

Toward Organizing Practices Against Harassment and Precarious Working Conditions: An Intersectional Perspective

Master's Thesis Collaboration between Techno-Anthropology & Development and
International Relations - Global Gender Studies

Renata Picos dos Santos & Andressa Souza Martins

Supervisors: Maurizio Teli & Lise Rolandsen Agustín

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Abstract

In this study, we have conducted in-depth individual interviews and a focus group with female migrant student workers to understand how knowledge of precarious working conditions and harassment can be socially shared, aiding to prevent financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers from undergoing these situations. As a result, this study brings a co-design proposition toward organizing practices against harassment and precarious working conditions for migrant student workers, alongside the visibility of multiple inequalities of being female, financially disadvantaged, non-Danish, EU or non-EU citizens, age group, limited professional experience, university students, and lack of knowledge of labor rights and employment status and to analyze the intersections among them. For this, the intersectionality approach, the distribution of knowledge, and organizational learning were the theoretical frameworks utilized.

Keywords: female, migrant, student workers, intersectionality, distribution of knowledge, organizational learning, co-design, precarious working conditions, harassment, service industry, workplace, Denmark

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1. Introduction

Often the research on international students is focused on their mobility choices to understand the educational aspects of it, but there is little research on how these students also have the workers' role in the country of destination, and how the labor market can become difficult and unequal to access, exposing them to 'tolerate' low-paid positions and poor conditions in their new home country.¹ On another note, when we searched for a feminist approach on the topic, we found that there is also research on how female international students are more vulnerable to sexual harassment as they are unfamiliar with "cultural norms, small support systems, financial insecurity, and uncertain immigration status".² Accordingly, there is potential for fresh exploration if we focus on these two characteristics, being an international student and a student worker, and adding the gender (being a female) factor; thus, our main research question for this project is *how knowledge of precarious working conditions and harassment can be socially shared, aiding to prevent financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers from undergoing these situations?* Nonetheless, to respond to this question, we assembled sub-questions that will serve as stepping stones to a proper response, which will be discussed below.

Before entering the reasons why Denmark has become such a popular destination for international students, and how their financial situation, compared to their Danish peers, affects their job opportunities, thus exposing them to precarious working conditions in the service industry, we decided that international students will henceforth be referred to as 'migrant students' throughout this study. Following the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) definition of migrant, we opted to categorize them as migrant students instead since the term is "an umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her [*or their*] place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes [...] those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students."³

¹ Clibborn, Stephen. "Multiple Frames of Reference: Why International Student Workers in Australia Tolerate Underpayment." *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 42, no. 2 (May 2021), 340.

² Lay, A. Morgan, Ron Saunders, Marni Lifshen, Curtis Breslin, Anthony LaMontagne, Emile Tompa, and Peter Smith. "Individual, Occupational, and Workplace Correlates of Occupational Health and Safety Vulnerability in a Sample of Canadian Workers." *American Journal of Industrial Medicine* 59, no. 2 (February 2016), 232.

³ IOM UN Migration, Making Migration Work for all. "Who is a migrant?". Accessed on May 1st, 2022.

Now, in recent years, Denmark has risen in popularity among migrant students for higher education.⁴ In 2020, the total number of migrant students enrolled in bachelor's and master's programs, who stayed in Denmark for more than a year, was 5,913. The duration of their stay plays a fundamental role, as these students are what the International Labour Organization (ILO) categorized as 'long term migrants' because they have moved to another country other than their "usual residence for a period of at least a year, so that the country of destination becomes [their] new country of usual residence".⁵ Most of these students are from other EU countries (2,976), Asia (1,026), North America (971), and Latin America/Caribbean (177).⁶ One of the reasons Denmark has become popular among migrant students is due to a large number of English courses available (over six hundred), as well as the high quality of its universities, as "five universities in Denmark make the top 400 in the QS World University Rankings 2021".⁷ The QS World University Ranking is a website that captures the universities' performance around the world using different metrics, such as academic and employer reputation, faculty and student ratio, citations per faculty, and international student and staff ratio.⁸

We recognized that there is a clear distinction between EU and non-EU students, and while we did not want to take a Eurocentric approach as researchers, it is necessary to point out that the system as a whole is Eurocentric, collaborating and exacerbating the differences between these two groups of students, for example in relation to financial support. Therefore, we chose the term non-EU to refer to migrant students from other regions of the world to clarify some of the concepts and ideas for this study. In fact, the EU students coming to Denmark to study represent fifty percent of the total migrant students in 2020, the reason behind this is that higher education is tuition-free, hence they will not incur any further fees while studying in Denmark. The Danish state provides a study grant (SU) to all Danish students while they are enrolled in university, and as the European Union does not allow discrimination against EU citizens, EU students are also eligible for the same grant. Therefore, the literature tallied that "enrolment in Danish higher education would thus

⁴ QS Top Universities. "How to Study Abroad in Denmark". 3-23. Accessed on May 1st, 2022, 4.

⁵ Hakizimana, Jean-Marie. "International Labour Migration:," n.d., 44. Accessed on May 1st, 2022.

⁶ Statistics Denmark. Education and Research: Student exchange program by sex, exchange, length of residence, education and area (2010-2021). April 24th, 2022. <https://www.statbank.dk/10335>

⁷ Qs Top Universities, *How to study abroad...*, 4.

⁸ Craig O. "QS World University Rankings – Methodology". QS Top Universities. Accessed on April 29th, 2022.

appear to be lucrative for students from the rest of the EU: the universities are highly ranked, the education free of charge, and the possibility of getting one of the highest study grants in the EU”.⁹

Nonetheless, it is not as easy as it seems to be an EU student. Unlike Danish students, EU students must work a minimum of ten to twelve hours per week while studying to receive the grant. As a result, the reliance on work for obtaining and maintaining the study grant places these students in a position that is not only distinct from that of Danish students but also makes them subject to labor market exploitation.¹⁰ On another note, when we look at the non-EU students’ situation, we are aware that they not only do not have the right to receive the SU grant from the state; but, they also have to pay tuition-fee to complete their studies, which aggravates their situation. Overall, we acknowledge that not every migrant student has the opportunity to receive financial assistance from their relatives, scholarships, or grants from institutions back home;¹¹ thus, they must work to pay their living expenses, which increases the stress of looking for a job. This difficult situation of searching for an income opportunity to cover expenses and obtain the SU from the Danish state (in the case of the EU students) or to pay for educational fees (in the case of non-EU students) while not speaking the Danish language, is reflected in their job opportunities, being those part-time, low-skilled, and low-paid jobs in the service sector.¹² For this reason, we decided to categorize their (EU and non-EU students) situation of dependency on a part-time job and, for the EU students on the SU grant, as being ‘financially disadvantaged’ in comparison to Danish students.

Returning to the number of long-term migrant students enrolled in higher education in Denmark, we discovered that women account for more than half of the migrant student population (3,332).¹³ In this regard, we may assume that there are more female migrant students looking for work to pay for their living expenses; furthermore, in accordance with the ILO’s approach to precarious work, which is defined further below, it was stressed that women are the ones who are most at risk, as “women have always been most subject to precarious work [...] employers take advantage of women’s struggle to balance work-life and family duties”.¹⁴ Hence, we hypothesized

⁹ Wilken, Lisanne, and Mette Ginnerskov Dahlberg. “Between International Student Mobility and Work Migration: Experiences of Students from EU’s Newer Member States in Denmark.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 43, no. 8 (June 11, 2017): 1347–61, 1350

¹⁰ Wilken & Dahlberg, *Between International...*, 1350

¹¹ Ibid, 1352.

¹² Ibid, 1349.

¹³ Statistics Denmark. *Education and Research...*, Accessed on April 29, 2022. <https://www.statbank.dk/10335>.

¹⁴ International Labour Organization. “Precarious work: its danger to workers, how we can fight it”. 1-4.

that female migrant student workers are also the ones who are most affected by the poor working conditions.

Additionally, female migrant students are not only susceptible to precarious working conditions but also harassment.¹⁵ Despite the fact that¹⁶ most studies focus on sexual harassment, as stated at the beginning of this section, migrant students are also susceptible to this type of harassment since they are unfamiliar with the norms of their host country, moreover, “support systems may be small or nonexistent for international students, so they may feel like they have no sources of help if they are mistreated”.¹⁷ However, we decided to not limit our study to the term sexual harassment, below we introduce the adopted definition for this study. Consequently, bearing in mind what we have discussed thus far, once female migrant students emerge into the Danish labor market, hence also becoming student workers, they are exposed to the same vulnerabilities as migrant student workers, in this study categorized as financially disadvantaged (EU and non-EU). On another note, in the light of ILO’s assertion that female migrant workers are at more risk of precarious working conditions, and female migrant students are susceptible to harassment, we introduce the following sub-question, *how do financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers become targets of harassment and precarious working conditions in Denmark?*

To help us respond to our first sub-question, we must first define a term that will be used frequently in this section: vulnerability. The IOM defined vulnerability as “means that some people are more susceptible to harm, relative to others, as a result of exposure to some form of risk. The type of harm to which they are more susceptible varies: it may be psychological, physical, environmental, etc.”¹⁸ When applied to migrants, it is defined “as a limited capability to avoid, resist, cope with or recover from violence, exploitation, and abuse”.¹⁹ Moreover, the IOM stated that a number of risk factors contribute to migrant vulnerability. These risk factors can be “individual (sex, age, access to resources such as money, gender identity, etc.), household/relatives (socioeconomic status, migration histories, employment, education levels, etc.), community (equal

¹⁵ Lay et al. *Individual, occupational...*, 230.

¹⁶ Abbasian, Saeid, and Carina Hellgren. “Working Conditions for Female and Immigrant Cleaners in Stockholm County – An Intersectional Approach.” *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies* 2, no. 3 (August 30, 2012): 161.

¹⁷ Lay et al. *Individual, occupational...*, 232.

¹⁸ International Organisation for Migration. “Handbook on protection and assistance for migrants vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse.” (2019), 4.

¹⁹ IOM, *Handbook on protection...*, 8.

access to resources, social norms, and behaviors) and structural (political systems, migration policies, etc.).”²⁰

Bringing this concept to our study, we opted to analyze the reasons for these vulnerabilities that financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers face through the intersectionality theoretical approach, where the social categories of inequalities linked to gender (being a female), economic situation (financially disadvantaged), and migrant status (non-Danish) is our framework that exacerbates their experiences in the Danish labor market. Nevertheless, we recognize that multiple inequalities interconnect, interlock, shape each other, and have a temporal hierarchy depending on the framework we choose; therefore, geographical area, age group, educational attainment, and professional experience also aggravate their situation.²¹ The purpose of this framework is to bring awareness to the challenges female migrant student workers experience in the service industry in Denmark as a result of the intersection of these complex multiple inequalities.

Accordingly, we found it relevant to clarify that our intention with this sub-question is not to victim-blame; moreover, we agree “that identifying ‘vulnerable people’ or ‘vulnerable groups’ is only a form of shorthand for looking at relative risk and looking at needs-based assessment”.²² Correspondingly, research on sexual harassment also highlighted when “studying sexual misconduct have also problematized a focus on ‘target suitability’ and ‘victim lifestyles’ as such concepts tend to place responsibility for crime on the victim”.²³ In other words, we acknowledge that there is a “disadvantage to define people as vulnerable since they become the ‘other’ for whom protections or services need to be put in place, rather than the ‘we’ who are making the decisions and taking the actions [...] that failures to recognize and meet their needs and priorities are defined as factor of their own vulnerability, rather than a fault in the system of risk governance and social equality that places them in a vulnerable situation”.²⁴ However, as we perceived within our previous project, *Designing for the trade unions – migrant workers relation: a case study in Denmark*, a fundamental issue female migrant student workers face is the lack of understanding

²⁰ IOM, *Handbook on protection...*, 5.

²¹ Strid, S., S. Walby, and J. Armstrong. “Intersectionality and Multiple Inequalities: Visibility in British Policy on Violence Against Women.” *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 20, no. 4 (December 1, 2013): 558–81, 559.

²² Picard Ph.D., Mary. “Beyond vulnerability to gender equality and women’s empowerment and leadership in disaster risk reduction: Critical actions for the United Nations System.” (2021), 15

²³ Lay et al. *Individual, occupational...*, 231

²⁴ Picard, *Beyond vulnerability...*, 15.

of their labor rights²⁵ and work status, we aim to empower these groups through knowledge of precarious working conditions and harassment, and we intend to do so through a co-design session proposing the first steps toward organizing practices against such dire conditions, which was collaboratively produced. And for that, we ask *how do financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers acknowledge precarious working conditions and harassment?*

For this research, we chose to follow the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)’s definition of harassment, which is determined as “any improper and unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation to another. Harassment includes - but is not limited to - words, gestures or actions which tend to annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle or cause personal humiliation or embarrassment to another; or that cause an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. It includes harassment based on any grounds such as race, religion, colour, creed, ethnic origin, physical attributes, gender or sexual orientation. It can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents. Harassment may be deliberate, unsolicited and coercive.”²⁶

While we recognize that students can work in different sectors, there is a tendency for them to work in the service industry, “in particular, they are found in the retailing, catering, bars and hotels”.²⁷ The reason for this is that to balance their studies and work, students need flexible work hours, which the service industry can provide.²⁸ Nonetheless, it is relevant that we mention how the service sector is notorious for exposing its workers to precarious working conditions, which reflects in economic and social vulnerabilities.²⁹ These low-skilled and low-paid jobs in the service sector are thought of in the literature as “the new insecure labor market created by restructuring and deregulation of the economy [*and is considered*] as key entry jobs for workers unable to integrate the higher-wage economy”.³⁰

The ILO defined precarious work as “the employment that offers compensation, hours, or security inferior to a ‘regular’ job”.³¹ In other words, we adopted the approach of precarious

²⁵ Chatzipolakis, P. et al., “Designing for the trade unions – migrant workers relation: a case study in Denmark”. (2021), 1-24, 10.

²⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “UNHCR’s Policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and Abuse of Authority”. (2005). 1-17, 3.

²⁷ Broadbridge, Adelina, and Vivien Swanson. “MANAGING TWO ROLES: A Theoretical Study of Students’ Employment Whilst at University.” *Community, Work & Family* 9, no. 2 (May 2006): 159–79, 161

²⁸ Broadbridge & Sawanson, *Managing two...*, 161.

²⁹ McPhee, Siobhán Rachel. “‘Finding Their Way’: The Negotiation of the City by Low-Skilled Service Sector Migrant Workers in Dublin.” *Urban Geography* 37, no. 3 (April 2, 2016): 396–415, 396.

³⁰ McPhee, *Finding your way...*, 398.

³¹ ILO, *Precarious work...*, 1-4.

working conditions as the circumstance in which workers are uninformed of their employment status, and do not have a contract and/or access to essential employment rights.³² We recognize that precarious conditions can impact anyone; nevertheless, in this study, we want to underline that migrant student workers are particularly susceptible to these risks and vulnerabilities due to their lack of knowledge of their labor rights and their urgency to find work as quickly as possible after arriving in Denmark to cover their living expenses. Some of the precarious conditions they are exposed to when entering these low-skilled jobs in the service sector are the possibility of losing their jobs without warning, absence of salary or unemployment benefits, and unreliable working hours and schedules.³³

After understanding how our participants, being female migrant student workers, acknowledge harassment and precarious working conditions, the next step is to comprehend how they acquired knowledge on those topics. Therefore, another sub-question is, *how do financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers acquire knowledge of harassment and precarious working conditions?* In other words, we wanted to examine if their acquired knowledge were through individual experiences and/or other individuals' statements. Our interest in this aspect stems from one of the reasons why migrants are subjected to poor working circumstances, and female migrants are subjected to harassment, which is the lack of knowledge about the host country's cultural norms, labor rights, and employment status.³⁴ Once again, we recognize that there is more to preventing precarious working circumstances and workplace harassment than simply providing information on the subject, and as previously said, we do not want to cast blame on the victim. Instead, our purpose in this study is to highlight that when knowledge is socially approved and distributed by respected organizations, for example, Danish institutions, it is a first step toward avoiding precarious conditions and harassment for female migrant student workers in the service industry. On one hand, the distribution of knowledge was the theoretical framework used for this part of the study to understand how knowledge may be derived; on the other hand, we also adopted the organizational learning approach since it interprets knowledge as practice, to later understand how practice becomes socially stabilized knowledge.³⁵

³² WoRC Work Rights Centre. "What is Precarious Work?". Accessed on 29th, 2022.

³³ Ibid, April 29th, 2022

³⁴ Lay et al. *Individual, occupational...*, 231.

³⁵ Gherardi, *Organizational learning*, 45.

Finally, this project includes our methodological reflections, in which we explain the research strategy, our role as researchers, data collection, and the challenges we encountered along the way. The theory portion will expand on the above-mentioned theoretical frameworks before introducing the analysis and finishing with the discussion and conclusions.

2. Methodological reflections

This section describes the research strategy, the challenges that we encountered during our research, our role as researchers, and the collection of former and new data through a three-phase semi-structured focus group interview to answer our main research question, together with the selection and recruitment of the participants as well as their background. Lastly, presenting the methodology we adopted for our data treatment.

Before we further explain the research design of this project, we shall briefly reflect on the philosophy of science whereas our research is mainly based on constructivist and feminist philosophical perspectives on science. Firstly we rely on a constructivist perspective, according to the professor of philosophy Sergio Sismondo when he referred to the work of the sociologists Berger and Luckmann to argue the reasons for the sociology of knowledge to study the social construction of reality by stating that “insofar as all human ‘knowledge’ is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations, the sociology of knowledge must seek to understand the processes by which this is done in such a way that a taken-for-granted ‘reality’ congeals for the man [*human*] in the street”.³⁶ We adopt such a perspective as we agree with the concept of Sismondo when referring to the idea that knowledge sits in the social sphere, being socially constructed, thus a product of human practices, not an object of study that can be accessed purely from nature, as stated by realism.³⁷ Secondly, we base ourselves on a feminist position, in agreement with the social scientist Ermira Danaj who asserts that “the lens of constructivism is particularly useful here given that gender is a social construction rather than a natural given”.³⁸ Both perspectives embedded in the theoretical lenses we chose for this project, will aid us in the process to respond to our research aim, over and above, allowing us to share the voice of financially

³⁶ Sismondo, Sergio. “An Introduction to Science and Technology Studies,” n.d., 257. Cited from: Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann (1966) *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, 58.

³⁷ Sismondo, Sergio. “An Introduction to Science and Technology Studies,” n.d., 257, 57.

³⁸ Danaj, Ermira. *Women, Migration and Gendered Experiences: The Case of Post-1991 Albanian Migration*. IMISCOE Research Series. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022, 21.

disadvantaged female migrant student workers who undergo poor conditions and harassment at work.

2.1 Research Strategy

To further understand the aim of this research, we consider it necessary to explain the provenance of the interview data which were conducted in a prior project. This project, *Designing for the trade unions – migrant workers relation: a case study in Denmark* was carried out in the second semester of our master's degree, Techno-Anthropology, by five students, including the both of us. Back then, the main objective of the project was to provide guidelines for improving the communication approach between third-party³⁹ and migrant student workers who confront challenges at work.⁴⁰ Since the primary target was students, an online questionnaire was created and distributed through social media (Facebook groups and WhatsApp), which gathered a total of eighty-nine responses; eight of them were willing to participate in an interview to further discuss their personal situations. The respondents were female migrant student workers aged nineteen to thirty-eight years old, working in the service sector. In the interview sessions, they introduced themselves, detailed their job-hunting and hiring procedures, experiences in Denmark in contrast with their home country, and described the precarious working conditions they encountered.

We followed professors Virginia Braun & Victoria Clark's thematic analysis approach, where they argued that this method “provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data”,⁴¹ to analyze the transcribed interviews aiming to encompass the shared experiences by our participants and our comprehension regarding those narratives.⁴² We identified five themes: tolerance, lack of knowledge, motivation to speak up, frustration after seeking help, and discrimination. These themes led to the development of principles that designers should bear in mind when designing to improve communication with migrant student workers: communication in multiple languages, proactive approach, transparent and clear processes, and dedicated help.⁴³

³⁹ The third-party in the project *Designing for the trade unions - migrant workers relation: a case study in Denmark* was Migrantcenter Hovestaden, 2021.

⁴⁰ Chatzipolakis, P. et al., *Designing for the trade unions...*, 1-24.

⁴¹ Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. “Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology.” *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (January 2006): 77–101.

⁴² Ibid, 78.

⁴³ Chatzipolakis, P. et al., *Designing for the trade unions...*, 1-24.

For this thesis research, we have decided to continue with a qualitative research strategy since it can be understood as “a representational practice, in the sense that it is concerned with making sense of the world, by understanding and interpreting the meanings of different practices, phenomena and processes.”⁴⁴ This means that to make sense of precarious working conditions and harassment in this study, we find it necessary to unfold and interpret the practices, processes, and knowledge that take place in the situation evolving the ‘how’ and ‘becoming’. Thus, this method is our preferred strategy as the main objective of this study is to understand how knowledge of precarious working conditions and harassment can be socially shared, aiding in preventing financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers from undergoing these situations in Denmark.

Furthermore, we have elected to revise the materials collected before with a new lens, the intersectionality approach, in order to give us the room to explore how social categories of inequalities linked to gender, economic position, migrant status, age group, educational status, former professional experience, and geographical areas function “as reciprocally constructing phenomena that shape complex social inequalities”;⁴⁵ hence, aggravating our participants’ vulnerabilities to varieties of precarious working conditions and harassment at the workplace in Denmark.

Bearing in mind one of the themes uncovered in the previous project, *lack of knowledge* is the main base for this research study. This requires a brief explanation to introduce the reader to what the theme entails. Half of our interviewees had a poor understanding of their labor rights and how Danish institutions worked, leading us to validate that there was a lack of clarity in the information they were given.⁴⁶ Continuing in this line, the philosopher Alfred Schütz stated that knowledge can be distributed and approved in three different ways, calling this process *stock of knowledge*, which can be through personal experiences, other’s statements and experiences, and knowledge being socially shared through reliable sources, such as Danish institutions.⁴⁷ However, this framework will be further explained in the theory section.

⁴⁴ Lundberg, Tove. *The Politics and Ethics of Representation in Qualitative Research: Addressing Moments of Discomfort*. London: Routledge, 2021.

⁴⁵ Mügge, Liza, Celeste Montoya, Akwugo Emejulu, and S. Laurel Weldon. “Intersectionality and the Politics of Knowledge Production.” *European Journal of Politics and Gender* 1, no. 1 (July 13, 2018): 17–36, 18.

⁴⁶ Chatzipolakis, P. et al., *Designing for the trade unions...*, 1-24.

⁴⁷ Alfred Schütz cited in Gherardi, Silvia. “Organizational Learning: The Sociology of Practice.” In *Handbook of Organizational Learning and Knowledge Management*, edited by Mark Easterby-Smith and Marjorie A. Lyles, 43–65. Hoboken, NJ, USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2015.

Accordingly, sociologist Silvia Gherardi mentions that the “bulk of what an individual knows does not originate from his or her [*their*] experience alone, but is knowledge of social origin that has been transmitted to the individual by social relations of all types”; therefore, we aim at considering that knowledge socially shared is the first step to addressing precarious working conditions and harassment, in which it is relevant to emphasize that our purpose is not to blame the victims but to highlight that a collective approach from the Danish institutions to address these topics is an essential step. Thereby, our ulterior motive is to prevent migrant student workers from acquiring knowledge on topics such as precarious working conditions and harassment solely through the first two methods of obtaining knowledge as Schütz discusses, but first, we need to understand how our participants become targets of these inequalities, and how they perceive and acquire knowledge on these topics.

Subsequently, we decided to follow an abductive approach as researchers have agreed in the past that “this approach enables the researcher’s engagement in a back and forth movement, between theory and data in a bid to develop new or modify existing theory.”⁴⁸ Additionally, philosopher Charles Peirce’s recognized contribution to the approach describes the relevance of mixing abductive, deductive and inductive approaches as an essential method of qualitative research, which “carefully frames a hypothesis, outlining the consequences of such hypothesis and subsequently testing those consequences through a comparison with facts that were not taken into consideration during the formation of hypothesis”.⁴⁹ In this study, however, we followed professor Martin Lipscomb’s⁵⁰ advice and used deductive and inductive sources to validate findings using the abductive approach. Meaning, that instead of ensuing Peirce’s version of the abductive process with its three stages (first abduction, second deduction, and third induction), we adopted a different path in which our first stage was *induction* (Peirce’s third stage) since our findings from the previous research were the fruit of observing stories and practices with an intersectionality lens behind the harassment cases and precarious working conditions that female migrant student workers undergo. This led to our second stage *abduction*, what Peirce claimed as his first, in which we adopted hypotheses based on the literature review and former uncovered themes to understand how multiple inequalities (gender, migrant status, economic situation, age group, professional

⁴⁸ Awuzie, Bankole, and Peter McDermott. “An Abductive Approach to Qualitative Built Environment Research: A Viable System Methodological Exposé.” *Qualitative Research Journal* 17, no. 4 (November 13, 2017): 356–72, 357.

⁴⁹ Awuzie & McDermott, *An Abductive...*, 358.

⁵⁰ Martin Lipscomb Cited in Awuzie & McDermott, *An abductive...*, 358.

experience, geographical areas, and educational status) intersect with the lack of knowledge on their labor rights and role of the Danish institutions, aggravating our participant's working experience in Denmark. Lastly, our third stage, second to Peirce, is *deduction* wherein this study also provides "the necessary and probable experimental consequences"⁵¹ to how precarious working conditions and harassment are perceived among the participants, together with the workshop to 'co-create' visible solutions, where their voices are heard, to raise awareness of having knowledge of precarious working conditions and harassment, or simply what can go wrong once they enter the labor market, being socially shared knowledge by Danish institutions, with the goal to potentially aid on preventing them to be less exposed to these vulnerabilities.

To organize the reviewed data with the intersectionality approach, although this will be discussed in greater detail in the qualitative data analysis section, we used Miro as an online whiteboard to assemble and categorize the materials for a practical overview assisting us to design the thesis research method. Gender, economic position, and migrant status were recognized as a framework to examine the experiences of female migrant student workers in Denmark, while the other inequalities also have a role in impacting their experiences.

2.1.1 The Role of the Researchers

Most commonly, in qualitative studies "the researcher and research participants may be considered independent of one another [...] to study participants objectively or without researcher bias".⁵² In this study, we as researchers are also female migrant student workers with shared experiences that might bring certain biases to this research. Nonetheless, we opted not to obliterate the bias since the literature agrees that "the dynamic interaction between the researcher and the participant is viewed as central to capturing the inherently contextualized experiences of the participants";⁵³ therefore, our main goal instead is to embellish the integrity of the analyzed findings while proving that we engaged sufficiently in the participants' experiences to accurately portray and evaluate them.⁵⁴ Moreover, since we chose a feminist approach for this research, we agree with the feminist sociologist Carol Smart's saying that this lens "challenges academia traditionally due to its value

⁵¹ Awuzie & McDermott, *An Abductive...*, 360.

⁵² Leavy, Patricia, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Cary: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2014. Accessed May 27, 2022. ProQuest Ebook Central, 82.

⁵³ Leavy, *The Oxford...*, 83.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 83.

of application of research to lived experiences”,⁵⁵ in other words, we want to emphasize that this method permits us to give voice to the lived experiences of our participants. Additionally, identifying our own biases allowed us to minimize “the hierarchical relationship between researcher [*us*] and the participants to facilitate trust and disclosure”⁵⁶ to collect reliable information on women’s experiences.

Although we adopted this positionality within the project, we acknowledge that “the core use of the feminist theory is the understanding that ways of knowing, or epistemologies, are constantly evolving as knowledge grows as the “knowers” expand in scope”.⁵⁷ In other words, we understand that studying such topics as precarious working conditions and harassment that financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers face in the service industry “increases the complexity of the problem under study”.⁵⁸

That being said, when reflecting upon our own practices during this research, we acknowledge that we assumed several roles, not only as researchers but also as listeners, writers, focus group mediators, and work partners, among many others. Accordingly, besides the aforementioned roles we embedded, it is worth mentioning that the knowledge we have today compared to the beginning has increased enormously; thence, we also want to recall that one of the most important roles we adopted throughout this last phase of our master’s studies is the role of learners, as professors Ulrik Brandi and Bente Elkjaer claimed, “the role of individual learners is to be engaged in sense-making and to create knowledge within and among their trajectory of participation”.⁵⁹

2.2 Data Collection

Focus group interviews were used to collect new empirical data on how financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers interpret and acquire knowledge of precarious working conditions and harassment in the tertiary sector; and how through a co-design project we could work collaboratively toward organizing practices against these circumstances, with the aim to understand how knowledge on precarious working conditions and harassment can be socially

⁵⁵ Carol Smart (2009) cited in Leavy, *The Oxford...*, 92.

⁵⁶ Leavy, *The Oxford...*, 93.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 93.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 93.

⁵⁹ Brandi, Ulrik, and Bente Elkjaer. “Organizational Learning Viewed from a Social Learning Perspective.” In *Handbook of Organizational Learning and Knowledge Management*, 21–41. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2012, 29.

shared, aiding in a first step to prevent them from undergoing these situations. The focus group lasted two hours and forty-five minutes and was divided into three different phases that will be further explained in the focus group dynamics section.

The new empirical data collection was accomplished through a semi-structured focus group, composed of four participants, attempting to gather wide-ranging insights and points of view⁶⁰. Thus, the research question and sub-questions were used to guide the interview's conversation, however, when interesting comments emerged, we would dig deeper into the responses to gain additional insights on the matter.⁶¹

As the topic of this research is sensitive, and could potentially cause discomfort among the participants, we opted to work with a reduced number of attendees, thereby, we could have the opportunity to establish an intimate atmosphere, avoiding feelings of exposure and at the same time, to explore in-depth conversations amid the theme. It is important to point out that due to the busy routine of our participants balancing studies with work and private matters, as well as one of us living outside of Denmark and the implications of traveling from one country to another, we decided to host the focus group online through a Microsoft Teams meeting, to avoid the time consumption of transferring from one location to another.

2.2.1 Focus Group Dynamics

The semi-structured focus group was divided into three phases whereupon each phase was designed and elaborated aiming to respond to our main research question of understanding how knowledge of harassment and precarious working conditions could be socially shared, aiding to prevent female migrant student workers from undergoing these situations.

Knowing that the topic of this research might generate uncomfortable moments for the participants while sharing their understanding of the circumstances we decided to initiate the conversation by introducing ourselves; providing a brief summary of our project and research aim, including telling them that overall, we as female migrant student workers and researchers, were genuinely interested in the topic, and equally have been through tough moments. By “finding some common ground of shared experience”,⁶² we intended to build a good relationship with the

⁶⁰ Lazar, Jonathan, Jinjuan Heidi Feng, and Harry Hochheiser. “Interviews and Focus Groups.” In *Research Methods in Human Computer Interaction*, 187–228. Elsevier, 2017, 204.

⁶¹ Lazar et al., *Interviews and...*, 199.

⁶² Ibid, 213.

participants. Subsequently, we asked them to introduce themselves and engage in an *ice-breaker* activity by responding to which animal they would be if they had to be one, and the reason behind their choice. The aim of the icebreaker was to generate a comfortable atmosphere and an enjoyable experience for the participants, whilst generating *rapport* with them, as well as somewhat getting a sense of their personalities.

Furthermore, to avoid encouraging our interviewees to provide answers they believed were correct or that we wanted to hear,⁶³ we agreed not to enter too much into detail about our goals and aims of the research, therefore we stated that the general objective of our interview was to further understand the working conditions that female migrant student workers go through when living in Denmark.

In the following subsections (*Phase 1*, *Phase 2*, and *Phase 3*) each phase is explained thoroughly, alongside the strategy chosen and stimuli designed. It should be noted that we decided to divide the tasks between us, while one would take the host role, the other would oversee the technical matters, such as sharing the stimulus on the screen, following up on the timing, body language of our participants, and taking written notes.

Phase 1

The first phase, called ‘*How would you feel if...?*’, was designed to understand how the participants received and reacted to harassing verbal messages and precarious working conditions. Hence, the strategy of this phase stemmed from what literature agrees that the *affective* dimension, instead of emotions, can impact someone’s capacity to take action,⁶⁴ as it “points to pre-rational elements upon which rationality can, or cannot, be articulated”.⁶⁵ For this study, the affective dimension, which comes before the cognitive one for a short time, would help us understand how our participants perceive and acquire knowledge on precarious working conditions and harassment.⁶⁶ As researchers, we understand how difficult it is to capture people’s affects and emotions, and we know that this work demands the use of effective methods.⁶⁷ Given that this phase aims to contribute to answering the first research sub-question, not only by stopping at the participants’

⁶³ Lazar et al., *Interviews and...*, 213.

⁶⁴ Teli, Maurizio, Antonella De Angeli, and Maria Menéndez-Blanco. “The Positioning Cards: On Affect, Public Design, and the Common.” *AI & SOCIETY* 33, no. 1 (February 2018): 125–32, 126.

⁶⁵ Teli et al, *The positioning...*, 126

⁶⁶ Ibid, 126.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 127.

affective dimension; we adapted ‘*positioning cards*’⁶⁸ with eight narratives extracted from previous interviews during our previous study.

“The construction of narratives paves the way to the accumulation of affect, which is able to open up spaces to collecting information deeply influenced by affects”.⁶⁹ Therefore, the ‘*How would you feel if...?*’ phase, with a total duration of forty-five minutes, was divided into two subphases containing four stimuli each. The difference between each subphase was the theme behind them, being the first subphase subjected to examples of precarious working conditions, and the second regarding workplace harassment. Despite being split into two phases, the positioning cards were designed to connect and demonstrate the various challenges that female migrant student workers encounter in the service sector. Once the participants were presented with these cards, which the host read out loud without any intonation, they were asked to submit up to ten feelings that came to mind into Menti, a website service that provides a word cloud as its final results. Although the table below summarizes all the stimuli used, we will include the positioning cards and the word cloud results in Appendix A.

Table 1. ‘How would you feel if ...’ phase (Table by authors)

Precarious Working Conditions Verbal Messages <i>‘How would you feel if your boss told you...’</i>	Harassment Verbal Messages <i>‘How would you feel if your boss told you...’</i>
“We don't give a contract for the first 3 months”	“All you (young people) do is drink vodka and do drugs every day”
“You are the first paid employee, actually, we always take people who want to do an internship”	“Do you want to sit on my lap? It will be nice”
“Since you're going to pay so much in taxes anyway, we could just pay you 50DKK an hour through MobilePay so you don't pay the taxes”	“You are a psychopath and a bad girl”
“I only hire migrant women to work at the bar”	“Look, you are just shit”

Following, we aimed at unfolding the outcome from their responses uploaded into Menti to understand their pre-rational (affective) feelings towards the stimuli. It is essential to mention that at the end of this phase they were informed that the verbal messages in the stimuli were extracted

⁶⁸ Ibid, 127.

⁶⁹ Teli et al, *The positioning...*, 129.

from real-life situations collected in our previous research. We opted to share with them only at the end of the phase because we wanted to see their natural reactions and feelings, rather than influence their perceptions of our expectations.

Phase 2

The second phase, with a duration of one hour and fifteen minutes, was composed of two *scenarios* and one *persona*, which we decided to name '*What could Lily do*'. In this phase, we chose to use persona, as it is a method that sums users with shared experiences and facilitates the focus on one subject, it “represents a synthesis of a number of real users who have been involved in data gathering, and it is based on a set of user profiles”.⁷⁰ In our case, we named our persona *Lily Silva Adamski*, she was created with an intersectional lens, with gender, economic situation, and migrant status as a framework. The design of this persona was based on the literature, as we “looked for patterns in the data and commonalities that could be grouped into one persona”.⁷¹

Figure 1. '*Lily Silva Adamski*' Persona (Figure by authors)



When it comes to building the scenarios, we scripted them based on real circumstances gathered through our previous studies, as they should “describe human activities or tasks in a story that allows exploration and discussion of contexts, needs and requirements”.⁷² Moreover, the scenarios

⁷⁰ Sharp, Helen, Jennifer Preece, and Yvonne Rogers. “Interaction Design,” n.d., 657.

⁷¹ Sharp et al., *Interaction Design...*, 404

⁷² Ibid, 408.

described existing behaviors,⁷³ which were divided between precarious working conditions and workplace harassment, also extracted from previous interviews. During this phase, the participants were introduced to *Lily Silva Adamski* who has double citizenship, Brazilian-Polish, and is currently studying for her master's degree in Computer Science while working as a cashier in a restaurant. The host decided to read *Lily's* persona and background but left the scenario's dialogue to the participants, thus they could not be influenced by the host's intonation. The following table summarizes both scenarios, representing precarious working conditions and harassment, presented during the focus group meeting (see Appendix B for the scenarios presented during the meeting).

Table 2. Summarized Scenarios (Table by authors)

	Precarious working Conditions Scenario	Harassment Scenario
Scenario Background	Lily has a contract of 25 working hours monthly. However, during the last month, Lily worked 55 hours, covering up on last-minute call shifts she was asked to. Her manager pays Lily for the 25 hours as stated in the contract. Lily approaches the manager.	Lily's Manager usually makes comments about Lily's body and also her colleagues' bodies. He likes to give the women a massage and ask them to sit beside him. However, the boss does not treat the men in the same way. He never gives them a massage or asks them to sit closer. One day her manager comes to Lily and says
Dialogue between Lily and Manager	<p>Lily: Manager, last month you asked me to work in different shifts, and according to my control, I worked 55 hours.</p> <p>Manager: This is the agreed salary, are you not happy?</p> <p>Lily: It is not about being happy, I worked much more than 25 hours. You can see from my own control shift that I have worked 55.</p> <p>Manager: Ow Lily, please stop complaining, you already have your SU. What do you want me to do?</p> <p>Lily: Please pay me the number of hours I have worked.</p> <p>Manager: I am sorry, you know the situation is not easy for me at the moment, I cannot pay you more.</p>	<p>Manager: Today you are looking so good. I love your Brazilian curves. Come here, sit closer.</p> <p>Lily: Thank you, but I am fine where I am.</p> <p>Manager: Ow Lily, stop it, you need to relax. Let me give you a massage.</p> <p>Lily: I am fine, please don't bother.</p> <p>The manager comes closer to Lily and gives her a massage.</p>

⁷³ Sharp et al., *Interaction Design...*, 409.

After the stimuli were shared, we asked the questions present in the following interview guide:

- A) *How do you understand the situation mentioned above?*
- B) *Looking at the scenario, what should Lily do, knowing that she needs her job to keep paying for her living cost while studying?*
- C) *If you were Lily's coworker, would you do something? If so, what?*

The strategy during this phase was to propose two exercises where the participants were asked to place themselves in fictitious situations and discuss their own interpretation of the circumstances; not only evaluating *Lily's* options but also what they would have done if they were *Lily's* coworkers. Here we could evaluate the discussions on the situation and their understanding of it.

Phase 3

The third phase, which was designed to take one hour, had a distinctive approach to building upon the answer to our research question as we brought a co-design proposal based on how knowledge of harassment and precarious working conditions can be socially shared, aiding to prevent female migrant student workers from undergoing these situations. This phase could have been adapted to any university in Denmark; however, we chose to work on a prototype for Aalborg University. Although it is necessary to highlight that there is no collaboration between the researchers and the university.

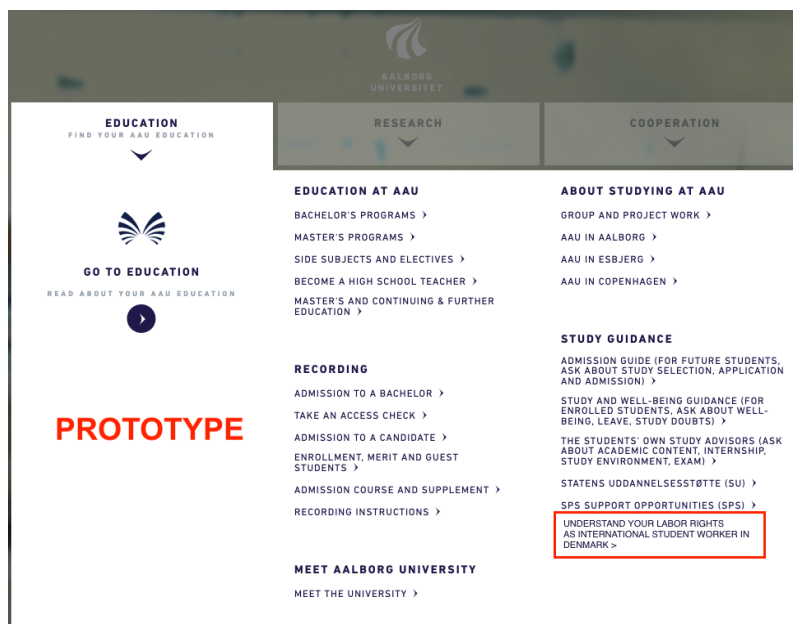
Bearing in mind that Aalborg University hosts a welcoming event for new international students before the start of every academic year, in which topics such as residence and CPR number (which is a civil registration number) are discussed, we opted to avail the existence of this meeting to build upon it by adding a section with information on their residence, labor rights, unemployment benefits, among other topics, with the objective of making them aware of precarious working conditions and harassment at work. At the same time, we reinforced that this information could be always accessible on the university's website whilst ensuring the availability of staff members for questions, worries, or necessity to talk.

We first presented the prototype, '*International Welcoming Meeting*', (see Appendix C) to the interviewees as stimuli to assess if they noticed a lack of relevant information, aiming to co-design and work with them towards improving a potential solution. As a result, the agenda for the junction of both, the existing (point 1) and our proposed idea (points 2-5) would have the following topics:

1. Residence and CPR number
2. *Understand your labor rights as an internal student worker in Denmark and their relevance*
 - a. *Contract*
 - b. *Salary*
 - c. *Working hours: Minimum and Maximum*
 - d. *Defining your scope: Tasks and Responsibilities*
 - e. *The importance of understanding what can go wrong: Harassment*
3. *Trade Unions: Relevance and different types of Unions*
4. *A-Kasse: Unemployment benefits*
5. *SU and Skat Institutions*

The above different points emerged from the data analysis of our previous study as the interviewees shared their concerns. For that reason, we have determined that these subjects are fundamental to be included in the agenda to bring awareness to recently arrived international students who might not be familiar with the Danish system. We also offered a second prototype, ‘*Info on the Website*’, (see Appendix C) which highlights where the information for new arrivals could be found on the university’s website. We preferred to include the content under ‘*Study Guidance*’ since it is easier to find aesthetically and logically. This helped the participants imagine how the information accessible on the website could be displayed.

Figure 2. ‘Info on the Website’ Prototype (Figure by the authors)



2.2.2 Selection and Recruitment of participants

Accordingly, the selection of participants begins when we try to grasp the proposed topic having in mind the different perspectives that the participants can bring.⁷⁴ Thereby, the focus group consisted of some of the same participants who had been interviewed for our previous study and first-time participants. Because we already had their working experiences; therefore, we aimed to use the data to analyze how female migrant student workers who are financially disadvantaged become targets of harassment and precarious working in the Danish service industry, now we agreed that having the former participant's interpretation and acquirement of knowledge of precarious working conditions and workplace harassment, and to collaborate in a prototype with a focus toward organizing practices against these dire conditions through a co-design would be relevant and essential for this study, as we would be also giving voice and something back to them. The reason for this is that in the previous study, as repeatedly mentioned, our purpose was to increase communication between the interviewees and a third party; hence, they were not asked about awareness of precarious working conditions and workplace harassment. At the same time, we believed that the two new participants could also bring a 'fresher' point of view on the topics, considering the need to guarantee that different views are not overlooked and that we have a more complete understanding of the issue.⁷⁵

At first, we aimed for a maximum of five participants in the focus group; however, we ended up having four in total. Since our previous project sample was formed of eight interviewees, we decided to contact some of them, considering our thematic analysis table and their experiences. This means that we contacted the participants with remarkably diverse experiences in precarious working conditions and harassment, classified into our board. Thence, we could explore these circumstances broadly as well as their knowledge of them. As we had contacted the participants previously through email and Facebook Messenger, we opted to approach four out of eight in the same way, stressing the continuity of our research and the purpose of this new study, as well as the importance of their involvement. From the four participants selected, two of them came back with a positive response and willingness to work with us once again. It is noteworthy that one of them continues to work in the same place where she has faced precarious working conditions when we originally wrote the former project, while the second participant has switched jobs.

⁷⁴ Lazar et al., *Interviews and ...*, 196.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 197.

Simultaneously, to find our newest respondents, we were aware of the necessity of respecting them, particularly in research involving sensitive topics, which necessitates an extra caution in planning and implementation.⁷⁶ Therefore, when seeking participants, we used the mouth-to-mouth approach, also known as the mediator method,⁷⁷ in which we presented the purpose of our thesis to a third party, who noticed that some of their coworkers suited the profile we were looking for.

On the other hand, in the message sent to them, we indicated the duration and the number of participants that we were aiming for, together with the date that the focus group would take place, to finally express our gratitude for their time and thoughtfulness. We explained that, unlike the last project, this would involve more participants that share a common experience.

2.2.3 Background and characteristics of participants

This section introduces some of the characteristics of our participants. We chose pseudonyms to safeguard their identities; and as aforementioned, we have classified their nationalities based on the geographical areas (EU and non-EU countries); and arraying in age from twenty-three to twenty-seven years. Additionally, all of them are fourth-semester students with different master's degrees, Aurelia and Danka are currently employed as student workers, at global companies; whilst Indira and Giovanna remained in the service industry. On another note, our participants narrated their past and current experiences, some of them reflected on their perceptions of the current and previous situations when they first arrived in Denmark. Such narratives will be unfolded in detail through their sense-making in the analysis chapter. Consequently, we want to highlight that bringing this perspective is important to point out that past experiences are relevant when looking into their knowledge of precarious working conditions and harassment, and the methods by which they have acquired such knowledge. It is interesting to observe how, in retrospect, some of our participants interpret their stories differently now that they have more knowledge of the topic.

⁷⁶ Lazar et al., *Interviews and....*, 198.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 198.

2.2.4 Data Treatment

Although it has been repeatedly stated that some of the empirical data utilized in this study stemmed from a prior study, it is necessary to elucidate that the data collected at that time was re-examined with an intersectionality lens and again coded to enable the extraction of themes.

For the new empirical data, collected via a focus group, the procedure was very similar. In order to have a fair qualitative analysis, we decided to record the focus group meeting as it “can be used to reconstruct details, focus in on specific comments, and share user feedback with colleagues”.⁷⁸ Although this method allows access to everything said throughout the interview, it can also take a large amount of time to transcribe.⁷⁹ Therefore, as already mentioned, we decided that while one of us was the moderator of the focus group, the other one would focus on taking written notes throughout the meeting, which brings an “advantage of being relatively compact and easy to work with.”⁸⁰ Despite the fact that we were aware that taking written notes could lead to the omission of some important details, we realized that combining the two ways could counteract the downsides of each. Nonetheless, the data analysis procedure is yet to be described in greater detail.

2.2.5 Challenges to the research

This section describes some of the difficulties that we encountered while conducting our research for this thesis. One of the challenges that as researchers we faced was the ethics and principles that this type of study might generate, resulting in a contradiction between seeking the maximum information possible whilst still preserving the participant’s righteousness.⁸¹ The situation of wanting to learn more about human experiences with the goal of gathering empirical data while not overstepping on the participant’s willingness to share is considered a ‘microethical situation’ by the literature, where once the researcher decides not to delve deep into the interview, there is a risk of knowledge being lost.⁸² We faced this challenge while conducting our focus group, wherein at a certain moment of the conversation, one of our participants became emotional and we decided

⁷⁸ Lazar et al., *Interviews and....*, 220.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 220.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 220.

⁸¹ Brinkmann, Svend, and Steinar Kvale. “Confronting the Ethics of Qualitative Research.” *Journal of Constructivist Psychology* 18, no. 2 (March 16, 2005): 157–81, 169.

⁸² Brinkmann & Kvale, *Confronting the ethics....*, 170.

to prioritize her wellbeing above our aim to gather data, therefore we did not grasp further some sensible topics, that could be useful in this study. As there is not a precise answer to the ethical issues that arise due to the strong liaison of this type of study, we as researchers should be able to make situational judgments based on prior experience, have a complete understanding, and pay close attention to the specifics of the circumstance and the participant's condition.⁸³ Consequently, recognizing which rules, if existing, to use in a particular scenario to aid moral conduct guides us as researchers, to become what professors Svend Brinkmann & Steinar Kvale called "an ethically capable qualitative researcher" and for that, they mentioned how this "involves cultivating one's *phronetic* skills which are ultimately based on experience".⁸⁴ Therefore, we chose to adopt the authors 'focus on the particular example' approach to examine our practices and gain knowledge on identifying ethical concerns; hence, we opted to regard each topic with that particular group of people as unique to a certain place and time in order to avoid generalizing all scenarios with the goal to be "morally proficient".⁸⁵

In addition to the challenges, we reflected on a precise limitation that we observed, which was the fact that we had fewer participants than expected for the focus group. Although we were aware that our participants were students and workers, the timing that this research was carried out made it difficult for some of them to engage given that they were also working on their final projects and exams, as well as having tight work schedules. In the hopes of getting at least five female migrant student workers to participate in the focus group, we decided to reach out to nine people in total, keeping in mind that there was a possibility of some of them not getting back to us. Finally, we had four participants in total in the focus group; however, due to their work schedules, two of them had to leave before the meeting was finished. The first one left when there was still one hour left to go, and the second when there were only fifteen minutes left for the focus group to be finished.

2.3 Qualitative data analysis

This chapter will further explore how theoretical thematic analysis is practical to analyze the qualitative data gathered for this research study. For that, we decided to divide it into two data sets

⁸³ Brinkmann & Kvale, *Confronting the ethics...*, 170.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 177.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 178.

as each of them will be focused on answering a different research sub-question. Thence, the first data set focuses on answering how financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers become targets of harassment and precarious working conditions in Denmark. The first two phases of the second data set aim to explain how female migrant student workers acknowledge precarious working conditions and harassment; furthermore, how they have acquired knowledge of such conditions, while the third phase of our focus group (second data set), co-design, will be handy on supporting us to answer, in combination with the three sub-questions, to our main research question. And for this reason, we decided to present the outcomes of the co-design phase in the discussion chapter, where we intend to combine it with all our three sub-questions to respond to our main research aim, which again, is to understand how knowledge of precarious working conditions and harassment can be socially shared, aiding to prevent financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers from undergoing these situations.

2.3.1 Thematic analysis

We have opted to use theoretical thematic analysis as a research tool for its adaptability and versatility, intending to gather comprehensive and detailed data for this research.⁸⁶ Braun and Clarke have defined thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data [...] it minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail”.⁸⁷

Relatedly, it is critical to state that we, as researchers, recognize that the theoretical framework and methodologies are appropriate for the goals of this study and that ‘theoretical’ thematic analysis is the chosen strategy for doing so. Although this type of thematic analysis enables a more detailed examination of a specific component of the data, it does not provide a rich description of the data as a whole.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, we have elected this form for its benefits and our interest in the data since Braun and Clarke asserted that “the researcher may well be interested in the way permissiveness plays out across the data, and focus on that particular feature in coding the data [...] *resulting* in a number of themes around permissiveness”.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Braun & Clarke, *Using thematic...*, 78.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 79.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 84.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 84.

Furthermore, we chose the latent approach while focusing on the level at which themes should be detected aiming to seek the meaning behind the data, as it “starts to identify content or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations and ideologies”.⁹⁰ Besides, the latent thematic analysis involves interpretive work, and the analysis that is produced is not just description but is already theorized”.⁹¹ Conclusively, thematic analysis is a cyclical procedure that allows the researcher to return to the material as needed.

When conducting the ‘doing thematic analysis’ we followed Braun and Clarke’s phases, which are further explained in figure 3. Before diving into the various themes identified in this section, it is relevant that we clarify and repeat that we have the data *corpus* acquired in the prior project and the new data collected through the focus group, making the overall data for this project. Nonetheless, we will split the data corpus into two data *sets*, each of which will be used for a different aspect of the analysis aiding to answer the research question and sub-questions.⁹² As a result, the two data sets will be categorized according to the sub-questions, bearing in mind that the analysis of the themes was executed using the theoretical framework of intersectionality approach and organizational learning, which is further detailed in section four.

Figure 3. Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Source: Braun and Clarke, Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology, 2006.

⁹⁰ Braun & Clarke, *Using thematic...*, 84.

⁹¹ Ibid, 84.

⁹² Ibid, 79.

First Data Set

The first data set aims at answering how financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers become targets of harassment and precarious working conditions in Denmark. Since the data had previously been transcribed, we re-read the data and jotted down initial thoughts, using intersectionality as a theoretical lens, to reacquaint ourselves with the material. It is worth reminding the reader that the previous material focused on the challenges the migrant student workers faced while working in the service sector. Then, we decided to organize our data through latent codes, in a theory-driven way, where we addressed the data with specific queries in mind, although remembering that a certain code could fit in more than one ‘theme’.

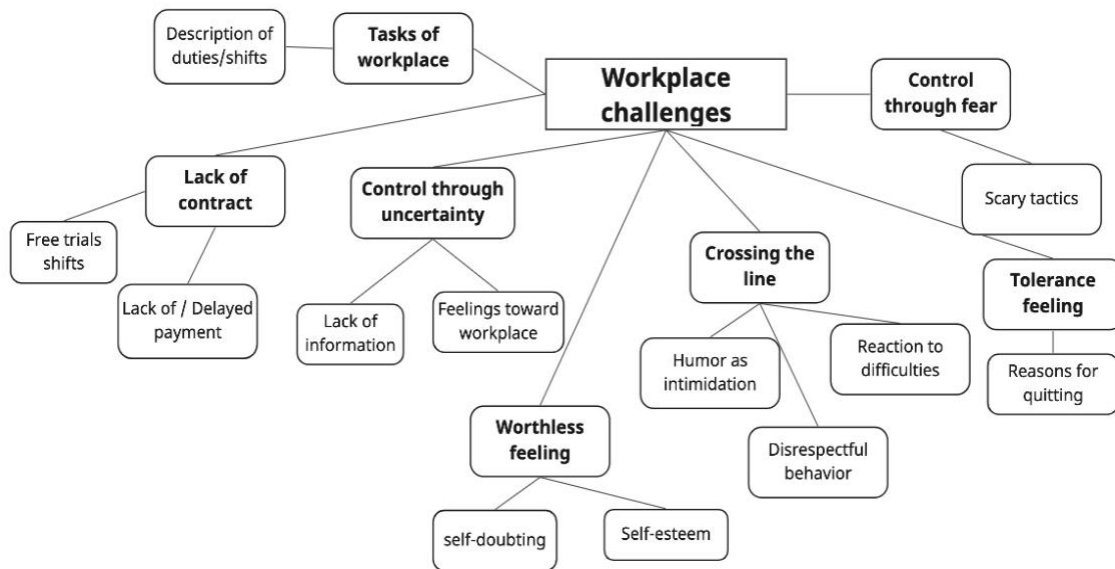
Table 3. Excerpt extracted, with codes applied (Table by authors)

Excerpt extracted	Coded for
“No, never. I just wrote it by myself on my phone. And every Monday they just wanted to know like, ‘how much did you work?’, but it was usually always the same amount, like fixed 43 or so. Even though I sometimes worked more. That wasn't, it didn't count basically. Like maybe the maximum they paid was like 47/48h, I'm not sure why not.”	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Kept track of her working hours.2. Get less paid than worked hours.3. Do not understand the reasons.

Once we coded the first set, we proceeded to search for themes, keeping in mind that this phase is the “re-focuses [*of*] the analysis at the broader level of themes, rather than codes, sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes”.⁹³ Considering what was stated in the methodology reflections section, we used the Miro website to arrange and categorize our sets in a feasible and aesthetic way. The following figure depicts the initial thematic map, in which subthemes and themes are classified according to the workplace challenges our interviewees reported.

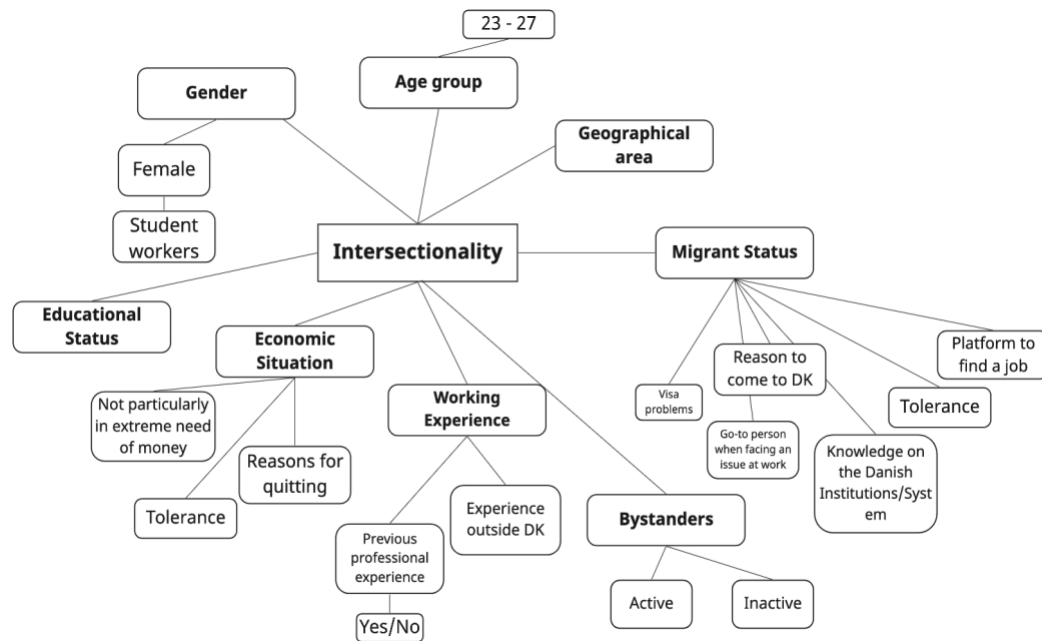
⁹³ Braun & Clarke, *Using thematic...*, 89.

Figure 4. Initial Thematic Map (Figure by authors)



As we structured our first thematic analysis map when reviewing at level one the themes with the intersectional lens, we aimed to organize the workplace challenges' themes into different frameworks (gender, economic situation, migrant status, age group, geographical area, educational status, and working experiences) as we believed that they have an impact on the reasons behind the vulnerabilities that financially disadvantaged female migrant students face.

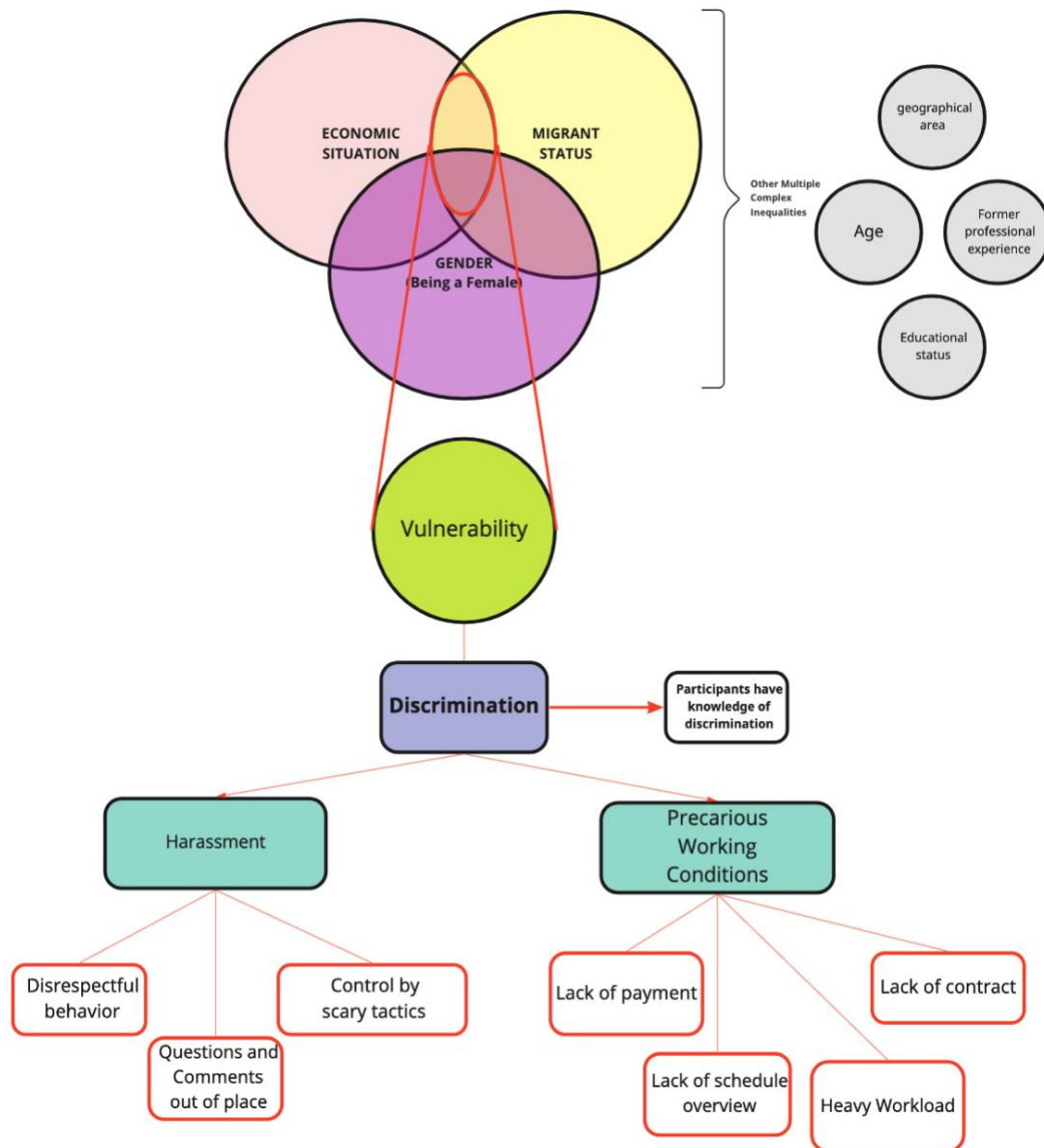
Figure 5. Reviewing themes at level one (Figure by authors)



“Level two involves a similar process but in relation to the entire data set. At this level, you consider the validity of individual themes [...] but also whether your candidate thematic map ‘accurately’ reflects the meanings evident in the data set as a whole”.⁹⁴ Therefore, once the working conditions that our participants undergo were categorized under precarious working conditions and harassment topics, following the theoretical approach, we determined gender, economic situation, and migrant status as a framework to organize the defined themes, to further analyze the precarious conditions and harassment the participants faced at the workplace. Consequently, some of the themes identified (geographical area, age group, educational status, and working experience) we opted to categorize as additional multiple inequalities to the above-mentioned frameworks, as they play a temporal hierarchical impact on the participant’s experience. The final thematic map then is the following figure.

⁹⁴ Braun & Clarke, *Using thematic...*, 91..

Figure 6. Final Thematic Analysis Map (Figure by authors)



But first, we shall guide the reader to understand the process behind the ‘choices’ of these topics. Once we understood what our participants were dealing with at work, we identified and determined the themes. We immediately recognized that these circumstances were intolerable; the awful working conditions they were forced to endure to fund their living expenses put them in a vulnerable position. When we evaluated the data, we noticed a pattern in which two separate types of mistreatments were interconnected. The data guided us to identify and categorize these challenges faced by our participants as precarious working conditions and harassment. The

unstable working conditions they had undergone produced a hostile environment for them, as well as a space for all types of harassment, including sexual, affective, and financial. Finally, the first topic is precarious working conditions which include the following themes: *lack of contract, lack of schedule, heavy workload, and lack of payment*. The coming themes of *questions and comments out of place, disrespectful behavior, and control by scary tactics*, are part of the topic of harassment. These themes will be expanded upon and substantiated with excerpts from the interviews in the analysis section.

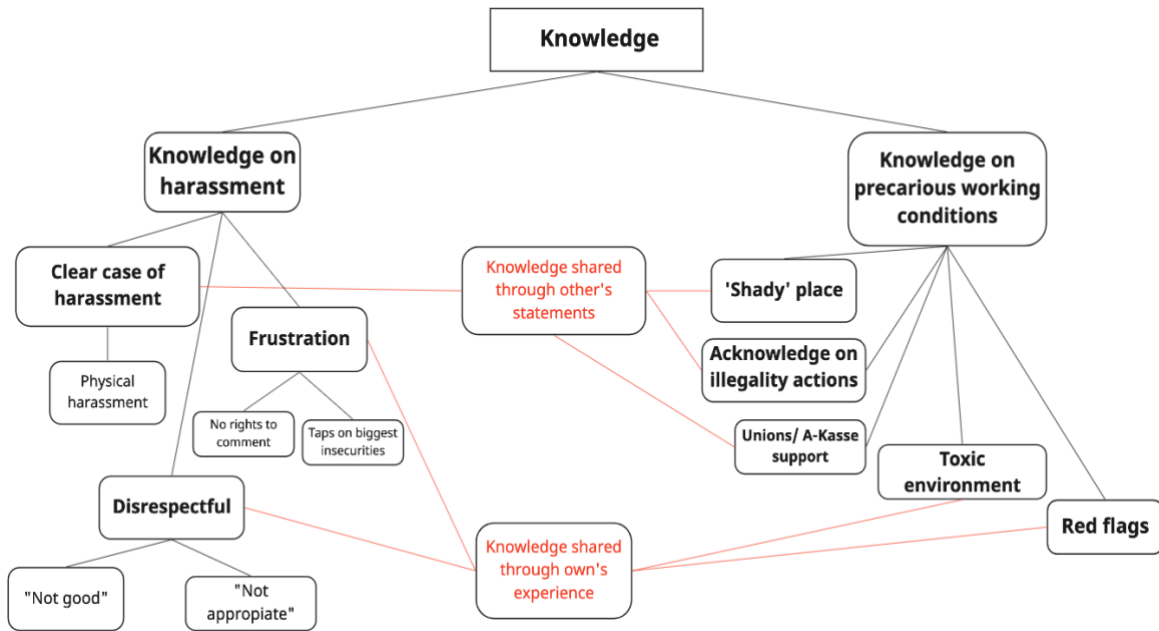
Second Data Set

The second data set, collected through the focus group, pursues as mentioned before, in combination with the first data set to answer our main research question on how knowledge of harassment and precarious working conditions can be socially shared, aiding to prevent female migrant student workers from undergoing harassment and precarious working conditions in Denmark. Yet, to respond to the aforesaid question, the second data set will be used to further investigate how female migrant student workers acknowledge harassment and precarious working conditions, and how they acquire knowledge on these topics, based on the concept of *stock of knowledge*, in which the philosopher Schütz established that knowledge can be obtained through three distinct ways: personal experience, other's testimonies, and socially shared knowledge.⁹⁵ The figure below delineates the preliminary thematic map, whereupon subthemes and themes are classified based on phase 1 and phase 2 of the focus group, and according to the participants' acknowledgment of precarious working conditions together with harassment; in red we added how this knowledge was obtained, based on Schütz' principle of *stock of knowledge*.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Alfred Schütz cited in Gherardi, *Organizational Learning...*, 45.

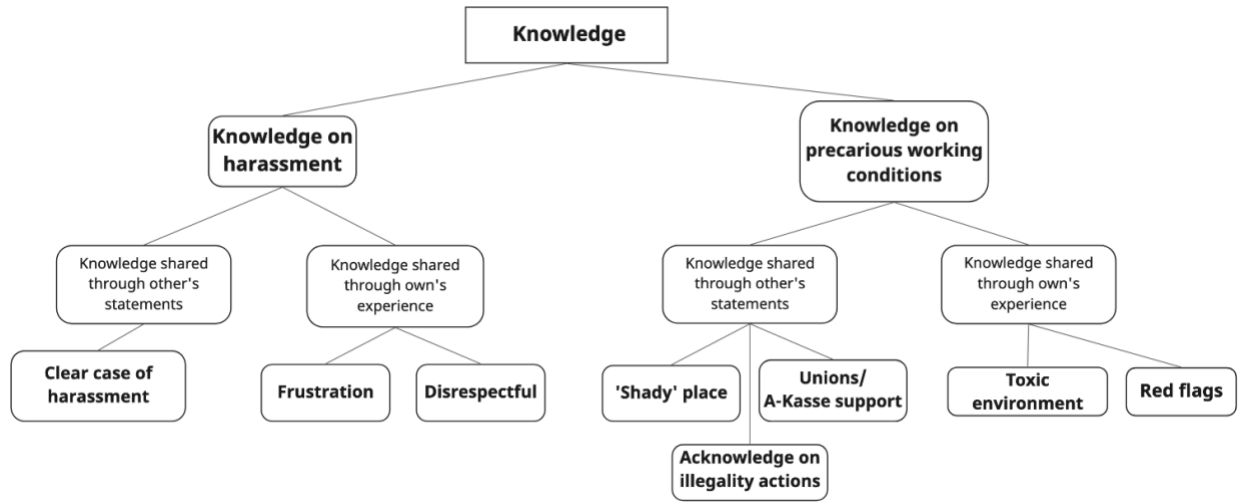
⁹⁶ Alfred Schütz cited in Gherardi, *Organizational Learning...*, 45.

Figure 7. Initial Acknowledgment Map (Figure by authors)



After assembling the first map we decided to organize the information, bringing attention also to how the acquaintance of the knowledge happened, according to our participants. In this sense, we were able to visualize not only their perception of harassment and precarious working conditions but also, if in any case this knowledge was socially shared, as we propose in our work, as a means to aid in preventing female migrant student workers from undergoing these situations. As a result, the following final scheme was constructed.

Figure 8. Reorganized Acknowledgement Map (Figure by authors)



It is important to point out that the level of knowledge on harassment and precarious working conditions differs among the participants, since some of them mentioned words such as *toxic environment* and *illegal conduct in the workplace*, while others, recognized precarious working conditions as *shady place* and *red flags*. Regarding the topic of harassment, one participant, when asked how she understood the situation (stimuli 2 in phase 2), came up with the words *harassment* and *physical harassment*, whilst the others articulated harassment as *disrespectful* and *frustrating* behaviors.

The third phase of the focus group was a co-design with the participants' collaboration to improve the idea of how knowledge could be socially shared, aiding to prevent female migrant student workers from undergoing harassment and precarious working conditions, and for this reason, thematic analysis was not applied on the responses, instead, we gathered the proposals aiming to present in the discussion section the outcome from the exercise, as we already mentioned. Lastly, the following section will further explain the intersectionality approach, distribution of knowledge, and organizational learning and how they come in handy to analyze our study.

3. Theory

This chapter explores the theoretical approach that addresses intersectional dimensions considerably discussed in this work, therefore we aim to clarify, first, what intersectionality is; second, how this project will employ intersectionality as one of its main foundations in order to unfold the potential reasons behind female migrant student workers financially disadvantaged becoming targets of harassment and precarious working conditions in Denmark. Third, as a means to aim at answering the question of how knowledge of harassment and precarious working conditions can be socially shared aiding to prevent female migrant student workers from undergoing these situations, we opted to use the philosopher Schütz's approach of the distribution of knowledge and the sociologist Gherardi's organizational learning as theoretical frameworks for the ground of that "knowledge resides in social relations, and knowing is part of becoming an insider in a community of practice".⁹⁷ The rationale for this decision is that, as previously said, we do not wish to blame the victims but instead believe that focusing on collaborative work among Danish institutions could be a first step toward ensuring that migrant student workers have a basic understanding of harassment and precarious working conditions, hence, aiming at empowering them with knowledge being socially shared on the topics.

3.1 Intersectionality

The sociologist Patricia Collins pointed out how difficult it is to give a definitive definition of the term intersectionality without underestimating its complexity.⁹⁸ Therefore, we aim to present, based on the sociologist Collins, a wide overview of intersectionality, by introducing conceptual premises, as well as intellectual and political contexts in which this approach is historically grounded.⁹⁹ Whilst, we also adopt the framework that social relations of inequalities have different outcomes depending on the analysis and perspective that we as researchers decide to employ on them.

In the United States, during the 1980s most of the ideas that constitute intersectional dimensions were present under the name '*race/class/gender studies*' creating conditions for further

⁹⁷ Gherardi, Silvia. "From organizational learning to practice-based knowing." *Human relations* 54, no. 1 (2001): 131-139, 133

⁹⁸ Collins, Patricia Hill. "Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas." *Annual Review of Sociology* 41, no. 1 (August 14, 2015): 1–20, 3.

⁹⁹ Collins, *Intersectionality's Definitional...*, 3

development of the theoretical framework of intersectionality.¹⁰⁰ The overarching understanding of social inequalities' deep bonds with race, class, and gender interconnected dimensions, around the time, gained relevance not only between practitioners and academicians but also within the general public.¹⁰¹ A greater contributor to this intersectional understanding was the Black Feminist movement alongside the intellectual production of African American and Latin women, which emphasized and analyzed the interconnectedness of race, class, gender and sexuality as systems of power, preparing the ground for the emergence of the race/class/gender studies, almost two decades later.¹⁰² In 1989, Professor and civil rights advocate Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the term intersectionality in her essay '*Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*', whereupon she aimed "to address the marginalization of Black women within not only antidiscrimination law but also in feminist and antiracist theory and politics".¹⁰³

Accordingly to clarify how intersectionality is used as an analytical strategy, Collins pointed out that most of the intersectional knowledge projects include or combine a set of premises as guidelines, such as "race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, nation, ethnicity, and similar categories of analysis are best understood in relational terms rather than in isolation from one another",¹⁰⁴ a second assumption is that "these mutually constructing categories underlie and shape intersecting systems of power; the power relations of racism and sexism, for example, are interrelated",¹⁰⁵ third one "the complex social inequalities fostered by intersecting systems of power are fundamentally unjust, shaping knowledge projects and/or political engagements that uphold or contest the status quo [...]".¹⁰⁶ Based on Collins, here we point out that in order to apply intersectionality as an analytical strategy, we consider important to contemplate such categories of analysis relationally, and bear in mind that these categories aid in shaping systems of power and when understood in connection to one another, enable one to analyze complex structures of social inequalities phenomena derived from them. Thus, when utilizing the intersectionality approach, it

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 9.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 6

¹⁰² Ibid, 7

¹⁰³ Carbado, Devon W, and Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. "Mapping the Movements of a Theory," 2013, 11, 303.

¹⁰⁴ Collins, *Intersectionality's Definitional...*, 14.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 14.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 14.

is essential to take into consideration power relations, as both disciplines are profoundly linked to one another.¹⁰⁷

Wherefore, to employ intersectionality as the main theoretical foundation to answer our sub-question on how female migrant student workers financially disadvantaged become targets of precarious working conditions and harassment in the service sector in Denmark, we take into consideration that “intersecting identities produce distinctive social experiences for specific individuals and social groups”;¹⁰⁸ thus, it is from the experiences shared through the interviews and focus group that we analyze the correlation among the common intersectional dimensions across the individuals we interviewed and the social power structure and oppression exerted on them.

However, we are aware of the complexity of analyzing this intersection. The sociologist Sylvia Walby claimed that “the challenge here is to capture the multiplicity and nuances of social inequalities while retaining the scale and scope needed to grasp the global, to understand difference but not at the expense of the explanation of inequality”.¹⁰⁹ She introduced the relevance of understanding that social relations of inequality (also known as regimes of inequality) such as gender, class, ethnicity, race, religion, and age group, among other social categories are multiple complex inequalities.¹¹⁰ Walby also defended the importance to differentiate the institutional domains, in which economy, polity, violence, and civil society are part of the system,¹¹¹ from the regimes of inequality, to comprehend that this new framework allows for analyzing multiple sets of social relations within every institutional domain.¹¹² Bear in mind that these inequalities are considered complex because they depend on how the social relations are grouped when being analyzed and interpreted for the relevance of the study, affecting the outcome of inequality and difference, this is because the social relations are not similar, as Professor Mieke Verloo argued.¹¹³

For this research study, we adopted Walby and Verloo’s perspective to understand that in order to study multiple social categories of inequalities we need to take into consideration that these are not equally the same, but at the same time they affect each other, “this means recognising

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 14.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 12.

¹⁰⁹ Walby, Sylvia, and Sylvia Walby. *Globalization and Inequalities: Complexities and Contested Modernities*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2009, 58.

¹¹⁰ Walby, *Globalization and Inequalities*, 60.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 58.

¹¹² Ibid, 65.

¹¹³ Verloo, Mieke. “Multiple Inequalities, Intersectionality and the European Union.” *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 13, no. 3 (August 2006): 211–28, 221.

temporary hierarchies of inequalities, that is, recognising that one inequality may temporarily be more important than another”.¹¹⁴ At last, as previously mentioned, we determined gender (being a female), economic situation (financially disadvantaged), and migrant status (Non-Danish) as our intersectional framework, followed by additional layers of multiple inequalities that influence our participants’ backgrounds such as geographical area, age group, educational status, and working experience. Thence, we aim at analyzing how these regimes of inequality have shaped the experiences of our participants considering that they are dissimilar, exposing them to precarious working conditions and harassment in the service industry, in Denmark.

Consequently, by focusing on the social categories above mentioned, we intend to raise the understanding that the challenges faced by financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers do not originate from only one of those dimensions, instead, it is a result of their intersection, where “gender is a dominant factor, although shaped by and simultaneously shaping other inequalities”.¹¹⁵ Therefore, naming the inequalities, understanding their intersections and how they mold each other and give voice to our participants is the “strongest recognition and inclusion of intersectionality”¹¹⁶ according to Walby.

Lastly, in order to understand the rationale behind the second chosen theoretical framework, distribution of knowledge, and organizational learning, we followed Collins’s arguments on knowledge and empowerment being intrinsically connected ideas, profoundly based on intersectionality roots and aim to social transformation; she reaffirmed that “African American women were not alone in this endeavor to develop new forms of knowledge that would empower people within what was clearly a global system of social injustice. Their intersectional framework suggested provocative links that might ground social justice projects, initially, of civil rights and feminism, the movements most directly affecting African American women, but also of other movements with a shared goal of transforming society.”¹¹⁷ Additionally, we found it relevant to also adopt Walby’s point on giving visibility to the different inequalities that female migrant student workers face. To do so, we shall use the most potent form of visibility and inclusion: naming the inequalities, analyzing its intersections, and giving voices to the group of financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers, as mentioned before.¹¹⁸ However, to give the

¹¹⁴ Strid et al., *Intersectionality and...*, 561.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 561.

¹¹⁶ Strid et al., *Intersectionality and...*, 565.

¹¹⁷ Collins, *Intersectionality’s Definitional...*, 8.

¹¹⁸ Strid et al., *Intersectionality and...*, 559.

appropriate voice, we shall first understand how precarious working conditions and harassment are acknowledged and acquired by our participants. Therefore, the next chapter will introduce the distribution of knowledge and organizational learning frameworks with the purpose of empowering female migrant students through socially shared knowledge on these topics.

3.2 The Distribution of Knowledge and Organizational Learning

We discovered the philosopher Schütz through the organizational learning framework written by the sociologist Gherardi. Therefore, we have decided to follow Schütz's idea on how knowledge is socially distributed and approved but having in mind Gherardi's approach on how knowledge is practice, and how practice becomes socially stabilized knowledge.¹¹⁹

We learned from the philosopher that the preponderance of what a person knows comes also from social interactions rather than only personal experience, "the personal knowledge of each of us refers to the knowledge acquired by others - our teachers and predecessors - and handed down to us as a preorganized stock of problems, with the means for their solution, procedural rules, and the like".¹²⁰ Once we have understood that others' experiences affect our own, we found it essential to clarify the importance of empowering our participants with knowledge through the socially shared and approved approach by the philosopher.

But first, we shall briefly explain the three ways Schütz stated that knowledge can be acquired, hence shared. For that, he introduced three 'ideal' types (*the man [human henceforth] on the street, the expert, and the well-informed citizen*) to clarify the process. The first one, the human on the street, has knowledge in many fields but does not question where that knowledge came from unless it interferes with their daily practices at some point. The second, the expert, has extensive knowledge but is limited to a specific field, and is not aware of their surroundings. The third one, the well-informed citizen, is the ideal type, meaning that is in between the first two ones. In this case, the knowledge has been acquired through social distribution.¹²¹

Hence, the first way of knowledge being acquired is through one's personal experiences where we become what Schütz called 'eyewitness'. We are aware that we cannot prevent this first method, however, our goal is to emphasize the importance of knowledge being socially shared by

¹¹⁹ Gherardi, *Organizational Learning...*, 45.

¹²⁰ Schütz, Alfred. "The Well-Informed Citizen." *Social research* 13, no. 1 (1946): 463–478, 464.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 465 & 466.

“prestige and authority sources”,¹²² such as Danish institutions, thus our participants can become the ‘well-informed citizen’, but we will reinforce this later. The second is through others’ statements, in which knowledge is shared by others’ personal experiences, in this specific method the philosopher stated that it has an advantage to a certain point where the information is not completely shared with the individual. Bringing this idea to our study, although our participants learned through others’ experiences about how difficult the service industry can be, there is a chance of the information not being completely shared with them. Lastly, when we emphasize the relevance of knowledge on precarious working conditions and harassment, or simply what can go wrong when working in the service sector, being socially shared with migrant student workers by Danish institutions, we mean that they, Danish institutions, have taken the time to arrange and group the knowledge keeping in mind the different practices that female migrant student workers face when emerging into the Danish labor market. On the other side, once this knowledge is clear and precise, and shared by these institutions, “their opinions have special weight and this weight itself has the character of an imposed relevance [...] it becomes an element of the relatively natural concept of the world, although the source of such knowledge remains entirely hidden in its anonymity”.¹²³ Therefore, it is a trustful source that female migrant student workers could count on.

This approach is very philosophical as the reader can sense; however, we have decided to adopt it since we believe that a first step in aiding financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers to not undergo situations of harassment and precarious conditions at the workplace is through knowledge being socially distributed and approved, in this specific case by Danish institutions. As Schütz mentioned, “it is our interest at hand that motivates all our thinking, projecting, acting, and therewith establishes the problems to be solved by our thought and the goals to be attained by our actions.”¹²⁴ In other words, as female migrant student workers researchers, it is in our interest to empower others, in the same or similar situation, with the knowledge to “break asunder the unproblematic field of the preknown into various zones of various relevance with respect to such interest, each of them requiring a different degree of precision of knowledge”.¹²⁵

¹²² Ibid, 478.

¹²³ Schütz, *The well-informed...*, 477 & 478.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 467.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 467.

Until now we have understood how knowledge is socially acquired and shared, however, it is also essential to comprehend how practice becomes knowledge. To define practice, we adopted Sociologist Gherardi's concept in which "practice is a processual concept able to represent the 'logic of the situation' of a context. The study of practice, or better 'practicing,' yields important insights into how practitioners recognize, produce, and formulate the scenes and regulations of everyday affairs."¹²⁶ She also mentioned that to understand how 'knowing' becomes 'knowledge', it is necessary to comprehend that practice is the element that attaches 'knowing' with 'doing', meaning that knowledge is socially constructed through practices of knowledge, which are created and replicated, while a variety of other elements also playing a role.¹²⁷ On that account, we adopted the sociologist's approach that "practice may therefore be an object of doing, a time of doing, and a socially sustained way of doing. And in all three cases, knowledge is present in the form of learning intrinsic to the doing - a knowledgeable doing - and knowledgeable doing sustained by social norms appreciative of the doing of things well".¹²⁸ Now that it is clarified that in practice, knowing and doing are closely interrelated,¹²⁹ we decided to adhere to this framework to better grasp how knowledge cycles and alters as it is conveyed, added to how it is produced in the context of practice until it reaches 'normative stabilization'.¹³⁰

From the sociologist's approach, we have decided to focus on what she considered relevant for a practice to become institutionalized and stabilized as we are intending to emphasize the relevance of such practices of knowledge being socially shared through collaborative work, thus disadvantaged female migrant student workers have access to the knowledge without having to only experience it first themselves. As a result, discursive practices are an essential form of sharing knowledge not only individually but collectively, where one feels, describes, and uses their personal knowledge as a procedure of learning and communicating such, "we learn not only that the learning of sensory knowledge develops through stages extending from the mundane knowledge of the novice to the mastery of expert knowledge within a professional community, but also how participation in the community is contextual to the learning of an expert language with which to express aesthetic judgments".¹³¹ Gherardi argued that once a practice happens to be

¹²⁶ Easterby-Smith, Mark, Marjorie A. Lyles, and Mark Easterby-Smith. *Handbook of Organizational Learning and Knowledge Management*. Hoboken, UNITED KINGDOM: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2011, 48.

¹²⁷ Gherardi, *From organizational...*, 136.

¹²⁸ Gherardi, *Organizational learning...*, 49.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 43.

¹³⁰ Gherardi, *Organizational learning...*, 51& 52.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 55.

habitual, the equipped environment form of sharing knowledge comes into effect, “the more completely prepared the environment is, the easier it becomes to accomplish one’s task”.¹³² It occurs when technology, artifacts, and objects adopt the practice as well, building a highly correlated relationship between artifacts and individuals, as they allow a precise action of the practice.¹³³

Accordingly, Gherardi reaffirmed that recursiveness as stabilization and legitimation of practice is dependent on social and material elements. Although the practice is rooted in discursive practices and the practitioner’s environment, as we have seen above, the practice must become recurrent for historical and cultural knowledge to be socially accepted, “the practice is further stabilized by being embedded in a texture of practice that the action connects and recalls”.¹³⁴

To conclude, we decided to concentrate on how practice originates and is transmitted. This is possible to interpret from both an individual perspective, in this case, our participants’ knowledge concerning harassment and precarious working conditions at the workplace, where the practice is seen as a “stimulus for explicitation of that knowledge entangled in doing which may enable better verbal expression of what is known and is enacted in doing, and of which the individual may have scant awareness”.¹³⁵ Secondly, a collective perspective, in which is seen as “an opportunity for the explicitation and negotiation of the assumptions implicit in practice and which practitioners do not have opportunities to confront”,¹³⁶ here once knowledge is socially distributed and approved through a collaboration among Danish institutions, it gives an opportunity to our participants to better grasp the situations they have undergone, and empower others in a similar situation through knowledge.

4. Analysis

This section aims to present the empirical analysis of the data corpus collected from the individual interviews and the focus group, by applying the theoretical frameworks of intersectionality, distribution of knowledge, and organizational learning. We chose to divide the two data sets through the analysis. The first section is the analysis of the data collected through individual

¹³² Ibid, 56.

¹³³ Ibid, 56.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 56.

¹³⁵ Gherardi, *Organizational learning...*, 59.

¹³⁶ Ibid, 59.

interviews, and the second section is gathered from the focus group. We decided to present the first data set analysis by combining the excerpts extracted from the individual interviews to avoid repetition since some of the challenges faced by our participants are frequent among them; thence, each excerpt illustrated the themes we intend to unfold in the following section. Moreover, although the second data set was gathered through a collective method, to reconstruct the practices through the stories they shared with us we determined to present the findings individually, accentuating their context. This means that we wanted to highlight the context where the knowledge of precarious working conditions and harassment is understood and acquired while underlining the social categories of inequalities of our participants, and the intersection between these. Finally, to protect their identities we used pseudonyms for the whole data corpus.

4.1 Understanding the experiences of financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers in Denmark: precarious working conditions and harassment at the workplace

In this section we aim at analyzing the first data set. One of our aims with this research is to study how the intersection of these multiple complex inequalities linked to social categories of gender (being a female), economic situation (financially disadvantaged), and migrant status (non-Danish) in addition to age group, educational attainment, professional experience, and geographical areas (Eu and non-EU students), intersect to impact female migrant student workers' experiences in Denmark, aggravating their situations of social and economic vulnerability. Although we acknowledge that these social categories are interrelated and influence one another, we also recognize that these inequalities can be differentiated from each other.¹³⁷ In other words, for this study, as professor Walby claimed, we adopted the correlation between social categories of inequalities in precarious working conditions and harassment faced by financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers as dynamically structuring rather than just cumulative.¹³⁸ The difference when adopting this approach is that we understand our participants' inequalities as interdependent; yet individually, because we agreed that eventually in the analysis, some of the multiple inequalities will have transiently more importance than others; however, shaping and intersecting with one another.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Verloo, *Multiple inequalities...*, 222.

¹³⁸ Strid et al., *Intersectionality and...*, 560.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 560.

We decided to opt for this approach as we comprehend that is insufficient with only listing these inequalities. Once we gave our participants a voice, it allowed each one of the inequalities to gain visibility.¹⁴⁰ Notwithstanding, it is crucial to keep in mind that to understand how financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers become targets of precarious working conditions and harassment in the service sector in Denmark through the examination of the multiple inequalities they are part of, we emphasize that gender is the most dominating social category in our framework; but, it is still molded by the other inequalities while in parallel shaping them as well. Said that, for this study, we adopted the notion that there is a temporary hierarchy of inequalities, meaning that at some point during the analysis, one might be more relevant than the other.¹⁴¹

On another note, we have constantly underlined throughout this project, with support from the literature and now our empirical data, that when female migrant student workers lack knowledge about their labor rights, employment status, and how Danish institutions and rules work has a direct impact on them.¹⁴² Hence, this absence of information puts them in a more vulnerable situation, where there is room to be exposed to poor conditions and harassment at the workplace. Having said that, we want to highlight that once is clear that lack of knowledge is the base of this research, we aim at clarifying how this absence of information together with the multiple complex inequalities mentioned above exacerbate these circumstances of precarious working conditions and harassment in the service industry. Although this is not their fault, and we do not want to blame the victim, when our participants mentioned that they did not have the necessary information from the start, some blamed themselves for that lack of awareness and even categorized them as ‘naive’ as our following participant.

Aurelia: “No, that’s also one of the biggest issues. I think some of us are naive about the rules. Like there are a lot of rules I just learned in the past couple of years after that. Yeah. I was just looking for a job and so I didn’t think it through, really.”

For this study, we only had the opportunity to briefly look at how these situations of precarious working conditions and harassment at the workplace impact our participants’ affective responses. Although we comprehended how challenging it can be to capture such reactions, we could see the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 561.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 561.

¹⁴² Chatzipolakis et al., *Designing for the trade unions...*, 1-24.

feelings that they categorized these circumstances as.¹⁴³ Following, after we analyzed the data gathered from our previous research¹⁴⁴ with an intersectionality approach, we identified two significant themes: harassment and precarious working conditions.

Precarious working conditions and the intersectional dimensions of female migrant student workers' lives

One of the primary motivations for our participants coming to Denmark to study is the high academic level provided by Danish universities, as disclosed by one of our interviewees. She even mentioned how well-publicized Danish education is in her own country, encouraging many migrant students to finish their education here. However, she also stressed the need to find an income right away to cover living expenses, and for that, she worked part-time in several places.

Patricia: "I came to Denmark to study because it was advertised very well in our country. And everyone wanted to study here. So, yeah, so I came here in 2017, it was August, and I started my studies. And I was working in various places as well as a part-time job because as a student, you need some extra money to have with you."

Note that our participant mentioned part-time jobs, as she still needs to combine university with work. Therefore, it is also essential to draw attention to how female migrant student workers search for job positions in the first place. As they are brand-new to the country, they cannot count on having a network immediately. Hence, to find a position as soon as they can, their main platform to search for it is Facebook. There are several Facebook groups, '*Internationals in Aalborg*', '*Aalborg Students*', '*International Students and Candidates - Job seekers in Aalborg*', and '*International Aalborg*', where other students, managers, and owners post job openings for pupils looking for part-time work. These practices are common among migrant students once they arrive in Denmark because they know that applying through these groups is an easier way to get a job; they have heard from others' experiences and can see it for themselves that when a job opening is posted, many students respond immediately to be the first one in line to get the job.

Patricia: "When I came to Denmark, I didn't know anyone here. I didn't have any friends here. So, I really just tried to reply to any Facebook advertisement or any Facebook posts and also what I

¹⁴³ Teli et al., *The positioning...*, 126.

¹⁴⁴ Chatzipolakis et al., *Designing for the trade unions...*, 1-24.

did was text through Facebook to various companies and let's say fast-food chains and restaurants. But I always did it through Facebook messages because I knew that it works. And it worked."

There are other platforms that these groups of people also use to search for an easy-to-get job. Most of our participants claimed that delivering CVs is another common way of looking for an opportunity in the Danish labor market, as well as monitoring the newspaper and job center websites. On one hand, we reveal that our participant Patricia, who is twenty years old and did not have much professional experience before entering the Danish market, focused on part-time and low-skilled jobs in the service industry, and tried to find those through Facebook groups. On the other hand, another participant, Laura, who is thirty-eight years old and has ten years of experience in the service sector, used the Jobnet, a more trustful job center website, opting to search for a position in a more structured way, although without success. Both, university students, ended up facing precarious working conditions at their workplaces, whilst occupying part-time and low-skilled jobs.

Our empirical data led us to hypothesize that there are transient hierarchies of inequalities when examining the precarious working conditions that our participants faced. For instance, their economic situation, which we classified as financially disadvantaged at the beginning of this study because they are reliant on finding a job to get the SU grant (EU students). On another note, for those female migrant student workers who are non-EU students, their cases are even more complex, as they must pay tuition costs in addition to financing their basic needs. Therefore, their economic situation aggravates their vulnerabilities since they feel 'desperate' to find an income opportunity, so they 'accept' any chance for a trial shift in the service industry, even when they have the feeling that something is off about the workplace. This reflects on exposing them to different types of challenges which can be categorized as poor conditions.

Fiona: "Even with all those alarm bells going off you know I was just so desperate to get a job at that point, job net is horrible. I am not too fond of it. So, I just wanted to get a job."

Another participant described how she was told that after she obtained a trial shift at a restaurant, it would be divided into three days, none of which would be paid. In the past, she previously lived with a Danish family while she was visiting the country, where she learned that trial shifts should always be compensated. At the time of the interview, she was already living alone and given her current circumstances, as well as the fact that she is not an EU student, she agreed to the trials in

the hopes of securing the position. This is when the social category of inequalities linked to the geographical areas (as a non-EU student), intersect, shape, and influence the inequality linked to their economic situation as well. Despite Thalia's understanding that free trial shifts are illegal, the temporal hierarchy of inequalities in this situation overrules her knowledge of it as there is a necessity to not only pay for her basic living expenses but also the fees to study at a Danish university.

Thalia: "She was like, yeah, so basically, we do three trial shifts. And I was like, Okay. And she said they were unpaid. And I was kind of desperate for work at the time [...] But I did it anyway because I was kind of desperate for work and money."

The geographical area and economic situation are multiple complex inequalities interconnecting and molding each other, which at this point of the research have a higher impact on our participants' experiences in the service sector. As one of our non-EU students shared in the interview, once the managers/owners of the workplaces are aware of their current status as non-EU students, they see this as an opportunity to take advantage of these student workers, because they know they can get cheaper labor while convincing the migrant student workers to not report their taxes. As a result, the student agreed to the conditions because she felt that she did not have the option to refuse due to her financial situation.

Thalia: "No, I wouldn't mind that [getting paid under the table]. Because I don't, I can't apply for SU. Yeah, she [manager] knew that. Because I'm not from the EU. So, I can't apply no matter what. And I was just like, desperate for money. So, I'll take it if I don't pay tax, but I'm willing to pay taxes, if I have a contract, and if I'm getting paid the proper amount. But if I'm getting paid black money, and then on top of that, it's only 50 DKK an hour, I wouldn't mind."

It is not only the economic situation and the geographical area playing a role in shaping their experiences within the service industry but also their student status. At the end of the day, they came here to complete their higher education, and if they have not found an income opportunity, they face the prospect of not only having to quit their studies but also of returning home, where they first left for a reason. Although we mentioned before the difficulty of capturing their affective reactions when there is such pressure on oneself, one of the typical sentiments identified is frustration through discursive practices, as the following participant said.

Patricia: "You're so frustrated, you're so scared that you will lose your money, which you don't have, you came here to work because your parents probably can't afford to pay it. So that's why I work. And so, you just feel scared that you will have to finish your studies or stop your studies and leave for your country and you don't want it. So, you just start fighting for your rights. And you do everything for that if you really want to."

Their age group and previous working experience are also multiple inequalities shaping each other. One of our volunteers, who is nineteen years old and has no professional background, told us how the owner of the place determined she was just not 'good enough' for the job after she worked for free for several days. However, we cannot help but wonder why the owner waited until the last day of the unpaid trial shift to inform her that she would not be hired. The intersectionality lens helps us to conceptualize the circumstance as a structure of power, inequality, and control.¹⁴⁵

Alice: "I didn't get any contract. I was there like for a few days, which were like trials. And at the end, this guy just told me... I was kind of depressed because he just told me I will not get the job because he doesn't see me here. It's not that I'm wrong, or something. Just no because no, and I didn't like that there was not an explanation and I already worked there a few days, so I just couldn't understand."

Another participant shared her experience of working for free and not being offered a job. In her situation, she never received a response or an explanation for why she was not hired. She also mentioned something we found intriguing: how she looked for mistakes she might have made. This response suggests that she questioned whether the reason for not being offered the position was her own fault. After that, she found that recruiting migrant student workers to undertake unpaid trial shifts was a typical occurrence in that workplace. She learned from other people's experiences that someone had to return the SU grant because the employer did not comply with their obligations.

Patricia: "I was in many places on trial shifts, and then they didn't contact me at all. Like after the trial shifts. I did everything there. Everything goes on time. There were no mistakes. And they're doing it all the time [managers at the workplace]. They just took every two weeks or every week someone else for trial shifts and it was also a very sketchy place, and other friends had to pay SU back because of that."

¹⁴⁵ Strid et al., *Intersectionality and...*, 561.

After we have seen the different and common reasons for their ‘willingness’ to accept unpaid trial shifts with the hopes of landing permanent employment, we shall focus now on what happened once they have found a part-time position, either in a bar, or restaurant, or cleaning service. We want to highlight some of the precarious working conditions they encountered while working in this sector. These vary from signing the wrong paperwork thinking that it was the actual contract, working without a timetable and a tremendous workload, to the end receiving partial or even no remuneration at all. For instance, our participant Fiona shared that she did not have knowledge of what type of paper she was signing until after she left the workplace.

Fiona: “They presented me with something for sure. They presented me with a lot of papers to write and sign [...] but I wasn’t sure what the hell this was, what kind of paper this was, again for example when you didn’t walk out, I wasn’t sure about people function here but then I was told afterward, that it was no proper contract [...] sort of a hybrid that they could call a contract when they felt like it, but they could also reduce it as not a contract when it suited them finely so it was extremely shady.”

Whilst others explained the *lack of contract* from the employer’s side in the first place, one of our migrant student workers mentioned how the manager persuaded her to return to work for him by guaranteeing that she would have a contract this time. Furthermore, another participant shared how while she had a contract, her new coworker, also a female migrant student worker did not receive one. Although we did not have the chance to interview this other colleague, our participant stated that she was getting paid illegally.

Aurelia: “It was some girl who was working without a contract. And he was, I guess, paying her cash under the table or something.”

The same participant shared that the manager not only hires women but also migrants to work at this respective cafe place. She confessed and unconsciously admitted that there is a difference between Danish student workers and non-Danish; where the first ones know or have common knowledge of their labor rights, while the second ones do not. She emphasized that once a Danish student worker was hired in the same local, she was working at the time; however, this one sued the manager because he did not pay her according to the points written in the contract.

Aurelia: “I heard another story where it was a Danish Girl that was hired. It usually only hires like, Eastern Europeans or non-Danish people. But a Danish Girl got hired some time. And she actually sued him.”

Regardless of whether they were on a contract or not, all our participants chose to remain at their positions back then for an extended period. Some of them were promised that the contract would be delivered later. Meanwhile, as they needed an income and they have ‘finally’ found something that could provide that, they continued to perform their duties at work. Little did they know that other issues would show up, and here is when we introduced another challenge they faced quite often: *lack of schedule overview*. The majority of them admitted to showing up at work without knowing when their next shift was, they even mentioned asking their coworkers about the schedule and receiving negative replies about it.

Alice: "I asked other girls about the schedule. And they told me that there is no such thing there."

Others claimed that despite their contract stating a fixed number of hours per month, which is important for EU students who must document that they work at least twelve hours per week to receive the SU, they always ended up working considerably more and not being paid for it. One participant described how she sought to have open communication with her manager about the lack of timetable, and how it was always promised that they will discuss it the next day. In her case, the manager demanded availability and flexibility from her without considering the fact that she was still a student and not employed full-time.

Alice: "the problem was that I didn't have any schedule. And when I was coming there, he was just at the end of the shift, he was telling me, okay, so tomorrow at five, and it was always tomorrow. It was always tomorrow. But in my contract, it was stated 50 hours and of course, I was trying to talk with him about this, because we agreed on something and then he just wanted me to come every day. But at first, when I tried to talk with him, he told me that he will make the schedule, he promised me this, then, of course, he didn't."

Another participant explained that because she did not have a clear schedule overview, she kept track of her hours by writing them down herself. Although she was attentive and informed her boss, she did not receive the correct salary at the end of the month. She emphasized that she never understood why she was not obtaining the full amount of worked hours. At the time of the interview, we did not ask if she confronted her manager on the topic.

Patricia: "No, never. I just wrote it by myself on my phone. And every Monday they just wanted to know like, 'how much did you work?', but it was usually always the same amount, like fixed 43 or so. Even though I sometimes worked more. That wasn't, it didn't count basically. Like maybe the maximum they paid was like 47/48h, I'm not sure why not."

On top of not having a schedule, our participants had to deal with a *heavy workload* while working in the service industry in Denmark. Some of them, with previous experience in the sector in their country of origin, averred their suspicions regarding the delivery of the tasks. In other words, our following participant expressed her concern that she was handling too many tasks at once, which she believed should not be the case in typical employment. She also reinforced the statement that this was happening since they did not want to hire more personnel. This situation can become exploitative for our participants, female migrant student workers, and due to their current situations, most of them did not raise a complaint.

Fiona: "I could smell like 10 million miles away that I was given way too many tasks, and they were understaffed, on purpose. I've interviewed, and I've trained people to work. and I could smell 10 million miles ahead of that this was not correct like this is. This is two-three persons' job that I'm doing right here."

Another participant shared that is not that she is weak, but the amount of stuff that she needed to move around in her workplace was being reflected in her health, for instance, hair loss and back pain. It was a daily physical struggle to manage all the big boxes that she was requested to move around; moreover, she showed her discontent with the situation and claimed that it was unfair to her and the other girls working there.

Aurelia: "And also physically to carry all the big, like boxes of beer and the to move the big jugs around. I'm not going to say I'm weak, but they're really heavy and over time like it...I don't think it's fair...it's only girls in there. And, for the two months, I was there, there were only two girls hired: me and one other."

Not only do they have to endure a lack of contract, lack of schedule, and too many tasks for only one person in order to keep the job that is necessary to cover living costs and tuition fees; but at the end of the month, all of our participants, eight female migrant student workers, faced either delay, received a small percentage of their salary or did not obtain their remuneration at all as it was accorded. Therefore, we have named these issues as *lack of payment*. For instance, one of our participants received only thirty-seven percent of her salary, in cash, while the paycheck ensured full payment. Besides, she explained how she was always sent away when the tip, also earned in her turn, was divided between the rest of the coworkers but she would never receive anything.

Fiona: "I think the other thing that kind of did disturb me was that they always sent me away when they distributed tips, I never got anything."

She also mentioned how after working there, she acquired the knowledge, through her mother-in-law, that bars in Aalborg underpay their workers. She emphasized how the place that she was working for at the time ensured that they paid higher than any other workplace in a specific party street, very well known in Aalborg. Once the manager said that, and because she did not have any further information on the topic and again, a financially disadvantaged situation that she was in, she of course did not question it at the time. But she expressed that through her experience, she has learned now.

Fiona: My mother-in-law sent me an article about how in Aalborg bar-workers are grossly underpaid. You know as low as 100-105 DKK. And that's when I got a little angry because at this point, they know about everything really going on, but you know, my assistant manager, 'we pay higher than anybody or any bar on the Ane Jomfru Gade. We pay 105 per hour.' And at that point, I don't really know much or did know better. But yes, at this point I do know that some bars pay even lower than that, I know that. But when I saw how expensive their products are, how organized, how much imported stuff they have, and they choose to pay their workers below the sort of accepted minimum wage by the unions, that's when I got pissed off."

In the case of our non-EU student, she only got paid fifty Danish crowns. The rationale that she received for this, is that since she would have to pay taxes anyway, and in the end, the amount she would have left was the same amount the manager was offering her illegally. In her case, economic status and geographical areas are two inequalities that are temporarily heavier than the others, as it has a direct impact on her studies and living situation.

Lastly, another participant divided with us that although she had asked for her salary so many times, she did not receive it for two months. This resulted in her ending up having problems with the SU department, she was asked to return the amount she had received until that day. It is one of the requisites for this grant to have a consistent payment, meaning that the student worker needs to have a monthly salary to receive this state grant.

Patricia: "And the worst part was that I always had to text them like 10 times to give me some salary. So, they're just sending me. And, I knew that I needed paychecks. I wasn't like, I was new, but I wasn't that stupid. So, I was always like, 'send me my paychecks'. And they're always sending adjusters emails. And sometimes there were mistakes, and they needed to remake them. And then the amount didn't match what they sent to me."

So far, we have described some of the precarious working conditions that our female migrant student workers faced when emerged in the Danish service sector. This was possible when we analyzed the data with the intersectionality approach but keeping in mind the multiple inequalities that they are exposed to. Although gender is the dominant inequality in this study, in this specific section we could see how the economic situation, migrant status, age group, education, and former professional experience played a role in shaping and aggravating their experiences. In particular, the intersection of the economic situation and migrant status is visible when we observe that there is an urgency to obtain an economic foundation to cover basic living and tuition expenses while in Denmark. Additionally, the intersection of economic foundation and geographical area, neither non-Danish nor EU student, is also clear when our participant is only offered to receive illegal money with the justification that otherwise she would have to pay taxes and would still obtain the same amount. These are some examples of how multiple inequalities interconnect and mold each other.

Harassment and the intersectional dimensions of female migrant student workers' lives

Now that we have seen the precarious working conditions that our female migrant student workers confronted while employed in the service industry. In this part of the analysis, we aim at introducing some of the consequences that a precarious workplace has. The assistant professor of sociology Paloma Villegas reinforced that managers and colleagues take advantage of the participants' vulnerabilities linked to their social categories of inequalities to create a precarious workplace, where harassment can be performed.¹⁴⁶ Questions and comments out of place, disrespectful behavior, control by scary tactics, and pressure and fear are some of the issues we categorized as harassment since we adopted the definition that argues the creation of an intimidating, belligerent, and derogatory workplace.¹⁴⁷

In this aspect, the multiple complex inequalities also have temporal hierarchy influence over each other. Gender, being a female, plays a dominant role as well; however, the other layers affect the inequality of gender. Accordingly, all of our participants mentioned that they have heard *questions and comments out of place* from their managers. For instance, participant Aurelia stated an example of how harassment interlocked with geographical areas and age groups when often her

¹⁴⁶ Villegas, Paloma E. "'I Made Myself Small like a Cat and Ran Away': Workplace Sexual Harassment, Precarious Immigration Status and Legal Violence." *Journal of Gender Studies* 28, no. 6 (August 18, 2019): 674–86, 680.

¹⁴⁷ UNHCR, *Policy on Harassment...*, 3.

former manager would make preposterous comments regarding young and migrant people, and stigmatize them with alcohol and sex, creating a hostile and cumbersome environment for her.

Aurelia: "But he would always be like 'Oh, hey, look at how drunk they are. And they're probably going to go, like, have sex in the bathroom or something. And they're going to like, lose all their dignity' and stuff like that."

A different participant pointed out that her manager would also make these types of comments about young people coming from the same country as hers who would drink alcohol every day. She did not know how to respond, so her only answer was nodding to whatever the manager was commenting on. Nonetheless, she explained how her manager started to make further unnecessary and uncomfortable sexual comments, which remarks that there is an unequal power dynamics as multiple inequalities interlace where harassment is being exerted. In this case, our participant did not know how to react, first, she was not expecting this type of behavior in her workplace; second, she did not want to lose her job and income, so her response was to ignore some of the comments.

Alice: "I was just nodding and saying as you do it when you listen. Then he said something. It was the first red flag because he said something like: 'Are you having sex? Or what? you are ha-ha.' And it was just the beginning because then he was of course like, I was trying to keep that in mind not to say it anymore when he's explaining, but sometimes, of course, I didn't. It's just a habit that you have... So yeah, he was still like pointing that out about like, you know, the sex and everything."

Additionally, she indicated how it did not stop there, that was only the beginning of the harassment patterns, and that the comments just increased in numbers and consistency. Not only does she have to face lies about her salary and contract but also questions from her manager such as 'sit on my lap', or vile comments and analogies about the way she would hold a ketchup bottle, being a resemblance to how she would touch a penis. We could perceive that while she was detailing to us these absurd situations she faced, she felt uncomfortable and confused, and could not associate what was happening with sexual harassment.

Alice: "Because there were some situations, they were both, for example, lying to me about some stupid things. I don't know. It's something, something is weird there. The atmosphere there is like, I don't know, I'm putting sauce on pizza... and he's asking me if I'm holding a dick or what? Like something I don't know, like, or some totally... It was just enough."

A similar case happened to another participant, Giovanna; regardless, besides listening to comments about her body, her situation involved physical touch from her manager's side. What we found interesting about Giovanna's case is that she tried to take importance out of the manager's practices by saying that 'guys' were also touched. Despite the fact that at the time we did not mention the term harassment, she brought it up on her own, albeit without categorizing the circumstance as harassment. However, we acknowledge what Villegas claimed, that sexual harassment can also be a practice of imposing heteronormativity in the workplace.¹⁴⁸

Giovanna: "‘If you were... If you gain some weight, you will be perfect. Like five kilos.’ [...] he sometimes he can touch you like here [shoulders] and like do this massage thing, but he does it also to guys. And he like, yeah, hugs me. But it's not harassing. No, no, no."

The inequality of being a student worker also has its temporary hierarchy shaping our participants' experiences. For example, participant Patricia expressed how her manager used to joke about her receiving a salary, stating that previous employees were never paid as they focused on finding student workers. Villegas cited in her work that humor is a practice that employers can use "to enforce patriarchal power to silence women and maintaining them in a precious position in the workplace."¹⁴⁹ This situation leads to creating an environment where our participant should feel grateful for having the opportunity to receive a salary; hence, she could consider being in a better position than the former student workers at her workplace. Moreover, we understand and interpret this situation as the managers creating an unequal power relation over our participants. Therefore, they expect her to endure all the poor conditions she faced because she is the only student worker that received a salary.

Patricia: "They told me like 'you're the first paid employee, actually, because we always took people from schools for like, internship.'"

These situations where our participants had to listen to comments and questions out of place led to a hostile environment in which *disrespectful behaviors* from their managers' side became a common practice. For instance, our participant Fiona mentioned how she had to endure insults from her manager at her workplace, she categorized his behavior as disturbing as he imposed and

¹⁴⁸ Villegas, *I made myself...*, 680.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 681.

expected from his employees' respect that he would not reciprocate back. She argued that they were mistreated and seen only as 'money machines'.

Fiona: "All he had to say is that it's like you are shit, you know, you are just: 'Look, you're just shit.'"

At the time that our participants decided to not tolerate these situations of precarious working conditions and harassment any longer, their managers would also be violently disrespectful since it meant that they would not have power and control over them. We categorized these behaviors as *control by scary tactics*, which included threatening and intimidating practices. Some of our participants shared how they received frightening messages from their former bosses where they were forced to answer a certain message. Patricia, for instance, received a message stating that she needed to pick up her phone, and once she agreed on meeting with her manager, she stated that she was only screamed at in front of everyone. Again, the employer used the power relation to browbeat our participant.

Patricia: "They said 'pick up your fucking phone' in a text message. [Participant explained what happened once she agreed to meet her boss]. So then, she started also shouting, she just pushes the whole paper. She started shouting and was like, 'you think you're smarter than me', in front of everyone."

Lastly, several of our participants thought or tried to report some of the workplaces they had experienced on. However, due to their situation of fearing not finding another job afterward, and the work environment they were in, some decided not to report them, as our participant Thalia stated. This is not the victim's fault, but it is a combination of not knowing where to search for assistance and support and the consequence of experiencing a workplace with such precarious conditions.

Thalia: "And I was kind of like thinking about actually reporting them. But the thing is, they were really sketchy people, they had drugs around, really sketchy people coming in and out of the shop. And I was just like, I better just leave on a good note."

To wrap up this section of the first data set analysis, we found it relevant to indicate that most of our interviewees resigned from their jobs, except for one who, as previously said, took part in our focus group meeting. Most of them opted to quit since they were not receiving their salaries, which was the primary reason for their job search. We could see how many of them endured precarious

working conditions and harassment, although they did not necessarily characterize these challenges as such, because of their economic situation, educational attainment, and migrant status. We wondered if they would have continued their jobs if they were still exposed to these conditions but were paid. Is that what happens to our participant Giovanna? The second data set analysis evaluates how our participants recognize and acquire knowledge of precarious conditions and harassment at the workplace.

4.2 Acknowledging and acquiring knowledge of precarious working conditions and harassment practices: into financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers' context and perspective.

This section aims to analyze the findings of the second data set gathered throughout the focus group. Firstly, we intend to unfold the themes and subthemes classified based on the participants' acknowledgment of precarious working conditions and harassment. Henceforth, we aim to present how our participants have acquired knowledge on such themes. For us, as female migrant student workers and researchers, analyzing a sensible object of study, it is important to not only present the results as such but to give voice to our participants; thereupon, we decided to present the analysis and empirical findings individually. As before said, our objective is to not only bring their acknowledgment of the circumstances, and how they acquired such knowledge; but also, to share their stories, backgrounds, and sense-making. We believe that the approach to giving our participants space to share their tales, which are unique to them, respects their individuality as well as contextualizes their stories.

As a result, to avoid repetition of the phases carried out in the focus group and their purposes throughout this section, we want to briefly remind the reader what each phase aims to achieve, as has been detailed in the data collection chapter. The first phase, *How would you feel if...?* intended to comprehend our participants' reaction to precarious working conditions and harassing verbal messages through feelings. In the second phase, *What could Lily do*, we targeted to explore how our participants interpreted the situation that *Lily* was in, and how they would act if they were coworkers. The organizational learning approach plays a role in this section as we look into the discursive practices that our female migrant student workers use to share and communicate their knowledge through feelings, descriptions, and personal experiences, first in an

individual matter, to later engage collectively with the rest of the participants in the focus group.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, we also adopted the approach that “inquiry is a way to enact knowledge that does not begin with language and conscious reflection [*instead it arises*] in the senses, the bodily feelings and emotions, which may be turned into words in order to provide a way to learn from inquiry”.¹⁵¹ Additionally, the distribution of knowledge and intersectionality lens permits us to study how knowledge of precarious working conditions and harassment are acquired through one’s experiences or someone else’s, where the participant can make this last one their own. Further, to analyze how power relations are impacted when multiple inequalities intersect and shape each other.

Multiple inequalities and Danka’s perspective

Danka who arrived in Denmark in August 2017 to study for a bachelor’s degree, explained to us that in September of the same year, her father informed Danka that due to his scarcity of money on affording two households, she needed to find a job as soon as possible as a means to cover her living expenses in Denmark, on the contrary, she would have to return home. The inequality linked to her economic situation instantly impacted Danka’s situation. Nonetheless, when she decided to look for job opportunities, she aimed for cleaning jobs in hotels because, according to the rumors shared by some of her friends, the restaurant businesses were deprived in Denmark.

Danka: “Uh, you know the restaurant business can be very shady and the cleaning business can be very shady as well. So, I knew that I had to go to hotels because that’s the place that usually has, you know, the labor unions[...] they have fairly good, you know, it’s not the greatest work. It’s not the best job ever, but they have fair enough conditions, you know.”

Furthermore, she points out that from the beginning she was aware that she would not find an office job; therefore, knowing what she knew, and making the other’s experiences her own, her rationale for the job choices was that she needed to take into consideration her financially disadvantaged condition, her young age, and lack of former working experience, together with her father’s pressure. We can see how Danka’s knowledge about the restaurant services avoided her

¹⁵⁰ Gherardi, *Organizational learning...*, 55.

¹⁵¹ Easter-Smith & Lyles, *Handbook of Organizational...*, 34.

from working in these places; however, it did not prevent her from undergoing poor employment conditions.

Danka: "You know, on one hand, I was having my dad pressuring me into finding a job, and on the other hand, the knowledge that I just should go for the best possible way. I knew I would not be able to find an office job. That was for sure. So, I just had to be open to anything, but I knew restaurants are, you know, hit or miss. So, I just went to hotels."

When exposed to our stimuli during the first phase of our focus group, Danka realized that nowadays her first impressions and emotions are completely different from the ones she would have felt five years before, if exposed to the same exercise. Once asked to further explain the differences, Danka said that *worthlessness* would be her first reaction five years ago, but after experiencing similar situations, she emphasized that *anger* and *suspicion* are her current feelings. Moreover, Danka says that presently, she would not only investigate deeper any unusual hints regarding her work such as contract, working hours, and wages, among others but also refuse to work under these conditions, if she had the financial means to do so. Consequently, younger Danka would not have paid attention to signals of irregularities that she might have encountered in the workplace.

Danka: "I think that it just made me think that, you know, like those responses that I've given now; are probably different from what I would have said five years ago when I just came here."

Nowadays, being suspicious and willing to investigate more before taking for granted the imposed relevance of the situation;¹⁵² five-years-old Danka is acting as Schütz calls the 'well-informed citizen' by trying to investigate zones of relevance for her, knowing that the outcome of the situation she is about to get involved with, could potentially affect her interests and life.¹⁵³ Continuing in this line, when reasoning the motives for the different answers she would have given five years earlier, Danka points out some cultural societies' expectations of women in Eastern European countries, stressing that in her perspective, these women do not have a high level of self-worth.

Danka: "It's just that, you know, right now would be a little bit more curious, like what's going on here. Like, why are we doing this, in this way? But I think that if you're a woman, especially coming

¹⁵² Schütz, *The well-informed...*, 473.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, 473.

here from the eastern countries, you just don't have that level of critical thinking. You don't have that level of self-worth."

Further, we asked Danka to clarify why she called out Eastern European countries, and what she understood when making a difference between these and other EU countries. She states that in her opinion, people in these countries are taught to follow rules and remain silent, without questioning the reasons behind the orders and whether they are acceptable or not.

When exposed to the exercise in the second phase of our focus group, our participant reinforced what the literature and our empirical data have been stating that the absence of knowledge regarding their labor rights plays a big role when exposing them to precarious working conditions. Although she is aware of this absence, she enhances that the point is not to blame the victim, and these are not excuses for managers to take advantage of migrant student workers.

Danka: "The reason why they're doing this is because people coming to Denmark just don't know what they can do, they don't know their rights, they don't know the law. Which doesn't excuse him, obviously. I mean, they should know what's going on in the country that they're going to, but that doesn't mean that everyone is doing that."

Danka argued that one way *Lily* could face these poor conditions exposed to the stimuli was with courage, meaning that she should be direct with her manager, clarifying that if *Lily* did not receive her payment, she would not continue to work. Although Danka's first reaction was associated with the courage to speak up, she raises the concern if *Lily* has the financial conditions to challenge her boss, because in doing so, there is a possible risk of losing her job.

Danka: "And I'm just wondering if she has that security to do that, because I think that a lot of people, you know, they do, they are upset about their situation. They do know that it's not right, but they also can't afford losing that job that is paying at least something."

Hereby we can see that Danka acknowledges, as it happened to her, that inequalities of financial situation impact one's decision, and that most of the time being dependent on an income and the urgency to obtain one, difficult to exit a precarious workplace. Bearing in mind the intersectionality approach, when analyzing Danka's perspective, we wonder if the experiences she shares with us are the result of dominant gendered expectations and conventional roles that society

enforces over women in her home country;¹⁵⁴ thence, gendering Danka's experiences herself by referring to cultural expectation towards women in Eastern Europe.

Multiple inequalities and Aurelia's perspective

Our second participant, called Aurelia, is an EU student and has been living in Denmark for seven years because her parents decided to move due to a working opportunity. Aurelia completed high school, a bachelor's degree, and now is about to finish her master's degree, also in Denmark. When looking into her working experiences within the country, she has worked in several places in the service industry; however, at the moment she has been employed as a student worker in a global consultancy company located in the north of Denmark. Aurelia is one of our former interviewees, she participated in the first project, and some of her experiences were shared in the first data set analysis.

During the first exercise of the focus group, Aurelia underlines the feeling of being *cheated*, whilst explaining that she knows, from previous experiences, that employers often take advantage of migrant women, because they lack the knowledge of the rules, and usually do not report complaints further. Here once more, we want to make clear that this absence plays an additional aggravation on the vulnerabilities of these victims, not either as reasons or justifications for them to undergo such conditions; therefore, we are not attempting to blame them for such outcome.

Aurelia: "They can get away with a lot. So that's why they choose immigrants. [...] foreigners do not know the rules [...] I worked at a bar just for a couple of months that only hired women or immigrant women [...] they [employers] know they can get away with a lot because girls are not going to stand up. Maybe she will, but most likely she will be a bit more emotional or scared."

When looking into Aurelia's interpretation of the situation, we point out that after experiencing precarious working conditions, she acknowledges the vulnerability that lays on migrant women. Hence, it was from her personal experience, becoming what Schütz called 'eyewitness', that she acquired the knowledge of the interrelated power relations of racism and sexism,¹⁵⁵ exerted on herself and some of her coworkers. Following, during the second phase of our focus group,

¹⁵⁴ Danaj, *Women, Migration...*, 174.

¹⁵⁵ Schütz, *The well-informed...*, 476.

Aurelia's approach was to try to understand the situation according to the Danish rules and law, also highlighting the importance of student workers being part of an A-Kasse and trade unions.

Aurelia: "Yeah, I was just thinking that she already signed a contract within 24 hours. I don't know what the A-kasse would do, but they would have suggested that she send them her contract so then they could put in a clause saying any extra hours."

Even though she has been living in Denmark for several years, and completed most of her education here, and she recommends all student workers to be part of an unemployment insurance fund, she is not fully familiar with the regulation; hence, she compares the exercise with a similar situation a friend of hers went through. In this situation, Aurelia is acting as *the human on the street* with Schütz's approach; she trusts that the institutions will help but does not understand how they will do so.¹⁵⁶ In this case, when she brings previous knowledge acquired from someone else's experience, she tries to make sense of *Lily's* options and possibilities to confront the situation.

Aurelia: "I've heard a similar story to this [similar to Lily's] but I feel like if you signed a contract then, it's not so easy to figure these things out."

Accordingly, when thinking about *Lily's* options, Aurelia brings back that not everyone has the chance to quit their jobs to avoid undergoing precarious working conditions and harassment, as they might not be able to afford their living costs without an income. Consequently, she acknowledges that many student workers end up in a *toxic* environment, which is precarious working conditions in Aurelia's words, while commonly the majority of them do not find work settings where they feel comfortable.

Multiple inequalities and Indira's perspective

In our third participant's situation, who we named Indira, the social category of inequalities linked to the geographical area since she is a non-EU student, intersect, shape, and aggravates her economic situation, reflected for example in the number of jobs she needs to handle while still being a student. To introduce Indira's background, she moved to Denmark two years ago to study for her master's degree. Currently, besides working in two different restaurants, she is also self-employed cleaning private houses to cover her tuition fees and basic living costs. We want to remind the reader that for non-EU students, as mentioned before, Danish universities are not free

¹⁵⁶ Schütz, *The well-informed...*, 465.

of charge. Furthermore, she calls attention to the fact that living expenses in Denmark are considerably high when compared to her home country.

We shall now commence with Indira's experiences shared throughout the focus group. In the first place, she brings the feeling of *weirdness* when debating precarious working conditions situations and expounds doubts on the reasons behind a place that hires only female migrant workers, underlining the migrant status of the employees. Additionally, she inquires if these reasons are attached to the power exerted on migrants, where the intersectionality lens opens to the power dynamics around being a migrant.¹⁵⁷ Although she did not explicitly state it in the following excerpt, Indira wonders about the vulnerable position a migrant worker is susceptible to.

Indira: "I wrote [weirdness] and that's because it doesn't make sense. Why would you hire me only for the power over a migrant worker, for the power?"

Indira explained that if she were *Lily's* coworker, she would raise concerns to the manager about the treatment given to *Lily*. Furthermore, she describes that while these precarious conditions and harassment are happening to *Lily*, she sees it as something that might also happen to her and other colleagues. This relates to her own interest, according to Schütz, meaning that one's motivation to speak up and solve problems stems from one's personal interest; hence, actions.¹⁵⁸ For this reason, the whole group of workers should try to solve the problem together, as they all might be exposed to the same issues.

Indira: "I can only see my future, and that's not very good. So this would be a red flag for me already."

Once again experiencing a 'socially derived knowledge' Indira learned from other colleagues' experiences that a certain restaurant in the city (we are not exposing names here for ethical purposes) was strongly recommended to avoid as a workplace; therefore, she bypassed working there.

Indira: "So I don't know. I mean, yeah, I also heard about the [X] restaurant. I don't know exactly what, but I knew I had recommendations not to work there from a lot of people."

¹⁵⁷ Mutola, Sianga, Ngambouk Vitalis Pemunta, Ngo Valery Ngo, Ogem Irene Otang, and tabi-Chama James Tabenyang. "The Plight of Female Cameroonian Migrant Sex Workers in N'Djamena, Chad: A Case of Intersectionality." *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 24, no. 2 (April 2022): 430–36, 435.

¹⁵⁸ Schütz, *The well-informed...*, 467.

Furthermore, when exposed to a workplace harassment scenario, Indira was the only participant to recognize the situation by identifying it as harassment. Accordingly, we asked her to further explain what she meant by the wording used, and she stated the following.

Indira: “Uh harassment is something that another person does against your will [...]It [the scenario’s case] is not sexual, it’s just you never know. He might have just intended to give her a massage and nothing else. So, the ideas are not quite clear. But what I can see from it is that she is denying and he’s still doing it, which is a form of harassment.”

As we can see in the previous extract, Indira’s knowledge of harassment as unwelcome conduct carried out against someone, will be clear in essence and similar to the UNHRC¹⁵⁹ approach. Further, Indira shared with us that she acquired this knowledge by witnessing several cases of harassment while working in her home country for a non-governmental organization that supported women undergoing these conditions. In addition, she emphasizes that such abusive circumstances against them are recurrent in Nepal, a patriarchal society, although very few women report it.

Indira: “So we come in the 21st century and speak about women’s rights and we are equal and stuff like that. If we don’t take the first step in being equal, then there’s no point asking it from anybody else.”

In Indira’s perspective, the ideal approach to be taken by victims to oppose harassment and precarious working conditions is to report the situation to authorities and talk about it to others, in doing so, one can prevent others from undergoing the same conditions. The theory of intersectionality permitted us to understand that inequalities are experienced differently;¹⁶⁰ therefore, Indira’s proposition to *Lily* is simply based on her personal interpretation of the circumstances.

Multiple inequalities and Giovanna’s perspective

As mentioned before, Giovanna, is our second participant that has also participated in the previous project and who is still employed part-time in the same workplace. Giovanna is Italian, has been living in Denmark for four years and at the moment, she is finishing her master’s degree. When

¹⁵⁹ UNHCR, *Policy on Harassment...*, 3.

¹⁶⁰ Verloo, *Multiple Inequalities...*, 224.

discussing the first phase, Giovanna identified the situation with the feeling of *worthlessness*, we wanted her to unfold this feeling; but she could only make sense through discursive practices whilst repeating that she did not feel worthy enough.

Similar to Aurelia, Giovanna acts as the *human on the street*, while still not comprehending in totality what A-kasse and trade unions can do to support student workers; she believes that they can do something leastwise because she identifies *Lily's* situation as illegal, when not getting the correct salary. Although she acknowledges that students have free access to these unemployment insurances and trade union support, she does not consider her own situation as precarious because in contrast to *Lily's*, her manager 'respects' her contract; hence, she is content with that.

Giovanna: "But they respect my contract and everything, so I'm OK with that, but he's like a rude person."

Once exposed to the harassment phase, we could notice that the stimuli made her feel closer to *Lily*, where Giovanna started to see herself through *Lily's* experience. She highlights the importance of knowing the type of person one is dealing with before you confront or speak up. For instance, she mentions several times that her boss is extremely rude to her, which affects her position to confront him because she explains how uncomfortable it is for her to handle these types of situations. On one hand, she minimizes the issues of precarious working conditions when there is no breach of her working contract; on the other hand, Giovanna turns emotional while relating to us that she has undergone similar 'touchy' situations from her boss, and comments about her body, as we have seen and discussed some of them in the first data set analysis.

Giovanna: "He would tell me like, mind your fucking business. And I'm a person who doesn't like to hear these things, and I get very sad, and I can't speak anymore. So, I think that in my case, in my workplace, work environment, I couldn't say anything because he is very proud, this boss and I don't think I can handle that like, so I think I would talk to the man, the other manager [Lily's manager] because we have different ones."

As we can see, Giovanna differentiates her boss from *Lily's* although both have acted the same way when commenting about their bodies and giving unwanted massages. A point that caught our attention is how Giovanna mentions the feeling of owing something to her boss; therefore, using this as a reason to endure situations of harassment. She recognizes and gives her boss authoritative power over her role, as an employee. Although she agrees that these types of comments are

inappropriate for a workplace, she feels powerless to respond to him, diminishing the remarks of him being nice to her.

Giovanna: “When you have like the authority, your boss doing that to you, you feel almost that you owe something to him. That you want to... You feel that if you say no, it’s almost like disrespecting him. Like, that’s me. When I was a bit younger, this happened to me many times and I would say ‘oh, thank you’, and I would smile. I wouldn’t be angry or completely reject it because I felt almost that I owed it to him because he’s my boss and he is my authority and he’s just being nice to me in a way like in my psychology, I’m almost thinking that it’s normal and that he’s just very nice to me. Just giving me compliments, although it’s not appropriate at work if he comments ‘Oh, I can see that since you’ve come from summer, you have shapes now’ and I’m very sensitive to these things. Well, it happens all the time.”

Having noted this, we wonder if her tolerance is related to the inequalities linked to her financial situation, which we categorized as financially disadvantaged when depending on an income to finish her studies. Nevertheless, it is still an open question as we did not try to dig deeper into this topic because Giovanna was highly emotional and needed to excuse herself from the meeting for a moment. Bearing in mind that this caused a *microethical situation*, not only as researchers but as student workers that have undergone similar situations of harassment,¹⁶¹ we opted to prioritize her well-being over the findings we aimed to gather.

To summarize this section, we want to emphasize that our participants’ overall attitudes regarding precarious working conditions and harassment were unfavorable throughout the focus group meeting, with many stating that the situations (stimuli) presented to them, caused uncomfortable and anxious feelings. Furthermore, while all our participants have been exposed to these conditions at work, the process in which they have acquired knowledge of these topics is, first, through others’ statements, friends or family’s advice, and general conversations about colleagues’ experiences, these informal channels provide them with useful information that they make or build upon their own; second, witnessing and experiencing these situations themselves. The intersectionality approach also played a role in their interpretation and acquirement of such pieces of knowledge, in the way that the inequalities of being a female, student, and migrant shaped

¹⁶¹ Picos dos Santos, Renata. “Practices of Resisting Harassment: an autoethnographic study”. 2021. Internship internal project carried out during the 9th semester of Techno-Anthropology master’s degree.

and molded how these understandings have been derived to them through others, and how the vulnerabilities our participants are susceptible to exposed them to these poor circumstances.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this section, we would like to proceed with the practical work discussed throughout this research study. To respond to our main research question, *how knowledge of precarious working conditions and harassment can be socially shared, aiding to prevent financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers from undergoing these situations?* It is fundamental to unfold in the first place our three sub-questions and the proposals collected throughout the co-designing phase with our participants. As a result, during this chapter, we will expand on the literature review utilized to support our empirical data, the analysis of our findings, and how the theoretical frameworks played a role in interpreting our gatherings. Lastly, we will present the co-design strategies, which aim to be a first step toward organizing practices against precarious working conditions and harassment in the service industry. For the reader's awareness and concern, the prototype, the persona, together with the two scenarios used during the focus group meeting will be available in Appendices A, B, and C.

Now to respond to our first sub-question, *how do financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers become targets of harassment and precarious working conditions in Denmark?* we shall briefly bring in what the literature review asserted. As we have observed there are different reasons why Denmark has become such a popular place for migrant students to complete their higher education. We want to remind the reader that some of the reasons are the prestige that Danish universities have and the highest educational student grant (SU) that is available in Europe,¹⁶² which is restricted to only Danish and EU students. Additionally, the majority of students who migrate to Denmark are female, accounting for more than half of the total of long-term migrant students enrolled in higher education in the country.¹⁶³ Moreover, as stated before, these migrant students necessitate finding a job to cover their living expenses, and in the case of non-EU students, to bear their tuition fees; and due to their, usually narrowed working experiences combined with their studies and the urgency to find an economic foundation as early as possible, they often end up working in part-time jobs in the service industry. Furthermore, we have remarked

¹⁶² Wilken & Dahlberg, *Between international...*, 1350.

¹⁶³ Statistics Denmark. *Education and Research...*, Accessed on April 29, 2022. <https://www.statbank.dk/10335>.

at the beginning of this research that the service industry is known for its exploitative practices.¹⁶⁴ Bearing this in mind, our participants who are female migrant student workers and have a dependency on a part-time job, are exposed to several vulnerabilities due to the social categories of inequalities linked to gender (being a female), economic situation (financially disadvantaged), migrant status (non-Danish), age group, geographical area (EU and non-EU students), educational attainment, and professional experience. Consequently, these multiple inequalities aggregated to the industry being unscrupulous directly impact their experiences while working in the service industry, exposing them to precarious working conditions and harassment.

The intersectionality approach facilitated the visibility of multiple inequalities and the intersections among them, which the strongest form of visibility of inequalities is by naming them, analyzing their junctions, and giving voice to the victims.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, we are starting the discussion by naming and intersecting these multiple inequalities, to later give voice to our participants. Accordingly, we want to remind the reader that throughout this project the social category of inequality linked to gender (being a female) is dominant in our research while in “temporary alliance with other inequalities”;¹⁶⁶ further, all the other complex inequalities have a temporal hierarchy over one another, intersecting and molding each other.

As we have observed during the analysis section, the context that these multiple inequalities play a role, exposed our participants to precarious conditions and harassment in their workplace. On one hand, we have seen that they are vulnerable to endure challenges such as working without a fixed contract, they are not provided a clear schedule, meaning that their managers expect full availability from their side, in addition to a heavy workload, they have to deal with delayed salaries or not at all. On the other hand, whilst enduring the poor conditions, they are also susceptible to workplace harassment, sexually and psychologically, alongside inappropriate comments and questions, dealt with their managers’ control by scary tactics, and other challenges abovementioned. The intersectionality approach enables us to understand not only gendered practices but also how the intersection of the economic situation (financially disadvantaged) migrant status (non-Danish), geographical area (EU and non-Eu students), age group, professional experience, and student attainment together with the lack of knowledge of labor rights, affect and mold differently their experiences in the Danish service industry,

¹⁶⁴ MacPhee, *Finding their way...*, 396.

¹⁶⁵ Strid et al., *Intersectionality and...*, 559.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 560.

endangering them to dire conditions, that we emphasized so far.¹⁶⁷ Because our participants are dependent on an economic foundation to cover basic living expenses and educational fees, they are exposed to patriarchal practices of control and considerably gendered norms casting their experiences within the service sector.¹⁶⁸ Danaj argued that migrant women are subjected to practices of precarity and gendered/racial limitations, such as gender discrimination, precarious conditions and harassment at the workplace, and sexual objectification.¹⁶⁹

Another important stage that contributes to answering our main research question, is to comprehend on one hand, *how female migrant student workers acknowledge precarious working conditions and harassment*; and on the other hand, *how female migrant student workers acquire knowledge of harassment and precarious working conditions*. Firstly, when looking into the knowledge acquired through their *own experiences*, in some cases, they were quick to categorize the situation of precarious working conditions as such, and even called it a ‘toxic environment’. To illustrate, Aurelia acknowledges the vulnerability that subdues migrant women, attaching it to a lack of knowledge about labor rights and employment status that one as a migrant does not have when arriving in Denmark. Whereas, in the circumstances of harassment, most of them did not classify the issues as such; for instance, our participant Giovanna justifies her manager’s practices by pointing out that he also did it (unpermitted massages) to her male colleagues, even though, she continuously emphasized during the focus group that the same situation of her being touched in her workplace was rather common conduct from her boss. Being the first participant to introduce the unequal power relation dynamics between her, as an employee, and her boss, being this last an authoritative figure; hence, Giovanna feels almost as owing him something. The balance of power in their relationship is the boss’ capital and Giovanna’s labor, which have different influences because although Giovanna needs the capital to survive, her boss’ needs for her labor force are minor to the survival of the business or his own. This is an example of the social power structure derived from the intersection of the multiple complex inequalities that are oppressively imposed on Giovanna.¹⁷⁰

Indira, on the contrary, ranked the stimuli of harassment as such right away because she has seen those situations quite regularly in her home country. Therefore, she thrusts that *Lily* should

¹⁶⁷ Anthias, Floya. “The Intersections of Class, Gender, Sexuality and ‘Race’: The Political Economy of Gendered Violence.” *International journal of politics, culture, and society* 27, no. 2 (2014): 153–171, 166.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 166.

¹⁶⁹ Danaj, *Women, migration...*, 188.

¹⁷⁰ Collins, *Intersectionality’s Definitional...*, 14.

not accept and endure such conditions; nonetheless, she also expounds that in her opinion, it was not sexual harassment since there was no penetration. What is interesting from Indira's perspective is that, although she caught the harassment conduct right away, when it comes to the precarious working conditions, she says that due to her situation, being non-EU and having to also pay her tuition fees, she is willing to endure such circumstances because otherwise, she needs to go back home and surrender her studies. Here we can observe once more how the social inequalities of the economic situation and geographical areas affect her working experience enormously, to the point that she is pushed to continue in such a position.

Danka, in particular, already raises the knowledge she acquired through *others' experiences*, making it her own. She explained how being warned that often restaurants and bars business is precarious working places, she avoided applying for positions in such sites. Besides, Danka shares with us that five years ago she would have taken for granted the concerns related to work since they were out of her interest; however, presently the feeling of curiosity, shared through discursive practices, is brought up because any outcome from circumstances related to work can potentially affect her zone of relevance, as we already mentioned.¹⁷¹ We want to accentuate that at any point in our lives we are all, what Schütz called the human on the street, the expert, and the well-informed citizen.¹⁷² To exemplify this idea, we want to bring Aurelia's case, in which she behaves simultaneously as a well-informed citizen when sharing the knowledge of the importance of trade unions and A-kasses while being a student worker; but, also acts as the human on the street in lacking the knowledge of what exactly can be done to help.

After we have analyzed how the vulnerabilities resulting from the intersection of multiple inequalities expose them to become targets of precarious working conditions and harassment, together with their knowledge, interpretation, and acquisition of these topics, we shall provide the last step to answer our main research question, which we intend to do so by giving voice to our participants during the co-design in the focus group. This method is the last stage for the strongest form of visibility of our participant's inequalities, according to the intersectionality approach, because when giving them the opportunity to raise their concerns, they are representing other victims that cannot speak for themselves.¹⁷³ Accordingly, the final component of the focus group activity was to present our participants with a rudimentary prototype that they could expand and

¹⁷¹ Schütz, *The well-informed...*, 467.

¹⁷² Ibid, 466.

¹⁷³ Strid et al., *Intersectionality and...*, 565.

reflect upon. We wish to remind the reader that the prototype contained different sections such as the residence and CPR number, understanding your labor rights as an international student worker in Denmark and their relevance, which would expand into a contract, salary, working hours, and defining your scope of responsibilities and the importance of understanding what can go wrong. Together with the importance of trade unions, A-kasse, SU, and Skat institutions. Overall, the prototype was well-received among the participants and the essence of the initial ideas was further developed through their collaboration.

In this regard, one of the ideas that caught our attention was how the elements of intersectionality played a part when our participants proposed to have a speaker who should represent the targeted public: females, migrants, young, students, and workers. They state that if the speaker is a representative and staff member of the university, the message will be endorsed since it is someone who has been through similar difficulties. Unconsciously, they were describing both the well-informed citizen and expert from Schütz, as they understand that the speaker will have the prestige because in this case will be representing a Danish institution, to share such knowledge, being this information part of the system of intrinsic relevance to the receivers, which is then, what Schütz calls socially approved knowledge.¹⁷⁴

Another participant pointed out the relevance to keep in mind those students who cannot attend the meeting in person; thence, suggesting the online availability of this welcoming meeting. She also identifies that a key stakeholder to partner with the university, in this example, could be with the International House North Denmark, as she argues this last one already has several arrangements and different programs for international students and expats. Further, they propose the recurrence of the welcoming meeting throughout the academic year to reach the largest number of people, as well as reinforcing the message throughout the year, as education in their opinion takes time. Based on the practice approach, we understand that the changes we aim for, both researchers and participants, can be achieved by a group of actors' adjustments in their activities, when practicing them repetitively.¹⁷⁵

Expanding on the proposals, they highlight the relevance of not only stopping sharing the knowledge of precarious conditions and harassment at the workplace, with only master's students, but also passing it to bachelor's, and even high school students because they emphasize that these

¹⁷⁴ Schütz, *The well-informed...*, 478.

¹⁷⁵ Gherardi, *Organizational Learning...*, 50.

younger pupils do not consider what could go wrong when entering the Danish labor market. For instance, bringing back the elements of intersectionality, our participants are not only worried about this public lacking knowledge of their labor rights but also understand the urgency of finding a part-time position when first arriving in Denmark; thence, the need for an economic foundation. They also stress the importance of tailoring the message to the target audience; for example, they discuss the appeal of creating a teaser video, which we designate as a communication strategy. Although we will not focus on such details in this area, we want to state their enthusiasm for moving forward with the co-designing project.

To sum up, the literature, as well as our empirical data, displayed the precarious working conditions and harassment that financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers face when considering the intersections of numerous inequities, and how they interpret and acquire knowledge on such topics. We believe that naming the inequalities, identifying their intersections, and giving voice to our participants, through a collaborative design phase, was the most complete practice to aiding in preventing financially disadvantaged female migrant student workers from undergoing these situations they have faced in the Danish service industry.

Now, we shall acknowledge some of the limitations of this study, as those are present in every research. Firstly, we would like to point out that although we have considered a broadened literature, the scope of this project, as well as the empirical data collection was restricted to one city in Denmark; therefore, the conclusions cannot be generalized to other areas around the globe. The majority of our participants were White, except for one being a woman of color; therefore, this study does not contemplate how they are exposed to racism as one of the multiple inequalities. Likewise, the age group studied throughout this project was limited, being the participant's age range between nineteen and thirty-eight years old, this implies that we may be missing female migrant student workers who also have handled such dire circumstances at work that are outside of this age range. Furthermore, the way we categorized the challenges that they faced as precarious working conditions and harassment is not necessarily complete. There is room for other types of challenges that can also be classified as such; despite that, our data sets did not contain these categories. Lastly, we only investigated one industry, the tertiary sector; hence, we cannot assume that female migrant student workers in other occupational areas would face similar situations of precarious working conditions and harassment as our participants.

This project opens different approaches that could be considered for further research. Among several possible topics, we point to a complete design project, where the prototype, along with the feedback from our participants, can be further developed and tested, covering all the essential phases for full development. Besides, there is a possibility of studying the roles of female migrant workers as bystanders since our empirical data also encompasses a large material on the theme; yet we faced time limitations to cover it. Lastly, when reflecting upon possible practices toward a solution to precarious working conditions and harassment in the service industry, we acknowledge that it is substantially relevant to combine not only knowledge around the themes, but the emergence of strict regulations accompanied by regular inspections. Said that we want to bring one last citation that we believe explains brightly our last statement, for that we recurred to the sociologist Gherardi's argument that "stabilization in materiality takes place through anchorings in discursive and technological practices, in the artifacts of the practice, but these are not unconnected from the cultural process that a practice institutionalizes by attributing ethical and aesthetic values to the modes of doing and stabilizes them as a normative system (creating further artifacts of the practice such as codes, norms, auditing systems, laws). Finally, the practice is further stabilized by being embedded in a texture of practice that the action connects and recalls.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Gherardi, *Organizational Learning...*, 56.

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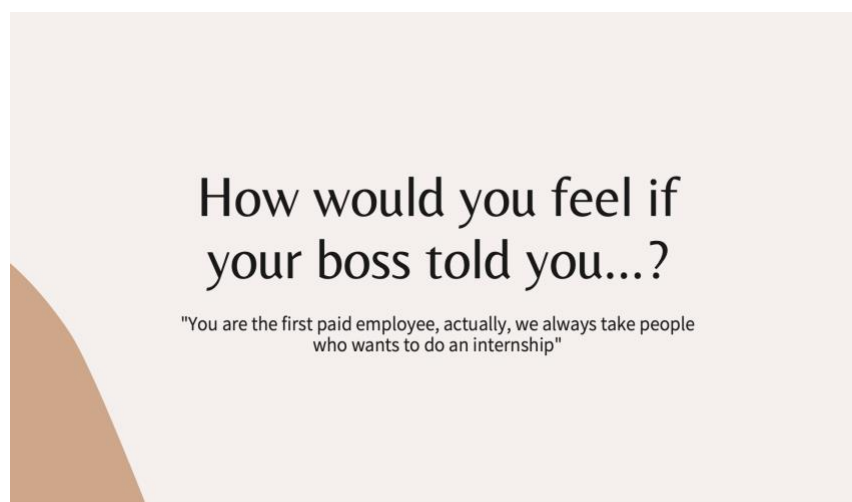
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Appendix A

Positioning cards

The following positioning cards were presented during the ‘*How would you feel if...?*’ phase of the focus group. The first four positioning cards represented precarious working conditions phrases, whereas the other four contained verbal messages about harassment. All of them were extracted from real scenarios. Please see section 2.1 to further understand the process behind the goal of the focus group meeting and its phases.



How would you feel if your boss told you...?

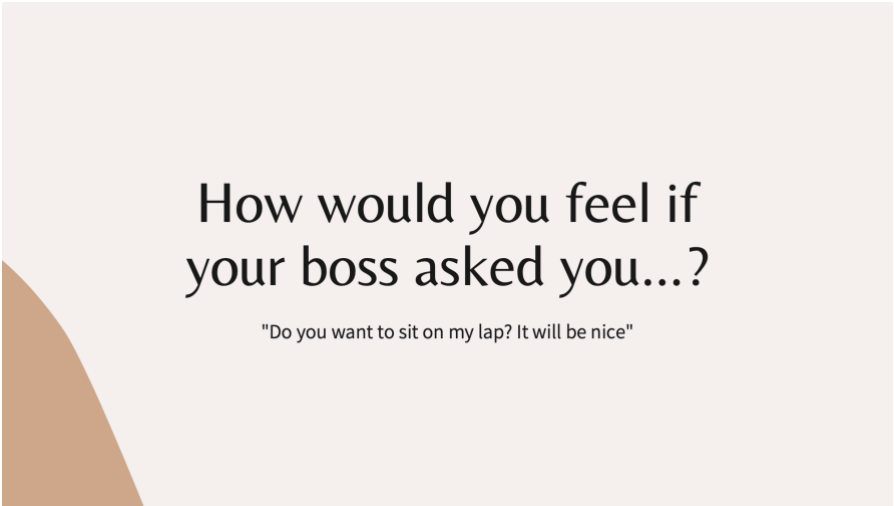
"Since you're going to pay so much in taxes anyway, we could just pay you 50 DKK an hour through MobilePay so you don't pay the taxes"

How would you feel if your boss told you...?

"I only hire migrant women to work at the bar"

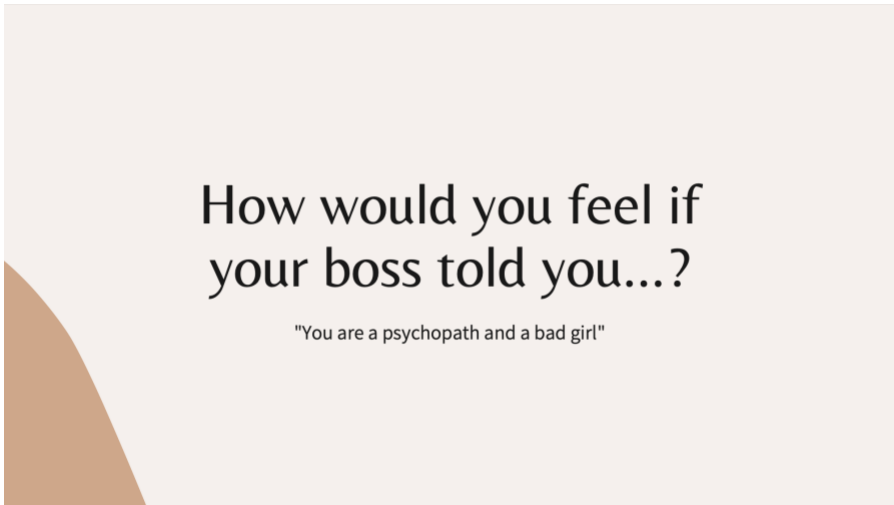
How would you feel if your boss told you...?

"All you (young people) do is to drink vodka and do drugs everyday"



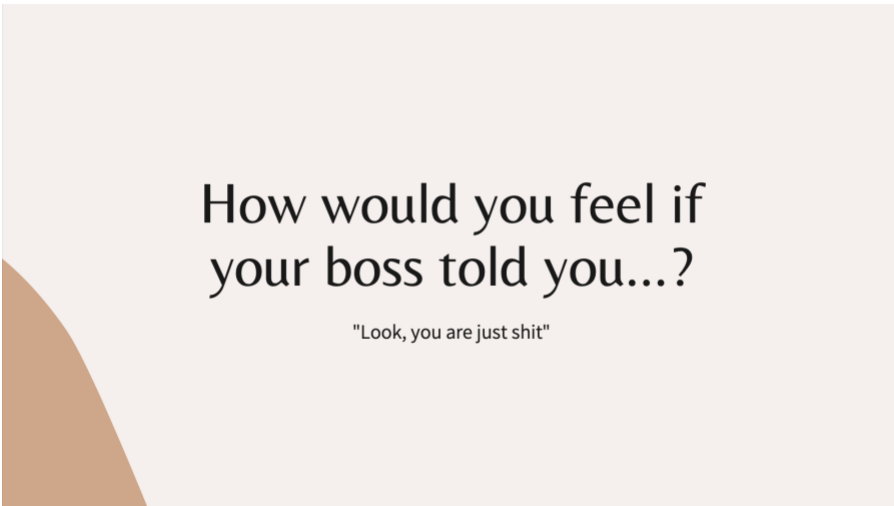
How would you feel if
your boss asked you...?

"Do you want to sit on my lap? It will be nice"



How would you feel if
your boss told you...?

"You are a psychopath and a bad girl"



How would you feel if
your boss told you...?

"Look, you are just shit"

Word cloud Menti

Once our participants were introduced to the positioning cards above mentioned we asked them to submit to the website Menti the first feelings that came to mind. The following word cloud is the result of the activity. The first represents the feelings of precarious working conditions, whilst the second indicates the feelings toward harassing verbal phrases.



Appendix B

Persona

The subsequent persona was introduced to the focus group's participants as stimuli, during its second phase, '*What could Lily do?*'. The persona was utilized to represent the shared experiences of the first data set's respondents. This persona was created based on an intersectional lens, with gender, economic situation, and migrant status as a framework, her name is *Lily Silva Adamski*.



Scenarios

During the second phase of the focus group ‘*What could Lily do?*’, alongside the persona, two scenarios describing existing behaviors were presented to our participants. The first one regards a situation of precarious working conditions and the second one represents harassing behaviors. Before the dialog of each scenario, there is a brief description to contextualize the respondents. Both scenarios included the above-said persona, *Lily Silva Adamski*.

The illustration depicts a conversation between a manager and Lily. The manager is represented by a small icon of a man with a beard and a dark suit, while Lily is represented by a small icon of a woman with long dark hair and a green scarf. The background is a light gray with yellow abstract shapes. The text is presented in a series of speech bubbles, alternating between the manager (dark blue) and Lily (orange).

Scenario 1

Lily has a contract of 25 working hours monthly. However during the last month, Lily worked 55 hours, covering up on last call minute shifts she was asked to. Her Manager pays Lily for the 25 hours as in contract, but she tells him:

Manager, last month you have asked me to work in different shifts, and according to my control, I have worked 55 hours.

This is the agreed salary, are you not happy?

It is not about being happy, I have worked much more than 25 hours. You can see from my own control shift that I have worked 55 hours.

Ow Lily, please stop complaining, you already have your SU. What do you want me to do?

Please pay me the number of hours I have worked

I am sorry, you know the situation is not easy for me at the moment, I can not pay you more.

Scenario 2

Lily's Manager usually makes comments about Lily's body and also her colleagues' bodies. He likes to give the girls a massage and ask them to sit beside him. However, the boss does not treat the boys in the same way. He never gives them a massage or asks them to sit closer. One day her Manager comes to Lily and says:



Today you are looking so good. I love your Brazilian curves. Come here, sit closer.

Thank you, but I am fine where I am.



Ow Lily, stop it, you need to relax. Let me give you a massage.

I am fine, please don't bother.

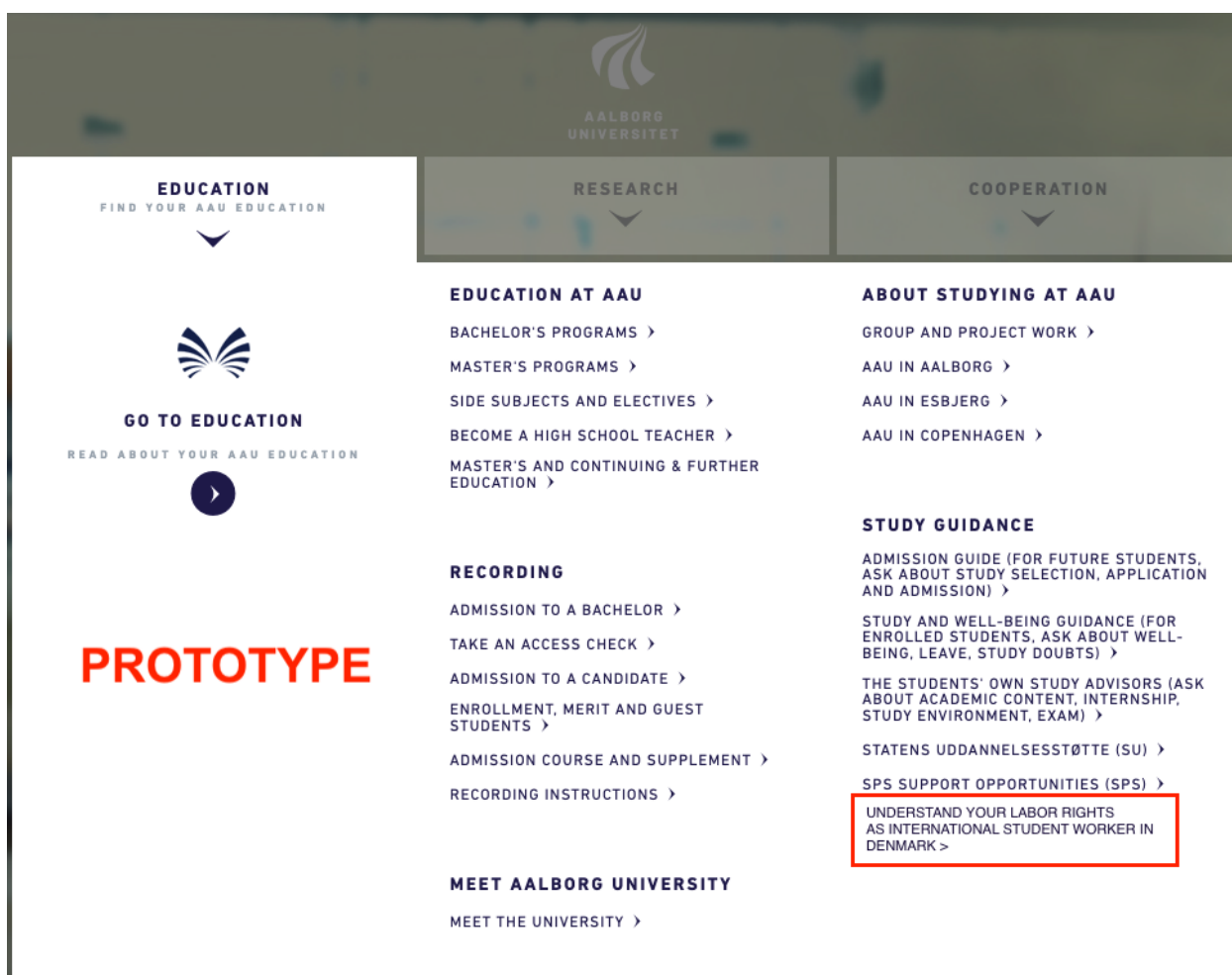


The manager comes closer to Lily and gives her a massage.

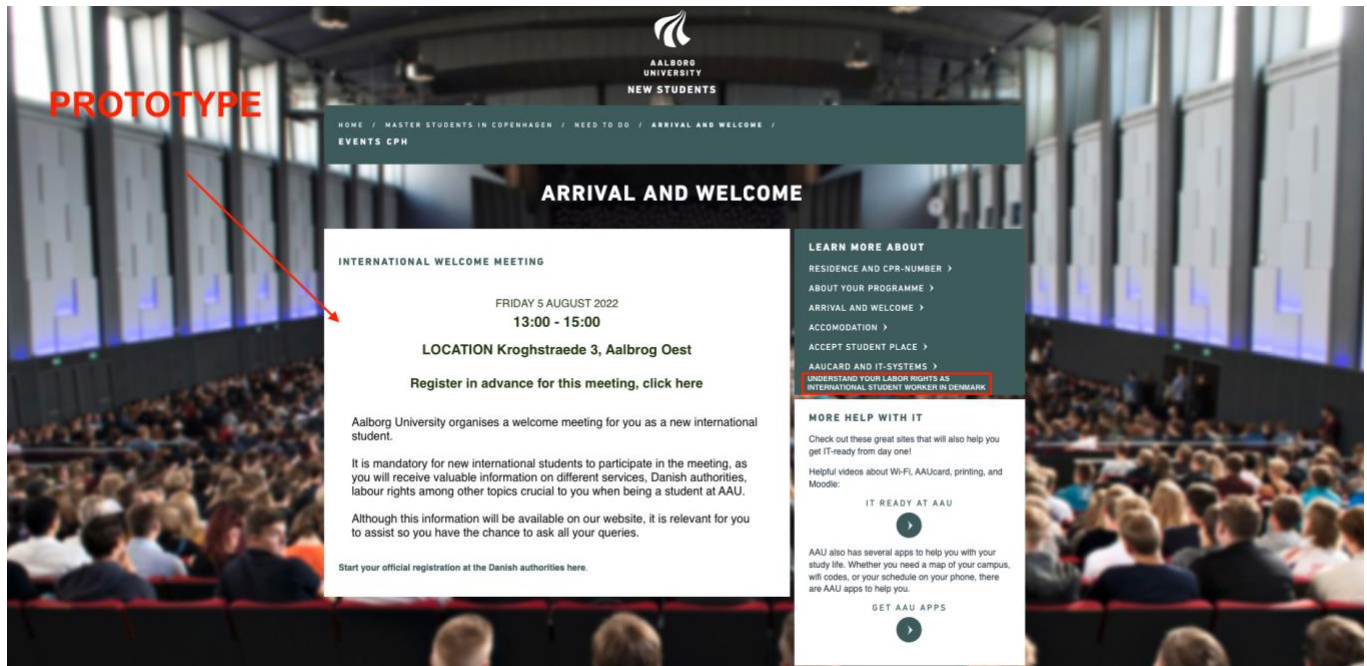
Appendix C

The third phase of the focus group aimed to expand on an initial prototype design where collaboratively with our participants we discussed the importance and relevance of having available information regarding their labor rights, and the roles of Danish institutions, among others (see section 2.1 for further details). The following pictures are the prototypes we showed to our participants. It is fundamental to remind the reader, once again, that the following prototypes were not assembled from a partnership between us and Aalborg University.

Information on the website (prototype)



Information on the website 2 (prototype)



Welcoming International Meeting (Prototype)

INTERNATIONAL WELCOMING MEETING

Friday 5 August 2022
Kroghstræde 3, 9220 Aalborg at 13:00 - 15:00

After collaborating with Renata Picos and Andressa Souza to research the conditions that young migrant students face in Denmark, Aalborg University has decided to take the initiative and provide new international students with information on their residence, labor rights, and unemployment benefits, among other topics, in order to prevent precarious working conditions and harassment at work from the beginning of your studies.

Therefore, we take this opportunity to call all the new international students to attend our International Welcoming Meeting on Friday 5th of August 2022, at the Kroghstræde 3, 9220 Aalborg at 13:00.

In the meeting, we will discuss the following topics:

1. Residence and CPR number
2. Understand your labor rights as an international student worker in Denmark and their relevance.
 - a. Contract
 - b. Salary
 - c. Working hours (min/max)
 - d. Defining your scope (tasks)
 - e. The importance of understanding what can go wrong: Harassment
3. Trade Unions: Relevance and different types of Unions.
4. A-Kasse: Unemployment benefits
5. SU & SKAT institutions

We recognize that as international students, you are exposed to a variety of (financial) conditions and that you begin looking for work as soon as possible. As a result, the purpose of this conference is to advise you, to familiarize you with Danish institutions, and to inform you of your rights, because we want you to have the best possible experience working and studying in Denmark. This information will, however, always be available on our website, and you are welcome to contact us if you have any questions, worries, or need someone to talk to about your current situation.