another cleaner mentions that he is openly talking about being a domestic cleaner and feeling rather proud about it. At this point I need to mention that the cleaner who claimed the last sentence, is socially a male, whereas the cleaners that claimed that are ashamed about being domestic cleaners were females. Elaborating on that, it can be said that being a male and a domestic cleaner has less of a heavy connotations of subordination and therefore is easier to subvert. Additionally, the cleaner who mentioned that is rather proud about being a domestic cleaner, belonged in a high academical environment, being aware that being his position as a cleaner is a precarious situation, until he is finished with his studies.

Summing up it can be said that class of origin and current class of the individuals effects both cleaners and clients on how they feel about the profession with rather polarized dispositions. It seems that the connotations of powerlessness and exploitation that follow the domestic cleaning services are in some cases strong enough for the clients to want to “make it up” to their workers by making sure they have hired a company that seems as legitimate as possible. This is where I need to say that I am aware that this is not always the case, but that it is a possible case; raising awareness about the cleaners situation in order to create better working conditions. From a Foucauldian and intersectional perspective, it can be said that it is the combination of the clients characteristic (gender, race, ethnicity, whiteness) that makes the client aware of their position, in comparison to that of their cleaner, that evokes feelings of injustice. That disposition that originates from the clients social status in combination with the knowledge of what constitutes a legal/illegal company could be a resolution which creates demand for a more legal domestic cleaning market.

Last, Gavanoas (2013) in previous research has focused and elaborated on how important is networking for the cleaning business for both of the sides. Evidently from my research, it seems that the importance of exchanging information has a larger effect for the actors of the two sides in order to initiate the first contact, and by first contact I mean the initial meeting between client and company, potentially via recommendations from other clients/social circle and respectively, the initial meet between the company and the (soon to be) employee, also potentially via recommendations from social

circle. However, it is noticed that for some that flow of information after the signing of the contract halts due to feelings of embarrassment, guilt, shame.

5.7 Respect

As far as both of the parts of this equation are concerned, they are both aware of the heavy connotations and stigma the job as a domestic cleaner comes along with. It is only understandable that in a politically correct social framework, none of the two parts would enjoy to show feelings or thoughts of subordination/subordinating, and this is the part where the very abstract concept of respect comes in the way and is very specifically coloring this cliental relationship. The thoughts around respect and how respect is being manifested in this relationship differs, considering the obvious socio-economic inequalities that are only strengthened by the stigma of the past, mixed with feelings of shame and guilt. Additionally, it is known that domestic cleaning (professional or not) has been and still is a highly gendered and in the contemporary professionalized condition is very much nowadays a class and ethnicity issue. Therefore the power play is already so far in favor of the one part, but *respect* can potentially be a mean to balance it, something that can be observed further on.

5.7.1 Respect according to cleaners

The concept of respect will be the subject this section will be focusing on. It is found that clients and cleaners have different ideas on how respect in this cliental relationship is manifested. For the cleaners' part, a good and friendly business arrangement is what is a sign of respect. However, the clients being aware of their socio-economic position, have different understanding of how respect is being manifested and put to practice. In both occasions, respect seems to be an effort to balance the inequalities between the two parts.

I asked both groups of interviewees if they feel that there is mutual respect in this cliental relationship and how this respect is being created. Most of the cleaners gave me rather similar answers, whereas the answers of the clients would differ a great deal. As far as the cleaners are concerned, most of them mentioned that they feel respected when there is a good contact between them and their clients, and when they are not treated as *second category citizens* or looked down upon because of their profession¹¹, but *treated as equal*. Some also mentioned that respect is shown when the clients show

¹¹ Cleaners consider their profession as a factor that can initiate lack of respect but no one has mentioned lack of respect due to gender, sexual orientation or origin. However a cleaner mentioned that has been experiencing disrespect because of the her religion, which also mentioned on the chapter "Where are you from?"

appreciation about their work in combination with a good arrangement for time/work/money. As I mentioned previously, there are obvious connotations of intersectional disadvantages that follow the profession and the cleaners are aware of it, so the effort to eliminate the stigma and treat the cleaner as an equal is being the first step to achieve equality according to the cleaners.

At this point I can not help observing and pointing out what the cleaners did *not* mention that they perceive as a sign of respect towards them; that is when the clients are making sure that their cleaners are getting paid properly, and getting the social benefits that a fully white job would offer, which is something that the some of the clients mention that it is a sign of respect. In a way it makes me wonder if it is a matter of a range of knowledge (how much they know about their social rights as workers) why the cleaners do not have an interest or even the expectation in getting bureaucratically covered as best as possible, either if it is due to the fact they lay this expectation to the company owners rather than the clients.

5.7.2 Respect according to clients

Clients on the other hand, mention that they show respect towards their cleaners in different ways. A client mentioned that she shows respect by making sure she is not home when the cleaners arrive at the apartment, so in that way she is not in the way and her presence is not interpreted as an inspection of their work, something that has been mentioned above as well¹². The client later on continues by specifically mentioning that :

I respect that they want to be left alone when they clean and they respect me through reporting to me when there is something special {is done/has happened} [...]. I respect them and I thank them for their work and they respect me through that they do their stuff they way that I want them to be done.

Showing appreciation is a way of showing respect according to the same client (which it is also something that is mentioned by the cleaners), but when the client is removing oneself from they cleaners' working place is also a sign of respect. At this point it be added the observation that removing the clients presence is like removing the concept of the Panopticon as a mean of surveillance and a disciplinary method shows respect, since the client is showing trust in the cleaners skills and that the tasks to be performed will be carried out properly without the clients presence as a mean of exhortation.

Another client mentions that he is not sure if there is mutual respect, however he feels that he respects them and that it the respect is manifested via making sure, they cleaners have all the tools and

¹² Clients presence is interpreted as supervision both from clients and cleaners. See chapter "Contact".

supplies they need in order to perform their job, make sure the household is as *cleanable* as possible and by having a basic polite contact whenever they happen to meet each other.¹³ Additionally on the same side, another client mentions how exactly because of the heavy past connotations that the profession is carrying, there are hard conditions the for cleaners nowadays and refers to her cleaner who speaks no Swedish or English and comes from a poor country, yet not elaborating further on this. However the client summed up her thoughts by mentioning that cleaners should have a proper and “spacey” pay. That in connection to the cleaner's description from the client, makes me assume that the link of thought behind this client's statement, is the fact that the client recognizes that the cleaner is in a rather difficult socio-economic situation, and for that reason she should be able to have a proper pay. Upon a follow up question to if the client has gone through the process of examining that the cleaner is getting a proper white pay, the client answered negatively and then added that she actually does not know what kind of payment the cleaner is receiving. This client's answer is intersecting with the cleaners answer a bit further above about the combination of time/work/money as a sign of respect.

An other client mentions that she definitely respects the cleaners and how she thinks that it is “fantastic” that they do this job, something that could intersect with the need for appreciation from the clients that some cleaners mentioned. The same client later on continues her thoughts about the part of mutual respect, mentioning that she is not sure if the cleaners have respect for her and that she is worried that the cleaners think less of her, due to the fact that she is hiring cleaning help. She later on gives a clear example:

[...] for example there was this woman that kept calling me “madame” saying like “I'm off now madame, could you please move now madame” and that sort of did not help at all cause it felt really as if I am above her [making gesture with hands that shows different heights] I suppose that that's the worry, I worry that they think that I think things.. like we re not equal [...].

As mentioned above, issues of class and inequalities are fueling the discourse of respect between clients and cleaners, in combination with feelings of shame and guilt. This disposition seems as well to be the reason why a client would pay attention to how the company is treating their employees and under what kind of conditions; the cleaners are gaining on power through their powerlessness from a conventional socio-economic point of view.

¹³ Additionally, the same client has mentioned at an other part of the interview that they (client and spouse) have actively searched for a company that is working under legal terms and is taking care their workers as much as possible. Also the same client has mentioned how they decided to decline services from one cleaner due to the fact that the cleaner could not finish her tasks on time and was always working overtime without getting paid for it.

What is furthermore observed in this chapter is how the whole discussion around respect coming from both groups of interviewees would mainly describe the process of respect, with the cleaners as the receivers of respect having the clients in a secondary position, although the question was trying for the biggest part to figure out the creation of *mutual* respect. That observation makes me assume what I have already mentioned above, that the clients have already internalized their position as being on the upper part of this unequal relationship, with connotations of the past strengthening that feeling. The clients, taking this as a given situation, mainly focus of how to equalize this inequality in all sorts of ways, but subject aside, it shows how there is an intense effort for erasing inequalities by how the clients choose to speak about respect, with the respect towards them being very little mentioned or even not mentioned at all from both groups.

5.8 Cheating

For this section, the issue of cheating will be raised; it is more often met that it is the domestic cleaning companies that become the center of attention when it comes to cases of fraud. However, in this part, it is illustrated how cases of fraud can originate from any direction, cleaners or clients, yet only very specific cases eschew from exposure or publicity.

Illegitimate earnings also known as black money has been one of the main debates around domestic cleaning companies in Sweden, that have reached a political level, legislation-wise, and that was one of the reasons the hiring of domestic cleaning companies is directly connected to the Swedish tax office, offering tax deductions to the ones who chose to purchase the services. One of the arguments that were used to promote and strengthen the legislation, was that the closer connection between the companies and the state, the higher the elimination of the black market, although research has shown that the black market has been growing respectively (Gavanas and Mattson 2011, Gavanas and Calleman 2013).

Since the whole debate evolves around tax evasion, along with a number of tax scandals reaching the media rather often, one would easily make the assumption that it is usually the domestic cleaning companies that are trying to gain by no legal means out of this situation. Since the companies are so tightly connected to the state they automatically become visible and in the case where the authorities become aware of an illegal action, the company becomes an other statistical evidence of tax evasion. However, there is very little agency for the cleaners and companies that are getting cheated by their clients. At least not any of those stories are reaching the news and just remain in the realms of

academical research about the subject.

Some of the cleaners however, have mentioned cases where the clients have tried to embezzle the cleaners first, and in the long run the company by making accusations of damage that have already been there in the first place and then proceeding to asking compensation from the company or asking to get compensation from the cleaning company's insurance company. One cleaner and owner of a cleaning company mentioned that the way that these situations are dealt with is by breaking the contract right away before the situation gets to escalate. Another cleaner mentions that, since that situation of fake accusations has occurred in the past, he is currently aware of how this scenario could play out and is being proactive, by taking pictures with his mobile phone when there is a noticeable damage in the household. An action like that has helped him in the past, and upon confrontation from the client making false accusations of damage, the cleaner took out the pictures that he had previously taken with the mobile phone and showed them to the client. In this way the accusations from the client's side stopped and the client relationship went on.

So it seems that there are efforts from both sides, for extortion and exploitation yet it is unknown in what degree and with what repercussions. The repercussions are only known when the cleaning companies are being the perpetrators of extortion and that attracts a rather large amount of media attention that only perpetuates or even strengthens the connotations and stigma around the domestic cleaning services and its' actors, yet there is no agency nor media attention for the companies that are getting embezzled by their clients. Therefore the companies and consequently the cleaners, are often being the ones lacking knowledge about their social rights as workers, are the ones put in the center of such situations. In the occasion where the company is already operating with black or half-black money, it is assumed that it could be even harder to report the incident and move legally with it or by legislatively by any means.

Summing up, in the domestic cleaning business situations of fraud and extortion could originate from any of the sides and potentially with different targets and outcomes. What is important though to extract from this situation is to notice the patterns of focus -when it comes to fraud and extortion- and which side is gaining agency and attention and for what reasons. The connotations and stereotypes that are around the cleaning business is mainly making the scale to tilt negatively for the cleaners, also due to their intersectional characteristic making them, easier targets for extortion.

5.9 The missing Gender dimension

For this last section, in the effort of trying to obtain information that has to do with the gender aspect, I came across what clients and cleaners consider to be a good or bad client/cleaner. It turned out that the clients are heavily focusing on the contact between them and their clients, as an extension of their tools they are using for work, whereas the clients are heavily focused only on their cleaners' skills and task-performance abilities. Additionally, it is observed that the way the two sides chose to express themselves about what makes a good or bad client/cleaner, maybe encrypts but also validates the existing inequalities, that both parts are trying to equalize.

More specifically, it has been seen in previous research from Leppänen and Dahlberg (2012) that there is a gender segregation in the domestic cleaning business, which points out that men are mostly bound to carry out outdoors tasks and women indoors. However, so far in my research I did not happen that I have noticed a gender division in the clients preferences, yet I need to add that all the cleaners I interviewed have been working indoors and the clients have hired domestic cleaning help with only indoors tasks. In that way, it could be possible that Leppänen's and Dahlberg's research is not comparable or even applicable to mine. Yet I think I need to focus on the gender aspect that so far has not been an issue, neither mentioned in any way. In order to be able to capture some answers that might escape the every-day political correctness, I asked both groups, what makes a good and what makes a bad client/cleaner.

5.9.1 Good traits

Cleaners listed a number of qualities that they would think makes a good client. The answers would only mildly vary. According to many, a good basic contact and being friendly and approachable would be a trait of a good client. Others mentioned words like *patience*, *acceptability*, *tolerance* and *trust*. Last, some others would mention that a good client is being capable of *good business* that can be interpreted as a person that is able to offer a satisfactory time/work/money business agreement, that is rather “*spacey*” but also a client who appreciates the cleaners' work and does not constantly complain.

Clients on the other hand, when asked what they would think constitutes a good cleaner, most of them focused only on the cleaners' skills but not any other characteristic¹⁴. At this point It could be said that gender, class, ethnicity seems not to matter to the clients and their thoughts about what makes a

¹⁴ By saying that only the cleaners' skills were mentioned by “some of them”, does not mean that some other clients have given me different replies about what makes a good cleaner. The reason I chose to use “some” is due to the fact that this subject was not discussed with all of the clients.

good cleaner. The focus remains heavily on the skills, and in the “affection”-I could say due to lack of better word- that the cleaner shows to the household. More specifically, some cleaners gave me exactly the same answer word-by-word: *I want them to clean my house like their house*. Another client mentioned how it is important that the cleaner is paying attention to details and how nice it would be to pay attention to those details and take care of them, independently if they are not in the task list that the cleaners are paid for. This is where it can be observed how miscommunications of this nature can come in between the two sides which also often lead to dissatisfaction. It can be seen that the combination of time/work/money is understood and practiced differently from both sides.

5.9.2 Bad traits

When it comes to what makes a bad client, cleaners again gave approximately the same range of answers, with contact or rather bad contact, being the first reason for dissatisfaction for the cleaners. According to the group of cleaners, a bad client is someone that *looks down on you* and keeps contact to the basic minimum. Additionally, a bad client, is the one that is showing constant dissatisfaction and does not provide the proper tools for the job to be done. Again, no gender, race, ethnicity characteristics were mentioned and it could be said that contact still plays the most important role for the cleaners.

On the other side, clients mention that a bad cleaner is one that does not perform their tasks correctly or the ones the “cheat” and by cheating it was implied that they avoid to perform the whole task list in order to spare effort and time by *hiding the dirt underneath the carpet*. Hence it seems again that skills for the clients are first in their focus on what constitutes a good cleaner. No other characteristics or traits were mentioned. Specifically a client mentioned:

- Client: *[...]on the other side a bad cleaner would be someone who cleans as if they clean an office..*
- Me: *So you'd say that it mainly has to do with skills not characteristics or..?*
- Client: *Yes*
- Me: *So it mainly has to do with skills, even though the contact might not be there?*
- Client: *Yes, getting the work done is more important.*

What is interesting to point out is that there is a high possibility that the interviewed cleaners are working with a half-black money arrangement, yet none of them mentioned that a characteristic of a good or bad client is to make sure the hired company is having their cleaners working under fair

conditions and acknowledge that the clients choice or ignorance for choosing a black company is contributing to their difficult socio-economic situation, something that also contributes to a wider intesectional marginalization; that of the immigrants of the lowest working class, who usually are women.

On the other side, that of the clients, it seems that there is no obvious preferences on the cleaners attributes and characteristic, as long as they perform their tasks up to the clients desired level, which sometimes might exceed the given at that time task agreement. But it seems that gender, class and race play no obvious important role on affecting the clients' preferences and in the long run the client relationship. However, I think that it is very important to mention again here that the group of interviewed clients, belongs to a local elite, with high status professions and many years inside the academia. That alone could be a reason that contributes to the politically correct answers.

5.9.3 Choice of words

It is rather interesting to notice what constitutes a good trait from group to group with the cleaners solely focusing on to the interaction between themselves and their clients but the clients focusing only their cleaners' tasks and skills. That could be possibly explained by viewing the contact between the two parts as a tool or as a prerequisite in order for the cleaners to perform their tasks, easier, with less stress and as pleasant as possible, something that does not reach out to the clients, since their only interest is for the agreed tasks to be carried out. In addition to that, it is also interesting to observe the choice of words that are chosen to describe a traits of a good client, words like: *patience*, *acceptability*, *tolerance* and *trust*. Although the objective of the paper is not to use discourse analysis or linguistics, I dare to say that those words portrait an already unequal relationship, but that can be left to be examined in the future.

6. Conclusion

The mirrored qualitative research between the two groups is giving information about how the relationship is shaped and it is revealing dispositions from both of the sides that can actually motivate changes in the way the relationship is shaped in different levels. This research's addition to the so-far research is that now there is a little bit more insight of how the other part of the equation is thinking, that of the clients, around the subject of having a cleaner, something that has not been researched before, as far as I know.

It is so far known that cleaners constitute a very low-leveled working class, but parts of them also constitute a cluster of a class known as the Precariat (an individual finding oneself in constant precarious employment situation) in combination to the class of the Denizen (usually working in another country immigrants, with limited working rights based on their origin). When it comes to the clients' class position, the previous research is coinciding to my findings, where the clients usually belong to the middle class and have no visible immigrant background.

Contact, seems to play a more important role than one would think in the way the cliental relationship is shaped. The clients are very well aware of their socio-economic position and are aware that they are a higher class-wise than their cleaners, in combination with the connotations of what it meant to have a cleaner in the Swedish past, evokes feelings of shame, guilt, but also cases of commodification where also mentioned in a smaller part. Hence, it seems that the feelings of shame and guilt are leading the clients to alter their behavior towards their cleaners in various ways but those alternations were justified by the clients in a way where they are mainly aiming to equalize the relationship between them. Contact, from the cleaners side, I find that it matters more to the cleaners rather than the clients. Cleaners, are trying to establish a good relationship with their clients due to the fact that a good relationship is just an extra tool to facilitate their work. Feelings of shame are also common to the cleaners which is usually making the cleaners to hide their profession altogether. In addition to that, incidents of dissatisfaction are usually handled in a way that is considerate towards the cleaners. Signs of respect are also targeting mainly the cleaners and not the clients.

The issue of cleaners' ethnicity can have a polarized attention, with that of one being looked-down upon, and to that of one being "special" with positive connotations, with both cases affecting the cleaners' dispositions and in an extension their profession. An extension of that is the issue of the linguistic gap which seems to very little affect the relationship and the contact.

The combination of the findings in the research, are raising discussions about issues or class,

ethnicity and power, but the subject of gender was nowhere mentioned. That makes my thoughts split into two assumptions; Firstly, I would assume that due to the fact that most of the informants who are involved in the research are having a high educational background, might be inducing political correct answers. Secondly, I assume that gender does not play any important role to the way the connection between the two parts is shaped. The only way I could find what connects gender to the research, is based on the retrospective view of one having cleaning help in Sweden, where the maids where on a large degree only females. Although times has changed, and domestic cleaners come in all shapes and forms, the dispositions that follow the profession are still those of the poor-exploited woman, something that could assist to the shame and guilts that clients have.

I have also found that the fact that the state is highly involved into the domestic cleaning business is evoking safety from both sides, and promotes an assumed “whiteness” although the “whiteness” of the contract is not guaranteed. It makes me wonder how the issue of the black market would be dealt by the clients, in the case where they become aware that they have hired a black domestic cleaning company, considering their feelings of shame and guilt.

6.1 Possibilities for future research

During the process of this paper, new ideas and new theoretical problems came up, something that could be used for future research. One of the subjects that emerged could investigate how raising awareness about the black market to the clients of domestic services can affect the business as we know it, and more specifically the black market in domestic cleaning services. A combination of qualitative research on clients combined and crosschecked with a qualitative and quantitative data gathered from cleaners and the state, gathered in depth of time, could be employed in order to observe the results. Based on the results of this research I am led to assume that raising awareness to the clients, can be part of the solution against the black market in the domestic cleaning sector and that could be the long-term aim of the research.

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Appendix:

Introductory email sent to the clients:

Hello! My name is Aikaterini Giannopoulou and I am student in Lund's University in the Gender Studies program. I am currently doing my research for my thesis and I think I could use your help.

With my research I will try to discover or cover a piece of the nature of the relationship between a person who has cleaning help (client) in their home and the person who is working there (cleaner).

The reason I decided to do this research is the fact that I have been noticing that there is a lot information and previous research being done on the field of domestic work, both in Sweden but also globally with sole and main focus on the cleaner. The findings are usually very discouraging, showing the strongly gendered and unfair treatment that the cleaners and carers are being exposed to.

However Sweden in comparison, is a different occasion where there are a lot of cleaning companies being connected to the welfare system RUT and with that way eliminating a large part of the black market and unfair treatment. Therefore I would be more interested to find out how the clients (you in that case) feel about the cleaners. I think that it is important to investigate both of the parts of this equation, since there are no studies at all that concern the clients' experiences and feelings.

Ethics:

At this point I need to reassure you that I understand that the information that will be provided for this research are very private and sensitive and therefore your identity will remain anonymous. The data will be used only for academical research. In case you feel you need more information about the academical ethics of the research please feel free to contact me or my supervisor at:

ass10agi@student.lu.se or

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