



BANGLADESHI STUDENT MIGRANTS IN DENMARK



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Abstract

Through many years, the process of migration has been practiced among human beings for various purposes, primarily for the pursuit of a better life. Student migration is a specific type, wherein students migrate to another country to obtain superior education and to study at more prestigious institutions. However, numerous other reasons can also motivate migration. The aim of my MA thesis is to explore the reasons and purposes of student migration from Bangladesh to Denmark, including how these students maintain various kinds of relationships, such as social or cultural, across borders, and how they navigate daily life in a nation with a different culture and society.

For the purpose of this thesis, interviews with seven student migrants from Bangladesh were conducted. Narrative analysis was employed to explain and understand the in-depth meanings of these interviews. To analyze the situation comprehensively, the theories of transnationalism, navigation, and social reproduction were utilized.

As a result of my analysis, I have found that students maintaining cross-border relationships and networks significantly shape their experiences, particularly in the job market. It has also been found that they face unequal treatment not only in the labor market but also within their educational institutions. This has led to the generation of findings and suggestions that might help improve the experiences of migrants. Despite the struggles and hard work, some positive insights have emerged among the migrants, which will benefit them throughout their lives.

Keywords: Bangladeshi student migrants, Denmark, motivation, network, transnationalism, social reproduction, Daily life, navigation, inequalities, EU/non EU

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Abbreviation

NA	Narrative analysis
SR	Social reproduction
IOM	International Organization for Migrants
EU	European Union
EEA	European Economic Area
SIRI	Styrelsen for International Rekruttering og Integration
Visa	Visitors International Stay Admission

1. Introduction

Migration is a very ancient practice of human beings, undertaken for purposes such as securing food, shelter, and other basic needs (Hanlon and Vicino 2014). There are two types of migration: internal migration, where individuals move within a country, and international migration, where people cross national borders (Hanlon and Vicino 2014). The migrants can also be categorized in various ways, such as voluntary or involuntary, labor migrants, etc. (Hanlon and Vicino 2014). Student migrants are those who cross borders in pursuit of education.

According to a report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Bangladesh ranks 6th worldwide in the list of migration-producing countries. In 2020, it was reported that 7.4 million Bangladeshi migrants were living abroad (Anon 2021). In 2022 alone, the number of student migrants from Bangladesh was approximately 50,000 (Alamgir 2023). Various factors drive this significant movement of students, including the pursuit of quality education, family influence, and other considerations (Basu 2023). Additionally, students worldwide migrate with the desire to learn new skills, improve language proficiency, experience different cultures, and, most importantly, study at higher-ranking universities to gain a competitive edge in the labor market (Bessey 2012).

The primary concern of my thesis is to identify the motivations behind Bangladeshi student migrants studying in Denmark. Additionally, the purpose includes investigating the relationships and ties these migrants maintain that shape their experiences during the migration period, and examining whether these migrants receive equal treatment compared to the general population, particularly in educational institutions and the job sector. Bangladeshi student migrants will be referred to as "students" throughout this thesis.

The thesis structure begins with a background section that describes the general concepts and reasons for student migration from Bangladesh. The next part will cover theoretical concepts, where I will briefly discuss transnationalism through the lens of (Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1992), (Vigh 2009) concept of navigation, and social reproduction theory as articulated by (Backer and Cairns 2021), (Bhattacharya 2017), and (Kofman 2012). In the methodology chapter, I will explain why I have chosen these theories for my thesis and how and why I conducted qualitative interviews with the students. I will also discuss my positionality during the research and provide a thorough outline of the analysis, including a short description of the seven interviewees whom I interviewed for this thesis.

Through the analysis section, I will interpret and analyze the stories of these student migrants and their experiences using the theoretical frameworks. Finally, I will conclude my MA thesis by presenting the findings and any suggestions that arise. Based on my research, the questions for my study are: What motivates students from Bangladesh to migrate? Are there factors beyond

academic pursuits influencing their decisions, and how do they navigate the daily life challenges while maintaining overseas relations in a new country?

2. Background

In the last 15 years the number of students going abroad from Bangladesh has tripled in number and will reach almost 50000 only in year 2022 (Alamgir 2023). They are mostly going to USA, Canada, UK, Australia, Japan, and in Europe (Alamgir 2023). The government is trying to encourage the education sector and the number of university both private and public has been increased as well. Since 2008, 81 new universities have been established to tackle the increasing number of students (Alamgir 2023).

There could be many reasons behind the migration of students that includes family decisions, family member studying abroad, teachers, and high ranking of foreign universities in world rankings, and thinking about a better education system (RAHMAN n.d.). Students often think that the education structure and ranking are better in foreign universities, so it attracts students (Basu 2023). The increasing number of students going abroad after having more universities in their home country leaves questions for the journalists and researchers about the reason.

Throughout an interview one specialist said that the number of buildings are increasing but not the quality of education is getting better (Alamgir 2023). So just the increasing number is not able to provide a good study environment for the students. Also, one of the former student of a renowned university stated that during his study he felt like he was not learning anything. He was just studying and sat for the exams. So, he has decided to go abroad (Alamgir 2023). Students also things that going to study abroad will provide them very concise and in depth knowledge that can lead them to better jobs in the competitive job market (Basu 2023).

Based on these things, students chose to migrate to a different space. All the students have their very own motivations for studying abroad. However, there are some common aspects about the study structure and visa issue that led up to students making decision to choose Denmark among other countries in the north. From the primary source of this thesis, it has been confirmed by the students that the tuition fees on average is lower than other countries of popular choices. They said on average the tuition fees for universities in Denmark starts from €7000 per year. Where on the other hand a university in England can cost them near €11000, USA around €10000 (Kerr and Wood 2023a; Shearing 2024). Also, they have mentioned that the both the visa processing time is quicker and system is easier for Denmark comparing to all others. In addition, the students do not need to proof any funds before moving to Denmark. So, over the years it has become one of the popular choices.

Besides the decision-making process, Bangladeshi student migrants do face many types of challenges during their stay in foreign countries for many reasons. Firstly for language barriers as students in general do not study in English back in home country, so student feel less confident and face problem joining classes, understanding lectures, writing projects, and participating class related activities (Mahmud 2023). Also, the culture of Bangladesh is not any extend similar to countries student moves. So they find it difficult to adjust in a total different environment which effects their very general daily life movements such as grocery shopping, using public transport etc. (Mahmud 2023). Besides that student also face difficulties managing expenses of tuition fees and their living as things are way too expensive in abroad comparing to bangladesh (Mahmud 2023). Also being living alone in a foreign country left student with loneliness and home sickness which effects their academic performance and mental health (Mahmud 2023).

However, in the analysis part the precise reasons will be discussed through the data material received from few of the current students. Also, their overall experiences will be looked through by their own explanations.

3. Theory

3.1. Migration:

Migration can be defined as the movement of people from their place of origin in search of better opportunities in the economic, social, and political sectors. Migration is a journey that consists of many steps and stages. From decision-making to settlement, the entire process can be encompassed within the definition of migration (Castles and Miller 1998). It involves relocating to a different country to improve one's economic, social, or political circumstances. The concept has been explained to know the situation in a better way.

3.2. Transnationalism:

Transnationalism, according to (Schiller et al. 1992), is the identity, ideology, and practice of race, ethnicity, culture, and sometimes religion within national boundaries. People from the same nation share common identities and practices. Transnational migrants, while adopting the host country's nationalism, continue to bear their own, creating a dual nationalism that can lead to insecurity and tension. They seek legal and social rights in the host country but are never fully seen as citizens, nor do they retain their previous roles in their home country. This duality raises questions of belonging for transnational migrants.

This conceptualization of transnationalism will help frame the study of Bangladeshi students in Denmark, exploring their motivations, academic pursuits, and daily life challenges in a new country.

To understand the ties of students with their home country, abroad, and host country, I will introduce transnationalism theory. In the 1990s, researchers (Schiller et al. 1992) identified the need for a reformation and addition to existing theories and concepts to better define and study migration, which they named transnationalism. Transnationalism is a framework to understand the migration process, where migrants maintain ties with people in their home country, during migration, and after settling in the receiving country (Schiller et al. 1992). According to these

researchers, transnational individuals migrate with specific thoughts from their home country and always maintain ties with their home country through various relationships and means.

Considering the students moving from Bangladesh to Denmark, they leave behind family and friends but maintain connections with them. Additionally, after moving, they find people from the same nation in different sectors, forming new relationships.

3.2.1. Economic Ties:

Transnational migrants hold different identities in both the host country and their own country simultaneously, such as racial, ethnic, or national identities. For example, one day a migrant might join a meeting in the host country as a citizen, and the next week they might visit their own country. As the researchers stated, "The same person might be joining meetings in workplaces for their rights and, on the other hand, might be sending money back home to buy property or opening associations, schools, and clubs back home." To understand this concept better, the researchers used the word "simultaneously." Here, "simultaneously" means that migrants/transmigrants hold different identities or relationships in two different places or countries at the same time. While they are part of the labor force in the receiving country, they might also be leaders or providers to their families in the home country. Relating to transnationalism, researchers mention that transmigrants are more than merely working-class members of the labor force in the receiving state (Schiller et al. 1992). Transnationalism is not limited to transferring goods, materials, or money.

3.2.2. Social and Cultural Ties:

Transnational individuals contribute to making the world a global village by carrying their culture with them and sending aspects of the culture from the receiving country back home. Migrants often strive to follow their own culture while living in another country by organizing small festivals, gatherings, and other activities with people from the same nation (Schiller et al. 1992). They also create a cultural flow when sending goods to their families. For example, when a

migrant sends an expensive gift to a family member back home, it not only shows their social ties but also conveys the culture of the receiving country in which the migrant resides (Schiller et al. 1992). As the researchers mentioned, when a person from New York sends a barbecue grill back to their home country, it not only demonstrates affection for their family members but also reflects New York's culture, such as the types of food they eat to celebrate occasions and parties (Schiller et al. 1992). Through these exchanges, migrants share culture and maintain their family ties back home.

3.2.3. Identities:

Migrants assume different roles and identities in their home and host countries (Schiller et al. 1992). A migrant who participates in ethnic group meetings in New York and contributes to the city's development might return home to join community meetings and discuss the development of their nation (Schiller et al. 1992). Similarly, migrants from Haiti who attend meetings with colleagues advocating for labor rights in New York might also buy land and act as landlords in their home country (Schiller et al. 1992). This duality illustrates how the same person can be an oppressed individual fighting for their rights and wages in the host country while being a powerful landlord in their home country.

3.2.4. Class, Nationalism, Race, and Ethnicity:

(Schiller et al. 1992) defined class, race, ethnicity, and nationalism within the framework of transnationalism. According to them, both race and ethnicity are social constructs that categorize people or groups. Race pertains more to physical characteristics and abilities, which can create inequalities in the migration process, while ethnicity relates to cultural practices, language, religion, and heritage. When people migrate from their home countries to a host nation, they bring their own culture and ethnicity, and they belong to a specific race. Maintaining ties with their home country helps them preserve their ethnicity, and having people from the same nation in the host country allows them to create their own groups and spaces to practice their culture (Schiller et al. 1992).

Race often identifies the nation people belong to, such as Indians, Africans, or African Americans. Racial differences often correlate with the economic status of a country. Thus, when people from lower economic countries migrate to developed countries, they often appear different from the nationals of the host country. These differences create inequalities and distinctions among transmigrants in the host country, as the host country has its own cultural norms within its boundaries (Schiller et al. 1992).

Class is defined based on economic factors, including education, income, and profession within the nation and society. Both race and class create boundaries among people and nations. However, in the context of students in Denmark, class will not be a primary focus, as they are not labor migrants, and their economic situations can be set aside (Schiller et al. 1992).

Nationalism, according to (Schiller et al. 1992), is the identity, ideology, and practice of race, ethnicity, culture, and sometimes religion within the borders of a nation. People from the same nation share a common identity, ideology, and practice of race, ethnicity, and culture. When transnational migrants move to a host country, they not only try to practice the host country's nationalism but also carry their own nationalism due to their ties, family, culture, and race. This dual nationalism places them in a space of insecurity and tension. They are neither true nationals of the host country nor do they fully belong to their home country anymore. This situation raises questions of belonging for transnational migrants. They seek legal and social rights and attempt to adopt the identities of the host country, but they are never fully regarded as equals to the citizens of the host country. They no longer play the same role in their home country as they once did (Schiller et al. 1992).

3.3. Navigation

Navigation, as explained by (Vigh 2009), is a concept widely used by anthropological researchers to describe contexts of instability, insecurity, and social change. While the literal meaning of navigation is to sail, in a broader sense, it refers to moving in changeable situations. It involves

movement in a dynamic environment; during migration, for example, the situation and space are temporary for migrants, yet they strive to live within this space by adopting strategies of navigation. Analytically, the concept encompasses the movement of people within their changing society or surroundings and the ways they shape themselves to move within these situations.

In the case of Bissau in 2000, when the city was plagued by drug-related and other criminal activities, people still sought ways to live their lives through cultural and political activities. Similarly, for an illegal migrant living in Lisbon, navigation in everyday life involves securing meals, jobs, and seeking recognition through various means. Navigation not only denotes physical movement but also indicates the strategies people use to ease the complexity of their environment.

Navigation can be explained in two ways: first, how people try to adjust and engage with the situation they are in; and second, how they attempt to change their location or improve their possibilities in a way they desire. Navigation contains a temporal element, as it describes our movement towards social goals. It is a process of planning or strategizing, where people consider possibilities and dangers as they work to change their present circumstances into a potential future.

Through the lens of navigation, I will examine the lifestyles of students and how they try to navigate their own situations, whether favourable or not, to discover their strategies and ways of managing difficulties. I will uncover the processes and strategies students adopt to secure a better social life and avoid their current struggles (Vigh 2009).

3.4. Social Reproduction (SR)

In the article by (Kofman 2012), she explains that social reproduction is not solely about biological reproduction but also encompasses care, social, and educational necessities. She discusses SR through various approaches. According to the feminist approach, SR involves the reproduction

of human beings and includes parenting skills. Anthropological approaches divide SR into two parts: human reproduction and social relationships. However, Kofman attempts to define social reproduction within the context of the migrant care sector, including labor, family, and education. She conceptualizes social reproduction as the sum of activities and relationships that people engage in to maintain their lives.

In this context, students are primarily part of the education sector and partly engaged in the labor workforce. Therefore, I will use the lens of social reproduction as analyzed by (Backer and Cairns 2021), who examined social reproduction in educational institutions. Their analysis is mainly based on secondary data from various books and literature, particularly the concepts of renowned scholars such as Durkheim, Pierre Bourdieu, and Jean Passeron. They noted that social reproduction is evident in Bourdieu's work through the lens of social inequalities. Through sociological concepts, they observed that during the 1950s, the French higher education system exhibited inequalities that could not be masked by the notion of equal educational opportunity (Backer and Cairns 2021).

Despite the provision of opportunities to all, students often face unequal treatment due to differences in class within institutions. Furthermore, various literature and concepts reveal that education does not eliminate societal inequalities for other races in the host country and does not necessarily improve economic conditions for these groups. Their analysis indicates that individuals from underdeveloped parts of society, often migrants, symbolizing different races, face various forms of inequality within schools. Thus, societal inequalities extend beyond society and into educational institutions. There are inequalities within educational institutions based on students' race, class, and gender. Through curriculum content or teacher expectations, schools often reproduce existing social categorizations. Consequently, students may experience limited opportunities within the system due to these factors (Backer and Cairns 2021).

In this context, class refers to societal divisions based on income and economic conditions. Race refers to physical appearances, where people from different countries exhibit distinct physical characteristics that differentiate them from nationals of host countries. Gender lines typically

refer to inequalities between males and females. However, Backer and Cairns did not specify the types or forms of inequalities that exist.

(Bhattacharya 2017) explains that labor production and social reproduction are interlinked. She poses the question, “If workers’ labor produces all the wealth in society, who then produces the worker?” Labor production creates capital, but it is social reproduction—comprising family, healthcare, education, shelter, and other necessities, which she labels as the “basket of goods”—that supports laborers in producing labor. The basket of goods varies from person to person, as everyone has different needs.

In terms of labor production, Bhattacharya discusses it within the capitalist framework, highlighting how employers gain more capital by discriminating against laborers through low wages and long working hours. Employers exploit the working class, knowing they must work hard to fulfill their needs. Here, the inequality lies between the working class and the upper class (employers) (Bhattacharya 2017).

Through her lens, the educational sector can also be explained for the purpose of my research. Like labor, education is productive. Just as labor produces capital, education produces knowledge and experiences that students can use throughout their lives, including in the job market. All educational institutions have a structure that students follow during their studies (Bhattacharya 2017). There may be inequalities within this structure or system, which I will investigate during my analysis.

(Bhattacharya 2017) also addresses gender inequalities, noting that women who take care of their families and fulfill household needs are engaging in unpaid labor, which is often neglected. They are criticized for staying home and are perceived as having the luxury of rest. This highlights gender inequalities in society, as women have limited opportunities in the job sector due to their domestic responsibilities. Additionally, there are invisible boundaries within the same race and religion, contributing to inequalities.

For the purposes of this project, we will focus more on racial discrimination rather than gender-based analysis. Students can be examined in a similar context to care workers to better analyze the situation. (Bhattacharya 2017) also explains that social reproduction involves producing labor or engaging in other activities to meet family, education, food, and shelter needs. Within the capital and societal structures of a country, there are differences in opportunities for workers.

(Bhattacharya 2017) also mentions that social reproduction encompasses the social conditions necessary to maintain the workforce, including producing goods and services. She explains labor production and reproduction through the kinship of family. Labor power is produced and reproduced through families, with bonding and biological reproduction. Families support laborers by providing food, shelter, and physical care for the next day's work. She also examines the relationship between capital and labor.

(Bhattacharya 2017) elucidates the inequalities faced by care workers, particularly migrants, in terms of race and nationality. She highlights how migrants are often excluded from governmental policies and funds due to their non-citizen status in EU states. Many migrants working in the care sector, as revealed through interviews, endure long hours and overtime without proper compensation, which jeopardizes their own social reproduction needs.

For the sake of their mental well-being, migrants often seek solace in social activities such as visiting friends and attending church, which provides them with peace of mind. Analysis suggests that most migrants have friends or acquaintances from their own country residing and working in the same nation. This social network may influence newcomers to migrate to the country and may also facilitate job placements within the sector. Moreover, the shared experience of working in the same sector may lead to mutual assistance among migrant workers in securing employment opportunities (Bhattacharya 2017).

Furthermore, low-paid workers are often compelled to work extended hours, which not only exacerbates inequalities in pay scales but also hinders their ability to engage in personal activities vital for social reproduction, such as spending time with family and friends. The lack of opportunities for advancement confines them to low-paying jobs, impeding their capacity to

pursue other reproductive activities in their personal lives. Exhausting work hours leave them with little energy or time for their own personal reproductive endeavors, such as nurturing familial bonds (Bhattacharya 2017).

4. Methodology

4.1. Data Collection

To conduct this thesis, primary data was collected through interviews with students about their motivations of migration, experiences inside educational institution and classroom of here in Denmark, experience in the job sector, and how they are balancing everything together.. To conceptualize and explore these experiences and understand and unfold their experiences, the theories of theory of transnationalism (Schiller et al. 1992), navigation (Vigh 2009), and social reproduction (Backer and Cairns 2021; Bhattacharya 2017; Kofman 2012) have been used. Literature from scholars has been used as secondary data to establish the theoretical framework, construct other chapters, and to examine the experiences of the students.

4.2. Theoretical framework

Transnationalism indicates people having ties across national borders; to their home country, bringing them to the receiving country, and maintaining ties with nationals in the receiving country (Schiller et al., 1992). This theory is used in the MA thesis because of the nature of these student migrants. The students have their own motivations to leave their country and always maintain different types of relations with their home country, either through family, friends, remittances, or development activities. They also find people from their home country in the receiving country and maintain various kinds of ties such as social ties, economic ties etc. that help them in their daily lives by different means. Additionally, they have some sort of connection

with the community of the receiving country as well. Through the theory of transnationalism, the stories of students will be studied in this thesis.

Social reproduction theory is also used to have in-depth knowledge of students' experiences in different sectors such as labour space, educational institutions etc. during the migration period. As the students come from different cultures, societies, and countries, they might face different treatment in various sectors of their daily lives. Social reproduction will help examine the students' experiences not only when they work but also in their educational, social, and personal lives. Through the explanation of social reproduction by (Backer and Cairns 2021; Bhattacharya 2017; Kofman 2012), I will try to explain if the students face different treatments that shape their lives and experiences not only in labour but also in other sectors of daily living.

After moving to a different country and living in a different culture, society, education system, and workplace, the students are finding their own way to survive in such situations. Through Vigh's theory of navigation, their way of lifestyle has been studied to know how they are moving in their moving space and secure or insecure circumstances. Through the lens of navigation, students' ways of managing their everyday life in between all their experiences will be explained and explored.

4.3. Interview as method

The qualitative method is employed in research to delve into people's experiences and emotions (Naderifar, Goli, and Ghaljaie, 2017). It serves as a form of data collection that provides in-depth information about the focus area through various methods such as interviews, observations, focus groups, and reviews (Naderifar et al., 2017). Interviews, in particular, are a method of inquiry that aids in uncovering individuals' personal experiences and analyzing human behavior (Seidman, 2006). When exploring educational institutions and social science fields, interviews are often deemed the most effective method for gaining insight into people's experiences (Seidman, 2006).

Interviews are frequently utilized in social sciences research to obtain comprehensive knowledge of the field. They are especially appropriate when the researcher seeks to explore experiences or identities (Alsaawi, 2014; Fina, 2019). Moreover, when addressing social issues, interviews provide valuable information from informants or interviewees regarding such situations (Seidman, 2006). Given that my topic revolves around exploring the experiences of student migrants, conducting interviews is imperative to understand participants' experiences and gain a comprehensive understanding of the overall situation. By interviewing them, I have acquired insightful knowledge about their experiences, from decision-making processes to their current situations, enabling me to analyze the situation with greater depth and understanding.

Interview can be defined as an open conversation of a topic between two or more people. There are several types of interviews used conducting research; structured, unstructured, semi-structured, and focus groups. Among them semi-structured type has been used conducting the thesis for its nature. Semi-structure interviews are combination of unstructured and structured interviews where the questions are pre-planned and open ended, also can be moderated with the flow of the conversation of interviewee. Here the interviewee has full freedom to talk in between the questions. During this type of interviews the researcher has outlined their topic and avoids the structured interview for exploring into the topic deeply (Alsaawi 2014). According to scholars, the interviewer must structure the interview format keeping few things in mind; to keep the question short, simple, and natural, interviewee must be provided with maximum time to talk, impose question to make and way situation, has to avoid biases and being neutral, and the interviewer must be acting like interested in the explanation (Alsaawi 2014). During the interviews, the interviewees were given full freedom to talk their own in between the questions. My questions were open ended that gave the interviewees chance to explore themselves while answering them. Also after each interviews, I have asked if they have anything else to share that they think might relevant or helpful for the research.

Before taking the interview, the researcher must choose the interviewee either randomly or by choice (Alsaawi 2014). To find interviewees, I have given a post in a facebook group of student

migrants from bangladesh in Denmark for participants to contact me if interested. The purpose was to have random participants. I was open to any students currently studying in Denmark and mostly came here before last spring semester. Besides that, I was also looking for people who are interested to share their migration experiences. However, as a result of insufficient responses, I had to use the snowballing method where I had contacted the people I know to help me find others for the purpose of my thesis (Parker, Scott, and Geddes 2019). They are not like friends, but I knew one boy as neighbour and he helped me to find others. So during making this thesis both random and selected participants were presented, which goes according to (Seidman 2006) as well, that there is no such genuine random selection. In terms of number of interviewees, it has to be observed by the interviewer. The number might be what he thinks sufficient for the research or whether he starts getting the same information from the interviewees (Alsaawi 2014; Seidman 2006). 7 students has been interviewed for the purpose of conducting this thesis. Among them 6 were male and 1 female. The number was selected for limited time period of research and availability of students. It was hard to manage them for interviewing as the responses from students were very poor in number and not everyone out there showed interest spending time. Each interviews was about 40 to 50 minutes long on average and they were conducted through online calling. One of the interview was conducted via Facebook Messenger call and other 6 was through Whatsapp call.

For better use of the information from the interviewees, the interviewer must be prepared with tools to record audio or video versions of the interview for further use. As only taking notes leaves chances of missing information so the interviews were recorded as well. There are quite a lot of information that was not possible to wrote down during the interview and taking so much time for nothing might made it less interesting to the interviewee (Alsaawi 2014). Also taking notes might not catch the same speed. There are also chances of missing information in notes. Also the recording can be and had been heard more than once to gather all the information. Also it can be stored for further use of study with permission. Before starting the interview, following ethics of interview, I have explained my whole idea and research field to the interviewees. Also each of the participants were asked for permission before recording. As it is the duty of the interviewer to make a safe and convenient environment for interviewees ease, I have tried to act friendly and

passing my own experiences sometimes so that they can feel ease. After conducting interviews, the researcher have to make good use of the interviewees information by using the information leaned, transcribe them to the closest extend, and make sections according to them (Alsaawi 2014; Seidman 2006). The interviews were conducted in their own language “Bangla” for a better understanding of experiences and to make it more comfortable for the participant. Later I translated the interviews in English. I must ask open ended questions to make them share about their experiences. For making them comfortable, all the interviews were started with a friendly conversation asking about their days and family if any. Sometimes it was hard to make them talk about their experiences as some of them tend to answer in single words. Such as, when I ask them how you describe your work environment, they answer, “good”. So I have ask “why” in return to make them explain their answers.

It is a time consuming and difficult task for the interviewer from starting to make concept to incorporating it into the research. The interviewer is responsible and incharge of the transcribing, he can transcribe it as it is or can play with the meaning of words as well. Also, sometimes the interviewer might be influenced by the information and that can affect the overall outcome of the research (Alsaawi 2014). As per ethical issues, there are many factors that questions the credibility of interview as method. There are chances of biases while imposing questions and make use of data. Also the identity and behaviour of researchers can also influence the answers (Alsaawi 2014).

4.4. Narrative Analysis (NA)

Narrative analysis Involves uncovering stories shared by participants and exploring how these narratives have shaped their experiences (Weatherhead, 2011). In this method, the stories of participants serve as the focal point, influencing the direction of the research. NA facilitates the exploration of the meaning embedded within participants' stories or experiences through their narratives. It is a method of understanding and describing participants' statements based on their unique situations and circumstances.

Unlike other research methods, NA does not adhere to specific rules; rather, it relies on the researcher's interpretation and framework construction. However, the self-positioning of the researcher can influence the interpretation of narratives during NA (Weatherhead, 2011). Given the objective of exploring the profound meaning within interviews, I have opted to use NA.

4.5. My position within the field of migration

Reflexivity is a very crucial part of qualitative research. Researcher's own experiences and biases can always influence the data material specially in case of interviews and observations. The researcher should always be aware of his participation and can mention his situation and position whether he/she has any contribution, influence, or participation in the research. Also while thinking about reflexivity, the researcher can ask himself how and why he has chosen the topic/field of research (Patnaik 2013). I will explain my self awareness and position what (Patnaik 2013) called Introspective reflexivity. I am myself a student migrant from Bangladesh pursuing my masters degree. During my whole study period, I have struggled a lot maintaining the balance between my study, work, and personal life. While searching for jobs, I have been discriminated against because of language and limited working hours as per my immigration rules. During my internship in 9th semester, I had no permission to have a job. The internship has counted as a job and it exceeded my limited working hours. I believe my own experience has influenced me to write my thesis on such an issue having it in mind that students don't get equal treatment here in Denmark as other EU students. Though I am a representative of the community of my research field, I have tried to be neutral throughout my research specially while conducting the interviews but as a student migrant myself, I was not able to maintain it. As a migrant myself helped me to understand the experience better as when they say "education system or culture in our country" they did not need to explain the terms. However this also imposed pre perceptions of experiences of the students and it did influence me to ask triggered questions that sometimes lead the students to talk about their struggles more than all other types of experiences. As (Patnaik 2013), I have tried to note down the answers during the interview mostly, and in other cases as soon as possible after interviews to avoid my own reflections and influences. I have tried to not hint anything during interviews. However, while asking the questions or explaining the theme, I might

have done it the way that gives the interviewees a way of answering them. I was being played the role of a researcher during the interviews rather than a mere student migrant. I have tried not to include any of my experiences in my thesis. It is solely based on the data collected from the participants, however while imposing questions to the students I did share my experiences with them that might have influenced their answers.

4.6. Themes of Interview

To conduct the interview, several open-ended questions were prepared based on six themes. These themes served to gather different information relevant to understanding the field better and helped shape the entire research.

- **Motivation for Moving:** This segment explored students' conditions and situations in their home country, their choices, and the factors that forced or influenced them to move. It helped me understand whether economic reasons or other factors motivated them to move.
- **Reason for Choosing Denmark:** This part unveiled the immigration system and its accessibility, including any differences in moving to other countries. It also covered why they chose Denmark as students.
- **Experience After Moving:** This section examined the participants' expectations versus reality and how they navigated a different country, education, culture, and workplace.
- **Experience in the Workplace:** This section provided insights into workplace environments and how participants found their way into the Danish labor market. It also explored opportunities and treatment in the labor market and differences compared to EU citizens.
- **Academic Progress:** As the participants are student migrants, this section assessed whether their main purpose was being fulfilled and if they were satisfied with the process.
- **Living Environment and Balance:** Finally, participants were asked about their living space, lifestyle, and how they managed everything to understand their balance in life and personal experiences.

4.7. Structure of analysis:

The analysis chapter will be divided into two parts. In the first part all the participants' experience from making the decision of moving to living their life in Denmark will be explored. I will divide analysing this part through each participant and will consider more than one person in one section if they have similar experiences. In this part I will use transnationalism and navigation theory to explain their ties and way of navigating in their own choice.

In the second part I will unfold the part of their experiences that explains them facing differences in different roles of their lives and explain with the theory of reproduction.

I have interviewed a total of 7 people. Below I will introduce each students with a random given name with a short description.

1. Nil, male

- He has come to Denmark looking for work-life-balance last september with his wife and 2 year old baby. He is now doing his masters, working in McDonald's part time.

2. Zed, male

- Is a single student. Came to Denmark in september 2022. He is doing his thesis from business course. Right now he is working in a cleaning company.

3. Sher, male

- Came here with scholarship. Is a single student and for scholarship grants doesn't need to work

4. Simba, male

- Is a single student. Doing his masters and living with someone else from his country to manage expenses.

5. Sandy, male

- Came to Denmark with his wife. He is working in a restaurant part time. manage to have an internship in a renown NGO from next semester.

6. Adil

- Is a bachelors student in a university in denmark but the course is mainly regulated by a university in UK. the tuition fees is real high so he is Working more than restricted hours to fulfil needs.

7. Helene, Female

- Has dreamed doing her masters in a foreign country. She came to Denmark with her husband. Living her life fully and doing things that she likes to do.

5. Analysis

In this chapter, I will delve into the insights gleaned from the interviews with the 7 participants to provide a comprehensive analysis of their migration experiences. Firstly, I will examine how migrants establish and sustain connections in national, international, and transnational spaces. I will explore the significance of these ties in facilitating various aspects of the migration process and ascertain whether the motivations for migration vary among individuals or align with economic factors, challenging stereotypical perspectives.

Secondly, I will investigate the process of cultural adaptation, employment, education, and overall integration into a new country's system and lifestyle. This analysis will shed light on how students navigate and acclimate themselves to their new environment, examining their strategies for survival and adaptation.

Lastly, I will assess the differential treatment and opportunities afforded to migrant students in various sectors, particularly educational institutions and the job market. This examination will encompass all facets of their living experiences and assess the impact of immigration policies and labor market structures on their lives

5.1. Migration stories and cross border relations

While asking about the reasons for deciding to leave their country, Nil said, “I wanted work-life balance. I had an office job, what we call 9 to 5, but I was staying there until 8/9 at night like all other offices.” He had a 9 am to 5 pm job in Bangladesh that often required him to stay longer hours. As his salary was monthly, he did not receive any overtime pay for staying late. He explained that it is common in most offices there to assign excessive tasks that cannot be finished within working hours, forcing people to work beyond their contracted hours. The structure of offices in his country is poorly managed, leading him to work long hours for a modest salary. Nil did not want to work overtime and needed better wages, motivating him to migrate. In this case, the motivation behind migration was finding work-life balance.

Nil was more interested in the job sector, so I asked why he did not come as a worker instead of a student. He said, “Getting a work permit is so difficult. Getting a job in the Danish market is so complicated, and the process is also difficult. But the process of obtaining a student visa was quite simple, you know.” According to SIRI regulations (Anon n.d.-c), securing a work permit requires having a job offer, which is not easy for people from Bangladesh. All informants confirmed they had not seen or heard of anyone migrating through a work permit. Given these challenges, Nil chose to migrate as a student, navigating the system to make his journey easier, as explained by (Vigh 2009).

A similar experience was noted in Zed’s interview. He had a job and was preparing for governmental sector jobs in Bangladesh. Although his job paid him enough, he wanted something better to secure his life with a higher status in society. His primary motivation was to earn more money and secure his needs. Initially, he had no interest in going abroad. However, when COVID-19 hit, job recruitment in Bangladesh stopped, and job vacancy announcements ceased. With no clear timeline for normalcy, he decided to move to a northern country.

While searching for a destination, Zed found that migrating to Denmark was easier compared to other countries. He also applied to the USA and Canada but found the process time-consuming and estimated it would take over a year to complete. Additionally, these countries are expensive, and their tuition fees are significantly higher than those of Danish universities. He chose not to apply as a worker because it would be harder and found it easier to come as a student. Zed said, "You must know the student visa system is the easiest."

Although (Vigh 2009) explains the navigation during the migration period in terms of its structure of insecurity and moving space, the decision-making process can also be viewed through this lens. The decision-making process is part of migration (Castles and Miller 1998), and it is an insecure space, with students experiencing confusion and tension about obtaining visas. Students are in an insecure position as they must secure visas and offer letters from universities, decisions made by different authorities rather than the students themselves.

So, while the main reason for migration in both cases was obtaining jobs, the underlying motivations were different. Nil wanted a balanced and organized life with fixed working hours to manage his personal life and have ample free time. On the other hand, Zed wanted a better job in economic terms, aiming for a secure life by earning enough money and achieving a higher social status.

Nil said he has many friends and seniors from his home university in Denmark and different EU countries who shared positive experiences with him. He also received much informational help from the Facebook group of Bangladeshi students in Denmark. Before moving to Denmark, these sources inspired him to consider studying abroad. According to (Schiller et al. 1992), he already had international ties, which inspired and helped him make the decision to move to a different

country. Though these people are transnationals, for him, sitting back in Bangladesh, friendships in foreign countries can be seen as international ties according to (Schiller et al. 1992).

As a non-EU citizen, Nil has to pay tuition fees in Denmark where he is currently studying. He has a 2-year-old son and his wife with him in Denmark. Having a child restricts his family from working long hours. He mentioned that getting his son into daycare was not easy, as the system takes a long time and one of the parents has to stay home to look after the child. Additionally, Nil has to attend classes and can only work 20 hours per week due to his visa conditions, which made it difficult for him to earn enough money for his tuition fees in January this year. As a result, he had to seek help from friends living in Denmark and neighboring countries to pay his tuition fees.

When asked if he meets with his friends often, Nil said they have get-together lunches and dinners on weekends and celebrate occasions and cultural festivals. This gives him mental peace and a sense of family in a foreign country. His friends also helped him get a job, and he managed to secure a position in a fast-food restaurant within a month of moving. Nil has friends from his home country in Denmark and has formed ties with them to make his life easier, from helping with money to practicing cultural traditions. These transnational ties help him navigate his difficulties in the migration process (Schiller et al. 1992).

Living alone at home without any friends or peers, his child was getting frustrated. Nil also said, "I wanted to move to a developed country for my baby's future. I want him to grow up in a secure space and have a better life." To improve the situation, Nil contacted the municipality, explained his situation, and they arranged a daycare spot for his child before the standard waiting time was reached. When he couldn't find a solution through cultural means, he took steps to help himself out of the difficulties. According to (Vigh 2009), he is navigating insecure spaces for his own ease. Now, with his child in daycare, Nil has enough time to study and do house chores. His wife works

during the day, and during this time, Nil attends classes, studies, or talks with his family back home. He spends quality time communicating with his family, as he misses them.

In this migration period, Nil has maintained international ties, transnational ties, and national ties with his family back home. Discussing his experience in his study program, Nil said it took several months to adjust to the Danish educational system. Education in his home country was more about memorizing theories and writing answers in exams, whereas education in Denmark is more research- and problem-based. Group work is emphasized, and it was hard for him to join a group of fellow students. As a student from the South, he felt that fellow students were not very welcoming. It was difficult to navigate the system but having a master's degree from the USA helped him adjust more easily.

In the case of Zed, his transition to Denmark was significantly eased by his transnational ties. Within just 17 days of arriving, he secured a job through the assistance of a senior compatriot living in Denmark. This quick employment allowed him to pay his tuition fees independently. Additionally, living in a low-cost student house helped him manage his expenses. These transnational connections were crucial in facilitating his job search and overall adjustment in a foreign country, aligning with (Schiller et al.1992)'s concept of transnational ties that support migrants emotionally and financially.

Zed said, "the students from EU and Denmark does not want to make study and project groups with him. They are very reserved and don't want to talk with outsiders that much". he also mentioned, "the study program must incorporate a course of methodology where they will teach people how to incorporate theories in the problem-based projects. Student coming outside of Denmark really find it difficult doing the projects". Zed's experience in his study program highlights the social and academic challenges faced by non-EU students. He noted the reluctance of EU and Danish students to include him in study and project groups, describing them as

reserved and unwelcoming to outsiders. He suggested that the study program should incorporate a methodology course to teach students how to integrate theories into problem-based projects, as he found this aspect particularly challenging. Initially, he felt trapped in a difficult situation due to these academic and social barriers, but over time, he adapted and is now collaborating on his thesis with a Danish student.

In terms of his work environment, Zed described a marked improvement after switching jobs. Initially, he worked in an Indian restaurant where he and his colleagues, all from the Asian subcontinent, were overworked and underpaid. He observed that the restaurant management treated EU workers better. Now, working for a Danish cleaning company, Zed finds the working conditions significantly better, with appropriate treatment of employees. Although he occasionally perceives subtle racism, it is never overtly expressed or acted upon.

Zed maintains regular contact with his family back home, which provides him with emotional support and mental peace, highlighting the importance of maintaining home ties. When asked how he managed to pay his fees despite limited working hours and low wages, Zed hesitated before simply stating, "You do understand. I need to work long hours," without further elaboration. This response suggests that he may be working more hours than officially allowed, indicating the pressures and difficulties he faces in balancing his financial and academic responsibilities.

Overall, Zed's experience underscores the vital role of transnational ties in facilitating job acquisition and adjustment in a new country, while also highlighting the social and academic challenges faced by migrant students (Schiller et al. 1992). His story reflects broader themes of integration, inequality, and resilience among student migrants.

Adil wanted to be independent. When asked about the motivation behind his migration, he said, “I don’t want to be living on my father’s money anymore. I was just sitting lazy and spending my father’s money.” Adil was a newly graduated high school student when he decided to go abroad for study. When asked about the reason behind this decision, he said he felt too dependent on his father’s assets. He explained that in his culture, they typically do not work during high school, and it is not easy to balance a job with full-time college and university studies. All school fees are usually paid with their father's income. Additionally, he remarked, “You know that it is not possible to get a decent job with a high school degree.” Considering the labor market, he felt that he would not be able to find a job that could provide a secure life after graduation. He believed it would be a waste of money to study in his home country and then struggle to find a job.

Adil no longer wanted to depend on his father’s income, but he had no luck finding jobs, as there were no opportunities for official employment after high school. Desiring independence, he decided to move abroad. He thought that by moving to a foreign country, he could both study and manage a job to support himself. With insights from family members in England about living abroad, he decided to move to stand on his own feet. He said, “At that time, I only had a few options, and Denmark was the quickest and easiest way.” Denmark was an easy choice because of the fast and straightforward visa processing system. However, he ended up enrolled in a course at a university regulated under a university of England and not in the proper Danish system. He noted, “I don’t have any classmates from any EU country. All of them are from Southeast Asia. I didn’t find it difficult to adjust.”

When I asked him if he knew beforehand that the students would be predominantly from Southeast Asia or if this was stated anywhere, he replied, “No, but everyone knows that. None of the EU people apply for this course.” This suggests that the entire course system has become a transnational space for migrants. The cultures of Southeast Asian countries are quite similar, so they do not need to make significant adjustments during their studies in the classroom. Neither the university system nor any official statement indicates that the course is exclusively for Asian students, but EU students do not seem to attend such courses.

Through a transnational lens, it is evident that these students have formed ties within the university, creating their own space with people who share the same culture to facilitate adjustment and integration (Schiller et al. 1992). Additionally, through the lens of navigation, they have found ways to feel comfortable in a new system and have spread this information to incoming students, continuing the chain (Vigh 2009).

Adil mentioned that his tuition fees are much higher than those of other universities in Denmark. When I asked him how he manages, he said, "I have three jobs. I am a cleaning assistant, kitchen assistant, and a chef. I need to work long hours so that I can pay all my expenses by myself. I don't want to get any help from my family. I am also living alone in a student house with comfort." To be independent and cover all his expenses, Adil works at three different places. He also mentioned that in all his workplaces, his colleagues are either from his country or from other parts of Asia, which makes him feel very comfortable. He added that people from his country helped him find these jobs. Maintaining these transnational relations makes his life easier, and despite his busy schedule, he still tries to call his family to share his feelings and experiences (Schiller et al. 1992).

I asked him how he manages everything together. He said, "For the first five or six months, it was difficult. I could not study because of the extra load of pressure. But now I am settled and can study as well. The education system is better than in my country, so it was also easier to adjust." After struggling to balance his life, he has made his own adjustments and time management strategies to make his life easier and fulfil his main purpose of studying. He is navigating his own way to improve his life (Vigh 2009). He also mentioned that he does not have any issues with his working environment and is happy. However, he has no time to apply to many places for a better job. He has tried and expected to find a job related to his studies but has not found anything yet.

Simba came to Denmark in search of a better educational degree. He said, “After graduation in my country, I was working at a renowned office at an entry level. I realized that the job market there is too competitive. So, I decided to get a degree from a foreign country to get to the front line in the competition.” Simba’s motivation for migration was related to the job market, but not specifically in Denmark. He wanted to study and complete his education successfully to earn a master’s degree from a developed country. He said, “The universities of Denmark are highly ranked in international rankings. And the visa processing is easier, so I came here.”

I asked him about the study program and his integration experience in the study system and class. He said, “After moving, I found a few seniors from my country studying at my university through a Facebook group. They helped me navigate the classes, library, and other facilities inside the university. This made it easier for me to find my way around the university, and I felt confident while walking inside.” He has established transnational ties to receive help in an unfamiliar environment. He added, “The system was different from our country. I was used to only reading, memorizing, and writing things in exams there. But after coming here, it seemed difficult to do research-based projects and all. Also, I find it difficult to form groups for semester projects. EU people do not want to join. Additionally, because of the language barrier, it was difficult to communicate with EU people. Not everyone in the class speaks English, so it was hard to start a conversation.” The reluctance of EU students to communicate can be seen as an example of inequalities in the educational sector (Backer and Cairns 2021).

He also said, “I didn’t have anyone here, so it was very difficult for me to find a job at the beginning.” According to (Schiller et al. 1992), having transnational ties helps you find your way, share culture, and create a comfortable space. It is difficult if you do not have any ties. He said, “I keep two days free so I can study, talk with my family, and meet people from my country living here in my neighborhood. We sometimes play games if everyone is free, which gives us some relief.” Though he did not have anyone initially, he has made new connections and networks after living in Denmark. This helps him spend quality time with people from the same culture and

country. They share thoughts, problems, and play games to relieve the pressures of everyday life. To make his life easier, he has made friends from his country in Denmark and spends time sharing the same culture to feel a sense of home in a different environment (Schiller et al. 1992).

I also asked him how he manages his expenses, having two off days and working only limited hours. He said, "I manage it by cutting my expenses and sharing a room with another person." He has found his own way to survive on a limited income, study, and have free time for friends and family. He also mentioned that he talks to his family back in his home country on those two days. He manages this by cutting his daily expenses and sharing a room with another person, thus paying only half the rent. He is navigating his way through an insecure environment (Vigh 2009). He has adjusted his expenses primarily to find time for study, but also engages in various activities during his free time to feel comfortable.

Sandy has some interesting motivations behind his migration. When I asked about his reasons, he was excited and said, "I am sure my story is different. Actually, I wanted to get married to my girlfriend, but I thought my extended family might raise questions because I was less than 25 years old. You know how our society views a boy of this age, especially since I was only working in an NGO and not established enough according to societal standards." So he decided to move so that he and his girlfriend (now wife) could start their married life together. He said, "I chose Denmark because the spouse visa approval rate is high, and the process is not so complicated. I got married just 10 days before applying for her visa." Unlike others, he had a unique reason for moving. According to him, the society and culture in his home country are not supportive of a young boy's marriage, especially if he is a recent graduate with an entry-level job. Additionally, the ease of visa processing in Denmark was a significant factor in his decision to migrate.

Sandy said, "The education system is different here. I won't say it is of high quality because they teach theories, and during the project we have to find problems and write a project, but there is nothing in between that teaches us how to apply the theories to the problems." Similar to Zed, Sandy also mentioned that there are no courses that teach them how to integrate theories into

their problem-based projects. He also mentioned, “Danish people are reserved. If you smile, they will smile back, but they are not the ones to smile first.” He added, “We have almost 10 people from my country in the class, and I felt a boundary between the EU citizens and us coming from Bangladesh. Also, one of the teachers knows the names of all the students except ours.” Some inequalities are clearly visible in this case. To better understand the situation, I asked him why he thinks this is happening. He said, “They have a preconceived notion about us not knowing much.” I asked, “Why do you think they have this notion? Did something happen in the class? Or do you think they have had prior experiences?” He replied, “Yes, that could be the reason. Some of the students from our country come to Denmark just to work or use it as a pathway, so they do not focus on studying. Also, some students couldn’t satisfy the teacher during the question-and-answer sessions. But I was very active from the beginning, participating in everything, and now I have just lost all interest.”

In Sandy’s case, there are visible differences in treatment from both students and teachers. However, some of these situations are created by the students themselves. Despite being a generally bright student, Sandy found himself neglected. He has withdrawn to avoid the ignorance of teachers and students and is finding his own way to navigate the situation (Vigh 2009).

I asked Sandy about his job sector, and he said, “I am working in a small restaurant for 18 to 20 hours per week. I have also got an internship in a renowned NGO here in Denmark.” Hearing that, I was curious about how he would manage his expenses. He said, “During summer, I will work full-time and save money for tuition fees. Also, my wife is working full-time, and we are living in student housing that is quite cheap.” According to (Schiller et al. 1992), Sandy’s transnational ties are not only with his neighbors or friends but also with his wife. Though she came with him, she is a person from his country with whom he has a close relationship, and she is helping him maintain a better lifestyle during his migration. He also stated, “I have never felt the actual exile situation after migrating. I have a senior from my university here in Denmark who has helped me in every sector, from finding a place to stay to securing my first job. I have never experienced any financial crisis because I had a job very early after migrating.” The transnational ties with others are also evident in his case. Transnational people help each other achieve a better life. They

encourage each other to migrate and provide a sense of trust. Additionally, having his wife earning here gave him free time to apply for jobs and internships. Since he has no insecurities about money, he plans to cover the losses from doing an internship during the summer by working full-time. He has managed to navigate his situation and fulfill his goals.

“I had a dream of doing my master’s in a foreign country, especially a Western country. Also, I wanted to have a better life,” Helena said. She added, “I waited for a few years for that opportunity and didn’t enroll in an MA course in my country for that reason.” Helena has a different reason from others. Many wanted to pursue higher education, but for Helena, it was a dream. She was passionate about it, and the excitement in her voice while saying that explained it all. She sounded very happy and excited at the same time. “I was working after my bachelor’s degree and waited until I got the opportunity to move to Denmark for my master’s,” she added. She also has her spouse with her, who is working full-time. But what about the afterlife? What happened after she moved to Denmark? I will unfold that now.

I asked Helena about her overall experience with her university and class. She said, “The first semester was not so good. I was not understanding the system. We were quite a few people from the same country and worked together. We also have students from the EU, but they formed their own groups.” Although it was her dream to pursue a master’s degree in a foreign country, the difficulties of adjusting to a new education system made it challenging for her. She said, “I was making mistakes while writing projects, but there was no one to tell me the right way.” Just like Simba and Zed mentioned, there are no courses in the program to help students integrate into the education format. I asked her what changed in the subsequent semesters. She said, “I found better teammates from my country, and we are helping each other solve our problems.” Here, both transnationalism and navigation are helping her and her fellow classmates adapt to the system. Transnationalism is evident through the presence of people from her country who help each other to transform their insecure, unfriendly situation (Schiller et al. 1992).

Additionally, the students finding their own way to address and solve their problems is a form of navigation (Vigh 2009).

Regarding her job, she said, “I started working three months after moving.” She said this calmly, indicating she had no issues with the situation. Her spouse was working full-time at that time, earning a decent amount that covered their expenses. I asked her how she managed to pay the tuition fees in August since she was not working for three months. She said, “I told you I have my spouse with me. He was earning at that time. Also, I worked some extra hours during the summer, and we managed to pay the fees.” Having her spouse with her in a different country helped her to be stress-free and avoid economic problems. According to Schiller et al. (1992), having a spouse is also a form of transnational connection. Although her spouse is a family member, he is no longer staying in Bangladesh; rather, he is living with her in the host country and supporting her during her migration period. She also stated, “I don’t think about money that much. I go on tours, I eat in restaurants every time I am outside. I spend a lot of money.” Having her spouse with her has put her in a secure space where she can fulfill her dreams and wishes without hesitation. “I am living my dream life,” she stated. She is quite satisfied with her lifestyle right now.

It can be observed from the above-mentioned details that students who came with their spouses struggle significantly less compared to those who are single. The transnational relationship with their spouses during the migration period makes their lives much easier than others.

About her job, Helena said, “I love my workplace. I have a strong bond with them. They are from different parts of Asia.” Here, the transnational ties with people from similar cultural backgrounds enhance her experience. I asked if she thinks other places are better, and she replied that she does not know as she has never been to any other workplaces. The comfort provided by working in a culturally familiar environment has been so significant that she has not felt the need to explore other opportunities in over a year. These transnational ties have provided her with such comfort that she has never tried to work elsewhere. When asked about her

educational progress, she said that it could only be evaluated once she is exposed to the job market, but she feels more confident now (Schiller et al. 1992).

Sher's case is quite different from the others. He came to Denmark under very different circumstances. "I wanted to live," he said, explaining his reason for migration. I had never heard such a reason before. He elaborated on his situation back in his country during his studies to help me understand. Sher was a bright student, pursuing religious studies and general education simultaneously and excelling in both. After high school, he passed the qualification exam for a renowned public university, competing against hundreds of thousands of students. As his family lived in a different city, he started living in the university's student accommodations.

He was not involved in state politics, which led to him being tortured and harassed in various ways by fellow students and seniors who were deeply involved in politics. They pressured him to join their political activities. "They checked my phone and Facebook to see if I had posted anything related to politics and harassed me if they found nothing. Once, they did not even let me perform my daily prayers. There are many other things as well," he said. Sher hesitated to explain everything to me, as there might have been very personal and sensitive issues involved. He had no freedom to live his life according to his own values and beliefs. Sher's story is one of resilience and transformation. He faced intense pressure from other students who forced him to conform to their political activities, which led to severe depression and a suicide risk, according to his psychiatrist. Despite his strong religious beliefs, his peers prevented him from practicing his faith, pushing him to a breaking point. "So at a point, I decided to leave the country. Otherwise, they won't let me live," he said. The oppressive environment and his declining mental health drove him to seek a way out.

Sher had a promising future in his home country, with preparation for high-ranking government jobs and a supportive network. However, the hostile situation made it impossible for him to stay. He reached out to seniors who admired him and family members living abroad, who provided insights and encouragement, influencing his decision to migrate. This pre-migration support,

both moral and financial, from his friends and family, helped facilitate his move, showcasing the role of national and international ties in easing the migration process (Schiller et al. 1992).

Sher received a scholarship from the Danish government due to his excellent academic performance, covering his tuition fees and providing a stipend for living expenses. This financial support allowed him to live comfortably in a student house with low rent. He has only worked a few days in the past eight months, enjoying his newfound freedom without mental pressure. He can study, pray, and live according to his own terms, navigating his daily life in a way that brings him relief and comfort (Vigh 2009).

With the funds from his scholarship, Sher can save a decent amount, which he sends back home as remittance. This money supports a religious institution and covers the educational expenses of two underprivileged children. Sher's actions reflect the transnational ties described by Schiller et al. (1992), where migrants maintain connections and contribute to their home countries. He regularly communicates with his family through calls and messages, maintaining his national ties. Sher embodies a dual identity: a student migrant in Denmark and a provider for those in his home country, making him a quintessential transnational migrant (Schiller et al. 1992).

Academically, Sher faces challenges due to the stark differences between the education systems in Denmark and his home country. Pursuing an MSc in Information Studies, he finds some courses particularly difficult because they are new to him and lack prior experience. However, he benefits from studying with friends from his home country who are in the same program. They share knowledge and study together, leveraging their transnational ties to enhance their educational experience and make their lives easier (Schiller et al. 1992).

Sher's journey highlights the significant impact of transnational relationships on migrants' lives. His connections with family and friends, both in Denmark and his home country, have been crucial in his adaptation and well-being. These relationships have provided him with emotional and financial support, enabling him to overcome the challenges of migration and pursue his goals in a new environment.

5.2. Production - Reproduction, Education - Work - Personal Life

In this chapter, I will unfold the experiences of the aforementioned participants through the lens of social reproduction to identify the difficulties faced by migrants in the presence of unequal treatment, if any.

The first inequality that can be observed is that all students from Bangladesh, unless granted a scholarship, have to pay tuition fees. In contrast, students from the EU/EEA are exempt from paying these fees and receive a certain amount of state funds per month (Anon n.d.-b). We will examine how this system affects students through the lens of (Bhattacharya 2017). According to her, inequalities can affect basic needs and experiences, such as working long hours, which can detract from family time. In sum, these inequalities can disrupt the entire cycle of production and reproduction (Bhattacharya 2017). From the situations described, it is evident that many students struggle to maintain their daily life activities as they need to work more to cover the fees, leading to mental stress.

Zed said, "I wish to have a job related to my subject. But I don't get any governmental funds like EU people and I have to pay the tuition fees as well, so I have to work and have no time to find and apply for new opportunities." He also mentioned, "I wanted to do an internship, but as per visa rules, it will count as working hours, and I would not be able to work anywhere outside my internship. And according to university rules, it has to be unpaid. So what am I going to eat, and who will pay my tuition fees and rent?" He had previously mentioned working long hours to cover

his expenses. Thus, in Zed's case, he has no time to find a better job of his choosing and cannot pursue his preference for an internship. When asked how he managed everything, he said, "It was hard at the beginning. I could not study well, did not have enough time to sleep, and struggled to buy food during the first few months because of all expenses and tuition fees." The system hampers his basic needs like sleep and food, which are essential to produce his life (Bhattacharya 2017). He was not able to eat properly because he was saving money for tuition fees, and he couldn't sleep enough hours because he had to work more. I also asked Adil what he does in his free time, and he answered, "I do not have any free time. I must work long hours to cover my tuition fees. Sometimes I do not have enough time to sleep." Here, the same issue is evident: his basic production activities are hampered by the extra workload. Adil also mentioned, "I wasn't able to study for the first few months as it was so hard to manage. Now I am somewhat adjusted to the system and can manage some time to study." Due to the extra working hours and pressure, he was initially unable to study effectively. As a student, his first priority should be studying, but to continue his education, he has to work long hours, which hinders his ability to focus on his studies.

Simba mentioned, "I had to cut off expenses to manage time to study. I am sharing my room with another student." He downgraded his basic need for adequate shelter to manage his studies. Otherwise, he would not be able to pay the tuition fees. He could have managed time to study without cutting his expenses if his education were free of fees.

From the experiences of Zed, Simba, and Sandy, I have noticed inequalities inside the classroom. As Zed mentioned, "I can feel a light racism during the group formation for projects and studies." Simba also mentioned that he couldn't initially form a group for projects. Sandy observed that both students and teachers offered different treatment to those from outside the EU. He added that this made him lose interest in actively participating in class. According to Backer and Cairns (2021), this form of inequality results from racism, ethnicity, and nationality. Students from Bangladesh, neither physically nor culturally similar to those from EU countries, face discrimination. In Simba's case, unequal treatment from a teacher was also evident.

As a result of these inequalities, they often fail to form groups with EU students. This hampers their learning process, as forming groups with EU students might have helped them integrate into the education system through knowledge and experience sharing. Instead, they end up forming groups with people from the same countries, limiting their learning opportunities. Moreover, Simba's unequal treatment by a teacher limits his participation and affects his learning experience.

The same issue is happening in the case of Helena. She is also working exclusively with people from her country on projects, which limits her opportunities for learning and gaining experience. Without these inequalities, she could have learned in a more diverse and enriching way.

Regarding the course assessment system, both Zed and Simba mentioned that there are no courses that introduce students to project writing rules and how to integrate theories into their projects. This structural inequality means that only those familiar with the system can excel during exams, while others struggle. This hampers the educational development of students.

Adil's situation is more complicated than it appears. He mentioned that there are no EU or Danish students in his class/course. Additionally, he pointed out that they have separate campuses for EU students and those from Southeast Asia. This raises the question of whether this segregation is student-driven for comfort within the classroom, or if it is an institutional policy. Upon checking the university's website, I noticed that the advertisement pictures for English BA courses feature only Southeast Asian students, with no EU students present except for the teachers. This suggests an environment of unequal treatment, although I cannot make further criticisms without more information.

In summary, the experiences of Helena, Zed, Simba, and Adil illustrate the various forms of inequality that affect their educational experiences. These inequalities, whether structural or interpersonal, limit their learning opportunities and create additional challenges for their academic success.

This is not the end of the discussion on inequalities. According to Zed, he does not have any time to sit down and spend quality time applying for official jobs. He mentioned that he needs to work long shifts to cover his expenses and tuition fees. He stated, “As I work at an Indian restaurant, I have so many tasks and am under so much pressure. Also, the payment is quite low, so I need to work extra hours.” (Bhattacharya 2017) explains that the structure of the labor force affects the daily life reproduction activities of migrants. Zed's story reveals that his workload leaves him with no time or energy to pursue opportunities for better employment. Consequently, he and other students like him are stuck in low-wage labor conditions. This creates a cycle described by Bhattacharya (2017), where social reproduction not only produces services but also involves the circumstances and conditions required to maintain the workforce.

For migrants from different countries to get a job, they need work experience in the Danish labor market. However, the unpaid internship system leaves them with no choice but to continue doing low-skilled jobs. According to visa rules (SIRI n.d.), their internship hours are counted as job hours, covering all their limited working hours and leaving them without money for their expenses. Therefore, they usually do not apply for internships unless they have additional support, such as a spouse providing economic support, like Helena, or a scholarship, like Sher. This situation traps them in low-wage jobs.

Furthermore, it has been noticed that all working students are employed in restaurants owned by Asians. During the interviews, all of them mentioned that their networks helped them find jobs in these places. They also tried to secure positions in EU or Danish-owned establishments but were unsuccessful. Thus, their networks help them find jobs in environments with similar cultures and ethnicities, which are easier to navigate. However, the pressure in these workplaces is so high that they cannot upgrade to better positions due to lack of time and cannot leave these jobs because of their economic conditions.

The experiences of these students highlight the multifaceted nature of inequalities affecting their lives. From structural issues in the educational system to labor market challenges and the role of social networks, these factors collectively trap them in low-wage jobs, limiting their opportunities for better employment and personal growth.

However, this reproduction cycle does bring changes to their personal lives in different ways as well. To gain insights into their daily lives, I asked everyone how they view themselves now compared to when they were in their home country. Zed said, “I am more productive than ever. Besides work and study, I can also do house chores, which I had never done before while staying in my country. I was living with my parents, so I didn't even cook.” Helena said, “I feel like a different person now. I didn't know that I had the capability to manage study, work, and house all together. I am more confident. You know how we stay in our home country. I was doing a job, going out in the morning and coming back in the evenings. All other things were managed by my parents and the help at our house.” Simba echoed similar sentiments, adding, “I have become punctual and sensible.” Adil said, “I am mature now. I can take my own decisions without consulting anyone. I have decision-making power.” Sher shared, “I visited the doctor here. He said I am completely fine. He can't see any signs of depression in me anymore. I am happy and free here.”

Everyone noticed visible changes in themselves. All of them are learning how to balance everything in their day-to-day lives. According to the interviews, in their home countries, they either studied or worked, rarely doing both simultaneously. They also had family and household help to assist with daily chores. Moving to Denmark made them realize their capacity for handling multiple responsibilities. Many were surprised, having never imagined managing so many tasks at once. This experience also fostered independence, as they are doing everything on their own, unlike in their home countries where they had family support. They have become more confident and capable of making decisions independently. Thus, migration has indeed made them stronger and more resilient for future challenges.

There are significant differences in lifestyle and struggles between students who are single and those who are with their spouses. Students with their spouses here not only receive mental support and family bonding but also economic support, leading to a less stressful life. Helena

mentioned she is enjoying her life, going out to eat, exploring the city, and even traveling abroad. Although she works limited hours, her spouse earns enough to support their needs. Simba mentioned he will be doing an internship next semester. He is also working part-time, with limited hours, as his spouse helps share expenses. This support allows him to apply for internships and undertake unpaid ones because his spouse provides economic backing. Nil also works part-time as his spouse's income helps cover their expenses. This setup provides moral support as well.

Sher highlighted the emotional impact of being alone: “When I come back home after class and all, I feel the loneliness of not having family here. I could talk and share feelings if I had someone.” This underscores that having a family member not only provides financial support but also mental peace and encourages greater productivity (Bhattacharya 2017).

6. Conclusion

The study of this thesis set out to explore the experiences of Bangladeshi student migrants during their migration period, from decision-making to their present daily life experiences as students in Denmark. These experiences were examined through the lenses of transnationalism, social reproduction, and navigation to gain a deep understanding of the situation. Through qualitative interviews with the students, the research provided in-depth and real-life insights into their experiences.

The findings of the research reveal that students migrate not only to receive education but also for various other reasons. Each student has their own personalized motives behind their migration. In some cases, individuals migrate not only for their own benefit but also to provide a better life for their future generations.

The analysis also found that students maintain robust cross-border transnational ties that support them emotionally, financially, and in securing employment during the migration period. These ties also provide support to other students and contribute to development efforts in their home country. Additionally, the students face inequalities not only in the workplace but also in the educational sector, inside the classroom, and in terms of visa policies. These visa policies and work conditions trap them in a cycle they wish to escape for better opportunities, but they end up having no time to seek those opportunities.

The findings of this research raise questions about the course structure of universities. There is a need for reform, such as incorporating a system to introduce new students to project requirements. Additionally, revisiting tuition fee structures to increase the number of scholarships in social science fields is necessary, as currently, only one out of seven students received a scholarship, and that was in the science field. The non-acceptance among students in the classroom is a more complex issue that may require time and increased positive participation of migrants not only in the classroom but also in society and cultural activities.

This thesis is not exhaustive and has its limitations. It covers only a small number of participants and cannot represent the entire structure of student migrants. If such diversity is found in a limited group, the entire system might have many more complexities. Therefore, this study can pave the way for further research in this field. Including more participants from different fields could provide additional insights and perspectives.

In conclusion, the study has shown how student migrants navigate tough situations and how transnational ties, and social inequalities impact their lifestyles. It also highlights how some students find their own ways to live comfortably. If slight changes can be made in visa policies and the education system, it could bring a positive change in the lives of student migrants.

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