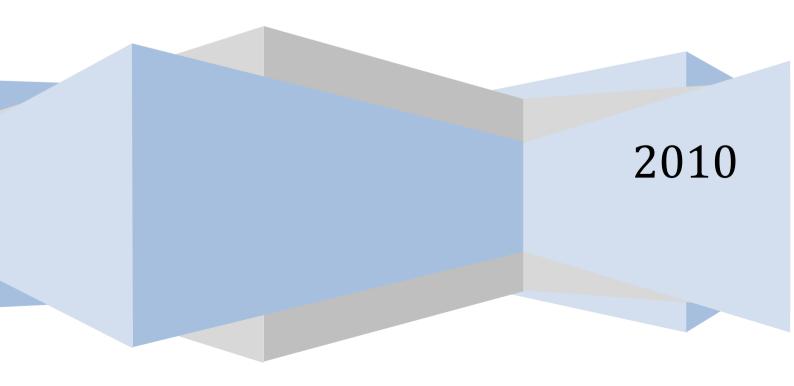**Aalborg University
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The meaning of friendship for German work migrants in Denmark

A case study

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Abstract

Academic discussions that posit that globalization pressures social relations and aggravates the problem of maintaining foreign workforce in Denmark, directly contrast with literature proving that social relations can be stable despite mobility, which is also promoted by the European Union. Taking up this discrepancy, the study investigates the meaning that work migrants assign friendships to find out, whether friendship as a form of social relations is pressured by mobility, and which measures employers, the European Union and it member states can undertake to encourage and sustain work mobility with the EU.

Taking up this discrepancy, the study investigates the meaning that work migrants assign to friendships in order to find out, whether friendship as one form of social relations are pressured by mobility, and which measures employers, states and the European Union can undertake to succeed in maintaining foreign workforce as a form of promoting sustainable mobility.

The 'Adams & Blieszner conceptual framework for friendship research' (1992, 1994) provides the theoretical background for the case study, which was conducted among 11 German work migrants living in Denmark. Semi-structured interviews are analyzed using qualitative content analysis, resulting in in-depth descriptions of the meaning of friendship for them.

The study supports the view of best and close friendships are durable despite geographical distance, such that generic claims that mobility pressures social relations have to be specified. Likewise, the respondents demonstrated success in forming friendships in the receiving country Denmark. However, finding friends depended, to high degree, on workplace structures. The workplace thus facilitated friendships if respondents worked in close and regular cooperation with colleagues. Colleagues' nationalities depended on the working environment, and this was reflected in the newly formed friendships. Still, respondents said that they would have liked to mingle more with Danes, whereas some international friends were reported to provide necessary social capital, too.

Flows of social capital were found to differ according to friendship level, coinciding with friendships held in the country of origin. Best and close friends in Germany thus provided the interviewees with advice in profound decisions, and the confidence of having a place of refuge in emergency cases. The migration process is facilitated by these friends, whereas friends in Denmark rather ease the migration experience on a day-to-day basis. Social capital includes sociability and task-related help. In spite of the advantages provided through friendships, only best and close friendships in Germany were assessed as stable. Equally, friends in Denmark were not found to have a vested impact on work migrants' intentions to stay in the country or leave as initial migration motivations and future job perspectives outweighed their decision. Having friends in Denmark, however, was seen as an indispensable asset. With employers, states and the European Union recognizing the importance of these social relations, better tailored incentives can be created for socioeconomically advantaged persons to either move to another country, or to stay on a long-term basis.

Keywords: Friendship, work migrants, structural predispositions, social capital.

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1. Introduction

The phenomena of migration and friendships, both natural to human existence, have received considerable attention during past decades. Attention arises from debates on the effects that globalization has on migration and friendship in our postmodern time: Whereas some commentators refuse the idea of globalization being genuinely new and impacts being severe, sceptics of globalization stress its novel socio-cultural and psychological impact. Giddens' phrase of a "runaway world" (1999) and Bauman's notion of 'globals' and 'vagabonds' (1998) both point to the fact that globalization mainly denotes increasing mobility, understood as the mobility of goods, information, and people (Thurlow & Jaworski 2003:580). Following these sceptical perspectives, increasing mobilization pressures social relations, for example friendships. In a world where everything is 'disembedded' from space and time (Giddens 1991) and where there is a lack of psychological depth and of fixed points (Jameson 1991), friendships are assumed to be particularly fragile since they are not institutionally anchored in contrast to kin or marriage (O'Connor 1998, Wiseman 1986).

Giddens', Bauman's, and Jameson's arguments state that globalization enhances mobility, migration, and a general uprootedness through which attachments to fixed points or relationships dwindle away. Thus, our culture becomes "fragmented, dispersed and decentered" (Michael 1994:384), with people becoming "nomad[s] of the mind" (Melucci 1989) who are "wandering between unconnected places" (Bauman 1992 as cited in Billig 1995:136). In contrast to these rather negative stances to globalization, this study argues that the most mobile in our societies, migrants, are able to maintain their most important friendships. This study aims to provide a thick description of the meaning on friendships for migrant workers. Moreover, this study applies Adams' and Blieszner's conceptual model of friendship, emphasising the flexibility work migrants show in maintaining old and developing new friendships at different places and stages of their life. These friendships function as fixed points relating both to one's origin and present circumstances.

1.1 Migrant workers, friendships and the European context

Migrant workers were chosen for this study, since the thesis places itself in an European environment; the European Union promotes mobility of its human resources to become "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and social cohesion" (Eurofound 2007:3). This primarily economic motivation for promoting mobility overlooks the importance of human needs for affiliation and friendships. If friendships can be created at new places and stages of life, they may thus serve as fixed points which provide migrants with a sense of attachment and belonging to certain places and social structures that reinforces their identities. In this way, migrant workers are also socially attached to their place of origin.

Promoting migrant workers' mobility that is solely grounded in economic and knowledge-based motivations can thus be a doubtful enterprise. Instead, it is advised to shift focus to a more comprehensive picture of migrant workers: If migrant workers' lives are understood beyond *work* as their main motive for migration; if social perspective is added to rationalise promoting work mobility, then better tailored mobility and maintenance policies will be more effective and successful. Obviously, friendship is just one part of migrants' social lives. Still, it is a very vital and dynamic part with effects reaching from personal over network to community and even societal levels (Allan 1998a:687). This range of effects and impacts of friendship make it a highly valuable concept for investigating possible changes of personal relationships incurred by our postmodern, globalised time.

Indeed, globalization and economic pressure on the European Union (EU) seem to be the main motivation for increasing European internal mobility, which aims at succeeding the quest for competitiveness in the global economy (EC 2003). Initiatives to promote workforce mobility include, among others, the removal of administrative and legal barriers to migrant workers, and the facilitation of job-searching and job-matching through the EURES initiative, to name only two of the most effective measures (Eurofound 2007:4). These support the idea that individuals can be continuously mobile and flexible, going to where education and better income await them.

And truly, many European citizens take the step and migrate to another country. After the fifth enlargement of the EU in 2004, migrant workers from former Eastern bloc countries migrated to Western EU partner countries. In Denmark, this development is reflected in the current trend where immigrants form Western countries outnumbered those from non-Western countries -- a trend that started in 2004 and has, since, been rising (Integrationsministeriet 2008:3f).

Likewise, granting of residence permits has, since, changed from being based on family reunification and status as refugee to being based on the objectives to work or study in Denmark. The trend in the period from 2001 until 2008 clarifies the drastic changes of immigration patterns into Denmark: Net immigration of Western immigrants increased by 271 per cent, and grants of residence permits based on objectives to work or study increased by 172 per cent (ibid.).

Still, the belief that postmodern times have made *all* people mobile is at odds with the fact that the majority of Europeans does not move further than within the borders of one city. Their immobility can partly be explained with the comfort which deeper insights into advantages of a specific location offer for insiders (Jordan & Düvell 2002:28f). Insider knowledge is acquired over long time, and it comprises of, among others, "social capital built up through participation in local clubs and associations, and access to informal support and long-standing friendships" (ibid.).

The picture evolving around friendships in a migration setting is thus characterized by rather contradictory tendencies: On the one hand, friendships among others provide the comfort and incentive to stay 'at home' for some Europeans; on the other hand, still many people decide to migrate. And while friendships might be subject to pressures induced by postmodern society as claimed by Karp et al. (2004:136) or Giddens (1991:2), they are yet flexible enough to span wide time and space distances (Becker et al. 2009). This area of conflict has been a great incentive to draw the focus on migrant workers, who even amplify those contradictions: As per definition they go to the country without necessarily knowing whether the migration is a temporarily limited or unlimited project (Bell et al. 2004:10f). Therefore, they have

to employ certain strategies for maintaining old friendships, but certainly also for finding new ones.

In his book "Eurostars and Eurocities," Adrian Favell describes some of our societies' most mobile persons who prefer to be termed 'free movers' instead of 'migrants'. They believe that this rather traditionally founded category does not correspond to their modern lives being highly characterized by temporariness and provisionality (2008:100-126). Although the respondents in this study also gave accounts on their lives being rather provisional and depending on future employment, the term 'work migrant' is used for several reasons: Firstly, it points to these persons' work related motivation for coming to Denmark. Secondly, they are migrants in the sense that they move to, settle and work at a place different to their place of origin. Thirdly, they recognized themselves as work migrants by replying on the call for respondents that clearly stated that the study wanted to investigate German work migrants. Still, the parallel to Favell's respondents lies in the fact that none of the interviewees expressed the desire to obtain Danish citizenship, just as Favell noted: "Membership comes with a price – and free movers don't fit the nationalized system" (ibid:102).

In this context, it is assumed that migrants might go to where the money is, but stay where they feel comfortable due to friendship ties that provide them with social and emotional support. This assumption is in line with the difficulties that Danish employers find in maintaining their foreign workforce who leave Denmark because they and their spouses do not feel comfortable since they lack friends, who otherwise could make them feel integrated into the Danish society. This was shown in the Expat Study 2006 that asked 401 foreign workers in Denmark about their satisfaction with the live conditions in Denmark (Oxford Research 2007). Among others, 61% of the 401 participants to that study perceived it difficult to find close friends in Denmark (ibid:42), who were otherwise viewed as one decisive factor for making them feel socially attached to a place (ibid:33-42). But which meaning do migrant workers assign to friendship in general? Before establishing the research questions, a basic understanding of the features of friendship need to be established in the following section.

1.2 The nature of friendship

R. Pahl's book "On Friendship" (2000) vividly describes that friendships have been important in distinct cultures and societies at different points in history. Already, Aristotle distinguished friends of utility, of pleasure and of virtue. Whereas he saw the first two categories as processes, friends of virtue were seen as a 'pure' relationship involving whole persons, and therefore constituting a desirable activity (ibid:21). The historical notion of Aristotle has changed, but in the Western world we still refer to the 'pure' friendship relation when talking about friends. Friendship, however, is a gradually developing process which in academic literature, has led to distinguishing between the three widely accepted categories of casual, close and best friends (cf. Becker et al. 2009, Johnson et al. 2003, Hays 1985). The continuum spanning from casual to best friends is often related to friends' closeness or the amount of disclosure (Pahl 2000, McGinnis 1979), social support in form of emotional support (Hays 1985) and resulting intimacy. However, as Delia has criticized, friends may not feel the need to develop deep intimacy (1985 in Becker et al. 2009:231). Commitment and trust may instead be the strategies decisive for friends to categorize each other as either casual, close or best friends (Oliker 1998:20, Allan 1998b:77), and for long distance friendships to survive (Becker et al. 2009:350).

For a definition of friendship, it is yet not enough to recognize that friends are emotionally closer to each other than strangers. Anthropological and social work often discriminates voluntarily achieved friendship from ascribed kinship (for example Pahl 2000), since kin is structured by obligations and responsibilities that may determine whether we like or do not like to spend time with the person in focus. While this study limits itself to the investigation of friendship, it also recognizes that friendship is possible within kinship structures. Friendship here is regarded as a voluntarily maintained relationship, with "participation [depending] on the relationship created over time […], while what *brings people together* in friendship may not be what *keeps* them together" as opposed to kinship (Rawlins 1992 in Bell & Coleman 1999:6).

Friendship being a matter of choice is, however, a debatable concept (Allan 1998a). Instead, it operates among others, within the implicit but powerful constraints of age, gender and geographical location, and is thus a highly relevant sociological topic that "could be an important ingredient in the understanding of emerging social forms. The styles and symbols of contemporary culture are increasingly mediated through friends" (Pahl 2000:3). Unfortunately, the sociological value of friendship has often been a neglected orientation towards friendship.

Orientations towards friendship often ground in the field of psychology that posed the questions, why we are making friends, and who we might include in our circle of friends. Psychologists have identified an affiliation motive, "a desire to be near others and to have pleasant and affectionate interactions with them" (Kenrick et al. 2005:216). We make friends to avoid unpleasant situations and to create pleasant situations. If this motive is fulfilled and combined with affiliation behaviour (for example searching for friends, making friends, and maintaining activities within the friendship), the affiliation motive generates satisfaction and can be converted into well-being (Schüler et al. 2008:232f).

Due to the effect of friendships on health and well-being, it is very important to investigate friendships of migrant workers. For migrants, lack of friendships or difficulties in establishing friendships in the receiving country could result in a lack of well-being, which will nurture the wish to go to another place where they find themselves socially better anchored. Anchorage, though, is not only based on personal motivations. Structural and cultural context also set the frame in which friendships to certain persons is promoted or discarded.

Despite exploring friendship from a psychological perspective, researchers have partly shifted focus to its sociological value. But as Eve bewails, a prevalent dichotomy between communal life versus individualization implies that social structures are merely conceived in terms that implicitly exclude 'personal relations' (2002:388): Communal life belongs to the past, whereas individualization is induced by post modernity, in which relationships are thought of as being free-floating and disembedded from space and time (Giddens 1991:2). Giddens defined disembedding

mechanisms as "mechanisms which prise social relations free from the hold of specific locales, recombining them across wide time-space distances" (ibid:2). Releasing actions from their ties to space and time, both dimensions are "emptied" (ibid.). Thus, actors in a relationship are neither timely nor spatially bound to their actions; they are not proximate to each other. If proximity is equalized with intimacy, it could be argued, that mobility and 'disembedding mechanisms' constitute a threat to friendships that ultimately corrodes friendships. If this was true, friendships between migrants and their friends left behind 'at home' would be doomed to dissolution.

Apart from constructing post modernity as a threat to friendships, Giddens' representative outlook also fuels the tendency to view friendship today as a highly personalized relationship with little effect on people's life chances (Eve 2002:390ff). Eve argues that this misconception of friendship is based on a methodology and assumptions that conceive friendship as providing service exchanges and resources to friends. In post modern times, both are presumed to have a minor effect since nepotism is much less regarded than merit (ibid:389). Thus, we do not 'use' our friends. Consequently, even "attempts to investigate the 'material' contribution made by friends empirically has tended to reinforce the idea that friendship matters relatively little, and has only a personal, emotional role – important no doubt for the individuals concerned, but not central sociologically" (ibid:391).

Eve's small-scale study of social networks of doctors and teachers in Turin has, however, been able to show that the information provided through friends and networks can have a great impact on a person's life course (1989 as described in ibid:396f). Thus, friends can be those persons in one's life, who function as the 'backbone' in a certain environment, as illustrated by said research study:

> "...there is qualitative evidence that the capacity to persist – and thus eventually gain a permanent post – is affected by the presence of other teachers on one's friendship network. Such friends may help by providing many kinds of information allowing a young teacher to become more proficient, and cope with both the teaching itself and with administrative obstacles. But they may also help to solidify identity as a teacher, determination to persist, commitment to, and interest in, the tasks of teaching" (ibid:398).

These findings point to the fact that friendships, which for an individual carry rather personal and emotional value, can have a greater sociological value in their entirety. Moreover, these findings support the focus of this study to identify the meaning of friendships for migrant workers, since friendships may be the medium through which migrant workers gain support that anchors them socially in Denmark. For employers, employees' commitment to the job and the will of migrant workers' to stay is of outmost importance to keep re-hiring and training costs low.

The different levels of friendships ranging from acquaintance to best friend, from geographically close to long-distance, and from having a personal to societal effect imply a great complexity of the concept. Nevertheless, recognizing the nature of friendship in its complexity, the attempt of drawing as comprehensive a picture as possible of the meaning of friendship for migrant workers is undertaken. To guide the study in more definite terms towards this objective, a set of comprehensive research questions was posed, as presented below.

1.3 Research questions

In light of the focus on the meaning of friendship, the overarching research question for the present study is:

Which meaning do migrant workers in Denmark assign to friendship?

To determine the "meaning of friendship", Blieszner and Adams's conceptual framework for friendship research is applied (1992). Offering the advantage of great straightforwardness to the otherwise complex concept, it visualises those parts necessary to elicit the "meaning of friendship" comprehensively. The sub-division of the concept of friendship requires the research question to be broken down into substantive questions accordingly. To this end, the following questions inform the study:

(1) Which account do migrant workers give to personal characteristics in contrast to structural predispositions in talking about their friendships?

(2) Which implications hold differing friendship structures of friendships maintained in the home country to those in the receiving country Denmark?

(3) Which obstacles and advantages do migrant workers encounter in the course of forming new and maintaining already existing friendships?

(4) How do migrant workers assess their friendships?

(5) Which influence has friendship on migrant workers' intentions to stay or leave the host country Denmark?

1.4 Research design

The focus of the study and its substantive research questions are operationalised using the concept of friendship (Adams & Blieszner 1992, 1994) as provided in section 2. The model takes its point of departure from individual characteristics of a person, illustrating that they form a behavioural motif which is the basis for emerging friendship patterns. All of these are embedded in a structural and cultural context, and it is this context that in this study is claimed to be important for a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of friendship today. The research questions thus relate to the parts of the Adams and Blieszner conceptual framework of friendship, with question (1) relating to the fundament of friendships to emerge: It aims at finding out how migrant workers' individual characteristics and the structural and cultural context affect friendship structures that are illuminated through question (2). Insights into friendship formation and maintenance strategies as vital parts of friendship phases are obtained by posing question (3), and question (4) relates to friendship processes. Questions 1–4 are thus clearly informed by the Blieszner and Adams conceptual framework for friendship research, whereas question (5) relates to the effect of friendship which is important for a completion of the picture on the meaning of friendship for migrant workers.

A qualitative approach is chosen, which is described in detail in the chapter on methodological considerations. Due to the flexible nature of qualitative research, a high degree of explicitness on the preparations undertaken prior to, during and after the interviews is required to guarantee the validity of the research (Olsen 2002:18-22). Preliminary it can be revealed that the study follows seven stages suggested by Kvale (1994) that also guide the structure of this paper. These stages comprise *thematizing*, *design*, *interview*, *transcript*, *analysis*, *verification* and *reporting* (ibid:19ff).

The first stage, *thematizing*, primarily includes the reasons for the conduct of the study. These have been established in the introduction, which concluded that friendship needs to be explored to show how migrant workers make sense of their friendships despite debates claiming that globalisation and an increase of mobility erode friendships. Furthermore, in friendship research, migrant workers have not been investigated previously. Likewise, in migration studies there is a relative paucity on investigating the meaning of friendship dyads to the benefit of investigations on kin and friendship networks.

Secondly, the concept of friendship is *thematized* in chapter 2, through which the author makes visible the pre-existing knowledge on friendship, and how it relates to the persons in focus, work migrants. Unfolding the theoretical background for this study is necessary to ultimately understand how this study contributes to the research field. Thirdly, the stage of *thematizing* does not only include the content of friendship research, but also the *how* to approach it with appropriate methodology. In section 3, these considerations are specified, arguing for deploying a small sample size due to the complexity of the theoretical concept of friendship.

The methodology section also incorporates the second research stage, accounts on the *design*: This study is a case study of 11 German migrant workers in Denmark. Likewise, the section on methodology is explicit on preparations for, and the entering of the stages *interview*, *transcription*, *analysis*, and *verification* to guarantee replicability and thus reliability and validity of the study.

Results of the interviews are *reported* and analyzed in chapter 4 with an emphasis on the different meanings of friendship based on the different contexts of friendship formation and flows of social capital. The discussion of these findings in chapter 5 make it clear that friendship in its entirety is an asset for work migrants that, on the one hand, facilitates and supports the decision to migrate; and on the other hand, facilitates their incorporation in the receiving country in a holistic and informal way. These findings are the basis for recommendations on what could be done to maintain work migrants in a Danish setting.

Likewise, a European perspective on work migrants' mobility is presented. Due to its scope, this thesis is of interest to Danish researchers, policymakers and practitioners in the field of maintenance of work migrants. Their work has to recognize that European work migrants do not fit into one closed category, as it has increased in terms of diversity in social and cultural characteristics (Castles 2002:1146). Socio-economically advantaged work migrants may thus not depend on higher income granted in the receiving country, as the study shows. A wider European readership might thus equally be interested in this study, since it argues that promotion of EU-wide work mobility has to acknowledge the importance of social aspects of the migration experience.

2. An integrative model of friendship

Interest for researching friendship has risen in the last three decades, yielding a large corpus of studies on the topic. Often, the findings lack a categorization into the wider concept of friendship research, a fact that made it seemingly necessary to develop an *integrative* model of friendship, as done by Adams and Blieszner (1992, 1994).

The integrative conceptual model for friendship research shall here be applied for several reasons: The model facilitates a structured approach to the otherwise complex topic. Using this model as a guide in the present study facilitates taking up a variety of interconnected elements vital to friendship, enabling a comprehensive picture to be drawn on the meaning of friendship for work migrants. The model is *integrative* because it includes the three main elements to friendship (i.e. personal characteristics, friendship patterns, and the context) which have been in focus separately in other studies.For example, there is a great corpus of literature on individual characteristics of friends (e.g. Linden-Andersen et al. 2009, Schüler et al. 2008, Mazur 1989), rendering friendship a rather individual one with little sociological impact (Eve 2002:386-390). The greatest advantage of the *integrative* model of friendship thus lies in its combination of individual, interpersonal and contextual levels, making it possible to show that friendship has a sociological value, and that it cannot be seen without any context.

Along this line, there has been a tendency to investigate the effects of individual characteristics on various aspects of friendship patterns, but the processes by which those effects occur (Adams & Blieszner 1994:165) had been neglected. This is similar to "explaining the connection between ingredients and dinner without discussing cooking" (Duck 1990 in ibid.), since the researcher acknowledges friendship being "a wider complex of interacting influences which help to give each relationship its shape and structure" (Adams & Allan 1998a:2). Again, with this stance, friendships of migrant workers are simultaneously seen as being embedded in and influenced by a wider European, but also more narrowly Danish and German context, which the model is capable of incorporating for analytical purposes.

The present study therefore inevitably comes across cultural and economical topics: Culture as either a barrier to mutual understanding and the finding of friends, or in a cosmopolitan view, as a nurturing ground for mutual interest across nationalities[1]. Economic issues touch upon the main motivation for migrant workers to come to work in Denmark. The context is also shaped by new technologies, which make it increasingly easier for those living distant from each other to maintain relationships (see Adams 1998 for research on online friendships).

By choosing the integrative model of friendship, the attempt is undertaken to categorize already existing findings on friendships that serve as support for themes selected for and emerging during the interviews of German migrant workers. The results of this study can be more easily evaluated in terms of their contribution to the academic field. Its advantages together make the model a convincing map for this endeavour. Finally, peer review of the model corroborated the strength of the model since it unifies thoughts within the fields of social psychology, sociology and communication (Sanderson et al. 2005, Dugan & Kivett 1998, Adams 1998, Dugan 1996). The details of the framework are outlined in the following, proceeding from the overall explanation to more specific ones on those parts which are deemed particularly relevant for the present study on migrant workers.

2.1 The framework

As figure 1 below shows, individual characteristics (I) affect friendship patterns (II) on network and dyadic level, both of which are embedded in the structural and cultural context (III) (Adams & Blieszner 1994:165 ff). For a better understanding of the figure, its elements will be introduced in the following.

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[1]Cf. section 2.1.3 for an elaboration on *culture*

FIGURE 1
Integrative conceptual framework for friendship research

2.1.1 Individual characteristics (I)

On the one hand, individual characteristics (age, gender, race and class) can be conceptualized as *opportunities and constraints on friendship* inherent to an individual's social structural position (Ia). That means, an individual's social position naturally opens up for, or restricts access to certain levels of power, prestige and wealth, which in turn limit or support access to behaviours leading to friendship. Even though it is almost impossible to change one's structural social position, changing environments may either improve or decrease opportunities of friendship (Adams & Blieszner 1994:168). On the other hand, individual characteristics are also partly made up by the individual's psychological disposition, including personal preferences and personality traits (ibid.). Personality traits can change, too, and with them, preferences for certain types of friends and friendships. Whether change is brought to an individual's psychological traits, or his/her structural environment, both dispositions are connected through internalization and interpretation, and thus

cannot be isolated from each other: Individuals might internalize expectations towards behaviour, and therefore demonstrate behaviour accordingly. Conversely, one's predisposition can affect the way he/she interprets social structural opportunities and constraints. Thus, "individuals do what they are predisposed to do within the structural opportunities and constraints that confront them", and these predispositions shape their *behavioral motif* (ibid:169)*. The *behavioral motif* is actions such as daily routines or responses to unpredictable aspects of daily routines (ibid.).

What does this conception of friendship so far mean for the present study? This part of the concept relates to research question 1, which asks for the account that migrant workers themselves give on the constraints and opportunities that their structural position and personal preferences imply. As individuals vary in meanings they attach to their age, origin, gender and class, economic circumstances, leisure preferences and so forth, so do they display different friendship patterns. To determine how these accounts inform an overall behavioral motif, daily routines, the schedules and regularities in migrants' lives are of interest, too. Examining where their activities take place is identifying the *site of engagement* where social practices, as the finding and maintaining of friends, are carried out using certain means (Scollon 2001:3f).[2] This could for instance be the workplace where certain behaviour rather than other behaviours could lead to friendship relations beyond the boundaries of the workplace. Likewise, which other sites of engagement can be identified as being beneficial to the making of friends? Again, attention is given on whether migrant workers ascribe the basis of their behavioral motifs to personal preferences or to social structures they belong.

Research question (1) thus illuminates the personal environment level of friendships (Adams & Allan 1998:6f). However, the conceptualization of the personal level should not be at a disadvantage to the interpersonal and contextual level. Both are described in the following.

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[2] See Scollon 2001 and 1997 for an elaboration of the concept of site of engagement.

2.1.2 Friendship patterns (II)

Adams & Blieszner (1994) identified three interacting elements in friendship patterns: *structure, phases* and *processes*. *Structure* refers to the form of linking ties between friends, the similarity and number of friends, and the connections among friends. *Phases* refer to "the formation, maintenance and dissolution of friendship dyads and of clusters of friends within networks" (ibid:170). *Interactive processes* refer to "the thoughts, feelings and behaviours involved in acting as friends" (ibid.). As the figure displays, structure, phases and processes occur both in friendship dyads (IIa) and on network level (IIb). Since dyads are embedded in networks, processes at one level may influence characteristics at the other level, as is indicated by the dotted box separating the two levels (ibid.).

2.1.2.1 Dyadic and network structure

To create a comprehensive picture of migrant workers' friendships and due to the chosen methodology, this study asks respondents to provide an insight into their friendships in general, not excluding neither dyads nor networks in advance. Not restricting the respondents' accounts is deemed necessary to understand which kinds of friendship patterns are sought by migrant workers, and which implications this has, for instance, on the maintenance work they have to do. Main focus though, is limited to friendship dyads because there is available literature on migration that focus on the benefits and detriments of migrants' networks (e.g. Haug 2003). To contribute to the field of migration studies, friendship dyads is the preferred pattern to be inquired further during the interviews. Since reference still is made to networks during the interviews, their features are also included in the theoretical considerations.

The structure of dyads and networks are very similar, since both are affected by the power and status, solidarity and homogeneity of the friends within the dyad or network (Blieszner & Adams 1992:6f). Particularly friendship dyads are perceived as involving minimal structure and an egalitarian allocation of power (ibid:8). But while one friend may be able to exert more *power*, that means to "carry out [her or] his own will despite resistance" (Weber 1947 in ibid:6), his or her moral *status* or worth may decrease because a high power status might violate expectations towards a

friendship on behalf of the less powerful friend.

Research is therefore advised to investigate power status instead of a priori assuming friendship to be based on power equality (ibid:8). Asking for the expectations, whether and why they are met or not, the respondents are expected to disclose information on differences between their German and Danish friends. These differences may come in form of diverging levels of power: Whereas a Danish friend obviously has more, albeit sometimes unconscious insight into the Danish society and labour market structures, the German migrant worker lacks this knowledge and may regard the Danish friend as a trusted "expert". Status as expert and lay person may be different in the German friendships, since here, both friends have approximately the same understanding of the context. Thus, Danish friends may have more power, whereas the power relation may be more balanced in German friendships. The effect of cultural understanding on power relations already forecasts the importance of considering the structural and cultural context for friendships, to be discussed in detail later (cf. section 2.1.3).

Solidarity is the element uniting friends (Blieszner & Adams 1992:41); it is also termed intimacy or closeness, and is sometimes seen equal to self-disclosure. Although the definition of intimacy as involving "mutual sharing of personal concerns and information, [...] exchange assistance, encouragement and constructive criticism (Fischer & Narus 1981:445), equalizing self-disclosure with intimacy is problematic: In general, people differ in the degree to which they share intimate information with friends; but those, who disclose less do not necessarily feel less intimate to their friends. Furthermore, several studies have highlighted gender differences, according to which men disclose less intimate information than women (Fischer & Narus 1981, Hays 1985, Martin 1997).

Despite proving a gender different manner of engagement in friendships, Mazur found the subjective outcomes being the same for both sexes (1989:277). Nonetheless, the level of disclosure and intimacy can be expected to be higher in dyadic friendships than in network patterns (Marks 1998), and highest in women's friendship dyads (Fischer & Narus 1981:453). Whereas comfort is drawn from the

"elaboration of thoughts, feelings, and experiences through acts of self-disclosure" in friendship dyads, comfort in networks is generated by "being surrounded by members of one's group or category [rather] than by seeking exclusive ties in which one can fully disclose the finely elaborated inner world of thoughts and feelings" (Marks 1998:45). Even though the degree of intimacy and self-disclosure is different for both sexes and in dyads and networks, it serves the flow of resources and well-being of friends (Blieszner & Adams 1992:9, Schüler et al. 2008:231, Kenrick et al. 2005:220f, Pahl 2000:144ff).

Homogeneity -- the similarity of friends -- is another aspect that needs to be highlighted further for dyadic and network structures. If relationships are held to others who show the same characteristics external to the relationship itself, these relationships are *homophile* (Haug 2003:727). Various studies have proven that friendship relations are often homophile with regard to gender, ethnicity, occupational status, age, marital status, education and so forth (Blieszner & Adams 1992:48). It is therefore important to find explanations for this circumstance. Decisive may be the structural context, e.g. the ethnic diversity at work or place of residency, in which friendships are formed.

Haug, who investigated homogeneity of friendships among immigrants in Germany, concluded that the probability of becoming friends with similar others is conditional to opportunity structures. If a person lives and works in a place with similar others, it is more probable to get acquainted and become friends (2003:732). Conversely, immigrants' language barriers might inhibit the making of friends among the native population, partly because they do not possess the necessary linguistic means to disclose information and create intimacy, and partly because they would need to put a much greater effort into doing so than with co-nationals (ibid.).

In the present study, features such as power status, solidarity, and homogeneity are investigated under research question (2). Beyond aiming at finding differences and similarities in friendship structures between those friendships, migrant workers hold in Denmark and Germany, it focuses on which effect differences and similarities have on migrant workers, since they can be perceived as either beneficial of

detrimental to the desire to stay in Denmark and deepen contact to Danes. Thus, while structures of friendships and its features are illuminated, it is the assessment of these structures that are of vital interest in this study. Therefore, research question (2) cannot be isolated from research question (3) and (4).

The main demarcation between friendship dyads and networks remains its size, density and configuration. Whereas friendship dyads refer to a befriended pair of two persons, personal networks are theoretically not limited in size. Due to the increased numbers of network participants, networks can be very dense in case that the participants are linked internally to each other.

The configuration of friendship is related to the concept of density: If participants are only linked with some participants of the network, certain patterns or clusters are at hand (Adams & Blieszner 1992:171). Networks' density and configuration have implications for the social capital[3] available to its members. Portes argues that there is a consensus in academic literature to treat social capital as "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures" (1998:6). Social capital is thus a resource resulting from investments into social relations (Coleman 1991 in Haug 2003:717). Important to the conception of social capital is not only that it manifests itself in help and support by acquaintances, friends and family, but in the *confidence* that resources would be provided in a situation that would demand them. Social capital is thus not only seen in the factual achievement of resources through networks, but in the qualified expectation to receive such (Haug 2003:718).

Whereas some researchers claim dense networks to be a necessity for social capital to emerge (Loury 1977, Coleman 1988), Burt (1992) stressed the importance of a "relative paucity of network ties" (Portes 1998:12). According to this view, information circulating in dense networks becomes redundant. Instead, weak ties, as they exist in loose networks, provide new information. Network quality is argued to increase since new and diverse information enhance opportunities to access and

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3   For a review on social capital, its origins and effects, see Portes 1998. For a dense reflection on social capital and social exchange, see Magdol and Bessel 2003.

draw on different resources available through these ties (ibid:6, 12f). Accordingly, non-homogeneous and non-dense networks could be argued to provide good opportunity structures for network members. It will thus be interesting to see which network structures are employed by the interviewees and which kind of social capital circulates within them.

An important feature of social capital is that it is locally bound, motivating a distinction between social capital specific for the country of destination and that of origin (Haug 2003:718). For the present study, this conception of social capital flowing in networks and friendship dyads is decisive with view to the structure of the analysis, since social capital may differ for friendships held in Germany and in Denmark. Questions to be raised therefore include: How do individuals perceive their friendships to be beneficial for their enhancement and well-being in Denmark as the receiving country? Which information and benefits derive from which of their networks or friendship dyads? Which insights does the configuration of networks give us regarding the will to stay in Denmark or not?

The density and configuration of work migrants' networks can be displayed in either of several possible scenarios: (1) They have well-established friendships and networks in both home and receiving country, with or without connections between the networks and friends on each side of the border. In this case, social capital can be assumed to be very diverse and supportive for migrant workers' enhancement and well-being; (2) Migrant workers have well-developed friendships and networks in Denmark, resulting in a high degree of social capital in the receiving country; and (3) Migrant workers have only very well-established in their home country, with social capital being limited to benefits from friends at home. While each scenario seems to be very different, the configuration and density of networks does not necessarily give insights into how well-integrated work migrants are into the Danish society. In each case, friendships and networks might be very homogeneous, including mostly co-nationals. It is necessary to pose a question on whether migrant workers' friendships include Danes, and which forms of social capital are derived from these friendships.

2.1.2.2 Phases

As mentioned before, friendship phases refer to the developmental stages over time. They begin with a formational phase, during which strangers become acquainted and find out whether they could be friends or not. As Blieszner and Adams acknowledge, several processes of identification and attraction, initiating first meetings and beginning disclosure take place. At the same time, they acknowledge friendship dyads as being formed between two people (1992:15f).

Conceptualizing friendship as such has been shown to not fully display reality, though. Eve posits: "who becomes a friend seems to be determined not solely by individual attraction but above all by the potential for enriching and maintaining another relationship which is already important" (2002:401). Migrant workers can thus be assumed endeavour to find friends who are rather similar to themselves *and* their core family residing in Denmark, since these friendships can reinforce their social identity (ibid:402). Friendship dyads can thus only be conceptualized as a link between two persons if the importance of third parties is recognized. The fact that one selects friends who, not only fit to personal preferences, but who also reinforce already important relationships confirms the preliminarily stated argument that friendships do not solely rely on individual preferences. Focus therefore has to be on the context that migrant workers find themselves, including the site of engagement as an opportunity structure for finding friends who are beneficial for oneself and already important relationships.

Subsequent to a formation phase, dynamics of friendships would lead to "a middle, when solidarity and other features increase, decrease, fluctuate, or remain stable" (Blieszner & Adams 1992:15). This phase is characterized by nurturing activities, ranging from harmonious activities over disagreements and conflict, which all may have beneficial effects on friendship (ibid:94). Still, friendships are found to be necessarily based on enjoyable activities (Hays 1989:35), and communication between friends has repeatedly been shown to be a decisive factor for friends to either feel very close (best friends), close or distant towards each other (Rawlins 1992, Becker et al. 2009). These findings are important to the present study since communication with distant friends takes place in a different way than with

geographically close friends. Likewise, communication in another language other than in the mother tongue has implications on the perceived friendship level and, consequently, the perception of obstacles or advantages in the formation and maintaining phases of friendships (research question 3).

Proximity has been assumed to play a decisive role in maintaining friendships. The proximity-attraction principle supports this assumption, which denotes the "tendency to become friends with those who live or work nearby" (Kenrick et al. 2005:238f), implying that geographically-close (GC) friendships are not only more likely to occur, but also to be more durable than long-distance (LD) relationships. On the one hand, durability is anticipated to create a higher level of trust through "a history of past reciprocal acts" (Magdol & Bessel 2003:151). On the other hand, physical proximity appears to increase trust, which, in turn, provides the basis for accessing and mobilizing social capital in relationships. As Magdol and Bessel criticize, social capital is often assumed to rely on face-to-face interaction (ibid.). Nonetheless, their study on residential mobility and exchanges of social support among a representative sample of the US population found evidence for long-distance movers not being disadvantaged with regard to exchanges in relationships. Whereas diminished task support was proven (for instance, baby-sitting depends on physical proximity), emotional and financial support did not decrease significantly (ibid: 165-167). According to those findings, friendships are capable of spanning long distances, with a continued provision of some forms of social capital.

Likewise, in their study of friendships among college students, Becker et al. (2009) stressed that friendships rather depend on the friends' level of commitment to maintain even long-distance (LD) friendships than on proximity. They concluded that it is more appropriate to conceive friendship as a flexible and durable type of relationship that even can span long distances. Becker et al. also showed that LD friendships are more turbulent than geographically close (GC) ones, i.e., friendship levels more often follow a non-linear line with friends shifting from best friend to close or casual friend with recovery to closer levels (ibid:360ff). These shifts depended on commitment and initial friendship level, both being based on the quantity of interaction. GC friends may thus interact more often than LD friends, but

interaction rates are in any case higher for best and close friends than for casual friends.

The same was shown by Hays, who concluded that close friends interact more often and with greater satisfaction than casual ones. He explicitly made clear that not only the quantity but also the quality of interaction affects the friendship level, since interaction rates only reveal behavioral closeness, but conceal perceived closeness among friends (1989:33-35). This implies that especially best and close friends are more attuned to span long distances since they might feel closer to each other despite the lack of joint activities through which task support could be exchanged.

For work migrants, these findings imply that they indeed can maintain their friendships at their home country through common interactions such as writing mails, cards, calling and chatting through social media. Maintenance activities of LD friendships would differ to GC friendships in that GC friends rather would meet. Still, both friendships depend on the satisfaction derived from the interaction rather than on interaction rates. Furthermore, migrant workers could be expected to derive emotional, financial and knowledge-based support than task-related support from their LD friendships. The above explored existing empirical material suggests that especially best and close friends must be assumed to play a decisive role for migrant workers, being a supportive argument for focusing on these friendship levels rather than on the impact casual friends have on migrant workers' situation in Denmark.

In addition to the empirical findings focusing on dyadic friendship phases, migrant workers are assumed to maintain some of their networks at home, just as they might develop new ones in Denmark. However, network phases will only be of concern to this study with view to the account migrant workers give on the obstacles and advantages that they encounter in forming and maintaining friendships. Findings within the area of network phases could remedy the lack of research within this area (Blieszner and Adams 1992:93).

Eventually, a final phase can be reached wherein friendship is dissolved (ibid.). Friendship dyads are more vulnerable to dissolution than networks, since the

withdrawal of one friendship member does not necessarily imply disintegration of the entire network. However, there still is a lack of conducted research in the field of network phases (Adams & Blieszner 1994:173). For the present study it is interesting to see whether migrant workers attribute an eventual dissolution of a friendship to the migration as such, or whether they identify other impacts on the friendship to be more decisive, e.g., the previously mentioned friendship level. Findings by Becker et al. may be corroborated, stating that commitment is the pivotal element for befriended parties to stay friends (2009:347ff). It is thus obvious that personal characteristics as opposed to structural dispositions are connected with obstacles and advantages for friendship phases through friends' assessment of those elements. Consequently, research questions (1) – (3) are highly connected and coherent with research question (4), investigating friendship processes.

2.1.2.3 Processes

As argued before, an advantage of the integrative model of friendship is the integration of friendship processes as one of the elements to focus research. Eliciting the processes is seen to provide better understanding of the interaction between friends. Processes refer to "the overt behavioral events and the covert cognitive and affective responses that occur when people interact" (Blieszner & Adams 1992:12). Whereas cognitive processes are internal evaluations of each befriended party about himself or herself and the friendship as such, affective processes are emotional responses to ones' friends and their performances within the friendship. Cognitive and affective processes are related by positive or negative assessments of the friend or the friendship either resulting in positive affective processes such as empathy, loyalty, trust and satisfaction. Or, they can result in negative affections such as anger, indifference or hostility (ibid:13). The third component of processes is behavioral processes, which denote the elements of action within friendships. Communication, meeting up, exchanging support or the like, and cooperating are among the positively rated actions, but competition, betrayal and conflict are equally possible to occur among friends (ibid.). The three processes depend on each other, since behaviour affects thoughts and emotions, while cognitive processes can lead to affective reactions that determine future behavioral processes, e.g., decreasingly or increasingly satisfying communication between friends (ibid.).

These processes occur in friendship dyads and networks, though with different objectives and outcomes. Whereas friends in a dyad depend more on each other for the friendship to sustain, networks do not cease to exist upon the withdrawal of one member. Behavioral processes in a dyad might thus, to a higher degree, be characterized by commitment and communication between two friends, than it is seen between two members of a network (ibid:14).

For the present study, processes will be of interest regarding migrant workers' evaluation of friendships maintained in the home country and those developed or developing in Denmark (research question 4). Counter arguing that mobility erodes friendships, one objective of this study is to investigate how migrant workers assess the stability of their friendships relating to cognitive processes.

Affective processes are brought to the surface by investigating satisfaction and commitment levels. How satisfied are migrant workers with their friendship relations in Denmark and at home? How committed are they to forming and maintaining friendships? Likewise, behavioral processes are made visible by asking about the ways of communication, social support, sharing activities, et cetera. Since all three processes interact with each other, it is of interest how communication means and social support influence satisfaction and commitment levels, and thus the assessment of a friendship's stability.

The underlying assumption to the investigation of friendship processes is that friendships are evaluated as stable if they yield a high degree of satisfaction and mutual commitment. Likewise, the impact of social support and means of communication are decisive factors in understanding what migrant workers gain from friendships and how they deal with them communicatively. Moreover, the understanding of how migrant workers assess their friendship, its structure, features and phases avoid the drawing of a static picture of friendships. Instead, how they make sense of their friendships produces a dynamic, multifaceted account on friendships, whose effects are as relevant on a personal level as on societal level.

2.1.3 Structural, cultural and historical context (III)

The third main element of the integrative model of friendship acknowledges that friendship differs according to structural, cultural and historical context. It affects all other parts vital to friendship by either limiting or facilitating available social positions (Adams & Blieszner 1994:178).

Social positions are accessible through certain structures which come as "any fairly permanent social pattern" (ibid). The hierarchical order of social positions and rewards and responsibilities circulating among them are expressions of social structures. Likewise, culture limits or facilitates chances establishing, maintaining or dissolving friendships. The key to this is the understanding of culture as an area of practice (*Handlungsfeld)* offering opportunities for actions on the one hand, and setting conditions for actions on the other (Boesch 1980:17).

As a practitioner in the field of cultural psychology, Boesch focuses on everyday life activities through which people are able to test the learned, to rebel against the internalized, to transform the already existent (ibid.). This conceptualization opens up for an understanding of the dynamics of culture, which are vital not only to the concept of friendship in general, but to migrant workers in particular: They bring their own cultural background, their understanding and interpretation of everyday life situations into a Danish setting, where they first will act "normal" according to their German "normality" (Schroll-Machl 2002:24). According to Hall & Hall (1990), Germans and Danes each belong to rather individualistic societies, which would let us predict similarities in the understanding of cultural determined matters as friendship building and maintenance.

Hofstede reminds us in his cultural dimensions that Germans still differ from Danes in several respects that pervade private and business life (2005)[4]. Thus, German normality obviously differs from Danish normality, and persons in an intercultural setting try to explain the "different" behaviour of the others, relying to considerable amount on prejudice and stereotypes (Schroll-Machl 2002:25). These explanations

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[4]   The identified strands of difference are power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. For a brief and precise overview over scores by country see http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_dimensions.php

may facilitate or restrict deeper and more effective cultural understanding with outcomes affecting the migrant's personal and work life. For instance, Hofstede's research shows that Danes are more individualistic than Germans, i.e., Danes tend to form relationships with even larger numbers of people than Germans, but with the relationships being weaker than in collectivist societies (Hofstede 1967-2009). It is assumed that Germans might indeed find cultural differences a as valid factor, and research question (5) of this study focuses on the effects that these perceived differences have for the formation, maintenance or dissolution of friendship and ultimately their intentions to remain in the country or depart corresponding to the scenarios illustrated under friendship structure (cf. section 2.1.2.1)

Whereas systematic research on friendships in history is a virtually unexplored area (Blieszner and Adams 1992:26), some research can be found on the influence of structure: Retsinas and Garrity (1985) found that residents of a nursing home did not make as many friends within the nursing home, if they had strong external ties. For the present study the reverse of these findings are interesting to consider, since those work migrants who have friends inside the workplace might not feel the need to establish friendship relations outside the workplace. Likewise, friendship ties outside of Denmark could have a similar restricting affect. Coupled with the conceptualization of culture, it is anticipated that migrant workers would find it more difficult to establish well-functioning friendships with Danes, compared with maintaining already existing friendships. Consequently, important friendships held in the home country will gain strength rather than being weakened, being evidence for globalization and post modernity not eroding personal relationships, affiliations and attachments to places.

2.2 Criticism on the model

The purpose of presenting Adams' and Blieszner's integrative conceptual framework of friendship has been to unfold the components vital to the investigation of the meaning of friendship. It has been set into a migrant context, in which German migrant workers seek jobs in Denmark, and in which the European Union promotes workers' mobility. Despite the previously sketched advantages of the framework, Adams' and Blieszner's model has some shortcomings: By showing that friendships

rely heavily on personal characteristics informing a behavioral motif, the individual is at the heart of friendship research. In this, the model is coloured by its Western, American origin, since other culture groups might put the collective at the heart of the model.

The personal level of friendship research is in this study taken up and implemented by asking migrant workers about the meaning friendships have for them *individually*. Nevertheless, friendship research has been shown to be greatly informed by findings from the field of psychology, neglecting its sociological value (Eve 2002). Moreover, primary focus on the personal level distorts the social and cultural effects that impact on friendships as well. The depiction as friendships being merely embedded in a social, cultural and historical context obfuscates the dynamics the context inherit and its effect on behavioral motif, friendship phases and processes. Instead, dotting the lines between personal characteristics and friendship patterns would better illustrate that the personal level of friendship is pervaded by the contextual level.

Conceptualizing friendship as permeated by the context friends are located in, of course gives ground for arguments for globalization affecting friendships. Whether this is a negative effect cannot be established a priori. As Billig criticizes in his book *Banal Nationalism* (1995:134), there is a tendency not to investigate the meaning of globalization for average citizens, but rather heavily relies on experts' opinions. Likewise, Bell & Coleman criticize the generic claims with which 'global' realities are characterized (1999:1). Being aware of this tendency, this study counteracts by investigating the meaning of friendships for some of the most mobile of our societies, migrant workers, who are placed in an increasingly mobile environment.

2.3 Conclusion

Before turning towards the methodological approach of the study, some summarizing remarks have to be given. The lengthy theoretical description has been provided to elaborate on the elements that make up the complex concept of friendship. The concept thus corresponds to the complex lives we live in post modernity. In this time, friendships may be pressured by the tensions emerging from an increasingly mobile society, and may persist due to personal and interpersonal

strategies. Incorporating influences of micro and macro level on friendships, the theoretical and methodological approach is shaped by the view that friendship is not solely a personal experience, but relies on the contextual environment. Likewise, context depends on every single experience at large. Of main interest to this study are the strategies of friendship formation and maintenance, with the other parts of the friendship model contributing to the comprehensive understanding of the friendships of migrant workers.

Intensive engagement with the theoretical background implies expectations towards certain results of the study:

- Mobility does not corrode important friendships; instead, friendships are flexible.
- Friendships help people to become socially attached to places.
- Identifying sites of engagement may predict where friends are found, and which friendship patterns emerge.
- Social capital differs in its form in each country, but is highest for work migrants who have friends both in Denmark and Germany.

These assumptions are explicitly laid down here to avoid implicit operating with them during the process of interview, e.g., in form of leading questions (Flick 1995:151). Instead, being conscious about expectations helps to set them aside during the interviews, to be as open-minded to the contents brought forward by the interviewees (cf. section 3.2.6). Assumptions informed by theory are taken up in the analysis to guarantee coherence of the research process and reporting. Moreover, the understanding that context, personal characteristics, behavioral motif, friendship patterns in their structures, phases and processes are vital to a holistic research of friendship, form the backbone to this study. They make it possible to break down the otherwise elusive concept of friendship and make it researchable. The chosen approach to the research process is presented in the following section on methodological considerations.

3. Methodological considerations

Some methodological choices underlying this study were preliminarily introduced in section 1.4 on the research design. Having in mind the given theoretical framework and the outline of the field, arguments for the chosen methodology are now elaborated within this section.

3.1 Research strategy

This study places focus on the individual workers as actors within the Danish context, which is both affecting the workers and being affected by them. Acknowledging and referring to the interplay of individuals and their structural and cultural context, and asking the participants of this study about the meaning that they assign to friendship, the author clearly takes a constructionist stance.

Constructionism "asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors" (Bryman 2008:19), and along this line, the ideas about culture developed in the theoretical part are ontologically founded: Culture has been argued not to be an external reality for the persons in focus, rather, it is an area of practice where meanings are constructed and reconstructed individually despite predictions on limitations by Hall & Hall (1990) and Hofstede (2005). Their research, though, is helpful in asserting that individuals may perceive culture as a barrier. Still, this barrier must be understood as socially constructed, since other persons may indeed find culture as the feature that helps them tremendously in everyday life.

Likewise, the other parts of the Adams and Blieszner conceptual framework for friendship research (cf. sections 2.1.1 & 2.1.2) are empty categories if we do not try to *understand* the content as it makes sense *to the participants* of this study. Thus, this study attempts to understand and interpret social action, and these ontological and epistemological considerations informed the choice of conducting qualitative research rather than quantitative: The complexities of social lives and the meaning that we ascribe to social phenomena are best uncovered by giving participants voice for expressing their thoughts in length and detail. Consequently, the research design is a case study employing semi-structured interviewing as method, through which

participants are given the opportunity to express more, than a few lines space in a questionnaire would allow them.

3.2 Migrant workers in Denmark – research design and method

The case study design has been deemed most appropriate for this study because it enables the researcher to pay attention to the particularities of each single participant, while identifying similarities of their lives. Each of them is represented by one interview conducted in late May/early June 2010, with a slight underrepresentation of male respondents. Describing the particular research process is done to make it explicit and understandable and ensures transparency. Transparency is seen as a marker for replicability, an issue to be finally discussed in section 3.3.

3.2.1 Data collection

Some interviewees were found by contacting language schools in Central and Southern Jutland, where teachers passed on the call for participants. Additionally, personal networks were activated using social media as *Facebook* and *StudiVZ*, the German equivalent to *Facebook*. Personal contacts were also engaged in passing on the call to participate to Germans working in a multinational company.

These procedures resulted in a great diversity of respondents in terms of length of stay in Denmark, occupational and civil status, age, location, motivations for migrating and further life perspectives. As indicated previously, women were more likely to respond to the call for participants, resulting in a sample with four male participants. Including the perspective of male interviewees on friendship is important in our attempt to understand German work migrants' reality: In 2007 more than twice as many German men received a residence permit based on the prospective to work or study than German women (Integrationsministeriet 2008:8)[5]. This study also aims to provide a comprehensive picture of friendship for work migrants, and effort had been made to establish a balance in gender distribution. The data collection method is influenced on several reasons, as among others elaborated on in the following section.

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[5] In detail, 1534 German men and 688 German women received this kind of residence permit (ibid.).

3.2.2 The sample

The sample is comprised of 11 interviewees: 11 Germans who work and live - at least partly - in Denmark. Thus, they all are part of the same national location, namely Denmark, though they live in different cities and towns in Jutland. The specific location serves as backdrop with which the unit of analysis, the German migrant workers, stands in interplay. Additionally, participants living in different places in Denmark generate a diverse picture of the lives and friendships that migrant workers in Denmark lead. With the participants only being situated on Jutland, the sample can be argued to be neither representative of migrant workers in Denmark in a geographical sense. Nor is the sample representative for all migrant workers in Denmark since it is restricted to Germans, excluding other EU nationals immigrating into Denmark for labour purposes. However, with 61 per cent of migrant workers being settled on Jutland in 2007, it is deemed justified to exclude the regions in Funen and Sealand as areas where migrant workers potentially settle (ibid:10). Geographical representation of migrant workers is only partly obtained. However, as previously mentioned, the respondents differ greatly in age, occupational status, perspectives of work et cetera. In this light, the sample thus represents the diversity of migrant workers supporting Castles' notion that today's migration is based on more diverse motivations than economically founded push and pull factors (2002:1148-1151).

Delimiting the sample to German participants has been done due to several reasons: First and foremost, Germans are the second largest group of immigrants that are granted residence permits on the objective to work, only outnumbered by Poles (Integrationsministeriet 2008:8). The second reason is of more pragmatic character; since the researcher is German, with German as mother tongue. Full understanding of the conversation in German and the participants' life situations would be facilitated. Likewise, limiting the sample to a rather small size is pragmatically founded: First, the researcher has not previously been in personal contact with migrant workers, and gaining access to the field turned out to be a time-intensive endeavour. Secondly, a small sample size allows for a thorough analysis of the interviews with view to investigating the meaning of friendship, the concept, which already in theory, is very complex. Thirdly, the respondents differ in length of time

that they have spent in Denmark, whether they have settled fully, or still partly live in Germany, and in their job perspectives. Therefore, a small sample size enables the researcher to bring forward the variety of cases, the diversity of meanings, showing the differences in strategies for forming and maintaining friendships. Still, the comparison of the 11 cases also bears some similarities, which give insights into the sociological value of friendships among Germans in Denmark.

3.2.3 Semi-structured interviews: advantages and challenges

Deeming the case study design with the conduct of semi-structured interviews as most appropriate is not only based on ontological and epistemological reasons per se, which automatically would lead to one single method being the most correct one. Friendship could equally well be -- or even more fully -- investigated by employing ethnographic methods, e.g., *friendship as method* (Tillmann-Healy 2003). Tillmann-Healy argues, *friendship as method* holds the advantage of researching friendship "with the practices, at the pace, in the natural contexts, and with an ethic of friendship" (ibid:729).

Choosing to interview the respondents instead was the researcher's conscious choice based on the time frame available. Limitations in time make it difficult to conduct full-fledged ethnography, which indeed would have been the most desired method due to its advantages and the personal nature of friendship: Investigating friendship through interviews holds the handicap of asking respondents to open up and disclose intimate knowledge to an unfamiliar researcher in an interview situation which, according to Kvale and Brinkmann, is characterized by asymmetrical power relations: Since the interviewer among others has the monopoly of interpreting the narrated, respondents may try to display themselves in as positive ways as possible (2009:51). Through this impression management negative interpretations of the interviewees' social relations shall be prevented.[6]

Still, semi-structured interviews have the advantage of meeting the respondents at the place chosen by them, to chat over a cup of coffee and to show that the researcher is not an unidentified 'expert' behind a questionnaire as is the case for

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[6] For a detailed description of impression management see Goffman 1990.

research employing a survey design in which questionnaires are distributed electronically. While that method is better equipped to gather a representative picture of the investigated, the chosen approach is fitted to gain deeper and more personal insights. The researcher herself has a similar background as the interviewees themselves, and having the chance to introduce herself and disclose information during the interviews, the researcher believes that she was able to establish a setting, in which she was not seen as the 'expert', but a conversation partner with a specific interest in the friendships of the other. In some instances, the interviewees even invited the researcher directly to their homes, which is truly appreciated. All interview settings were thus familiar to the interviewees, enabling them to feel comfortable. This way, the quality of the interviews was ensured even if interviews, by definition are instrumental conversations aiming to elicit knowledge to answer the given research questions (ibid.).

3.2.4 Interview implementation

Despite interviews being an instrumental conversation, preparations were taken to allow the participants be at ease during the interviews. As explained, the interview setting was chosen by the participants, guaranteeing familiarity and comfort with the place. Prior to the interview, the respondents were informed about the approximate length of the interview, the audio-recording of the talk, and assured of absolute anonymity. Likewise, they were offered a sample of the finished paper, which would give them the opportunity to react on the use of direct quotes and comment on the thesis in general.

An interview guide was used, containing open-ended questions for encouraging the interviewee to talk as freely as possible. Naturally, the interview guide follows the Adams and Blieszner conceptual model for friendship research, outlining those questions through which answers to the research questions are obtained.[7] For each interview, the point of departure was the interviewees' motivations for coming to Denmark and their life situations in Germany. This seemingly easy question was always answered in complex narrations, opening up for further questions about their

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[7] See appendix A. Note that the analytical dimensions were removed for the interview and only serve for illuminating the connection between research questions, theoretical dimensions and interview questions. For a similar approach see Bak Jørgensen (2009).

lives and ultimately, their friendships. These questions where first posed when the researcher had assessed that the interviewee had given an exhaustive answer and a so-called 'turning-point' in the conversation was reached, providing the opportunity to ask into directions set out by the interview guide. While the interviews varied in the degree to which they finally constituted a free-floating dialogue, none of the respondents were reluctant to disclose information, in the same way as the researcher information about herself (for similar approaches see Foley & Valenzuela 2005, Kvale 1994).

Creating a dialogue despite the semi-structured interview guide, the interview contains elements of discursive interviewing: The participants are seen as experts of themselves, who are able to validate the researcher's interpretation of the mediated information either during or after the interview (Hopf 1995:179). This validation has sometimes been asked as part of the interview in form of summaries or as part of resulting questions. At other times, the interviewees asked for a more thorough explanation of the theory underlying this study after the interview had ended. During elaborations on this issue, the researcher's perceptions and interpretations were sought and were clarified and validated communicatively by the interviewee. The interview hence becomes even more dialogical, giving the interviewees the opportunity to correct eventual misunderstandings and expound on their opinions. Likewise, communicative validation is a great benefit for the researcher in terms of research validity (see section 3.4).

3.2.6 The relation of theoretical training, assumptions and method

As pointed to in the conclusion of the theoretical considerations, effort was made to avoid working with implicit assumptions. Making assumptions explicit enabled the researcher to bracket them during the interview rather than being guided by them implicitly. The reasons for this approach shall now be given.

Presenting qualitative methods of inquiry, Hopf (1995) points to the expectation of interpretative social inquiry following the *principle of openness*, which demands "that the theoretical structuring of the research object is put aside until a structuring of the research object has emerged through the research subjects" (Hoffmann-Riem

1980 in Hopf 1995:180, own translation). The principle thus means that hypotheses are abandoned during the process of data generation and gathering. It also implies a preference for approaching the research object without any preconceived theory since this may limit the researcher's understanding of relevant topics communicated by the research subject (Hopf 1995:180f).

The choice for getting well acquainted with the friendship literature prior to the interviewing thus seems to run counter to the principle of openness. But, firstly, this study is of descriptive-explorative character and does not aim to test or generate theory. To explore the topic, it was deemed necessary to gain insight into existing literature, since this is the only way that gaps in literature and opportunities for contributing to the research field could be identified. Secondly, a suspension of theory does not necessarily correspond to research practices, since the researcher may need to justify the research motivation to the research subjects. Being able to explain the motivational and theoretically informed background may give the researcher the status that allows him or her to investigate personal topics that otherwise are closed categories for strangers. Knowledge on the theory and the conscious choices taken proved to be helpful for this study, especially, in settings where the interviewees themselves were acquainted with academic research.

Thirdly, abandoning explicit hypotheses may result to distorting of the results by implicit hypotheses, since they remain unspoken and opaque (Flick 1995:151). Peer-review is hindered due to a lack of transparency. Finally, the researcher agrees with Malinowski, who put it as follows:

> Good training in theory, and acquaintance with its latest results, is not identical with being burdened with 'preconceived ideas.' If a man sets out an expedition, determined to prove certain hypotheses, if he is incapable of changing his views constantly and casting them off ungrudgingly under the pressure of evidence, needless to say that his work will be worthless. But the more problems he brings with him into the field, the more he is in the habit of moulding his theories according to facts, and of seeing facts in their bearing upon theory, the better he is equipped for the work. Preconceived ideas are pernicious in any scientific work, but *foreshadowed problems* are the main endowment of a scientific thinker, and these problems are first revealed to the observer by his theoretical studies (1922/1984 cited in Stake 2005:461).

The interview guide has therefore been established in close connection with the theory, with each question corresponding to a part of the theoretical model. However, these theoretical categories were removed for the interview, and attempt was made to interview the respondents with what Flick calls "gleichschwebende Aufmerksamkeit" (equally weighted attention, Flick 1995:150): The interview guide was rather meant to be a backup for those situations, where the story of the respondent came to halt or seemed completed. New questions for re-starting the narrations were then necessary. Aware that these questions also correspond to the theory, theoretical assumptions were answered, and the interviewee's story was elicited, with no ultimate goal other than the understanding of his/her situation. This paved the way for new patterns and topics to emerge despite a theoretical preconception of the topic.

3.3 Data analysis

The method chosen for the analysis is based on the overall methodological approach: The Adams and Blieszner conceptual framework for friendship research (1994) has been employed as an outline for developing the interview guide as per parts of the framework. The interviews are analysed within this framework by employing qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis differs form content analysis in that content analysis is usually employed in quantitative research since it "seeks to quantify content in terms of predetermined categories and in a systematic and replicable manner" (Bryman 2008:275). As this study is of qualitative nature, qualitative content analysis corresponds better to the actual approach for data generation and analysis:

> [Qualitative content analysis aims] to be systematic and analytic but not rigid. Categories and variables initially guide the study, but others are allowed and expected to emerge during the study, including an orientation to *constant discovery* and *constant comparison* of relevant situations, settings, styles, images, meanings, nuances (Altheide 1996 in Bryman 2008:531, original emphasis).

Being guided by the theoretical framework creates consistency between theory and the researched, and increases research validity. Likewise, the researcher sought to generate sensitivity and open mindedness, and already during the interview period, topics emerged that had not been previously anticipated as important.

A revision and adaptation of the interview guide was then undertaken -- resembling fine-tuning, not complete alteration. For example, the use of IP-telephony or programmes like Skype was anticipated; however, the role of using social media as *Facebook* and its equivalents was later added in the interview guide. Likewise, theory touching upon this topic was identified to backup the empirical material to create consistency between theory and empirical data. The aim of this abductive approach is not to test a certain theory, nor to build theory based on the empirical data (for a similar approach see Lund Thomsen 2006:69f). Instead, the going back and forth between theory and empirical findings during the process of collecting data allowed categories to emerge out of the data and the meaning of friendship for migrant workers is thus explored in a comprehensive manner (Bryman 2008:276). Moreover, the conceptual framework has shown to be comprehensive and non-exclusive to emerging topics since they, in one or the other way relate to personal characteristics, behavioral motif, friendship patterns and the structural and cultural context.

Analysis of the data always already started during the interviews: The design and high degree of familiarity with the interview guide enabled the researcher to identify topics according to the Adams and Blieszner conceptual framework for friendship research. For in-depth analysis, the interviews were first listened to and subsequently transcribed for obtaining a general, then a closer sense of the data. Due to a change towards this method of data analysis, all but two interviews were fully transcribed. The other two are analyzed using thematic analysis, wherein the researcher listened to the interviews three times and identified important quotes. Since this approach did not turn out to be more time-efficient, it was decided to transcribe all interviews[8]. Moreover, full transcripts also enhance transparency of the research process and increase the researcher's comprehension of the interview tremendously. Full transcripts thus have the advantage that they instantaneously provide topics within their communicative context facilitating an easy selection of relevant quotes. Out of the emerging picture that the transcripts reflect, important topics and citations were identified and categorized according to the theoretical framework. The stages of analysis thus comprise:

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[8]   Note that quotations from the interview with Amelie are referred to by indicating line numbers in the interview transcript. Quotations of other respondents are given using time references of the interview record.

1) Analysis during the interview: Adaptation of interview guide and backup theory.

2) Transcription of interviews.

3) Identification of answers to questions laid out in the interview guide. Categorization according to the conceptual framework.

4) Identification of themes not yet covered by the interview guide, incorporation into theoretical framework.

5) Division into friendships in Germany and Denmark to highlight differences and similarities of friendships in these countries and flows of social capital.

6) Comparison of the 'meaning of friendship' across interviews considering age, civil status, occupational status and future perspectives.

7) Reaching conclusions.

Comparing the interviews is done with view to establishing commonalities in the very different stories of the migrant workers. This is an important task to be fulfilled for establishing the informative power of the study, despite generalizations as such neither being intended nor achieved.

3.4 Reflections on reliability, validity and generalization

The importance of transparency and explicitness of the research process have been underscored several times in this study. This effort at transparency is done with view to make this study valid and thus reliable. Considerations on validity, reliability and generalizability are now explored more fully.

The point of departure for establishing validity and reliability has to be the recognition of these two concepts originating from a positivist school of thought, where, validity is concerned with "the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research" (Bryman 2008:32). Reliability relates to whether a repetition of researching the same phenomenon would lead to the same results if the same methods were applied (Kvale 1994:428). These conceptualizations of validity and reliability have a predominant value in quantitative research.

In the present qualitative study, validity and reliability need to be paraphrased and viewed as consisting of transparency (reliability) making research trustworthy (valid). Transparency, or dependability:

> entails ensuring that complete records are kept of all phases of the research process – problem formulation, selection of research participants, fieldwork notes, interview transcripts, data analysis decisions and so on – in an accessible manner (Bryman 2008:378).

Decisions and motivations for choosing to investigate the area as well as emerging assumptions have been spelled out in the previous chapter. Likewise, this chapter clarifies the motivation behind the explicit and implicit choices made during the research process, being written down in a consistent and accessible manner. Furthermore, interview transcripts in the original language (German) are found in Appendix C. Translated quotes are used in the analysis with reference to the original wording to avoid a loss of meaning. In this way, peers are able to review all stages of the research and to replicate this study, if desired.

The question of how this piece of qualitative study can be claimed valid has only been partly answered. Justifications of validity are connected with the question whether a method investigates what it has set out to investigate (Kvale 1994:233). As outlined in section 3.2.6, attempt had been made to create consistency between theory and the interview guide. This consistency is upheld by allowing the empirical analysis to be mainly guided by the theoretical framework that abductively is adapted to also include emerging topics brought forward by the interviewees. Furthermore, research and its conclusions are usually estimated true and valid if they are conducted objectively.

It is worth mentioning Kvale's three different aspects of objectivity: Firstly, objectivity as "the freedom from bias" (ibid:73) cannot be obtained in this study, since the researcher is in a similar position as the interviewees. Recognizing and talking about similar experience constitute pre-conceptions of each others' situation and is even deemed necessary in a methodological approach that aims to create dialogue. Within the dialogue, the researcher found herself taking the interviewee's side, but this rather constituted a process of understanding than of distorting findings, as she endeavoured to elicit the interviewee's voice and self-understanding.

The researcher's influence on situation on the study is mainly reflected in the choice of topic, in understanding the interviewees' narrations, and investigating side tracks. Since the data generation and the analysis are guided by theory, biases have been controlled.

Secondly, objectivity is obtained through dialogical intersubjectivity referring to the mutual agreement of an understanding of a narration. To validate the findings, in situ analyses were proposed to the interviewees in form of summaries of the narrations with questions on whether the researcher had correctly understood the narration. Communicative validation with interviewees recognizes the interview being intersubjective communication: Interpretations are mediated and negotiated communicatively, and knowledge can be obtained from dialogue rather than from non-human realities (Kvale 1994:429). Consequently, the researcher attains objectivity by acting adequately to the research subject. The chosen research method presupposes an understanding of truth existing in the linguistically constituted and interpersonally mediated social world. Arguing with Kvale's words, "the qualitative research interview as linguistic, interpersonal and hermeneutic method [becomes] a more objective method in sociological than in natural scientific methods, which are developed with view to a non-human field" (ibid:74).

4. Analysis

In this chapter, the analysis of the 11 interviews of German migrant workers is presented. The structure of the analysis is guided by the Adams and Blieszner conceptual framework for friendship research (cf. section 2). Due to research focus on maintenance of friendships in Germany and formation of friendships in Denmark, differences and similarities in the meaning of friendships on each side of the boarder, the analysis is divided into two parts. Part 1 concentrates on the interviewees' friendships in Germany, which are presented along their commonalities. This part starts out with the definition of friendship as provided by the interviewees. It does not highlight in-depth personal characteristics and the behavioral motif, since these were mainly subject of the interview when talking about friendships in Denmark. Short reference to general personal characteristics and structural disposition can be found in the first part under friendship structures, and at length in the second part of the analysis.

Structural dispositions, coupled with the social and cultural context, were found to have a vested impact on friendship formation in Denmark. Therefore, the interviewees were classified according to their common traits into groups mainly for the second part of the analysis. The groups are[9]:

1) Teachers Kristin and Amelie. Both are young, in a relationship with a German partner, no children, speak Danish and want to stay in Denmark.

2) (Elderly) nurses Grit and Iris. Both have family in Germany, travel back and forth, and have explicitly sought a job in Denmark. They speak Danish fluently and would never voluntarily go back to Germany to work.

3) Academics Axel, Björn, Xaviar (and Alexandra). Highly mobile individuals in the past, partly with family in Denmark. Denmark may be one 'station' in the life course.

4) Employees at a multinational Nicole, Michelle and Norbert. Young, partly found their partners at the workplace. Intentions of moving on after a work period of 3-5 years.

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[9] A short presentation on each participant can be found in the Appendix B.

These categories are established along the finding that workplace structures pose the main influence on the present friendship patterns in Denmark. Likewise, structures applying for the different job positions in Germany are similar for members of each category, supporting the claim that structural influences prevail over personal preferences, as these are only a choice within certain structures. Still, since not all members of one category work with the same employer, differences in friendship patterns occur within the categories. It might seem equally reasonable to categorize the interviewees according to age, gender, or their place of settlement in Denmark. This would, however, skew the picture on workplace structures being the most prevalent site of engagement, where acquaintances and friends are made. Still, there is some overlap of characteristics across the categories, as can be seen with the categorization of Alexandra into the groups of academics: She has a high academic education, but due to her husband's employment, she would also fit into group 4.

The second part of the analysis presents the particularities of each group according to the influence that personal characteristics and the context have on friendship patterns, i.e., friendship structures, phases and processes. In this way an attempt is made to highlight how different structures lead to different friendship patterns, supporting the argument that friendship cannot be perceived to rely solely on personal preferences. Instead, the impact of the environment is decisive for the development of personal relations with diverging effects on the maintenance of migrant workers in Denmark.

4.1 Friendship in Germany

4.1.1 Defining friendship

In their introduction in their book "Adult Friendship", Adams and Blieszner state that if one asks a group of people what friendship means to them, one would almost get as many answers as there are people in the group (1992:1). Still, this thesis exactly asked this question, and while respondents emphasized nuances of their friendship differently, they agreed on a definition independently from each other. Thus, a friend is a trustworthy person, who is committed to the friendship to the same degree as the interviewee, and who listens to everything or just shares silence or a beer. One

can meet them spontaneously and informally, but the friend neither holds a grudge after several months without contact. And even if the literature predicted a tendency of men to mention the importance of shared activities, all respondents showed a preference for people who they could talk with exactly in that way that matched their needs. Despite Axel stating that: "Well, sometimes [we don't talk] at all. Sometimes we drink. Then you don't have to say anything" (14:32), male interviewees also rated highly the possibility to talk in depth:

> If really exciting things happen in life, special life situations are ahead, for having somebody who you really can discuss with, whether you have the right perspective on a situation in the moment or not. Whether it really is a good idea to go to Denmark now, or whether it wouldn't be better to see whether you stay in Germany. It's really at these decisive points in life, where you really have to think a long time about what you'll do next, to have those you trust, with whom you really can discuss (Xaviar 36:37).

The definition of a friend thus reflects how literature generally defines a best friend (Pahl 2000, Hays 1985, McGinnis 1979), as this sort of friend is emotionally closest, receives most in-depth information and is highly trusted. The interviews therefore generally concentrated rather on friendship dyads than on networks in both countries, though respondents in group 4 showed a tendency of having a bigger network of persons in a similar situation in Denmark than others.

Some interviewees also view family relatives as friends, and it must be assumed that similar processes are at play when choosing friends among family members, as they use these persons for the same purposes than other close friends. For instance, Iris mentioned her son as a close friend because: "with him, I can talk about everything" (38:58). But whereas Björn also views his older brother as a close friend, Alexandra would not mention her older sister as a friend. She explains, that the emotional connection was fading as youths, because her older sister led a different life, i.e. she was already in a different stage in her life. Likewise, Michelle would not regard her sister as a friend in the same token as her other friends: Whereas she describes her friends as unproblematic, her sister might react capriciously, if she does not receive a call or as much attention as she expects (47:48). These examples show that it is possible for people to have friends among family members, but that this always has been a voluntary choice. As soon as interviewees regarded the relationship to family

members as implying some form of duty, these were described as family instead of friends. Despite some interviewees mentioning family members as friends, they were asked to focus on those ones, who they would regard as their best friends excluding kinship. This small detour was thus only to show that including family into friendship research may be empirically founded and justified.

Both best and close friends tend to be persons whom the respondents have known for very long time, though circumstances for getting acquainted differ greatly. The time aspect also explains why best friends were only found in Germany, whereas close friends and acquaintances could be found in Denmark and Germany. Some respondents reported having best and close friends that they met during primary, high school or university. Others became friends in the village that they had lived for many years. Some friends stayed at the place where the friendship geographically originates from, others moved on, too. An interesting point was made by, among others, Björn, who mentioned: "It is also mobility of the others, isn't it" (49:46), referring to the structural German context in which mobility in some jobs is more required than in others. For some respondents, it was thus very natural to have friends at a long distance already in Germany, as Björn's continued explanation shows: All his friends now live in other German or European cities than the one where they got acquainted. The national setting thus is not a guarantee for compiling an ever-growing circle of close friends, and an international setting might not be to so great a difference.

4.1.2 Friendship structures in Germany

The definition of friendship, and the emphasis on time being a major feature facilitating the friendship to grow, implied that most respondents named one best friend, and an average of three to four close friends. Interestingly, none of the respondents would talk about these close friendships as being part of a network or clique. Still, particularly in those cases where interviewees have friends who live in a small village, these friends mostly know each other and are linked with each other. For example, Nicole, Norbert, Kristin, Grit, and Iris report that some of their best and close friends know each other, that they eventually meet together, and that they exchange news about each other. There is a tendency to have network structures

among close friends, which were not regarded as a network as such. The differentiation between close friends and networks might be due to different semantic perceptions on networks: Either, networks are seen as a group of people homogeneous in their status as friend towards the interviewee (implying that in this study, interviewees used each dyad within the network differently, with each dyad being a close friend in a special way rather than belonging to a homogeneous network on close friendship level). Or, networks are perceived as existing on a lower friendship level (acquaintanceship), so that close friendship is more special than the general bulk of people in one's network. For example, Nicole refers to networking at work. She found her current job through her workplace in Germany, and through her contacts within the company, she was promoted in Denmark. None of the contacts leading to promotion were referred to as close friends. Research on what networking means to individuals might shed light on different perceptions of rather operational than friendship-based networks. Since in this study, focus rather lay with best and close friendship dyads in Germany, no deeper insight has been gathered on network structures.

Concerning the structure of friendship dyads in terms of power relations, solidarity and homogeneity, it was initially found that that there is no imbalance of power within existing friendships. In contrast, power imbalances were decisive for impeding friendship formation. An example is given by Xaviar, who was promoted in city X in Germany and moved to city Y for conducting his habilitation. Whereas he found his still best friends during his time in city X, he did not find friends in city Y. Asked for the reason of this difference, he mentioned lack of time in city Y, and adds:

> [In city Y] I was the supervisor of [colleagues who had just finished their diploma degree], and then I find it difficult. Too much gets mixed up, I think. If you have to evaluate their work or just have to do some straight talking when deliverables don't come for the projects. Then I think it's better to have a bigger distance. But [in city X] we were quasi on the same level; we were all PhD candidates […] (21:08).

Authority therefore does not match with friendship, and explains why interviewees did not have problems establishing friendships with colleagues as long as they held the same position.[10]

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[10] Friendship among colleagues is a topic to be returned to in the section on friendships in Denmark.

Solidarity was found to be highest among best friends, where the degree of disclosure and intimacy was rated highest. As forecast by literature and as mentioned before, women valued in-depth conversations higher than men (Fischer & Narus 1981, Hays 1985, Martin 1997). Topics range from current events and developments in one's own life. Inquiries about family members or joint acquaintances are also issues.

In contrast, men tended to mention joint activities with their friends, but even though meeting for instance Norbert's friends would imply some sports, he normally meets up with only one friend, and gathers with the group of friends in the evening. In this way, exchange of information with best and close friends can be assumed to be higher than with the general network and acquaintances. This is also supported by Björn, who distinguishes between mates and friends as follows: "Mainly, I think, that you also talk more about private issues. That's the most important difference" (31:24). While men stress joint activities with friends more than women, both evaluate their friends according to the *opportunity* to talk about private issues. Corroborating the findings of Mazur (1989), the interviewees also pointed to their best and close friends when asked which contacts satisfied them most. The subjective outcome of friendship, the flow of resources and satisfaction yielding well-being, is thus the same for both sexes.

Looking at the third feature of the structure of friendship dyads -- homogeneity -- it can be said that the interviewees' friendships in Germany were homophile regarding nationality, gender, and educational background. Already in Haug's representative study of inter-ethnic friendship relations, such friendships were rather an exception than the rule among German respondents (Haug 2003:722). While Haug does not provide any explanation for this tendency of Germans mainly finding friends among their own national and ethnic groups, it must be assumed in this study that homogeneity of nationality and educational background is based on the point in the interviewees' lives when the friendships were formed. With all interviewees except two having lived in villages or towns, nationalities in schools, universities, or the neighbourhood must mainly have been German, but the interviews provide no clear evidence. Furthermore, friends who were found through educational channels

obviously are about the same age, as the German educational system regulates entry age. Those friends found through the neighbourhood or during vacations differ in age, but were at the point of friendship formation in approximately the same life stages. Both Iris and Grit mention that their friends had children at the same age as their own children, and in this way they quickly became acquainted and eventually friends. Homogeneous friendships can thus be traced back to structural dispositions, including gender, as exemplified by the conversation with Nicole:

> M: Is there a reason why you rather become friends with women?
> N: No, I don't know, generally here and in the USA I first found contact to men. And also today I still go more for lunch with them then with others; they are such nice and superficial contacts. They are none, who I would confide in. No, that's really such a nice and open friendship. But with girls it's really ok, when I have a bad time, when I have problems, then I would go to them.
> M: Because you feel better understood?
> N: Yes, and maybe better taken care of. (24:09)

Still, women finding friends among women is only a tendency, not a rule, as best and close friends also include men for Kristin, Iris and Amelie. Structural dispositions thus always are the frame within which interviewees became friends with those who they preferred personally.

It is interesting to note that best friends' mobility or non-mobility did not diminish the value they have for the interviewees. This consists of a reinforcement and negotiation of the interviewees' current identity, whereas close immobile friends were less regarded as reinforcing ones current identity. Instead, their value lies in the interviewee's attachment to a geographical place, through which most interviewees derive a part of their identity. This account is supported by Nicole, who demarcates her best friend from her close friends, who all live in the same place:

> Kerstin principally is my best friend, and the other three are a little bit like, born in a village, lived in a village, and died in a village. [...] They are not so outgoing, adventurous... (14:36).

The note on her close friends not being so outgoing and adventurous is important in the sense that Nicole regards herself as such. Her close friends are thus dissimilar from her in a certain way that impedes access to the category of 'best friend'. Denied access to the category of 'best friend' cannot be ascribed to immobility as such, since her best friend also lives in the same village; instead, shared similarities and

reinforcement of one's current identity seem to be the key.

In the same way, Grit talks about her best friend Henriette, with whom she worked together in Germany, searched for a job in Denmark and is now living together with:

> With her, I can talk about everything, there are no taboo issues. [...] We have had very many similarities in our lives. And because so many things have been so similar, we understand them (34:18).

She contrasts her very similar best friend with her very close ones, who do not understand her current life situation and identity:

> These are very good friends, but they just don't understand some issues, because they don't know them. Divorce, I never understood it myself, when somebody got separated [...] I probably wouldn't if I were still married (1:06:57).

What these quotations show is that close, immobile friends are not 'only' close friends due to their immobility, which might be part of the reason, but mainly because they do not reinforce the interviewees' current identity in the same way as a best friend. But because these friends also share an important part of the interviewees' identity, they are close friends, and would not be acquaintances. However, through their immobility, they provide a fixed point in the interviewees' lives, as Michelle puts it:

> Somehow they are part of home, where I grew up. ... yes they have also shaped me, it was my teenage years, when we went out for first time... parties, celebrating... yes, that was with these people. And now they are part of me, it's a nice experience and it's still the same, when I am there. These are important people (38:10).

Besides being part of one's identity, some interviewees described their best and close friends in Germany as a backbone, a net, someone to come back to in the case they had to go back:

> For me, the friendships that have endured the longest time, from university, or primary school, they are the basis for me, where I know, you can always return. If this doesn't work out, you'll land softly. And through this basis, the knowledge that you have these friends, even if it is just a handful, gives you the strength to dare it. [...] In this case it has given me the strength to say, ok I try it. [...] Therefore I value my friends pretty much, because they strengthen my backbone, because they have given me the security, ok, you can do it (Nicole, 58:13).

> I mean, I know that if now something really bad would happen, I became redundant [...] and we had to go back to Germany head over heels, we

could go to [two best friends] and live there the first 3 months (Xaviar 43:11).

These quotations particularly show that well established friendships support migrant workers in migrating. In case of unexpected return, they are *confident* that they have a point to return. This way, social support in form of an exchange of help and assistance by friends may not necessarily have been given yet, but *confidence* in the friends providing prospective shelter and information is the form of social capital flowing among the German friends (Haug 2003). The benefit of this form of social capital lies with the creation of security in the migration process that is unpredictable in its outcomes and friendship is an asset supporting migrants in their decision to migrate.

Interestingly, social capital is derived mostly from single friendship dyads to best or close friends rather than friendship networks; at least, reference is more often made to friendship dyads. One exception is Nicole who got the job offer in Denmark, and right after talking about the opportunity with her parents, she wrote an e-mail to her friends, asking for their opinion (58:05). Asking friends about their opinion surely has an emotional value. But it should not be neglected that the migration can be smoothened, as this mail to friends opened a channel for receiving information on the moving including, advice. In other contexts, one could even talk about risks of migration being diminished due to advice and information received from friends. Therefore, friendship has not only a personal value, but is valuable on societal level, as it supports members of our society to move and to be able to return. To gain new experience and skills that the EU is seeking to support (EC 2003), friends take part in the decision-making process and should therefore not be a neglected dimension in contexts of work migration.

4.1.3 Friendship phases

Friendship phases were categorized into formation, maintenance and dissolution (cf. section 2.1.2.2). Some reference has already been made to friendship formation, as it has been shown that educational institutions or neighbourhoods often formed the setting for finding friends (for instance groups 1, 3, and 4). Likewise, children were a decisive factor for getting acquainted with people (e.g., Alexandra, group 2). These

findings show that each individual's structural disposition is densely coupled with personal preferences, since only some of the people in a neighbourhood or school become one's friends. Likewise, the structural context is a decisive factor, particularly in maintaining friendships.

Friendship maintenance is affected by the time available to the interviewees. As Grit explains, the highly competitive labour market situation with high pressure at the workplace influenced her insofar as she retreated from her friendships:

> We had a time when it was not so close anymore, because I simply was so bound by work. We had this company, this self-employment; we had over 10 years a 24h standby-duty that you have to provide. [During this time] I retreated a lot. It first became close again with divorce from my husband, because I had a really bad time then. I had incredible support, when normally you would have thought, well, you didn't take care of [your friends] all this time [...] One had neglected it, because you simply didn't have the power and energy. You were happy to have a weekend off, and then you only thought, you have to replenish energies for the next 12 days ahead (31:02).

This example, though, also shows that best and close friendships have to be flexible already in a national setting. Friendships can experience turbulence in terms of growing closer, more distant, and closer again, as it also had been shown in the research by Becker et al. (2009:364). These turbulences seem to rely highly on the level of communication and reciprocal acts, not on proximity per se. As the example shows, Grit's friendships in Germany were formed within a village and developed to very close and best friendship levels, but due to the demanding work, she neglected her friendship despite proximity to friends. Friendships were revitalized and grew closer again when she communicated her needs.

This finding is also decisive in understanding how the interviewees maintain their friendships in Germany from Denmark. Most interviewees report e-mails and telephone conversations to be most important for upholding their long distance friendships. Frequency of contact varies from calling each on a daily basis to e-mailing each other once every six months. The interviewees all state that frequency of contact is not decisive, as Xaviar tells:

> I have this tactic that, if it's good friends, the friendship will last, and then it is not absolutely necessary to write an e-mail every 2 weeks, or to

call or something like that. And in general it's like we call each other regularly, which means once each half a year, we write e-mails regularly, depending on the events, whether something is ahead; for example now with the children it was a frequent seesaw between [friend A] and me, because she has 3 children by now. And then you can tap some experience from her. And we really try to visit each other once per year, what sometimes can be a little difficult. [Friend B] for example has been living with his wife in Japan the last 4 years, and we only have seen each other 2 times. But when we have been over there, we always arranged that we also could visit them (26:09).

Instead of frequency of contact, it is rather the long time that has bound people together, and this deep knowledge of each other leads to an awareness of the friendship being able to continue despite phases of dormancy. Norbert exemplified this by saying that he really believes that his best friends would stay his best friends if they had close to no contact through 5 years (48:47). And also Björn's two friends still count as his best friends even if they have less contact now due to their recent fatherhood, because he knows them "from my high school years, that is no problem" (35:07). In contrast, acquaintances are maintained rather accidentally, as Xaviar highlightes:

> I mean, if I am in [city X], I pop over for a coffee. [...] Then you chat about the people that you have known before, where all of them ended up, or so" (46:33).

Moreover, with acquaintances, contact is not maintained on a deep level, whereas with best friends, it is very deep even after long time without any sign of life:

> We talk about the last months, what has happened, what is new, probably about many things in short versions, but then clearly see the whole exchange. And at some point, I think when each has been talking for 10 minutes, we get lost in details, which is like as if we had talked 2 days ago (33:21).

The same was reported by Alexandra, Amelie and Michelle, who stress that they immediately have the feeling of being close to each other as soon as they talked together again despite the geographical distance.

It has already been mentioned that e-mails and calling each other are the preferred means of maintaining contact. One respondent mentioned blogging as a possibility to keep many people updated, but as it is very time-consuming, it was not an implemented activity. Likewise, Facebook and equivalents of this kind of social

media were not used for maintaining contact with best and close friends. Some of the respondents reject using these social media due to controversies of data protection. Others only used them for maintaining professional contacts. Again, others used them for following the lives of friends and acquaintances, but none of them for maintaining their important friendships. And even though Michelle for example is connected with all her friends via Facebook, she explains:

> I am not somebody, who displays half of her life on Facebook. If I post something, it's only because something important happened. I rather have a look, what's going on with the others. [...] Facebook rather plays an inferior role. If Facebook didn't exist, I could well stay in contact with my friends over Skype and by e-mail. It's rather like, when somebody of my old school class has married and is now advanced in pregnancy, it is interesting to see the pictures. And then I talk with [my 2 best friends] over phone, ah, he, have you seen the pictures on Facebook? It's nice conversation topics that arise out of it. But I could maintain contact with my friends without it (59:45).

This quotation demonstrates that best and close friends are maintained through individual, direct channels, as Skype and telephone conversations. The importance of Skype or other means of IP-telephony was valued by all participants highly, since it allows them to stay in touch for low costs. In this way, modern communication technology is indispensable for maintenance of long distance friendships, corroborating findings by Adams and Blieszner (1992) and Becker et al. (2009). For group 2, maintaining friendships in Germany did not pose any problems, since they are still travelling home very often, and thus meet their friends personally. However, being at home is sometimes rather stressful, since family obligations and friendship maintenance now have to be achieved in short time periods (Iris 55:18).

Using modern communication technologies and meeting up whenever possible thus shows that geographical proximity is not perceived as problematic. And even respondents' geographical proximity to their friends would not imply that they saw each other more often, as Alexandra explains. City size and different obligations in everyday life also impede meetings in a proximate area. The difference now is that *opportunities* for sharing activities are fewer. Since their friendships mean so much to them, they would nevertheless not give them up:

> No, why should I give them up? They are there, you know. [...] I have never weighed good up against bad, sense against nonsense, I have

never thought, or, I have never made a plus-minus list on, whether I need [my best friend] or not. She is there, you know. And I think that still is the point: Despite the huge distance we know from each other that we are there for each other. No matter how big the distance is (1:39:15).

Because there is so many that connects you. I could not imagine, if I changed my location every 3 years, that I would build up friendships every 2-3 years at every location and showed a cold shoulder to the others. I think you build up a friendship, because you like each other, because you have something to tell each other, and you want to do things together, and that doesn't discontinue over the distance (Norbert 45:04).

These quotes also explain why none of the interviewees reported good friendships fading away because of the long distance. Friendships that faded away did so because of diverging ways of life:

[...] because you feel, you don't have anything anymore [in common]. Yes, many from that circle of friends were not employed, mother and housewife, it really got on my wick. [...] And I only thought, no, that doesn't fit in the moment. [...] It then faded away (Gabi 1:01:10).

The process of fading away is described as a mutual recognition of the mismatch, as Kristin reasons about a similar episode:

Funnily enough, it also came from his side. Like, you had less and less contact. You still met at parties and the like, but not with him [only] (1:43:28).

Friendship dissolution thus has never occurred due to distance, but due to insurmountable dissimilarities preventing functional similarity and commitment to develop in early friendship stages. These were also found in Becker et al. (2009) and Adams and Blieszner (1994) to be decisive features preventing friendships of dissolution instead of proximity or geographical distance.

4.1.4 Friendship processes

Friendship processes have already been mentioned in the previous paragraphs on friendship phases and structure, showing that all three parts of friendship patterns are tightly intertwined. Even though some quotations already comprised the positive terms with which interviewees regarded their best friends, they do not capture the vitality and sparkle in their eyes, with which they spoke about them. Asked about which friendships yield most satisfaction, all interviewees pointed to their best and closest friends. Amelie described this feeling as: "It only applies with [my best friend], that I have the feeling, one has received something and that does me good"

(523f), and Michelle adds to this picture the fact that friends make life worth living. These quotations show that covert internal evaluations of the friendships must be positive, since the affective processes result in positive evaluations of best and close friendships.

As already mentioned in section 4.1.2, all interviewees pointed to their best and closest friends in Germany as the friendships that satisfied them the most, since they have mutual understanding, deeply-rooted due to the long time they have known each other. For example, Michelle stresses that her German friends know her history, whereas Danish friends only know the everyday-life events. Though she mentions that it might not be necessary to know every detail of her past life to get an understanding of which kind of person she is in general, Michelle also argues that those persons who know her family and her background have a different insight into her as a person. In her example of taking her partner with her to Germany for vacations (18:28), Michelle highlights that experiencing where she comes from gives her partner another understanding of her, an understanding, which her best friend and neighbour in Germany already has had through all her friendship. From this episode, which is found in the other interviews in similar ways, it becomes visible that best friends confirm more parts of the interviewee's identity than the current, job-related identity which is often supported by Danish friends. Depending on which other identities are most important to the interviewees, best friends are able to correspond to them and are highly valued for it. As they have a deep understanding of the interviewees, it must be assumed that they provide them with the feeling of being a person of integrity. In fact, those asked also said that they do not feel as split persons even though they recognized that they lead very different lives in Germany and Denmark. Best and close friends in Germany thus were estimated as understanding the interviewee, reinforcing past and current identity traits, and having sufficient and most satisfying contact with the interviewee. Due to the reported great satisfaction with these friendships, they were also estimated as being stable despite the distance between the friends. As described in the integrative model of friendship research by Adams & Blieszner (1994), positive cognitive and affective assessments of the friendships determine the behavioral processes manifesting itself in highly satisfying interaction between best and close friends.

These interactions also comprise actions such as discussing important decisions (most interviewees) or spending holidays together (for instance Iris and Björn).

4.1.5 Conclusion on interviewees' friendships in Germany

Having analysed the interviewees' friendships in Germany, the following conclusion can be drawn based on the research questions (1) – (5): Firstly, it has been shown that structural predispositions highly influence friendship patterns today, because mobility is already part of a national setting in which some educational paths and jobs require at least national mobility. The interviewees made, nevertheless, rather sense of their friendships as relating to personal preferences (research question 1), since mobility and non-mobility were not regarded as problematic as long as these friends reinforced desired parts of the interviewees' identity. Asking for best and close friendships in Germany, interviewees identified friendship dyads rather than networks as holding those advantages, best and close friendships offer (research question 2). These advantages (research question 3) include the fact that the mentioned friendships have evolved over a long time period, a feature that explains why respondents and their friends have a very deep understanding of each other. Thus, friends take part in far-reaching decisions, and give the respondents the feeling of improving their well-being by providing them with the confidence of having a net that is there for them in case of unexpected return. Due to these advantages, they rate their friendships in Germany very positively: Research question (4) can thus be answered by highlighting that best and close friendships in Germany were assessed as deriving greatest satisfaction for respondents leading to the evaluation of these friendships as being stable and attuned to span the long distance. This durability is also facilitated by modern communication technologies, which are an advantage in the maintenance work that the interviewees conduct (research question 3): Modern communication technologies, particularly internet supported telephony, was reported as a cheap and easy-accessible means to maintain the friendship. Though all interviewees reported great satisfaction with these friendships, some mentioned it being a pity that they do not have the opportunity to meet as regularly as before. However, decrease or low frequency of actual meetings did not decrease satisfaction levels of these friendships. For the interviewees, the meaning of these friendships can be best summarized by pointing

to the effect they have (research question 5): Reinforcement of the interviewees' identity and provision of a security net in case of unexpected return or similar negative events can be said to be most important in a setting, where the migration process poses several uncertainties and unpredictable outcomes for the migrant workers. These friends thus are an indispensable asset to the interviewees, providing them with resources through which they support the interviewees' migration process. Strong friendships thus provide the basis for smoothening the migration process.

4.2 Friendships in Denmark

This second part of the analysis mainly concerns friendships in Denmark, as they differ according to the interviewees' occupational status. The analysis follows more rigidly the categorization into the previously presented four groups in order to highlight the impact of structural disposition and cultural influence on the interviewees' friendships and in this way to challenge the notion of friendship being a purely voluntarily enacted relationship as suggested by Pahl (2000). The analysis of each group internally follows the structure of the Adams and Blieszner conceptual framework for friendship research (cf. section 2.1).

4.2.1 Group 1 – Teachers in Denmark

Kristin and Amelie are both teachers in Denmark, but due to their very different structures at work, different opportunities for establishing friendships have emerged: Kristin works at a boarding school, where she stands in very frequent and close contact to her Danish colleagues. Thus, she has built up friendship relations with her colleagues who also helped her tremendously, for example in the beginning phase, when she autodidactically learned Danish:

> As I said, I think, I really have the greatest colleagues in the world whom I could ask for every possible mini-question, and whom I almost drove nuts because they couldn't explain to me many things (46:58).

Likewise, her colleagues now take part in her private life, as they have a countdown for Kristin's partner return from seafaring. Still, Kristin reasons: "Of course I have my colleagues, and they are really good friends, but none of them is such a good friend for me that I [could replace my German best friends]" (43:30).

Having friendships at the workplace but not close or best friends there, shows that Kristin's personal preferences are limited within her workplace structure, as she expounds: "[He] is simply too confused that I could lead [an intensive] friendship with him. We are best surfing friends" (1:10: 52). Summarizing the status of Kristin's friendships in Denmark, it can be said that she is satisfied with the friends she has, since she also rates independent sport activities very high. Still, the structural predisposition she finds herself affects actual friendships. In particular, she mentions age differences at work and at her sports club as a reason that hinder developing of friendships to closer levels. For example, one of her closest colleagues, Lone, shares several activities with Kristin when there is time for it. Lone, is however, in her early fifties, has children and little spare time:

> Lone is already a very involved person [in the city area]. She would never say, 'no I don't have time for you today', but it is also rare, and that's not because of me, that she says, I have time in the weekend, then we have to do something together. It's because t she has three children [...] (1:06:02).

Despite the workplace setting a frame for friendship formation, Kristin mentioned that having children and the rural location also limit the formation of friendships:

> But I think I lack children. I think, it is due to Western Jutland. I think it would have been different if I lived in [bigger cities in Denmark], where you are in the middle of the city, and where you go to clubs at night [...] It is easier to find friends there. For instance like you, when you are at university, where you deal a lot with people (43:02).

Kristin has thus made her structural disposition very much responsible for her friendship patterns in Denmark: Close cooperation and teamwork promotes the establishment of acquaintanceship and close friendship among Danish colleagues, but dissimilar age and life stages, as well as few facilities to meet similar people, inhibit the formation of new friendships that can eventually develop into best friendships in Denmark.

Similar results can be elicited from Amelie's story: Working as an external teacher who prepares lessons independently, she has limited contact with colleagues. Workplace structures with few interactions and dependability of the colleagues on each other thus seems to inhibit making of friends. Trying to understand why she has so few Danish friends, Amelie pointed to her structural disposition: Coming to

Denmark as an adult, and working in her position as external teacher, the opportunities for becoming a part of already existing friendship circles is limited to parties and the like, that do not lead to mutual interest and commitment so vital to friendship formation:

> Yes, I've already briefly been acquainted with a few Danes. And it's nice. But most often, they would have their own circle. It simply requires a certain extra effort, or you really have to be interested in me as a foreigner, in my story, to get involved with me. [...] Most of the friends I have here are foreigners, because you share with them the history, the experience how it is to be here with another language, another culture (104-110).

Getting rather acquainted with other foreigners instead of Danes is based on shared similarities with these persons. And just as it is very important for Amelie to be able to talk and exchange thoughts, she assumes that Danes might feel the same way about her, though her Danish has improved already. In this explanation, and as already described by Haug (2003), language is either the facilitator or barrier for finding friends (research question 3), being the important set that opens the door to acquaintanceship and friendship as the means to disclose information, create intimacy and to convey culturally appropriate behaviour.

Group 1 has extensively referred to their structural disposition of their workplace, family status and location, in which personal preferences are restricted to a limited set of persons to get acquainted (research question 1). This implies, that friendship structures are less well-established (research question 2), though both have few Danish friends in friendship dyads. Moreover, both reported that some of their friends were important for themselves and their partner, as Amelie explains about her Danish friend Tobias:

> So to say, always when one of us wants a third person or some aspect from outside, or when we are too boring for ourselves, then we use Tobias, or the other friends here [...] Because you are lonely, you turn in circles, you jeopardize your partnership if you only share everything with just one person. Because you are standing still, you miss input, things that you experience are lacking, or stories you hear, which you can also take into the partnership, but which also bring you a little further. [...] things are [still] missing despite these people, maybe except Tobias (417-419; 497-502).

This shows that friendship is not a purely voluntary relationship based on choice, because choice is restricted to workplace structures facilitating and equally

restricting friendships. Moreover, as Eve (2002) argues, friendship is not only an individual relationship, which is clearly reflected in the above quote: Interestingly, the friendships in Denmark were, to a higher degree, reported as needed to maintain other important relationships, mainly the partnership. This aspect was not mentioned in relation to German best friends, since they were only friends of the respondents.

There are two possible explanations for this phenomenon: Either respondents or their partners have in general fewer contacts with the environment (resulting in a stronger need for common friends providing new input), or, common friends in Germany were simply not mentioned as best and close friends, while they fulfil the same role of providing input. Still, it has to be recognized that best friends were used for the interviewees personally, whereas Danish close friends were of greater importance for the interviewees' partnership.

On the assessment of their Danish friendships (research question 4), friends are assessed in positive terms as parts of their life, necessary to provide input and sociability. Still, Danish friends range not on best friends levels, as Amelie mentions:

> A: I assume that I am not his best friend.
> M: But you are for [your German best friend]?
> A: Yes, and there I know that she talks about certain things only with me. That's not the case with Tobias, I am not his best friend, whom he tells everything. No way (403-409).

Amelie does not consider her closest Danish friend as best friend because she is not a best friend to him. In this quote, the importance of mutual commitment to grow even closer friends is visible, as it has also been shown in Kristin's relationship to Lone. The study of Becker et al. (2009) forecast commitment as the decisive factor for maintaining LD friendships. The present study emphasises that also geographically close friendships gain from mutual commitment for developing to close and best friendship levels.

Furthermore, lower friendship levels definitely yield less satisfaction, as Amelie explains:

> The incentive [to contact friends in Denmark] doesn't arise of the friendship itself yet, so that I would have the feeling, oh, nice, that's what

I need now, I call this person now. That's not really there yet (507-514).

There does not seem to be a clear-cut causality if low friendship levels facilitate the respondents' ongoing mobility of (in contrast to high friendship levels being an incentive to stay in Denmark, research question 5). Whereas both can be said to have friends in Denmark on similar friendship levels, Kristin feels better anchored in Denmark than Amelie, who said:

> [If I had to go from here in half a year due to my job or so], I would miss many things and I would be sorry having started something for 2½ years, and then I had to go again ... and also [despite] the friendships that I started, I could still go and wouldn't really miss many of the people. It's just the way it is. Also, for example, Trine and Hans have moved to [another Danish city], so that also goes away now. Tobias has now been away half a year, so... (690-696).

This quote shows that mobility indeed affects the assessment of a friendship's stability, supporting Gidden's statement of globalization pressuring personal relationships (1991). Mobility, however, does not hinder the respondents to establish new friendships, as they feel the need to do so. The claim that we become "nomad[s] of the mind" (Melucci 1989) without attachments to fixed places has thus not shown to hold true for group 1.

4.2.2 Group 2 – Nurses in Denmark

The answer on research question (1) for group 2 is similar to the one given in group 1: Workplace structures were a decisive factor in setting a frame for the behavioral motif, an opportunity structure for meeting friends: While both said that they are very open persons who easily find new contacts, both established friendships and acquaintances only among their Danish colleagues. The difference to group 1 lies in the opportunity structures, as the nurses have less opportunities to participate in associations, clubs or the like as they have evening duties, as Grit tells:

> Obligatory [activities] not at all, where you know, you have to go there. I tried it with the language school in [town]. In the mornings I then had to get at half past six up latest (54:53).

Again, the structural disposition limits opportunities for finding friends, who are found at the workplace. Both Grit and Iris have at least one Danish friend, and this friendship pattern is dissimilar from those in Germany, since friends there were found outside of workplaces, with friends knowing each other in network-like structures in the small towns they come from.

The three scenarios on the flow of social capital as sketched in section 2.1.2.1 on friendship structures, however, do not apply as rigidly (research question 2): Arguing for scenario (3), the nurses have better established friendships in Germany, and flows of social capital should be low in Denmark. While problems particularly in the beginning phase had to be overcome alone (see Iris 16:19 - 19:43), friends and colleagues at work provide sufficient help, at times, extraordinarily much, as in the case of Grit. She explains that she and her German friend wanted to live together in a flat that their joint Danish friend had found for them. A high deposit was required, and neither Grit nor her friend was able to raise the money in such a short time. Their friend helped them out, provided much of the interior, helped in moving-in, or, in a more recent example, provided her garden for a joint party with colleagues unknown to this friend (41:00 - 44:40). These examples show that despite less well developed friendship structures in Denmark, social capital in the receiving country is still considerably high, since these few friends have good insights in and resources within Denmark.

Still, the nurses' work schedules and frequent travels home to their families could be viewed as a slight disadvantage for establishing new contacts beyond their workplace (research question 3). An advantage, though, is their close and regular contact with the same colleagues, among which friendships are established. These friendships are assessed very positively (research question 4), but for both, friendships in Germany (or with the German friend in Denmark in Grit's case) yield the most satisfaction. The need to continuously find new friends is thus rather limited. In this group, we can clearly observe that anchorage to Germany is still strong, and that mobility has not diminished this anchorage significantly. It has added another layer to their life, as both recognize that they are living two rather distinct lives but still feel as one person of integrity (Grit 21:13).

Grit's story provides yet another interesting facet in the assessment of her friendship to a Dane. The mentioned Danish friend, who helped out with money, furniture and the means to transport them, was not seen as holding a higher power status obliging the friend according to the German idiom 'small gifts preserve friendship, big ones

obligate'. Instead, the personal traits of the friend being proactive and implementing solutions unconventionally come to the fore. In this way, friends can be an informal but reliable way of gaining access to resources that may even be available through formal channels (e.g., financial state support for housing). Similarly, Kristin of group 1 reported that her colleagues and friends can much better help her to learn Danish than the language school. Whereas the language school taught topics irrelevant for Kristin, her friends can respond to her needs to the extent she requires. These examples show that friendships help work migrants in overcoming problems in everyday life, which could have been solved through formal channels. The advantages of friendships over authorities and institutions lie in their informality, unconventionality, spontaneity, and adaption to individual needs. Acquiring small pieces of resources is thus achieved easier through friendship.

Group 2's motivation for coming to Denmark and satisfaction with workplace, work culture, and colleagues, strengthen their will to stay in Denmark: "So, for work matters I will surely not return to Germany. Not with this stress [there]" (Iris 1:23:45). Grit answered similarly to the question on, whether she was still happy about her decision to come to Denmark: "Yes. So, there is no return to Germany" (1:19:57). These statements provide an answer to research question (5): friendships are not the decisive incentive for the women to stay in Denmark, though they are a part of the harmony between the colleagues that did not exist in Germany: The German health care system is characterized by "enormous build-up of pressure, very much quality control on the paper, not with the humans" (Grit, 3:47), stress, negative competitiveness and low wages that lead to very unpleasant working conditions. In contrast, the Danish workplace is structured in a way that enables personal relationships and work to harmonize. The importance of the balance between work and personal relationships is described by Grit:

> Everything has to match. It's not enough if I only have the time here now, that I didn't have for nursing in Germany [...] But I mean, my colleagues didn't match, the whole has to be harmonious, otherwise you bend backwards over for it. It has to harmonize (1:10:32)

Furthermore, the approval of status in Denmark is very different from that in Germany:

> When I started working here in Denmark, they asked me whether I was

an assistant, and I said, no I'm a nurse. - 'Oh, nurse, that's a nice title.' - 'You think so? Why?' – Because we don't know that in Germany. In a nursing home it doesn't matter if you are a carer for an elderly or a nurse [...] Here, there is a totally different structure (Grit 1:09:02).

Approval of the status, of the value the education as a nurse, also helps one to feel appreciated and supports the will to stay, despite the fact that there is little time for forming new friendships due to the travels to Germany. For Iris this implies that she is not explicitly looking for more friends (1:26:06). Moreover, Iris brings forward the opinion that Danes are very reserved though friendly (22:30). Iris' and Grit's success in finding friends in Denmark thus heavily relies on the workplace structure. On the question, how workplace structures in Germany and Denmark affect friendships, Grit answers:

Now you have significantly more time or closer contact. You also have the zest to have contact. Because, you didn't have that... because we were just tired [in Germany] (32:28).

For this group, a workplace culture that facilitates personal relationships with colleagues are important for well-being and the intention to stay in Denmark for the work life period.

An important hint on which components are important to migrant workers in their decision on complete settlement in Denmark versus further travelling back and forth or re-settlement in Germany is given by Grit:

Then I don't know, will I give up too much if I fully settle in Denmark? Or will I really only stay until I cannot work anymore? How will I be provided for in Denmark? I have to... In the past I was always protected, I was married, and now this also is a change, you have to get used to, for yourself, there is nobody who earns for you (1:17:51).

As a single earner, Grit balances the security that she feels in the German system (e.g., health care system, against the Danish that is still unfamiliar to her). Asked if the presence of her friends in Germany versus few in Denmark have an impact on this decision, she refuses by saying: "No, I think the friends only, no, not to defray it, only, I know there are friends, but it's more the confidence in the German system" (1:18:24). Aside from friendships being an important component at her Danish workplace, it becomes visible that an in-depth understanding of a state system is indispensable in the work migrants' decision-making process on where to settle permanently.

4.2.3 Group 3 – Academics in Denmark

The academics -- group 3-- ascribe their friendship patterns very much to their structural disposition (research question 1). Whereas all of them are open-minded and have no difficulties in establishing contacts, they hardly seek them at the moment: Three of them are very involved in family life and thus have limited free time. They also do not feel the necessity to discuss everything with others (as for example Alexandra said) and thus do not feel compelled to search for Danish contacts. She recognizes that she does not lack opportunities, which are given for example at the language school. The same can be said for Björn, who expresses it as follows:

> It's enough for me. Yes, it's always been like that, that I did not need a big circle of friends. I don't know; if you track it back it might have to do with that I have an elder brother. [...] Sometimes there is this [...] division into Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary. [...] So it was my brother who was more extroverted, and he was more responsible for external contacts. While I had enough with my brother, if I wanted to talk about something (35:51).

These two respondents particularly show that small numbers of contacts or friends cannot be judged as having a detrimental effect, since their strong ties to family provide the necessary amount of social capital. Moreover, they also have friends in Denmark, but a difference was observed in how respondents made sense of their numbers of friends: Whereas all of them only named few close and best friends in Germany and even fewer in Denmark, some interviewees would simply regard this as normal, whereas others would explicitly say: "I only have few friends", giving explanations as the above on personal characteristics.

In this instance, it has been observed that the method of conducting interviews can be at odds with the topic at hand, since the interviewees might apply forms of impression management due to their idea about the researcher's agenda behind the analysis of numbers of friends (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). But as mentioned before, lower numbers of friendships held in Germany or Denmark did not constitute problems for the interviewees because they have other channels to retrieve social capital.

Respondents in this group report having at least one Danish acquaintance. Danish friendships were generally not found through their workplace but through neighbourhood, leisure activities, or partly through partnership with a Dane. Thus, this group significantly demarcates against the previous two groups, where *Danish* friends were mainly found through the workplace (with the exception of Amelie). Instead, the workplace facilitates this group's finding contacts to other foreigners, as knowledge about expat meetings circulates within this international environment. Expat meetings are thus a regular social event, but for instance, Björn, does not show great interest in these expat meetings because they do not help him advance his Danish. Also Xaviar questions the advantages of these meetings because his idea of integration aims at mingling with the native population:

> You meet once a month, but then you only meet all the expats. That's somehow counterproductive. Like, it would be good if it was a network where you also met some Danes [...] If we are staying here, it would be nice to get integrated into the Danish society than just hanging out with foreign colleagues. That's of course also nice, but you somehow try to rather build up a network in Denmark (53:00).

Still, the will to integrate is sometimes at odds with the Danish culture, as Axel argues. Having experience with cultural encounters, he misses spontaneous, informal meetings at the local bar which he knows from Germany and his life in Spain. He describes the situation in Denmark as follows:

> When you meet with friends, then you call, in 15 minutes I am downstairs, put jeans on, shoes, shirt, downstairs, done. But Danes don't do that. That's the main problem. They don't have this culture [of] spontaneity ... They have here something, what they call *værtshus* [pub], there they have small curtains in front, so that you aren't seen. [...] You don't go into a *værtshus.* Yes, there are some Irish Pubs here, but they are rather stress. [...] And if you invite people to your home, you have to invite them in advance, you have to plan it in advance, the food, the house has to be tidied up, it has to be representative, and that you don't do so often. That's much more formal (9:14).

The practice of meeting in cafés or outside the home was also mentioned by Alexandra, who asked whether it is highly valued in Danish culture to meet at home where it is *hyggelig* (cosy), or whether high costs incurred by meetings outside restricted those and thus formed Danish culture. And whereas Alexandra lives with her small children and husband in a rural area with even fewer facilities, Axel recognises that "you can choose your environment" (16:04). For instance, in his

leisure time he has changed from a yachting club to a surfing club: Members of the yachting club were rather elderly men who after sailing "were sitting around a table, but didn't talk" (16:43). With few opportunities of socializing through talk in the yachting club, he sold his boat and focused on his other hobby, surfing. At the surfing club, members are between 20-30 years old,

> [...] and there you can just go, you spend, we barbecue together, and then it's fine. You don't have to [talk] deeply, it's just social, you talk with each other, you make a comment, or so (17:13).

In this example, it becomes apparent how we can understand culture as an area of practice (Boesch 1980): Despite the limiting age structure, actors are able to identify other sites of engagement where limiting structural factors no longer apply, or at least to a diminished degree. In this way, internalized expectations are adjusted to behaviour (Adams & Blieszner 1994) as Axel also mentions:

> I mean, I go to the surf club, but otherwise... I don't go out. Though I miss it. But I don't go out. You also adjust to it. Here then it is more working, so then in the evening, I read or do something (44:48).

In these quotes it becomes visible, that a missing culture of Danes mingling with foreigners (instead of foreigners mingling with foreigners at expat meetings) and of meeting spontaneously outside the house is bewailed by the participants as disadvantages influencing their friendship patterns in Denmark (research question 2 & 3). These activities would otherwise be opportunities for finding more acquaintances and eventually friends to "just drink a beer, go bowling, I don't know. Just for some adventure. Games evening, whatsoever" (42:21).

Assessing the friendships in Denmark (research question 4), the interviewees who had not been in Denmark for very long time yet, found it difficult to estimate how close and durable the friendship would become. But Alexandra and Xaviar told about friends who they felt very close because they also have children. For Alexandra, it was important that the children could play together while the parents socialize, whereas for Xaviar, support through advice was more important, though sociability was also rated highly. Asked, what he needs his Danish friends for, he answered:

> [The] feeling of having arrived here. In the beginning, you are quite isolated, of course, and we didn't speak Danish. [...] You don't know anybody, you have no network that can catch you if you fall. At the moment, with the child, it's nice to know that if something happens, I

can go over to them and they will help us. Yes, also somehow, the feeling of security… so you know, if something happens, there are some people whom I could turn. And with them, I can talk about it. Not really big decisions, but some everyday stuff (38:12).

Another advantage of Danish friends is that one can practice Danish with them. In all accounts on friendships in Denmark, it was found that these yielded a considerable amount of satisfaction, though it was obvious that most respondents found it difficult to make more or closer *Danish* friends who would correspond to their understanding of integration and sociability. Thus, one can only speculate on how stronger friendships to Danes would affect the migrants' intention to stay in Denmark or leave the country (research question 5). Since this group came with the aim of staying at least as long as their contract lasts (typically a period of three years), staying or moving further depends on future job perspectives. Despite this limited perspective, respondents in this group are eager to learn Danish. Willingness and the effort being put into language learning seems to be coupled with the respondents' provisionality of stay, as will be shown in comparison to group 4: The higher respondents estimated the probability of staying longer than three years in Denmark, the more they are willing to learn Danish, since mastering Danish opens up for new job perspectives (Björn, 9:30), or, again, corresponds to their understanding of integration. Longer time perspectives in employment situation seem to correlate with the willingness to open up for the foreign culture and for closer friends in general, as is argued in comparison with group 4.

4.2.4 Group 4 – Employees of a multinational

Just as the other respondents, the interviewees in this group describe themselves as open-minded and sociable. For instance, Nicole describes herself as "very open and outgoing, in fact a person, who doesn't like to stand still, in principle very interested in other people and cultures." Open-mindedness as a personality trait surely leads to easily finding many *contacts*. These *contacts* are found mostly among co-workers, most of them German, including other nationalities and few or no Danes. This fact is ascribed to the structural context of the interviewees:

I think, here it is so extreme because so many internationals came into this area, where incredibly few people live, with a generally low population density, and in the middle there stands this company, for which many work. I think this is a unique structure (Nicole, 31:27).

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Likewise, Norbert makes sense of his few Danish contacts:

> [T]he company is very, very international, I think more than 50 nationalities at this location. Many internationals arrive, but each Dane already has his friends from school, a girl-friend, a partner. (23:57).

Michelle even mentions:

> Sometimes I think, well, yes, in fact I am in Denmark, but I almost have built my own German world here (43:25).

Responses to research question (1), showed that the workplace is again the decisive structure that influences friendship patterns in Denmark: Work takes most of the respondents' time with work days of 9 hours not being the exception, as Michelle puts it: "[...] you easily work 40-50 hours per week" (23:01). Likewise, they attend Danish classes at work (Norbert 27:11). The work day is followed by sport activities, language classes, spending time with the partner, or meeting with those friends found through the workplace. Thus, sites of engagement (Scollon 2001) may reach beyond the workplace, as for example the local pub, and the gym. These sites of engagement however, do not open up for opportunities to mingle with Danes, because the people they meet with are befriended colleagues whom they have easy access to. Through the communication channels at work (internal mail system) it is easy to find others interested in starting up regular football matches, spinning groups or travel clubs.

Due to the international work environment, most friendships are established between internationals (research question 2). The interviewees talked about some few friends as close friends in Denmark, but interestingly, these dyads were always embedded in small networks of close friends, which in turn are embedded in larger networks of casual friends and acquaintances. Thus, Michelle and Nicole take part in dinner evenings with their 'girls group' that is only exclusive for close friends. There are occasions for which the wider network is activated, for example for joint adventures. Being included in several layers of a company-wide network holds the advantage of never being alone in those cases when close friends or network members move away, as both Nicole and Michelle reported: Nicole came to Denmark before her friend Michelle and another common friend. During her first months, Nicole became good friends with some colleagues whom she already knew from her studies in Germany. After these friends returned to Germany, Nicole had to look for

new friends again. She found Michelle and the second common friend in the wider network of acquaintances that she met within her workplace's international environment. Asked, why she preferred international friends than Danes, Nicole answers:

> Here you are a bit forced to get a grip [with the internationals]. And it's not so easy to integrate into already existing Danish circles of friends. [...] I have the feeling, [Danes] are very nice, but they don't have a real interest in getting to know you. [In contrast] all the international people here, they come alone, but don't want to stay alone, and that brings you together (32:35).

On the one hand, the international environment fuels making acquaintances and friends among non-Danes quickly (research question 3). On the other hand, difficulties in identifying ways of getting acquainted with Danes also influence the nationality of friends in Denmark as non-Danish, as Norbert, who actually meets Danes through surfing, reported:

> I'd say you can have a conversation with everybody. I'd say, until you reach friendship, I think, Danes are very open, are very friendly, but until you reach the step to friendship, it takes much more than in Germany [...] Now in summer, I surf relatively often where you also get chatting with the one or other Dane, but then that's it. You might talk about the weather forecast for the weekend and the next days, but then there's this sentence: 'Ok, see you on the water. Ciao' (28:02).

'Danish reservation' as an experienced cultural phenomenon highly influences friendship patterns that already are highly determined by the structural disposition of these respondents in the international environment. Still, most friends in Denmark hold German nationality. Preference for close German friends in Denmark is due to felt similarities, "we all know what Germany is like" (Michelle 51:34). Likewise, speaking the same language was a highly rated advantage realized with German friends: "Sometimes, it is more relaxing to speak in the mother tongue [...] you feel better understood" (ibid: 50:53). Those German friends who already have stayed for a long time in Denmark and who speak Danish well are then also sources for help, for instance when rental agreements or applications for bringing the German car to Denmark are filled. Social capital was thus found to flow mainly within German circles, though Norbert also reported that his Canadian friend was a great source for improving his English:

> In the beginning we watched very much English TV or series, where he stopped after each second minute and we talked about what had

happened, so that I became more fluent in English. [...] That's what binds us so much together, that he took the time to help me. [...] Also, we have done so much together [...] and it's not only this 'come, we go to drink a beer together', but that we have seen a lot [of Germany and Denmark]. Therefore we can always delve so much in our stories (16:42).

In this quotation it becomes visible that the intensity of experiences brings people faster, closer together as all respondents of this group recognized. Otherwise, their German friendships were built up over longer time periods. The main difference in these friendships still lies with the friendship level and assessment of stability (research question 4): Whereas best friendships in Germany were assessed as rather unconditionally stable due to the long time they already have lasted, close friendships in Denmark were assessed in terms of enriching the current life situation:

> Your job can make you happy and fulfil you for a while, but latest after some weeks or months you surely wake up and ask yourself 'hm, has that been everything?' (Michelle 49:39).

Predictions on friendship's stability were rather vague due to anticipated mobility of these friends. Those friends who were expected to stay in Europe or with the company, were believed to continue being friends. Estimations on future friendship levels however revealed an expected distance between the friends. These friendships could thus become casual friends, but were not believed to slide into the category of acquaintances, as acquaintances in general faded away with time.

With few contacts to Danes, friendships were not found to have a major impact on the group's motivation to stay in Denmark (research question 5). It rather derived from original intentions to come to Denmark and future job perspectives:

> I think it would be different, if I really had come to stay here for good. I live here until retirement and found my family. It's always been 2-3 years Denmark, and in the beginning I thought, ok, then I'll go back to Germany when everything has developed at the job and privately. Well, and now it's more like, before I go back to Germany, first somehow out of Europe. Before I'll be too old. In this way, it's never been my intention to anchor here in Denmark (Michelle, 44:56).

The picture evolving around this groups' lifestyle and friendships in Denmark thus clearly resembles that of 'Eurostars' described by Favell (2008). With the intention to only settle temporarily and yet no family obligations (expressed in 'before I get too

old'), these persons are still free to choose where to go next. This choice for onward mobility is, of course, also based on growing financial resources, but the link to their homes should not be neglected: Family and friends back home are visited very regularly, and just as Nicole explained, her friends are consulted in the event of upcoming big decisions. Likewise, those respondents with partners have made some agreement on how to handle further mobility. For example, Nicole explains that job offers abroad limited to duration of six months would not necessitate the partner's movement. For positions that imply a longer stay abroad, they would try to move together. The same is observed with Michelle, who is trying to follow her partner to North America as she expects him to stay there longer. Mobility thus always implies a social alignment that was also reported in Favell's study (2008) This case has so far shown that there is evidence for those close friendships that are formed 'on the way' are able to continue existence in less close terms. They rather serve as fixed points to the current situation.

4.2.5 Conclusion on friendships in Denmark

The analysis of the interviewee's friendships in Denmark has shown that friendship patterns are highly influenced by their structural disposition coupled with the cultural context (research question 1). Therefore, the interviewees were categorized into four groups according to their occupation in Denmark. It could thus be highlighted that the workplace, being structured by close and regular cooperation among employees, facilitates friendships. This could particularly be observed in groups 4, 2 and for Kristin of group 1. In contrast, Amelie and Alex as external employees to education institutions faced workplace structures were independent work restricted acquaintanceship and eventual emerging friendship among colleagues. Xaviar and Björn of group three have few acquaintances among colleagues of which some could become friends. Their workplace is only to some degree structured by cooperation with colleagues. Despite emerging friendships, these are on a lower friendship level than those in Germany, which is partly ascribed to the little time that the interviewees have spent in Denmark.

Illuminating research question 2, friendship dyads were the most prevalent friendship structure in groups 1, 2, and 3. Interestingly, these dyads were very often

reported to be of importance for either the partner, or the interviewees' children. The respondents thus identified friends that are similar to them regarding gender, family situation, and occupational status. As explained in the previous section on friendships in Germany, the tendency of women to find female friends was ascribed to the interviewees' personal preference.

The same applies for friendships with other families with children, since the interviewees expressed a personal preference to get together with people who could support them in their life stage. These friendships were also formed beyond workplace structures, which clearly hold advantages for friendship formation for those who work within dense cooperation patterns (research question 3). If this is coupled with an international environment in an otherwise rural area, interviewees reported quick and easy access to contacts and eventually, friends.

Disadvantages to friendship formation manifest themselves in the language as a means to communicate with Danes and as a means of showing cultural understanding. It can only be speculated whether speaking Danish could diminish the felt cultural distance between the respondents and 'reserved' Danes, since those respondents who speak Danish still experienced difficulties in becoming friends with Danes.

The friends whom respondents found in Denmark were assessed in positive terms, but none of them ranged among the interviewees' best and very close friends. Social capital specific for the country of destination (Haug 2003) did not include advice on important decisions or discussion of severe problems. Rather, it comprised support for everyday activities and the opportunity of socializing, which all but group 4 and 2 mentioned to still lack some components of spontaneity and informality.

Lastly (research question 5), these friendships are not the only decisive feature for the interviewees in their decision whether to stay in Denmark or move on, since this relied to equal parts on future job perspectives and the original motivation for coming to Denmark. Nevertheless, for group 2 and Kristin, friendships are an indispensible part of their daily work.

5. Discussion

The conclusions on friendships in Germany and in Denmark found certain similarities and particularities, to be summarized in the final conclusion. Their effects on societal level are briefly discussed in this section. Applying the findings of friendship research in a migration setting, this chapter presents recommendations for policy makers and employers on promoting work mobility and maintaining work migrants in a receiving country.

First of all, it could be shown that in Germany and Denmark, friendship formation depended on the structural disposition. Everyday structures set the frame within which friends were found due to personal preferences. In Denmark, the prevalent site of engagement for friendship formation was the workplace. To maintain foreign workforce this finding implies that employers should create facilities for their employees to get together, to become acquainted and eventually friends. Such facilities would not only increase the feeling of having a job in Denmark (which is the most prevalent connection to the country), but enable foreign workforce to establish further social connections especially to Danes which were reported to lack to a considerable degree. A holistic approach to employing foreign workforce could thus improve maintenance incentives.

In a Danish setting where foreign workforce shall be maintained, social connections of foreign workforce are important because they provide social capital in form of help in everyday situations. While it may be argued that this is an effect of friendship on a personal level, the entirety of effects leads to well-being and satisfaction with life in Denmark that is preferable over a life in another country. We have to recognize that the interviewees in this study were socio-economically advantaged compared to, for example, third country nationals. In the interviews, none of the respondents stated that it was a necessity to come to Denmark solely based on economic considerations. Particularly Sweden was mentioned by some respondents to be an equally desired country of destination for work purposes. Though it can be argued that none of the interviewees had come to Denmark if they could have expected a lower income than they had in Germany, many of them highly rated: better collegial cooperation, opportunities for practicing certain outdoor leisure activities, or

responding to their adventurous nature. This shows that personal and social aspects of a future life environment are as important as economic considerations regarded as push and pull factors (Castles 2002). Likewise, it shows that the interviewees had the resources for migrating in first instance, but that friendships formed in Denmark are necessary to provide resources for smoothening everyday life, corroborating findings of the Expat Study 2006 (Oxford Research 2007). Societal effects of those everyday aspects of friendship should not be underestimated: As these friendships added sociability to their lives in Denmark, without friendships, these migrants could be anticipated to return or migrate further, since other countries also provide similar income but higher levels of social life for these socio-economically advantaged persons. That these interviewees are socio-economically advantaged has also been shown by the fact, that German friendships are an emotional anchor providing social, not financial capital.

In an EU context, where attempts of promoting mobility are implemented, it has thus to be recognized that EU citizens willing to migrate are socio-economically advantaged, at least to a considerable degree. Promoting job-mobility in an EU agenda characterized by objectives of competitiveness, on the one hand should not be conducted without the recognition of people having a need for sociability in the country of destination. On the other hand, generic claims of mobility pressuring social relations should be specified, since there is evidence that respondents who had only stayed in Denmark for a few years had no best friends in the country.

In Denmark, friendships ranged on levels of acquaintanceship, casual and close friendship, whereas the interviews evolved around best, very close and close friends in Germany. Consequently, the time spent in one location might be an indicator for the opportunities of establishing deep relationships, which are restricted if migrant workers move on to another country. However, if friendships have entered the level of best friendship, the interviewees reported to be able to maintain them, as shown by the maintenance of friendships in Germany. For this purpose, modern communication technology is indispensable.

It must be noted that In the Danish setting, mobility was also an issue, as the

interviewees stated their Danish friends moving within Denmark being a larger barrier for stabilising new friendships. Thus, mobility can be argued to be a barrier for friendship *formation* whereas friendship *maintenance* is not as deeply affected, once friendship has stabilized on best friendship levels. The generic claim that globalization with increased mobilization pressures social relations has thus been specified (Giddens 1991).

Employers and the Danish state can tailor and support measures to retain foreign workforce according to the impact of structural predisposition on friendship formation in a setting foreign to a work migrant. Facilitating collegial cooperation among Danes and work migrants next to measures such as expat meetings could be an effective activity implemented by employers. Likewise, granting unlimited employment contracts would promote sustainable mobility that acknowledges the need for humans to create a net of social connections that develop into stable levels over long periods of time. Comparing group 2, the nurses, with groups 3 and 4, the nurses hold unlimited work contracts that are a high incentive for them to stay in Denmark for work life. The academics and employees at the multinational cannot rely on such. Thus, they are restricted from assessing their future in Denmark and putting maximum effort into establishing themselves in the country socially. This tendency is reflected in the reported low friendship levels. In contrast, in the case of these friendships achieving stability, Danish friends could be assumed to influence the desire to stay in Denmark more, as they provide a more informal way of acquiring insight into the Danish system. Likewise, they could overtake the advantage of participating in far-reaching decisions and provision of a net important in emergency cases such as unexpected unemployment.

6. Conclusion

The point of departure of this study has been the discussion on whether increasing mobility in our postmodern time pressures social relations, with a focus on friendships of German work migrants in Denmark. The main objective has been to investigate the meaning that work migrants assign to their friendships in order to break down generic claims about mobility corroding friendships, as representatively brought forward by Giddens (1991).

Disagreeing with these claims, the researcher argued that friendship maintenance is possible for important friendships despite long distances between friends. Furthermore, friendship formation was argued to depend on individual's sites of engagement, and it was assumed that friendships provide differing forms of social capital in Germany and Denmark. Eventually, people feel socially attached to a place through their friendships. The study thus combined the field of friendship and migration research, and applied the Adams & Blieszner conceptual framework for friendship research (1992) as a structured means to investigate the complexities of friendships for work migrants. Based on the conceptual framework, five research questions were raised, to which answers were found by applying qualitative content analysis to the 11 interviews conducted among German work migrants in Denmark.

The account that migrant workers gave on the personal characteristics in contrast to structural predispositions in talking about their friendships (research question 1) was similar in Germany and Denmark: In both countries structural predispositions such as visiting certain educational institutions, living in a certain neighbourhood, or being a member of sport clubs, were the prevalent frame within friendships were made.

German friendships profited from the long time, and the different life stages of the respondents in Germany, during which friendships could develop. In contrast, friendships in Denmark rely highly on the prevalent site of engagement, the workplace. This structure facilitates friendship formation to Danes in case of close and regular cooperation with Danish colleagues, but restricts the same in case of

external employment, or in an international work environment located in rural areas. In this instance, the workplace provided already established channels for leisure activities leading to international friendships though a slight preference for friends of same nationality was observed. Likewise, interviewees stated that cultural issues and linguistic difficulties hinder friendship formation in Denmark. Structural and cultural predispositions were thus the prevalent influences for friendship formation in Denmark, though respondents chose friends within these structures due to personal preferences.

Friendships in the home country ranged on best and very close friendship levels, with friendship dyads only important to the interviewee being the prevalent friendship structure. In contrast, friends ranged on close and casual friendship level in Denmark, with more acquaintances being mentioned. Those interviewees with children especially stated their children being a connector to Danes, and friends were more often reported to be important for the partner and children than in Germany. These friendships therefore cannot be classified purely as friendship dyads, as they involve more than just two befriended parties, but do not qualify for a friendship network. Furthermore, only respondents employed at a multinational corporation spoke about being members of friendship networks.

Despite these network and friendship structures ranging on lower friendship levels than the German ones, friendships were observed to provide social capital in both countries, though in different forms: German friends reinforce respondents' identity and provide social capital in the form of friends' participation in interviewees' far-reaching decisions, advice, and the provision of a safety net in case of unexpected return. Friends in the country of origin facilitated the migration process. In contrast, friends in Denmark provided sociability and task-related help for overcoming everyday obstacles, and ease the migration experience.

Structural predispositions such as workplace structures, cultural misunderstandings, and linguistic difficulties were reported to be possible obstacles in forming friendships in Denmark, which did not apply in Germany (research question 3). Maintenance of friendships formed in Denmark likewise suffered the

short period, through which interviewees and their friends had known each other yet. In contrast, friendship formation in Germany was advantaged by the long time period for the friendship to be strengthened. Moreover, the assumption that long distance friendships depend on friendship level, and that best friends were easily maintained, was corroborated. Friendship maintenance was found to be advantaged by modern communication technologies, with a preference for direct channels, such as Internet-based telephony. For many respondents, social media such as Facebook played an inferior role. Respondents to this study s rejected the idea of giving up their friendships in Germany.

Considering these findings, it is to no surprise that long distance friendships to best and close friends in Germany were assessed as stable, with great satisfaction deriving from them (research question 4). In contrast, friendships in Denmark were assessed positively, but due to the relative short time of its existence and mobility of these friends, the development and stability of these friendships cannot be easily assessed. This finding gives some support to Gidden's claim of mobility pressuring social relations (1991). Whereas friendship maintenance relies, to a high degree, on friendship level, mobility *per se* is not decisive for friendship stability. It rather is the frequency of mobilities threatening friendship *formation* and development onto higher friendship levels instead of friendship *maintenance*.

Finally, very poor evidence was found for the respondents feeling attached to Denmark through their Danish friends. The motivation for coming to Denmark, job perspectives, and insecurities based on a lack of insight into the Danish system were more decisive factors that determine the will to stay or move away. Friends in Germany, though, reinforced the interviewees' identity, providing some social attachment to the place where the friendship was formed. Still, this attachment can be fluid, since some of the German friends are also mobile in national and international settings. In this way, local attachments might be pressured by mobility but it is debatable whether local attachment is as important if social attachment to friends provides a personal anchor that is employed for gaining access to social capital.

The meaning of friendship for German work migrants in Denmark has thus been shown to manifest itself in the different kinds of social capital circulating among friends: Whereas long distance friends, who simultaneously are best or very close friends, provide the backbone for the migration process and a net for emergencies, friends in Denmark ease the everyday experience of the migration. In neither case were friendships solely personal experiences. They even hold implications on measures to be implemented by employers and the state in their need to maintain foreign workforce.

Increased cross-cultural cooperation among Danes and work migrants, as well as provisions of unlimited employment contracts could facilitate friendship formation with Danes, which in this study has been reported to be poorly developed. Initiatives by the European Union should thus not only aim at facilitating mobility, but at facilitating sustainable social connections, to meet the Danish State's and employers' goal of retaining their foreign workforce.

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Appendix A – Interview guide

I. Individual characteristics

Question	Analytical dimension	Research question
Can you tell me a little about yourself?		(1) Which account do migrant workers give to personal characteristics in contrast to structural predispositions in talking about their friendships?
	psychological predispositions	
- What kind of person are you/characteristic traits		
- Do you find friends easily? Why?		
- preferences which kind of friends (if so?) - Which expectations do you hold towards friendship/a friend?		
	social structural disposition	
- civil status		
- educational background		
- Where are you from (region/city)? - Which job did you have before coming to DK?	local and economic background	
- Why did you come to Denmark?	motivation	
	sites of engagement behavioral motif	
Please describe an average day of yours. - daily routines		
- participation in organisations/clubs/associations	opportunity structures	
- other leisure activities		

- place/location of activities		
- differences to weekend activities		
Where and how (personal/virtual) do you meet friends?		

II. Friendship patterns

	Structure	(2) Which implications hold differing friendship structures of friendships maintained in the home country to those in the receiving country Denmark?
How many friends do you have in DK/D?		
Do they know each other - in Denmark - in Germany - across borders? Do you meet as a group or individually?	Ties density, size, configuration Network or dyads	
Are they: - of same nationality - of same gender - of same workplace/previous workplace/education years - your best or close friends or acquaintances	Similarity	
How would you describe your relationship?	Power status	
- What do you do together(dyad/network)? - What do you talk about? - What would you not talk about? - Would you say that you "use" your friends? If so, for what? Differences in DK/D?	Solidarity, self-disclosure	
	Phases	(3)

In your opinion, why did you become friends with your actual friends? Are these friends also important to your spouse/children/family/other friends?	Formation	Which obstacles and advantages do migrant workers encounter in the course of forming new and maintaining already existing friendships?
How long have you been friends with A/B? How do you keep in contact? Is the amount of contact satisfying for you? Why, why not? With which friends do you feel it is easier to stay in contact with (LD/GC)? Do you mind putting greater effort into maintaining (the more difficult friendship)? Why, why not? Why do you maintain your LD friendships? How does the "being friends" differ between your DK/D friends? Do you use social media? Which role do they play?	Maintenance	
Do you feel that you have faded/are fading away from some of your friends left at home? If yes, which friends (close, best, acquaintances). Why do you think are you fading away from each other?		
	Processes	(4) How do migrant workers assess their friendships?
How would you describe your friend?	Cognitive processes	

How would you describe your relationship? What do you feel when you meet this friend?	Affective processes	
What do you need this friend for?	Behavioral processes	
III. Structural & cultural context		
Do you think that friendships in Denmark could make you stay? How do your future plans look like?	Effects	(5) Which influence has friendship on migrant workers' intentions to stay or leave the host country Denmark?
Tell me about how your life has been before coming to DK and now (family, economical, friends, personal 'life' satisfaction)		

Appendix B – Description of participants

Kristin studied Scandinavian studies, spent one semester in Sweden, but conducted research in Denmark for her final thesis. Kristin was afterwards explicitly looking for a job in the country that she came to appreciate for its work culture and due to her passion for surfing, sports and nature. Since 2008 the 27-year-old teacher has been living with her partner in a rural area in Denmark. She now teaches in Danish.

Amelie is a teacher of German as a foreign language. Moving to Denmark had never been her priority, but she and her partner settled in a bigger city in Denmark in 2007 as Amelie found a job there. The first job lasted for 10 months, and since both of them liked it in Denmark, both decided to stay longer. Today, 32-year-old Amelie works for different institutions. By now, she speaks Danish.

Iris is a 46-year-old nurse, who withdrew from her underpaid job in Germany. Unable to find a new job, she answered a job announcement on the internet. Iris is now employed at a hospital in a bigger Danish city, where she works 10 days, after which she spends 4 days in her German home. Her two grown-up children and husband support her decision. They owe a house in Sweden; Iris thus speaks some Swedish, Norwegian, and fluently Danish.

Grit is a 46-year-old elderly care nurse. Structural problems in the German healthcare system, great workload, constant pressure, for a relative small salary were reasons for Grit to participate in a Danish project recruiting elderly nurses. Here, she also learned Danish. Grit lives in a small Danish town, spending the same amount of time in Germany as in Denmark. She cannot imagine returning to Germany for work, but continues travelling forth and back until her youngest child will have finished school in approximately 3 years. Grit is divorced.

Axel and his German ex-wife were looking for new job perspectives and decided to go to Denmark in 2004. Together they have two children living with their mother. They are the main reason for Axel remaining in Denmark. Here he works at a higher education institution in a bigger city, and gives also lectures in East Europe and Asia. He completed his ph.d. in Spain. Approximately one year ago he met his new Danish partner. Axel speaks Danish.

Björn also works at a higher educational institution in a bigger city in Denmark. As job perspectives were not suitable in Germany, Björn decided to go to Denmark in late 2009 after a colleague referred him to the vacancy. He is very engaged with his work. In the past he has therefore moved several times within Germany and to the USA for one year. He is now eager to learn Danish.

Xaviar is 39 years old and moved with his wife to Denmark in January 2010 as he got a job at a higher education institution in a Danish city. Less attractive job offers in Germany, where hiring procedures are more bureaucratic, brought him to Denmark. Before, the couple pursued their academic careers at different places in Germany, resulting in about 7 years of long-distance relationship. Now they have a baby and

are learning Danish.

32-year-old *Alexandra* and her husband always wanted to go abroad for new experiences. The husband's job was the basis for choosing Denmark, since Alexandra just had finished studies and expected their second child. The four of them have lived in a rural area of Denmark since 2008. Alexandra is currently taking Danish classes and is looking for a job.

25-year-old *Nicole* took her studies at a German multinational. Changes in the company's structure and her supervisor's intention to move to Denmark to work for the company, gave Nicole the incentive to spontaneously choose to settle in Denmark in 2007. She met her partner at her workplace, and they are living together in city close to the workplace. Nicole was an exchange student in the USA in one of her teenage years. She and her partner might go to the USA later.

Michelle had just finished her studies, when she applied for a position as trainee in a multinational in Germany. She was invited to a job interview in its Danish subsidiary. With the perspective of working there for one year, she took the step and moved to a Danish city in 2008. At her workplace she met her partner, who she is likely to move to the USA with in the near future. Michelle is 27 years old and has also completed half a year of internship in the USA.

24 years old *Norbert* also took his formal training and studies at a multinational in Germany and came to its subsidiary in 2009 to work as a delegate for 2½ months. Since he favoured the work culture in the Danish subsidiary, he decided to stay. Norbert lives alone in a Danish city close to his workplace[11].

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[11] Nicole, Michelle and Norbert work for the same multinational and are informed about colleagues' participation in this study.

Appendix C – Transcripts

Transcripts and sheets containing thematic analysis have been stored on the attached CD-ROM.