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**HOMELESSNESS AS INFLUENTIAL FACTOR FOR THE IDENTITY
OF MIGRANTS AND FOR THEIR INTEGRATION TO THE DANISH
SOCIETY.**

A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH OF THE PATTERNS OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG MIGRANTS IN
COPENHAGEN AND THEIR SUBSEQUENT INFLUENCES TO INTEGRATION.

**A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
MSC IN GLOBAL REFUGEE STUDIES**

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ABSTRACT

In the context of integrating and adapting to the Danish society, this thesis attempts to shed light upon the implications that homelessness can have on the identity of the migrants, who live in Copenhagen. The focus is on migrants who originate from European Union countries and moved to Denmark with the purpose of a better life.

Through a qualitative research, the thesis utilized data gathered from interviewing four homeless migrants who expressed their desire to settle in Copenhagen and from two social workers who supported this settlement. Specifically, this thesis had its starting point in the struggle of EU migrants to integrate in Copenhagen which interestingly contrasted their homeless setting. In order to investigate the potential impact that homelessness has upon their identity and adaptation, theoretical concepts such as social identity and acculturation were employed.

Through the analysis and based on the empirical findings, the thesis argued that the patterns of homelessness can determine the adoption of specific occupational activities which can maintain a positive social identity of the migrants within the low-status group of homelessness. It was also identified that these activities can build a homeless identity as a functional way of living in Copenhagen which obstructs the attempt and determination of the migrants to a prospective acculturation process and subsequently prolongs their homelessness condition. Conclusively, in contrast with the initial approach, it was found that the salient milieu created between the factual routine developed within homelessness and the relative positive social identity of the migrants demeaned and influenced their initial determination and objectives to integrate in Denmark.

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PREFACE

The completion of this Master thesis wouldn't have been possible without the support of few people. Therefore I am grateful to my respondents for being open and willing to share their sensitive stories with me. To my supervisor, Marlene for her critical feedback which represented my boost of motivation and determination for improving my work. To my boyfriend for being supportive and giving me useful feedback when needed.

READER'S GUIDE

This thesis revolves around the narratives of homeless migrants. Therefore along the text they will be referred to as participants. In accordance with their anonymity, the four participants who were interviewed are referred to as 'participant D, participant G, participant S, participant C', the capital letters representing the initials of their names. They are referred to as 'the participants' on a general level along this thesis.

The other participants who were talked to informally are referred to as 'anonymous participant'. When referred to on a general level, they are 'the anonymous participants'.

On a general discourse, the migrants are often referred to as 'homeless migrants' or 'EU job-seekers'.

Two other interviews were carried out with social workers from Kompasset Kirkens Korshaer. They are simply referred to by their first names 'Marta' and 'Silvia'.

SIT in this thesis stands for Social Identity Theory.

EU stands for The European Union.

KKK stands for Kompasset Kirkens Korshaer.

INTRODUCTION

Some people prefer to return to their countries, but most of them stay despite the conditions. So they end up rough sleeping for months, even years. They completely disconsider returning as an option. They prefer to be homeless here than returning to their countries of origin. They don't have anything to go back to.

They can survive here. Despite the precarious living they have, they adapt to the conditions and create a lifestyle from it. There are many places which offer free food and they adapt to sleeping on the streets. Interestingly, contrary to the public authorities' opinion, they stay even if they don't get help, social benefits and face this cruel reality of the streets.

(Marta, social worker, The Extra Mile Project, Kompasset-Kirkens Korshaer).

This quote strikingly describes the paradoxical experience of homeless migrants who despite the precarious living conditions they confront in Denmark, they manage to settle and adapt to the street conditions and prolong their stay.

In the context of the expansion of the European Union in 2004 and 2007, there was registered an increased growth in the numbers of migrants from EU countries who seek employment and better life conditions in the West of Europe (Mostowska, 2014). The expansions of the EU to the East, the economic recession as well as the free movement of labour within the EU can thus explain the impact on the growth of migrants in Copenhagen (FEANTSA¹, 2012).

Interestingly, when their desire for integration and settlement gets challenges by the homeless status they inevitably acquire, their entire migratory experience become a mismatch. The precarious reality from living in the streets contrasts their reasoning for building better lives in Denmark.

¹ FEANTSA is The European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless AISBL

The topic of migrants experiencing homelessness in the host countries has been debated in various studies before. Most of these studies researched homelessness from a political perspective, with a focus on either the criminalization of this category of people, the potential exits from homelessness or a critical approach of the social support aimed for homeless people. From a separate perspective, the integration of the migrants has also been long debated and scholars have looked mainly at their reasoning for migrating, ways of integrating or adapting to a new societal context or the outcome of their movement. Few studies have attempted to connect the pattern of homelessness to their prospective attempt to settle in the host society and even fewer have looked at the influences these patterns have upon their identity within the context of integration in the host country. In a landmark study, Alice Farrington and W. Peter Robinson (1999) discussed the relation between homelessness and identity maintenance and subsequently proposed different pathways which homeless individuals can undertake in order to maintain a positive self-identity, exit the homeless reality and pursue their transition to the mainstream society, which in this context is represented by the host society (Farrington and Robinson, 1999). However the study has focused on homeless people who were already members of the society they were seeking to re-integrate into. In this sense, granting that the migrant identity has its own contribution upon the adaptation of people into the host society, Farrington and Robinson's (1999) study still makes relevance for this research but cannot be referred to entirely as it omits the migrant factor in discussing the homelessness-identity relationship.

RESEARCH QUESTION & PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the relation between the membership to the homeless group of the EU migrants and their social identity and subsequently explore what implications this relation has upon their integration and settlement in the Danish society.

With this in mind, the research problem is formulated as follows:

How does homelessness, as a low-status group influence the identity of EU migrants and their prospective settlement in the Danish society?

From this thesis purpose, the following working questions arise and are needed to simplify the thesis course:

- What are the implications of being homeless in Copenhagen for EU migrants?

- What is the relationship between these implications and their identity within their attempt to integrate into the Danish society?

Based on a qualitative research, this thesis explores the meaning of being homeless as experienced by the migrants interviewed and talked to with the main objective of identifying if there is a connection between this meaning and their self-identity. As well, their adaptation in Copenhagen is explored in regards to the above mentioned aspects.

The thesis is limited to EU investigating the relationships between the patterns of homelessness and the social identity of the migrants with their adaptation to a new societal context. Therefore it neither aims to explore the motivation of the migrants to reside in Copenhagen, nor to investigate the potential means to exit homelessness. The thesis limited its research to a scholarly discussion and seeks to employ theoretical concepts of social identity and acculturation in order to explain the empirical patterns of homelessness collected from the narratives of the migrants. It is not the aim of this thesis to develop a debate about the Danish policies on homelessness, neither on the policies of integration addressed to EU migrants.

To better understand the importance and relevance of researching this topic, the reader is further introduced to previous academic studies, which revolve around the topic of homeless migrants. Therefore within the Literature review section, the background of this research is set out in order better define its purpose and research question.

LITERATURE REVIEW

‘A review of prior, relevant literature is an essential feature of any academic project’ (Webster and Watson: 2002: 13). Besides creating the foundation of the thesis purpose, this chapter seeks to expose the previous knowledge on the thesis topic and ‘uncover areas where research is needed’ (ibid: 13).

It follows a concept-centric framework, which means that it is structured in accordance to the key concepts that revolve around this research, respectively homelessness and self-identity (ibid).

UNDERSTANDING HOMELESSNESS

From a purely semantic point of view, the homeless are the people who lack a home, usually due to poverty factors.²

From a scholarly perspective, Jeffrey Grundberg (1998) in his study about *Homelessness as a Lifestyle*, defined the concept as being ‘often the final stage in a lifelong series of crises and missed opportunities, the culmination of a gradual disengagement from supportive relationships and institutions (1998: 244).

Grundberg (1998) study follows a sociological perspective and connects the roots of homelessness with various categories of people who experience a deviant social condition, such as alcohol abuse, immigrancy, ill health, depression (ibid). He (1998) associates the people part of these social categories as outsiders or as living in extremis (ibid).

His study findings are based a qualitative research which comprises four case studies. The case studies revolve around men who have adopted homelessness as a lifestyle. His study however looks more at the causal relationship between a deviant social condition and homelessness.

Hocking and Lawrence (2000) on the other side, approached the topic of homelessness from a societal perception perspective, which resulted in a quantitative research on the attitudes of people towards the homeless. They started their experimental study from the primary statement that the Americans generally perceive the homeless in a negative manner.

MacKnee and Mervyn (2002) refer to homelessness as being ‘the most somber and distressing social problem’ of modern society and it defines the situation when individuals or families live on the streets (p 293). Their qualitative study tried to explore the exists of homelessness by setting several key transition factors, such as social network, self-esteem, personal responsibility, personal goals and changing perceptions (ibid). The two authors briefly touch the aspect of self-esteem in regards to homelessness. In this respect they discovered that life on the streets can have a downward effect upon the self-esteem of the homeless people and that it supports the adoption of a ‘self-as-homeless’ identity (2002:302).

By the same token, Hiebert *et al* (2005) explored the strategies adopted by immigrants and other visible minorities in order to exit homelessness in the Canadian society. In their attempt to understanding the phenomenon of homelessness, they divided it into *absolute* and *relative* homelessness. In short, people who experience the former form of homelessness are the ones

² <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/homeless?q=homelessness>

without any form of shelter whereas the latter form encompasses individuals who have shelter but ‘are subject to substandard, unsafe and/or temporary conditions’ (ibid, p 29). Their study drew upon the idea that the migrants form a disadvantaged group as they are financially un-resourceful and lack knowledge of the public system and the housing market in the host society (ibid). This categorization of homelessness is supported also by Fiedler *et al* (2006) who specifically distinct between *street* or *visible* homelessness and *relative* homelessness. As the name describes, *visible* homelessness refers to the individuals who reside on the street whereas the relative form comprises more people perceived as being hidden, but in less acute conditions than the visible ones (Fiedler *et al* 2006).

From a more psychological perspective, Russo *et al* (2001) analysed the phenomenon of homelessness in relation the self-attributed dependency needs for both genres (Russo *et al*, 2001). The authors assimilate homelessness as being a condition of learned detachment from social life in combination with a rejection of the society’s values (ibid: 271). Their study aimed to identify the relation between homelessness and interpersonal dependency by collecting data for five years from participants- members of a vocational rehabilitation program for homeless men and women (ibid). A comparison between the two sexes was also employed in their study. In a similar manner, Tessler *et al* (2001) investigated the reasoning behind homelessness with an emphasis on gender perspectives. The three authors assumed that the reasons homeless people give for their situation is linked to their social identity in the given society. As this might be true, the study is however focused on a gendered discussion. A qualitative research was conducted and it concluded that the reasons for homelessness are ‘tied to social roles that create different points of vulnerability’ (p 253).

HOMELESSNESS AMONG MIGRANTS

In 1992 Rahimian analysed the link between the status of homeless people and their migration behaviour. The author specifically explored if migration is a coping method for homeless individuals (p.1318). The author developed several variables which served to analyse the quantitative data he collected on migration patterns of homeless people. Stability for instance, was measured by the length of stay in a particular city or the number of moves within a year time (ibid). From this perspective there is a visible similarity between Rahimian study on the

migratory behaviour of the homeless and their determination of staying in a particular city, as it is exposed in this research. In short, the mobility behaviour Rahimian (1992) explains is also linked to the decision of remaining in Copenhagen as given in our research topic. Contrary to this research, Rahimian (1992) employed a quantitative study and explored multiple relations of the homeless status and migration behaviour.

Another study that linked the concept of homelessness with immigration was Daly's in 1996. He took a political approach in regards to the links between immigration and homelessness in Western Europe and critically analysed the cases of several countries such as Britain, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland and The Netherlands.

Daly's (1996) study was limited to a political discussion and also to a temporal context which might not be applicable nowadays. In regards to Denmark's case the immigrants Daly (1996) referred to are non EU while this research is focused only on EU immigrants.

On a similar note McDonald in 1998 investigated immigration in relation to homelessness with an emphasis on the governmental policies in South Africa.

Both Daly (1992) and McDonald (1998) concluded that the main cause for homelessness among immigrants is the shortage of housing, the expensive rents and the lack of social housing programs for foreigners. Furthermore the overall perception or societal attitude towards foreigners was also taken into account as acting as primal factor in supporting homelessness (Daly 1992, McDonald 1998).

HOMELESS IN DENMARK

In regards to homelessness in Denmark, Anker (2008) conducted a qualitative research from a political perspective on the capacity of influence of homeless individuals. Explicitly Anker (2008) looked at the power to influence social policies and to advocate for their rights of homeless people living in Denmark. Homelessness is a phenomenon with a multitude of facets but Anker (2008) agreed with the classification which provides four forms of homelessness: rooflessness, houselessness, insecure housing, and inadequate housing (Anker 2008:28). However Anker (2008) limited his study to houselessness people, which comprises the individuals without a house but who reside in temporary shelters (ibid).

In a similar way, Benjaminsen and Dyb (2008) employed in their study a homeless policy comparison between the three Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Starting

from the premise that the homeless policies take on similar approaches, the two authors investigated the effectiveness of the strategies adopted in tackling homelessness and the influence of housing policy in relation to homelessness in these countries. The definition the two authors operate with includes 'rough sleepers, hostel users and individuals living in temporary supported accommodation' (Benjaminsen and Dyb 2008:48). Besides, people temporarily living with friends are also part of this definition of homelessness (ibid). Noteworthy the study does not make any clear distinctions between the locals and immigrants which can confuse the reader.

On a more representative note, Jarvinen (2003) investigated the strategies homeless immigrants employ in handling their stigmatized position. Jarvinen (2003) study relates more with this thesis purpose. Specifically it addresses the concern of self-presentations of the homeless people in regards to their homeless situation. However, Jarvinen (2003) employed a larger sample of research, 25 interviews with homeless people. The sample was selected only from people residing in five institutions for homeless people in Copenhagen. Another difference stands in the theoretical concepts used to interpret the narratives collected in the study. Jarvinen made use of Bauman's (1991) view on strangers, friends and enemies in a given society whereas this thesis uses the theoretical lens of social-identity as described by Henri Tajfel.

Contrary to the other relevant studies on homelessness, Jarvinen (2003) seems to get the closest to this thesis focus. The rest of the studies reviewed previously have focused on investigating homelessness from either a policy level or a causal one (exploring the causes or the reasoning that cause homelessness). Few have focused on the self-portrayed image that immigrants gain or transforms while experiencing homelessness in a new society and even fewer connected this relation on this specific geographical context, respectively Copenhagen. This particular academic gap is what the thesis aims to fill in.

OUTLINE OF THESIS

This thesis is divided in five main chapters: Introduction, Methodology, Theories, Analysis and Discussion.

The first chapter introduced the reader into the topic of homeless migrants and presented the purpose for choosing this topic of research. It continued with the Literature review section

which, as part of the Introduction, set a more profound scene of this topic, of the previous literature and ultimately reveals the relevance for researching this topic.

The second chapter presents the research process, methods and explains how data is analysed and interpreted within the Analysis chapter.

The Theories chapter introduces the reader to the notions of social identity and acculturation which represent the theoretical concepts used for supporting and interpreting the findings of this research within the Analysis chapter. It also explains the manner in which these concepts are operationalized and utilized in this thesis.

Within the Analysis chapter the findings are presented in relation to previous literature on the topic and with the support of the theoretical concepts explained in the Theories chapter.

The Discussion chapter attempts to give a more detailed interpretation and provide a thorough understanding of the significance of the connections created in the Analysis chapter. It also emphasized the limitations and consequently ends with the Conclusions section.

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the reasoning behind the choice of research methods is explained. The essential information provided by the method section of a scientific research allows the reader to test the validity of the results and the conclusions of the study (Azevedo, 2011:237). The method section or the methodology defines the set of guidelines and means through which data was collected and analysed.

The following section describes the choice of the qualitative methodology used in order to explain the formulated research problem.

RESEARCH DESIGN

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

This thesis is grounded on a qualitative research foundation. A qualitative approach permits the researcher to investigate the social relations and to describe ‘reality as experienced by the respondents’ (Sarantakos 1998, p 6 in Ashley and Boyd 2006).

Contrary to a statistical or quantitative approach, the qualitative research revolves around the words and actions of the informants which meanings it seeks to explain and understand (Ashley and Boyd, 2006).

As described by Porteous (1996 in Ashley and Boyd, 2006) a qualitative approach resembles with a humanistic worldview. Accordingly the researcher of a qualitative approach seeks to understand the world by perceiving and contemplating its nature, humanity and the relation between the two (ibid). Porteous (1996) associates therein the qualitative research with the humanistic approach, by placing ‘human values at the fore’ (ibid).

It is also argued that through a qualitative approach, the researcher is empowered to investigate the reasoning behind people’s actions (Alexander, 2000). For this research the purpose is to understand the meaning of the informants’ behaviour contextualized to their specific experiences. The qualitative approach often implies the presence of the researcher within the studied landscape. Therefore, it can be resumed that whenever the researcher is the interpreter of the findings, the concern of bias arises.

The human contribution, as Alexander (2000) suggests, can perturb what is being observed or studied (ibid). This can imply fallibility and inaccuracy in processing and interpreting the findings. Nonetheless, the qualitative approach as well as the quantitative approach entails the exposure to reliability and validity as their core concerns (Ashley and Boyd, 2006). The researcher commits to being regardful and strives to ‘avoid errors, false conclusions, and misleading inferences’ (Neuman, 2003:439 in Ashley and Boyd, 2006).

In conducting this research validity and reliability were also factors of concern.

The next section provides a more detailed description of how reliability and validity were regarded in this research.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Reliability and validity determine the rigour and the trustworthiness of a scientific research. (Roberts *et al*, 2006).

In short, reliability addresses the ability of reproducing the results of a research by using the same methodological tool or procedure (ibid). Validity is concerned about how accurate a topic or subject under investigation is measured with the research tools used (ibid).

It is generally assumed that under a qualitative research, the credibility of the findings can be biased by the researcher itself. (Johnson,1997). This fact is due to the personal beliefs and perspectives the researcher undertakes when embarking on the data collection journey. Johnson (1997) argued that the researcher's bias arises from 'selective collection and recording of data, or from interpretation based on personal perspectives' (ibid). While the qualitative approach employs research methods such as interviews or observations, Johnson's point is valid as the researcher cannot distant himself/herself from the setting of study. This view is also supported by Alexander (2000) who explains that the researcher's intrusion to what is investigated is directed to affect what is observed. He supports his statement by quoting Bergmann (1985): 'We have only a limited competence of remembering and reproducing amorphous incidents of an actual social event. The participant observer thus has no other choice than to note the social occurrences which he was witness to mainly in a typifying, resumming, reconstructive fashion' (ibid). This quote explains further that the interpretations of the researcher are very much dependent on his/her ability to reproduce the meanings as accurate as they were when collected.

Considering the above, the aspects of validity and reliability were also taken into consideration when this research strategy was designed. In this manner, for the interview method the informants benefited of anonymity and confidentiality that aimed at reducing the bias of their statements. Moreover the written narratives were reproduced as close as possible to their verbal statements. All these elements had the general purpose of reducing the overall bias of the findings.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

Within the qualitative approach, this thesis used observation and semi-structured interviews for collecting primary data. Additionally, secondary data was also needed and it was represented by documents review.

The research methods are to be described individually in the following sections.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

This research used person-to-person encounters or face-to-face interviews. They were conducted as conversations. Merriam (2009) defines this type of interviewing ‘conversation with a purpose’ (Merriam, 2009:88). In this particular situation, the main purpose of the interviews was to obtain specific information regarding the social implications of being homeless in Copenhagen. In Yanow and Peregrine view (2006) this ‘purposive conversation’ is assimilated to the interpretative interviewing. In this manner the researcher aims to uncover the meanings of the informants’ words, attitudes and actions (p 118). One main reason of choosing the interview, as method of research, stands under the intent of finding out the meaning of homelessness from the personal perspective of people who experience it. As Merriam (2009) describes, this method is determined by the researcher’s want of finding out what is ‘in and on someone else’s mind’ (p.88).

Another reason for using semi-structured interviews is due to the fact that they confer more flexibility in collecting the data, than the structured interviews for instance.

However the open interviewing could not be regarded as an option in this research, as the aim was to guide the conversations in accordance to the thesis objectives.

Furthermore, this type of interview allowed the adoption of a creative and flexible approach in managing the conversations. As the informants had different personalities and life stories, this research method permitted to adapt the conversation accordingly, without deviating from the research purpose.

Merriam (2009) also claims that the semi-structured format allows the respondents to give unique interpretations and descriptions whilst enable the researcher to ‘respond to the situation at hand to the emerging worldview of the respondent and to new ideas of the topic’ (p. 90). In other words, the researcher is allowed to be flexible in conducting the conversation without disregarding the main focus of the research.

A number of six interviews were carried on, from which four were taken with EU migrants who crossed a period of homelessness in Copenhagen. The other two were taken with social workers from the social organisation Kirkens Korshær who are engaged in the alleviation of homeless people’ life conditions.

The interviews had the same structure for both the type of informants, with a different set of questions but which followed the same main purpose of investigation.

It is important to mention that along this thesis the EU homeless immigrants interviewed are referred to as ‘the participants’ and Kompasset’ social workers are still mentioned as ‘social workers’. Only the four participants are kept anonymous for confidentiality reasons.

The places of the interviews varied and were agreed together with the informants. Three of the interviews were taken in a public park in Copenhagen and other two at a day shelter (Cafe Grace). The interviews with the social workers took place at the offices of the organisation. One of the interviews with a participant lasted longer than one and a half hours due to unexpected incidents and the rest lasted approximately one hour each. The unexpected incident is mentioned and discussed in the Analysis chapter, as part of the observation findings.

SAMPLE SELECTION

This research made use of cluster sampling meaning that the sampling was narrowed from the large group of EU homeless migrants to a small and homogeneous group (Russell, 2011).

The sampling was completed by the convenience sampling method. In this regard, from the group of Kompasset clients the recruitment was made in accordance to their willing of participating in this research. In convenience sampling all the samples represent something and the task to make them representative is left in the duty of the researcher (Russell, 2011).

The sampling for this research was constituted of two types of informants. Respectively four were part of the target group of EU migrants under research and others were represented by two social workers with experience in the alleviation of homelessness in Copenhagen. The social workers interviewed were part of an on-going social project (The Extra Mile) conducted by Kirkens Korshær - Kompasset. Their roles were considered to be representative for obtaining a different insight about the adaptation the EU migrants undertake in Copenhagen and how they perceive and manage their homeless experiences.

The sampling source was represented by the Kirkens Korshær Kompasset organization. Kirkens Korshær Kompasset represented only the source for extracting the sample of research for this thesis, but not served as a primary source of information about the profiles the informants have in relation with this organization. According to the organization’s internal policies, the information about the informants’ lives was confidential and the access was restricted to

researchers and other scholars who investigated the topic of homelessness. Therefore all the empirical data collected in this thesis was provided by either the participants' narratives or the social workers' interviews. In this regard, the aspect of confidentiality played an important role both in the data collection process and in the data interpretation, as it is precisely described in the following section of this chapter.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Before the interviews taking place, the informants were informed about the possibility of being anonymous and the purpose of the research. They also learned that their statements would only be used for academic purposes.

In this research confidentiality had a dual meaning. On the one hand it referred to the commitment of using the data gathered strictly to the purposes of the research and not making it public through other means of communication. On the other hand it is linked to the restriction of accessing internal data from Kompasnet directory. Kompasnet has an internal policy which constrains researchers or scholars from gaining information regarding their clients. Moreover it prohibits these category of people to conduct interviews with their clients at the organization's' offices. The rationale behind these policies is to protect the privacy of their beneficiaries and thus not to intrude their lives.

All these aforementioned aspects were taken into consideration throughout the process of data collection and none of the findings came from other sources than the respondents themselves. The interviews took place in public spaces, outside Kompasnet. It is relevant to mention that Kompasnet did not restrain the access to its beneficiaries, but it only restricted any research process taking place within its office space and use its beneficiaries as a research sample while their time spent at the organization. Outside its offices, the contact with the informants who are also the beneficiaries of Kompasnet was not a concern any longer.

Their narratives constituted primary data and were supported by notes from the observation period. The observation generated notes for the whole duration of the research, disrespecting location or time.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

After receiving the verbal agreement of participation, the participants were introduced to the aim of the research. They were informed about their anonymity and confidentiality and were also asked for permission for audio-recording the conversations.

The interviews started with a brief introduction about the topic of the research. Entry questions were used in order to make the interviewee confident with the setting.

Following Merriam (2009), a neutral and descriptive introduction lays the foundation for concrete questions about the informant's opinions and experiences.

The concrete questions that guided the interview were according to basic patterns derived from the focus of the research, such as housing, employment, personal care and health, social connections and their opinions on their social situation.

The interview employed open-ended questions with focus on the particular elements of their social situation. When it was considered to be needed, follow-up questions were also used. They facilitated the understanding of previously given statements and enriched the content of others.

The interview questions are annexed at the end of the thesis.

Throughout the interviews probing methods were used when considered appropriate and necessary. Specifically the 'silent' probe and the 'tell me more probe' aimed to provoke the informants to provide more information and add rich value to their narratives (Russell, 2011).

The use of probing techniques was needed when my informants became reflective and took time in responding the questions. In this manner they were encouraged to express their thoughts and continue their stories (Russell, 2011).

However these techniques were not overused so that the focus of the research could still guide the conversations.

OBSERVATION

The observation method permits the researcher to form an overview of the setting of investigation. Within the contextual background the observer can notice things and record events and discover aspects that the informants do not deliver in the interviews (Merriam, 2009).

As Merriam (2009) put it: 'Observation makes it possible to record behaviour as it is happening' (p. 119). This explains the added value of the observation of noting what is being communicated nonverbally as well. This also represents the main reason for opting for this research method as well.

Although it could be unstructured or open-ended, in this research the observation was guided by the concepts defined in the theoretical framework (Wellington and Marcin, 2007:81).

In this research observation was recorded both during and outside the interviewing time. The field notes were constituted of comments, quotations and descriptions. The written account was highly descriptive in order to provide as much insights of the social context of study as possible.

SECONDARY DATA

Document review was the last research method employed in this thesis. The need of completing the data gathered from the interviews and observations support the use of this method. Its purpose is determined by a better understanding of the social context homelessness is portrayed in Copenhagen. On that account the official documents of several social organizations that support the homeless people from Copenhagen are reviewed.

ANALYSIS DESIGN

The analysis design section describes the manner in which data is analysed. It thus includes the philosophical paradigm of approaching the findings as well as the analytical strategy and structure. The following section introduces the reader to the paradigm of research chosen for this study.

INTERPRETATIVE APPROACH

On a broader scale, this research is framed within Interpretivism as the guiding paradigm of research. Interpretivism aligns with relativist ontology and a subjective epistemology and defines the philosophical perspective of this research. Altogether it stands for a set of beliefs or principles which filter the researcher's approach towards the piece of world he/she investigates (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). Within Interpretivism the common belief is that the reality investigated is dependent on the subjective experiences of the informants. So long as these experiences determine multiple interpretations, the realities generated are multiple and varied (Levers, 2013).

The interpretative research or the *hermeneutic method* (Russell, 2011) allows the researcher to explore and understand the meanings of the words, actions or attitudes studied, chance which is undertaken in this analysis as well (ibid).

Additionally within the interpretative approach the main focus of the research was on narrating the meaning of the human experiences investigated (Levers, 2013).

The following section continues with describing the strategy for analysing the findings.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The collected data is analysed through a thematic approach and in an inductive fashion. In this regard, the data as well as the working questions stated in the introductory part of the thesis serve as a starting point for emerging patterns and categories in the Analysis chapter. These patterns are data bits full of meaning which can be separated into categories. As Merriam (2009) shows, the data can be explained by shaping the findings of a research into thematic categories, models or theories.

The explanations of the patterns as well as the answers to the working questions are subdued to the purpose of this thesis. They subsequently determine the answer to the main research problem. Furthermore the inductive approach undertaken in this analysis brings into light the important ideas that emerge from data (Ashley and Boyd, 2006).

ANALYTICAL DESIGN

In this section the analysis structure is described.

Within the analysis chapter the empirical findings resulted from the data collection are presented and interpreted in relation to the theoretical concepts of social identity and acculturation. Furthermore the relationships created between the empirical findings and the theoretical concepts are discussed in a broader context also in relation to previous research and literature on the topic.

THEORIES

This chapter seeks to present the theoretical concepts chosen and used in this thesis. The reader is also introduced to the manner concepts such as social identity and acculturation are operationalized and applied to the findings.

In this thesis, the social identity theory represents the principal theoretical lens of analysing and interpreting the findings. In order to understand the context of adaptation to the host society that the homeless migrants undertake, the acculturation theory is employed as a secondary theory in this thesis.

WHAT IS SOCIAL IDENTITY?

As human beings are social beings, the social identity is defined by the human identity, wherein the social aspect implies the interaction with others, the environment and the social world (Jenkins, 2004). Thus people use identification to distinguish themselves from the others in social interactions or social relationships. As Jenkins (2004) puts it, in order to understand who we are and who the others are, playing the game of *vis-a-vis* is necessary. Identification helps to give meaning to us as well as the others within our social relations and collectivities (ibid).

Moreover, the identity is constructed in regards and from within social interactions. In other words the formation of the identity is based on the environmental context that has influences upon it (Jackson and Hogg, 2010). As interpersonal beings, people collect information from the interactions with the others that help them construct their own identity. In the same manner we can also understand how identity is expressed. People can plan their actions in accordance to the social context they are performing in (Goffman, 1978). In simple words identity is expressed through people's' actions and behaviour. This view is supported also by Terry *et al* (1999) who explain that the identity theory predicts the connection between self-identity and behavioural intentions (Terry *et al*, 1999).

Besides, the social identity comprises the beliefs and principles of an individual (Jackson and Hogg, 2010). This set of beliefs is not only concerned with the social world but with the individual's self-perception as well. The belief ones has about him/her can be defined as self-awareness (ibid). Jackson and Hogg 2010 name it 'self-schemata'. It is associated with self-

awareness but also with a set of guidelines people follow when performing in different social settings (ibid).

Defining the social identity concepts is not an easy task, as it is entangled and related to various other concepts and theories that support its understanding. An example of this is its association with self-esteem. As we agreed that social identity is a way of being aware of our self and defines our beliefs, the self-esteem represents in this equation a mean to support a positive self-identity. ‘Self-esteem works to reduce unpleasant feelings’, as Jackson and Hogg (2010) explain it. This idea stands behind the theory that people create a positive self and have positive beliefs about who they are or regarding how they define themselves. In this respect, a positive self-esteem keeps and maintains a positive identity.

The human identity is connected to self-awareness, to the ability of assessing our individual worth and value, with a positive self-esteem and nonetheless with culture (ibid). In relation, the different social contexts that can influence people's behaviour, culture in a similar manner brings a contribution to how identity is constructed (ibid). Also described as the ‘collective self’ it has been claimed that people borrow information from the groups or collectives they are part of which can influence their identity (ibid).

Following this strand we can understand what the social identity theory is about in the next section.

THE SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

When identity is formed as an outcome of a group membership, the social identity comes into play. Scholars believe that the social aspect of the self-identity is shaped by the membership to various social groups or collectivities (e.g. Terry *et al*, 1999; Goldberg, 2008; Farrington and Robinson, 1999). In this regard, the identity is characterized and influenced by the group norms (Terry *et al*, 1999).

However scholars and psychologists distinguish the self-identity from the social identity. In this respect, the social identity theory is described as the identity that is formed around the member quality of social groupings (ibid).

According to the theory, individuals in order to maintain a positive self-esteem compare the groups they are part of with other external groups. The external groups they compare with need to be in a lower condition, so that people can maintain a positive self-esteem about themselves and their groups (Goodfriend and Smoak, 2009). Simply put, they are valuing the in-groups, the groups they are part of and devaluing the out-groups, the ones they compare with (ibid). Another definition was given by Goldberg (2008) who described the social identity theory as being a process within people categorize themselves socially in such a manner that permits themselves to sustain a positive self-esteem (Goldberg, 2008).

SIT therefore revolves around the idea that people maintain a positive view of the in-groups or associate themselves with particular groups which consequently provide them a positive self-esteem (ibid). Therefore intergroup comparison is a key aspect in the social identity theory. Besides this, motivation is another important factor that characterizes the social identity theory. Because people are driven to maintain a positive self-esteem, they undergo different means in this respect (ibid). One example is 'status enhancement' which Goldberg (2008) describes as being the need people have for a high level of self-esteem and a favourable social identity (ibid). With this in mind, people are in search for joining the groups which can satisfy this need and can increase their social status (ibid).

Back in 1974 Henri Tajfel developed the social identity theory from the existing relationship between the individual and the social processes he/she experiences in intergroup interactions. In other words the notion of social identity is shaped by the placement of the individual in different social contexts (Tajfel, 1974).

In relation to the membership to social groups, Tajfel (1974) formulated two theses which describe the evolution of the individual within the group. To explain, as long as the group satisfies the individual's needs and interests, it is more likely for that individual to continue to be part of that particular group. On the contrary, the individual has the choice of leaving the group and trying to join the one that meets his interests. Because of objective reasons though, people might not be able to leave the group and then, there are several manners that help them manage this situation: either remain part of the group and they adapt by reinterpreting the attributes of the groups so they become acceptable or 'to accept the situation... and engage in social action which would lead to desirable changes of the situation...' (Tajfel, 1974:70). Briefly, the member can

decide to either leave or stay with the group. The opportunities of choice appears when people compare their own group with others within the same societal context, and are in search for the one that can better meet their needs and provide them a positive sense of self (ibid). This process is undertaken through the social comparison theory that 'is a system of orientation which creates and defines the individual's own place in society' (Tajfel, 1974: 71).

While homelessness can be regarded as a low-status social group which provides a negative identity for its members, the homeless persons tend to change or achieve a positive social identity within or outside the homeless group (Farrington and Robinson, 1999). Derived from the social identity theory, there are three main strategies that this people can adopt in order to self-enhance their identity.

These means are social mobility (implies the movement of the people from one group to another), social change (implies a societal change that can influence the overall image the group has within the society) or social creativity (implies changing the group of comparison, so that a new comparison would bring a favourable image of the group) (Farrington and Robinson, 1999). All these strategies are linked to a negative social identity and subsequently to the individuals' need for achieving a positive self-esteem. In other words we can understand that the adoption of one of these strategies occurs only when a negative level of self-esteem or a negative social identity is identified. These strategies can be adopted by individuals who experience homelessness, which is regarded as a low-status, disadvantaged group (Farrington and Robinson, 1999).

Therefore leaning on Tajfel's social identity theory (1974) and following the rationale formulated by Farrington and Robinson (1999) the findings will be analysed with the support of these theoretical concepts. The main purpose is to understand the relationship between homelessness and the social identity of the participants. The relationship between the lived experience and the perceived social identity is analysed in the context in which the informants desire to adapt and become part of the Danish society. This adaptation can be interpreted as a cultural adaptation, and therefore Berry's (2015) acculturation theory is employed as a secondary means for interpreting this context.

The following section is dedicated to understanding what the acculturation theory stands for and what specific theoretical concepts derive from it and are used in the analysis of the findings.

ACCULTURATION - ADAPTING TO A NEW SOCIETAL CONTEXT

When groups of different cultures interact, acculturation happens. Acculturation can be defined as the process that produces changes in different dimensions (cultural, psychological) within the group of people which represents a minority in a given cultural context (Berry, 2015). The migrants who live in a new host society can portray an example of a group which can acculturate. Therefore in this thesis the acculturation theory is used as a secondary means to support and interpret the research findings.

Acculturation also implies the strategies that people employ in order to engage in the dominant society with the purpose of adapting to it (ibid). Even though the concept of acculturation imposes a cultural situation, the changes can happen at a psychological or individual level as well. In this case as Berry (2015) describes ‘psychological acculturation refers to changes in an individual who is participant in a culture contact situation, who is influenced directly by both the external (the dominant) culture and by the changing culture of which the individual is a member’ (Berry, 2015:2). As far as the individual is concerned, the acculturation strategies and process can differ from person to person. However Berry (2015) proposed a framework of acculturation that comprises the strategies in which people can acculturate and their subsequent outcomes (ibid). These strategies depend on the degree to what an individual desires to maintain his original culture and assimilate the new culture. These strategies are: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization (ibid). I step sided these strategies and focused on getting a deeper understanding of the significance of the changes produced at a psychological angle.

‘Acculturation refers to the process by which people adopt a new culture’ is another definition of this concept given by Schaefer (2008:1). Acculturation is a one-way process as it occurs only for the groups or individuals who acculturate as they acquire ‘some knowledge of the language and customs’ of the new culture (ibid: 1).

Schaefer (2008) furthermore argued that as more people speak the language flawlessly and practice the local traditions and holidays the more they achieve a complete level of acculturation (ibid). Shegog (2014) also described acculturation as being a process which produces changes upon the ‘racial/ethnic group’s behaviour, language, and beliefs when continuous, first-hand contact with a differing culture occurs’ (Shegog, 2014:2). It is also argued that acculturation

occurs only for those who choose to emigrate, thus Shegog (2014) also supports the idea that acculturation is a one-way process. In essence acculturation is the ability of the individual to adapt, thrive and navigate easily within the new society while gaining knowledge of the language, traditions and cultural aspects of that respective society.

Even though acculturation defines a cultural adaptation in the new society, it also implies a social perspective that has implications upon the social identity of the individuals who acculturate. In this regard Schaefer (2008) stated that there is a relationship between the acculturation process and social identity that is characterized by the manner in which the individuals regard themselves as members or as a marginalized group in the new society (ibid).

CRITIQUE TO ACCULTURATION THEORY

The acculturation theory Berry (2015) proposed drew criticism from scholars, as his ‘one size for all’ approach neglected the differences that the characteristics of a group can make within acculturation. To explain, the acculturation theory addresses principally the immigrants, refugees or asylum-seekers as groups who acculturate while settling in the new host society (Swartz *et al*, 2010). It means that these people can experience changes at a cultural or psychological level when they interact with a new dissimilar culture (ibid). In this regard these changes can differ accordingly to the specific of that respective group. The ‘one size for all’ approach represents particularly the opposite case, in the sense that it does not take into the consideration the distinctions between the groups of migrants and claims that acculturation would have the same outcome for all of them. Few examples of these variables which can influence the acculturation experience are represented by the reasoning for migration, the local language knowledge, ethnicity or the reception context (Swartz *et al*, 2010).

Despite the similarities these groups of migrants share, there are significant differences which may influence the way each of these categories acculturate or adapt to the new societal surroundings (ibid).

Another controversial debate has revolved around the one-dimensional aspect of acculturation. ‘According to the one-dimensional model, as migrants acquired the values, practices, and beliefs of their new homelands, they were expected to discard those from their cultural heritage’ (Swartz *et al*, 2010:3). However it was later found that people who acquire the host country’s culture but

at the same time preserve their original one too develop a bicultural or integration approach (ibid). Furthermore the outcome of acculturation does depend on other aspects as well, such as the reception context. The reception context refers to the openness of the receiving society (or the dominant group) to integrate the migrants who aspire to acculturate (Swartz *et al*, 2010). It was shown that the more individuals experience discrimination in the receiving society the more likely they would separate from the host culture and the desire to integrate (ibid).

Based on the dimensional or bicultural approach, the acculturation model exposed by Schumann (1986) explains the interconnected relationship between the sociocultural factors of acculturation and the acquisition of the host country's language. Accordingly acquiring a second language represents a step stone of the acculturation process and permits the merging and understanding of the two cultures (Schumann, 1986). The social factors that can influence this goal are represented by the social and psychological distances which play a vital role in language acquisition (ibid).

To explain, the more social or psychological distance the immigrants experience the less likely they will learn the host country's language. The social or psychological distance can be determined by a variety of factors such as, lack of integration of the two groups, cultural shock, and lack of motivation. Briefly the lack of acculturation can influence negatively the acquisition of the local language. In Schumann's (1986) acculturation model, acculturation is represented as the 'social and psychological integration' of the immigrant (learner) within the host society (target language group) (Schumann, 1986:379). Acculturation is defined by its dynamic character as well, in the sense that it is a continuous process and its variables are due to changes (ibid).

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THEORY

In this thesis we are leaning on the definition of acculturation that encompasses the psychological changes and adaptive behaviour that individuals undertake in a new cultural setting (Berry, 2015). These psychological changes can be expressed through behavioural shifts and 'the adaptations can be primarily internal and psychological (e.g. a sense of well-being or self-esteem) or sociocultural (e.g. competence in the activities of daily intercultural living)' (Berry, 2015:3)

It is noteworthy that not every person or group undertake acculturation in a similar manner. The process can depend and vary according to educational or occupational background of the individual (ibid).

In relation to the individuals' need to enhance their self-image and social status, the acculturation process can be understood as the way through which individuals can transit from a low-group to the one that meets and satisfies their level of self-esteem. As the social identity theory describes, when an individual is part of a low-status group, he or she will try to disassociate from it and become motivated to achieve membership to a high-status out-group wherein they can maintain a favourable social identity.

In accordance with the definitions of social identity and acculturation theories, I drew few ideas which will help in analysing the findings:

- As homelessness is a low-status social group, it can have effects upon the social identity of the migrants who experience it. In accordance, people adopt various strategies for either keeping up the level of self-esteem or transit to other group that can satisfy their needs.
- Acculturation in this case can be regarded as the process the homeless migrants undertake in order to transit to the mainstream society, where they can fulfil their positive social identity. Acculturation is subsequently used through its language acquisition factor which is thought to favour this transition.

ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative research which are analysed in relation to the conceptual lenses emerged from the theoretical chapter, respectively social identity and acculturation theories.

The analysis chapter follows the structure as described in the analytical design part of the methodology chapter which means that is conducted in an interpretative manner and is based on a combined strategy of inductive and deductive approaches.

In other words it begins with a thematic structure based on key patterns derived from the data and continues with creating relationships and connections between these patterns and the conceptual lenses of social identity and acculturation theories. The analysis chapter conducts to the discussion chapter which comprises the discussion of the relationships identified within a wider context on the topic of homelessness.

The subsections of this chapter emerged from the key patterns identified in the data and aim at answering the two working questions addressed in the previous chapter.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXTUAL SCENE OF HOMELESSNESS IN COPENHAGEN

Homelessness is simply defined by the roofless situation that individuals experience (Farrington and Robinson, 1999). My participants' stay in Copenhagen ranged between four months and two years, which means they have experienced a short-term homelessness (less than two years) (ibid). The participants were all categorized as EU migrants provided that their citizenship originated from one of the EU member states. In the interviews conducted with the social workers they are mentioned as 'job-seekers' too given that the purpose claimed for their arrival in Copenhagen was to improve their lives and settle in Copenhagen by means of employment.

The participants were all living on the streets of Copenhagen at the time when the data collection was conducted.

However not all of them shared the same resting spaces, and in accordance with their interests they had specific places where they slept and rested.

Some informants preferred to gather and stay together with other homeless people but others not. Part of my informants have arrived and been living in Copenhagen alone. Only one was accompanied by family. The ones that were alone have mentioned their existing families in their origin countries.

I have my own place close to Netto³, the one next to the Round Tower. No one bothers me there. And oh, I think I firstly came to Copenhagen last summer, so it would be one year soon since I have been living here. (Participant D.).

³ Netto is a Danish discount supermarket operating in Denmark

This quote shows how my participant attributed a specific place from the city centre of Copenhagen as his own place of resting and sleeping. The fact that he can have a peaceful rest at this particular place appears to be very important for his well-being in Copenhagen. By 'bother' he expressed the contact with the police. He further explained that given that it is a central public area, he is always in the watch of the patrols. Sleeping in visible areas was his way of proving a positive behaviour in Copenhagen for the police and the rest of the people he gets in contact with.

The data collection included a four week period of time within fieldwork was conducted. In this regard I frequented two public places dedicated to homeless immigrants (Kompasset and Cafe Grace). Besides the interviews I conducted, the observation method was used during these visits and it produced several field notes that are analysed furthermore in this chapter. The interviews were conducted outside these visits, as aforementioned in the Methodology chapter.

During these visits I aimed at observing the behaviour of my target group within these spaces, their interactions with the others and how they like to spend their time there. While being there I also had few informal conversations with some of the persons present there which were recorded as field notes, when information was thought to be useful or relevant for this research topic.

From these conversations the most addressed question to me was 'How can we find a job here?' and it seemed that finding a job was the principal concern of most of the persons I talked to. Employment was regarded as getaway from homelessness to an active social life.

From their narratives I also noticed that the homeless experience was not familiar for many of them. It was a new experience, in this case difficult to manage. They perceived it as a compromised period of time they needed to get through, until they achieved their goal of getting employed and thus overcoming the lack of a house and of material resources.

At Kompasset I met a Romanian couple who have been living in Copenhagen for 6 months. They used Kompasset facilities, such as a hot drink, a snack and a shower. I asked about their experience in Copenhagen and told me that they cannot complain. Although they were roofless and jobless, they assured that the opportunities from Denmark are much better than what their home country can provide them. They do not have a permanent place to live, they used the day and night shelters for a resting and sleeping. When these shelters are overcrowded they admitted to have slept in the street. In regards to employment, they would like to find a job, but at the

same time they do not actually looked for one and argued that it is difficult because they do not speak or understand Danish.

More interesting is how the woman emphasized what a good place to be Copenhagen was. She mentioned that during the summer time they brought her own daughter (a 18 years old girl) while her summer holidays and after a month of being in Copenhagen she returned back home with 2000 RON which is about 3300 DKK:

‘She was extremely happy! She got back home and bought herself new clothes and everything needed for when school started in September. We wouldn’t have had that money in Romania otherwise. And she also travelled and spent her vacation at the beach’. When I asked what job her daughter had only for one month, the woman clarified ‘only from bottles’, meaning she gained that money from collecting and recycling bottles. These two quotes highlight that the outcome of the job excuses the type of the job and the compromises which come along with it. However the woman seemed happy when talking about her experience in Copenhagen and glad that she had this opportunity of coming here. Despite the rough conditions, she admitted: ‘nowhere is easy nowadays, and this is much better than what we have in Romania’. She also mentioned that meeting other people in a similar situation is supportive, as they help each other if needed and ‘there is always someone to talk to’. ‘There are a lot of Romanians around but we talk to other people too. I have a Polish friend who promised to teach me how to use the computer if I teach him to speak Romanian. I met a lot of good people and it’s comforting to know that you can rely on them in a foreign country’. Although ethnicity seems to be the principal criteria of clustering, the similar life situation plays a role too in the way homeless people create a social network in Copenhagen.

The people I talked to thought that the homeless status is a negative tag to have. Even if they practically were roofless in Copenhagen, they regarding this experience as a compromise undertaken with a noble purpose, the one of working. They differentiated themselves from the people who use begging for survival or are not active individuals.

MAKING FRIENDS AND CLUSTERING WITH ‘LIKE’ OTHERS

It was found that some participants were sceptical in their relations with other people. Three of them were living alone in Copenhagen whereas one was accompanied by his family. The ones

living alone admitted to know the people who frequented the same day shelters or places as they did, but having few friends in Copenhagen.

They expressed an interest in socializing with Danes, as according to them, a relationship of that kind could bring more benefits than one with people alike. Clustering with people alike was not perceived in a positive way, as other homeless people engaged in a criminal behaviour, fact that was attentively voided by the participants. The simple association between them and other in-groups which were perceived in a negative manner was considered to have downgrade effect upon their identity.

Any actions and behaviour is intentionally influenced by the desire to maintain an honest self-presentation of the self. The informants were aware that living in the streets provided them with a negative social label. With this in mind they were more concerned about their behaviour and their daily routine constituted of several strategic actions which were meant to portray an honest image of them for the mainstream society.

Finding a safe place for resting is not an easy task when being homeless. The participants stated that they experienced getting fined by the police for sleeping in the parks. Therefore they were avoiding hanging out in the public parks where could get in contact with the police. Even though they were not having a criminal record or behaviour, by being homeless they considered that the policemen could perceive them as suspicious or treat them with scepticism.

Besides feeling insecure in the relationship with the Danish police patrols, the life on the streets lacks safety and personal security in regards to themselves too. The interview with one of the informants was conducted in a public space, where he left his backpack with his belongings aside while the interview was taken. In this time frame his backpack got stolen by supposedly another person who was hanging around that area. The unfortunate event put a pause to the conversation, time within I noted the observations taken in relation to this happening. My participants walked around to look for his backpack but with no success. I obviously asked what support he would get in this type of situations. Would he go to the police station and report the theft?

He said that this would never be an option for him. He doubts that his loss would matter for the policemen or that they would believe his story, given his neglected appearance and the fact that he is not a legal resident in Denmark.

However he assured that his social connections and network around the other homeless people in that area would provide him with insights what can lead to the stolen backpack and the person who committed the crime.

This event describes how homeless people rely only on themselves and avoid asking for the authorities help when their personal security is concerned.

Keeping their personal belongings secured seemed to be a major concern for all of the respondents. One of them related how he left his pants laying on a bench in the park, to get washed and a cleaning person who was cleaning the park took his pants too, without noticing they belonged to someone. Participant C described the story with humour but concluded that it in general is a difficult task to stay clean and tidy while sleeping on the streets. Furthermore they mentioned that they try not to keep all their savings with them all the time, as they fear thefts and the police to confiscate it.

Provided that they frequent the same social organizations or daily shelters as other people in similar situations, they create connections and form a group that is characterized mainly by their homelessness experience.

Participant D reported that he void joining same ethnic groups, in this instance Romanians, as some have legal problems with the police. Therefore by voiding contact with these people he tries to stay away from getting in trouble with the authorities. The following quote described his personal approach in making friends in Copenhagen:

I like the Danish people. They are very friendly and helpful. I am more concerned about the rest of the migrants living on the street like me and I usually try to avoid connecting with them too much, as sometimes they have problems with the police and I don't like being associated with them in that case. (Participant D)

Borrowing bad habits is another factor that clustering with 'like' others can determine. As Marta explains:

(...) in the streets they became part of different clusters. They pick up on drinking, even if they haven't used to before. I'm saying that given their vulnerable situations, it is very easy to adopt addictive behaviours while hanging around with other de-motivated people. And of course this has negative effects on the long run on finding a job and subsequently integrating.

Clustering in this case can influence negatively the immigrants' adaptation to the host society as it can imply a tendency of adopting a similar behaviour as the lower group people associate with and thus distancing even more the adaptation or transition to the mainstream society. On the other side bonding in a healthy manner with the rest of the members by creating relations of friendship and support can also delay the exit of homelessness, as these relations can provide a sense of comfort and maintain a positive self-esteem.

MacKnee (2002) affirmed that family relationships or ties to mainstream institutions 'are essentials elements in facilitating the transition from streets to a more stable lifestyle' (page 301). Contrarily, the findings of this thesis showed that the healthier and more supportive the relationships within the in-group are the less people seek to leave the group and overcome homelessness. This aspect makes even more sense when the entire family immigrated and undertook together this way of living or the family ties of the members are lost.

Part of the participants expressed a higher interest in meeting Danish or local people rather than clustering in groups based on their ethnicity or country of origin. They reported that the contact with the locals bring them more advantages in navigating through the Danish society than relationship with 'like' people do.

For example the following statement describes how much one of the informants is valuing his friendship with a Danish girl:

I have a friend, a Danish girl who's helping me a lot. I've also met her boyfriend. They both joined me once at the Red Cross clinic where I have a dentist appointment. They helped me with the translations. Since then she's always been there when I needed her. I keep all my savings at her place. She works at Netto and when I need to talk to her, I just pass by the supermarket. We get along through signs and a bit of Danish that I understand. She's very nice. I also keep the Mickey Mouse costume at her place.

The Danish people are good people, if that was your question. What I don't like is that the state doesn't do anything for us. There are no jobs for us. I got to the thinking that Denmark doesn't kill you but it doesn't let you die either... I mean that even if the state doesn't give us any jobs, we have left the bottles and cans that help us survive and live here. (Participant D).

This quote expresses that the contact with the locals can provide advantages for my informant in his attempt to adapt to the Danish society. Besides the language factor, this type of support

offered by the Danish girl facilitates his process of integrating within the new cultural and societal context.

Despite this singular example, the other participants reported than excepting the public authorities, they do not interact much with the locals and thus they do not have a clear image about how the society is.

Well, excepting the public authorities, I didn't really interact that much with them, but they seem nice people. I mingled more with other peers from the day shelters where I used to hang out and they are from all over the world and facing mainly the same issues as I do. (Participant S).

The cultural surroundings are described through their personal experience and thus portray the host society as being a cold place, rather than a friendly one because of the lack of social support and jobs offered to the low-skilled immigrants:

What can I say? I don't really know how the society is, but I observe different things. It's tough here, if it wasn't for the potential jobs, I wouldn't have stayed. People seem to be cold they don't smile and it looks like they don't care about the others, like us who are sleeping on the streets. Everyone minds his own business. (Participant G)

However this coldness expressed by the previous quote is not unfamiliar for Participant C who has worked before in Germany and found similarities between these two societies, the Danish and the German one:

I worked in Germany before and I find this place similar to how Germany is. Everyone is very serious and reliable in their jobs, they stick to the schedule. They treat things with rigor. I like that. But they don't seem that friendly. Well I don't speak the language either, that might be the issue. (Participant C)

In this quote, my informant associates the 'coldness' of the locals with their professionalism in work and justifies his poor contact with the locals with the lack language knowledge, which in this case appears to be a barrier in the process of acculturation.

Furthermore, the various strategies that my informants employ in order to manage their homelessness experience are discussed.

MAINTAINING A POSITIVE SELF-ESTEEM

EMPLOYMENT & OTHER OCCUPATIONAL ACTIVITIES

It was found that the informants were low-skilled or unskilled workers who were mainly looking for unqualified jobs. They defined themselves as job-seekers, as their main purpose for moving to Denmark was being employed and improving their past lives' situations.

Once in Copenhagen, it seems that they all have followed the same path of searching for a job, while some have been more successful than others.

The two participants, who were employed, had low-skilled jobs in the services industry, as a cleaner and a butcher assistant. The prerogatives for obtaining employment at a short period of time after arriving in Copenhagen are based on their language skills, as they emphasize:

I work at a cleaning company. We clean restaurants, bars, but it's only 3 days a week. I need to find occupation for the rest of the time. But I got the job as I arrived here, I think by the second week. I speak good German, I think that might be one of the reasons I got it and I inspired trust to the employer (Participant C).

Proving to be a reliable person mattered significantly when searching for employment.

Participant S worked as a butcher assistant:

I worked since recently at a butcher shop, but it was pretty hard, even for a big guy like me. They had this freezing room where I cut the meat and I was getting sick most of the time. Anyhow it was a good job to have. Better than nothing. Now they let some people go and unfortunately I lost my room too. My landlord didn't want me to remain there without a job; he feared I won't pay the rent in time. Now I have to start all over again (Participant S).

It was noticed in this case that the employment factor was closely linked with the possibility of renting a room in Copenhagen. This dependency creates a vicious circle wherein the two main objectives of the informant are inherently interconnected. However, even if they gained a legal form of employment it was not sustainable enough to overcome their homelessness situation. Therefore gaining a job and afterwards losing it provided an additional hope that the proximate future would bring new opportunities and thus prolonging the homeless reality became reasonable. Moreover having a job even if it cannot cover a rent in the city is another factor that maintains a positive self-esteem and prolongs this form of existence.

‘COLLECTING BOTTLES IS A FULL-TIME JOB FOR ME’

Unlike the previous examples, the other two participants never had the opportunity of working legally in Copenhagen since their arrival.

When I first arrived in Copenhagen I looked for jobs (low-skilled jobs), as everyone else. But there was nothing for me. But I'm not complaining, because I get enough money to live and to save from collecting cans and bottles. (Participant D). The way of expressing ‘there was nothing for me’ describes somehow a passive attitude towards finding employment in Denmark. All the informants reported that the principal reason for moving to Denmark was job-seeking and consequently settling here. However when finding a job was unsuccessful, they rapidly took up on a back-up solution which in this case is represented by the bottle recycling activity. Interestingly none of them has considered the option of leaving the country and exiting homelessness by returning to their home countries.

Therefore, we can expand MacKnee and Mervyn argument (2002) which claims that people are more likely ‘to become acculturated to homelessness as a functional way of life’ when they lost ties to families and friends (page 301). It was further argued that the alienation from the mainstream society, the lack of social support as well as the supportive relationships developed with other homeless people can contribute significantly to the entrenchment in homelessness (MacKnee and Mervyn, 2002). In this sense the decision of the participants for remaining in Copenhagen despite the homelessness reality can be understood as their acculturation to homelessness as a functional lifestyle when any other empirical options were disregarded.

When obtaining a legal form of employment was unsuccessful, a plan B was brought up. It was found that recycling bottles and cans in exchange of small amounts of money was the alternative which the informants have undertaken when any other material support lacked.

This is a full-time job for me. When I need to, I do also night shifts. I have my specific spots, I know where to go, what to do. And it's ok. I have money saved and kept safely to my Danish friend. I already bought a ticket to the Roskilde festival for this summer, there's where one can make really good money. But not everyone (the rest of the homeless migrants in the same position as his) knows about it or has the money for the ticket. (Participant D).

Participant D expressed a feeling of pride when relating about how rigorous the recycling activity was. He had a fixed schedule and good knowledge about the places around the city with

good potential of recycled items. Furthermore, he reported 2016 to be the second year when he participated at the Roskilde Festival⁴ which has a great potential for recycling the empty cans).

These alternative activities provide them with the material resources that can cover their basic needs in Copenhagen, excepting of course housing. In this respect, the bottle recycling is one of them and it is perceived as being a compromise option, when legal employment became unavailable.

Oh, what can I do besides collecting cans as the rest of us do? No one would give us a job here. They hire only their people. But fortunately my wife (partner) made friends with a Norwegian lady and she promised her a job as a cleaner. We really hope to get that opportunity! (Participant G).

This quote highlights an attitude of giving up on searching and adopting a passive attitude. P2 believed that in his current homeless situation, the chances of getting hired were low. This view of adopting the bottles recycling as a compromise solution is also supported by SW1's statement: *We also have some in our project who need to survive and they are collecting bottles. It is not necessarily a good thing because they cannot spend time on looking for a job constructively, because it requires time, of course. It makes them to be less focused on doing the right thing maybe, but at the same time I can understand that they need to survive and they need money. It's sad but on the contrary the ones that are not collecting bottles and not doing anything can be regarded as even less motivated or lazy. I think the ones that are collecting bottles are in a real need of money, they need to eat, to survive. Sometimes they don't have other choice.*

P1 informed that besides the recycling activity, he also worked as a street entertainer. In other words he possessed an adult size Mickey Mouse costume and used to dress up and stroll the city centre while tourists and locals were taking pictures with him in exchange of small amounts of money. He claimed that besides the financial aspect, this work approached him with the locals better as behind the mask nobody would have guessed it is actually a homeless man, and thus he could void the scepticism. P1 was also content with bringing joy in people's lives, and he regarded this activity as a positive one. It made him different from the rest of the homeless people like him and redefined his identity. He expressed that for his relationship with the police it was very important to distinct himself from the rest of the homeless group which was engaging

⁴ The Roskilde Festival is an annual music festival held south of Roskilde in Denmark. It is one of the largest music festivals in Europe and the largest in Northern Europe

is small crimes. This finding supports MacKnee's (2002) argument: 'because of basic survival needs, relationships among street people are frequently characterized by distrust and suspicion' (p. 301). In a similar way, Participant D was attentively choosing the groups or people he associated his identity with.

In this regard, the sleeping place was also a factor very attentively chosen, in order to preserve a positive image in front of the authorities:

I always sleep in the visible areas, where the policemen usually patrol. Don't you think I'm not smart! If I sit close to the police station or in the places where they patrol, well, they get to know me and it's getting obvious I have nothing suspicious to hide and that I'm not doing nothing wrong (like stealing, robbing or other such crimes). (Participant D)

All these activities, such as bottles' recycling or choosing a specific place for sleeping needed to be carefully taken care of, as any wrong action could have made a difference in the way P1 was perceived by the mainstream society, which in this particular case was represented by the police patrols. The factor of maintaining an honest appearance in his relations with the locals counted significantly for him.

The alternative activities to legal employment can be understood through the social creativity strategy that homeless people adopt in order to maintain a positive self-esteem within a low-status group (Farrington and Robinson, 1999).

Returning to street entertaining, he related that this activity was providing him more than money, but a sense of belonging and fulfilment, as people approached him naturally and with trust. Behind the Mickey Mouse mask, he could present another identity to the locals, one which was not framed within his homelessness situation.

Another example of undertaking additional activities is represented by Participant C who was dedicated to writing. He was writing poems and essays about his experience as an immigrant and was trying to sell them to people on the streets. Participant C claimed that he has been a writer for a long time, even before moving to Denmark, and that this type of activity maintains the best representation of him. Despite the rough conditions of homelessness he was experiencing and the status of an immigrant he was referring to, by writing he could express the real him. As this activity was providing Participant D with a positive self-esteem, it can be perceived as a strategy for differentiating himself from the rest of the homeless group and for maintaining a positive self-esteem.

In other words these strategies can maintain a positive self-esteem while living in the streets. Following MacKee and Mervyn argument (2002) ‘the degrading physical environment of the streets conducted to a loss of self-esteem and an adoption of self-as homeless identity’ (p. 302), these activities could be regarded as strategies to transit to the mainstream society. On the contrary though it was found that as long as these strategies maintain a positive self-esteem they as well contribute to the prolonging of the homeless situation and actually delay the transition to mainstream society. MacKee and Mervyn (2002) proposed that acknowledging one’s self-esteem among homeless individuals facilitates their exit from homelessness. However the findings of this study contradict this view, as some measure of self-esteem can delay the adoption of a negative self-evaluation which subsequently could determine the transition to mainstream society. Furthermore the immigrancy aspect needs to be taken into account too, as the prerogatives for exiting homelessness can depend on the acculturation facilitators or the permeability of the mainstream society. A relevant example in this sense is the Danish language acquisition which could positively influence the acculturation process and consequently the exit from homelessness. On the other side, the strict language requirements even for low-skilled jobs can define the permeability of the mainstream society, which in this case play a negative role in facilitating the transition of the immigrants.

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION - AS ACCULTURATION FACILITATOR

I found that learning the host society’s language is a controversial aspect related to my participants’ experiences. On the one hand they perceive it as an adaptation facilitator but on the other side it is not an achievable goal within their homeless situation.

Part of the informants reported that they were willing to learn Danish or improve their English language skills and even registered for free classes, but found it very difficult to continue the class activities due to their precarious living conditions on the streets.

I’ve already signed up for the free Danish classes. I’d like to learn it. It’s just sometimes it’s hard to keep up with the class, homework and everything when I have to worry about employment, housing and all the paperwork for registration. But I am sure it would help in getting settled here sooner. (Participant S)

Even though it is considered to be an important aspect in adapting easier to the host society, it is not a priority for this informant, who lacks material resources and housing. Providing for the daily basic needs and looking for building a new life in Copenhagen are concerns that distract him from being focused and engaged to the Danish classes.

In this regard, another informant claimed that he does not have the readiness for starting learning a new language at all, given the living conditions he has at the moment:

I don't have the mind-set for that now. And for my type of work I don't really need it. It would be nice, of course, to get around better and talk to people, but I don't even have registration here, without mentioning the lack of housing and other necessary things. Learning the language would be the last thing on my mind right now. (Participant D)

This view is supported also by the following informant:

I speak Spanish and English too. I can get along with people easily; I don't see a problem in that. The Danes speak very good English. I would like to learn Danish at some point too. But I don't really have the readiness for that now. I am very concerned about getting a job at the moment. (Participant S)

Besides having the right mind-set for learning a language, the conditions on the streets obstruct joining a group, such as the language classes, where their appearance counts.

As Marta also emphasized, the precarious living conditions and the concerns for providing for their basic needs, part of the informants were not able to attend the language classes. When asked how this group of people can sustain a job, Marta stated:

I think it's impossible though. Many of them think they can manage somehow, to come here (day shelter) and take a shower but in the long run our experience shows that it doesn't work. After a couple of days, if they cannot shower or get enough sleep (from sleeping on the street), it gets impossible to keep the job. That's why housing is indispensable once they get employed. As soon as they get a job they need proper living conditions. Of course might be some exceptions, some fighters who survive even when go through tough situations.

This quote can apply also to the language classes' activities which require frequent attendance and engagement from the participants.

The following quote highlights why Participant C skipped joining the free language classes especially because of the personal care aspect:

I speak German and I understand a bit of English. I'd be interested in learning Danish but that only after I find a place to live. It's pretty hard to hold on a job while living on the streets and you know, you can't go to classes or to work without having showered before. You understand what I mean. (Participant C).

As an exceptional example, the participant G stated that learning the Danish language was not of his interest at all. He justified his lack of interest on the type of activity he employs in Copenhagen; respectively recycling cans in exchange of money. He argued, as follows that for this type of job, speaking a particular language is not required:

I speak only Romanian, but we don't need Danish or English for collecting bottles. Our lives on the streets are already compromised. I cannot think about learning now, in these conditions. But however we understand people and get along with them even if we don't speak their language. I cannot explain how although. (Participant G).

It was found that the patterns of homelessness (lack of employment and language knowledge) are interconnected in a dependent relationship. As language proficiency is required even for the low-skilled jobs, the chances for finding employment are reduced for the immigrants. Therefore they tend to adopt the compromise solution of bottles recycling as a long-term option for residing in Copenhagen.

DISCUSSION

This thesis explored the relationship between the patterns of the homeless reality and the social identity of the immigrants who pursue to settle in Denmark. In this sense it investigated the influences these patterns have upon the self-presentation and the self-esteem of the immigrants in the context of adapting to the host society.

It was found that homelessness implies various empirical dimensions which can impact the way people behave or act within the low-status group and transit to the high-status one which is represented by the mainstream society.

Following Tajfel's and others arguments, when people reach a negative level of self-esteem or a negative social identity are determined and seek to enhance their self-esteem. By doing so, they develop various strategies which can be defined by the social creativity theory. Accordingly they develop behaviours and run activities which can distinct them from the negative group and

provide them with a positive self-esteem. However the findings showed that these alternative choices are still made within the broad reality of homelessness. Furthermore the longer they maintain a positive self-esteem through activities such as bottles' recycling, the less motivated they are to overcome homelessness and transit to a more stable way of living than the one in the streets. It was agreed that this transition can be regarded through the lenses of the acculturation theory which can thus describe the process of adaptation this people undertake. However given that acculturation is a controversial concept as it depends on a variety of factors, we counted only on the language acquisition and social interactions factors. Even though the primary thought was that learning the host's society language represents a facilitator for the acculturation process, it was later discovered that within the homelessness reality, language acquisition is rather a desiderate than a priority or a means to overcoming homelessness. An interesting perspective of acculturation seems to be its association to the gradual adaptation to homelessness. In other words, after analysing the experiences of the participants, we can expand the understanding of acculturation as defining the adoption of the homeless lifestyle as a functional way of living in Denmark, rather than their integration within the society.

SOCIAL IDENTITY AS BARRIER TO ACCULTURATION

The participants stated their willing to integrate into the Danish society, and pursued the practical pathways in doing so (employment and housing). Becoming part of the host society would give them a sense of belonging to the high-status group which subsequently deliver a positive social identity and self-esteem. But the acculturation process seemed to be approached in accordance to their self-presentations. The ones who used the social creativity strategy in order to maintain a positive self-esteem appeared to be less interested in acquiring the host country's language while the other two who did not undertake any maintenance strategies proved to be more eager to adopt the language and use it as path to acculturate. However we noticed that engaging in language classes was a difficult task in the given conditions for the participants. With this in mind, I agree with Schumann's argument that acculturation would rather facilitate the language acquisition than vice versa. Statements of the participants, who disconsider learning Danish as long as their homeless situation persisted, support this view. Therefore we can assume that the more integrated they are, the more likely they would learn the language for reaching a complete

adaptation into the mainstream society. However acculturating through language acquisition does not seem necessary for those who are proficient in English or other languages which helped them getting employed and neither for those who committed to the alternative means of support which do not imply any language requirements (e.g. bottles' recycling or street entertaining). Conclusively language acquisition does not represent a priority in the acculturation process but rather a desiderate.

We found that the participants undertook different activities which provided them with a positive sense of self, and facilitated their relationship with the locals. Additionally they used these activities as a manner to preserve a positive social identity and distinct themselves from the inner group. These activities served as a bridge that facilitated the relations with the high-status group members. However the more successful these coping strategies were the less interested they appeared to be in acquiring the Danish language.

The lack of sustainable social support, determined them to adopt various strategies through which they can maintain a positive sense of self and overcome the stigma position of homelessness and thus prolong their stays in Denmark within this form of existence.

From this particular perspective the social identity of the homeless migrants can be perceived as a barrier rather than a propel factor to acculturation.

The social network created in the streets seemed to have a dual meaning. On the one hand, the participants tended to be sceptical about the rest of the inner-group, individuals who were associated with petty crimes or laziness. On the other hand there was noted a tendency to strategically connect more with people from the mainstream society which could bring more advantages to their situation and define their identity as a positive one.

However we noticed that clustering with 'like' others does not bring any positive contribution to overcoming homelessness and transiting to the mainstream society from neither of the two perspectives of discussion.

On the contrary it seemed to have a positive influence in maintaining a real feeling of support and thus a positive self-esteem for those who bonded with the members of the same group of homeless. A negative effect appeared to have the association with groups who were identified with crime or addictive behaviours. The individuals who voided these groups developed creative strategies to distinct themselves from them. These strategies although provided them with a

positive self-esteem and thus subsequently determined the perpetuation of their homeless situation.

‘Receiving free services or welfare is one type of incident from the four MacKnee and Mervyn (2002) claimed to hinder the transition to the mainstream society. They showed that homeless individuals might feel less motivated in working for a living and transiting to the mainstream society while they benefited from welfare support. This support could also create a state of dependency for the beneficiaries. From this perspective, the findings of this thesis seem to be in accordance with MacKnee and Mervyn claims, in the sense that the social organisations which support the homeless people in Copenhagen seem to have a contribution in the perpetuation of their situation. Marta explained:

‘... They help them only on a temporary basis. They give them food and shelter for a few days. But covering their basic needs doesn’t do more than sustaining their current situation (of living in the streets). I think this type of help is not constructive as they (the organisations) don’t enable or empower them to change their life conditions’.

This form of help does not seem to be sustainable on a longer-term perspective for the immigrants who pursue to integrate in Denmark. Their daily working routines of collecting bottles in combination with the regular visits to the daily shelters available in Copenhagen result in the only way of living the immigrants have known since their arrival. This routine which for some seems to work can alter their beliefs and understanding in the sense that this specific routine ‘can keep them trapped in the illusion that life on the streets is advantageous and credible’ (Dordick 1997 in MacKnee and Mervyn, 2002).

However this view comes in contradiction with Tajfel’s (1979) social identity theory which implies that individuals are in a persistent search of enhancing their self-esteem and identity and homelessness low-status group would drive this need. The findings slightly expand the understanding of the strategies people employ in order to enhance their social identity and show how these strategies actually contribute to the prolonging of the homeless existence rather than facilitating the exit. Furthermore the acculturation process appears to be altered from the initial purpose of integrating into the host society to adapting to homelessness as a functional way of living outside the mainstream society.

This MA thesis has its limitations. Inherently in qualitative research, the sample of the research was small and it lacked gender diversity, as the most informants were male, excepting one

woman who was talked to informally and not interviewed. Moreover the findings of this research cannot be generalised to the whole population of homeless immigrants living in Copenhagen. In the context of this Master thesis, the findings are applicable to the participants who have contributed to this research and to other immigrants who find themselves in very similar situations.

This thesis has not focused on the motivation for integrating in Denmark of the migrants, neither on their mobility as a potential means to exit homelessness.

Therefore further research is needed to explore the potential exit means from homelessness and the sustainability of the strategies employed to maintain a positive social identity.

CONCLUSION

This thesis attempted to investigate the influences of homelessness upon the social identity of EU migrants within their context of adapting to the Danish society.

It appears that homelessness does influence the identity of the migrants, in particular the manner they perceive their living situation in Copenhagen. They acknowledge their unfavourable situation which subsequently determines them to adapt some strategies in order to increase their self-esteem and to improve their overall image presented to the mainstream society. By doing so, they engage in activities such as bottles collection, poems writing and working, activities which distinct them from the rest of the homeless group. This comparison as well as the outcome of these activities appears to contribute positively to the enhancement of their self-perceptions and provide them with a good feeling about themselves.

Contrarily to the initial statement, their adaptation appears to have a dual meaning and portrays both the process of adaptation to the host society (which is undertaken through language acquisition and social interactions) and the adaptation to homelessness as a functional form of living in Denmark (fact that hinders the initial prospects of integration).

In accordance to previous literature on social identity (Tajfel, 1979; Terry et al 1999; Jenkins, 2004;) the negativity identified with the low-status group of homelessness does determine the adoption of strategies that aim to positively enhance the social identity of the migrants.

However the low-status group of homelessness does not seem to be powerful enough to maintain or reinforce their determination for exiting the street life and transiting the mainstream society

with the purpose of integrating in the Danish society. Furthermore the creative strategies they adopt as alternatives to employment and the temporary support received from the civil society contribute as well to the perpetuation of their situation. Moreover these activities employed slightly provide them with a better, more positive level of self-esteem which consequently justifies the adoption of this rough, street routine as a functional form of living.

Conclusively the following question arises: How sustainable are the strategies employed by the EU migrants in Copenhagen to maintain a positive social identity and how they can influence the motivation to exit homelessness?

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