Wandering becomings:
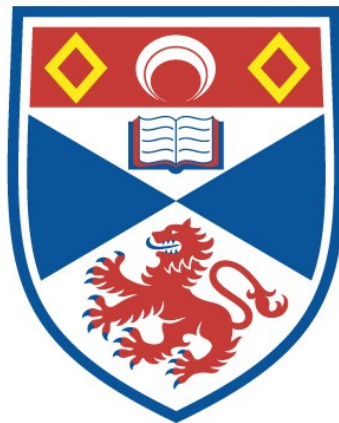# free movement, farm labouring and desires of becoming amongst Romanian migrants in the Danish countryside

Astrid Stampe Lovelady

A thesis submitted for the degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

2020

Wandering Becomings

Free movement, farm labouring and desires of becoming amongst Romanian migrants in the Danish countryside

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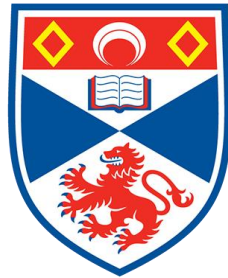
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University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee

07 June 2016
Astrid Stampe Lovelady
Department of Social Anthropology

Dear Astrid

Thank you for submitting your ethical application, which was considered at the Social Anthropology Ethics Committee meeting on 7 June 2016 when the following documents were reviewed:

1. Ethical Application Form
2. Participant Information Sheet
3. Consent Form

The Social Anthropology Ethics Committee has been delegated to act on behalf of the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee (UTREC) and has granted this application ethical approval. The particulars relating to the approved project are as follows -

Approval Code:	SA12119	Approved on:	7/6/16	Approval Expiry:	7/6/19
Project Title:	Making moral livelihoods: mobile livelihoods, hopes, desires, and Christianity amongst Romanians in rural Denmark				
Researcher(s):	Astrid Lovelady				
Supervisor(s):	Dr Mette High and Professor Nigel Rapport				

Approval is awarded for three years. Projects which have not commenced within two years of approval must be re-submitted for review by your School Ethics Committee. If you are unable to complete your research within the 3 three year approval period, you are required to write to your School Ethics Committee Convener to request a discretionary extension of no greater than 6 months or to re-apply if directed to do so, and you should inform your School Ethics Committee when your project reaches completion.

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Yours sincerely

Convener of the School Ethics Committee

_____

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iv

Abstract

This thesis explores the everyday implications of labour migration within the European Union. Every year many people from Romania travel to work in Danish agriculture to gain a better livelihood. Due to issues of corruption and the risk of poverty, it has become increasingly difficult to make a living in Romania. In Danish agriculture, Romanians now constitute the largest group of migrant farm labourers. This thesis therefore takes up contemporary debates on European transformations and the implications of persisting socio-economic inequalities between EU countries.

To understand the social and individual implications of this migration, this thesis explores how Romanian farm labourers, along with their friends and families, experience and make sense of their lives and work in the Danish countryside. The analyses are based on 15 months of ethnographic fieldwork, which took place across a range of contexts that the farm labourers were part of in Denmark.

By analysing processes of becoming, the thesis analyses the different identities that the farm labourers construct for themselves across these contexts to make sense of their migratory movements. Through these different identities, the thesis argues, the farm labourers were continuously reassessing their social and individual lives within the European political economy and alongside their migratory experiences in the Danish countryside. As such, the thesis shows how the farm labourers' *situational becomings* shape their experiences of working and living in Denmark, and how the farm labourers act according to their shifting interpretations of their past, present and future lives.

On the basis of these analyses, this thesis questions whether and in what ways the Romanian farm labourers' becomings are distinct as a result of their migratory experiences. The thesis argues that migrants' ways of perceiving their becomings as part of their life transitions are influenced by the restraints and opportunities they encounter as migrants. In such a way, analysing migrants' becomings allows for an exploration of the intersection between their particular ways of becoming and universal ways of becoming as human beings amidst contemporary European transformations.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Ionut's story

'I thought money would make me happy,' Ionut said with a mix of self-justification and anguish in his voice. He was sitting behind the steering wheel of his fairly new 4x4 car, I was sitting on the front seat next to him. We were on our way to one of the farm houses, where we were going to meet up with a group of interlocutors with whom I had been spending the last year. It was August 2017, and the Danish summer weather made Ionut's large black car shine on the countryside roads. Ionut continued, 'I did not have a lot of money as a child.' Being in his early thirties, Ionut grew up in the post-socialist turmoil of Romania's 1990s. He came from a smaller town in the Eastern part of Romania – one of the poorest parts of the country. Here, he had been living in an apartment block together with his parents and sister, Dorina. After finishing school, Ionut moved to the region's capital Iași to train as an engineer at the university. Later, he was employed as an engineer. He thought this would enable him to earn a lot of money.

Ionut was a friendly and out-going, sociable guy. He was gradually developing grey hair which had started to pop up amid his previously completely black hair, and his teeth showed a long-term lack of maintenance. He was often hiding his teeth on photos and when he was smiling. He was a heavy smoker, which probably did not improve his teeth situation.

Before coming to Denmark in 2014, Ionut had been working as an engineer in Romania for two years. But his company had suddenly cut down his salary to 300 EUR a month, and from this amount he had to pay 100 EUR in rent, and bills in addition. Supermarket prices in Romania were at almost the same level as in Denmark, and petrol could be more expensive than in Denmark. This did not leave much room for buying things other than the absolute necessities. At that point, he had been in contact with a Romanian friend who was already

working in Denmark at a farm, and who had encouraged Ionut to come to Denmark. Despite his initial resistance, Ionut eventually went to Denmark. On the friend's request Ionut had gone for an interview with the agricultural recruitment agency Agrojob which accepted Ionut as a candidate for a job on a pig farm. As we talked about his move to Denmark, he said: 'We choose to stay where it is best… It depends on us how we live life… Wouldn't you do the same as I have done?' Slightly surprised by his question to me, I responded 'Possibly…'. 'If it wasn't difficult [in Romania], we wouldn't go', he said. Though Ionut would express his satisfaction with the financially better position he was in when working at the farm in Denmark, he also said that he was bored with the farm work. He eagerly showed me a video on YouTube which demonstrated the engineering work he had been doing in Romania. At times, he was also disappointed with the way he felt poorly treated by the farmer in Denmark.

Ionut had not had any specific plans when arriving in Denmark. He told me that when he left Romania, he had had a bill to pay. So, this was the first thing to get done when starting the work in Denmark. And then he had also been able to start sending money to his parents in Romania. When starting to earn money in Denmark, he told me, he had felt that he could buy anything. Firstly, he had bought a tablet, then a phone, then a laptop, a large TV, and some clothes. When I met Ionut, he already owned his second car in Denmark. He was considering buying a house in Denmark at some point. He preferred however to buy a house in a town or city, and not in the countryside. Ionut was living alone in a house next to the pig farm he was working at. Living and working here, it was difficult for him to find a girlfriend to share his life with. At some point during my fieldwork he was seeing a Romanian woman, but the romance was short-lived.

I asked Ionut about his plans for the future. Many of my interlocutors had expressed a wish to return to Romania in the future. Ionut, however, had no plans for returning to Romania, because, as he said, 'Romania is a poor country…' (*România e o țară săracă*). Though Ionut had moved to Denmark initially to earn money, he was also hungry for life and experiences. 'You can *do* things with money!', he emphasised when comparing his life in Denmark to that in Romania. He spent money on going to the gym, he attended Danish classes, he went to visit Norway, Germany and various Danish towns, he enjoyed going biking

(with a friend he even biked more than 250 km to Copenhagen once), and he frequently talked about going on holiday to Miami or the Maldives. Sometimes he would use his new phone (which he was paying off in rates) to find pictures of Maldivian sand beaches, full of sunshine and a relaxed holiday atmosphere. Finally, he also considered doing a Master's degree in Denmark. '[Then] I can change my mentality', he commented on his educational aspirations.

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I began this project with a wish to understand how Romanian farm labourers experience their lives and work in the Danish countryside. Since my early childhood I have been interested in the implications of transformation processes in Eastern European countries – the so-called post-socialist countries. And I have lived and travelled there over a number of years (starting from before the end of socialism). For my Master's degree at Copenhagen University I conducted fieldwork at a homeless shelter in Warsaw, Poland, where I explored some of the long-term consequences of the country's transition to a market economy in the 1990s. After the completion of my Master's degree in 2013 I went to Brussels to work at an international consultancy. Working with European social policy sparked my curiosity for exploring the everyday life of European transformations even further. In 2014-2015 I then worked at Copenhagen University where I explored some of the complexities that arise in the intersection between migratory movements within the EU and the Danish labour market model. At this point in Denmark, a lot of discussion about depopulation in the countryside was taking place. And in the autumn of 2015, the Danish government introduced the reform "Better Balance" (*Bedre Balance*) to move many public workplaces to the countryside, as these, according to the government, had centralised too much in the Copenhagen area (The Danish Government 2015). Simultaneously, I heard that many people from Eastern Europe had been settling down in the Danish countryside and that many Romanians were working in Danish agriculture. I thought I had to explore what was going on and embarked on this project in 2015. This eventually took me to places in Denmark which I had never seen or heard about.

As part of my fieldwork I met Ionut who was living and working at a pig farm and became one of my central interlocutors.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Ionut's life was entrenched in the aftermath of Romania's socialist dictatorship, which ended in 1989, Romania's access to the European Union in 2007, the principle of free movement in the EU and structural changes in Danish agriculture. His decision to move to Denmark had obvious financial reasons as he needed to earn more money. But what his story also tells us is that he wanted more from his migratory movement than merely money. He wanted to see and learn new things and spend his money on material objects that he had not been able to buy before. Doing and buying these things and taking on new experiences would perhaps, as he alluded to, allow him to change. That is, through his migration he would be able to shape his becoming, individually and socially: he would be able to develop himself and gain social status through the things he could experience and the things he could buy. Seen in this way, his migratory movement constituted a way of becoming; meaning that he was "making himself" alongside his changing circumstances of life.

In conjunction with Ionut's experiences of working in Denmark, his desires for how he wanted to see himself and be seen by others thus also developed. Seen as such, his migration to Denmark allowed him to shape his becoming through a range of things, relations and ways of understanding himself (cf. Biehl and Locke 2017: x). As I will return to, his and other of my interlocutors' becomings did however not necessarily succeed when they, for example, became disappointed with the farmer's treatment of them or when they were bored with their farm work. But what emerged from Ionut's story was an account of how his individual desires were shaped within and against the structures and social forces that he was part of in Romania, the European Union and Denmark. It is this multiplicity and complexity of desires for *becoming* that led me to the guiding questions of this thesis:

1. *What do Romanian farm labourers´ positions in the Danish labour market mean for the ways in which they perceive themselves, other people and the world beyond?*

2. *How do Romanian farm labourers develop their lives outside their workplaces, and how does their migration become a social and gendered experience?*

3. *How can we understand Romanian farm labourers' migratory experiences as processes of becoming, and how does such understanding contribute to the anthropological analysis of what it means to be a migrant and a human being?*

To respond to these questions, I will take the reader through the variety of contexts, inside and outside the farm, of which I too became part during my fieldwork. For the concept of *becoming* I rely on "the anthropology of becoming" which emphasises the continuous making of the person in conjunction with the person's changing life circumstances (Biehl and Locke 2010, 2017, Jackson 2013). Through my interlocutors' everyday lives in Denmark, I will show, they were trying to become in different ways by constructing themselves within the contexts and relations of the situations that they were part of. Becoming, as such, implies the ways that people make themselves in relations to their own self-perceptions and in relation to other people. My interlocutors' migration did not merely entail geographical movements for monetary concerns: here were also movements of emotions, self-perceptions, self-representations, social relations, beliefs and cosmologies. These movements contained potential for individual and social transformation but also offered disappointments, apathy and anxieties. As I will show, the choices that my interlocutors made and the ways that they were able to become shifted according to and relied on their continuous, transitional and ever changing migratory experiences. In this way I analyse the *situational becomings* of my interlocutors.

It was the nature of my fieldwork which led me onto this analytical path. I was fortunate to be able to accompany my interlocutors both inside and outside their working lives. This made me realise how they shifted between different ways of becoming; for example, by identifying themselves in different ways in different situations and drawing on different discourses and positions according to the contexts of the situations. This did not preclude

their long-term plans but showed how they adjusted such plans alongside their experiences in Denmark. In the concluding chapter I will return to a discussion of migration as a form of becoming and ask whether this is different from non-migratory ways of becoming as part of life transitions.

To provide a background for the analyses of this thesis, this chapter proceeds by providing an overall framework for Romanians' migration to Denmark and the principle of free movement in the EU. Afterwards I turn to a discussion of previous research on rural migration and discuss the relations between migration literature and the anthropology of becoming. Finally, I explain the fieldwork process.

Migration from Romania

Every year many people from Romania travel to Denmark to work in agriculture to gain a better livelihood. In particular due to corruption and poverty it has become increasingly difficult to make a living in Romania.[1] The United Nations (2016) estimated that the Romanian diaspora populations had increased 7.3% annually from 2000 to 2015, only superseded by Syria. In 2016, around 3 million Romanian citizens were living abroad in another EU or a European Free Trade Association (EFTA) country[2] (IOM 2017). According to the Romanian Statistical office, the number of people residing in Romania has decreased from 21.38 million on 1 January 2005 to 19.63 million on 1 January 2017. Despite uncertainties in the actual number of emigrants, it remains clear that many people have left the country.

Though this thesis is concerned primarily with my interlocutors' lives in Denmark, I find it necessary to briefly sketch the background for this significant emigration from Romania. During Romania's period of socialism (1947-1989), the country was isolated, even when compared to other socialist countries. The Romanian socialist leader Nicolae Ceaușescu wanted to distance the country from the communist leadership in Moscow, and opposed

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[1] Romania is widely criticised by the European Union and international partners for the country's lack of improvement in the fields of corruption and poverty. The country also ranges low on Transparency International's corruption perception index list. In 2018, Romania was no. 61, whereas Denmark was no. 1.

[2] EFTA countries include: Norway, Island, Switzerland and Liechtenstein

initiatives in the socialist military union, the Warsaw Pact, and the economic union, Comecon. Instead, he worked to create a particular Romanian (national) communism (Verdery 1991: 132). This isolated the country from the rest of the socialist countries. To develop industry in the country, Ceaușescu took up large loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and tried to establish closer ties to Western and capitalist economies (Hitchins 2014). In 1984, he decided to start paying back Romania's debts to the IMF. During the 1980s, this led to steeply declining living conditions in Romania, and started the end of Ceaușescu's dictatorship. Following violent demonstrations, Ceaușescu and his wife were shot in December 1989 (Flora and Szilagyi 2005: 117, Leustan 2014). The socialist system fell, and President Iliescu took over in Romania. According to some Romanians, I spoke with, Iliescu was worse to Romania than Ceaușescu, because he closed down a large part of the industry in the country, which further impoverished people and left them with limited livelihood opportunities.

The fall of socialism and transition to a market economy in Romania dismantled the state and the institutions which were – in theory – supposed to protect the citizens of Romania (Kideckel 2008). The introduction of capitalism led to new ways of earning money. For many people this created wishes to earn money quickly and gain the wealth that was often associated with the West (Verdery 1995). In the aftermath of socialism, many Romanians left the country when possible. The geographical restrictions which had been imposed during the socialist period meant that mainly people in power had been able to move across borders. There have, as such, been clear economic motivations for people's emigration from the country. But the past of living in such a closed country has also created desires for exploring the world when the borders became open (Burrell and Hörschelmann 2014). When Romania entered the European Union in 2007 and borders to other countries opened, everyone as a citizen of the European Union was granted opportunities for moving – something which had previously been reserved for few people. Following the financial crisis of 2008, even more people have left Romania. Emigration has happened to such an extent that it is a common saying today that there are no families in the country that do not have family members working abroad.

Free movement in the European Union

The principle of free movement of workers in the European Union has developed from being merely an individual right based on a job commitment to also include social rights and acknowledgement of the worker as a citizen. This development has provided European citizens with new opportunities when they gain their livelihoods in other countries.

The free movement of workers constitutes one of four key freedoms in the European Single Market that developed gradually since the Second World War. Based on shared economic interests and a wish to unite European countries after the War, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established in 1951.[3] The purpose of the ECSC was to allow cross-border recruitment in these industries as a response to demand for labour within coal mining. In 1957 the right to movement was extended with the Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community (EEC), which allowed people to move to work within the ECSC countries. The right to work in another member state was based on a job commitment; meaning that the right to movement applied to workers only (Recchi 2005: 4). Denmark became a member of the EEC in 1973.

The Single Market was formalised in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, which transformed the EEC into the European Union. The Maastricht Treaty is an important cornerstone, as it introduced the principle of "European citizenship" to strengthen the rights of EU citizens to move from country to country to work and reside. The Treaty therefore also acknowledged the social dimensions of the movement of workers and created an overlap between being a worker and a citizen with rights (Blitz 2014: 37 ff., Craig and De Búrca 2011: 715 ff., Recchi 2005: 6). The year of 2004 was another important landmark: The Free Movement of Citizens Directive of 2004[4] allowed workers' families to accompany the worker, and workers were allowed to enjoy social rights in the host country. The requirement of performing an economic

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[3] The ECSC originally included only six countries; namely France, Belgium, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands

[4] Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States

activity and being classified as a "worker" has however been maintained to avoid burdening the host member state (Blitz 2014: 39, Craig and De Búrca 2011: 715 ff.).[5] Such measures to manage migratory flows indicate a tension between free movement and some member states' concerns about EU integration, which were particularly salient during the EU-enlargements in 2004[6] and 2007[7]. As the enlargements caused heated debates in Denmark and other existing member states, the European Union responded by introducing a transitional scheme to accommodate these member states' concerns for being overwhelmed with people from the new (and generally poorer) member states. The member states' concerns and the transitional scheme meant that free access for citizens from the new member states could be delayed up to seven years (Blitz 2014: 44). Romanians gained free access to Denmark from May 2009 – more than two years after the country entered the Union. Romania is at the time of writing not part of the Schengen area.

Article 45 § 2 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union concerns free movement:

> Such freedom of movement shall entail the abolition of any discrimination based on nationality between workers of the Member States as regards employment, remuneration and other conditions of work and employment.[8]

Nationality should therefore not be of importance for free movement and the ability to enter employment in another country. Inequalities between member states in the European Union have however led to problems for the practice of free movement. According to official figures, Romania is one of the poorest countries in the EU. The salary differences between

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[5] During recent years the status as a worker has been expanded to also apply for students, self-employed people, and job-seekers. For workers made redundant, and for workers who have resided in another member states for more than five years, rights also pertain with regard to the right to reside in another member state (Blitz 2014: 39). See also the European Commission's website on information of the free movement of workers: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=457

[6] Countries included in the European Union in 2004 were Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus.

[7] Countries included in the European Union in 2007 were Romania and Bulgaria (Croatia was included in 2013).

[8] European Union, *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union*, 26.10.2012, C 326/66

Denmark and Romania are considerable. As of 1 January 2015, the statutory minimum salary in Romania was 217.50 EUR (1,623 DKK or 192 GBP) per month, only superior to Bulgaria.[9] The minimum salary in Romania has increased since 2015 – but so have the prices of groceries. Romanian farm labourers in Denmark might earn monthly around 12,000 DKK gross (around 1,420 GBP). As I will return to in Chapter 2, Denmark does not have a statutory minimum salary that can be compared with Romania's. But when measured in GDP per capita (2017 data), Denmark is one of the wealthiest countries in the European Union (46,500 EUR or 5,493 GBP), whereas Romania is one of the poorest countries in the EU (8,300 EUR or 980 GBP).[10] GDP does not consider potential unequal wealth distributions within a country, though Denmark has reportedly low income inequality compared to other countries, including Romania (Falco 2014, Olwig and Paerregaard 2011: 7).

These socio-economic differences have created intense public debates about Romanians' access to Denmark, based on concerns for economic migration, "welfare tourism" and the negative impact on Danish labour market standards that this access could lead to. The assumptions underlying such concerns derive from an understanding of migration as being a result of inequalities between countries, where push and pull factors drive migration from poorer to wealthier countries, and where Romanian labourers may be considered willing to work for lower wages and accept poorer living conditions for the sake of economic gain. Romanians have however emigrated during periods of economic growth in Romania throughout the 2000s (Stan and Erne 2014). Their migration may thus not simply be a result of inequalities between Romania and other countries. Migration could also be entangled in Romania's own changing modes of production, and the country's integration into European and global production networks (ibid.: 4). In Chapter, 2 I will return to the ways that Romanian farm labourers' employment in Danish agriculture is entangled in the structural development that has taken place since the Second World War.

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[9] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/labour-market/earnings/main-tables
[10] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/national-accounts/data/main-tables

Figure 1. Map of the European Union, 1 October 2019[11]

Rural migration

Agriculture is a sector that benefits from migrant farm labourers in several ways. Given the seasonal nature of agricultural work, it makes sense to have workers who are willing to work for long hours during the busy seasons, and who live close to the farm (Johansen, Nielsen, and Larsen 2014, Kearney 1986). These circumstances mean that migrant farm labourers may be physically isolated from the surrounding society and are in a weak situation for negotiating improved conditions (Rye and Andrzejewska 2010). In a functionalistic sense this arrangement provides employers with an efficient and profitable supply of labour (Burawoy 1976, Parry 2005).

Whilst international literature focusing on the urban context for migrants is vast (e.g. Sassen 1991, Schiller and Simsek-Caglar 2011), less attention has been paid to migration into rural areas, especially following the EU-enlargements (Jentsch and Simard 2009). In Denmark (and the other Nordic countries), previous anthropological studies on rural migration have

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[11] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24367705

mainly addressed the displacement of asylum seekers and refugees into rural areas, including the financial and social benefits that the asylum seekers may have for the rural communities, and the concerns that local residents have about the asylum seekers (Larsen, Whyte, and Olwig 2015). Skvirskaja's (2015a, b) study of Ukrainian agricultural apprentices in Denmark is an exception. The Ukrainian agricultural apprentices are however temporary apprentices on the farm – and do not come under the free principle of movement in the EU. Skvirskaja provides important insight into the ways that the agricultural apprenticeships (do not) form part of the apprentices' social mobility. She has however primarily been interacting with *former* apprentices, *after* they have left the farms (2015a, b). This means that she has mainly explored the apprentices' experiences of their farm work through their retrospective accounts. In contrast to Skvirskaja, Larsen (2011) has been able to show some of the issues arising when migrants live in the Danish countryside. In her study of refugees displaced to the Danish countryside, Larsen shows how the refugees' ability to comply with local norms for domestic activities – such as gardening, not drawing the curtains, and cooking – are crucial for how they fit in with the community. To Larsen's main interlocutor, the lack of ability to comply with the local norms makes the Danish locals suspicious of Larsen's interlocutor's willingness to be a part of the community, and even makes them question his morality (ibid.: 152). Larsen thus demonstrates some of the social issues of settling into the local community in the Danish countryside. The difficulties of settling into rural communities mean that many Tamil refugees, who have been displaced to a fishing village in Northern Norway, end up moving to Oslo (Grønseth 2007). In the village some of the refugees start to suffer from odd pains. The Norwegian medical staff treat these pains as only physical, and not social pains. Grønseth (ibid.: 32), by contrast, analyses the pains in terms of Tamils' loneliness and lack of recognition in the local Norwegian community. By moving to the more urban areas, Grønseth's interlouctors have an opportunity to become part of Tamil communities, where they feel recognised (ibid.: 37). In Chapter 6 I will return to my own interlocutors' ways of gaining recognition through their making of communities.

Although the refugees in Larsen's and Grønseth's analyses have been displaced to rural areas, Shubin's (2012) study on East European migrants in rural Scotland also shows that these

migrants experience difficulties with being accepted in the local community, as they can be perceived as a threat to the stability of these communities (ibid.: 616). Despite such issues, Verinis (2011) argues that migrants in the countryside have formed an important part of the transformation of some rural areas in Greece. They may have come to work as farm labourers but have settled into the communities and later moved on to other occupations and trajectories (ibid.: 52-53, 56).

These studies indicate that rural migration potentially covers a wide range of life trajectories and that migrants might become part of the rural communities in different ways. But migrants' actual experiences of gaining their livelihoods in the countryside and working at farms in the Danish countryside remain underexplored.[12] In Chapter 2 I will return to the idiosyncrasies of Danish farming and the Danish labour market, which provide an understanding of the ways that my interlocutors' lives are shaped by the changing nature of agriculture, national legislation, union organisation and the principle of free movement in the EU. Whereas these are more recent issues, migrant farm labourers and the issues surrounding their migration have a longer history in Denmark.

Migrant farm labourers in Danish agriculture

Denmark has historically been an agricultural country, and the agricultural sector still plays a vital economic and social role in the country (Petersen 2014, Refslund 2014, Svendsen and Koch 2013). Almost two-thirds of the area is covered by farmland (Statistics Denmark 2017).[13] Danish agriculture is however in transformation: people have been moving away from the rural areas, agricultural work has lost popularity, and the sector is financially under pressure. The farms are becoming fewer and larger, and the management of farms increasingly looks like management in corporations. This transformation is often referred to as 'the

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[12] In an American context, a great deal of research has concerned Mexican farm labourers, who often work in exploitative conditions (e.g. Ferguson 2010, Holmes 2013, Nagengast and Kearney 1990). Literature from Europe is often based on quantitative research which documents the impact of migration; in particular in Southern Europe (e.g. Bayona-i-Carrasco and Gil-Alonso 2013, Kasimis, Papadopoulos, and Pappas 2010), but also in Ireland and Scotland (Jentsch and Simard 2009), and Norway (Rye and Andrzejewska 2010).

[13] https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/nyt/NytHtml?cid=24323

structural development' (*strukturudviklingen*) and means that Danish farmers are often under considerable financial pressure due to demands for effectivisation. In this context, lower salary costs may be an advantage for the farmers' financial situations.

During recent years the number of migrant farm labourers in Danish agriculture has increased significantly. In 1993, statistical records showed that 2% of the workforce in Danish agriculture consisted of migrant labourers. In 2013, records showed that 24% of the workers came from abroad (Refslund 2014: 15). Until the end of the 1990s, mainly young Danes were employed as apprentices on the farms. But given the decreasing popularity of this work amongst Danes, farmers began to employ Ukrainian apprentices through an apprenticeship scheme. Following the EU enlargements, Danish farmers have however preferred to employ Romanian farm labourers instead of Ukrainian apprentices, as they then do not have to deal with visa restrictions (Skvirskaja 2015b: 50). Table 1 provides an overview of the development in the number of farm labourers from Romania, Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania.

Table 1. Number of migrant farm labourers working in Danish agriculture, forestry and fishing from 2008-2017, by selected countries
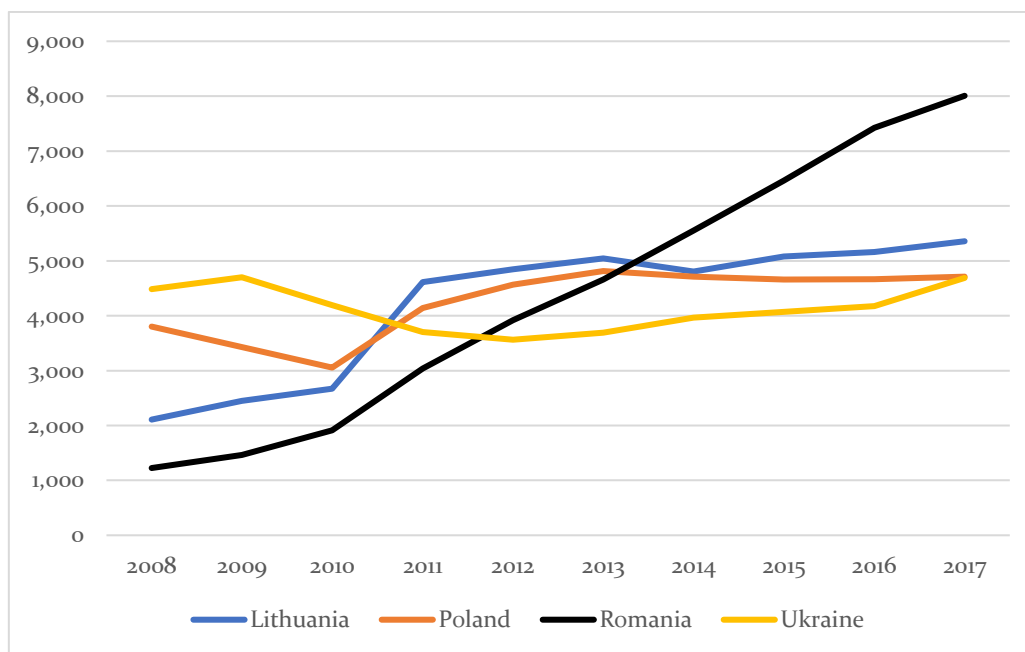
Source: www.jobindsats.dk

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Table 1 shows that the number of Romanian farm labourers in particular has increased (from around 1,200 in 2008 to around 8,000 in 2017), making Romanian farm labourers the largest group of migrant farm labourers.

The validity of statistics on migrants is often debated intensively. It is important to note that Romanian migrants who come to live and work in Denmark may do so legally as EU citizens. My interlocutors were not undocumented migrants but came by virtue of a right to move freely across borders within the EU. There was in this way no incentive for them to be "under the radar". It is difficult to work in Denmark without being administratively and statistically tracked. To open a bank account in Denmark – and to carry out many other activities with the public services – one must have a central registration number (*CPR-nummer*).[14] This number allows public authorities and the national statistical office *Danmarks Statistik* to record people's administrative data. Most public systems in Denmark are online, and the systems are often connected. It is difficult to be registered in one system without being connected to another. As I will return to in Chapter 2, the recruitment company may help with the *CPR-nummer* and registration with the authorities as one of the first things in Denmark. Visits to the farms from governmental inspectors, veterinarians, agricultural associations and labour unions, as well as critical public attention to farmers, means that it is not necessarily beneficial for employers to employ undocumented migrants. In addition to this, most of my interlocutors were employed for a longer period of time at pig and dairy farms, and were not, for instance, seasonal workers picking berries (which could make statistics less reliable as these seasonal workers may not be registered with the authorities). Despite the margins of error, statistics therefore still provide a useful indicator of the development in the number of EU migrants in my field.

Quantitative indicators show that especially Romanians earn less than Danish employees. Companies with Romanian employees have some of the lowest salaries, even

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[14] I never went with any of my interlocutors to the municipality to have a central registration number. But when my British husband first arrived in Denmark, it took him less than an hour to register with the authorities. Registering does not need to be a stretched-out process for EU migrants (more complicated rules apply to migrants from third countries).

compared to companies with employees from other Eastern European countries (Andersen and Felbo-Kolding 2013: 149). In the agricultural sector more generally, Danish farm labourers are estimated to earn 19% more than farm labourers from Eastern European countries (here: the new EU member states from 2004 and 2007). This is the largest salary difference between Danish and Eastern European employees compared to wage differences in other sectors (Andersen and Felbo-Kolding 2013: 156, see also, Refslund 2014: 25). This may also indicate that free movement in Europe has allowed Danish farmers to continue to profit from low wage migrant farm labourers (cf. Rye and Andrzejewska 2010).

Migrant farm labourers in Denmark is not a new phenomenon, however. Already in the years 1520-1521 Dutch migrants came to settle down and bring products from the Netherlands. They were invited by King Christian II and lived in Denmark under favourable conditions. 164 Dutch families came to Denmark, and for generations they lived with their own language, school and church. The next migrant farm labourers were Germans, who were invited by King Frederik VI from 1760. They were invited to cultivate a part of Jutland. This had become a necessity to be able to feed the population in Denmark. 965 German people (265 families) came to Denmark. Many left quickly because they did not think the King fulfilled his promises. Some went to Russia and became so-called Volga Germans, and others were expelled from Denmark because they were considered incompetent. 59 German families stayed in Jutland. Like the Dutch migrants, the German migrants spoke German, and had their own school and church. The next group of migrant farm labourers were German and Swedish farm labourers at the end of the 19th century, when Denmark established its first sugar factories. They were often recruited via recruitment offices. Between 1893 and 1929 many Polish farm labourers were recruited to work the sugar beet fields on islands of Lolland and Falster. They were often recruited, supervised and paid by middlemen (Hellvik 2014). Their working and living conditions created debates between the Danish Government and the Union movement (which developed from the mid-19th century, as I will return to in Chapter 2). In 1908 this led to the introduction of an Act on businesses' use of foreign workers, colloquially referred to as 'the Pole law' (*Polakloven*). This required migrant labourers to have a contract and a workbook to be able to document their payment. From 1929 the Polish farm

labourers were no longer allowed access to the Danish labour market (Østergaard 2007 in Andersen and Felbo-Kolding 2013: 22, Nielsen 1999, Sane 2000).

The current usage of migrant farm labourers can be seen in the context of the significant changes which agriculture has gone through since the Second World War. These changes have not only transformed the nature of Danish agriculture but have had an impact on agricultural production on a global scale. From the 1950s, in the context of industrialisation of rural areas and agriculture, many people moved from the rural to urban areas to find employment (Dalton 1972, Escobar, González, and Roberts 1987, Fitzpatrick 1987, Kearney 1995). In some places this changed employment structures in the agricultural sector and created labour shortages and a need for migrant farm labourers (e.g. Loudon 1979). As a result of rising oil prices in 1973, the Fordist labour market changed and became centred on light services which further boosted urbanisation (Eades 1987, Sassen 1991, 1988). In short, this shows that migrant farm labourers' lives are shaped by complex networks of global production processes, international and national political economy, cross-border migration schemes, historical and political developments and socio-economic conditions in the origin and destination countries. It is within this context that I see the potential for exploring my interlocutors' "becomings" in their new place of living.

Migration and *becoming*

In this section I present the analytical framework of the thesis and discuss how this contributes to existing literature on migration. As I have already touched upon, my fieldwork took me through different contexts of my interlocutors' lives. This meant that I experienced their lives from multiple angles and explored the ways that they shaped their lives and worldviews within these contexts. I wish to use my experiences to transcend the, to some extent, dichotomous nature of migration literature, with *either* a main emphasis on economic motivations for migration (and the exploitation of migrants that this may lead to) *or* an emphasis on the adventurous side of migration. This means that I move from a perspective

on the political economy of Danish agriculture to the ways that my interlocutors shaped their lives around them.

Numerous studies have documented the exploitation of migrant labourers who are forced to leave their deprived countries to seek better opportunities elsewhere. Recently, philosopher Thomas Nail wrote in the book *The Figure of the Migrant* that 'most people fall somewhere on this migratory spectrum between the two poles of "inconvenience" and "incapacitation"' (2015: 2). Drawing on Zygmunt Bauman, Nail highlights that both ex-pats (including academics) and migrant labourers move within the same 'social conditions', but that the degree of 'expulsion from the social order' may vary (ibid.: 2). Nail acknowledges the many professionals and academics who move across borders but focuses in his book on the migrants who he thinks are most excluded from the social order, such as migrant farm labourers (ibid.: 6, 188). As migrant labourers are dependent on their jobs in the destination country, they may find themselves in the position of being in an exploitative employment relationship with an expectation of providing cheap and flexible labour (Castles and Miller 2014, Clifford 1992, Cohen 2006, Lucht 2012). Because of their precarious living and working conditions, migrant labourers may be seen to be part of an emerging 'precariat' (Standing 2011), and may be seen to constitute a global reserve of labour (Sassen 1988: 36). Focusing on economic migration, Pine (2014) has done research in Poland amongst people who migrate to another country to earn money, often in sectors such as agriculture, hospitality and construction. By imagining a better future, they endure their work abroad, as the work gains its moral value from the future that it is supposed to create (ibid.: 98). Some of Pine's interlocutors, however, have returned from working abroad with a feeling of having been 'vulnerable, exploited, and underpaid' (ibid.: 102). Though Pine focuses on the ways that people ascribe their work value, the economic factors are still the main drivers for her interlocutors' migration. This part of the literature on migration thus emphasises global inequalities and changing relations between labour and capital as the conditions for why and how people are able to move and work across borders. The problem of mainly focusing on this aspect of migration is however that it risks making an analytical construction of migrant labourers as primarily puppets in a capitalist system where economic inequalities dictate their

positions in the system. This leaves little space for examining the ways that migrants shape their own lives and circumstances (at least on an existential level).

Another strand of the literature on migration has to a larger extent focused on migrants' more creative ways of shaping their lives and gaining something else from migration than primarily economic profit. Several studies have analysed the ways that migration enables people to develop themselves and explore the world: through migration people may gain more individual autonomy and free themselves from social norms in their place of origin (Shah 2006, Parry 2001). And migration may be seen as a possibility for developing oneself and one's career, as this is the case for many of Amit's interlocutors (2002). This does not mean that Amit's interlocutors do not experience inconveniences when moving abroad, but they might emphasise other aspects of their migration than the need to earn money, such as experiencing new people and places (Amit 2012). One of Olwig's (2015: 181) interlocutors directly criticised the stereotypical narrative of economic migration, which makes Olwig consider migration as a form of adventure that allows people to explore the world. The creativity of migration is replicated in Ferguson's (2010) analysis. His main interlocutor, a Mexican farm labourer, is never a passive subject to his otherwise difficult circumstances. Rather, he keeps engaging in and interpreting the structures that he is part of. By for example developing a long-term personal plan, Ferguson's interlocutor is able to provide himself with a life-project that directs him in life (ibid.: 36). Emphasising people's abilities to "make themselves", I think, provides people with a sense of humanity and dignity, as it does not subject people structures and social norms. In my own fieldwork and analysis afterwards I thus not only paid attention to the ways that my interlocutors were subject to capitalist structures. I also paid close attention to the ways that my interlocutors shaped their lifeworlds amidst an often difficult everyday life. But my experiences during fieldwork do not permit me to only focus on this aspect of migration, if I would do justice to people's everyday realities and experiences and the social forces that shape these experiences. I have therefore needed to think about a way to bridge these strands of the migration literature to provide an understanding of the ways that my interlocutors moved between these analytical models for understanding migratory logics and experiences.

Through a focus on *becoming* my aim is to analyse how people make themselves and are able to make themselves within their changing economic, political, social, spiritual and material landscapes. In this regard I am particularly inspired by Biehl and Locke's article "Deleuze and the anthropology of becoming" (2010) and their recent edited volume *Unfinished. The Anthropology of Becoming* (2017). Through the stories of Catarina in Brazil and people in Bosnia and Herzegovina's post-war Sarajevo, the authors investigate how people's desires to become supersede the multiple power structures and constraints that they are part of. The authors are inspired by the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, who insisted on people's desires as a way on moving forward. According to Deleuze (and his colleague Guattari) (2009), a person consists of wholes and parts that are at play and work together at the same time: because the parts and the whole in the person are at work together, connections between the parts are continuously produced as part of the making of the whole. People's desires are, in this perspective, produced by the constant making or remaking of connections between the parts. To Deleuze and Guattari, the internal contradiction between wholeness and partiality means that the person is in a schizophrenic state of being, where the person never feels a stable sense of an ego. This means that the person is never complete but is continuously in the making. Seen as such, there is no hidden essence in the form of an unconscious id, which can be uncovered (as the psychoanalysts want it) (ibid.: 1). Rather, the person is continuously in a state of becoming through the person's visible ego.

In Biehl and Locke's anthropology of becoming, the Deleuze-inspired approach allows for 'possibility, *what could be*' (2010: 323, emphasis in original); meaning that the possibility of becoming circumvents structural power and institutional limitations. The subjectivity of becoming allows people to work within and against restrictions, problems and constraints that they face in everyday life. This is possible because people are continuously 'in the process of becoming through things, relations, stories, survival, destruction, and reinvention in the borrowed time of an invisible present' (Biehl and Locke 2017: x). The desires that people have do not merely reach for one object: rather, they evolve in multiple relations across space and time (ibid.: 6). As the vignette with Ionut demonstrated, he was trying to make himself and was thinking of making himself in multiple ways (through material objects, education, etc.).

Though he had a particular purpose with his migration to Denmark – to earn money to firstly pay his bill – he also developed more desires to become in different ways alongside his migratory experiences. Lives of people like Ionut are in many ways under constraints and are embedded in power relations. But through their continuous becoming, they are also able to imagine how other realities could look (cf. ibid.: 9). In such a fashion, people are continuously constructing themselves in multiple ways. Desires are therefore not about finding a "real essence" of the person (hidden in the id) – or in Lacanian psychoanalytic terms, a lack. Rather, people's desires to become means that they are constantly finding new ways of constructing and making themselves. People are never finished or stagnated in an identity and "true self", and their futures are not to be seen within the nostalgic idea of a contained essence which can be realised (ibid.: 4, 9).

Analysing migrants' lives in this way means that we may consider their constructions of themselves as 'empty signifiers': that is, signifiers without signification (Laclau 1996: 36). Empty signifiers are the result of an unsolvable paradox between the universal and the particular: 'The universal is incommensurable with the particular, but cannot, however, exist without the latter' (ibid.: 35). According to Laclau, there is therefore no '*true* body of the universal' (ibid.: 35, emphasis in original); meaning that the universal or "the whole" does not have a true body or content which is representative of the whole. Instead, there are empty signifiers – in my case, for instance, "migrant", "farm labourer", "man" or "woman" – which compete for temporary universal signification (cf. ibid: 44-45). By moving through different contexts across space and time, my interlocutors took upon themselves different signifiers. Seen as such, they *become* through constructions of themselves in a variety of situations where they take upon them empty (or floating) signifiers with different significations (cf. ibid.: 36). And as we shall see throughout the analyses, some significations become more important in some contexts than in others. But people do not possess an essence – in Laclau's words, a 'true body' – which can be uncovered and made into a universal representation for the individual. Rather, by taking upon themselves different signifiers people become by perceiving themselves, other people and the world around them according to these situational significations. The competition between signifiers mean that people's diverging ways of

identifying themselves may conflict with each other. This will become clear in cases where my interlocutors for example wanted to identify themselves more as Christians than as Romanian farm labourers, or when they explicitly adhered to multiple understandings of gender and family at the same time.

Cohen argues that to say that a group imposes an identity on a person (ethnic, national, class, gender, etc.) is the same as denying 'that individuals construe their membership and their selves in very different terms' (1996: 803). I appreciate and am inspired by Cohen's position, though I will also analyse the implications it may have for individuals when specific ideas of group identities *are* imposed on and constructed for individuals (see Chapters 3, 6 and 7). But my analytical approach also means that I do not analyse for instance how migrants form shared national identities as a key component of their identity. Certainly, being of Romanian nationality played a role in many situations. But "being Romanian" was not the only way that they identified themselves. Once, for instance, I asked my interlocutors Silvia and Vasile (who I will introduce in Chapter 3), if they would be going to the celebration of the Romanian National Day at one of the local Romanian associations (I had seen the event advertised on Facebook). But Silvia responded that they did not really celebrate this kind of day and that they did not really see themselves so much as Romanian. 'We are cosmopolitans [*suntem cosmopolitanists*]… Internationalists…', Vasile added to the conversation. And Silvia said, 'We are just people.' In the situation this made me think to myself that I had been too presumptuous thinking that they would be interested in going to the *Romanian* event. However, at other times Silvia and Vasile were very aware of their Romanian background and emphasised their "Romanianess" more than other parts of their selves. It is such shifting between various ways of identifying oneself that I would like to draw attention to.

In a similar vein to the focus on nationality, I do not analyse how a Christian worldview penetrated and shaped all areas of my interlocutors' lives. Again, as I will return to in Chapter 6, being Christian came to the fore in some contexts and situations. But only analysing how migrants become Christians (or, let us take a more pertinent example in the public debate: become Muslims), I think would be to miss the ways that they draw upon other ways of identifying themselves in the world around them. This also applies to the issue of gender:

being a man or a woman was certainly a concern sometimes (as Chapter 7 will show), but not in *every* situation. That is, my interlocutors' gender did not always define who they were and how they related to other people. Through their experiences I therefore shift between the situational becomings and the shifting significations that they took upon them across space and time.

Analysing how migrants become in different situations through a variety of identifications and significations thus allows for an appreciation of the partial truths that anthropologists are able to obtain. This is an extremely important issue when studying migrants (especially in the current climate of increased political polarisation): parts of people and their societies seem – all too often – to be taken as wholes that can be compared to other wholes; for example, when migrants' countries of origin and destinations are compared (cf. Strathern 2004: 97). Apropos my critique above, this often assumes a primacy of nationality or religion. Though I will also draw upon comparisons between Denmark and Romania that either my interlocutors made to make sense of their lives and actions, or that I made to make sense of for instance the community-making amongst my Romanian interlocutors (see Chapter 7), such comparisons are not meant to be understood as comparisons between definite wholes. Rather, they are ways of making sense of specific situations and the ways that my interlocutors perceived themselves and other people within the contexts of different situations.

Though I draw on certain comparisons between Denmark and Romania throughout the analyses, the thesis will not analyse for instance other transnational connections and the ways that these shape my interlocutors' migration. When I heard about my interlocutors' connections in Romania it was often in the form of having to send money to their relatives (though my interlocutors were sometimes tired of demanding relatives) or constructing a house in Romania with the money earned in Denmark. Many of my interlocutors' friends and relatives had however also left Romania to work and settle down elsewhere. This to some extent loosened up their ties to Romania. As we shall hear from Danuţ in Chapter 2, he had been working abroad for most of his adult life and many of his friends were also living abroad. In his and other of my interlocutors' accounts, it was not necessarily clear whether they

wanted to return to Romania or not. The nature of the principle of free movement in the EU means that the migratory movement is based on the individual's ability to move to work in another country. Though this does not exempt the ways that migration might be embedded in social and familial obligations in the migrants' place of origin, my interlocutors' migration did not necessarily hinge on obligations in Romania (apart from sometimes monetary obligations). Rather, migration to Denmark should also be seen in the context of fairly newly gained opportunities for a younger generation in Romania that might not see many prospects in staying in Romania. Whereas the younger generation in other post-socialist countries, such as Mongolia and Georgia (Pedersen and Højer 2008, Frederiksen 2018), may feel stagnated in these countries' socio-economic problems, younger Romanians have generally gained an opportunity to leave those problems behind. In such a way, the migratory movement constitutes a particular opportunity for shaping one's way of becoming. In the next sections I present my own way through the field and my own becoming in a variety of situations.

Field site

My fieldwork mainly took place in the area around Sønderborg in the southern part of Denmark, close to the German border, between June 2016 and October 2017. This is an agricultural area with many pig farms (and some dairy farms), and I had the opportunity to establish relations with local Romanian farm labourers, their families and friends.

From September 2016 – October 2017 I lived on the peninsula of Kegnæs. Before embarking on fieldwork, I had never heard of Kegnæs. I grew up in a suburb just north of Copenhagen and have only spent a little time in Jutland during my life. Kegnæs is a small peninsula with a long history that has evolved alongside Danish and global developments in trade, agriculture and the shaping of the nation-state. The peninsula is 17 km²; 8 km long and 3 km wide. Around 600 people live on Kegnæs today.[15] Kegnæs is connected to the mainland via a spit. There are three villages on Kegnæs: Vesterby, Sønderby and Østerby. The two main occupations, I was told, are agriculture and tourism. A lot of the land on the peninsula is

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[15] http://kegnaes-sydals.dk/kegnaes-om-os/fakta/

cultivated agricultural land. There are three camping sites, which are closed during the winter period and busy during the summer.

Figure 2. Map of Denmark[16]

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[16] http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/denmark-political-map.htm

Figure 3. Map of Sønderborg Municipality[17]

Figure 4. Newly harvested fields on Kegnæs, September 2016

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From the late 1700s onwards (especially 1784-1814) Denmark went through some of the most fundamental reforms in the country's history: the agrarian reforms (*landboreformerne*). These reforms also had a profound influence on Denmark's and Kegnæs' agricultural layout and occupational structure (Bladt sen. 2011). The reforms entailed both restructuring of the agricultural land and production, and changes in peasants' rights. Wars with Sweden – and in particular the Great Nordic War (*Den Store Nordiske Krig*) between Denmark-Norway and Sweden in 1709-1720 – led to decreasing corn prices and an agricultural crisis in the 1730s.[18] For this reason, serfdom (*stavnsbånd*) for men was introduced into Danish agriculture in 1733. This stood against an otherwise long-term tradition of free born peasants in Denmark, and the emerging Enlightenment in Europe at the time. From 1750, agricultural conditions improved. The serfdom was abolished in 1788 alongside efforts to mobilise peasants' social and economic awareness (Barton 1988). Danish farmers were also exposed to increasing prices on global agricultural products, in particular corn prices. To rationalise agricultural production and benefit from the increasing prices, parcelling land out (*udstykninger*) and relocations (*udflytninger*) took place over a number of years. Previously, land had been divided into small plots to ensure that each person had access to some of the fertile land. Within the village community (*bondefællesskabet*) this meant that everybody had to harvest at the same time. But such a structure made production inefficient. Instead, the small plots of land were merged into larger plots which one man would be responsible for. Instead of a little village with houses and land around the village, each farmer then built a house in the middle of his land. Farmers' houses then relocated outside the village and onto his own land (Løgstrup 2015). This restructuring ensured a more efficient use of the land (Bladt sen. 2011: 63).

From 1864 Kegnæs was – as the rest of Sønderjylland – part of Germany. Sønderjylland, including Kegnæs, were reunited with Denmark in 1920. Between 1835 and 1965, the number of people living on Kegnæs developed according to the graph below:

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[18] Norway was a part of the Kingdom of Denmark from 1536-1814.

Table 2. Development in the number of people living on Kegnæs, 1835-1965
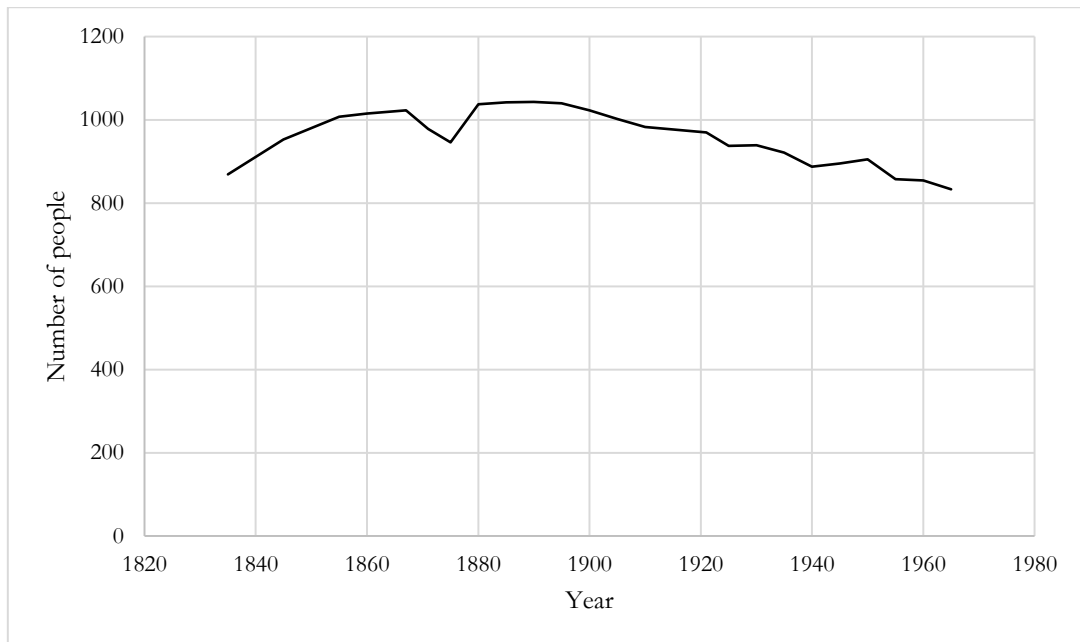
Source: Based on Madsen (2011: 238)

In 1996 there were just 300 households on Kegnæs (Andreasen, Madsen, and Slettebo 2011: 6). Following the Second World War and development of the industrial sector in the area, people gradually moved away from Kegnæs. This meant that a lot of the previous activities on Kegnæs closed down. Between 1966 and 1996 some of the companies and shops to close included: blacksmiths, mechanics, builders, painters, butchers, bakeries, grocery shops, clothes and shoe shops, and fruit and vegetables shops. Apart from these shops, numerous dairy farms (and some pig farms) were closed (Christensen et al. 1996). Such development has not only been taking place on Kegnæs but has also been taking place in other rural communities in Denmark (see for example, Whyte, Larsen, and Olwig 2019).

After 1996, the closing of Kegnæs kindergarten and school had a further impact on the peninsula. Kegnæs Folk School (*Folkeskole*) was closed in 2003 and replaced by Kegnæs Free School (*Friskole*), which is a private school. I was told about the dramatic events surrounding the new school by several of the local Danish residents on Kegnæs. Initially the new school apparently worked well. But some parents became dissatisfied and ended up in heated quarrels with the new school leader. This created sharp divides amongst people on Kegnæs, and even families were split because of 'the school conflict' (*skolekonflikten*). Today, very few

children from Kegnæs attend the school, which has an education approach that is particularly suited for children who have experienced difficulties in other schools. Children from Kegnæs often attend municipal schools in other villages or in town. My interlocutors' children attended school in another village. According to a long-term resident on Kegnæs, the lack of the kindergarten and school has meant that people do not meet spontaneously anymore. Previously, the school and kindergarten had been an important place for people to meet. I was told that the kindergarten and nursery had been a 'gathering and focal point' (*samlingspunkt og omdrejningspunkt*) which was no longer there.

Denmark introduced mergers of the municipalities in 1970 and 2007. These have served to centralise the Danish public system and public services. This means that public service institutions such as schools, hospitals, postal services and municipal administrations have become larger and are located further away from rural communities. On Kegnæs, the distance to the closest hospital means that the peninsula has an emergency car (*akutbil*) which is permanently located on Kegnæs and can offer help to people very quickly, before an ambulance arrives. Local people on Kegnæs are trained as paramedics to be able provide this help. Kegnæs also has a fire brigade, which consists of volunteers and which – during my fieldwork – was seeking new people to take over. This was difficult because of the lack of younger people in the area.

Kegnæs has a number of associations which hold events for local residents and try to improve the area to make it more attractive to move there. When I went to events at the local community hall, some people complained that some people on Kegnæs do not want to be part of the community and choose to stay at home. One man praised me for coming to events and for seeking out the events.

Kegnæs is a small community where some families have lived for generations. They are called *Kegnæsser*, and also speak with the local accent. Then there are the 'newcomers' (*tilflyttere*), such as my landlady, Pia. Pia told me that she used to know everybody on Kegnæs. But she did not any longer because she did not know all the newcomers. I was told that younger generations of newcomers on Kegnæs did not necessarily participate in the local community events, and were often busy with their daily lives with work outside Kegnæs and

family life. Apart from the Kegnæsser and the newcomers, a great number of tourists come to the peninsula every year (especially from Germany). One of my interlocutors told me that Romanian migrants had come to constitute a minority population on Kegnæs. At the time of my fieldwork, I was told, there were around 20 Romanians living on Kegnæs.

My research focus on migrants does not necessarily reflect the central concerns of Kegnæs' residents. My experiences told me that even though migrants were the centre of my research – and the centre of many public debates and international politics – they were not the primary topic of interest for local residents in the area. When I talked with them about Kegnæs, they primarily highlighted the school conflict as central to their experiences of the area, together with depopulation. And when I spoke with them about my research about Romanian migrants, they often showed awareness about "some Romanians living on Kegnæs" (one man confused Romanians with Ukrainians), but Romanians' migration did not seem to come to their minds as an important issue to Kegnæs. They mainly addressed Romanian farm labourers when we directly talked about my project. For example, in the beginning of January 2017 I attended a dinner together with Pia and some of her friends on Kegnæs. The hostess, Inger, asked me why I was staying on Kegnæs. I explained that I was a PhD student in anthropology, and that my project was about Romanian migrants in the Danish countryside. Inger's husband then said with indignation in his voice, 'Some don't treat them well... Some peasants don't treat them well' (*Nogle behandler dem ikke godt... Nogle bønder behandler dem ikke godt*). People around the table referred in particular to the farmer Anders (who I will introduce in Chapter 2), who locals were sometimes annoyed with because he did not clean up the local roads when he spilt dirt with his tractor. The local school conflict could also play into people's positioning around certain people. But, the main focus of this dinner party was to show the anthropologist from Copenhagen some traditions from Kegnæs. Though migration is a burning topic in the media, the urgency of this topic is not necessarily reproduced in people's everyday lives, where problems such as the consequences of a local school conflict appear as a more topical issue. When researching migration, we should therefore also pay attention to the potential reproduction – or lack of reproduction – of political controversies about migration (see also Whyte, Larsen, and Olwig 2019).

Access, methodology and positioning

To begin the fieldwork, I went to stay with the farm labourer – and later key interlocutor – Andrei for a week in June 2016, on Kegnæs. I had been introduced to him via the HR representative at a local agricultural association, when I had been on a pre-fieldwork visit in February 2016. At this point, I had also been introduced to Andrei's farmer, who approved of my brief stay in June and allowed me to come and work at the farm. Staying at Andrei's place gave me the opportunity to be introduced to other Romanian migrants in the area and gave me an initial idea of the nature of industrialised farm work.

After this week at Andrei's place, I stayed in the nearby town of Sønderborg in July and August 2016, to find out about the area and decide where to locate my fieldwork. I wanted to stay in the area outside Sønderborg to gain an embodied understanding of what it means to live in the countryside. During this period in Sønderborg, I stayed in contact with Andrei and his family and friends, and attended the weekly church services at the Romanian Neo-Protestant Church in Sønderborg. My husband, Alex, came to stay with me in Sønderborg in July 2016. This period gave me an opportunity to expand my network, explore the history of the area, and conduct interviews with a range of Romanian farm labourers and organisations in the agricultural sector.

Via my landlady in Sønderborg, I found a small apartment with my landlady, Pia, in a village on Kegnæs. I moved there on 1 September 2016. My week on Kegnæs in June had sparked my interest in this peninsula, when I overheard discussions about depopulation, problems with making newcomers feel settled, and shops that had shut down. Kegnæs is not a place that one goes through to arrive elsewhere; one resident on Kegnæs described the peninsula to me as 'the end'.

Initially, I went to Kegnæs with just my bicycle, thinking that I could manage with this. However, I very quickly felt isolated and incapable of moving around. It was around 6 km to the nearest supermarket, which was reasonable by bike but in the high price end. To go to a more average supermarket, I had to travel 18 km. Buses were scarce, and although the local residents offered me rides with them, I decided that I needed a car to be able to conduct my

research and visit farms around in the area. I bought a used Suzuki Wagon. As I found out during my research, my experiences with settling down without a car, and the anxieties that this might give were not uncommon for my interlocutors (who often bought a car as soon as possible, as I did). On Kegnæs I gradually expanded my network with local Romanian farm labourers, their families and friends in the wider Sønderborg area. I also worked a little more at the pig farm with Andrei. Little by little I settled in especially with two groups of Romanian migrants in the area. The construction of these groups will be the focus of Chapter 6. I thus went from knowing a large group of people to mainly socialising with smaller groups and fewer individuals whom I got to know well. During my days, I would often visit people and hang out in groups with them outside working hours. Several people were keen to have me around and invited me to come and talk with them. One Romanian woman called me a 'martyr' (*martir*) and a 'light' (*lumina*) who came around to people's homes. The analyses of the thesis will reflect my closer relations with some people, and the wider network I became part of.

To gain an insight into the dynamics of the local community, I participated in events at the local community hall, such as the Christmas lunch at the retirement association, summer party at the retirement association, a *Morten's Aften* event, Christmas event at the housewife association, New Year's costume night, the unveiling of a monument at the village hall, common waste collection, and a lecture in the village hall. Apart from this, Pia and I made a biking trip around Kegnæs, where she told me stories from the island, and I attended her 70th birthday party.

I wrote fieldnotes daily, mainly in the evening when I came home. Sometimes I had the opportunity to jot down notes during the day and in-between my visits. I noted down as quickly as possible what had happened and what had been said. I did not use an electronic recorder. My previous experience with electronic recording suggests that the conversation becomes more mechanical. I believe I collected the most useful information for my research by talking informally with people and participating in their lives, and being able to draw my attention to smells, sounds, facial expressions and body language. It was often outside more formalised interviews that I gained the richest understanding of my interlocutors' lives.

Apart from daily socialising, I carried out semi-structured interviews with representatives from organisations in both Denmark and during my trips to Romania in August-October 2017. These interviews provided me with an institutional, historical, economic and political overview of the agricultural sector and issues in the Danish countryside (see list of organisations in the Appendix). Interviews with Romanian farm labourers provided me with more factual information about when and where people had lived and travelled.

All interlocutors have been provided with pseudonyms. When referring to Romanian farm labourers and their friends and family (apart from with their pseudonyms), I mainly use the terms "interlocutors", "Romanian farm labourers", "farm labourers", "employees" or "migrants". I have partly kept the term of "migrants" to emphasise that my interlocutors were not merely a sociological category ("immigrants") but also people who were migrating through different life stages and experiences in life (cf. Grønseth 2013), and partly because some of my interlocutors' experiences related directly to their positions as migrants and farm labourers in Denmark. The analyses of the thesis move in the spectrum between exploring the importance of the "migrant position" in Denmark and exploring how they as migrants through life desire to become. I therefore find it useful to contextualise their experiences to the situation of being a "newcomer" in a different country. This also touches upon a fundamental concern in this project: my focus on migrants of a particular nationality. Such starting point risks creating 'methodological nationalism' and an exclusive analytical focus on national identity (Rytter 2013: 13, Wimmer and Schiller 2003). I will return to this issue by the end of Chapter 6. My interlocutors were all Romanian citizens, and similarly to Rytter's (2013) Pakistani interlocutors in Denmark, they also to a large extent identified themselves by nationality. Sometimes, however, they explicitly distanced themselves from their national background. The diverging ways that they identified themselves will be a key theme of this thesis. As such, I use the various ways that my interlocutors identified themselves to try and overcome the obstacle of methodological nationalism.

To conduct my fieldwork, it was necessary to learn the Romanian language. I am skilled in languages. Apart from my native Danish language, I have learned German, English, French,

Spanish and Polish as part of my education (I learned Polish for my fieldwork in Poland). At the age of 3, I was fluent in Polish and Danish, and spoke some English in addition to this. Both of my parents studied languages, and I grew up with the importance of language in my home. Rephrasing Goethe, my father often told me, 'Learning a new language is like gaining a new life'. In the year prior to fieldwork (2015-2016) I took Romanian language classes and participated in an intensive Romanian course in Bucharest. I passed level B2[19] before starting my fieldwork, and I met with Romanian friends to practice informal conversation. Though I had a good level of Romanian when starting my fieldwork, I still had to immerse myself and learn different ways of speaking during my fieldwork. In the beginning during church meetings, for example, it was difficult for me to understand the technical church language. I had to familiarise myself with the different accents from Romania and different words that people might use across the regions. The language was an important point of access. One Romanian woman told me that it was fantastic to have somebody *learning Romanian*; usually, she pointed out, Romanians go abroad and have to learn other people's languages.

The fieldwork presented me with challenges in different ways. First of all, and particularly during the first part of my fieldwork, I had to work a lot to establish contacts with Romanian migrants in the area. Their relative isolation in the countryside meant that it was difficult to locate them in the first place, and that both they and I were dependent on networks and getting to know people via our network. As we were all living in the countryside, distances could be considerable, and I could not just walk out into a community with interlocutors. I thus had to create networks where I would become a natural part of the social group. On my part, this demanded a lot of proactive work, where I would often ask people to meet up. Gradually, I became an integrated part of a few social groups, where I was included in their Facebook and Viber conversations and where I would also be invited along when we met up regularly. This was demanding as mistakes on my part could mean that I would no longer be invited along (this happened to some people if they fell out with each other). These networks

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[19] Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, divided into levels; from the lowest level: A1, A2 (beginners), B1, B2 (mediocre), C1, C2 (advanced).

seemed fragile and everyone had to get along with each other, especially as the number of people to socialise with was limited. This was sometimes a demanding task for my interlocutors and fed into their experiences of living in Denmark (see Chapter 6). Making connections to other people in the area involved a great deal of attention to both how my interlocutors and I would present ourselves to other people, some aspects of which were highlighted whilst others were in the background and hidden from view. I was subject to scrutiny and gossip amongst my interlocutors, who seemed to gain a certain status from hanging out with me. In many cases, I was the only Danish person they hung out with.

Secondly, I had to deal with my status as a (Danish) woman. I conducted the main part of my fieldwork alone, and I think my interlocutors sometimes saw me as being a lone woman – although my husband Alex had stayed with me during the first month of my fieldwork. I did not wish to interact with my interlocutors on the basis of (male) stereotypes of people from Romania and Eastern Europe. I quickly realised that my interlocutors often feel poorly treated in Denmark (an issue which I will return to throughout the analyses). However, I realised that I could not act as a woman as I usually do in Danish settings. This created a dilemma for me during my fieldwork, as I wished to act as I normally do – in order *not* to treat my interlocutors on the basis of ideas of "Romanianness". When I had been to Romania during my fieldwork, I told my interlocutor Silvia about how careful I had been in Romania in terms of my interaction with men, and that I went home to my hotel before 10 pm. She was clearly *not* happy to hear of my perceptions. Later on – when we discussed these issues – she told me not to think in terms of nationality – despite her own criticism of Romanian men (see Chapter 7). In Danish debates on migrants, the idea of male migrants as potential rapists and sexual transgressors – due to notions of backward patriarchal hierarchies in other countries – is strong and a motive for right-wing movements in Denmark.[20] I think it would be problematic to always approach

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[20] Recently, the Danish right-wing politician Pernille Vermund highlighted what she considered to be a correlation between an increase in the number of reported rapes and an increase in the number of refugees from non-Western countries in Denmark since 2015 (when the so-called refugee crisis reached its height). The Danish Crime Prevention Council, however, rejected Vermund's claim and said that the increase in the number of reported rapes was due to a change in the way that rapes are reported (introduced in 2015) and a campaign in 2017 which encouraged people to report rapes (*Danmarks Radio*, 13 October 2019: https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/detektor/detektor-er-migrantboelge-skyld-i-boom-i-voldtaegtsanmeldelser).

our foreign male interlocutors with the idea that they might automatically transgress boundaries. But I also had to acknowledge that my anthropological search for knowledge had limitations. Though my interlocutors were keen to learn from my Danish background, I had to also comply with their gendered hierarchies and the power relations between men and woman. This meant that I was not able to meet with men too often on their own. Despite my married status, stereotypes of Western European women as being 'more loose' – as one male interlocutor put it – still exposed me to sexual requests. Several of my male interlocutors were single men, living in the countryside. Having a car made this situation safer for me and made me more mobile. But I was not as mobile as I usually am, as I could not go everywhere and when I liked. This was an unusual feeling for me in Denmark. Such gendered issues and the obvious sexism are not issues limited to Romanian migrants – or to me as a female fieldworker. But, as I will explain in Chapter 7, gender equality is a particularly important topic in Denmark (and the other Nordic countries), as part of notions of liberalism and the welfare state ideology. The discrepancies I experienced between my usual everyday life in Denmark and in the context of my interlocutors constituted a part of the learning process of the gendered aspects of the migratory process.

As I spent a lot of time with my female interlocutors, the accounts in this thesis are often based on the women's perspectives. Given my own position as a woman in the field I gained a unique perspective understanding of my interlocutors' lives in Denmark, as I was able to establish closer relations with my female interlocutors than with my male interlocutors. Previous literature on migration has in particular focused on younger men's migration to Europe and the dangerous journeys they have had to travel (Vigh 2009, Lucht 2012). Similarly, I heard that it can be difficult for some Romanian migrants to bring their families to for example Italy, as the employers do not want the migrants to be dependent on their families. Literature focussed on female migration tend to focus on domestic workers

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A report from the Danish Ministry of Justice (Kyvsgaard 2017) pointed out that, in cases of rape, there might be misunderstandings in terms of sexual behaviours between men of other ethnic origin and women in Denmark. The report emphasised that there may be other reasons too for the high prevalence of men of other ethnic origin in the statistical records on rape in Denmark.

(Dalgas 2015a, b, Constable 1997), nurses (Olwig 2018), or undocumented migration or human trafficking for prostitution (Korsby 2017, Plambech 2018). As the principle of free movement applies to the individual worker, the individual man or woman is able to migrate to another country within the EU. What is particular to EU migration, and the rights provided with the principle of free movement is that the worker may bring relatives to the destination country. Several of my male interlocutors had for example brought their female partners. Some of my female interlocutors were working, and some not. Whether in a job or being a housewife, they were an important part of the migratory movement and my interlocutors' experiences of working and living in Denmark.

Finally, I had to consider the fact that I am a Danish citizen and that my Romanian interlocutors could possibly see me in a relationship of power to them. Though they saw me as such in the first months of my fieldwork, my Romanian language skills and time spent with them gradually placed me as one of them. One interlocutor called me 'the new Romanian' (*noua romanca*). Being considered as one of the women in the group to some extent removed the identification of me being Danish. At the same time, I was continually aware of the expectation that some of my interlocutors might have in terms of the help I could provide them in Denmark. Twice I was asked if I could help acquaintances of my interlocutors to find jobs at Danish farms. I declined these requests, as I did not want to be associated with the recruitment industry (see Chapter 2). Whereas I was happy to help with writing CVs and applications, translations, lifts to town and information about Danish society, I was always careful not to promise anything for the future. I felt that this lack of commitment to the future bothered some of my interlocutors who were keen to confirm that we did not just spend time together because of my fieldwork. Ionut said to me in May 2017, 'So when you leave, that's just it? Then you are gone, and we'll never see you again?' He made a wave with his hand into the horizon. I was unable to completely deny his assumption.

During both my fieldwork in Poland and amongst Romanians I have encountered concerns about the way I intend to write about people from Poland and Romania. That I have spent several years in Eastern Europe during my life, and have learned Polish and Romanian, have been important to assure my interlocutors that I know of multiple sides of these

societies. Such concerns, I think, feed into persisting hierarchies between Eastern and Western Europe (see Chapter 6). My interlocutors however also made fun of me studying them, writing notes about them, and the book (*cartea*) I would write about them. Ionut was certain that if I focused on him, my book would be very good. At least he became the introductory character.

Chapter outline

The thesis is structured to provide the reader firstly with a framework for understanding issues around migrant farm labourers in Danish agriculture. Subsequently I analyse how my interlocutors experienced their lives and work in Denmark within this framework, and how they constructed their identities across a variety of contexts.

In Chapter 2 I argue that migrant farm labourers become a wanted and unwanted labour force in the Danish agricultural sector. The chapter presents perspectives from Romanian farm labourers, the recruitment company Agrojob and a Danish farmer to provide a historical and descriptive analysis of how the conditions for Romanians' migration to Danish agriculture have been shaped. The intersections between the principle of free movement, inequalities between Denmark and Romania and changes in Danish agriculture create particular issues within the Danish labour market model. This means that migrant farm labourers are included in the Danish labour market via their practical exclusion from central mechanisms in the Danish labour market – a labour market which is otherwise designed to ensure a high level of equality.

In Chapter 3 I focus on the everyday life at the farm and analyse what this means to my interlocutors' self-perceptions. Often, my interlocutors were talking negatively about their positions as Romanian farm labourers in Denmark and the ways that their Romanian background limited their opportunities for doing anything else than menial work. I argue that my interlocutors constructed themselves as Romanian farm labourers and that this had implications for how they perceived themselves, other people and the world around them. In addition to this, the chapter also discusses the ways that my interlocutors were constructed *as* Romanian farm labourers through ethnicised and unequal labour market hierarchies. The

chapter thus explores different ways in which my interlocutors became Romanian farm labourers.

In Chapter 4 I analyse my interlocutors' work in Denmark through their bodies. Farm work entails significant risks for the farm labourers' health and safety. This is not unique to *Romanian* farm labourers, but what I show is that my interlocutors' abilities to deal with health and safety risks are influenced by their positions as migrants in Denmark. Their individual suffering in this way becomes a social suffering which is endured as part of their socio-economic positioning in Denmark. Suffering is not a new phenomenon in Romania, where previous conditions have had implications for people's physical and mental health. The suffering that my interlocutors experienced in Denmark could in this way be seen as a prolongation of many years of suffering in Romania.

In Chapter 5 I change perspective and analyse the ways that my interlocutors were able to distance themselves from their everyday realities. Through moments of enjoyment, resistance and imagination, I argue, they were able to momentarily reverse power hierarchies and take control of their lives. This shows how they were not fully subjected to the structural powers described in the preceding chapters but that they actively engaged in the shaping of their circumstances around them.

In Chapter 6 I analyse how my interlocutors created communities through boundary making. These communities were partly based on practical commitment to each other and partly on national and religious belonging. I use the lens on communities to show how some of my interlocutors were able to construct social roles within the communities that they were not necessarily able to develop at their workplaces. Such communities therefore provided them with a different possibility of identifying themselves. I suggest that the making of communities amongst the migrants became even more important in the Danish context with a lot of negative attention to Romanian migrants. It was therefore important to my interlocutors to create networks with people with whom they wanted to be identified. Nonetheless, I argue, such community making sustained and reproduced hierarchies between Eastern and Western Europe.

In Chapter 7 I analyse the implications of community-making to my interlocutors' consolidation of gender and family. Through a perspective on gendered subject positions I show how they shift between different gendered subject positions whilst simultaneously consolidating a dominant discourse of the conjugal family. I use this to argue that my interlocutors' transitions in life (for example, having a child or getting divorced) were embedded in their migratory experiences. In such way, their positions in Denmark impacted their intimate lives and, in their perspectives, led to drastic changes in their lives.

Finally, in Chapter 8, I respond to the questions set out in this introductory chapter and raise the question of whether migration is a different form of becoming. I also reflect on the implications of this thesis to our understanding of contemporary European transformations. In the subsequent Epilogue, I tell about the ways that my interlocutors and I have continued our becomings after my departure from the field.

Chapter 2

A WANTED AND UNWANTED LABOUR FORCE IN THE DANISH LABOUR MARKET

Danuţ's story: setting the scene between the farm labourer, the farmer and the recruitment company

The farm labourer Danuţ was a friend of Ionut. He came to Denmark in June 2012 to work at a pig farm (his brother was already working in Denmark at the time). His fiancée and later wife, Magda, came to Denmark later to live with him. When I met them, they were living in a little one-bedroom cosy flat in the town of Sønderborg. They both came from the capital city of the Moldavia region, Iaşi, where they had grown up in apartment blocks near to each other. Danuţ was 30 years old and a friendly and outgoing guy who always greeted me and others with a smile, which made his dark front tooth visible.

Danuţ found his first farm job in Denmark through the recruitment company Agrojob. Initially, he had wanted to look for a job in Denmark independently as the fee at Agrojob was 10,000 DKK (1,200 GBP), when he applied. He didn't have any luck looking on his own, however, and so he felt had no choice but to use the agency. First, he had to go to for a job interview at a hotel in Iaşi. Before this interview he did not speak much English, which was otherwise a requirement for being hired. Instead, he spoke to some of his friends about the questions he may be asked during the interview, and he found the questions in English on YouTube and practised answering them. He was accepted as a job candidate, and then had to wait until a suitable farm job became available.

At the time of the job interview, he was working in the construction sector, doing renovation works around flats in Iaşi with his godfather. And whilst waiting for a farm job to become available, he continued the construction work. I asked him what he had earned in his

construction job. He looked at me in a weird way as if I had posed a slightly naïve question. Magda, sitting next to Danuț in their living room, made a hand movement downwards to show me that the salary for Danuț's construction work was at the bottom. Danuț explained that they would be paid for each construction task they did. Danuț would receive 30% of the payment, and his godfather would receive 70%. He explained that, for example, one piece of work might take them two months, and they would be paid in total 3,000 EUR (22,300 DKK or 2,650 GBP). 30% of this would be 900 EUR (6,700 DKK or 800 GBP), which would mean that Danuț would receive 450 EUR (3,400 DKK or 400 GBP) for one month's work. During the summertime Danuț would be working a lot – perhaps 10-12 hours a day – and be home at 8-9pm. To make ends meet in Romania, Danuț explained, you might have to work *la negru* (informal work). He thought it would be difficult to get by in Romania, if 'you want to be correct' (*dacă vrei să fii corect*). Previously, he had also been working in Italy, but work there had been too insecure and poorly paid.

A little while after his job interview at the hotel, he was called by Agrojob and was told that a farm job in Denmark had become available. He was told to come to Denmark within a week, and so he became busy with the last preparations before departure. Danuț received the employment contract via email to approve the conditions for the job; when he received the contract, he immediately verified the salary for the farm work, and then accepted the contract. He did not tell me that he verified anything else in the contract than the salary – apparently the most important element in the contract. Before leaving Romania, he also had to collect documents such as his school diploma, provide a clean criminal record, and tax documents which stated that he did not have debt owed to the Romanian tax authorities. These documents needed to be translated into English and notarised. Agrojob bought him the ticket for the bus which he had to take to go to Denmark. When he arrived in Denmark, his brother picked him up to take him to the farm in a village outside Sønderborg.

Even before I began my fieldwork, I was aware of the sensitivity around salary issues for migrant labourers in Denmark. For this reason, I was always careful when asking about this topic. Danuț's openness, however, allowed me to satisfy my curiosity and ask more directly about salaries for Romanian farm labourers. According to Danuț, Romanian farm

labourers would often earn 10,000-11,000 DKK (1,200-1,300 GBP) gross per month when arriving in Denmark.[21] After six months the farmer may then add 1,000 DKK (120 GBP) to the monthly wage. Danuț himself had started with a salary of 13,000 DKK (1,500 GBP) per month when he arrived in 2012. A rough calculation would therefore make his monthly salary in Denmark almost four times higher than his previous salary in Romania.

Though Danuț was happy about earning more money with his farm work, his employment conditions had gradually worsened. According to his contract, he was supposed to work from 7am – 4pm. Often though he would be working until 7, 8 or 11pm. Given Danuț's knowledge of construction work, the farmer had asked him to do repair works on the farm in addition to his farm work. But Danuț had refused to do the extra repair works, and the farmer had apparently accepted his refusal. As Danuț was living on the farm, he was available to do extra work at the farm most of the day. Over the course of one month, for example, he had done 25 hours' overtime work, but the farmer had not wanted to pay him for these extra hours because the farmer, according to Danuț, thought it was too much to pay. Instead, the farmer wanted Danuț to take time off as compensation for the overtime work. After Danuț's first six months at the farm, he did not receive a salary increase from the farmer. But after one year of work at this farm, when the contract was renewed, the farmer had increased the salary. However, one week after the renewal of the contract, the farmer notified Danuț that he had found a replacement for him. This meant that Danuț had to find a new job and a new place to live.

Danuț managed to find another farm job in the Sønderborg area, this time through a local agricultural association which did not take a fee for the recruitment service. He told me that he was satisfied with the new farm job, where he was working during the time of my fieldwork. 'The working programme is respected' (*se respecta programul*), he said. At this farm he was initially employed with a salary of 16,000 DKK (1,900 GBP) per month. Later the salary was raised to 22,000 DKK (2,700 GBP). Danuț was happy about the increase, though he still

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[21] According to a labour union representative I spoke with, migrant farm labourers often receive 11,000-16,000 DKK (1,260-1,840 GBP) per month when arriving in Denmark. Though the labour union representative's estimate was slightly higher than Danuț's, they did not differ significantly.

complained about the high taxation levels in Denmark. 'It's legal theft!', he said.[22] He and Magda had nonetheless managed to save around 100,000 DKK (11,800 GBP) with their earnings in Denmark (she was working as a caretaker for elderly people). For this money, they had bought a piece of land in Romania, and – by the end of my fieldwork – they held their wedding in Iași, which I attended.

The new farmer had helped Danuț with the deposit for the new flat in the town of Sønderborg; a deposit which Danuț paid back to the farmer through reductions from his salary. Danuț was happy not to live on the farm anymore, as he would then not be available to the farmer all the time. After his experiences at the first farm, he also signed up for the labour union 3F which he heard about through a friend.

I asked Danuț: 'How do you see the future?' (*cum vezi viitorul*). He responded:

'I was thinking of staying here for some time. For so long as we have work. We will stay for as long as possible. We do not know for sure that we will stay here, I don't miss Romania. I have been working abroad since I was 18 years old, with some stays in Romania.' (interview, 24 April 2017)

Danuț's friends from Romania had left to work and live in France, Italy, Spain, Britain, Germany and Denmark. He had been away from Romania for most of his adult life, and he did not have a large network of friends to return to in Romania. And with a lack of sustainable work prospects in Romania, returning did not seem to be an immediate option.

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Danuț's story on the surface provides a nice account of how he managed to find a farm job that he liked, and how he signed up for the labour union which meant that he could receive support in case any issues with his farmer came up. But his story is also important because it highlights the intersections between Danuț's desires for earning more money, the

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[22] My interlocutors often paid around 40% of their salary in tax – a low level of taxation in the Danish tax system, which is based on a progressive tax rate (the more you earn, the more you pay in tax).

farmer's desire to earn a profit from his farm business, and – at least for the first farmer – profit as much as possible from the employment relationship. The recruitment company earned a profit on the facilitation of this employment relationship. The principle of free movement in the EU allowed Danuţ to move relatively easily to Denmark, and the socio-economic inequalities between Denmark and Romania meant that it made economic sense for him to take up the work at the farm in Denmark. But what is the historical, political, economic and institutional context of Danuţ's story? How does the employment relationship make sense for both Danuţ and the Danish farmer, and what is the role of Agrojob in this? And how are the migrant farm labourers received in Denmark by the labour unions and other labourers in Denmark? These are some of the guiding questions in this chapter.

To respond to these questions, I provide a historically and ethnographically grounded descriptive analysis of the relations between labour and capital in Danish agriculture, and the ways that these shape the opportunities for Romanians to travel to Denmark to work in agriculture.

Emerging relations between labour and capital in Danish agriculture

Through a perspective on emerging relations between capital and labour, I will analyse the ways that it has come to make sense for both Danish farmers and Romanian farm labourers to enter this employment relationship.

The relation between capital and labour is a key aspect of Marxist theory. It refers to the relationships between the labourer and the capitalist (the employer) who would, according to Marx, like to gain a profit from the employment relationship. For the employer to gain a profit from the capital-labour relation, the work should be organised in such a way that the employer pays the labourer with a wage which is lower than the value which the employer receives from the product of the labourer's work. In Marx' view, this relationship organises the production in a capitalist society (Hart 1983: 108, Durrenberger 2012: 128-129) and is based on exploitation of the labourer for the gain of the capitalist (Narotzky 1997: 212-213). Marx wrote in a time of the nineteenth century industrialisation process, however. The

agricultural sector is much older than the employment sectors developed during the industrialisation of the nineteenth century. According to Narotzky this means that the agricultural sector has been 'theoretically marginalised as a *survival* of previous relations of production' (1997: 215, emphasis in original). Narotsky compares such theoretical standpoint to Robert Redfield's rural-urban continuum model from 1960. She suggests that what we should really try and understand is the way that industrial capital-labour relations have become hegemonic and dominant (ibid: 215).

Throughout this chapter I will show how industrialisation after the Second World War has had an impact on Danish agriculture, including the sector's employment structure and relations of production. Industrialisation has boosted efficiency and potential economic gain in the sector but has also disrupted job security and generational continuity (cf. Goddard 2016: 5). Alongside this development in agriculture, rising global inequalities and the insecurity and processes of precarisation that these lead to have changed the nature of the capital-labour relationship. With free movement of capital and labour within the EU the risk of exploiting differences and inequalities between the countries have become greater. Though such exploitative practices have already been documented (for example, Pine 2014, Nielsen and Sandberg 2014, Lisborg 2011, Korsby 2011) and are even a concern for the European Commission[23], I still think it makes sense to provide a historical topography of how the conditions for the Romanian farm labourers have been shaped by emerging capital-labour relations in the Danish agricultural sector. Through this I aim to demonstrate the complexities and sensibilities around EU migration to Danish agriculture. The free movement of labour and capital in the EU, I will show, reconfigure the relations of production in Danish agriculture. This is buttressed by intersections between socio-economic inequalities within the EU, Danish labour unions' awkward relationship with migrant labourers, the Danish state's approach to agricultural production, and many Danish farmers' precarious position in a global market economy. Through ethnographic depictions of some of these intersections,

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[23] The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, for example, pays attention to migrants' potential labour exploitation (https://fra.europa.eu/en), and in 2019 the new agency The European Labour Authority opened (https://ela.europa.eu/)

my aim is to provide an understanding for the ways that Romanian farm labourers' social and individual lives are tied to capitalist restructuring at local, national and global levels (cf. Nail 2015, Harvey and Krohn-Hansen 2018).

To shed light on these issues, this chapter presents individual stories of Romanian farm labourers, representatives from the recruitment industry and the Danish farmers. Firstly, I will turn to the Romanian farm labourer Adam who provided vivid accounts of what he considered to be a 'sick world' where countries like Denmark was able to exploit Romanian labourers. Secondly, I turn to the recruitment of Romanian farm labourers and show how a recruitment industry has emerged with the Danish farmers' need for (cheaper) labour. Thirdly, I present the story of the Danish farmer Anders who was under financial and administrative pressure and who benefitted financially from hiring farm labourers from Romania. Finally, I discuss how migrant farm labourers become both a wanted and unwanted labour force in Danish agriculture. As such, I not only point to economic and political processes of capitalist restructuring: I also sketch some of the emotional implications in the form of populism and anti-immigrant sentiment which arise in the context of migrant labourers in Denmark.

Hopeful apathy: Adam and the sick world

Adam was a part of the friend group with Ionut and Danuț. He often expressed his disappointment with and concerns about the world and the people living in it. After completing his Master's degree in animal husbandry, he came to Denmark for the first time in 2012, also through the recruitment agency Agrojob. After that he worked for a year at a Danish owned farm in Australia. In 2015 he came to Denmark again to work at a farm outside Sønderborg. In between the travelling he had been spending time in Romania. When he first arrived in the Sønderborg area, he had been staying with Ionut (who he did not know beforehand), but he later moved to another house some kilometres away from Ionut.

Adam told me that when he came back to Romania the first time after he had been working in Denmark, he had spent his newly earned money very quickly. Reflecting on his own behaviour, he said: 'I was like a child… I earned a lot of money and had a girlfriend. I went

back to Romania and spent all the money.' Adam explained that he had been more careful with the money the second time he had gone back to Romania. When he had returned from Australia to Romania in the spring of 2015, he had bought an apartment in his hometown. He then went to Denmark to work again in the late summer 2015. With the money from this work, he was able to renovate the apartment where his recently divorced mother was living.

Adam thought that Western countries are taking advantage of both the Romanian labourers abroad and Romania's resources inside the country. In the following excerpt from my fieldnotes, Adam vividly told me about how he saw the difference between countries:

> 'The world is sick...! Romania is like a young beautiful – but stupid – girl[24]', Adam said. He explained that Austrian companies are buying up forest resources in Romania to use the wood for production in Austria. Apparently, the Austrian companies have managed to buy the forest cheaply, because some Romanian politicians have been able to personally benefit economically from these purchases. Denmark, according to Adam, is 'the lady' that takes care of the environment. United States, by contrast, is 'a slut' who takes everything from the others; in Adam's words, the country 'twists people and wears nice clothes at the same time'. Britain, according to Adam, happily goes into debt to get everything it wants. And France sits on a chair with a cigarette. With his legs crossed Adam mimed a woman – France – sitting coquettishly on a chair with a cigarette in her mouth. He thought that Romania is 'bullied' and is being taken advantage of by the other countries. 'She [Romania] is also stupid', he noted. (fieldnotes, 19 September 2016)

Adam's illustration of international relations – with his feminisation of countries as stupid and being taken advantage of, or as the slut who takes everything from others – mirrors many of my interlocutors' sexualised perceptions of relationships (which I will return to in Chapter 7). Adam, who turned 30 during my fieldwork, did not think that anything had improved in Romania during recent years; by contrast, he thought that other countries were increasingly exploiting the human and natural resources of Romania. He compared Romania's situation to that of many African countries: he thought that the Western world benefited from

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[24] In Romanian, country (*tară*) is feminine.

keeping Romania on a lower developmental level than themselves; that countries like Denmark just wanted a 'cheap hand' to come and work for them.

Starting with his apparent victimisation of Romania – and possibly of himself – Adam became more critical towards the end of my fieldwork: he would increasingly complain about the situation in Romania and raise his frustrations about his own situation. He told me that he hoped he would not end up in the 'nut house'. One day, when complaining about the state of affairs, while he was sitting in the living room of his farm house located opposite one of the pig farm buildings, he pointed towards the pig farm building on the other side of the courtyard and said, 'People are like the pigs in the farm!'. By this remark he referred to the behaviour of pigs in industrialised farming: Adam thought that the sows stand in their stalls, receive food and reproduce piglets – without thinking about this automated cycle. To him, this automated cycle resembled how people live: they do not think about their lives, but just follow an automated cycle of reproduction.

Adam's portrayal of the world and people today reflects the situation in Romania, which I heard about from many of my interlocutors. This is a situation where people are often struggling to make ends meet whilst at the same time waiting for something better – something which people seem to have been waiting for since the 1989 Revolution. This situation in Romania means that many people leave the country to work abroad.

Figure 5. The author in the farm. The sows are in the stalls with their piglets.

Hann and Hart (2011: 142) write that, 'We all seem to be living in one world unified by capitalism'. Until 1989 the Cold War divided large parts of the world into two different ideal economic systems: the capitalist market economy and the socialist planned economy. The overthrow of the socialist system in 1989 demonstrated the assumed unsustainability of the socialist system (Verdery 1995, 1996). "Shock therapy" and rapid privatisations were supposed to replace the old socialist planned economy with a capitalist market economy. This replacement was aimed at bringing the countries into prosperity, wealth and democracy (more in line with liberal democracies in Western Europe and North America). This however rarely succeeded as intended, and many people were in state of limbo and fundamental uncertainty during the years of transition (Dunn 2004, Wedel 1998). In a Mongolian context, Pedersen and Højer (2008) even suggest that the crisis during the transition to a capitalist market, which was supposed to be temporary, has become a permanent crisis; meaning that the uncertainties and insecurities arising from the transitory phase between a socialist planned economy and the capitalist market economy never disappeared but led to a permanent context of crisis in which people try to make a living without being able to plan

for the future. Romanians with whom I met both in Denmark and Romania to some extent similarly pointed to the continuous state of crisis and transition. One man told me that 'Romania has become sick' (*România s-a îmbolnăvit*), and another simply said, 'it's chaos' (*e haos*). To those Romanians who did not necessarily benefit from the steeply increasing inequalities, the continuous problems in the Romanian economy and political system meant that it was difficult for them to get by in everyday life.

A Romanian friend told me that just after the 1989 Revolution, Romanians hoped that "the Americans" would come and save them. When this did not happen, Romanians hoped that the European Union would bring changes into the country when entering the Union in 2007. But this has not happened either. The financial crisis then hit Romania's economy harshly from 2008, and this encouraged even more people to leave the country. Following the Romanian 2014 presidential elections, I met with an acquaintance in Romania's capital Bucharest. He hoped that the newly elected president Klaus Iohannis would finally "bring order" into the country. On the basis of national stereotyping, my acquaintance thought that Iohannis' background in Romania's German minority – in contrast to the ethnic Romanian majority – could be helpful for establishing order in the country. During my fieldwork, in the beginning of 2017, large anti-corruption demonstrations in Romania and in the Romanian migrant communities around the world showed that people were still not satisfied with the government, and that Iohannis had not brought the order that people had hoped for.

Despite the hope for changes, my interlocutors emphasised that they did not know if Romania would ever change, and they did not feel that they were able to stand up against the country's corrupt elite. Often, they would tell me about how poor Romania is in comparison to Denmark, and how very difficult it is to make a living in Romania today. To me many seemed to be in a state of "hopeful apathy": they hoped that one day the changes would come to Romania, although their experiences told them that changes were not likely to take place. Several times I heard statements such as, 'This is how it is with us... What should we do?' (*Așa e la noi... Ce să facem?*). This would often be said in a tone of irony, disappointment, and apology about the state of the country.

According to several of my interlocutors, endemic corruption is a major problem and makes everyday life for people very difficult: you apparently have to pay 'to open doors' when you have to do something; for example at the municipality or at the doctor. Giggling in a slightly embarrassed way, Laura, who was married to the farm labourer Adrian, told me, 'Romanians are easy to corrupt.' I was told that you cannot necessarily find a job by sending an application; you will also need to pay a bribe and have personal connections that could help you. Apparently, it might cost 200-300 EUR to get a job in Romania. Taking the low salaries into consideration, this is a significant cost. And even with a job, as in the cases of Ionut and Danuţ, one does not necessarily earn enough money to be able to make a living.

For many young people, leaving the country might be seen as the only exit to this situation. My talks with younger Romanians also left me an impression of people's urge to leave the country to pursue better opportunities. I spent one week at an agricultural school in Denmark, which runs an English language class for Romanian students. The students were 18-20 years old, and somewhat younger than many of my other interlocutors. These Romanian agricultural students had decided not to attend university in Romania, but to come to Denmark directly after finishing college in Romania. One of the students told me that many in Romania go to university with the hope that this might help them to find a job. But, this was, according to the student, most unlikely. 'We are waiting for nothing' (*aşteptăm degeába*), he concluded. When visiting an agricultural school in Romania in September 2017, I interviewed four students. Three of them were planning to leave Romania after finishing college. Entering a farm job in Denmark, therefore, presented a connection to other opportunities.

Connecting people to opportunities

I observed two main ways of being recruited to Danish agriculture: either via family and friends already working in Denmark, or through an organisation such as a recruitment agency or an agricultural association. This section will focus on the recruitment industry around the agricultural migration to Denmark. Whereas the historical Danish agricultural associations (*landboforeninger*) might help farmers finding Romanian employees, the

company "Agrojob – Connecting People to Opportunities" specialised in the recruitment of Romanian farm labourers. Many of my interlocutors (including Ionut, Danuţ and Adam) had been recruited through this company which was known to be the largest in Denmark.

I was fortunate to be able to meet employees at the Agrojob office in both Denmark and in the city of Iaşi in Romania. At the Danish office I was speaking to the American HR and communications manager, Simon. He was clearly concerned about my angle on Romanian farm labourers and said that a journalist might unscrupulously want to write that Romanians are just 'exploited labour'. I emphasised my researcher position to him, and he willingly told me about Agrojob's work and recruitment practices.

Agrojob was started in 2009 by Simon and his Danish partner. Little by little they had started to recruit people from Romania to an agricultural school in Denmark, as they already had contacts in Romania. During the first six years of the company's existence, Simon and his partner had travelled frequently between Romania and Denmark to do the recruitment themselves. The recruitment from Romania had intensified, and at the time of talking to Simon, Agrojob had 15 employees at its Danish office. Several of these employees were Romanians who had themselves initially come to work at a farm in Denmark. In 2016 Agrojob opened an office in Romania, and the Romanian employees at this office took care of the recruitment process in Romania, instead of Simon and his partner.

Despite his concerns, Simon allowed me to contact and visit the Romanian office of Agrojob. In the following section I present my experiences from the meeting with this office and a recruitment presentation which took place while I was there.

Agrojob in Romania: recruitment from East to West

Agrojob's office in Romania was located in the centre of Iaşi in a modern office building together with other offices. The office employed three Romanian employees. I arrived at the office an afternoon on a hot summer day in late August 2017. When I came into the office, I met with the younger woman Diana and the office's manager Sergiu. Diana was a student in Iaşi and had to return to her studies later in the year. Sergiu himself was trained in agriculture and had previously been working at a pig farm in Romania. His brother was working at the

Danish office of Agrojob. Sergiu thought that Agrojob had opened the office in Romania because it was cheaper than if Simon and his Danish partner would travel to Romania often. Instead, Sergiu was now travelling around Romania to make recruitment presentations and conduct interviews with potential farm labourers.

Sitting in their office, I asked them who the job candidates from Romania typically are, and how the recruitment process takes place. They told me that the candidates were typically from the countryside in the Moldavia region, and the majority were men aged 25-35. To be recruited for a farm job in Denmark they had to first fill out an electronic form on Agrojob's website. Based on this form, the Agrojob office selected those candidates who would be invited for a recruitment presentation; to be selected, the candidates for example needed a conversational level in English and should be neither too young nor too old. Also, they should preferably have a driver's license. Those who were invited for a recruitment presentation could stay beyond after the presentation for an individual interview. Around 10% of those who initially uploaded their CVs on the Agrojob website were finally accepted for a farm job in Denmark. After the summer holidays, there would usually be a peak in the number of job candidates, because people had come back to Romania for the summer holiday from their jobs abroad, and then wanted to go abroad again to work after the holiday.

Sergiu explained that they experienced a lot of competition for making the recruitment process faster and cheaper. Many employers from Western Europe, he told me, would come to Eastern Europe to find labour. This resembled concerns that Simon had raised in our interview; that recruitment of farm labourers from Romania was becoming increasingly difficult because Denmark competed for labour with countries such as Germany and the UK. The extensive recruitment in Romania had, according to Sergiu, changed the supply of labour in Romania, and this impacted on Agrojob's ability to recruit suitable candidates: previously, they had apparently had a lot of candidates with higher education. But this had changed, and many people without education, and very young people aged 18-19 years, had begun to apply for jobs via Agrojob. A problem for recruitment was also, according to Sergiu, the lack of prestige in farm jobs. Working at a farm and being a peasant (*țăran*) could, according to Sergiu, be considered embarrassing. Sergiu had for example known a family who had lied

about their son's farm work in Denmark. Instead of saying that he was working at a farm, the family in Romania had told other people that their son was working in an office job (even though the parents themselves were peasants). The difficulties in terms of recruiting farm labourers to Denmark meant that Sergiu went around entire Romania to make recruitment presentations and carry out job interviews. Also, Agrojob had started to recruit people from Hungary and the Republic of Moldova. The day after my first meeting with Sergiu and Diana, I participated in a recruitment presentation (on their invitation) in Iaşi, and in the next section I present how this took place.

A recruitment presentation: are you ready for a new opportunity?

I showed up at the hotel at 9.30 a.m. Inside the hotel hall I greeted Diana who had dressed up for the meeting. She told me to go upstairs where I met Sergiu, who had also dressed up in a suit. He showed me into the room where the presentation would take place. I sat down on one of the chairs which had been put up in front of a PowerPoint slide show. The song "We are the Champions", by Queen, was running in the background. Around five other people had arrived too.

The slide show presented the farm work in Denmark. With pictures and video from the farm work in the background, a Danish dairy farmer with a heavy rural accent talked about his satisfaction with his Romanian employees. The farmer explained that the cows needed to be milked three times a day, and he had not been able to find Danish employees who were willing to work the hours required for this job. By contrast, the farmer explained, the Romanian employees had shown interest in the work and willingness to learn. Other pictures and video clips in the slide show showed injections and castrations of pigs. Together with the farm work, the slide show advertised Denmark in terms of the possibilities for biking around in the countryside, and smiling blond women with a text on the picture saying that Denmark was the happiest nation in the world. Whilst the show was running, more job candidates came into the room to sit down on the lined-up chairs. In between videos and pictures of the farm work, the slide show presented statements such as 'Are you ready for a better future?' and 'Are you ready for a new opportunity?'

At 10 a.m. Sergiu showed up in the room to begin the presentation. He asked everybody to silence their phones. With another PowerPoint slide show in the background, he went through Agrojob's recruitment service. In the following excerpt from my fieldnotes, I provide a slightly shortened version of Sergiu's presentation:

Sergiu starts by stating the English language requirements: 'There is need for us to understand each other... there is no need for an advanced level... Learning Danish is a personal choice.' In his calm and assertive presenter voice, Sergiu then says, 'It would be a pity if we only came to work. Primarily, we live. Danish people have a specific way of solving problems. Perhaps we can adapt to this.' Sergiu quickly emphasises to his audience that the work in Denmark is legal work (*munca legala*) and continues to explain the exact conditions of the work. At first he explains that the candidate will receive 200 EUR (around 1500 DKK or 180 GBP) after two weeks of work before receiving the first salary, to allow the candidate to have some money during the first month.

Sergiu then asks on his slide show, 'What is a Danish farmer looking for?' (*Ce cauta un fermier danez?*). Responding to this himself, Sergiu says that a Danish farmer is looking for someone who is *asking*. 'He [the farmer] is not looking for Einstein... He is not looking for Superman.' Sergiu explains that farm work is Denmark is automated compared to farm work in Romania. This means that both men and women can work at the Danish farms, but, 'You have to look around and look for what is going on around you, and you have to ask yourself: one pig did not eat, *why*? The pigs are agitated, *why*? Is there is specific smell, *why*?' Sergiu is saying this with a friendly, but still determined voice, before he goes on to talk about the different types of farms you can work at: dairy farms or pig farms.

Starting with the work at the dairy farm, Sergiu immediately stresses: 'Animal welfare is important... Hygiene is important. If the milk does not live up to the standards, it cannot be sold.' He then moves on to explain the work itself: there is a lot of work at the dairy farms. The work partly takes place outside, which means that employees will have to manage in different weather conditions, and sometimes the very strong wind in Denmark. Sergiu explains the common Danish saying which states that there is no wrong weather, only wrong clothing for the weather. He ends the explanation about the work at these farms by explaining that dairy farms often have three milking sessions per day. The contract may therefore state the working

hours as being from 4.30am – 6.30pm. However, Sergiu assures the attendants, there will be a break during this period, as it will not be possible to work all those hours.

He then moves on to explaining the work at pig farms. At first, he explains that the working programme at dairy farms is like 'at a factory' [with industrial working hours]. Then his slide show shows a picture of a cute piglet. He explains that the pigs in Denmark might do anti-stress activities (important for the quality of meat). To the amusement of some people he explains that Denmark has a population of around 39,000,000 pigs, which is a lot more than the human population of around 5 million inhabitants. Again, he explains that the pig farm work is highly automated, but that one still needs to look after the pigs and do some work manually. 'Cleaning is important to protect the animals... You have to kill pigs that do not respond to the treatment.' The audience is quiet, and do not give any immediate response. Some have dressed up for the interview, some definitely not, and some are painted with tattoos; all sit quietly on the chairs covered in blue textile, listening to Sergiu.

Sergiu moves on to the next topic: 'Advantages of working in Denmark'. He explains that employees receive all necessary equipment at the farm. There are 'safety filters' at the pig farms, and you have to change clothes to go inside the farm area. 'To the farmer', Sergiu elaborates, 'the farm inside is clean, whereas the environment outside is dirty.' Sergiu says that there is a coffee break at 9am at farms, and notes, 'The farmer is expecting a more open collaboration [than in Romania]... All receive the same respect in Denmark, adult, child, man, woman'. He continues to explain that everything will be included in the employment contract, which will also state how many people who live in the house that the job candidate is going to live in. He then emphasises: 'In Denmark you should live, learn and work. One has to be responsible. Nobody will come and verify the work.' And he makes the candidates aware that they should think about their futures, and the fact that their salaries might increase after one year.

At last Sergiu presents the advantages of choosing Agrojob's recruitment service. They include: the job candidate has a contract before leaving Romania and is in a direct employment relationship with the farmer. The candidate receives a legal contract via email to be approved before leaving Romania. Finally, the candidate pays the recruitment fee in three rates during the first three months of employment. The candidate works 160 hours per month and earn 'clean' (*curați*) 1,100 EUR (approximately 8,200 DKK or 980 GBP) per month. In addition to

this, farm labourers receive payment for overtime hours which pay more than regular working hours. Annual extra holiday allowance (*feriepenge*) amounts to 14,832 DKK (1760 GBP).

Towards the end of the presentation, Sergiu sums up the recruitment service from Agrojob: after an individual interview, a personal profile of the job candidate will be developed for the farmer, and the farmer chooses the candidate. 'You are not like a potato thrown somewhere!', he emphasises to ensure the audience that this is a selective – and not random – process of employment where the job candidates and the farmers are matched carefully. When the farmer has chosen a candidate, the candidate receives the employment contract via email and may ask questions about the contract. Sergiu tells the audience that it is important to ask questions about the contract before leaving Romania. When the contract has been concluded, Agrojob arranges the bus travel for the job candidates to go to Denmark. Travel insurance and accommodation on the travel to Denmark will be covered by Agrojob. When they are working in Denmark, Sergiu explains, there is a Romanian employee at the Danish Agrojob office who can provide help, if they have questions. 'He is not there to make money out of you!', Sergiu says and shows a picture of the man. He makes the audience aware that salaries will be paid into the farm labourers' bank accounts, and not in cash (as is not uncommon in Romania). He ends his slide show with the statement: 'Are you ready for a new opportunity?'. He invites people to stay for the individual interviews. (fieldnotes, 1 September 2017)

I do not know how many of the people in the room stayed for individual interviews afterwards. From the atmosphere in the room, it was difficult to determine whether people gained enthusiasm for farm work by listening to the presentation. Both Simon and Sergiu had highlighted to me that they tried to provide the job candidates a realistic picture of farm work, to avoid unpleasant surprises for the new farm labourers when they came to Denmark. Though Sergiu did highlight some non-work aspects of life in Denmark, such as biking, the presentation mainly concerned the work and the employment and salary conditions. It did, as such, not promote farm work in Denmark as a development opportunity to the individual's career prospects, though Sergiu alluded to the possibility of a salary increase.

Back in the Agrojob office in Denmark, Simon also emphasised the financial reasons for job candidates' applications for farm jobs in Denmark. He told me that the job candidates dreamt about a house, building their family's future, and owning a car. 'They need money to

fulfil these dreams', he said to me as an explanation for why the candidates came to Denmark. According to Simon, around 80% of the job candidates came to Denmark to earn money. This worked well with the needs of the Danish farmers, Simon thought:

> '[The Danish farmers] are very satisfied. They get a person from a different culture, who is here to earn money... They [the Romanian farm labourers] are goal oriented. They are willing to work hard... They may not have been working with pigs before, but they jump into it!' (interview, 15 June 2017)

In Simon's view, therefore, Romanian job candidates' aspirations matched the Danish farmers' needs for labour. Simon thought that it was important to inform the job candidates thoroughly about the work in Denmark, in order for them not to feel forced to come to work in Denmark. 'Working in Denmark', Simon stressed, 'has to be a choice'. Such statement relied on an assumption that working in Denmark could be a choice for the job candidates to be able to consume and fulfil their own and their families' needs. As the stories of Ionut, Danuț and Adam showed, their choices to go to Denmark relied on a feeling of not being able to get by in Romania with the conditions offered there, *and* dreams of being able to consume (which was particularly evident in the story of Ionut). But Agrojob's business, from Simon's point of view, relied on an assumption that the job candidates chose to go to Denmark to fulfil their dreams. In this perspective, as such, Agrojob helped them to realise their future dreams.

When the job candidates arrived in Denmark for the first two days, they stayed at a local sport centre that Agrojob was allowed to use. On the first day, the candidates for the pig farms received a medicine course, where they learned to handle medicine for the pigs. Candidates for the dairy farms received a hygiene course to learn to ensure the appropriate standards of hygiene at the dairy farms. As also became clear in Sergiu's presentation above, farm labourers need to be able to carry out multiple tasks at the farms, comply with strict rules and handle medication and needles. Though they were often employed as unskilled labourers at the farms, and the work was often quite repetitive, their work at the farms still required the ability to take some form of responsibility and handle a set of different tasks. On the second day in Denmark, the candidates went to the State Administration

(*Statsforvaltningen*) to ensure that all documents for working and living legally in Denmark were in order. Agrojob had then bought the tickets for the candidates to take the train to their destination. When they arrived at the destination, they would be picked up by somebody from the farm.

Job candidates had to pay the recruitment fee to Agrojob during their first three months of employment in Denmark. 'This is an ethical way of doing it', Simon emphasised. He stressed that the candidates would receive the service first, and then they pay *afterwards*. In total, the candidates had to pay 650 EUR (almost 5000 DKK or 600 GBP). The farmer paid a fee too, but Simon did not say how much this was. This information was also not in the folder about the recruitment package that Simon gave me. Simon made me aware that the employment contracts from Agrojob were approved by the union. He said that he thought of the Danish labour union 3F as something positive, as the labour union provided some basic rules for employment: '3F ensures that people do not exploit others... We have to treat people properly'. According to Agrojob's records (Simon told me), around 87% of the candidates stayed at the farm during the first three months. The remaining 13% may not be able to work with pigs, they might not be able to get up in the morning, or the conditions of for example their accommodation were considered too poor. Sometimes the farmer and the farm labourer did not get along with each other. If the farm labourer wanted to leave the job, Agrojob tried to find a different farm job for the person (without a recruitment fee this time).

Below, I will return to the role of labour unions in Denmark. Simon's insistence on telling me how ethical Agrojob's business was – and that he thought the labour union was important to ensure that people are treated properly – might have fed into the important role of labour unions in Denmark and his concerns about my positioning. This demonstrates the political sensitivity around migration issues and opposing actors in the field of migration, where various institutions, organisations and companies operate according to diverging agendas and opportunities. In the interview with Simon, this made it difficult for me to ask very critical questions to Agrojob's business model, as I was keen to be able to visit the office in Romania and not lose my access to Agrojob. Also, I just wanted to keep a pleasant atmosphere throughout the conversation and did not wish to live up to his expectations of

prior judgements from me about the business. After all, I was there to learn about their recruitment practices – and not to take an immediate moral position about the ethics of the company's business. Nonetheless, when I have told other people that I visited a recruitment company and participated in a recruitment presentation during my fieldwork, I have received various sceptical reactions about this type of recruitment practice which has become part of the recruitment industry in the EU.

An agricultural recruitment industry

Agrojob played an important role in Romanian farm labourers' migration to Denmark and their entries into the Danish labour market. The company selected the candidates for the farmers, was responsible for conducting the interviews, informing the candidates about the work in Denmark and ways of living and organised the candidates' initial introduction to Danish society and farm work. In this way, Agrojob acted as a facilitator of the migratory process and took part in a recruitment industry around migration to Danish agriculture.

Agrojob's work feeds into a larger network of recruitment channels which Romanians' emigration has nurtured. Apart from companies like Agrojob, Danish agricultural associations, Romanian recruitment companies and a local Romanian association assisted farmers with the recruitment. Research has already demonstrated how migration nurtures the businesses of various actors within a 'migration industry' that facilitates or controls migration processes to earn a profit on people's migration (Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sørensen 2013: 6). Actors may include recruiters and those who provide transport for people's movements (ibid.: 6). Agrojob provides the whole package; including the recruitment itself, the facilitation of the travel to Denmark and the initial stages for the farm labourers to be able to start working in Denmark. As such, the case of Agrojob and other similar companies demonstrate an emerging recruitment industry within the EU: migration across the EU is promoted, and businesses like Agrojob are able to earn a profit on the facilitation this migration. This indicates that some countries' needs for (cheaper) labour in particular sectors have fostered companies to organise recruitment from countries like Romania where people often have lower salary expectations and desires to go abroad. The principle of free movement, changing

needs for labour, areas with a labour surplus, increased competition between farm businesses and socioeconomic inequalities between countries have therefore opened up avenues for companies like Agrojob to profit from these changing relations between labour and capital.

Organised recruitment such as Agrojob's offer may be convenient as the company takes care of information for, formalities with, and training of farm labourers. This will save the job candidate from coming to Denmark to start looking for a job and a place to live, which can be insecure and end up with no result. To the farmers, this service is also convenient as they will not have to look for a new farm labourer, take care of the recruitment, initial training, and formalities in Denmark. Whilst this type of recruitment provides some benefits, there is still a degree of precariousness for the farm labourers: the company places them at a farm, and although this is a tailored process according to Agrojob, the farm labourer and the farmer may still not get on with each other. The farm labourers' housing in Denmark depends on the job, as they often live in a house attached to the farm. If they want to leave the job, they also have to leave the house. Being in an unfamiliar country, rapidly finding a new place to stay may not be easy. As Agrojob's clients also comprise the farmers, the company must maintain good relations with the farmers. This means that Agrojob is not necessarily able to advocate for the farm labourers and take sides. Instead, the labour union may advocate for the farm labourers, should issues at the farms arise (as I will return to below, it is not necessarily easy for the labour union to get involved in such cases).

Some of my interlocutors had been satisfied with Agrojob's recruitment service, whereas others had felt exploited. One simply said: 'it's a business' (*e o afacere*). Danish agricultural associations also recruited Romanian farm labourers for farmers in Denmark, but those I was in contact with did not take a fee from the job candidates as did Agrojob (farmers pay for their memberships of the agricultural associations). An employee at a Danish agricultural association said to me, with indignation in his voice, about this kind of recruitment where the candidates have to pay a fee, 'This is a white slave trade!' (*det er hvid slavehandel*). Similarly to Agrojob, these associations had experienced increased competition for farm labourers, as they were competing with other EU countries and industries. This did not mean that no Romanian farm labourers came to Denmark; rather, as many were already

working in Danish agriculture, new Romanian farm labourers would sometimes come via their family and friends, and not through a professional recruiter. Altogether, this meant that it had become increasingly difficult to recruit labour for the agricultural sector, and a company like Agrojob was continuously trying to 'develop its product', in Simon's words, to respond to this increased competition for labour.

Though changing needs for labour, the principle of free movement in the EU and socio-economic inequalities provided Agrojob with business opportunities, developments in the market also means that the company's agricultural recruitment business was under pressure. One Danish employee at an agricultural association made me aware that Danish farmers will have to offer Romanian farm labourers higher salaries to be able to recruit and retain them. A central aspect of migration debates in Denmark, now and historically, has been whether the use of migrant labourers is just a way of hiring cheap labour and circumventing the Danish labour market model. In the following section, I will therefore turn my focus away from the recruitment practices to the Danish farmers. Though I will not provide any clear-cut answers to whether they purposely exploit migrant labour, my attempt will be to explain how it might make sense to the farmers to employ cheaper labour. Through this exploration I am not trying to excuse potential labour exploitation, or, indeed, feel sorry for a farmer whose business is running badly; rather, I wish to provide an understanding of the ways that the farmers' livelihoods and reasoning for employing migrant labour are embedded in their own moral worlds and structural constraints. Such constraints are part of the farmers' considerations when managing the farms' finances. By employing farm labourers from Romania, who might have lower salary expectations and who do not necessarily require the same standards as those usually provided in Denmark, the farm's profit might increase a little – and so also the chance of the farm's survival during a time for Danish farmers where they are often under considerable financial pressures. In the following story about the farmer Anders we shall see how such pressures on his farm business meant that he considered it beneficial to employ farm labourers from Romania.

The farmer Anders: structural development, administrative and financial pressures, and the option of cheaper labour

To provide an understanding of the Danish farmers' situations, and why they employ Romanian farm labourers, I will in this section present the ways that farmers' businesses are embedded in the ways that structural development in Danish farming and globalisation of the labour market change the relations between labour and capital. Through the story of the dairy farmer Anders I highlight the ways that this has had an impact on his farm business.

I met Anders on a chilly November morning in 2016 at his farm, where we went for a walk around his dairy farm. When I arrived, his Romanian employees were working intensely to prepare the next milking session. The global dairy company Arla Foods came to pick up milk every second day, and they could come at any time of the day. The farmer thus needed to be prepared. Anders, a middle-aged man, and I went for a walk around the farm buildings, whilst we had a talk about the functioning of the farm.

He explained that the farm had around 300 cows. Each cow produced annually 10,000 litres of milk. Employees milked the cows by putting the milking machines onto the cows' udders. In other farms they may use robots to milk the cows. One robot, according to Anders, costs 1 million DKK (118,000 GBP), and can milk 60 cows a day. In comparison, each employee cost him 300-400,000 DKK (35,000-45,000 GBP) annually. At Anders' farm, they needed to milk 100-120 cows per hour. They milked three times a day, and each milking session took around four hours. They milked at 4am, at 12pm and at 8pm. Two people were needed for every milking. He thought that investing in robots would be too costly in comparison with employment of farm labourers, who would milk manually. Ten years ago, he told me, many dairy farmers had bought milking robots. But many had, according to Anders, gone back to manual milking, because the robots were not as profitable as expected.

Anders told me that his grandfather had had a lot of animals at the farm. But since 1979 the farm had only had dairy production. In 1983, the European Union introduced milk quotas to avoid an over-production of milk within the Union. This closed all import of milk from USA and New Zealand. Because of the quotas it was difficult for the dairy farmers to be

allowed to expand their farms. This was easier for pig and mink farmers as they did not have the same restrictions on their productions. In 2003 though, dairy farmers were allowed to borrow money from the banks to invest in their farms. When Anders told me this, I had the feeling that he might have borrowed a lot of money at that point. According to Anders, these borrowing practices had created 'an A and a B team' of farmers in Denmark. The A farmers had no debt, and the farmers in the B team had a lot of debt. Judging from his tone of voice, I asked him, 'Do you feel part of the B team?' He confirmed that he did. In 2015, the milk quotas introduced by the European Union were cancelled. This exposed the dairy farmers to the global market and decreasing milk prices, and many went bankrupt as a result of this. He moved on quickly to explain that farmers' economies are also dependent on the salaries that they need to pay their employees. According to Anders this meant that the farmers are dependent on the migrant labour. 'We cannot pay the Danish salaries... I cannot afford to pay salaries according to the collective agreements!' He seemed aware of the many debates about cheap migrant labour and the public criticism of Danish farmers.

I asked Anders about his own perspective on his future. With some melancholy in his voice he replied, 'We have to live while we are here.' I was not sure how to react to this but asked him what he thought would help his situation at the farm. Anders thought that an 'economic upswing' (*økonomisk opsving*) and higher milk prices would help, together with more willingness from the banks to help the Danish farmers. He said that banks could for example cancel debts. Anders explained that banks had been known to cancel debts in some cases. But he also acknowledged that if each farmer in debt owes 20,000,000 DKK (2,370,000 GBP), the banks cannot afford to cancel *all* farmers' debts. 'Many [farmers] do not get through this... The banks are earning on this', Anders said. He thought that as long as he paid the loan interest, paid his employees low salaries, and people at his farm worked many hours to enable Anders to pay this, the banks would be happy. 'They earn money on this... The banks are playing cards with us', and he made an agitated movement with his hand. He moved on with his complaints about the banks. Having employed 6-7 people, the bank might tell him that he did not need that many employees. With disdain in his voice he explained that some economists had calculated that a dairy farmer should employ one person per 80 cows.

However, Anders continued, this kind of calculation did not account for ill cows that needed extra care and extra work. Economists apparently calculated the needed labour based on 'standard working hours' (*normarbejdstimer*). But this was, in Anders' perspective, based on scenarios where nothing goes wrong.

Anders had become absorbed in our discussion about the issues that contemporary Danish farmers might encounter and the frustrations he felt about his own farm. We continued our walk around the farm buildings. Firstly, we passed the 'day care' (*dagpleje*). This consisted of calves in smaller shelters outside. Calves were taken from their mothers when they were a few hours old. The farm, Anders told me, had had salmonella. For this reason, they had a lot of extra testing to do, and it could take up to 5 years to get rid of the salmonella. After the day care we went into a large, open and roof-covered building with many adult cows inside. He pointed out the behind of one cow and noted that I could see that the cow had given birth in the morning. To maintain the level of production, a cow needed to give birth once a year, and after the calf had been taken from the cow, the cow was used for milk production. Bull calves were sold later on to the butcher, and the meat was sold as beef. This made Anders complain that Danish farmers were under stricter rules than farmers in other countries. This meant that Danish meat was more expensive to produce, and that it was therefore also more expensive for consumers to buy than meat produced in other countries. But, as Anders stressed, Danish customers were not willing to pay the high meat prices. Instead, Danish beef was sold to Italy, and Italian beef – which was produced under more lenient rules – was imported to Denmark. Similarly, cheaper Polish meat was imported to Denmark.

Surrounded by straw and the cool air which the cows clearly enjoyed, he explained that the farmers are obliged to report all use of antibiotics in the treatment of cows. The farm had received unannounced control visits from the Danish Food and Veterinary Administration which made random inspections of the use of antibiotics. Anders himself said that he thought the unannounced visits were okay, because mistakes did happen in the treatment of cows. Earlier the farm had 30 cows, and one of the cows might have been ill. Because of the lower number of cows, fewer mistakes happened in the treatment, and the authorities had trust in

the farmers' abilities to treat the animals. But with more cows at the farm, more cows would also be ill and make the management of treatment more complex. At the time of our conversation, Anders' farm had 300 cows, and 4 cows may be ill. So, the authorities came on unannounced visits to audit the farmers. Turning back to his criticism, he said: 'The Danes think they are the best in the world and that Denmark is a frontrunner. But businesses pay for this idea!' According to Anders the Danish state had introduced stricter rules than in other countries to make Denmark a frontrunner in terms of sustainable farming practices; including on issues such as the use of antibiotics. This made Denmark less competitive compared to farmers in other countries. He thought that this was 'the politicians' game': the politicians wanted to show off by introducing new regulations in the agricultural sector. The ministers wanted to do this before they retired and received their large pensions. Anders underlined that the agricultural sector's export constituted an important element of the Danish national economy. The sector, according to Anders, provided 700-800,000 workplaces in Denmark. Slightly surprised by this myself, I noted that this should be almost a fifth of the population. But, Anders corrected me, the Danish labour force comprises around 3 million people, which meant that the agricultural sector comprised about a quarter of the Danish labour force. Each farm, he explained, gave work to 10-12 people outside the farm in secondary professions, and there were around 10,000 farms in Denmark. I was not sure if the numbers Anders gave me were correct. But his portrayal of the situation highlighted that he wanted to stage agriculture as vital to the Danish economy.

I asked Anders how the current situation compared to earlier times. He explained the structural development in Danish agriculture: 50 years ago, Denmark had around 50,000 farms. This has been heavily reduced, but the farms had become a lot larger. Previously, 21 families were living off the land which had come to belong only to Anders' farm. In 1954, Kegnæs included 159 farms that delivered milk to the local dairy company (Arla Foods had then to a large extent outcompeted smaller dairy companies in Denmark). In 1954, these farms delivered 2 million litres of milk in total annually. In 2002, Anders' farm had 30 cows, and in 2005 he became the only dairy farmer on Kegnæs to deliver milk. He had then started to expand the farm. Between 2003 and 2006 he was the only one to work at the farm, and he had

been milking two times a day, 365 days a year. The number of cows was growing. Then he had started to think about his health in the long term, and in 2006 he started to employ people at the farm. Apparently in 2008 he managed to have one week of holiday.

Given his complaints about the difficulties of running a farm, I asked Anders if he had ever considered doing something else himself. Anders did not think this would be an option. He told me that he did not like school. He went to school on Kegnæs when the peninsula still had a state school. But during the school day, he could only think about going back to the farm. After finishing school, he completed agricultural training at the local agricultural school. Calming down a little, Anders told me in a quieter tone: 'I don't know if I'll be able to continue'. He went back to work.

Danish farming between family tradition and commercial business

Anders' story is not unique for Danish farmers across pig and dairy farms, following the structural development in Danish agriculture. Structural development in Denmark had changed his family's farm and had ultimately put pressure on the farm to become larger and more effective. With the changing farming practices that the farm had been going through since the 1970s, Anders' farm was at the time of my fieldwork in a state between his family's tradition for farming and commercial business which had to make a profit. His financial statements to the bank had to look convincing to allow him to continue his business. But his family's, including his own, lifework at the farm meant that the farm was not just a business: it was a life's work which he had a great deal of emotional attachment to. To farm owners, farming certainly is not an everyday office job where one goes into office and leaves again in the afternoon: the farm is where one, as Anders, has grown up, has one's family, memories, pride, and where one has been imagining one's future. In Anders' story above, we see how he blamed the banks and politicians for his situation. According to Anders, *their* business agendas impacted negatively on his and other farmers' situations. In this way, by victimising himself, he removed some of the responsibility for the management of the farm away from himself. Perhaps the solitary responsibility for his farm's situation was too much to bear.

In the beginning of my fieldwork, in July 2016, I interviewed the retired financial advisor Jan. Jan had been employed at an agricultural association and had been advising many farmers on financial issues, including those farmers going bankrupt. However, he also told me about some of the emotional and social issues with farmers which had come up during his work with farmers who were under pressure and went bankrupt. After having spent most of the time in the interview telling me about the financial management of farms, I thought Jan indicated that he wanted to end the interview, and I started to wrap up the discussion. But Jan then said that he had not only been involved in financial management. 'There is more to it than that', he said. I asked him what he meant by this. Jan told me that it had been difficult for him to see how the financial situation at a farm could affect the farmer's entire family: if the farmer went bankrupt, the farm was forced to go through repossession. This meant that the entire family had to leave the farm. It was, according to Jan, a defeat for the farmer not to be 'good enough' to manage the farm, and the entire community around the farm would also know that the farmer had not been able to manage the farm. During my fieldwork I overheard several references to Anders' farm amongst local residents on Kegnæs, including the ways that the need for a large milk production was tough for both the cows and the farm labourers. The local community thus seemed to be aware of the difficulties at Anders' farm.

The changing nature of Danish farming would, according to Jan, probably, lead to a different way of owning farms. He thought that it would in the future be more likely to see more farms financed through funds: that is, farms where investors as shareholders owned the farm. This would remove the entire ownership from a single person. However, when I talked with Jan this was still not a common way to manage a farm business. Instead, many farmers were struggling to make ends meet and did not make it through an apparent transitory period for Danish farming. Also, I am not sure the extent to which a fund financed farm would appeal to a farmer like Anders, who had great pride in his farm which had been in the family for generations. Perhaps Jan's future model for farm businesses would appeal more to the next generations of farmers, who have not necessarily grown up on a family owned farm.

Though I will not go much further into depth with the particular situation of the farmers in this thesis, I will nonetheless occasionally touch upon their situations. I found it

important to include the story of Anders to demonstrate the contemporary environment around farming practices in Denmark, and the multiple and complex ways that farmers' business and practices are bound up with developments in the global market, EU regulations and national legislation. The purpose of explicating this is to demonstrate how my interlocutors' lives were part of larger scale processes of changing relations between capital and labour, which shape the ways that farming takes place today. Romanian farm labourers' situations should therefore not only be understood within a simple dichotomy of an exploitative employment relationship between the farmer and the farm labourer. Rather, their lives, as well as the Danish farmers' lives, are embedded in opportunities and challenges that evolve alongside historical developments which shape the conditions for migration to Danish agriculture. Industrial capital-labour relations have in this respect had a profound impact on the restructuring of the conditions for this migration. During a time of insecurity for Danish farmers, the EU expansions towards Eastern Europe have enabled recruitment of farm labourers from poorer countries with lower salary expectations. Lower salary costs meant that it became easier for the farmers to accommodate the financial pressures on their farms: that is, the ability to employ migrant farm labourers from Romania allowed the Danish farmers to take advantage of the socio-economic differences between Denmark and Romania, and use these differences to resist their own financial differences by creating a larger profit margin on their farm businesses. As we shall see in the next section, this recruitment practice created debates about labour exploitation within the context of the Danish labour market model.

A wanted and unwanted labour force in the Danish labour market

The Danish labour market model and Danish agriculture

To understand how Danish farmers can recruit and benefit from migrant farm labourers, it is important to understand the idiosyncrasies of the Danish labour market model (*Den Danske Model*). A key feature of this model is its foundation upon "collective agreements" (*kollektive overenskomster*). Collective agreements are agreements between the labour market partners – the organisations representing employers and the trade unions

representing employees – which agree salary and many of the working conditions. Collective agreements are decided separately in each sector, for example the agricultural sector. Key to this system is that state regulation plays a minimal role, and that the labour market partners self-regulate the conditions according to the sector's needs.

This labour market system means that Denmark does not have a minimum salary prescribed by law. In the context of globalisation of the labour market there have been discussions about a statutory minimum salary. But a central concern to this system of wage-setting is potential 'wage compression' which means that employers try to keep employees' salaries just above the statutory minimum level (ICF GHK 2014: 10).

The Danish labour market model is firmly rooted in the development of the Danish nation-state. In the last half of the 19th century, the development of the Danish labour market model intensified and took place alongside a more general national mobilisation. In 1849 "absolute monarchy" (*enevælde*) was replaced by a constitution, *Grundloven*, which shaped the framework of contemporary Danish democracy. Although Denmark could still claim ownership of several colonies – which, during the next century, Denmark gradually gave up – the country started to focus its resources on developing a stronger nation-state. At governmental level and in civil society, this was built on ideas of "community" (*fællesskab*) and societal cohesion, as well as education and "enlightenment" (*oplysning*) for each individual in *all* strata of society.[25]

Alongside this development of the nation-state, the labour movement worked to develop a framework for protecting workers' rights in Denmark. This culminated with the September Conciliation in 1899 and the establishment of the Danish labour market model (*Den Danske Model*). The Conciliation between the main organisations, the Confederation of Danish Employers (*Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening*) and the Danish Confederation of Trade

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[25] "Arbejderbevægelsen, 1872-1940": http://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/arbejderbevaegelsen-1872-1940/; "N.F.S. Grundtvig "Oplysning" 1839": http://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/nfs-grundtvig-oplysning-1839/; "Nationalisme": http://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/nationalisme/; Krigen i 1864 (2. Slesvigske Krig): http://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/krigen-i-1864/; "MYTE: Sagde Dalgas "Hvad udad tabes, skal indad vindes"?": http://danmarkshistorien.dk/leksikon-og-kilder/vis/materiale/myte-sagde-dalgas-hvad-udad-tabes-skal-indad-vindes/

Unions (*Landsorganisationen*), agreed on basic rules for the functioning of the Danish labour market. Key to this Conciliation was a wish to institutionalise labour conflicts between employers and employees – that is to say, through institutionalised negotiation – based on each party's contradictory interests and the parties' willingness to conclude compromises to solve their contradictory interests (Due, Madsen, and Jensen 1993: 16-17, 76, 487, 490). This organisation of the labour market has been important to the development of a welfare state and a relatively stable political and economic development in society (ibid.: 14).

The necessity of union membership and coverage of collective agreements in the agricultural sector were debated amongst the labour market partners during the time of my fieldwork. This had become an important debate because of the increased employment of migrant farm labourers who were seemingly willing to work for lower salaries and in worse conditions than would normally be expected in Denmark. In Denmark, there is by law freedom to sign up for associations (*foreningsfrihed*), and employers are not allowed to prohibit their employees from signing up to a trade union. Historically, Danish farmers do not however have a tradition of being covered by collective agreements. This could be because of farmers' desires to be independent and self-determinant. Such desires for independence not only apply to Danish farmers but may be found elsewhere (Bubandt and Anneberg 2016: 117).

But in a Danish context, the desired freedom of farmers seems quite contradictory, as the Danish state has played an important role for the establishment of agricultural associations. Also, national regulations, EU regulations and banks have – as Anders' story above witnessed – a significant impact on the ways that farms are being managed. Despite the farmers' wishes to be independent, their farms are reliant on multiple actors, including the state, veterinarians and banks (ibid.: 117). The Danish farmers' resistance towards collective agreements could in this way be seen as a resistance towards another external management of their farms. A few years ago, a survey amongst companies across a range of sectors in Denmark showed that few farms, in comparison with companies in other sectors, are covered by collective agreements. And farmers are not necessarily interested in further regulation of the salary level. At the same time the survey results showed that farms employ many migrant

farm labourers from Eastern European countries, and in particular Romania (Andersen and Felbo-Kolding 2013: 179-181). Although there are rarely collectively agreed minimum salaries for farm labourers, both Danes and Romanians told me that Danish farm labourers received higher wages than Romanian farm labourers. Apprentices from Danish agricultural schools are covered by collective agreements as part of their apprenticeship contracts between the farmers and the agricultural schools.[26] Whilst there were Romanian agricultural apprentices in Denmark, the majority of my interlocutors were employed as "agricultural helpers" (*landbrugsmedhjælpere*). This meant that they did not work under an obligation to be covered by a collective agreement and the stipulated apprentice salary, and they were not attached to an educational institution which would otherwise require the farmer to complete for example educational plans for the apprentices (sometimes a time-consuming process for the employer).

Danish agriculture thus has a specific position in the Danish labour market. It is an old sector which has historically played an important role in Danish society and for the Danish economy. Though industrialisation has changed the labour structure in the sector significantly, farms remain agricultural workplaces and not industrial workplaces. To my interlocutors this created specific challenges, which I will return to in Chapter 3. In the debate on migrant farm labourers in Denmark, concerns remain about the impact of migrant labour on established labour market standards. As I will discuss in the next section, the attractiveness of hiring migrant labour however also makes this labour force an unwanted part of the Danish labour market.

Debates on migrant labour in Denmark: becoming a wanted and unwanted labour force

Much discussion in Denmark has revolved around the question of whether migrant farm labourers are a cheap and flexible labour force for the farmers. Globalisation of the labour market and the changing nature of Danish agriculture have sparked debates about and

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[26] In Denmark vocational training includes an apprenticeship placement at a workplace as part of the formal education.

concerns for employment and working conditions at the farms, as the socio-economic differences between Denmark and Romania create a potential space for exploitation of these differences. Central to the debates between employers and employees has been the risk of so-called "social dumping" and a "race to the bottom": Danish labourers may feel that their conditions are under pressure, if migrant labourers accept worse conditions and lower pay than Danish employees (Lovelady and Arnholtz 2016: 9). This means that many Danish labourers feel exposed to unfair competition. Being able to offer cheap labour could in some cases be strategic for some migrant labourers as this provides an advantage in terms of being hired in a country where salaries range amongst the highest in the European Union, and where they can severely undercut the established wages (Nielsen and Sandberg 2014). Due to the changing nature of Danish farms and the continuous employment of migrant farm labourers, the labour union 3F was – during the time of my fieldwork – working to establish dialogue with farmers to reach agreements on the employment and working conditions. One representative of 3F however told me, 'It's like fighting a civil war from house to house!' This representative had heard of farmers who illegally prohibited Romanian farm labourers from contacting the labour union. Often, there would be a couple of migrant farm labourers at each farm, and the union representatives had to contact and enter dialogue with each single farmer around the country. First of all, though, the union representatives had to know about the migrant farm labourers at the respective farms, and this was difficult because of the isolation of the farms in the countryside. Migrant farm labourers' lack of knowledge about the role of labour unions in Denmark was a further problem to the union's work.

The employer organisation "Employers for Horticulture, Agriculture and Forestry" (*Gartneri-, Land- og Skovbrugets Arbejdsgivere, GLS-A*), with whom I spoke, argued that young Danish people do not want to work at the farms, and that there are not enough Danish job candidates when the farmers advertise jobs. According to this organisation, Danish students at the agricultural schools might not want to work inside the farms, but prefer to work in advisory and research jobs within the agricultural sector; for example in agricultural associations (which could still require them to complete agricultural school). The employer organisation therefore highlighted a scarcity of labour in the sector, whereas the labour union

thought that the farmers purposefully employed cheaper migrant labour and were not willing to pay salaries that were high enough to attract Danish farm labourers. The minimum hourly wage according to the applicable collective agreement would for many of my interlocutors at the farms be 135 DKK (16 GBP). But as Anders mentioned above, farmers do not necessarily feel that they are able to pay salaries in accordance with the collective agreements.

Disagreements between the employer organisation and the trade union kept alive a fundamental and historical conflict between employers and employees. Given the relatively new intake of migrant farm labourers from within the EU, the parties were, during my fieldwork, still negotiating employment and working conditions that would be sustainable to both employees and business. This also meant that there were Romanian farm labourers who worked many hours for little pay and lived in conditions that Danish workers would not accept.

My interlocutors were not necessarily aware of the importance of labour unions in Denmark and the mechanisms of the Danish labour market system. As the conditions were still being negotiated, their conditions often depended on the individual farmer's attitude towards employment and working conditions. Silvia, previously farm labourer herself, thought that many abuses of migrant farm labourers happened at farms today. She thought that the union should be allowed to visit the farms more frequently to inspect the working conditions. Not all my interlocutors would agree with her on this, as some preferred not to be in contact with the labour union. I was aware of Romanian farm labourers who had received help from the labour union in case of poor treatment at the farm, but I also heard examples of poor treatment from labour union representatives with xenophobic attitudes. Historically, labour unions have been critical of migrant farm labourers (Nielsen and Sandberg 2014, Lillie 2010), and Danish labour unions also have a reputation for occasional racism and discrimination. Anders had had visits from 3F representatives at his farm because of his employees' low pay and tough working schedules. These visits apparently had no impact however, as, during the course of my fieldwork, very little seemed to change at Anders' farm – apart from the farm's high turnover of Romanian farm labourers.

Zolberg (1987) writes that migrant labour in Western countries is often 'wanted but not welcome'. Labour migration took place long before the industrial revolution and has historically been both beneficial and problematic in the destination countries. Although the migrant labourers are alien and represent 'an undesirable "otherness"', it is exactly this 'alien character' which makes migrant labourers profitable in the destination country (ibid.: 37). Romanian farm labourers constitute a vital part of the labour force at Danish farms today. At the same time, they are not in practice a fully integrated part of the Danish labour market system. This is exactly what makes their labour a cheaper and more attractive compared to that of many Danes farm labourers, who might demand salaries in accordance with collective agreements. But the process of selling their labour cheaply "others" the migrant labourers simultaneously; or in other words, they become a wanted and unwanted labour force in the Danish labour market. Their inclusion in the Danish labour market depends on the practical exclusion of certain mechanisms of the labour market – a labour market which is otherwise designed to ensure the inclusion of everybody (Lovelady, in press).

Conclusion

The issues arising from labour migration which I have sketched in this chapter are by no means exclusive to Denmark. In fact, hostility towards migrant labourers has been at the centre of some of the previous years' elections and political transitions around the world. But throughout this chapter I have aimed to show some of the complexities of EU migration that arise specifically in the Danish context. Two interrelated themes for the subsequent analyses in this thesis have emerged from this: risk of labour exploitation and a dialectic of inclusion and exclusion.

With the contemporary organisation of migrant farm labourers in Danish agriculture there is a risk of labour exploitation. Often living at the farm or close to and with little knowledge about the organisation of the Danish labour market, migrant farm labourers may find themselves to live and work in precarious situations. Their relative isolation in the countryside means that they are also a fairly invisible labour force in the Danish landscape, and that it is often difficult for them to "be identified" (as highlighted by the labour union

representative) and to connect with people and institutional actors in the surrounding society. This further increases the risk of labour exploitation. As such, Romanian farm labourers may become visible examples of the types of precarious work and lives that the labour unions have been trying to fight. Their actual invisibility in the countryside, however, due to their relative isolation there, makes them less visible. In this way, they risk becoming a simultaneously included and excluded labour force which moves in a continuum of visibility and invisibility in the shadows of the Danish labour market.

With this framework, in the following chapters I analyse how my interlocutors' everyday lives unfolded around farm work, and explore how their lives inside and outside the farms were shaped in conjunction with the developments sketched in this chapter. First, I return to the daily farm work, and analyse what their work at the farm meant to the ways that they constructed themselves as Romanian farm labourers.

Chapter 3

BECOMING A ROMANIAN FARM LABOURER

On holiday (1): going back onto the farm

On a warm sunny day, we were driving on the German motorways, on our way back to Denmark from a week of camping in Germany's picturesque Black Forest area. Silvia and I were sitting on the back seat, whilst Ionut was driving, with Vasile at his side on the front passenger seat. The spring weather had been generous to us during the week, we felt relaxed, although we also begrudged our return to the Danish weather and everyday life. We were listening to music and were singing along. When the car radio played the Billy Ray Cyrus song "Achy Breaky Heart" and the verse 'You can tell my arms; go back onto the farm...!', Vasile sang along these words loudly and pointed with his finger at Ionut. Ionut smiled. Both Ionut and Vasile were going to start their farm work again on the following day. Neither of them particularly looked forward to this.

We had started our holiday on a Sunday in late May 2017, where Silvia, Vasile and Ionut had picked me up at 3.30am, so we would have the entire day to drive to Southern Germany in Ionut's large car. In the late morning, we stopped at a petrol station in Germany. Silvia and I took out some of the homemade sandwiches from the boot, to eat along with the much-needed coffee that we bought at the petrol station. We sat down on the elevated edge to the parking space. Following the early morning's talk about Romania, including the country's issues of poverty and corruption but also positive aspects of friendliness and hospitality, I asked Silvia, 'Do you miss Romania?', and she replied,

> Sometimes... It would be simpler in Romania... [Outside Romania] you have to learn a new language. You think to yourself that you have to work in jobs that you never thought you would have to work in... (fieldnotes, 21 May 2017)

Silvia looked at me with her slightly sad and melancholic look, and I noted 'hmm...'. She did not say anything but looked down at the asphalt. Sitting by the parking space, I was not surprised to hear that Silvia was not happy with her work and life in Denmark, as she had been complaining about this before.

Silvia

Silvia was in her mid-thirties and had long, black hair which had started to go grey. Adam, luckily, knew how to colour Silvia's hair black so the grey hairs were not visible. Silvia was a decisive woman with a lot of laughter, humour and compassion inside her, and a simultaneous self-irony and self-critique. She did not let the men in the group boss her around but acted to some extent as their mother and would tell them what to do and how to behave. It was not difficult for me to imagine that she had travelled to Denmark on her own to work at a pig farm, back in 2012.

Prior to coming to Denmark, Silvia and her fiancée Vasile, had tried to settle down in Romania after having spent five years in Rome. They had bought a mountain house in the Transylvania region and wanted to set up organic beekeeping together with Silvia's sister and her boyfriend. They had wished to start this dream with EU funding, but due to corruption in Romania, Vasile told me, it was not possible for them to gain access to this funding. Instead, Silvia contacted an agricultural association which helped her to find a job at a farm in the Sønderborg area (but further away from Kegnæs). She was originally trained as a French and Italian linguist from the University of Iaşi but had never worked in that domain. In Italy, she had been working as a shop assistant and a child carer.

Silvia had arrived at the farm in Denmark alone during wintertime, when there were only few hours of light during the day. Everything had been very dark, she told me. She had lived alone by the farm in the countryside and did not get on with her Danish female boss. And after a few months she had demanded Vasile to join her in Denmark, as she did not like being there on her own. He found a job at a farm on Kegnæs, also through an agricultural association. After one year of work at the farm, Silvia had left the job. Then she took Danish classes and was later employed at a local factory, where she was still working during my

fieldwork. When she left the farm job, she and Vasile moved to Kegnæs, where Vasile's farm was located.

I knew from our countless conversations that Silvia was unhappy about working at the factory. She thought that it was difficult for Romanian migrants to be recognised for their skills in Denmark. When I once tried to establish common ground by telling her that my husband – as a migrant in Denmark – had also faced challenges; she responded, 'I think it's easier for British people. Their education is more recognised than if you come from Romania.' It was difficult for me to deny the probable truth of this.

Silvia had periods of depression and was anxious about her future and the prospects of having to keep working at the factory and never do something else. She sometimes expressed a certain longing for Romania's socialist past. She was born in 1981 and remembered some of this period from her childhood, where she had been part of the Romanian socialist organisation for schoolchildren *Organizaţia Pionierilor*. 'It was really nice' (*a fost chiar frumos*), she said, although she acknowledged the consequences of Ceausescu's dictatorship, the country's steeply increasing poverty during the 1980s, and the Romanian security service *Securitate*'s persecutions of people. Nonetheless, Silvia said one day, 'If we still had communism, we would not have to move away from Romania.' She told me that moving to Denmark and working at the farm 'affects you psychologically'. Sometimes, when she was not feeling well, she would go to the town of Sønderborg just to have a walk around on her own.

Vasile

Vasile was a few years younger than Silvia. He was a short man with fairly blond hair. In our conversations, he often referred to Romanian literature and the news in both Denmark and Romania which he followed. Apparently, he had been known for his quite good language learning skills at the Danish language school, and he would sometimes surprise me with his knowledge of Danish colloquialisms. He seemed keen to talk with me about his knowledge and convince me that he knew more than just farm work.

In college and in school, Vasile had been writing poetry, and had participated in a poetry competition in Bucharest. Later, he had wished to study ethnology and history, but he

did not see any job prospects in this education. Instead he started to study engineering at the University in Iaşi, but he gave up these studies as well because he found them too tedious. He had joined Silvia in Italy, where he had been working as a construction worker. However, the work contracts there had been too insecure, and they decided to try to start a new life in Romania as beekeepers. When the beekeeping project did not succeed, and Silvia called him to Denmark, he became an unskilled farm labourer. He frequently voiced his frustrations about his job at the pig farm and expressed his wishes to do something else. He was thinking about becoming a veterinarian, prison officer or to go into vocational training in Denmark. He made it clear to me that he did *not* dream about a career as a farm labourer. However, doing further studies would require him and Silvia to accept a lower monthly income, and potentially move closer to a place of study in Denmark. This was not an immediate option for them during my fieldwork.

Silvia and Vasile received fertility treatment, and Silvia had still not become pregnant when I ended my fieldwork. Vasile's low sperm count was apparently the reason Silvia could not get pregnant, and according to Silvia, he refused to talk about it at home. Towards the end of my fieldwork, he seemed to me to be increasingly frustrated about his situation. He spent most of his day on Facebook, and he would tell Silvia to 'shut up' even when in company. Her facial contractions indicated that she found this uncomfortable. Vasile was often nice but also occasionally commented viciously and sarcastically on other people. I was for this reason never sure to what extent Vasile was well-liked by other people, or whether they were mainly afraid of him and his sudden attacks.

On holiday (2): a shared destiny of Romanians

After sitting a little while on the kerb by the parking space at the German petrol station, Ionut and Vasile joined Silvia and me. We continued our trip in a happy and joking mood, all looking forward to arriving in the camping site in the late afternoon.

Figure 6. Black Forest, Germany

During the week in Germany, we all seemed to enjoy the holiday; we were relaxed, going for walks, having barbeques, sightseeing, going to the local waterpark, and looking at shops in the lively town of Freiburg. In many ways this holiday reminded me of holidays that allow people a break from their everyday lives. At the same time, we several times noticed other Romanians around in the area. Silvia and Vasile's reactions to these Romanians reminded me of their dissatisfaction with their working lives and the ways they felt treated in Denmark and other Western European countries which are frequent destinations for Romanian migrants.

Early on in our week of holiday, as we were going for a walk, we passed a hotel. Two women were standing on a balcony, and they looked like they were cleaning. 'I think they are Romanians' (*cred că sunt români*), Silvia noted with a smile. Later in the day we went to a water park near the camping site. The water park was being renovated, and on the parking space we saw a van with Romanian number plates. Silvia and Vasile agreed that the construction workers were probably Romanian. Inside the water park, Silvia and I spent some time on the indoor sunbathing chairs, having a break from the water flumes and a dance class in water. Again, she complained about her work. 'What kind of place am I working in?', she

asked me rhetorically whilst reflecting about how her two Danish colleagues had difficulties reading – something which would not be an issue to Silvia.

Later in the week, we had a stop at a cafe where the cleaner of the tables was Romanian. When realising that the café had Romanian guests, the cleaner – in Romanian – immediately started to complain to my fellow travellers about the Italian restaurant owners' abusive treatment of her, noting that they – the Romanian migrants – were all working as 'slaves' (*sclavi*). When we left the café, Vasile looked at me in an explanatory way and said, 'That's life!' (*asta-i viaţa*). Although we were holidaying like many others, the destiny of many Romanian migrants never left us. This was not the first time I heard the use of the word 'slave': in February 2017, when Ionut's sister, Dorina, had given birth, Ionut was not given the time off from work that he had expected, to be able to be with Dorina at the hospital. Vasile was annoyed on Ionut's behalf, complaining that Ionut was not 'a minister' who had to attend to a crisis at work. 'We are slaves!' (*suntem sclavi*), Vasile emphasised to me at this point.

The last evening at the camping site, we were sitting outside the tent on the nylon camping chairs with can holders built in on the side and the folding table in front of us. Ionut was talking enthusiastically about all the memories we would have after the holiday. During the week he had been taking countless pictures on his phone and he was looking forward to going back and looking at these pictures and be reminded of the holiday. As a response to Ionut's enthusiasm, I replied, 'Time passed by quickly' (*timpul a trecut repede*). Vasile then took part in the conversation, 'But Astrid... We have memories [*avem amintiri*]. At the farm you take pigs in and out ...'. He thought that the farm work was always the same. Being on holiday, Vasile stressed, had given them other things to do and think about. By then, I had realised how disappointed Vasile was about the farm work. Prior to coming to Denmark, Vasile explained, he had thought that many farms in Denmark are organic. But he learned that this is not necessarily the case. 'It is like producing parts [*piese*] for cars... It is like at a factory [*fabrică*]', he noted.

Figure 7. Ready for dinner in the tent

Equal rights but not equal opportunities

What emerged from Silvia's and Vasile's experiences and the holiday story was their continuous awareness about being Romanians in Denmark (or Germany). Both made me aware of what they considered to be the "shared destiny" of many Romanian migrants, when drawing my attention to the cleaners at the hotel, the construction workers in the water park, and emphasising that they thought Romanians are working as slaves. My failed attempt to compare my British husband's situation with my interlocutors' situation highlighted that Silvia did not think that they, as Romanian migrants with equal rights as EU citizens, would have the same opportunities as, for example, British migrants living in Denmark. They were, as such, not reduced to 'bare life' (Agamben 1998) without legal or political rights, as refugees and imprisoned people might be considered to be. Rather, one of their main issues was exactly the fact that they had equal rights but did not think they had equal opportunities.

Silvia and Vasile were not my only interlocutors who thought that their Romanian backgrounds limited and constrained their opportunities and conditions in Denmark. Many of my interlocutors felt poorly and unfairly treated in their jobs and did not necessarily think that they would be able to progress into a different job than the one at the farm. As with Silvia

and Vasile above, this influenced their self-perceptions and meant that they identified themselves and positioned themselves as Romanian farm labourers. They felt that they, as Romanians, were destined to work in jobs such as those at the farms, in construction or in cleaning. The continuous awareness that Silvia, Vasile and more of my interlocutors had of their statuses in Denmark led me to ask *how my interlocutors constructed themselves as Romanian farm labourers*. This will be the guiding question of this chapter.

To respond to this question, the chapter will in particular draw on the story of Andrei. I will analyse the ways that he was constructing himself as a Romanian farm labourer in Denmark, and show how this shaped the ways that he perceived himself, his opportunities and future plans in Denmark and Romania. My purpose with this is to show how the way that he constructed himself as a Romanian farm labourer had consequences for the way that he saw the surroundings around him and the ways that he acted within this migratory context in Denmark.

I thus make a shift from the previous chapter and its focus on the ways that changing relations between labour and capital shaped the conditions for Romanians' migratory movements to work in Danish agriculture. Building on the framework laid out in Chapter 2, this chapter concerns the ways that my interlocutors became Romanian farm labourers within a multi-layered context of political and economic forces and continuous processes of becoming. In this way, the analysis points to some of the existential consequences of the social organisation of Danish agricultural production in the EU.

My analytical approach is guided by a wish to understand the ways that migrants "make themselves" alongside their experiences in the migratory context. According to Jackson, a migrant has to 'constantly piece together' (2013: 205) aspects of the past and present life. The migrant does this continuously when meeting new challenges and changing life circumstances. Moving through life as a migrant, across space and time, one may identify in a range of ways (Jackson 2013, Grønseth 2013). Identifying in different ways is as such not merely a "migrant experience" but is a process of life. Nonetheless, however, I will show how my interlocutors' construction of themselves as Romanian farm labourers with limited opportunities should be understood within their migratory context in Denmark. One of

Jackson's interlocutors, Emmanuel, for example, had come to Denmark from Uganda. Emmanuel experienced racism in Denmark and was unable to find a job in Denmark which matched his university level qualifications. For a long time in Denmark he received rude rejections from employers and was only able to find menial jobs. When Jackson met Emmanuel first, he was therefore depressed and had lost his self-worth (Jackson 2013: 22-23). These experiences meant that Emmanuel emphasised his academic qualifications instead of his African background (ibid.: 206-207). Alongside his experiences, Emmanuel thus chose to identify himself with some aspects of himself and not others. In such way, Jackson's account showed how ways of constructing the self change depending on the challenges and different circumstances in life. Similarly to Emmanuel, Vasile in particular emphasised his knowledge of literature and what was going on in the media. Seen as such, the migrant does not have a hidden "true self" but rather shifts between a range of ways of seeing him or herself in different situations. Becoming in this perspective is a situational process which depends on the shifting ways that it makes sense to situate and identify oneself.

Biehl and Locke (2017: 44) also emphasise the need to consider the unfinished nature of people's social and individual lives. Such attentiveness to people's continuous becomings within changing political and economic landscapes allow for an understanding of how people make themselves alongside their experiences. As Biehl and Locke, I remain open to the unfinished nature of people and the ways that they are in a continuous state of becoming. In this chapter I therefore pay particular attention to the ways that my interlocutors identified themselves as Romanian farm labourers within this specific situation of socio-economic inequalities and labour market hierarchies. Throughout this chapter I therefore argue that their migration to Denmark meant that they went through processes of becoming where they constructed themselves as Romanian farm labourers. This had fundamental implications for the ways that perceived themselves, other people and the world around them.

However, my ethnographic material also demonstrated that the categories imposed by inequalities, hierarchies between countries within the EU and possibilities for migration had implications for the ways that my interlocutors were able to identify themselves. With my approach to understanding how my interlocutors constructed themselves as Romanian farm

labourers, my attempt is not to avoid an understanding of the ways that Andrei and others were constructed as Romanian farm labourers through social forces and structures of socio-economic inequalities. As I showed in the previous chapter, recruitment practices meant that Romanian farm labourers were already categorised as such when arriving in Denmark; that is, they came to Denmark because they were going to work as farm labourers. And this recruitment was accompanied by specific conditions that they knew about beforehand (though they might still experience surprise at their conditions when arriving at the farms, as did Danuț). As such, their situations as Romanian farm labourers were to some extent already framed when leaving Romania. By the end of the chapter, I will therefore discuss the intersections between the socio-economic and "ethnicised" structures which shaped some of the conditions for the ways that people like Silvia, Vasile and Andrei constructed themselves. My aim with analysing their own constructions of themselves, however, is to understand how and why they positioned themselves as they did. This is particularly important for an understanding of their social and individual lives outside their workplaces, which will be the focus in Chapters 5-7.

A key aspect of their positioning and identification as Romanian farm labourers concerns the continuum between voluntariness and involuntariness, in which they moved: the stories of Ionut, Danuț, Adam, Silvia and Vasile highlight that they did not feel entirely free to choose whether they wanted to move, as they thought it was impossible for them to sustain a livelihood in Romania. But they had not been displaced or deported from Romania either. They had themselves contacted their recruiters to find a farm job in Denmark. In this perspective, their migration to Denmark was a choice. Nonetheless, coming from Romania, they thought that they were destined to take up jobs in countries such as Denmark and Germany, which no one else wanted and in which they were treated worse than other workers. When analysing the ways that my interlocutors constructed themselves as Romanian farm labourers it is therefore important to consider how they also moved in a continuum between voluntariness and involuntariness in terms of their migratory movements.

In the following sections I tell the story of Andrei with whom I worked at the farm. Apart from developing trust and shared experiences with my interlocutors, working at the

farm alongside Andrei provided him with an opportunity to directly relate his reflections about his work and life to the work that he and I were doing together. It also allowed me to get a taste of the heavy, repetitive and dirty work at the farm, which I was able to contrast with Andrei's previous work in Romania. As we shall see in his story, working at the farm caused him multiple frustrations in terms of the way that he felt treated, as well as the way he constructed himself as a Romanian farm labourer with a lack of opportunities for career progression.

Andrei

Andrei was a friendly man in his mid-twenties, and he had allowed me to come and be part of the work at his farm. I had been told by the farmer that I would only be welcome at the farm if Andrei agreed. When we had known each other for a while, Andrei told me directly that he liked me visiting the farm. I therefore felt comfortable asking him if I could come to the farm to work. I always agreed to stay at the farm for a limited number of days, to ensure that it would not be too much for Andrei and to allow him to express his dissatisfaction with my visits. I was trying in this way to continuously re-assess whether it would be appropriate for me to come and work at the farm. I also visited Adam's and Vasile's farms, but only during a one-day visit to each place.

I was asked by my interlocutors what I thought about working at a farm. I would honestly say that I found it interesting to see what all this was about. I only worked at a farm for a brief period (I will return to the reason for this in Chapter 4), and they thought it obvious that I find it interesting, because I did not have to go to the farm every day for a long time – as they had to. Perhaps they were right. In the next section I turn to a day on the farm, where Andrei and I were "looking through pigs" – one of the daily tasks at the farm.

Looking through pigs

Andrei was the only Romanian employee at the farm where he was working, besides 4-5 Danish farm labourers. The farm was a newly built farm compared to other pig farms I visited. It included around 1,100 sows, and the Danish farm labourers estimated that the farm

had up to 10,000 pigs in total, including piglets and boars. When entering the farm area from the changing rooms, one could walk down the aisles of concrete towards the stalls. The farm labourers aimed to keep a high level of hygiene, with for example frequent handwashing and use of plastic gloves where necessary. By the farm area's exit door to the room with the washing machines there was a sink with hand soap, disinfectant gel, nailbrush and paper towels available for handwashing. The entire farm was under one roof, and to move around between the different pig stables one did not have to go outside but could move along the indoor corridors. The farm had a strong smell of ammonia, which would stay in my hair for several days after I had been to the farm. Washing would not remove the smell immediately.

One afternoon I had to help Andrei to 'look through pigs' (*kigge grise igennem*). This meant that we had to go into each stall to check if the piglets needed treatment. To check the piglets, we went into the stalls and made the piglets run around in the stall. If a piglet was limping, looked skinny, had diarrhoea or just looked unwell, it needed treatment. Andrei and I had each brought a box which included bottles with injection needles on them and spray for the piglets that received treatment. If we identified a piglet which needed treatment, we would lift it up and inject it in the neck behind the ear. The piglet would give a short scream when we injected it and wander off when we put it down again. We could – and would occasionally – wear hearing protection when going through the piglets, as this could be a noisy affair. Through the ear pods it was possible to listen to the radio. However, my glasses would often press on the side of my head when I wore hearing protection, which hurt, and I therefore did not wear them all the time. Also, if wearing hearing protection, it would not necessarily be possible to hear a loudly screaming piglet being squashed in another stall – and we would lose the opportunity to rescue it. After treatment it was important to spray the piglets on the back; a line with the blue spray indicated that the piglet had been treated for diarrhoea, and a dot with the green spray indicated that the piglet had been treated for example for a bad leg. If several piglets in one stall had diarrhoea, we would treat all the piglets to avoid the diarrhoea spreading amongst the piglets. When entering a stall where the piglets had diarrhoea, it was important to wash the Wellingtons before entering another stall, again to prevent it from spreading to more piglets. For the small piglets, diarrhoea may potentially be fatal, and

preventing and stopping diarrhoea is an important task. During the first two days of the piglet's life this is particularly critical.

When Andrei and I had finished looking through the pigs, he had to wash stalls with the pressure washer, which was quite a heavy task that I did not participate in. I had completed the day's tasks and could go and start my procedure of washing and changing clothes before leaving the farm.

Figure 8. The author working on the pig farm

Farm work comprises a variety of tasks, from taking care of the pigs to repairs at the farm. Apart from looking through pigs, I helped in a variety of tasks such as cleaning and vaccinating and ear tagging the piglets. When visiting Adam's farm, I helped with insemination of a sow, and helped Adam to surgically castrate one piglet. I never euthanised a pig. Andrei offered me once to try, but I was concerned that I was not strong enough to crush the skull properly, so the pig would not die immediately. I therefore rejected his offer.

Although the farm work takes place according to a schedule, unexpected work with sick animals or sudden repairs might crop up and need immediate attention. It was for this

reason not always possible to foresee and plan one's work – and it might end sooner or later than the expected duration of the working day. If the farm's computer system suddenly stopped working, it needed to be repaired immediately, as the sows' fodder was managed through the computer system. Vasile would for example sometimes carry around an alarm, regulating the food system, which would let him know if his farm's computer system stopped working. Then he would have to go to the farm no matter the time of day. Farm work was however to a large extent routine work, and farm labourers would carry out many of the same tasks daily.

During the course of my fieldwork, Andrei became more open about his perception of the farm work. When driving home from the church service together with Andrei one Sunday evening, I asked him how work was going. At this point I was no longer working at the farm. 'You are lucky you are not going to the pigs tomorrow', he simply responded. Andrei was trained in management at university in Romania and had previously been working in a managerial role in Romania, prior to coming to Denmark. He missed his busy managerial work, including the responsibility that had come with this work. He had been working in this job until his boss decided to half the company employees' salaries and had wanted Andrei to sign illegal documents. Then Andrei decided to leave to join his brother Mirei who was already working at a farm in Denmark. When Andrei first came to Denmark to look for a job, he stayed in Denmark for a month to apply for jobs, but he did not find a job and returned to Romania. During his one month job search in Denmark he had however made contact to an agricultural association regarding a farm job. And just after his return to Romania, he was called by the association with a job. He then came back to Denmark to start his work at a farm located not far from the farm where Ionut was working.

Andrei wanted to do something else than working at the farm, which he thought should be a first step into a different career in Denmark. When I had just met Andrei and we talked about his work, he said, 'For now, it's good'. Later in my fieldwork however he started to complain more and express his boredom with the farm work and his loneliness when living alone in the house opposite the farm. Once Andrei told me that his younger brother from Romania wanted to come and work at a farm in Denmark. Andrei did not like the brother's

idea though. The younger brother was attending university in Romania, and Andrei thought that a farm job would be a waste of the younger brother's intellectual abilities. 'If you come to work at the farm, you will stay at the farm', Andrei sighed when he told me about the brother's plans. He was often reflecting about his potential future plans, whether he should stay in Denmark or return to Romania, and to what extent he was able to find a different job than the farm work. With the money earned in Denmark, he managed to buy a piece of land in Romania, with the expectation of building a house on the land and returning to settle down there. Sometimes, when he was very dissatisfied with his life in Denmark, he was talking about returning to Romania. But he did not manage to return during my fieldwork. At other times, Andrei was talking about completing a Master's degree in management in Denmark, but he never entered the course. His poor level of Danish and barely understandable English could have had an impact on his ability to enter university. Also, entering further studies (like in the case of Vasile) would require him to get by on a lower monthly income, which he was not necessarily able to allow himself. Andrei thus kept playing with different ways that he could possibly identify himself; such as a migrant who returns to Romania or a student in Denmark. Depending on his experiences in Denmark and the extent to which he was tired of working at the farm and living in the countryside, Andrei changed the ways that he saw himself and possible future in Denmark or Romania. To Andrei, as well as to Silvia and Vasile, the future plans were not settled. Silvia and Vasile, for example, sometimes talked about moving to a country in Southern Europe, where they thought they would feel more at home with people and where the weather would be better. At other times, as indicated in Vasile's reflections about his future career, they were thinking about staying in Denmark and entering further education or a different job. In such way, my interlocutors' ways of perceiving themselves and their futures changed and developed alongside their experiences inside and outside their workplaces in Denmark. Their present and futures becomings were therefore not finite but evolved continuously across situations and their evaluations of themselves and other people.

Though Andrei raised the opportunity to enter further education or a different job in Denmark, he nonetheless thought that it might be difficult for him to leave the farm job. As we shall see in the next section, he interpreted his situation as being a result of his Romanian

background: that is, he positioned himself as a Romanian farm labourer with limited opportunities compared to other people. In Chapter 6, I will return to the implications of this positioning for Andrei's social life in Denmark outside work. For now, however, I will return to the farm and another mundane task: vaccination of pigs.

'Because I'm Romanian'

After lunch at the farm on a Monday, Andrei and I had to vaccinate around 700 pigs. Monday was the day on which vaccinations are given, making it the toughest day of the week. Andrei and I first went to the cupboards and fridge, where he found the bottle with liquid he needed to mix the vaccination. He did this very quickly and with a great deal of certainty. I asked him how he learned to mix the vaccination – I assumed that it would be quite important to get the dose right. Andrei explained that he learned to mix the vaccination from one of the other employees at the farm. Before starting his work at a pig farm, he had conducted a one-day training course at an agricultural association. During this training he had learned a bit about pig farming, and how to vaccinate pigs. As he was standing with the various bottles in front of him at the table, he asked me, 'Would you like to do this work?' Not waiting for my response, he added, 'You will probably earn more money with the work that you want to do...'. Hesitating a little in my response, I just said 'I don't know...' (*nu ştiu*). 'Romanians earn less than Danes. But don't tell the farm owner [*fermierului*] I said that', Andrei continued in a calm way and with a dry voice.

When Andrei had finished the mixing of liquids, we went to vaccinate the piglets, one after another. We had to lift each piglet of 7-10 kg, either by one hind leg or under the stomach. Then we had to take the bottle with the injection needle and inject the piglet in the neck behind the ear. When doing this, the piglets gave a short and loud scream, and we put it down again. To keep track of which piglets had been vaccinated, we sprayed each piglet on the back. Again, this work required strength and a great deal of bending up and down. After Andrei and I had been vaccinating the pigs together, he would tell some of the other farm labourers about our achievement of vaccinating that many pigs. My work in this was often to great amusement of the others.

That Friday in the same week, the farm labourers were supposed to finish work at 12pm. Whilst the Danish farm labourers left the farm on time, Andrei and I stayed at the farm together with the daily manager (the daily manager was not the farm owner but the one who was responsible for the daily operations inside the farm). After we finished the extra tasks, I went back to Andrei's house opposite the farm. But Andrei had to help the farmer to mow the lawn in the farmer's garden. Andrei came back to the house at around 5.30pm. We then drove to the town of Sønderborg, where a local Romanian mechanic – a friend of a friend of Andrei – checked the motor on Andrei's new little black Kia. When we came back quite late to Andrei's house, he and I were talking in the kitchen, with a view to the farm on the other side of the road. Soon getting ready for bed, I asked Andrei if we would have to wake up and go to the farm in the morning as usual. He confirmed that we did, and then broke out,

> 'It's nice for the Danes! They work one weekend and have four weekends off. I work every second weekend, because I'm Romanian.' (fieldnotes, 24 June 2016)

He seemed clearly frustrated about the differences in working schedules for him and his Danish colleagues. Also, the garden work in the farmer's garden was not a part of his employment contract, and Andrei did not know if he would be paid for this work. Andrei was the only farm labourer at the farm who was living just next to the farm. The rest of the farm labourers were living further away with their partners and families. Given his proximity to the farm, it was easier for Andrei to do some extra work outside his stipulated working hours if the farmer asked him to. His accommodation opposite the farm was part of his contract, and in March 2017, Andrei seemingly annoyed told me that the farm owner had increased the rent from around 2,000 DKK (247 GBP) to 2,600 DKK (310 GBP). Andrei's house was larger than many of the houses that my interlocutors lived in, and his conditions were known to be comparatively good.

When I interviewed a teacher at a local agricultural school, she told me that 'in the old days', agricultural apprentices would live in the farmer's house and become part of the family. This, however, did not happen any longer and the apprentices would have to manage on their own and go to work at the farm. In a few cases, I heard that my interlocutors had been invited

to dinners with the farmer's family. But Andrei for example, was aware not to disturb the farmer outside working hours, although the farmer was apparently allowed to disturb Andrei outside working hours. Andrei's life in solitude in the house opposite the farm should therefore also be seen as part of the development in farmers' lives in Denmark where farm labourers are no longer included as part of the family but live separate lives outside the work at the farm. Nonetheless, the nature of agricultural work may still require work to be done outside contractual working hours, as it is not possible to leave the animals on their own, if, for instance, an animal is ill or a system breaks down. This indicates an inconsistency between the nature of agricultural work – with fields, machines and animals that need to be attended to – and industrial working hours. Living next to the farms and being willing – or at least able – to work outside contractual working hours, several of my interlocutors to some extent compensated for this inconsistency between the nature of agricultural work and industrialised working hours. To the farmers therefore, it was beneficial to have migrant farm labourers, who were able to work in the evening or even during nights if urgent work suddenly appeared.

Before his employment at this pig farm, Andrei had worked very briefly at a dairy farm. But the working hours had been too extreme, from 3am to 3pm, according to Andrei, and he did not stay there for more than eight days. He had left the dairy farm and had not been paid for the days of work there. Working at the current pig farm he considered to be an improvement. Still, Andrei expressed his continuous awareness of the inequalities between Danes and Romanians that he observed around him in everyday life. Andrei was for instance keen on cars and would like a Tesla. A few of the farmers on Kegnæs drove a Tesla, and to this Andrei said, 'People with money buy a Tesla. The farmers do not have money to pay the Romanians more. But they have money for a Tesla.' He laughed of this and told me that his own boss' Tesla had cost 1,000,000 DKK (123,500 GBP).[27] One evening he gave me a lift back to my house. When we turned down my road, he pointed out a nice and well-maintained house: 'I really like that house. Who do you think lives there? Do you think it's a Romanian?',

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[27] I do not know if this price on a Tesla was correct. However, compared to other countries, cars in Denmark are quite expensive due to 150% import tax on cars (this has been lowered from 180%).

he asked me rhetorically. I knew the owner of the house and just noted, 'It's a Dane' (*e un danez*). 'I wouldn't have thought it's a Romanian!', he replied. Such socio-economic differences between himself, including other Romanians, and Danes around him kept becoming visible to him. This made him continuously aware of his Romanian background and the opportunities he did not think he would have. These differences meant that his identification of himself as a Romanian farm labourer with limited opportunities was reinforced. On the one side this relied on his everyday experiences of feeling treated worse than his Danish colleagues. This, on the other side, could also mean that he did not pursue certain opportunities because he thought that his Romanian background meant that he would be rejected if he pursued other opportunities.

Likewise, Vasile had many ideas about what he could do. But I never heard that he actually tried to pursue a career as, for example, a prison officer. Once, Silvia applied for a job as an Italian language teacher in the Sønderborg area. She managed to get a job interview, and I gave her a lift to the interview. In spite of her nervous emotions filling up my small Suzuki Wagon when we went to the interview, her increased self-esteem was still apparent. She eventually had a rejection from the job, and I was concerned that she would be very disappointed about this. But she did not seem to be. The invitation for the interview in itself seemed to have improved her self-worth and prospects of perhaps being able to do something else than factory and farm work in Denmark.

According to the political theorist C. B. Macpherson, the labour that a person does has an impact on how the person sees him or herself outside work: 'A man whose productive labour is out of his own control, whose work is in that sense mindless, may be expected to be somewhat mindless in the rest of his activities' (1973: 67). In Andrei's case we see how he perceived himself within this "mindless work" where he did not think he had enough responsibility. Also, the labour was not entirely in his control: he did not think he had had other opportunities for establishing a sustainable livelihood than to pursue labour abroad. Similarly, Silvia's invitation for the job interview as an Italian language teacher reminded her that she *was* able to do something else than what she perceived as "mindless work" (at least if relying on her attitude towards the factory work which she expressed during our holiday in

Germany). Vasile's continuing efforts to learn from media and literature also indicated that he did not want to be associated as someone who only knows about farm work.

Building on Macpherson, Butler and Athanasiou (2013) argue that one may be dispossessed from certain ways of living through the loss of control of the ways that one is able to move around, work, and construct a living. Losing the ability to live in certain ways in this way has a fundamental impact on the formation of subjectivities. That is, a person may also be dispossessed of specific ways of understanding him or herself; meaning being dispossessed of one's subjectivity (ibid.: 18). One way of interpreting Andrei's frustrations is to say that he was dispossessed of certain ways of understanding himself; that he was dispossessed of seeing himself as a manager with a lot of responsibility. But what I rather want to draw attention to is the way that he took upon him a signifier as a Romanian farm labourer in Denmark. With these reflections I do not intend to ignore the ways that the structuring of the labour market was constructing *him* as a Romanian farm labourer. But the important point here is that the way he identified himself had consequences for the ways that he perceived his past in Romania, present in Denmark and future in either Denmark or Romania. Positioning himself as a Romanian farm labourer was in this way also a way for him to create an explanatory framework for the ways he was acting and seeing the world around him. This provided him with a sense of a certain level of control of his life as he created congruity between the way that he identified himself and the way that he was acting (or perhaps rather, was *able* to act). Because Andrei felt dispossessed of certain ways of understanding himself, he constructed himself in a way which he thought made sense to his situation in Denmark.

Andrei, Silvia and Vasile were not my only interlocutors who voiced their frustrations about their positions as migrants in Denmark. I heard countless stories and complaints about farmers – and employers more generally – and their treatment of Romanian employees. Despite some initial caution about revealing bad working conditions to me – as they had to see if they could trust me – I gradually heard more and more about these situations. Aura, a Romanian woman, emphasised that 'immigrants' (*imigranţi*) might often only receive 100 DKK (12 GBP) per hour, whereas Danish employees will always receive higher salaries. Aura was trained as a psychologist from Romania and was curious about her possibilities for

working as a psychologist in Denmark (she knew that her lack of Danish language skills probably would not permit her to apply for a job as a psychologist immediately). To my knowledge, however, she never applied for any jobs as a psychologist but started to work as a dishwasher at a restaurant, where her partner was working as a cook. 'We are immigrants. We are not people' (*Suntem imigranţi. Nu suntem oameni*), Aura concluded, after I had helped her boyfriend to understand his work contract. One farm labourer said, 'They [the Danish farmers] don't respect Romanians as they do Danes... We are migrants and don't know the rules. They take advantage of this [*Profită de chestia asta*].' Several of my interlocutors explicitly made me aware that the Danish farm owners wanted to employ them – as Romanian migrants – because they were willing to accept worse conditions and lower salaries than Danish farm labourers. Silvia told me that the contracts at the farms were 'pushed to the limit [*la limita*[' legally. Such conditions gave rise to many frustrations, albeit no open resistance against the farmers.

One evening at a birthday party in February 2017 at Magda's and Danuţ's place, Danuţ and the former farm labourer Emil told me that some farmers employ Romanians *la negru* (undeclared work). For example, they explained, a farmer in Northern Jutland had been paying his Romanian employees 80-100 DKK (9.5-12 GBP) per hour, *la negru*. The farm owner, who, according to Emil and Danuţ was a millionaire, had also not been paying for insurance or pension contributions for his employees. The Romanian farm labourers at this farm had been in contact with a Danish journalist, who published articles about the case. Emil and Danuţ did not think that the labour union 3F would have involved in the case unless it had become public: that is, their positions as migrants meant that not even the labour union would help them, unless it became a public issue. Emil was, as other of my interlocutors, often talking about the discrimination and exploitation that he thought Romanian migrants in Denmark were subject to. He frequently hung out with the group of people which included Ionut, Adam, Danuţ, Silvia and Vasile. Emil was trained in IT from Romania and had eventually found a job in the industry in Denmark. Compared to many of my other interlocutors, his Danish was excellent, and he was able to use Danish as a working language.

His girlfriend Veronika had also asked him to change his farm job, because she thought he smelled from being with the pigs during the day.

It is difficult to know whether Andrei's and my other interlocutors' salaries were lower because they were Romanians, or because they were often employed in unskilled positions, whereas many Danish farm labourers were trained in agriculture and employed as skilled farm labourers. Both factors probably played a role. Statistics Denmark does not publish statistics on salary level in the agricultural sector, and it is therefore difficult to create a proper benchmark.[28] But many of my interlocutors, such as Andrei, were well informed that their Danish colleagues often earned more, and told me that they – as Romanians – had been employed because they were willing to accept lower salaries than Danish farm labourers. Laura told me that the guys (*băieții*) had told her that Danish farm labourers receive 300 DKK (36 GBP) per hour. I am not sure how they knew this, or whether it is correct. But it drew attention to my interlocutors' continuous awareness of the inequalities between them and their Danish colleagues.

Andrei's and other of my interlocutors' construction of themselves as Romanian farm labourers, I suggest, relies on a complex and multi-layered set of factors, which include structural and ethnic hierarchies as well as changing self-perceptions alongside their migratory movements to Denmark. Some of the answers, I have argued, must be found by understanding the ways that they positioned themselves in the Danish and European labour market. Not thinking that they had equal opportunities could mean that they did not pursue certain opportunities. But one may also ask why Romanians with university training apply for farm jobs in the first place – and not jobs within the domains they had been trained in? One answer could be that there was targeted recruitment of Romanian farm labourers in Romania, because there was a need for labour in Danish agriculture (see Chapter 2). This provided the candidates for the farm jobs with relatively easy access to jobs with higher salaries than the ones they were able to find in Romania. As the stories of my interlocutors witnessed, earning

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[28] As I was unable to identify salary statistics for the agricultural sector on the website of Statistics Denmark, I called Statistics Denmark to find out how I could identify such statistics. I was however told that no salary statistics are published for the agricultural sector (in contrast to other sectors).

more money was a primary concern and had to be prioritised above other needs for personal and professional development. Also, several of them had found their farm jobs via personal connections already working at the farms. And in this way, a chain of recruitment of Romanian farm labourers was established.

Another answer relies more on a historical perception of Romanians having to "work for others." This refers back to the perceptions of exploitation of Romania, which Adam highlighted in Chapter 2. During my fieldwork I was told that Romanians think that they have always had to work for others: that is, foreign employers. Silvia, in line with Adam, thought that Romanians had always been exploited by foreigners. In Europe today, many Romanians abroad are working in lower skilled and unskilled jobs though they might have university degrees. When visiting the University of Iași, the researchers were clearly aware of this. One rolled his eyes when I told them about Romanians with university degrees who work in Danish agriculture. This indicates that the perception of being Romanian in Europe, and not having equal opportunities to other EU citizens, could mean that some Romanians might be discouraged from pursuing certain opportunities because they do not think that they have these opportunities. Again, this does not exclude the possibility that they become Romanian farm labourers because of "actually existing" structural forces of inequalities that they are part of: that is, the ways that inequalities make them into Romanian farm labourers. But seen as such, becoming a Romanian farm labourer is a multi-dimensional process of negotiating ways to identify oneself within or against societal structures.

Despite the complaints about their working conditions, some of my interlocutors had tried to ask their employers for improved conditions and higher salaries. This sometimes succeeded, sometimes not. Andrei received a pay rise of 500 DKK (60 GBP) per month (but, as mentioned, his rent also increased). Vasile managed to negotiate paid sick leave and an hourly salary of 140 DKK (17 GBP), which is slightly above the minimum rate in the collective agreement (135 DKK/16 GBP). According to this minimum rate in the collective agreement, farm labourers should receive around 22,500 DKK (2,590 GBP) per month. Previously, Vasile had been paid 20,000 DKK (2,400 GBP) per month which would correspond to around 125 DKK (15 GBP) per hour, and he did not receive payment during sick leave. Adam also asked

his farmer for a salary increase, but his request was rejected by the farmer. Though it could be possible to negotiate the employment conditions, their salaries were still low compared to those usually expected in Denmark. Their negotiations for better employment conditions, including higher salaries and paid sick leave, however showed their struggles for the same conditions as other EU citizens. Though they might not think they had equal opportunities to other EU citizens, they were not excluded from negotiating their claims for better conditions (cf. Ong 2006: 23). Nonetheless, as I will turn to in the next section, the construction of Romanian farm labourers through labour market hierarchies might intensify and be intensified by ethnic divisions and socio-economic inequalities in the Danish and European labour market.

Labour market hierarchies and the construction of Romanian farm labourers

So, were the Romanian farm labourers recruited to Danish agriculture because they were Romanians? Or was the primary reason for the recruitment of Romanians that they were considered to have lower salary expectations? Repeatedly, I have been asking myself this question of what should be foregrounded: ethnicity or unequal (capitalist) structures? In this section I will discuss how these factors could apply in the case of my interlocutors.

In a Norwegian context, Friberg and Midtbøen (2017) analyse ethnic labour market hierarchies and argue that ethnicity may become a skill for migrant labourers. For example, Swedish workers are considered particularly service-minded compared to Norwegians, hence better suited for jobs in hospitality. Eastern European workers are considered to be hard working, obedient and a good match for manual labour. In contrast to Swedes and Eastern European workers, Norwegians are considered to be spoilt, lazy and demanding (ibid.: 1470). Friberg and Midtbøen thus foreground the ethnic aspect of why Norwegian employers prefer Swedish and Eastern European workers above Norwegians. Ethnicity may also structure the labour market hierarchies within the workplaces. In his account of Mexican farm labourers in the United States, Holmes (2013: 84) shows how labour market hierarchies at the farms develop according to essentialised ideas of people from different ethnic groups. Perceptions

of which labourers are considered to be the "most civilised" structure who is at the top of the labour hierarchy (and therefore also receive the highest salaries). In the previous chapter, Simon from Agrojob highlighted how Romanian job candidates are keen to earn money and therefore constitute a good match for the needs of the Danish farmers. Simon as such drew a connection between being Romanian and wanting to earn money. This, according to him, implied a certain work attitude which made Romanians suitable for the farm jobs in Denmark. The question remains to what extent the employment of my interlocutors was related to capitalist structures and economic inequalities and to ethnic hierarchies?

There is no easy answer to this, I think. I hesitate to immediately grab to ethnicity as a single explanation for the employment of Romanians, as I think this explanation reduces the complexity of the matter and risks essentialising Romanian farm labourers as first and foremost being of a particular ethnicity. But what if this is how the Danish farmers see them: as primarily being of a particular ethnicity with a certain work attitude? Simon's comment and the Danish farmer's praise of Romanian farm labourers in the recruitment presentation (Chapter 2) indicated that they might do. Should this be reproduced in the anthropological analysis? The previous recruitment of farm labourers from Ukraine, Agrojob's recruitment from Hungary and the Republic of Moldova and the Danish concept of 'Eastern workers' (*østarbejdere*) – a term often used in the Danish media – suggest that recruitment is to some extent based on ethnic parameters as certain work motivations are attached to people from Eastern European countries. Still, analytically I remain sceptical to using ethnicity as the only explanation for recruitment of Romanian farm labourers. Rather, I suggest also paying attention to the ways that capitalism creates its own other. Anthropologist and geographer David Harvey might offer some insights here.

Harvey (2003) is in particular concerned with the geographical expansion of capitalism. He sees this expansion as a process which is based on an inside-outside dialectic (ibid.: 118): Capitalism requires growth, and creates the conditions for growth by creating an outsider from where new assets for the capitalist growth can be taken and turned into profit; such as unemployed labour. The outsider is often in a state of instability where resources are not fully developed and used. In this way, the capitalist system continuously creates its own other

(Kasmir and Carbonella 2008: 11, Carbonella and Kasmir 2014: 6). From Harvey's perspective we thus see how mechanisms of capitalist growth contribute to the construction of Romanian farm labourers: because of the continuous requirement for growth and effectivisation in Danish agriculture, it is necessary to create "an other" whose resources (cheaper labour) can be turned into profit. Industrial outsourcing to countries with lower salary levels is a useful example to demonstrate the capitalist expansion, as the companies that outsource expand geographically and make use of resources elsewhere. However, in the case of Romanian farm labourers in Denmark, we see how this expansion is internalised in the Danish labour market: the production activities are not moved abroad to make use of resources *in*, for example, Romania. With family owned farms such as Anders' farm (chapter 2), this is not necessarily possible as it might be with a factory and a production site. Rather, Romanian farm labourers – as "an other" in the Danish labour market – become insiders in the Danish labour market in the same process in which they become "an other" whose resources may be turned into profit for the farmer.

In the cases of Silvia, Vasile and Andrei, this othering is quite visible for them as they are surrounded by people who obviously have more than themselves. Therefore, if we understand the recruitment of Romanian farm labourers from Harvey's process of capitalist expansion through an insider-outsider dialectic, we see how this dialectic takes on ethnic dimensions and contributes to the creation of ethnic hierarchies in the labour market. In this way, the labour market hierarchies that are produced through the ability to recruit cheaper labour from Eastern European countries. Such hierarchies may be said to produce Romanian farm labourers.

A socio-political analysis of the implications of ethnicised labour market structures provides important insights into the micro-level consequences of global inequalities. More important for an anthropological understanding, I think, is the ways that people like Silvia, Vasile and Andrei constructed themselves within their changing life circumstances alongside their migration to Denmark. Seeing themselves as having, by default, fewer opportunities than other EU citizens deeply affected their everyday lives, concerns and anxieties for not being able to progress to other jobs. This means that they internalised the inequalities that they

experienced, which influenced their perceptions of (not) being able to pursue other opportunities. In the subsequent chapters, I will focus on the implications of this for their social and individual lives outside work and the ways they constructed themselves in other contexts.

Conclusion

Silvia, Vasile and Andrei became Romanian farm labourers in Denmark. This was a choice that they made already whilst living in Romania and finding their financial situations there too difficult. But alongside their experiences in Denmark they also used their identification as being Romanian farm labourers as an explanation for their lives, their lack of opportunities and their future plans. With their Romanian background, they considered themselves to be disadvantaged in the labour market, sometimes working as 'slaves.' Their feelings of being disrespected and dispossessed reinforced their identification as Romanian farm labourers, and this meant that they constructed themselves and their lives in relation to this identification. As such, they positioned themselves as Romanian farm labourers in the Danish and European labour market and interpreted their lives within this framework.

Berger (1972: 7) wrote that 'The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled'. That is, the way we see things is always informed by what we already know (ibid.: 8). For my interlocutors, constructing themselves as Romanian farm labourers was an ongoing process of becoming in relation to what they knew and experienced during their everyday lives. Seeing themselves in relation to their farm work in Denmark also depended on what they knew already. They related to their previous positions and lives in Romania or elsewhere, Romanians' "history of working for others", the vast numbers of Romanians today who are currently working abroad in unskilled and lower skilled jobs, and their experiences of significant socio-economic inequalities which they faced on a daily basis in Denmark. Their knowing thus informed the ways that they were seeing themselves and their relations to other people.

As we shall see in the next chapters, their social and individual lives outside their workplaces provided them with opportunities for identifying as something other than

Romanian farm labourers. First, however, I will turn to an analysis of how we may use the bodily implications of farm work to understand the suffering position of my interlocutors.

Chapter 4

BODIES OF SUFFERING

The bodies of farm work

By the end of my fieldwork, Andrei fell ill because of the lack of heating in his house (despite his requests to the farmer to have heating installed). He could only heat through a wood stove in one of the rooms, and this made the heating in the house uneven. When I once came into his kitchen in the winter period, it was incredibly cold. By contrast, the living room with the wood stove was uncomfortably warm. He would heat up the wood stove in the evening, and perhaps get up in the middle of the night to heat it up again. In the morning, it might have become cold again. He thus had to deal with large temperature differences which was not good for his health.

During my fieldwork several of my interlocutors, like Andrei, experienced work-related accidents and fell ill from conditions at work or at home. Certainly, farm work is in many ways different from office work where the worker comes to the office and leaves again to go home, and where the worker is not exposed to the same risks, dirt and smell as at the farms. During slurry season, my interlocutors' homes were often surrounded by a smell of slurry. Pig farms are particularly smelly, and one frequently works in ammonia-filled air during the day. According to Danuț, many farm labourers start suffering from asthma because of this air. After my first few days at Andrei's farm, I was coughing in the evening. When Andrei and I went for dinner at his brother Mirei's and Mirei's wife Roxana's place, Roxana heard me coughing and told me that Mirei had also been coughing when he just started working at the farm.

There was talk about Adam (from Chapter 2) having lost his hair from working in the pig farm air. Going bald since he had started working at a pig farm bothered him a lot. But he also had other issues. Adam fell from a ladder and broke his ankle in the late summer of 2016. When I left in October 2017, he still had pains from this accident and driving in a car for too

long was painful for him. Walking around in the farm during working hours also kept hurting his ankle. Adam complained that he did not think his ankle would ever be the same again. During his sick leave, he forgot to check his public services portal (*e-boks*) and lost his opportunity to apply for sick leave benefit (*sygedagpenge*) which would have secured him some income whilst not working. This left him without any income for many weeks. As Adam was renovating his flat in Romania and was dependent on his income to be able to do this, not receiving any money was stressful for him. At the time of his leave from work, he was living alone in a house on the farm. He had no driver's licence and did not speak Danish. Having broken his ankle, he was immobile and was not able to leave the house. Silvia, Vasile and Ionut often visited him and bought food for him. Silvia went with Adam to the hospital, as she knew some Danish and understood the Danish administrative system better than did Adam. Adam's fall from the ladder and broken ankle thus had multiple consequences for his individual and social life, and his immobility meant that he became completely dependent on others to offer him their support.

Boris, a man in his mid-twenties, later moved in with Adam. Soon after he had started working at the farm, I found out that he was struggling from back pains (as did Vasile). I suggested that he do some exercises for the back, but I am not sure he tried this. Boris came from a village in North-Eastern Romania, where his wife and son were still living. He was hoping to return to live with them as soon as he had been able to earn some money in Denmark. He had studied geography at the University of Iaşi and had had a job in Romania prior to leaving. But with his growing family more money was needed. Both Silvia and I had noted that he had lost weight, and we told him to eat more. He wanted to move away from the farm job, where he did not get along with his Romanian boss, and he applied for a job at the factory where Silvia was working. But he did not get the job. Instead he continued the farm job and endured the pains and the stressful working environment.

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Andrei, Adam, Vasile and Boris all endured some level of individual bodily suffering, pain or illness, which was caused by their farm work and housing conditions. But their individual suffering also shows how their positions as migrant farm labourers was an impediment to their ability to tackle their pain and illness. This situation illustrates the guiding question of this chapter of *how my interlocutors' individual and bodily suffering relate to their social suffering*.

Whereas the previous chapter focused on the implications of the farm work to my interlocutors' construction of themselves as Romanian farm labourers, I now move to a focus on the bodily implications of farm work. Through individual stories of suffering endured as part of the farm work in Denmark, I show how their individual suffering was not only individually endured pain and illness but also suffering which related to the social forces that they were part of as migrant farm labourers. I will also discuss the ways that their suffering at the farms in Denmark relates to a history of suffering in Romania.

Before I turn to a theoretical explanation of the concepts of individual and social suffering, I will provide a brief overview of health and safety issues in Danish agriculture to demonstrate the Danish public authorities' seriousness and awareness of this issue.

Health and safety in Danish agriculture

According to the Danish Working Environment Authority (*Arbejdstilsynet*) and the National Research Center for the Working Environment (*Det Nationale Forskningscenter for Arbejdsmiljø*), agriculture constitutes one of the most dangerous sectors in Denmark to work in. At pig and dairy farms, accidents frequently happen when handling the animals, dealing with machines, and falling from heights. To address these issues, guidelines have been published to inform farm labourers about the risks of farm work and ways of dealing with them.[29]

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[29] https://www.amid.dk/brancher/landbrug-skovbrug-og-fiskeri/viden-om/ulykker-i-landbruget/viden-om-ulykker-i-landbruget/forebyg-ulykker-med-kvaeg-og-svin/

Migrant farm labourers now constitute a large part of the agricultural workforce in Denmark, and Romanian farm labourers make up the largest group of migrant farm labourers (see statistical records in Chapter 1). At the same time, statistical records show that the rate of accidents amongst migrant farm labourers has increased. In 2012, 15% of the total number of reported accidents in agriculture concerned migrant farm labourers. In 2016, this share had increased to 20%. Across employment sectors in Denmark, 7% of the reported accidents concerned migrant labourers. According to such records, migrant farm labourers thus seem to experience a higher risk of accidents when working in agriculture than when working in other sectors (Arbejdstilsynet 2017: 4).

Groups of migrant farm labourers with the highest number of work-related accidents include Romanian, Ukrainian and Polish. Amongst Romanian farm labourers the number of work-related accidents in agriculture increased from 15 in 2012 to 33 in 2016. For Ukrainian farm labourers, the number of recorded accidents in 2016 was 26 and for Polish farm labourers the number was 15. The increase in the number of Romanian farm labourers in Danish agriculture has thus also meant an increase in the number of reported accidents amongst Romanian farm labourers (Arbejdstilsynet 2017: 5). To support awareness of health and safety issues, the agricultural organisation SEGES, under the Danish Agriculture and Food Council, published films about 'Safety on the Farm' in different languages; including in Danish, English, Romanian, German, Portuguese, Ukrainian and Russian.[30]

The fact that migrant farm labourers experience more accidents in the agricultural sector than in other sectors is not surprising (this applies to *all* farm labourers). But their ability to tackle health and safety issues, I will show, is impacted by their positions as migrants. By analysing their lives through the ways that the farm work had an impact on their bodies – and my own body which became an important tool for research – my aim is to demonstrate the ways that their work and lives in Denmark were manifested through and marked their bodily experiences of suffering and pain.

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[30] https://www.landbrugsinfo.dk/tvaerfaglige-emner/safetyonthefarm/Sider/Startside.aspx

Suffering as an individual and social experience

The locus of analysis in this chapter will be the bodies of my interlocutors and me, and in this section I discuss the application of the concept of suffering to understand my interlocutors' experiences. As I will turn to, health and safety concerns for my own body eventually led me to change my research plans. I use the word "suffering" as this was the word used by Roxana and Mirei (I will return to this below), and it is an analytical tool to understand how people's position in the global economy puts them in positions of physical and mental suffering (Kleinman, Das, and Lock 1997).

Applying suffering as an analytical lens is not unproblematic. Some years ago, Robbins (2013) argued that anthropologists' focus on suffering could be seen to be a different way of constructing the 'savage slot' known from modernist anthropology (ibid.: 448). Such change in anthropology had come out of for example humanitarian work in the 1980s and 1990s which took suffering as a human experience that everybody (cross-culturally) could relate to. According to Farmer (1997: 279), for example, suffering is part of the human condition: pain in itself relates to a somatic experience (Throop 2010: 7) and is a 'basic existential fact' of human beings and their being in the world (ibid.: 1). But according to Robbins (2013), an anthropological focus on suffering risks to defeat its own purpose and re-construct the anthropologist's interlocutors as "the other". That is, the attempt to create a shared humanity through suffering risks, ironically, to reinforce the othering of the people under study. Nonetheless, suffering may also be a lens to understand the social world of people. Stoller, for instance, uses healing practices of people suffering from illness to understand the social world of Songhay people in Niger (Stoller and Olkes 1989). Instead of labelling the Songhay people as suffering subjects ("the other"), which is the approach criticised by Robbins, Stoller explores how the suffering body is key to understanding religious practice and social life (1989, 1997, Stoller and Olkes 1989). In such a way, the suffering lens is not merely a way of describing people's suffering as a result of poverty and marginalisation; rather, the suffering body becomes a way of bridging an analytical gap between mind and body and gain a richer understanding of social life. Though I will in this chapter take into account the impact of

socio-economic inequalities on the suffering body, my attempt is not to construct my interlocutors as "an other" of suffering subjects. Rather, by examining the relationship between individual and social suffering, I show how suffering of the individual body is embedded in the social world, and how people make sense of individual suffering within the social forces around them. I therefore show how suffering also offers an opportunity to understand my interlocutors' own conceptualisations of themselves historically and within their current context.

In Kleinman, Das and Lock's work *Social Suffering* (1997), they analyse the ways that health conditions and bodily pain are not merely physical phenomena: rather, bodily pain and illness, the individual suffering, is also a social suffering in the way that such pain and illness are experienced socially within a particular specific social context which shapes the infliction of the pain on the body. Suffering, as such, transcends a dichotomy between people's individual and social worlds: it is individually experienced on the body but reflects the body's social position within the global economy and particular models of nation-states. Often, according to the authors, marginalised people are at particular risk for experiencing suffering. And as part of their suffering they not only experience bodily pain but also issues of mental health and domestic abuse which relate to their social positions in society (Kleinman, Das, and Lock 1997: x). As we already heard from the stories of Adam and Silvia, their lives in Denmark affected them mentally. And as I will return to in Chapter 7, domestic abuse could take place. In this chapter however I retain a focus on the ways that my interlocutors' bodies were marked by the farm work. The intersection between physical pain, illness and social forces means that a person's individual suffering also becomes a social experience as the ability to tackle bodily pain and illness was embedded in their social positions as migrant farm labourers. For example, the individual stories that I present show that their need to earn money could mean that they compromised their health and safety.

In the sections that I turn to now, I analyse the ways that individual suffering intersected with the social experiences of suffering. By the end of the chapter I will contextualise the individual and social suffering within a historical narrative of suffering in Romania, where recent socio-economic transformations and political violence during

socialism have already made a mark on people's bodies. Suffering in farm work as a migrant was in this perspective an extension of many years of socially inflicted suffering on many Romanians' bodies and lives. First, I will turn to the stories of Mirei and Sofia, who both prioritised their work above health and safety. The description of my own bodily experiences will serve to emphasise the risks involved in farm work and underscore the social experiences of suffering.

Mirei's suffering

Mirei was a man in his mid-thirties (and, as mentioned, Andrei's brother). He was a tall, almost completely bald and always helpful man. He had lived and worked in Denmark for a year before his wife Roxana and their son came to Denmark to stay with him. Roxana gave birth to a daughter during my fieldwork. The four-person family lived in a small 2-bedroom house attached to the farmer's house. They lived only a few footsteps away from the pig farm buildings, where Mirei was working. Mirei often worked overtime and sometimes had to spend the night repairing broken computer systems at the farm.

Shortly before I left Kegnæs, Roxana talked about hopefully soon returning to Romania. She reflected about Mirei's accidents at the farm and said, 'He has suffered a lot'. She contrasted Mirei's conditions to Andrei's better conditions. Before my fieldwork, Mirei had had an accident with his leg, which meant that he had to stay at home and not work for a while. During my fieldwork, Mirei was dealing with tooth problems, and he wanted to go to Romania to see a dentist there, which meant that he had to endure his tooth pain until he was able to go to Romania (dentists in Romania are cheaper than in Denmark, and Mirei would be able to speak Romanian with the dentist there). During my fieldwork Mirei also hurt his hand whilst using the pressure washer. His colleague had been trying to turn off the pressure washer, which had created a high pressure that made the pressure washer explode. Shrapnel from the explosion had gone into Mirei's hand. The wound in his hand meant that he would have to stay at home for a period. Mirei was the only provider for Roxana and their two children and was concerned that he could not work, and that he would only receive sick leave

benefit (*sygedagpenge*) which was a smaller amount of money than his salary. His farmer had to sign the documents which would allow him to receive sick leave benefit. Even this took Mirei a while to get done, because he was concerned about disturbing the farmer with this. The doctor had told him to be careful with an open wound and the pig farm bacteria which could potentially infect the wound. When Mirei started working at the farm again after his accident, he therefore wore two pairs of gloves to protect the remaining wound. Gradually, his hand recovered.

To Mirei, the potential financial implications as a result of the accident was an utmost concern. By his own choice, he was the single male provider for the household, and Roxana and the children were dependent on his income (as was the house in Romania that they were building with the money from Mirei's income). Alongside his economic position, gender – and Mirei's insistence on being the breadwinner – thus had a profound impact on his need to go back to work slightly prematurely. Roxana was not able to drive him to and from doctor's appointments in town, as she had too much to do with the children and was a nervous driver (which I will return to in Chapter 7). As he was not able to drive with his wounded hand, I was driving him to his doctor's appointments in town. His immobility, together with living in the countryside, thus meant that he also became dependent on me to assist him with transport.

Mirei's case was similar to that of the farm labourer Irena. Her hand had been injured just behind the knuckles when it had been crushed in a hay loader. The doctor had told her to stop working at the pig farm because of the bacteria inside pig farms. When telling me this story, Irena shrugged her shoulders and said that she had continued the work at the farm. However, she had stayed at home for a while after the accident to allow the wound to heal. Though bacteria inside the pig farm posed a risk to Mirei and Irena, they nonetheless continued their work inside the farms against the doctors' advice. In the next section I will focus specifically on these bacteria and what they meant to my own field research.

Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA)

At pig farms one needs to pay attention to the risk of the MRSA bacteria. These bacteria are a special type of staphylococcus which are resistant to a range of antibiotics which would normally be used to treat staphylococci. MRSA CC398 is a type of MRSA which can be transmitted from animals (especially pigs) to humans, and from humans to humans.[31] Recently, the risks of MRSA have been debated intensely in the Danish media, and the spread of MRSA has been particularly blamed on industrialised pig farms in Denmark. Because MRSA is very difficult to treat with standard antibiotics, it is important that the bacteria do not spread in hospitals where people are already weak and may not be able to fight these resistant bacteria. General guidelines state that the bacteria do not harm otherwise healthy people. One can become a carrier of the bacteria without falling ill from them or having symptoms such as a wound that does not heal. One may interact with other people as normal.

Some months into my fieldwork, I was tested for MRSA. I had visited a farm which I thought was very dusty, and where I did not think the hygiene standards lived up to the standards I had seen at Andrei's farm. I did not have any symptoms, and it would normally be recommended only to be tested if one has symptoms. However, my mother in the Copenhagen area was going to have an operation before Christmas 2016, and I was concerned about the risk that I could potentially cause her if I visited her at the hospital. I was tested for MRSA less than 48 hours after I had visited the dusty farm, and the test was positive. Had I been tested several days after visiting the farm, the test might have been negative. The MRSA bacteria often fall off the body after some time. Only if one keeps entering a pig farm (as the farm labourers), one may continuously be exposed to the bacteria. In this case, treatment is not recommended as the bacteria might become resistant to the treatment.

My first reaction to being tested positive was to panic. Could I visit my mother at the hospital? Did I pose a risk to people around me, including my husband when I visited him in

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[31] Information about MRSA from the Danish *Statens Serum Institut*, under the Danish Ministry of Health:
https://www.ssi.dk/Service/Sygdomsleksikon/M/Methicillin%20resistente%20Staphylococcus%20aureus.aspx

Copenhagen? And what would this mean to my research? I felt infectious and contagious. I suddenly felt that "my field" prevented me from going to Copenhagen, because I might risk bringing bacteria out of my field. I was not able to talk with my interlocutors about this. The doctor told me that it is generally advised not to tell everybody, in order not to create panic amongst people (also, I did not have any symptoms in the form of an infection). I did not pose a risk to any household members, as I was living alone. Mainly close physical contact gives a risk of transmission of the bacteria, and household members would thus be those primarily in risk. It was also not possible for me to know where I had caught the bacteria; I only had my suspicion directed towards the dusty farm. The doctor told me that I should expect that all pig farms have MRSA. In principle, I could have been positive for years. If I had been talking with my interlocutors about this, people might have been trying to figure out where I had caught the bacteria and started to gossip in this small rural community. This could have been problematic for my interlocutors who had brought me to their farms. It might cause the farmer problems if his farm was publicly known to have MRSA. Again, I was not sure where I caught the bacteria and potentially inducing gossip would have been problematic.

According to media articles, people working at pig farms sometimes feel marginalised by other people, who distance themselves from and exclude farm labourers in Denmark because of the risk of MRSA transmission.[32] In the Danish radio podcast "Pig MRSA" (*Svine-MRSA*), the host raised the issue of migrant farm labourers in connection with MRSA. In the podcast, local people in the area around a pig farm were complaining about the risk they thought they were exposed to because of MRSA at the pig farm. The host mentioned the many migrant farm labourers at the pig farms and said, 'Well, not many are thinking about them...' (*Ja, der er jo ikke mange, der tænker på dem*) (Radio24syv 2014).

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[32] "MRSA-register får landmænd til at føle sig udstødte" (https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/regionale/sjaelland/mrsa-register-faar-landmaend-til-foele-sig-udstoedte); "Multiresistent svine-MRSA: Landmænd mødes med frygt" (https://politiken.dk/forbrugogliv/sundhedogmotion/art5575601/Multiresistent-svine-MRSA-Landm%C3%A6nd-m%C3%B8des-med-frygt); "Landmand fortæller: Sådan er livet på en MRSA-smittet gård" (https://www.tv2ostjylland.dk/artikel/landmand-fortaeller-sadan-er-livet-pa-en-mrsa-smittet-gard)

In my own case, I consulted the doctor and *Statens Serums Institut*, SSI (Danish research institute for infectious diseases, under the Ministry of Health) for advice on how to proceed. They both calmed me down and told me to just live normally and undergo treatment. The SSI representative told me that there would be no problem in visiting my mother at the hospital. Seen retrospectively, I might have overreacted when being tested positive. But before I started my field research, I had mainly heard the media debates about MRSA, and a Danish friend had told me to be careful with MRSA when entering the pig farms. If the MRSA develops into an infection, it can be serious and in worst cases fatal. My treatment consisted of daily use of prescribed nose cream and anti-bacterial mouth wash for ten days, and I had to use a specific anti-bacterial body and hair wash. Apart from this I had to clean my home several times a week, including washing bedding and towels. After the treatment, I was tested MRSA negative, and in second test, later on, I was tested MRSA negative again.

Risks of MRSA mean that pig farm labourers must inform healthcare staff about their occupation when they are hospitalised to allow them to take the appropriate measures to protect themselves and other patients. People with MRSA are entitled to receive the same treatment as other people. At the hospital an MRSA-positive person might be put into isolation from other patients to prevent potential spread of the bacteria. If one carries the MRSA bacteria, one will need extra thorough hand hygiene to avoid spreading the bacteria. When I had just been tested MRSA positive, I was therefore extra aware of washing my hands frequently, and I would carry around a disinfectant gel to use before shaking hands with other people. Until I was tested negative however, I consciously or unconsciously avoided too much physical contact with people as the MRSA bacteria played on my mind. Some pig farms, including the one I worked at together with Andrei, had plans to prevent the spread of MRSA. This plan emphasised the importance of hygiene by, for example, washing thoroughly *everywhere* before leaving the pig farm.

Given the risk of becoming an MRSA carrier, I decided not to enter industrialised pig farms again. This changed my initial fieldwork plans. In the beginning of my fieldwork I had wished to work full-time at a farm for my entire fieldwork and become a "proper farm labourer". However, when I realised the health and safety risks that farm work involved, I

changed my plans about working at a farm. Not working at the farm led me to other insights: my increased integration into the lives of my female interlocutors meant that I was often occupied with them during the day. This meant that I obtained a more in-depth understanding of the gendered implications of my interlocutors' migration (the theme of Chapter 7). Apart from this, most of the Romanian farm labourers I met were men, and it was not considered odd for me to socialise with the women instead of working at a farm.

Issues around MRSA are sensitive in Denmark, and health information is kept strictly confidential. For this reason, it is not necessarily possible to ask straightforwardly about MRSA. Also, one is not obliged to inform others about one's MRSA status. Although I had overheard my interlocutors telling the hospital staff that they were working at pig farms, which might make the staff treat them as carriers of MRSA, I was not aware of any who had been tested positive. I did however hear talk – as with Mirei and Irena – about being careful with 'bacteria' (*bacterii*) at the farms. I assumed that this referred to the MRSA bacteria. Silvia only directly referred to MRSA one day (in a low voice) when she and I were shopping in the supermarket. When undergoing fertility treatment, the hospital staff apparently would not store Vasile's semen for very long because of the risk of MRSA, meaning that he required an extra appointment for the treatment. Apart from this, I did not experience any discussion of MRSA amongst my interlocutors. I did not know whether this was due to secrecy about this (at other times, they were happy to discuss health issues), or whether it simply did not constitute as significant a concern as it did to me and many people who have followed the public debate on MRSA in the Danish media.[33] Such public concerns also fuelled my initial panic about MRSA. But whereas I could allow myself to panic about this, and retreat from doing further work at an industrialised pig farm, my interlocutors were not in the same position. Rather, as with Mirei and Irena, they continued their work at the farms. As we shall

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[33] As of 1 January 2018, it became a legal requirement for employees at pig farms to complete an online hygiene course, which is aimed at preventing the spread of MRSA in society. It is the employer's responsibility to ensure that the employees conduct this training. *Source:* https://www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/Nyheder/Aktuelt/Sider/Nyheder_2018/10-000_skal_på_hygiejnekursus.aspx; https://www.ssi.dk/hygiejnekursus

see below in the case of Sofia, her need to work meant that she lied to the doctors, with a risk to both herself and her unborn baby.

Sofia's pain

Sofia worked at Anders' farm (Chapter 2) together with her husband and several other Romanian employees. She kept a lot to herself, preferred to stay at home and was mainly in contact with Laura and Roxana and Mirei. She was rarely in contact with Silvia and Vasile. Because I had a car, Sofia and her husband initially asked if I could help them with some transport to the hospital and midwife consultations. Slowly Sofia and I had more and more trips alone together. Often, she did not say much, especially in the beginning. But despite her high invisible fence, she and I got to know each other little by little. And she invited me into her home, for coffee and biscuits, and into her life.

Sofia was in her mid-twenties, did not speak Danish and only very little English. She already had a six-year-old son from an earlier relationship. The son was staying in Romania with her mother. Her father worked in Italy in agriculture. She had come to Denmark with her boyfriend and later husband to stay and work with him at the farm on Kegnæs. During my fieldwork she became pregnant, and due to her lack of driving license and her lack of Danish language skills I helped her to get to the doctor's appointments. If necessary, I assisted in translation during meetings. Alternatively, the doctors might book a translator who was anonymous and translated over the phone. Apart from assisting with the translation, she expressed that it was nice to have somebody with her whom she knew. She said that her baby would also be my baby, because I helped her so much at the consultations.

Sofia's husband worked as the manager at the farm. He rarely had a full night sleep, and often only slept a few hours at the time, because of the working hours which could be all around the clock. Both Sofia and her husband told me that he had issues with his memory and temperament because of the lack of sleep. He also did not have a driving license and often had to work whilst Sofia and I went to her medical appointments.

In March 2017, Sofia was well into her pregnancy, although this was difficult to see on her slim body. We had to go to her local practitioner for a regular pregnancy check-up, and to check up on some pain that Sofia had had in the right side. When we were waiting together in the waiting room, Sofia told me that she was concerned that the doctor might tell her that she could not work anymore. She was aware that she had some heavy work at the farm and stressed to me that if she thought there were issues with this, she would just ask her husband to help her. She emphasised that she could not just stay at home with nothing else to do. Already spending a lot of her spare time at home on the farm, she seemed to fill out a lot of the time with cleaning and cooking at home.

When we were called into the doctor's room, we met a senior and a junior doctor. Immediately when they saw me, they asked who I was. I responded that I was a PhD student in anthropology. They were curious about my language skills and my studies and asked me where I knew Sofia from. I explained that both Sofia and I were living on Kegnæs. The doctors did not take further notice of this and let Sofia and me sit down on the chairs on the other side of the desk. To allow Sofia to be as much as part of the conversation as possible, they conducted the meeting in English, and I assisted when necessary.

The doctors had a list of questions to ask Sofia in relation to her pregnancy. The senior doctor asked Sofia if she had heavy work to do. In contrast to what Sofia had just been telling me in the waiting room, she told the doctors that she did not have heavy work. I started to feel slightly bad because of Sofia's open lie. From the doctors' sceptical facial expressions, I assumed that they did not believe her. Farm work is known to be physically demanding, and Sofia's immediate rejection of carrying out heavy tasks almost seemed too obviously not true. The doctors went on with their list of questions. Returning to her working conditions, the senior doctor asked her: 'How many hours do you work?' In English Sofia explained that she was working 160 hours per month. With their raised eyebrows, the doctors again seemed sceptical towards Sofia's answer. Standard contracts in Denmark normally include 160 working hours per month. However, the Danish public debate often brings examples of migrant labourers who work a lot more than they should, and farm work is known to often include more working hours than the standard number of weekly hours (37 hours). The senior

doctor then reframed her question and asked Sofia: 'How many hours per week do you work?' Sofia became nervous. Slightly panicked she looked at me and asked in Romanian what the doctors had asked about. I translated the doctor's question into Romanian. In Romanian, she told me that she was working 6 hours a day, 7 days a week. She wanted me to translate this to the doctors. In English I then repeated Sofia's working schedule. I deliberately chose to speak English, as I did not want to encourage a conversation in Danish between the doctors and me. The doctors made some quick calculations and told each other in Danish that Sofia was working 42 hours too much a month. The junior doctor asked Sofia, 'Are you really working 7 days a week, without weekends?' Sofia confirmed. I did not know if Sofia thought this was normal. Again, the doctors were looking at each other, whilst noting down the facts that Sofia had just given them. Sofia did not understand what they had just said earlier in Danish, but she could see their facial expressions and asked me in Romanian, 'Why are they looking at me like this?!' In Romanian I responded to her that she was working more hours than normal in Denmark. Sofia looked nervous – as if she had failed a test – and seemed unable to comprehend the situation and how the doctors had reached their conclusion. Rhetorically, the senior doctor asked Sofia, 'You are not afraid?' Sofia did not really respond to this, but mainly looked uncomfortable with the situation. I felt trapped in the situation between the doctors and Sofia and felt slightly annoyed with Sofia for putting me in this situation. The senior doctor moved on and asked if she worked with strong chemicals and if she had to do heavy lifting. Again, Sofia did not understand the question posed by the doctor in English, and I had to translate into Romanian for her. In English, and possibly slightly surprised by the question about chemicals, Sofia replied to the doctors in a sharp voice that she did not work with chemicals. In Romanian, she then told me, 'Apart from the heavy work, there is nothing!' (*afară de greutăţi, nu-i nimic*). Sofia did not ask me to translate this to the doctor, and I remained silent. In the beginning of the meeting, Sofia had told the doctors in English that she did not do any heavy work. I left her to decide whether to tell the doctors more in detail about her work situation. When the doctors had finished their list of questions, we ended the meeting by discussing the dates for Sofia's next appointments during the pregnancy. Sofia had

already told me that she was overwhelmed by the number of appointments she had to go to in Denmark during pregnancy.

On our way out of the door, the junior doctor asked me 'So you live on Kegnæs?' (*Så du bor på Kegnæs?*). I confirmed and explained that my project was focusing on Romanian migrants, and that I was living on Kegnæs to gain a better understanding of what it means to live in the countryside. 'That's really peculiar place...' (*Det et også et specielt sted*), the senior doctor concluded.

Sofia and I walked out of the doctor's room and the building. I felt that the atmosphere between us was tense. She was worried and confused, and I felt that she had put me in an awkward situation. Also, I was insecure whether Sofia might have misunderstood something in English, and whether she was aware that she had told the doctors that she did not do any heavy work. Although I thought Sofia had to decide what she wanted to tell the doctors, I did feel a responsibility to verify whether she had understood what she had said. When we had left the parking space, I repeated the situation to her and made her explicitly aware that she had responded to the doctors that she did not have any heavy work – but that she had told me in Romanian she did have heavy work. Closing this discussion in an assertive tone, Sofia said: 'It's better this way [*E mai bine aşa*]... It's better only to say a little...'. 'Okay, okay' I replied and gave up on the topic. We drove back to Kegnæs in silence.

Later in her pregnancy, Sofia had so much pain in her side that she had to go on sick leave, despite her initial refusal to stay at home. She had been concerned about Anders' response to her sick leave. But he had apparently been understanding, and it had been no problem for her to take leave. Sofia was on leave until she went into labour two months too early. At that point, a panicked Sofia called me. The water had broken, and she wanted me to come with her to the hospital. However, I was in a train close to Copenhagen and was not able to help. Instead, Adrian (Laura's husband and Vasile's colleague) took her to the hospital. A few days after she gave birth, I visited her at the hospital. Due to the premature birth she had to stay at the hospital for longer to allow the tiny daughter to learn to suck milk and to allow the doctors to keep an eye on her.

I found out from rumours that Sofia's husband was sleeping with another Romanian employee at the farm. She was Adrian's niece, and Adrian was furious with Sofia's husband about this. Sofia had been begging the husband to stop, hoping that he would change. It did however not seem to work. Sofia never told me about the husband's affair herself, and though I knew about it – and saw the husband on his scooter with his lover – I did not interfere. Instead of telling me about his affair, she would tell me how much the husband was looking forward to the baby, and how she was cooking and cleaning at home. I thought that she might feel ashamed not to be able to "keep" her husband, and given her already delicate situation I did not want to further drive her into a corner. Though she stopped smoking when she found out she was pregnant, she started again during pregnancy. I sometimes wondered whether the stress of her husband's extra-marital affair had any connection to this. After the birth, Sofia's mother-in-law came to Denmark to help. She tried to make her son stop sleeping with the other woman, but her effort failed. Shortly after I left Kegnæs, Sofia also left Kegnæs to go and stay with her mother-in-law in Romania.

In *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies. Migrant Farmworkers in the United States* (2013), Holmes analyses the health implications of farm work for Mexican farm labours in North American agriculture. Holmes demonstrates how the Mexican farm labourers are exposed to multiple risks during their travels and farm work, in some cases leading to death. When they consult health care staff they are often blamed for their own suffering, and their health issues are normalised because such issues are considered normal for farm work. Holmes uses the word 'suffering' to describe 'not only physical sickness, but also mental, existential, and interpersonal anguish' (2013: 89). The bodily experiences of his interlocutors provide an important insight into the social forces at stake, as the degree of physical suffering often depends on the farm worker's ethnicity (Holmes 2013: 95). The bodily experiences of suffering, therefore, cannot be separated from the social forces which shape the experiences of this suffering. Important differences exist between Holmes' and my interlocutors. My interlocutors were moving legally as part of the EU Single Market, whereas the Mexican farm labourers were often undocumented, and as such already in a more disadvantaged position in terms of health and safety than my interlocutors when arriving at their destinations. Also,

Denmark and the United States provide two different types of nation and welfare states, and the demography and geography of Denmark and the United States differ significantly. What we still see, however, is that agriculture in both contexts involves risk for the farm labourers' health and that the ability to tackle these issues is impacted by their situations as migrants.

In my experiences with Sofia's appointments with the doctors she did – in contrast to Holmes' interlocutors – not encounter a lack of support from the health care staff in terms of support and advice. Neither did Irena and Mirei seem to. But although both Sofia, Mirei and Irena were in some ways positioned more favourable than Holmes' interlocutors, they were still not necessarily able to benefit from this. Rather, monetary concerns – and multiple other concerns, as was particularly evident in Sofia's story – meant that they did not necessarily follow the doctor's advice.

In the meeting that Sofia and I had with the doctors, we see how the doctors assumed that she was not telling the truth, because farm work often involves heavy work and long working hours. One might, as in Holmes' account, say that her health and safety issues in farm work are normalised. But what we also see is that the doctors were trying to uncover the realities about her working conditions, and that they questioned her judgement of the situation. They did not leave her in a normalised situation of suffering, nor did they silence her suffering but asked her to speak about it and articulate her situation. As such, they acknowledged her pain and potential implications of this based on their prior knowledge of migrant farm labourers and working conditions at a farm (cf. Kleinman, Das, and Lock 1997: xiii, xvi). But whereas the doctors and I were mainly concerned about Sofia's and the baby's health, Sofia was concerned about her potential inability to work and the consequences of not being able to work. Her priorities in this situation differed from our priorities and ethical agendas (which might also be the reason that I was annoyed with *Sofia* in this situation and not the *doctors*). Sofia's insistence on not staying at home but keeping at work could be due to several reasons: firstly, for financial reasons (though she did not mention this directly). In the beginning of her pregnancy she raised her concerns that she might be fired because of her pregnancy, which could also be a reason for her initial concern about telling Anders that she was pregnant and then asking for sick leave. And secondly, her husband's affair with the other

employee could also have made Sofia want to be inside the farm area to "keep an eye" on him. Sofia was squeezed on several frontiers though: she was constrained by her lack of Danish skills and her poor English skills, she was rather immobile, and she was living remotely in the countryside on the farm. Often, she was dependent on me or other Romanians in the area to help her with administrative matters in the public services and assistance with transport. In any case, her initial refusal not to work means that she rejected some of the support she could have had from the Danish health care system, and she continued working until she was no longer able to because of the pain in her side. She had her own priorities and agendas, and her own ways of dealing with for example heavy lifting in farm work (her husband could help her). Sofia's choice for how to deal with the situation was as such shaped within the wider priorities that she had to take into consideration. This meant that she lied to avoid the doctors telling her that she should not work. Not being able to work would have further impacted her already difficult situation. Through Sofia's story of bodily pain and suffering, we gain an understanding of how her individual biography and her life and work at the farm meant that she chose to continue working, and remain in a position of suffering, until the pain was too much. The individual suffering that was inflicted on her body therefore became a social experience, as the social forces in her life shaped the ways that she suffered and the way that she was able to tackle her individual bodily pain and suffering.

A history of suffering

The stories above demonstrate how my interlocutors' socio-economic positions shape the ways that they were able to deal with the health implications of farm work. Language skills, gender and immobility further reinforced their inability to deal with health issues. Their financial constraints, individual biographies and familial obligations, therefore shaped the contexts in which they decided not to follow the doctors' advice and, in Sofia's case, lie to the doctor (cf. Farmer 1997: 272). On multiple levels their suffering was therefore shaped by social forces, which meant that they prioritised their work above health and safety issues.

Such prioritisation is not new in a Romanian context. Historically Romania has been going through socio-economic transformations, which, despite their political and economic nature, have had embodied consequences for people's everyday lives. Many of my interlocutors were my age. They were born in the 1980s in Romania, during the last years of Ceaușescu's regime, and they had grown up during the aftermath of this regime in the 1990s. The enduring consequences of this, and the country's state of limbo and transition had accompanied them during childhood and youth, as well as formed part of their reasoning for leaving the country. Several described to me how people in Romania often look stressed, sad and annoyed because of all the problems that they face in everyday life; and that you can see this when people walk on the streets. They contrasted this to the "smiling Danes". Everyday in this way life manifested itself in the bodily appearances of people.

Kideckel (2008) analyses the bodily consequences and suffering of post-socialist transformation for Romanian workers (with a particular focus on miners). During socialism, the bodies of workers had been protected by the free health services provided by the state (ibid.: 97). But the transition to market economy meant that this protection disappeared and that workers felt they had to compromise health and safety because of their economic needs and the fears of not being able to sustain a livelihood in the new market economy (ibid.: 74-75). Kideckel therefore demonstrates how the systemic transformation became embodied in the way that workers experienced significant increases in the level of physical illness, together with stress and anxiety. Similarly, my interlocutors' movement to Denmark to work at a farm became an embodied experience, as the farm work itself was work "for the body", but also because the implications of farm work were embodied and could be felt through pain and their limited abilities to deal with health and safety issues. In this way we not only deal with the individual suffering of particular bodies but also with social suffering as some people suffer through the social forces and socio-economic inequalities that shape their abilities to deal with the individual pains. The bodily consequences of socio-economic conditions, as such, continued beyond everyday life in Romania and were extended into my interlocutors' everyday realities as migrants in Denmark.

Such physical manifestations and socioeconomic inequalities were also evident in the relationship between my own and my interlocutors' bodies. Though I felt the heavy work during my period of working at the farm, and I caught the MRSA bacteria (which I never suffered from, but mainly panicked about), I was also at liberty to retreat from the farm work as this was just part of my studies. The equality I thought I was able to create through my own work at the farm thus ironically demonstrated the power hierarchies that we were embedded in. This hierarchy was underlined in several ways by my interlocutors. For example, then they thought it was natural for me to find farm labouring interesting, as I only did this for a short period of time. Or when they raised the possibility that I was just on holiday when doing fieldwork, and that I was able to sleep in during the mornings when they had to go up early. Or when someone like Andrei noted that I was probably going to earn more money than him (see Chapter 3). Or when they noted upon my frequent visits to the dentist compared to them, and my ability to do exercise that they were not able to because of their physically demanding work. Several of my interlocutors also commented upon their observations of retired Danish people, who they saw around in the streets, who were doing exercise and were still looking fit and healthy. In Romania, I was informed, people at that age are worn out by their work. Danes, including me, I was made aware, had in their perspectives not suffered as Romanians.

With a historical view to Romania's past, Mirei told me in more general terms that 'Romanians have suffered a lot' (*românii au suferit mult*). Suffering is not a new concept in Romanian discourse. Suffering has clear Christian connotations (see Chapter 6) and has been emphasised as part of Romanian history (remember Adam in Chapter 2 who emphasised other countries' exploitation of Romania). Several of Kideckel's (2008) interlocutors also refer directly to their "suffering" when talking about their health declines. The body as a locus of suffering during the socialist period in Romania was particular evident given the psychological and physical suffering that many people went through because of the brutal methods of the socialist regime. This had far reaching consequences for people's social, individual and intimate lives (Verdery 2018, Müller 2015, Kligman 1992). During my fieldwork I was told that Romanians are used to getting by, despite their suffering and the difficult circumstances and systemic transformations that the country has been going through (see also Verdery 1996: 96,

Kideckel 2008). Romanians were getting by under Ceaușescu's violent regime, during the country's turmoil in the 1990s, and when working abroad. Again, this was contrasted to the "easy lives of Danes."

By emphasising their shared and historical suffering, my interlocutors were able to base their farm work experiences on a '*pregiven* subject to whom experience happens' (Das and Kleinman 2001: 5, emphasis in original): that is, by narrating experiences from farm work within this framework, suffering was no longer only an individual problem. It was a collective experience and a condition enforced upon Romanian migrants. In such way, they made their individual experiences of suffering into a social experience which was shared amongst Romanians. Verdery (1996: 107-108) argues that suffering in Romania has historically offered powerless people moral capital: by presenting oneself as a victim, it has been possible to gain a political voice. Opposing this view in terms of workers, Kideckel (2008: 101) writes that Romanian workers' suffering has not given them the same level of support, and their suffering has not provided them any moral claims or political voice, as has been provided to for example victims of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster in Ukraine and victims of violence that was done by the East German and Czech security forces during socialism. By emphasising their suffering and difficult circumstances in Denmark, my interlocutors were perhaps trying to claim some level of moral capital. Or perhaps they were just trying to share their experiences, let the anthropologist know that they were able to suffer pain just like anybody else and gain recognition as fellow human beings.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed the bodily consequences of my interlocutors' work in Denmark. As a sector with a high level of recorded accidents, it is not surprising that they faced significant risks to their health and safety. What I have however shown is that their abilities to deal with health and safety issues depended on their positions within the European political economy, and more specifically on their positions as migrant farm labourers in Denmark. Factors such as language skills, immobility in the countryside and gender further

impacted their sicknesses and abilities to deal with them. In this way their farm work in Denmark was embodied and inscribed into their physical and mental health. Their suffering was thus individual as it manifested itself as pain on individual bodies, but also social in the way that their suffering and ability to deal with this was shaped by social forces around them.

Suffering has a particular history in Romania. Both during and after socialism people have felt the embodied consequences of state surveillance and the lack of state support for, for example, health care services. What we see is that the positions of my interlocutors have particular bodily consequences for their health and safety, and that the bodily suffering feeds into a historical narrative of suffering of Romanians. In this perspective, being a farm labourer in Denmark did not necessarily relieve their suffering of the past and present difficulties in Romania; rather, their individual and social suffering was extended through the bodily consequences that they endured as part of their farm work Denmark. If we look back at Chapters 2 and 3 one may say that my interlocutors' capacity for withstanding their individual and social suffering was a benefit for the farmer.

In the coming chapter I will move on from a focus on the body as a locus of suffering. I will go on to analyse the ways that the Romanian farm labourers were momentarily able to get away from everyday realities: through moments of enjoyment, resistance and imagination.

Chapter 5

MOMENTS OF ENJOYMENT, RESISTANCE AND IMAGINATION

The *boier*

'*Boier*…!', Vasile broke out and made a bowing movement behind the steering wheel of the car, almost like he was going to kiss the shoes of the farm owner. He was driving, and Silvia was sitting on the passenger seat next to him. I was on the back seat. We were driving on the country road on Kegnæs and had just passed Vasile's farmer, who was about to turn onto the road from a side road. When we had passed the farmer, we had all waved out of the car windows. The farmer could not hear Vasile's *boier* comment, but in the car, we were giggling. A *boier* refers to a feudal lord in the old Romanian aristocracy. Talking about Romania today and the fact that a *boier* is a historical phenomenon, Vasile argued that Romania still has *boieri* (pl.) today; according to Vasile, they consist of employers who pay their employees very little. As such, he compared these employers to his own. Another time, Vasile referred to Adam's and Boris' farmer as 'Santa Claus' and 'Mother Teresa'. The farmer had apparently told Boris that he might get a day off in the weekend. Boris had however been working non-stop with no weekends for several months, and the farmer's "offer" seemed a little absurd.

The moments where Vasile labelled the farmers *boier, Santa Claus* or *Mother Teresa* had several purposes: firstly, labelling the farmers provided him with a sense of momentary power. For a moment, he was the one who had power to name the farmers and make fun of them. In the *boier* vignette, this was further strengthened by his accompanying gestures, and his giggling audience in the form of Silvia and me. The farmer was unknowingly sitting in his own car; and in Vasile's car, Vasile was in charge. Secondly, and in line with the latter, Vasile's

naming of the farmers both underlined the power hierarchy between himself and his (and Boris' and Adam's) farmer, whilst his joking and sarcasm about the farmer's higher position in the hierarchy also implied a critique of this power hierarchy. With his comments, he therefore acknowledged the power hierarchy, although his irony simultaneously distanced him cognitively from this hierarchy (cf. Rapport 2002b: 151, Nielsen 2018, Scott 1985). Thirdly, Vasile used imagination in these moments. For a moment he imagined the farmer as a *boier*, and made a mime of this; and for a moment he used imagination to describe Adam's and Boris' farmer as something that the farmer was absolutely not. Using these momentary imaginative techniques also meant that Vasile opened up for the possibility that a different reality of life could be possible.

In the previous chapters I have analysed the implications of socio-economic inequalities and structural powers to my interlocutors' positions at the farms, including their self-perceptions and bodies. In this chapter I move outside the workplace at the farms and analyse the meaning of particular moments of enjoyment, resistance and imagination. In such moments, people like Vasile were momentarily able to invert power hierarchies, enjoy themselves and play with their everyday realities; by, for example, making fun of the farmers, feeling the music, dancing, feeling the body through exercises at the gym and imagining a different – and perhaps a more meaningful – presence in the world.

These were also moments that provided me with a sense of intersubjective recognition between myself and my interlocutors: that is, they provided me with a realisation of those important emotions which created a coherence in my understanding of my interlocutors as human beings outside the categorical understanding of them as migrant farm labourers. The moments that I present in the sections below were somehow critical to my realisation of who they were as human beings and what human being I was for them (cf. Rapport 2008b: 229).

With my integration into my interlocutors' lives I often accompanied them outside working hours when they were socialising. They are moments from this socialising that I analyse through three main foci: firstly, I show how moments outside work could bring enjoyment into their lives. These were moments of laughter, being at the gym, dancing, music and food; sensory and (pleasurable) bodily aspects of life which did not directly relate to

everyday life at the farm. As we have seen so far, their lives were to a large extent filled with frustrations, anxieties and fears about their work and lives. In moments of enjoyment, these issues seemed to slide back, and the intensity of enjoyment took over the moment. As in the previous chapter, I retain a perspective on the bodily engagements in the moments. Our bodies, therefore, were not only loci of suffering but also became loci for enjoyment and pleasure; and similarly to suffering, enjoyment and pleasure were both an emotional and embodied state of being. Secondly, I focus on resistance towards their working and living conditions which sometimes appeared during our time of socialising. Often these moments of resistance popped up as irony about their lives and jokes about their farmers, as in the vignette above. Thirdly, I focus on moments as imagination. These are moments where the imagination of an alternative reality brings out a different sense of life, and through this allows for reflection about what current everyday realities are not. In the vignette with Vasile, we see how enjoyment, resistance and imagination could be overlapping and at play at the same time. In the next section I elaborate on my analytical approach to understanding the importance and implications of such moments.

Moments of embodiment and dialogue

In the moments to come, conflicts, frustrations, fears and anxieties came together with pleasure and joy. In this way, they created moments of ontological certainty: that is to say, a moment where they belonged, engaged in the world, had a voice, and mattered to other people (Jackson 1998). Such moments did not change their situations which I have portrayed in the previous chapters, but they provided a sense of control of the situation and a sense of being in the world – at least for a moment.

The British author Virginia Woolf used the concept of "moments of being" in her authorship. Moments of being allow people to make momentary sense of their lives; these are the moments where one experiences being fully human and realises a 'sense of something' (Rapport 2008b: 229). In *To the Lighthouse* (1927) Woolf describes one of these moments at a dinner party, where one of the main characters, Mrs Ramsey, is reflecting about the moment

at the table, where all the guests, including the guest Willam Bankes, are seated and served food:

> Everything seemed right. Just now (but this cannot last, she thought, dissociating herself from the moment while they were all talking about boots) just now she had reached security; she hovered like a hawk suspended; like a flag floated in an element of joy which filled every nerve of her body fully and sweetly, not noisily, solemnly rather, for it arose, she thought, looking at them all eating there, from husband and children and friends; all of which rising in this profound stillness (she was helping William Bankes to one very small piece more, and peered into the depths of the earthenware pot) seemed now for no special reason to stay there like a smoke, like a fume rising upwards, holding them safe together. Nothing need be said; nothing could be said. There it was, all round them. It partook, she felt, carefully helping Mr Bankes to a specially tender piece, of eternity; as she had already felt about something different once before that afternoon; there is a coherence in things, a stability; something, she meant, is immune from change, and shines out (she glanced at the window with its ripple of reflected lights) in the face of the flowing, the fleeting, the spectral, like a ruby; so that again tonight she had the feeling she had had once today, already, of peace, of rest. Of such moments, she thought, the thing is made that endures. (Woolf 1927: 85-86)

What appears in this moment for Mrs Ramsey is the reflection of the way that life comes together and makes sense. This is Mrs Ramsey's own moment where she is able to reflect about what it means to be in the world. What is important from this moment is that life not only makes sense in the moment; rather, this moment of experience becomes a constant in life: 'Human being turns on momentary apprehensions of experience; whatever *we are* to ourselves we are in moments. Paradoxically, this makes the momentary a constant in life. We forever live in distinct experimental moments and are forever exchanging one momentary realization of the sense of our lives for another' (Rapport 2008b: 230). Moments of being, therefore, are connected to other moments of being, and through their connections they create a sense of coherence and stability in life. These particular moments, when one realises the being of oneself and other people, are different from other parts of life which pass by in life unnoticed. The unnoticed moments of 'non-being' (Woolf 1976: 70) could for

example be when I take my vitamin pill in the morning. I do this every morning alongside my breakfast, but I sometimes forget if I took the pill or not. I simply never stop and reflect about this moment in the morning. Moments of being are conversely moments of intense connection to oneself, other people and the world beyond; moments where one is able to construct a meaningful pattern and meaning of life. What I would like to suggest is that such moments created a sense of ontological rootedness and certainty where my interlocutors and I felt at peace with ourselves, the people around us and a sense that the moment was just right. With my understanding of ontological certainty, I refer to a state of being where a person feels a coherence between the inner and outer world and understands the ways that he or she is connected to the world.

The moments of being that the anthropologist may inhabit are created in the intersubjective relation between the anthropologist and the interlocutors. Whereas Woolf is able to take a psychological perspective of her characters and describe their (and her own) moments of being from a point of view of an inner monologue, this is not possible for the anthropologist, in this case myself. Even if they told me their life stories, and reflected extensively about this, these stories would still be a product of the intersubjective relation between me and them in the conversation. The moments that I describe in the sections to come are therefore *my* moments in the way that they reflect my own interpretation of the experiences I had during my fieldwork. My evaluations of the moments were created in my interaction and relation with the people involved in those moments, my note taking during my fieldwork (in which the reflections about the moment are already created), and the analysis of my fieldwork material after the fieldwork.

My attention to such moments was often triggered by two factors: embodiment of the moment and the dialogue taking place with my interlocutors and between them. As the thesis has already shown, my interlocutors' migration to Denmark had bodily implications in terms of health and safety connected to the farm work. But my own movements around with my interlocutors also meant that I became attentive to the various bodily practices of the particular contexts that we moved between: farm work, dancing, listening to folk music, being noisy, laughing, eating Romanian food, doing exercise at the gym, or joking and making fun.

Such physical, emotional and sensorial manifestations played an important role for the viability of these moments: the embodied experiences were essential to my understanding of how such moments intersected with socio-economic logics of my interlocutors' migration experiences (cf. Stoller 1997, Holmes 2013). Through my own bodily participation, I was not merely an observer of social life, but also a doer who was part of the making of experiences with my interlocutors (cf. Rapport 2002a: 315). My own bodily participation in for example dancing and gym classes and my interlocutors' inclusion of my – the anthropologist's – body as a way of connecting to me and teaching me about their experiences of their lives had a significant impact on the ways that I was able to relate to them and their experiences. To be sure, these moments had significance outside the time of occurrence of the moments: they informed a more coherent understanding of my interlocutors' experiences and lives in Denmark. By analysing the ways that our bodies inhabited multiple contexts of farm work and time outside work I explore their experiences through the flexibility of our bodies; that is, the ways that bodily practices took place in different times and places (Harris 2007: 13, Rapport 2008b: 102). Exactly such bodily experiences triggered my own momentary sense-making.

Secondly, dialogue is important to such moments as this makes a person feel alive and infinite, and feel that he or she matters and is recognised by others as a human being (Bakhtin 1984). This is an aspect which does not figure so clearly in Woolf's account of moments of being but is something which I, as the fieldworker and part of those moments, find important to demonstrate the intersubjective nature of such moments. Dialogue and communication are important aspects of such moments as they ensure a state of being, in contrast to non-being, which provides recognition of the other person as a living human being. According to the Russian scholar Mikhail Bakhtin, it is through the communication with others that people gain recognition:

> The very being of man (both external and internal) is the *deepest communion. To be means* to *communicate.* Absolute death (nonbeing) is the state of being unheard, unrecognized, unremembered. (Bakhtin 1984: 287, sic)

According to Bakhtin, people *are* through communication with others; that is, people recognise each other as human beings by communicating with each other. With no communication and with no demonstration of interest in other people – that is, not responding to other people – there is no life between people and no recognition of the other (Pesmen 2000: 269). This view does not account for people who seek to dissociate and distance themselves from other people, and the question remains whether Bakhtin would consider these people to then be less human. Closedness to development of oneself is perhaps what Bakhtin would consider to be a non-human state of being; that is, seeing oneself as a finite person. In Bakhtin's view, a person cannot be defined as an object: a person becomes a living human being through continuous dialogue and responses from other people (ibid.: 265, 272). To communicate with others allows for the recognition of the other as a human being, and it allows for the infinite making of the incomplete person. This is what makes one feel alive and not reduced to an essentialised mechanical existence. Through his authorship, Bakthin was inspired by Dostojevskij's psychological insights into the infinite qualities of people and portrayals of his characters' individual reflections (Bakhtin 1984). But, as Woolf, Dostojevskij was able to take the authoring position of the inner dialogue and reflections of the individual character. This is something which I am reluctant to do. I therefore rely on the anthropologist's ethnographic techniques to register the embodiment of moments and the dialogues taking place in those moments, as well as my own subsequent anthropological interpretation of the sense of these moments. As with Woolf and Dostojevskij, the authorship and sense-making are mine; however, the intersubjectivity of the moments – and the dialogue and bodily engagement in the moment – belongs to the relation between my interlocutors and me. Melting together the embodiment of and dialogue in the moments, we may see how the moments of being of my interlocutors and myself evolve. In the following sections I will provide glimpses of such moments from my fieldwork. These demonstrate how bodily engagement and dialogue played out in different contexts, and how the intensity of this could create moments of ontological certainty.

Moments of enjoyment

At Ionut's place (1)

It was around 1.30am, late October 2016, and we had been spending the evening at Adam and Boris' place, together with Ionut, Dorina and Mihail. As it was so late, we decided to all go to Ionut's place to stay overnight. Silvia, Vasile and I were in the car on our way to Ionut's place. In the car, Silvia asked me if I had liked the evening. I confirmed that I had enjoyed it very much. We had been talking, listening to music and playing games. The evening had been full of laughter and joy. Vasile was tired and did not say much in the car. When we arrived at Ionut's place, the party continued with drinks and snacks in his small living room in the poorly maintained house next to the farm buildings. Both Ionut and Vasile had the weekend free and therefore did not have to get up early on Sunday. We could stay up late. Silvia and I slept in Ionut's bedroom which made the others insinuate and joke about a homosexual relationship between Silvia and me. They spent a great deal of the morning after talking about what Silvia and I "might have been up to."

Regardless of the reader's perceived quality of this joking, I knew in that moment that they placed me as an actor in the making of the jokes and the gossiping about what had perhaps been taking place during the night. The insinuated relationship between Silvia and me transgressed the distinction between me as an outsider and "them", as I became a doer in the moment when they made me one of the main characters of the memories of the night.

New Year's celebrations (2)

In the following excerpts, we were preparing New Year's evening, and we met the day after the evening to eat leftovers:

> After shopping Silvia, Dorina and I went back to Ionut's place. The men had gone into the barn to prepare a pig that Ionut had received from his farm. Silvia, Dorina and I went into the living room, where we spent some time talking about Dorina's pregnancy. A little after we went into the barn to follow the men's preparations. The dead pig was lying on a wooden palette. It was

dark brown on the body, because the skin had been scorched. Adam and Vasile were watching Mihail pouring a pot of boiled water over the pig's scorched skin. Ionut and his colleague, whom I had not met before, were scraping off the burned skin with a knife. They were very thorough with this. The burned skin was used to make the Romanian *sorici* (pork rind), which is the cleaned burned pig skin served raw in slices. These were served on a plate that went around between us, when we were sitting in the small living room. (fieldnotes, 29 December 2016)

After meeting up at Dorina's and Mihail's place in the morning, Silvia, Vasile, Ionut, Dorina, Mihail and I went to Adam's and Boris' place. We sat down in the sofa and chairs in the large living room. Silvia and Dorina were hungry and went to the fridge to take out some *salade de beuf* (salad with chopped vegetables and beef in mayonnaise) from yesterday's elaborate New Year's meal. We took a fork each and shared the salad from the plate. Mihail gave us some bread to share and noted happily, 'This is how you eat it in Romania'. (fieldnotes, 1 January 2017)

Figure 9. Romanian cabbage rolls with polenta and sour cream

Figure 10. Playing Monopoly

Feeling the music (3)

Apart from cooking, we spent a great deal of time dancing. Sometimes, we were listening to lively Romanian folk music *muzika populara*. On occasions, we danced Romanian folk dances. Boris had been dancing folk dance for five years in Romania and would act as the dance instructor for the rest of us. In the latter part of my fieldwork, he asked me: 'Do you *feel* the music?' (*simți muzica*). I confirmed that I did. In the beginning, when I had tried to dance Romanian folk dance, I awkwardly made the moves around the floor and was clearly unable to make the same steps as Dorina, who – even shortly before giving birth – was able to move her feet lightly over the floor to the quick steps of the intense music rhythms. Only by June 2017 was I able to move in time with the music. The others were impressed, commenting that I was like a Romanian.

Despite the joy of the situation, it also seemed absurd: we found ourselves in a farmhouse in the quiet countryside, with few people in the near vicinity. At the same time, the loud music and people's loud voices and laughter made noise (*gălăgie*) and filled up the remote countryside house with our barn dance in the living room with no heating installed, and where only a wood stove and people's presence created warmth and life. At this point I felt I was, together with the others, immersed in the learning of the steps for Romanian folk dance.

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The moments above triggered my emotions: pleasure, joy, absurdity, taste, the knowledge of my interlocutors' suffering and pain, and togetherness. A mix of these emotions were embodied in my feelings of these moments, which is how they became moments of sense-making. They were moments where I was brought into my interlocutors' moral and embodied worlds: I felt at peace with my interlocutors, and they seemed to feel at peace with me, when they were letting me into their enjoyment, joking with me, sharing food with me, and dancing with me. Such moments seemed intoxicated with a feeling of just being right: I felt at peace with the moment and felt that the people around did as well.

Woolf (1976: 72) writes all human beings are 'connected' with a 'hidden pattern' which only appears in moments of being. Being connected means that the world seems like a piece of art, and one is in the moment connected to this piece of art. It is, as such, a moment of wholeness (ibid.: 71). The moments above helped me to retrospectively understand my interlocutors outside the logics of changing relations between labour and capital. Despite the differences between us in terms of how we were positioned sociologically, such moments, to me, provided a sense of recognition. Drawing on the work of Walter Benjamin and Michael Taussig, Stoller writes: 'Recognition, it follows, is an embodied phenomenon that is part and parcel of the mimetic faculty. Through the embodied displacement of the self, recognition strikes us in a flash' (1997: 66-67). The process of understanding through corporal knowledge is often at stake in magic: the sorcerers copy the object or subject they want to affect. And through magical powers the copy gains the qualities of the original, which then also demonstrates the sorcerer's power over the copy (ibid.: 66-67). In those moments of enjoyment, where I for instance copied the dance moves, ate from the same plate as my interlocutors or consented to be part of their joking, what I think struck me was this flash of recognition and solidarity between myself and my interlocutors. With a sense of solidarity with other people, people find sense in themselves (Jackson 1998: 10). These were both acts of embodiment of the moments and of communication; two essential ingredients for our

moments. In the following section, I will focus especially on the communicative aspects of such moments: through the use of irony as a dialogical tool for resistance against farm work my interlocutors' conditions and work at the farms.

Moments of resistance

'You have to be sexy'

An early summer day in June 2017, I was sitting by the coffee tables in the Fitness World gym in Sønderborg together with Silvia, Vasile and Ionut. We had finished our workout and were as usual having our coffee afterwards. Vasile and Ionut were chatting about what they had been up to during the day at their farms. Vasile was mainly complaining about how busy he was. 'I have taken [pigs] out, I have taken [pigs] in... And I have been washing [*și am spalat*]', he explained. At this point I knew that washing could be a demanding task, thinking to myself that training in the gym afterwards must be hard.

Like Andrei and Adam, Ionut worked at a farm where the sows needed to be inseminated. During the day, he had been busy too. He was often working together with the farmer's mother, Else, who lived alone in the house next to Ionut on the farm. Silvia, Vasile, Ionut, Adam and Boris sometimes referred to Else as *baba* which is an expression for an older (perhaps unmarried) woman who might try and behave in a youthful way.[34] They would tease Ionut about pairing up with *baba* and make fun of the way she dressed. Ionut's farmer lived in a red brick house a bit further away from the farm. Ionut had been complaining that his farmer lived in a nice house but did not want to renovate Ionut's run-down house.

The story went, when Ionut had finished the day's washing at the farm, he had had to help Else to finish the insemination of the sows. Sitting in Fitness World's coffee corner, whilst Ionut told us the insemination story of the day, Silvia and Ionut started visualising scenarios of insemination. With a grin on her face, Silvia said: 'You have to be sexy!' (*trebuie să fii sexy*). 'You have to dress up!', Ionut continued. Vasile referred to Boris, who was probably the

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[34] https://dexonline.ro/definitie/baba

shortest and skinniest guy in the friend group, and pictured himself as Boris who had to manoeuvre around and inseminate the large and heavy sows.

When I visited Adam's farm I helped with insemination. One needs to take the plastic packs containing semen, which the farmer buys from a supplier. Sometimes, one takes a boar and puts it in front of the sows to arouse them. Then one takes the pack of semen and attaches it to a transparent plastic tube that should be inserted into the sow. When I helped with the insemination, I had to sit on the sow's back facing towards the back end of the sow. Although I was concerned about the sow's back, Adam told me that the sow would be fine – I just had to be careful if the sow wanted to lie down whilst I was still sitting on it. I held the pack of semen and pressed the pack to force the semen through the tube and into the sow. This could take a little while.

Sitting in the gym in our gym clothes with a view to the health and beauty enhancing gym machines to strengthen chest, arms and back, the discussion of the insemination process to me seemed somewhat out of place. Silvia, Vasile and Ionut were laughing of this discussion.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Joking about people, things and specific situations can serve multiple purposes: making fun of a situation can be a way of dealing with incongruities or creating relief under difficult circumstances (Sciama 2016, Fernandez and Huber 2001). Or according to Goffman (1974), the use of humour is a way of transforming the view of a specific version of reality. Joking in this way distances oneself from a specific reality, creates a sense of shared understanding between participants in the joking, and creates a space for relief from frustrations about everyday realities. One way to characterise these dimensions of joking would be to say that that joking may be seen as a form of the resistance towards the person, thing or situation that is being joked about: the joking provides the individual and the group together with a sense of power in the moment of joking (as with the *boier* comment).

Joking and humour did not change my interlocutors' circumstances and conditions. But through joking about for example insemination, they were able to both acknowledge and

resist the situation simultaneously. In the context of Filipina workers in Hong Kong, Constable (1997) argues that they both comply with and resist their situations. Often the Filipina workers comply with rules and accept their exploitative conditions; for example, by actively subjecting themselves to stereotypes of Filipina workers as being compliant and hardworking. But the Filipina workers are not powerless and passive victims. They respond to their situation in several ways; for example, through open protests or joking. Scott (1985) and Nielsen (2018) analyse the meaning of peasants' and tenant farmers' complaints about landowners through their backstabbing jokes about the landowners. To Scott, the slander and nicknaming of farmers become a symbol of the 'weapons of the weak.' The peasants never openly resist the farmer but remain in a 'cold war of symbols' (Scott 1985: 22). Not only does the nicknaming and slander criticise current conditions; it also portrays a potentially better world (ibid.: 23). The imaginative potential of joking and irony thus allows for a "could be version of reality." Nielsen's (2018: 116) analysis of Scottish tenant farmers demonstrates how they momentarily reverse the hierarchical order between themselves and the landowner by stressing the landowner's poor agricultural skills. Such talks and behaviours behind the landowners' backs both stress the actual power differences, but also provide a framework for ideal social behaviour and relations (Nielsen 2018, Scott 1985: 23). Rapport (2002b: 151) writes that '... irony can be understood as compassing a certain cognitive detachment, it is the recognition of displacement.' That is, as part of a human condition, irony allows people never to be pre-determined by social structures and allows people to cognitively juggle and shape their social realities. Irony includes an inherent imagination of an alternative to social realities (ibid.: 151). Through irony, people therefore appreciate and recognise the realities around them, whilst detaching themselves from these realities and allowing themselves to imagine other realities.

During the moment at the gym above, we see that Silvia, Vasile and Ionut engage with their realities by making fun of them. They were, as such, not subject to structural powers and under "false consciousness" about their conditions. Rather, the joking taking place meant that they acknowledged the difficulty of their situations and the embedded power hierarchies they were part of, though they were not necessarily in a position to change their circumstances.

For example, by making fun of the insemination – an oddly mechanised process of reproduction – they distanced themselves cognitively from this work and made each other aware that they distanced themselves from the work. The joking therefore served an individual purpose of creating relief and a social purpose in terms of distancing oneself from this work and agreeing with the others to distance oneself from the work. In this way, the joking connected Silvia, Vasile and Ionut (and me) to each other, as everybody knew that their comments were ironically meant.

Joking and irony, as I have mentioned, includes imaginative potentials of transforming everyday realities. In the next section, imagination will therefore be the centre of the moments of analysis.

Imaginative moments

'When do you feel at home?', Adam asked me one day we were sitting on his terrace in the late Danish summer in September 2016. 'To me home is not necessarily a physical place. I feel at home when I am together with my husband', I replied. He went on to ask about how I felt with being so much away from my friends. I had to admit that I knew that I was missing out on events in their lives. He then wanted to know how I see my friends when I return to Denmark after spending time abroad. Again, I had to concede that we might gain different perspectives on things in life, and that I might see some things differently to those who have never been living outside Denmark. Adam continued and explained that when you travel around, like he had been doing for more than five years, 'You become a wanderer. You spend one year here, one year there...' According to Adam, you make some friends and lose them again. 'Life goes on without you... You are a memory.' His friends in Romania had entered new jobs while he was away, and he could see that they moved on in their lives whilst he was not there. He was therefore not a part of their important life transitions. 'I feel at home when going home for Christmas, and my mother starts cooking', Adam said and explained that he would then sit on the sofa and not do anything. Adam did not like living and working in Denmark and wanted to return to Romania to settle down in the village where he had a house.

He said that he would 'Find peace in Romania... I sleep better at home'. Apparently, he told me, he did not sleep very well in Denmark.

Adam liked to tell mythological stories such as the Romanian fairy tale *Harap Alb* by the Romanian author Ion Creangă. This fairy tale, like others, concerns a young man who travels out to go through a lot of challenges that he must overcome. He then returns home and the story has a happy ending. I asked Adam, why he liked these fantasy stories. He explained that the stories represent a 'good world'. Adam was also a keen and skilled drawer. He showed me a briefcase with his drawings, and amongst them were several drawings that he had been inspired to draw from the fantasy genre. He would look up the drawings online and copy these. Adam told me, 'The fantasy genre represents a taste beyond the imagination... [The genre and the stories] give a taste of what the real world is not'. Adam often watched films and series of the same genre, such as Batman and Justice League. These are stories about heroes who defy evil, and where good prevails. I had a complete lack of knowledge of such films, but he knew many of these films, their storylines and what they represented. I asked him, 'Do you watch a lot of films?' And Adam replied, 'Yes... How did I give that away? I watch many films. But it's not something I'm proud of... It is a way of killing time...'.

Adam wished to return to Romania and become a teacher for school children and teach the boys 'How to be a good man'. 'Happiness is not money' (*fericirea nu-i bani*), he emphasised. He pointed to his head and explained that happiness should come from inside the head. Ideally, he preferred to move away from the city's 'civilisation', including its money and technology. He thought that electricity and the internet make you unhappy. With his romanticised idealisation of rural peasant life, he wanted to live a simple life outside civilisation and careerist life. Adam was a member of Greenpeace and often talked about his advocacy for nature and climate issues.

With Adam's imaginations of returning to Romania as a hero and becoming a teacher, he also imagined himself in a position where he mattered to other people and the world (through his Greenpeace membership he was able to try and make an impact in the world whilst living in Denmark). His dismissals of living a life with money and his apparent desires to settle down "outside civilisation" could also be seen in the context of him feeling that he

was not able to matter within his current life, where he had fewer financial resources than many other people and did not have a career-oriented life. He lived isolated, had few friends, broke his ankle (and lost income), had very few days off, and his friends in Romania had been going through developments in life that he had not been a part of. In a world without technology and desires of money, in a rural village, he thought he might be able to gain a more meaningful place in life. And in his imaginative moments he was able to imagine a better world than his everyday realities. By returning to Romania as a hero, as in the mythological stories and the films he was watching, there would be a meaning of his journey to Denmark and the farm work he was doing. Exploring the fiction that he was reading and the films and series he was watching thus allowed me to explore what Adam's imaginative moments meant to him. In such imaginations, he was no longer a wanderer but was finally at home.

In the introduction to this chapter I explained that the anthropologist is not able to take the psychological stance of interlocutors, as are Woolf and Dostojevskij of their characters in their (biographical) fiction. Dalsgaard (2015) however argues that 'fiction as a method' may be used in anthropological research to explore our interlocutors' inner dialogues. She uses fiction to analyse the impossible romantic dreams that women in need in Brazil are longing for. Similarly, Adam above uses fiction as a way of imagining the life that he is longing for but which in the moment was impossible to realise. Fiction in this way provided a bridge to his inner dialogue and inner moral universe and longing for a specific life. The moments of imagination that he could gain through this fiction connected him to his own person in a way where he felt at peace with himself, and it connected him to other people in a way where he mattered and was important in their lives; as a teacher, a hero, and someone who prioritised an (idealised) countryside lifestyle. His engagement in Greenpeace (I think mainly through Facebook posts and a membership fee) was also supposed to contribute to the preservation of nature. Through his imaginative moments, he thus managed to dislocate himself from immediate everyday realities into another world.

In August 2017, we all met up at Adam's and Boris' place. Sitting on the sofa, Adam looked sad. 'He is pining for change' (*are dor de o schimbare*), Silvia said. Later in the month, Adam returned to Romania to settle down in the flat he had bought with the money from his

farm work in Australia. He wanted to work and continue his studies in Romania, so he could become a teacher. Adam stayed in Romania for a month and then returned to Denmark again. He had had another job at a pig farm, this time as a manager (which would, after all, pay better than his last farm job). When he told me this, he said, 'I have spent a lot of money'. His return to Romania had apparently been costly: he had been going out with friends and a girl, and he had bought a new car. Also, he needed to buy more things for his flat in Romania. The return to Romania did not go as he had predicted, and he returned to work at a pig farm in Denmark. The realities of everyday life caught up with his imaginations of the fictional heroes that he admired. Even after he started his new work at the pig farm in Denmark, he maintained his dream of becoming a teacher in Romania and continued his studies through distance learning. Whether his dream of completing his studies, becoming a teacher and living in rural Romania will ever be realised, I do not know.

Through his moments of imagination, Adam connected to a world beyond that he was pining for. Seen as such, imagination is an act of connectivity: through moments of imagination one comes to momentarily see life within a coherent and meaningful framework, as Adam who through his imaginations became connected to a meaningful life. According to the Czech-French author Milan Kundera, dreaming is not only a tool of communication; dreaming also gains value in itself because dreams are beautiful (Kundera 1985: 59):

> They [human lives] are composed like music. Guided by his sense of beauty, an individual transforms a fortuitous occurrence into a motif (Beethoven's music, death under a train), which then assumes a permanent place in the composition of the individual's life [...] Without realizing it, the individual composes his life according to the laws of beauty even in times of greatest distress. (Kundera 1985: 51-52)

Adam kept reinterpreting his everyday realities in a beautiful framework where his life and work in Denmark gained value according to specific purposes with more meaning to himself and other people. He composed his life according to the laws of beauty, even though he often found himself in great distress and was hoping he would not end up in a 'nut house'.

With his vivid imagination and supported by his fictional heroes, he was momentarily allowed to escape his everyday realities and gain a sense of control of who he was and could be.

Moments of becoming

Now Adam was a very particular example of the use of imagination. Vasile, in contrast to Adam, to a larger extent used irony and sarcasm to cope with his frustrations and momentarily reinvert power hierarchies and gain a sense of power. Their ways of dealing with their frustrations about their work and lives showed something about their personalities. Vasile and Adam had quite different personalities, and it is not odd that they dealt with their frustrations in different ways. But if we return to Woolf and her moments of being, something more specific comes to my mind in terms of the relevance of her work to my interlocutors. In Woolf's set of autobiographical essays "Moments of being" (1944 [1921]), the character Fanny Wilmot realises a moment of being, where she realises both her own and another character's, Miss Craye's, sense of being: 'All seemed transparent, for a moment, to the gaze of Fanny Wilmot, as if looking through Miss Craye, she saw the very fountain of her being spurting its pure silver drops. She saw back and back into the past behind her. [...] lamenting, as she went, the pettiness of daily life...' (Woolf 1944 [1921]: 110). In this moment, Fanny Wilmot realises the sense of how she is connected to other people and the world, and in this way also realises the sense of her own being. Looking momentarily through moments of her past (the list of which I have not included in the quotation above), Fanny Wilmot connects these past moments of being into a coherent constant in her life.

Through the moments that I have presented in this chapter I suggest that my interlocutors and I were able to create a constant of continuous reflections about our everyday lives and being. By momentarily reinventing everyday realities, people like Silvia, Vasile and Adam created a constant in life according to which they not merely identified as Romanian farm labourers or suffering people (or 'slaves' in Vasile's words) who were subject to historical narratives and socio-economic structures of inequality. Moments as those described above rather consolidated their sense of being through their ongoing reflections and shaping of

everyday realities. The reflections arising from such moments meant that they did not essentialise themselves according to a particular societal category: that is, the category of for example being a Romanian farm labourer did not become a defining constant in life but became subject to momentary modelling and change. Likewise, my own identity as a fieldworker was continuously modelled according to my interlocutors' ways of placing me within their moral and social worlds during our moments together. In such ways, they and I went through moments of becoming alongside our shared and individual experiences of being.

Conclusion

Are Woolf's moments of being universal and are her psychological insights based on a so-called Western perception of the individual psyche and self? As an anthropologist it is problematic to claim to know the psyche of other people. But when I find Wool's literary insights useful, despite their starting point in the (Western) psyche it is because they allow for an exploration of the ways that people continuously reflect upon their existence and make themselves beyond categories such as being a Romanian farm labourer and a suffering subject within macro-economic structures of inequality. Again, this does not exempt the serious implications that such structures have for people's individual and social lives. But through their continuous interior reflections they expose their consciousness and interpretive capabilities of the world around them (cf. Rapport 2008a: 332). Seen as such, my interlocutors were acting with and against the societal categories that were imposed on them and that they imposed on themselves to make sense of their ways of acting.

Through moments of enjoyment, resistance and imagination I have thus tried to provide an account of the ways that my interlocutors and I were creating moments of becoming which allowed for reflections and sense making of our being as individuals and together with each other. None of us were, as such, contained in a specific essence of being but had the ability to model our reflections and our continuous becomings around diverging identities across a variety of contexts.

Moving from the individual reflections and interpretation in this chapter, I in the next chapter analyse how my interlocutors formed communities and constructed themselves in particular social roles within these communities.

Chapter 6

MAKING COMMUNITIES

Going to see one of *them*

In January 2017 I visited Nicoleta, who came from North-Eastern Romania. She lived in a village outside Sønderborg together with her Danish husband Jørgen. Nicoleta was a friend of Andrei and worshipped in the Neo-Protestant Church (and the Danish free church together with Jørgen). She had seen a photo of me on Facebook, where I was standing together with Silvia, Vasile, Dorina, Ionut, Mihail, Emil and Veronika, when I had been on a daytrip with them to the town of Fredericia around an hour's drive from Sønderborg. Immediately when I had arrived at Nicoleta's place and entered her kitchen, she said, 'It is weird to see you together with them'. After we had been sitting in her living room for a chat, I had to leave. As I stood next to my Suzuki Wagon on the parking space and took out my phone to start my satnav, she said to me from the door of the house where she was standing to see me off,

> 'One can see that you have had more friends. You don't have so much time for me. In the beginning you stayed longer. You are probably going to see one of *them*.' (fieldnotes, 16 January 2017)

Nicoleta laughed in a tense manner. I just responded that I had some things to do at home, slightly annoyed by her jealousy.

Nicoleta was in her mid-30s, had dyed blond hair and two daughters with Jørgen. Her Danish was excellent, and we often spoke a mix of Danish and Romanian. She had a heartfelt expression in her gestures, and she was a caring person who particularly enjoyed cooking. She loved inviting people, including me, around for homemade cakes and Romanian food. Via Jørgen's family, Nicoleta participated in a great deal of socialising with Danes (more than most of my other interlocutors). However, she told me, she found socialising with Danes boring

and too formal; and she thought that they, when socialising, discussed too much politics, and drank too much alcohol. Also, she thought that Danes plan to meet up too far in advance. Romanians, according to Nicoleta and other of my interlocutors, meet up more impulsively without planning in advance. Nicoleta had been told by a Danish man that he would always be able to detect that she was Romanian, and not Danish. This was because of her temperament, apparently, which the man thought differed to the temperament of a Danish person. Nicoleta agreed with the man that she had a different temperament than a Dane would have. Though she was in many ways proud of being Romanian, the negative public image of Romanians in Denmark kept playing on her mind. During recent years, issues of Romanians involved in criminal activities in Denmark have been taking up a lot of space in the Danish public media. And Nicoleta was concerned about the impact of this image on herself and her children. Her oldest daughter was soon to start school, and Nicoleta worried that the daughter would be bullied in school in Denmark because she was half-Romanian.

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This vignette about Nicoleta points to the key theme of this chapter: processes of categorisation and the paradoxes that these led to for my interlocutors' individual and social lives. Nicoleta ascribed herself and other Romanians specific characteristics, and she differentiated these characteristics from those that she ascribed to Danes, who she thought, for instance, were boring and too formal. She, and other Romanians, were according to herself more talkative and less formal. At the same time, she also distinguished herself from my Romanian Orthodox interlocutors, with whom she had noticed me on the Facebook picture. Nicoleta belonged to the so-called Neo-Protestant Church, which adhered to a stricter and a more literal interpretation of the Bible than most of my Romanian Orthodox interlocutors. In two ways she was therefore drawing boundaries with other people: firstly, with Danish people and, secondly, with Romanian Orthodox migrants ('*them*' as she called them above). In this way she made boundaries between Romanians and Danes, and between different categories of Romanians.

What I will draw attention to is that Nicoleta divided herself and other people around certain ascribed and self-ascribed characteristics. Throughout this chapter my aim will be to describe processes of categorisation for my Neo-Protestant and Romanian Orthodox interlocutors, and analyse the implications of such processes for their social roles outside the farm work. My focus will therefore be on the ways that communities amongst my interlocutors developed and were continuously negotiated within this specific migratory context. Though I analyse the formation of communities specifically in the context in Denmark, I also show how the boundary making between them drew connections to religious and geographical divides in Romania.

As a Danish fieldworker I was on the one side an outsider to both of these communities. But this position on the other side allowed me to be part of both the Neo-Protestant and the Romanian Orthodox communities when we met up outside working hours. This provided me with an opportunity to understand how and why they organised in two communities, and what implications this had to their understandings of what it means to be Romanian. Before I proceed to a critical interrogation of the concept of community, I will provide a brief overview of how my interlocutors divided into communities.

Two communities

Outside working hours, my interlocutors mainly socialised with other Romanian migrants. Their socialising mostly took place in two groups, based on each their type of Christian belonging:

1) Andrei, Mirei, Roxana and Nicoleta (including Raluca and Konstantin who I will introduce below) adhered to the *Romanian Neo-Protestant Church*. They primarily socialised with other Romanians who worshipped in this church. They did not drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes and attended church services (almost) every Sunday. In addition to this, they sometimes attended prayer meetings during the week. The Neo-Protestant Church is an umbrella term for smaller congregations in Romania such as Pentecostals, Methodists, Baptists and Evangelists.

2) Silvia, Vasile, Adrian, Laura, Ionut, Dorina, Mihail, Adam, Danuț, Magda (who converted at marriage), Veronika, Emil and Sofia were all *Romanian Orthodox.* Boris was an Old Believer which is an older and more conservative type of the Orthodox Church. They rarely went to church, except for on special occasions, and they drank alcohol and smoked cigarettes.

Largely, these two groups also reflected geographical differences in Romania: in Western Romania more people than in other parts of the country are either Neo-Protestant or Catholic, whereas Eastern Romania (including the Moldavia region) is mainly Romanian Orthodox. The Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) is the majority congregation in Romania, though many people have in recent years converted to a Neo-Protestant Church.

My interlocutors did not directly use the word "community" to describe these two groups. However, Silvia would sometimes refer to the Romanian Orthodox group as 'our group' (*grupul nostru*) or, in more joking terms, as 'our gang' (*gasca noastra*). And the Neo-Protestant group was more generally referred to as 'the church' (*biserica*). As such, they somehow indicated a sense of community between the people in the two groups above.

One difference is important to note in terms of the foundation for meeting up and socialising in these communities. My Neo-Protestant interlocutors deliberately chose to meet up within the church community (at services and meetings at the church, as well as at social events) and within the social norms that this community was founded upon. The Neo-Protestant Christian life was therefore a basis for their meetings and community making. By contrast, my Romanian Orthodox interlocutors met each other more coincidentally when they were working and living on farms around in the countryside – and happened to meet each other through work.

Though the "friendships" within these communities developed according to some social norms (which I will present in the sections to come), they could nonetheless also be labelled "friendships of convenience" as they were the (Romanian speaking) relationships available to my interlocutors, either within the church community or at a farm nearby. Although we spent a lot of time socialising and enjoying ourselves, their connections were

also practical in nature; they would for example lend each other money, help each other to find a job, help each other with administration in the Danish public services, give each other lifts in the car, and go to appointments at the hospital together. But despite the practical and convenient aspects of these friendships, the communities were nonetheless also based on their national (and ethnic) belonging as well as their religious belonging to the Neo-Protestant or the Romanian Orthodox Church. Whereas my interlocutors in the Neo-Protestant community emphasised the Bible as the guiding principle of life, my Romanian Orthodox interlocutors for instance emphasised their ability to have fun (and be "more modern" than Neo-Protestant Romanians).

The two communities were not, I will show, defined communities from the beginning when my interlocutors came to Denmark. Rather, they were established as part of practical exchanges and mutual recognition through national and religious belonging. Through continuous negotiations of social norms within the communities, they were able to establish themselves in certain social roles which differed from the ones they had at for example the farms. The negotiation and maintenance of social norms, I will argue, became even more important in a context where my interlocutors were often concerned about their positions as Romanian migrants in Denmark, and the ways that they were perceived as such. Communities, as such, were not predefined units of agreed upon social norms but were continuously reconstituted alongside their migratory experiences. By the end of the chapter I will reflect on this continuous boundary making in the light of studies on post-socialism, and the ways that ideas of post-socialism seem to be reproduced socially across Europe. First, however, I will examine the analytical usefulness and implications of applying the concept of "community" as a lens of understanding social processes.

Communities and boundary making

One way of looking at community making is to interrogate the ways that social norms within a community oppress individual expression and agency. But rather than merely considering communities to be oppressive forces of the individual, I will also focus on the

ways that my interlocutors in the communities were able to develop social roles which were otherwise not accessible to them in their daily working lives at the farms.

Fumanti (2010) argues that Ghanaian migrants in a Methodist church in London become encapsulated with the church, because it is here that they are able to exercise their agency as virtuous people and moral citizens. Within the church they are able to gain a status which they do not necessarily have outside the church in British society. For instance, one of Fumanti's key interlocutors, John, was trained as an accountant in Ghana but is in Britain only able to enter menial jobs which he does not think acknowledge his 'true potential' (ibid.: 27). Within the Methodist Church, however, John manages to obtain an important and recognised status in the church hierarchy. John's work and life around the church community means that he lives a rather encapsulated life with other Ghanaian migrants. Like in the case of my Romanian interlocutors, John's social networks with other Ghanaians in London have provided him with a great deal of practical assistance. This means that his life is embedded in networks of mutual assistance and obligations. The church, however, has in particular provided John with the recognition that he lacks from his working life in London (ibid.: 27).

Similarly, in my analytical lens of community I will analyse the ways that the two communities which I encountered allowed my interlocutors to develop social roles which were otherwise not accessible to them outside the communities. Though the communities allowed my interlocutors to exercise some level of agency, the ethnic and religious solidarity created within the community created its own problems as people had to comply with certain social norms to be part of the communities. Here, it is important to note upon a difference between my own and Fumanti's fieldwork in London: my interlocutors often lived scattered around in the countryside, and the number of Romanian migrants in the area was limited. Their opportunities for socialising with other Romanians were thus also limited. As alluded to in the Introduction, this put great demands on my interlocutors to carefully cultivate and construct their social networks. And the development and maintenance of one's social position according to certain social norms became particularly important. Not complying with such norms, could, I will return to, mean expulsion from the communities (or a certain level of bullying).

Though I find "community" to be a useful analytical tool in this context, I am also critical of my application of the ideas of community. Often, I find a focus on community limiting to the individual's agency and own interpretation of the world around. Also, I do not wish to reproduce a public image of the hostile term 'parallel societies' (*parallelsamfund*) which is in Denmark often used to characterise one of the major obstacles to migrants' so-called integration in Denmark (this is often used in the debate on Muslim migrants in Denmark) (see Rytter 2013: 45). Nonetheless, my fieldwork experiences also told me that community could be a useful concept to think with (cf. Amit 2012); not to argue that each member of these communities was determined by the social norms of the community, but to explore the ways that membership of a community provided individuals with an opportunity to develop certain social roles which they were not able to develop outside the community, and which they might have left in their place of origin in Romania. These social roles were not predefined but developed alongside the individual's negotiation of his or her role within the community. Nicoleta, for example, was trained as a nurse in Romania, and her father was a priest in their village in Romania. In the Neo-Protestant community in Denmark she was a caring, generous and food-making loving woman. Given her marriage to a Danish man, and her somewhat nicer housing than that of many Romanian migrants, she was expected to be particularly generous. During my fieldwork, she was on maternity leave and spent most of her time at home. Gaining a social role in the Neo-Protestant community allowed her to be something other than a mother on maternity leave, a housewife who was employed in her husband's company (and not working as a nurse as she was trained for), and she did not have to worry about her status as a Romanian migrant. In fact, she was financially better off than many of the other Romanians and was able to provide meals which the others in the community were not necessarily able to.

Thinking through community thus provides an understanding of how it was possible to exercise one's agency in a specific social role: that is, it became possible to be recognised as something else and more than a Romanian farm labourer and migrant. This perspective on community is not an attempt to take away agency and imagination from the individual; rather, it is an attempt to analyse the ways that it makes sense for people to engage in a community

and develop specific social roles within certain social norms. I therefore do not assume a 'political and ontological primacy of various forms of community' (Rapport and Amit 2002: 1), which were already there when I arrived in the field. Instead, the communities and their social norms were continuously made alongside people's abilities to develop their social roles within these communities.

Agreeing on social norms within the communities was however not a straightforward process. By contrast, conflicts within and between people from the respective communities demonstrated how social norms were continuously made and negotiated. Community, as such, was made through everyday activities, exchanges between people and evaluation of their life trajectories and norms according to which they wanted to live. The communities that I describe were therefore not established through symbols between people who were located far from each other (Anderson 2006 [1983]), and I do not see them as necessarily transnational Romanian communities across countries (Basch, Schiller, and Blanc 1994), though the transnational element became a factor in for example charity work. But my focus in this chapter will be on how everyday interactions and boundary making meant that my interlocutors developed communities within this specific context.

Barth (1969) argued that ethnic groups maintain their groupings through boundary making. Boundaries between groups, according to Barth, do not disappear when people for example move to other places and enter into contact with other people; rather, 'categories are maintained *despite* changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories' (ibid.: 10). Such boundary making takes place through processes of 'self-ascription' and 'ascription by others' (ibid.: 13): a group ascribes itself and others certain characteristics and makes boundaries based on these perceived different ways of being and behaving. This has practical implications for everyday life, as the perceived ways of being and behaving require members of a group to – at least to some extent – comply with the socially agreed upon norms (ibid.: 15).

The chapter proceeds by providing accounts of the ways that my Neo-Protestant and Romanian Orthodox interlocutors were making boundaries between each other and between themselves and Danes according to processes of categorisation. By exploring such boundary-

making, I analyse how my interlocutors constructed themselves within communities and in opposition to other people. I use this to discuss the ways that the formation of communities in this migration context and the boundary making between them provide an understanding of the reproduction of post-socialism across European borders. Overall, the chapter therefore draws attention to the ways that European and Danish labour market dynamics and inequalities influence the ways that people organise socially and construct themselves in social roles in ways where they are not necessarily defined by their positions as migrant farm labourers.

The Neo-Protestant Church: a community of love and sacrifice

From the beginning of my fieldwork I became involved with the Neo-Protestant Church. Andrei was very active in this community, and as I stayed at his place and worked at the farm together with him, he brought me to services and meetings at the church. These took place in the Sønderborg Free Church (*Frikirke*), which provided facilities for the Neo-Protestant church services.[35] At the church services and meetings, Neo-Protestant Romanians from the Sønderborg area attended. Apart from Jørgen, Nicoleta's Danish husband, I was the only Dane who also attended the services and meetings, which took place in Romanian. The weekly service took place every Sunday evening at 6-8pm, and often on Friday evenings there was a prayer meeting which allowed meeting participants to discuss the challenges they had faced during the week, how God had helped them through these challenges and what they could do to move closer to God.

During services and meetings, the priest Konstantin often reassured people that God loved them, and that God had a plan for each person's life. 'God is love' (*Dumnezeu este dragoste*) and 'God's love for people' were frequent statements to support the discussion on

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[35] I did not experience that people from the Romanian Neo-Protestant Church would socialise or have much to do with the Danish Pentecostal Church (in the Free Church) – apart from borrowing the facilities at the church. In the Danish Pentecostal Church, drinking alcohol and smoking is allowed. Also, the role of women within the Romanian and Danish Pentecostal Churches differ significantly. A couple from the Danish Pentecostal Church, who had been missionaries in Romania, told me that the interpretation of the Bible differs between these churches, with for example more confession in the Romanian Pentecostal Church.

love and emphasise the requirement for people to replicate this love in their own social relations. By following the word of God in the Bible, people should show love to each other. God, in this perspective, was love and should fill up people with love. The Bible served as a guidance for the ways that people should understand and practice their love for God, and the ways that people should show love to other people. Sacrificing oneself for other people and sacrificing one's desires, such as food and the internet, was particularly important to show love and to develop one's connection with God.

Konstantin and his wife Raluca were from the Transylvania region in Western Romania. During my fieldwork Konstantin was unemployed a lot of the time, though he at some point entered an apprenticeship. Within the church community, where I met Konstantin, he was however not unemployed but was the priest that people listened to and sought advice from. The meetings and services were mainly led by him. Raluca had a permanent job and was doing well in developing her career at the company where she was working. Raluca and Konstantin were pleasant people to be with, and they were visibly doing an effort to gather Neo-Protestant Romanians and show attentiveness and care to people around them.

Within the Christian Church, there are three types of love. Konstantin explained those to us during a church service in July 2017: *Eros* (erotic and romantic love), *philia* (friendly love) and *agape* (divine love). Konstantin explained that in the Greek era before Christianisation, there was a greater emphasis on Eros. With Christianisation, the ultimate form of love – *agape*, or the love of God – gained a greater importance. Konstantin said that as part of the love of God, people should be ready to make sacrifices. One might, for example, just sacrifice one' time for somebody else. This meant, according to Konstantin, that wealthy people could also be faithful to God. When I asked Andrei how he thought that people should show love to each other, he explained that ways that people show love for each other are individual: some people may show love by giving material things, whilst others may cook for other people. Showing love therefore implied some degree of affection, care and attention to other people's needs.

One Friday during a prayer meeting, by the end of July 2017, I asked the meeting participants, 'Why does God love people?' (*de ce iubeste Dumnezeu pe oameni*). 'God is love!'

(*Dumnezeu este dragoste*), one man replied. His wife then looked at me and told her husband that he needed to start from scratch. The man and his wife started to explain how God initially created Adam and Eve in his own image in the Garden of Eden. At this point, they emphasised, there were no sins. God wanted to create a connection (*legătură*) between himself and people, but Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit and were expelled from the Garden. God sent his son, Jesus, to die on the cross for people's sins. People, thus, are fundamentally sinful, but because God sacrificed his son, and Jesus suffered and died for people on the cross, people can obtain forgiveness. The foundation of the community of love, therefore, is Jesus' bodily suffering and sacrifice, which Jesus went through to enable people to obtain forgiveness for their fundamentally sinful (human) nature.

Love in this way could be described as a linguistic device for conceptualising the ways that people should relate to each other and to God. As a linguistic device, love also became a way of ascribing the community a specific superior moral foundation and philosophy, in contrast to "the world outside". Through a focus on fasting and money, the next sections will show how my interlocutors were able to practice love by suffering and sacrificing during fasting and by giving money to people in need. These acts of love were individual practices but were also social in the way that they served to include people into the community. They were able to share their experiences with fasting and giving money with each other, hence establish a moral high ground in contrast to people who did not live a Christian righteous life.

Embodied love through fasting

Fasting allowed people to embody the love of God, and it allowed people to share their bodily experiences when meeting up together. One day, Konstantin explained the purpose of fasting: this is to move closer to God. During fasting, he explained, you forget other things in life and can concentrate on God. He emphasised that one should not be loud about one's fasting to others – because fasting would then be a way of gaining recognition from other people, and not about creating a closer relation to God. According to Konstantin, there are different ways of perceiving fasting in the Old and New Testament: in the Old Testament, fasting related to the nation. In the New Testament, fasting is an individual practice, where

the purpose is for the individual person to move closer to God. Konstantin emphasised that one can also abstain from other things than food, such as the internet. And he explained that there are medical reasons for fasting: it is both a detox for the body and a diet. Fasting, he underlined, is not merely an exterior practice; fasting is an inner practice.

To Konstantin it was important that people lived according to the word of God outside the church. He complained that some people live a "double life"; meaning that they live one life at church meetings and services, and another – or, unchristian – life outside the Church. Fasting outside the church helped people to be reminded of God when not at the church. Also, fasting allowed *me* to try and connect to the church outside services and meetings there.

On a Sunday in September 2016 I was driving with Andrei towards the Neo-Protestant church service in Sønderborg. From our work together at the farm, I knew that he was fasting every Thursday. Whilst fasting, Andrei did not eat or drink during the day until dinner time in the evening. Sitting on the passenger seat next to Andrei, I asked him how fasting worked. He responded by asking me whether I had tried to fast. I said I had not. Enthusiastically, he asked me if I wanted to try. I agreed to this and asked how I should do it. Andrei explained that I had to choose a day in the week, where the fasting would not disturb my work too much; Andrei, for example, had chosen Thursday. He said that I could chose to either eat a little food during the day, but no sweets, or I could choose to not eat anything at all. This latter option, Andrei said, could be done in different ways: I could start by not eating anything, until the afternoon. I could still, however, drink water during the day. Andrei thought that it would be difficult otherwise. He thought it would be best if I could leave the water as well, but on the first day of fasting, he explained enthusiastically, it would be okay to drink water. Andrei suggested me to first choose one day in the week, and then stretch the fasting to the entire day in the following week. Andrei did not have a specific procedure I had to follow, as my fasting depended on myself. I tried to fast a few times but only for half of the day. When I told Andrei that I had tried to fast, he said that, 'God will reward you' (*Dumnezeu te va răsplăteasca*). He also asked me if I had been reading the Bible during my fasting. But I had to disappoint him on this. Nonetheless, he told the other participants at a church meeting that I had been fasting, and they were clearly impressed by my effort. My fasting then went

from being an individual practice to a social experience that I was able to share with the other community members.

During a Friday prayer meeting, Mirei said that fasting could be a 'weapon' (*armă*) in one's inner 'spiritual war' (*război spiritual*) between the divine and human nature. He argued that one should strive to make the divine nature win in life's challenges. To make the divine nature win, he said, one would have to 'feed the divine nature' by for example studying the Bible, praying and fasting. On this topic, Mirei's and Andrei's brother-in-law referred us to the following passage in the Bible:

> Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. (1 Corinthians 13: 4-8)

Mirei's brother-in-law looked at me and said that we should remember to live closer to God, and that God will make us stronger. Through fasting one would be able to move closer to God and battle the sinful human nature with its temptations for, for example, sweets and the internet. Moving closer to God would also move one closer to the divine nature of God's love.

Though the practice of fasting was an individual practice and manifestation of the individual relationship with God, it was also a social practice in the way that people in the church shared their experiences of fasting with each other. By fasting, people in the community thus showed their belonging to the community and commitment to the Christian principles. By suffering the hunger and sacrificing one's desires for food and the internet, it was possible to become part of this community: that is, through such practices they were striving to avoid too many temptations in life and let the divine nature win over the sinful human nature. Like the bodily suffering described in Chapter 4, the feeling of hunger was an embodied individual suffering; but at the same time, it was also a part of their social

experience in the church community. Mirei's wording of Romanians' suffering in Chapter 4 could therefore also be seen within a Christian and self-sacrificing context, where one suffers for one's faith. Suffering, in this perspective, serves a higher purpose.

In contrast to what Konstantin had preached about fasting not being an exterior practice, it still became a practice which people in the community shared by telling each other about their experiences with fasting. Sharing these experiences, people in the community could also be said to manifest themselves as morally superior to those outside the community who did not sacrifice their desires for the love of God and therefore moved further away from the love of God. This also applied to the ways that my Neo-Protestant interlocutors valued charity and emphasised the importance of sacrificing money for people in need.

The money of love

Showing love to other people could happen through the sacrifice of one's financial resources to support others. Sometimes there would be 'collections' (*colecţii*) for the Neo-Protestant Church during the church services, but collections could also be for specific people in need within the church community. As part of one service, there was a collection for a Romanian family living in Denmark, which needed money to be able to get by. During the service, Jørgen gave a sermon where he emphasised the love implied when giving money. In the following excerpt from my fieldnotes, I describe his sermon:

> When Jørgen went on stage in front of the church audience, he started by thanking everybody for always welcoming him and Nicoleta so well. Jørgen also thanked people for coming to his home to pack clothes for people in need in Romania. 'There is lack of love in the world around us', he said. But in the church, according to Jørgen, there is love for one another. Jørgen referred us to the family that we had been collecting money for. He emphasised that we do not just give money to some people. He emphasised, 'It is for *God* that we give money'. When giving money, he made us aware, we should not think about what we have left for ourselves for the rest of the month, and we should not just open our wallets; rather, we should 'open our hearts'. (fieldnotes, 30 October 2016)

Jørgen emphasised that by giving money, one also shows love for other people and God. Jørgen contrasted this to 'the world around' with a lack of love. In this way, he distinguished the moral foundation of the church, based on love, with the world outside and its lack of love.

Charity was an important part of the Neo-Protestant Church's work. To support people in need outside the Church, the Neo-Protestant community, including myself, would go to Nicoleta and Jørgen's house to pack clothes to send to people in need in the Botoşani area in rural North-Eastern Romania (this happened a few times during my fieldwork). Nicoleta and Jørgen had then piled second-hand clothes for women, men and children. We spent an entire day on packing the clothes thoroughly into boxes, which were sent to Romania. After such days, Nicoleta made a feast with food, often Romanian food, with several dishes and types of pudding. Jørgen would always start the meal with a prayer and thank everybody for the help with the packing. Mirei (from Transylvania) told me that people in the Moldavia region, in particular, are poor. Vasile (from the Botoşani area), however, found Mirei annoying for feeling sorry for people from the Moldavia region: with annoyance, he told me how Mirei had once expressed his pity with "poor people" from the Moldavia region. Though Mirei seemed proud of his charity work, Vasile's reaction indicated that he did not want to be victimised and be "given charity."

Andrei and Mirei were very active in charity work; both when we met up at Nicoleta's and Jørgen's place to pack clothes, and outside this setting. For example, they bought second-hand clothes and things that they could send to people in need in Romania. Andrei also showed me a picture on his phone of people in rural Romania, who were struggling with money, housing and food, and who had received help from the Neo-Protestant Churches. Apart from this, Andrei had also adopted a child 'in Africa' (he was not able to tell me from which country on the African continent), and he had a picture of the child in a frame at home. He was very proud to support the child.

By participating in these activities, Andrei and Mirei gained different social roles from their statuses as migrant farm labourers, and they were able to shape their social roles in a different way than they were at the farms. They were no longer those who were struggling

themselves but were those people who were able to support the people in need in Romania; that is, through their roles in the Neo-Protestant community, they were no longer the dispossessed and the suffering but the ones who provided for dispossessed and suffering people. In this way, they were able to exercise their agency in a different way than at the farms and in the wider Danish society.

Andrei told me that he had not been going much to church when he was living in Romania. But he had started to go more frequently following his migration to Denmark. He was also actively looking for a girlfriend, but with his home and work in the countryside, it was difficult for him to meet a girl. He showed me a Bible app on his phone where he was able to post his favourite excerpts from the Bible (in a similar style to "walls" on Facebook and LinkedIn), and by seeing other people's favourite excerpts from the Bible, it was possible to connect with someone who matched one's spiritual preferences. Andrei wanted his girlfriend – and future wife – to be from a Neo-Protestant Church. His mother, however, was apparently difficult to satisfy in terms of a potential future wife. To Andrei, it was important to have his mother's approval.

Charity work and consumption habits within the Neo-Protestant community also led to moral evaluations of other ways of spending money; for example, on sinful things and activities. Roxana told me that she and Mirei had been spending their money from the farm work in Denmark on the construction of a house in Romania. For this reason they had not been able to go out in town to eat and to go on holidays, as had Silvia, Vasile and Ionut (who I often joined for meals in town, including going to the cinema and walking around in the shopping centre). Roxana was critical of their ways of spending money and said – perhaps with a smidgeon of envy – that their use of money was a 'silly thing' (*prostie*). Although Roxana complained that she and Mirei never went for walks in town, she nonetheless defended their use of money on the basis that this was a more sensible way of spending the earnings from Denmark. Whereas Roxana's and Mirei's spending of money spending was based on the entire family's need and fed into the longer term establishment of a household, Silvia, Vasile and Ionut's spending did not contribute to the maintenance of a household. Rather, their spending was consumption for enjoyment in the moment. In this way, Roxana considered her and

Mirei's way of spending money as morally superior to the spending practices of Silvia, Vasile and Ionut. Though Roxana portrayed her and Mirei's spending as morally superior, she still expressed how she missed the (sinful) ability to be able to consume for the moment of enjoyment.[36]

Nothing in the Bible, Konstantin explained, indicates that Jesus did not have property or wealth. Money itself was therefore not an issue. Rather, what the excerpts above have shown is that the way one chooses to spend money indicates whether this is a way of showing love to other people and God. To conform with the foundation of the Neo-Protestant community, one needed to spend money in ways that showed love to other people and God. In this way, the foundation of love in the Neo-Protestant community shaped the ways that my interlocutors in the community were expected to spend their money and the ways that they made boundaries between their own morally superior way of spending money and other people's more "silly" ways of spending money for immediate consumption and enjoyment. My Neo-Protestant interlocutors' ways of spending money, including participating in charity work, thus allowed Andrei, Mirei and Roxana to make moral valuations of the righteous way of spending their money, and to develop their social roles according to these evaluations. As such, they were not just Romanian migrant farm labourers alongside other Romanian migrants. They demonstrated a particular way of being Romanian by taking part in the Neo-Protestant community and work for the love of God and other people.

Apart from maintaining the social norms of the community, they were also keen to include other people in their community of love. Seeing themselves as 'Ambassadors of Romania', they wanted to ensure that all Romanians lived a Christian life.

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[36] Roxana's distinction between her and Mirei's money spending and the ways that Silvia, Vasile and Ionut spent their money reminded me of the distinction between two 'transactional orders' (Bloch and Parry 1989: 23). The long-term transactional order implies money spending on the reproduction of the long-term social order. The long-term transactional order is often evaluated as morally superior to the short-term transactional order which implies money spending for individual purposes (ibid.: 24).

At services and during meetings in the church, the participants often discussed ways in which they could attract other people to the church and engage people outside the church setting in discussions about Jesus.

Konstantin was eager to evangelise other Romanian migrants in Denmark. 'There are many Romanians in Denmark, and they need Jesus' (*Sunt mulţi românii in Danemarca şi au nevoie de Hristos*), he said. Evangelising Danes was likewise on the agenda for the church (though they did not seem to have success with this), and Konstantin and some of the other church members had handed out Bibles at the local refugee centre, which at the time of my fieldwork housed many Muslim refugees from Syria. Mirei told me that religion to him provided some 'moral rules.' He thought that Protestant countries like Denmark and Germany were doing better because they had followed the Christian moral rules. Mirei also thought that Romanians who 'steal' in Denmark are the non-Christian ones.

People at the Neo-Protestant Church wanted to be 'Ambassadors for Romania', and ensure that Romanians abroad live a Christian (Neo-Protestant) life. Evangelising other Romanians thus became an important way to change the image of what it means to be Romanian. But becoming part of the Neo-Protestant Church also implied that one should follow this community's interpretation of the Bible. This was challenged by Aura.

Aura was Romanian Orthodox and declared herself as a believer. She was in her early 20s and had studied psychology in Romania. She came to Denmark shortly after I started my fieldwork, to join her boyfriend who was working at a restaurant. Compared to many other Romanian women, I knew, Aura was loud, had visible tattoos, and her style of dressing sometimes reminded me of a 1990s' skater style. Still, she expressed her interest in joining the services in the Neo-Protestant Church. Apparently, she did not feel particularly welcome in the Romanian Orthodox Church. She and I started going to the church services almost at the same time. We became "the new ones" together.

Aura came to the Neo-Protestant church over a period of time. She expressed interest in other religions and did not think that the message of love in other religions differed from

that of the Christian Church. To her, love was not only a Christian virtue. She studied Buddhism at home, which she told people in the Neo-Protestant Church about. When she one day during a women's prayer meeting, led by Konstantin's mother-in-law Anita, voiced that all religions were the same in the way that they preach love and being good to each other, Anita said, 'Other beliefs [*credințe*] are false. People [with other beliefs] have been led by demons [*duhuri*].' Aura still did not agree, and Anita made her sharply aware that 'there is only one God!' Still, Aura did not immediately accept Anita's reprimand, and they continued the tense discussion. During other prayer meetings, Aura raised the issue of homosexuality and raised her concerns with conservative interpretations of the 2000 years old Bible – and Romanian society's lack of social acceptance of homosexuality. She was not taken seriously, and the other church participants insisted that the Bible prescribes a marriage as being between a man and a woman. After some time, Aura stopped going to the Neo-Protestant Church.

According to Konstantin, Aura was further away from God than the rest of the people in the Church. Konstantin and some of the other men mocked Aura's knowledge of Buddhism, in the absence of Aura. When Raluca heard their mocking of Aura, she looked annoyed at her husband and said, 'It's admirable that Aura knows this', clearly not satisfied with her own husband's (that is, the priest's) backstabbing of Aura. I maintained my relationship with Aura throughout my fieldwork. She maintained her interest in other religions, became a volunteer in the local refugee centre and continued her studies. She never spoke about the people in the Neo-Protestant Church and remained Romanian Orthodox.

Though everybody is supposed to be equal in the eyes of God, as Christian love is supposed to be unconditional, May (2011: 112-113) rejects this unconditionality of Christian love. He highlights the persisting tension between the universal 'Good Samaritan' and the 'localism of love'. Christian love, he argues, is limited by faith, and not ethnicity or cultural belonging. May argues that Christian love is largely reserved for those who share the Christian faith within the community, and not necessarily for 'humanity as a whole' (ibid.: 111). In the case of Aura, we see that her questioning of the foundation of the Church and the community's adherence to the word of the Bible, for example in terms of homosexuality,

meant that she was not shown love unconditionally. Instead, she was made fun of behind her back – and was ultimately not welcome in the Church.

I gradually became aware of the Neo-Protestant Church's intentions to evangelise me. This caused an awkward moment for me in November 2016 when Anita during a women's prayer meeting asked me – in front of all the other women in the group – if I would be interested in becoming a member of their church. I was quite surprised and explained that I was a member of the Danish Lutheran Church (*Folkekirken*). Anita nodded and suggested that they could speak to my husband about this. I did not see a reason for this and explained that my husband is in the Anglican Church – and that we are married in this church. Afterwards, I was concerned that I might not be welcome in the church community. But my participation still seemed to be welcome, and they even allowed me to take part in the sacrament, which is otherwise only allowed for members. Mirei told me on this point, 'You are one of us.'

I was asked several times if I believed in God. I said that I do not know and that I had not made up my mind. Though I emphasise and sympathise with the need to love and feel loved, I still do not know to what extent I can believe in what to me appears as an invisible (male) authority for one's life (though I acknowledge that I have grown up in a society largely based on Christian values). When I married my husband in the Anglican Church in Copenhagen in 2014, I refused to say that I would 'love, honour and obey' in the vows, and I did at first not take his surname, which is apparently uncommon in England (I only decided later to take his surname). Paraphrasing the Danish author Hanne-Vibeke Holst I would say that with marriage I do not "go from being somebody, to being somebody*'s*" (Holst 1999). I have been brought up like this throughout my childhood. My mother signed out of the Danish Lutheran Church (*Folkekirken*) immediately when she became of age, because she found the Church to be oppressive and sexist. In the late 1980s I attended a Polish Catholic kindergarten in Warsaw. As part of this I and the other children had to attend weekly church services together with the nuns. With our right hand on our chest we had to say in Polish, 'My fault, my fault, my great fault' (*moja wina, moja wina, moja bardzo wielka wina*). Though my parents did not like the sight of a little girl confessing to original sin, they still considered it better for me to attend a Polish – rather than an American – kindergarten. Normally, diplomats' children

would attend the American kindergarten – as the kindergarten for foreigners – but I attended the Polish kindergarten as the only non-Polish child. I thus had my preconceptions about Christianity and worship, when I began attending the services and meetings at the Church. During my fieldwork, I gained an understanding of why the Church provided an important locus for my interlocutors. But I kept my fundamentally critical stance towards the Church, its preaching and way of working as a community of both inclusion and exclusion.

Though people like Andrei and Mirei were able to develop social roles within the church community, which provided them a level of agency they did not possess outside the church community, belonging to the Neo-Protestant community meant that one had to comply with certain norms and interpretations of the Bible. Asking too many questions, as Aura did, was not welcome, and she was excluded from the community. Though discussions about the interpretation of the Bible did take place, Konstantin was the priest who led the interpretations. He was the (male) authority who brought the reassurance of God to people. That I was still allowed to come to the church despite my refusal to become a member of the church could be due to several reasons: I was told that they were honoured by my presence in the church, and they were perhaps still hoping to eventually evangelise me. But also, I participated in many of the church activities and helped people, and I knelt, read aloud and participated in the discussions. Aura participated in these activities too, as she often helped with practical matters. But her questioning, which I did not replicate, shattered the foundation of the shared set of values on the community; including a literal interpretation of the Bible.

Aura's disagreement with this reading of the Bible was problematic, because it not only shattered the interpretation itself but also the way of being and social norms which were being settled within the community. These social norms allowed people like Andrei and Mirei to develop their social roles in certain ways, and they allowed people to construct particular ways of being Romanian (in contrast to "other ways" of being Romanian). Shattering the foundation of the community could, as such, also shatter the importance that Konstantin, Andrei and Mirei gained within the community. Similarly to the Methodist Ghanians in Fumanti's study (2010), they gained a status that they did not necessarily have outside the community at the

workplace. Andrei missed his old work in Romania, and the responsibility which he had had with this work. And Konstantin did not have a stable job outside the church, whereas Raluca was establishing a solid career. Inside the church, however, Konstantin was the priest with authority and the one who could have an important role in other people's lives when they came to seek advice from him. Mirei was often very stressed about his work and life situation, where he was the main provider. He had training from his church community in Romania and had been a teacher within the church community there. In Denmark, he told me, he ensured to teach his son how to live a Christian life. At church services, Mirei was often holding a sermon, if Konstantin was not able to, and he was therefore ranked number two in the church hierarchy. Andrei, Mirei and Konstantin were therefore able to create different social roles than the ones they occupied in the Danish labour market and Danish society. From within the church community and the social roles they developed, they were able to demonstrate themselves as 'Ambassadors of Romania' who lived a Christian life, in contrast to – according to themselves – other Romanians in Denmark who they thought were making problems and gave Romanians a bad reputation. They, instead, were people with 'fear of God' (*frica de Dumnezeu*). This also differentiated them from the Romanian Orthodox community, which did not in the same way practice a Christian life, but who based their self-ascription and ascription on what they considered to be "proper Romanian" and grounded in Romanian national history.

The Romanian Orthodox Church: a historical community

To understand the background of the boundary making between the two communities I find it necessary to explain the historical role of the ROC and its importance for the formation of Romanian national identity. The ROC is the largest congregation in Romania and has historically promoted itself as being the protector of Romanian values. This has had a profound role in Romania and the constitution of what it means to be Romanian. The ROC is an independent Church, the role of which has developed alongside that of the Romanian state.

Contemporary Romania is a rather new state in Europe: the two principalities Moldovia and Walachia merged into a state in 1859 and formed the beginnings of Romania as we know the country today. In 1885, the ROC was recognised as an autonomous church by the Patriarchate in Constantinople, and in 1925 the Romanian Patriarchate was established. Following the First World War in 1918, the largely non-Orthodox Transylvania was annexed by Romania (Hitchins 2014). The ROC has its origins in the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, and has for this reason to some extent been imposed in Transylvania after the inclusion of the region in Romania (Flora and Szilagyi 2005: 111). During recent years, however, many Romanians have converted to the Neo-Protestant churches, and this has raised concerns in the ROC.

Historically, there have been strong links between the Romanian state and the ROC, which has promoted a Romanian national ideology based on an idea of "Romanianness". Given the ethnic and religious diversity in Romania, particularly in connection with the inclusion of Transylvania, the ROC worked to keep its status as the national Church. Romania was part of the Byzantine Empire, where Constantine the Great in the fourth Century created a union between the State and the Church in a so-called *symphonia*. The State and Church powers were supposed to support each other in the way that the State ensured people's material well-being, whilst the Church ensured people's spiritual well-being. This is a role that the ROC has worked to maintain until just before Romania entered the European Union in 2007 (Heintz 2004: 5, Turcescu and Stan 2014).

The interwar period was characterised by a struggle to define the Romanian nation. The influential Romanian thinker Nae Ionescu for example emphasised the connection between being Romanian and being Orthodox (Flora and Szilagyi 2005: 111 ff.). In the shaken political environment after the First World War, Ionescu posed a strong criticism of democracy, rationalism and individualism. To him, the individual is subordinate to the collective, and a product of society and history. The nation should embody spiritual unity and constitute a 'community of love and life, an organic solidarity' (Surugiu 2009: 76), which, according to Ionescu, was threatened by increasing individuality. This approach also made Ionescu differentiate between a Romanian citizen and a *good* Romanian citizen, who would

require religious and ethnic affiliation with the Romanian collective (read: Romanian Orthodox). In particular this standpoint has been criticised for creating ethnic and religious inequality in Romania (ibid.: 73-76).

During the Second World War Romania began as an affiliate of the Axis (Germany, Italy, and Japan). Later Romania changed side to the Allies, and following the Yalta Agreement in 1945, Romania was included in the anti-religious Soviet sphere (Hitchins 2014). Despite being part of an anti-religious state, the ROC maintained its status as the national church – perhaps especially due to a Romanian Orthodox Patriarch who embraced communist values (Ware 1963: 175). From the 1960s – after Stalin's death, in the context of a weakened Moscow after the Cuba crisis, and in conjunction with the eagerness of socialist leaders Gheorghiu-Dej and Ceaușescu to distance Romania from the USSR and create "Romanian communism" – the ROC became important for the State in the construction of a national ideology (Verdery 1991: 132).[37] The ROC's support would be a benefit to the State that would then not have to tackle diversity and instead manage one people (Flora and Szilagyi 2005: 115-116, Hitchins 2014, Turcescu and Stan 2014). So, even though the ROC was in an inferior position to the communist state, and also experienced persecution of its members, it still enjoyed a fairly privileged status in return for its cooperation with the regime (Andreescu 2015, Angi 2011, Bratosin and Ionescu 2009, Conovici 2013). Contrasting the views that the ROC was fully submissive to the Communist Party, Verdery in 1991 noted – looking back on her fieldwork during socialism – that she had met clerics who opposed the Party's idea of a Romanian identity based on economic transactions. By contrast, the clerics argued that the 'religious institutions had unified the people through centuries of foreign rule' (Verdery 1991: chap. 3, fn. 38). In opposition to the "new communism", the ROC therefore positioned itself as the one who had defended and united the Romanian people over centuries (ibid.: 280). A delicate

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[37] The socialist leaders Ceaușescu (1967-89) and his predecessor Gheorghiu-Dej (1947-65) worked to distance Romania from USSR and create national communism. Ceaușescu for example publicly condemned the Prague Spring, and increased the Soviet leaders' concern with Romania's own line of socialism. Romania approached and opened up towards the Western countries, and Ceaușescu managed to conclude an agreement with the IMF. Ceaușescu also visited North Korea and China, where he was impressed with these countries' models of communism (Hitchins 2014).

balance between these two conflicting parties with mutual interests remained throughout Romania's socialist era.

The ROC's role during socialism should be understood within the structure of the Orthodox Church and the particular economic and political development in Romania. The ROC as a self-governing church could thus be limited to Romania. This is different from the Roman Catholic Church, where the Pope played an important role for the dismantling of the socialist state in Poland (Kemp-Welch 2008). Also, particularly Ceauşescu worked to distance Romania economically and politically from the Soviet sphere – for which he was praised in Western countries. However, this eventually led to the isolation of the country and the ROC, together with its nationalist discourse and oppression of minorities. The final resistance in Romania started with a religious dispute in the town of Timişiora, where a Hungarian Protestant priest initiated protests against oppression of minorities and the steeply declining living conditions. This started the end of Ceauşescu's dictatorship (Flora and Szilagyi 2005: 117, Leustan 2014: 1).

As noted by Hann and Goltz (2010: 8), research into the Orthodox Church in Eastern Europe has been limited. Verdery (2014, 2012) and Kligman (1988), both fieldworkers in socialist Romania, indicated the difficulties of studying in Romania and the restrictions on objects for study. A lot of the literature on the role of the ROC during socialism is thus analysed retrospectively, after revelations of the ROC's collaboration with the Romanian Security Service (*Securitate*). Despite these revelations, the ROC has enjoyed a strong status in post-socialist Romania (Andreescu 2015, Bratosin and Ionescu 2009, Stan and Turcescu 2000), where it promotes itself as a protector of Romanian values (Flora and Szilagyi 2005: 119-120, Schifirnet 2013: 182). The continuity of *symphonia* has been used as an explanation for the ROC's collaboration with right-wing movements in the interwar period, the socialist state after the Second World War and the Church's attempt to maintain a similar role in the post-socialist period. Both the State and the ROC could be seen as benefitting from *symphonia*, as the Church would maintain a certain status and, in return, support the legitimacy of the State (Iuga 2009). The ROC's influential role in Romania was a particular obstacle for Romania's EU membership. Following pressure from the EU, and despite the ROC's resistance to the EU,

the country introduced a law in 2006 which recognised other church denominations in Romania at the same level as the ROC (Turcescu 2013: 214, Turcescu and Stan 2014).

This historical introduction to the position of the ROC demonstrates how the idea of a national identity in Romania has created been alongside the ROC's influence in the country, where adherence to the ROC has been considered a fundamental principle for being a "true Romanian". Nonetheless, the increased number of people who convert indicates that the ROC does not have the same power over Romanian national identity – and the idea of what it means to be Romanian – as it might have had previously. Still, however, the majority of my interlocutors were Romanian Orthodox. They did not necessarily appreciate the religiosity of the Neo-Protestants, and they did not necessarily want to be associated with such image but rather with an image of modernity.

Seeing differences

'You *can* see that they are different, right Astrid?', Silvia said to me referring to Roxana and Mirei. Both Laura and Silvia thought that Roxana and Mirei were weird because they were so religious. Vasile often made fun of Andrei and Mirei and their religiosity; including the fact that they did not drink. He did not think that they had any sense of humour. Vasile, as we already know, was dissatisfied with the status of his farm work. Within the Romanian Orthodox community (our friend group), however, he was often the person with the last word and the one in charge when we made decisions. And he was the one who made a lot of jokes. Vasile had, he told me, been thinking about becoming a comedian. His social role in the community in this way allowed him to gain some of the authority that he did not have in his daily farm work.

Though this community did not worship in the church, several still said that they were 'believing' (*credincios*). Adam was the most (openly) religious Romanian Orthodox person, and his Orthodoxy went alongside his dream about living a peasant life in rural Romania outside civilisation. He said that the Neo-Protestant church services, which contained a lot of singing, 'is not really Romanian' (Romanian Orthodox Church services do not play music). Adam was also keen to convince me that I should believe in God, and that God exists. 'Astrid,

the problem is that you think too scientifically about this. You expect God to show up next to you!', Adam told me in an almost resigned tone. He suggested me to go and visit a Romanian Orthodox monastery in Romania, so I could talk with a monk who would have time to tell me about this. 'Maybe you'll find something', he encouraged me. Though I tried to keep my mind open towards possible encounters with God, God never came to me – as (S)He has never done before. Maybe Adam was right, I did expect that God would show up in person next to me. He was sometimes teased by the others with his religiosity, continuous philosophical wondering about the world and apparent sensitivity. As I will return to in Chapter 7, he did not hang out much with the guys in the community but often hung out with the women instead when we met up. His differences to the others made it difficult for him to develop a certain social role as Vasile had, and within the community he had to accept some level of teasing from the others. Perhaps this intensified the value of his imaginative moments. Adam's friendship with the others was coincidental. When Adam came to Denmark, his farmer – an acquaintance of Ionut's farmer – placed Adam in the same house as Ionut, without Adam and Ionut knowing each other. When Adam was staying in Ionut's house, he met Silvia and Vasile who came on visits to see Ionut. Later Adam moved to his own house, where he was living alone for a while, until the farmer employed Boris who then moved in with Adam. Adam still kept meeting up with Silvia, Vasile and Ionut, and his (and Boris') large house was often the place where we would meet.

Contrasting themselves to both my Neo-Protestant interlocutors and Danish people, Silvia, Vasile, Laura, Ionut and Adam would emphasise how much fun they had together (for example, during moments as in Chapter 5). Danuț (from Chapter 2) had made several observations in this regard where he for example compared Denmark to Italy and Romania. 'In Italy and Romania, it's full of life [*plin de viața*]. Here in Denmark I am bored [*mă plictisesc*]. Denmark lacks something [*lipsește ceva*]', he said. Magda ascribed this lack of life to the rainy and cold weather which she thought made people stay inside in their houses instead of doing activities together. In Romania, Magda and Danuț explained, they had often been meeting up with people impulsively. But this had disappeared more or less with their movements to Denmark, and they missed this.

In the Romanian Orthodox community, we would – often spontaneously – do things together which would have been considered "sinful" by my Neo-Protestant interlocutors; such as drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes (and to some extent, dancing). When *I* by the end of my fieldwork smoked a cigarette together with the group, Silvia said grinningly, 'We have corrupted her!' (*am corrupt-o*). This was something that the Neo-Protestants could not do, and in this way brought me closer to my Romanian Orthodox interlocutors. As they gradually saw me as a part of their group, some said I was like a *moldoveancă*, which is the term used for a woman from the Moldavia region. This inclusion of me in their group as a *moldoveancă* likewise distanced me from belonging to the Neo-Protestant community. My Romanian Orthodox interlocutors thus distanced themselves from both Romanian Neo-Protestants and Danish people. Perhaps they considered themselves to be the "real Romanians" – and though they did not use the terminology themselves – perhaps the "real ambassadors of Romania."

In the latter part of my fieldwork, people in the Romanian Orthodox group suggested with a smile that I be baptised in the Romanian Orthodox group and take a more Romanian name than Astrid; Vasile thought that *Maria* would suit me. I was known as a 'strong woman'. Though flattered by the invitation to the Orthodox Church, I never took them up on the suggestion for baptism.

Membership of a group depends both on the person's source of origin and the current identity (Barth 1969: 29). In terms of the Romanian Orthodox group we see that they did not necessarily consider Neo-Protestants to be "real Romanian", as explained by Adam. The boundary making between these communities was in this way reproduced in the Danish context, and the social norms for what it meant to be Romanian Neo-Protestant and Romanian Orthodox were renegotiated within their experiences of living in Denmark. As such, there was a certain degree of continuity in the way that the communities were reproducing themselves in this migratory context.

But the social norms of the communities were also continuously renegotiated alongside their experiences with Danish people and other Romanians. The often negative public image of Romanians in Denmark was playing on many of my interlocutors' minds, and they were very attentive to the ways that they would be perceived as Romanians in Denmark;

for example, when my Romanian Orthodox interlocutors considered themselves to be "more modern" than my Neo-Protestant interlocutors, who in return considered themselves to be living a more Christian virtuous life. Forming networks with other Romanians with whom they wanted to be identified, thus became even more important in a migratory context where public debates about Romanians made them hyper attentive to their national identity and the ways that people around them might interpret their Romanian background. In this way, we see how communities are formed not only from within the members of the communities but also in the intersections between the communities and wider society. In the next section I will elaborate on the ways that the paths between members of these communities had been crossing prior to my fieldwork and the ways that this in some cases served to enforce the boundary making between them.

Crossing paths and internal conflicts

The making of boundaries between the communities did not exclude interaction between people from the communities. Ethnic groups may for example be interdependent on each other in practical and economic transactions (Barth 1969: 18-19). Similarly, I experienced that my interlocutors from the two communities interacted with each other in terms of practical matters, such as sharing transport to and from town or picking up children from school. And the Neo-Protestant Church had made occasional attempts to approach my Romanian Orthodox interlocutors with religious advice and artefacts. In such cases their interaction served to reinforce the boundaries between them. I found out that the two communities had not always been as divided as they were when I embarked on my fieldwork. The paths of some of members of each community had been crossing previously, and this had contributed to their mutual categorisation and separate socialising which I encountered.

Firstly, when Andrei was still working at his first farm in Denmark, he was living close to Ionut's place. They met each other on a training course for pig farm labourers and started to hang out together. Andrei had brought Ionut to the Neo-Protestant Church services and involved him in the community's charity work. But then Ionut had met Vasile and had started to hang out with him instead of accompanying Andrei to the church activities. Andrei's

mission to evangelise Ionut was unsuccessful. Secondly, when Silvia and Vasile moved to Kegnæs, Mirei was already living on Kegnæs. When Mirei found out that Silvia and Vasile were living together without being married, Mirei had called Vasile to tell him that he should marry Silvia. Vasile found this ridiculous and laughed about it, when he told me the story. He did not think that Mirei had any right to interfere with this.

Andrei also tried to use my position in both communities to establish contact with Vasile, Silvia and Ionut again. Andrei suggested that I brought some of my Romanian Orthodox interlocutors over to his place for some board games one evening. This never happened. And Konstantin gave me calendars from the Neo-Protestant Church to give out to my Romanian Orthodox interlocutors. When I gave them the calendars, they laughed of the situation. When Adam was at home with his broken ankle, the Neo-Protestant community went to visit him and sing songs. As mentioned above, Adam did not appreciate their singing. My Neo-Protestant interlocutors' attempts to be ambassadors of Romania and spread the church's message in such ways meant that the boundaries between the two communities were sharpened even further.

Despite such controversies, some people were also interdependent on each other across communities (cf. Barth 1969: 18-19). Laura and Adrian had a daughter who went to the same school and in the same class as the son of Roxana and Mirei. They all lived on Kegnæs, but the school was located 11-12 km away. As the public transport in this area was limited, they had to drive the children back and forwards a lot and pick them up at the bus stop, when they returned from school in the afternoon. For financial and timing reasons, it was practical for them to share the transport. Also, the children would sometimes stay at each other's houses to play. As Mirei and Adrian were quite busy working at the farms, and Roxana and Laura were both housewives, Roxana and Laura had quite a lot to do with each other. When I spent time with both of them, for example if they met up after school with the children, the atmosphere seemed relaxed.

But, when I spent time with each of them separately, they would talk about the other person: Roxana on the one side told me that Laura had been saying 'bad things' (*prostie*) about Roxana and her family behind her back, and Roxana had been very upset about this. She

complained to me that Laura 'talks too much' (*vorbește prea mult*) and 'invents'. According to Roxana, Laura had apparently been saying things that were not true. 'We are never bored with Laura. She talks a lot, and sometimes she wants to know more than she should', Roxana said about Laura in a derogatory way. Roxana thought that 'people from Moldavia are more difficult'. On the other side, Laura did not speak particularly well about Roxana either. She thought that Roxana was boring, too quiet, too religious and too much like a person from the Transylvanian region: according to Laura, people from this region were more quiet, calm and controlled. Laura also made fun of Roxana's and Mirei's protection of their children from illnesses, and Mirei's continuous concerns about falling ill. These "ice crystals" between Roxana and Laura included references to both religious belonging and geography in Romania, hence their mutual criticism became an issue of their religious and geographical source of origin, and how difficult it was to get along across these communities.

Both Roxana and Laura tried to socialise with local Danish residents in the area, but they only seemed to meet up once or twice. Roxana told me that she thought it was easier to socialise with other Romanians. She and I went to a local mothers' group (*mødregruppe*) where all the other new mothers were Danish. Roxana went along to the group when I was able to accompany her and help her with linguistic translation and explanation of social habits in the group. But, when she was on her own, she did not attend the group. Laura had tried to meet up with some Danish neighbours, but they did not continue to meet up after meeting once or twice. According to Laura – and in line with Nicoleta's criticism – the Danes had apparently been very formal when they met up, and they had organised their meetings carefully in advance.

Similarly to Roxana, neither Silvia nor Vasile liked Laura very much. Vasile and Adrian had been friends in Romania, and already at this time, Vasile explained, Laura had been a 'bad woman' (*femeia proasta*). Silvia and Vasile did not like the – according to themselves – extreme jealousy and exploitation of financial resources that they thought Laura exposed Adrian to. Laura participated initially in the knitting club that Silvia, Anca (a local Romanian woman married to a Danish man) and I established on Kegnæs. But Silvia and Anca eventually stopped inviting Laura along. Ionut also made fun of Laura, mainly for her loud voice. The

criticism from Silvia, Vasile and Ionut however did not include references to her religious or geographical background but to other characteristics of Laura. Whether Laura was in fact bullied by the others or was a genuinely difficult person to get along with, I shall not judge. However, what is important is that her conflicts with Roxana were explained with reference to "membership" of different communities, whereas her disagreements with Silvia and Vasile were based on Laura being, according to Vasile, a "bad and difficult" woman.

Apart from this, Silvia expressed that she missed socialising with other people than the ones we usually met up with. Though we often had a lot of fun when meeting up, she was apparently getting tired of always seeing the same people. In the countryside area, however, the number of Romanians to meet with was, as earlier mentioned, limited. Once I asked Silvia and Vasile if they were going to one of the social events organised by a local Romanian association. But Vasile said that some people at such events could drink too much, and that they preferred not to go to such events.

What we see is that community-making around categorisation is not a single event where communities are formed. Rather, it was a process of continuous negotiation of the norms that my interlocutors wanted to live according to and be identified with. In addition to this, my interlocutors often distanced themselves from Romanian Roma and Muslim migrants in Denmark. I was told that the so-called "refugee crisis" (in Denmark reaching a climax in 2015) had removed the focus from Eastern European, including Romanian, migrants in Denmark. Vasile thought that they had been lucky about this removal of attention from Romanians. My interlocutors' occasional derogatory comments about Roma people and Muslim migrants served to construct a hierarchy of migrants in Denmark, where my interlocutors, despite their concerns about being Romanian, were able to assert themselves above for instance Romanian Roma and Muslim migrants in Denmark. Muslim migrants were in their perspective under more critical scrutiny in the media than were Romanian migrants. My interlocutors were, as such, continuously evaluating themselves and each other, and the ways that it was possible for them to form communities, make boundaries and establish networks with people with whom they wanted to be identified. Ascribing and self-ascribing themselves, other Romanians and Danish people with specific characteristics meant that they

were also in a process of continuously negotiating what it meant to be Romanian in this migratory context. Whereas Andrei and Mirei wanted to establish themselves as someone living a righteous Christian life, and provided for people in need in Romania, people like Silvia, Vasile and Ionut were to a larger extent able to ascribe themselves characteristics as what they considered to be "modern" and less religious people. Laura once emphasised to me, 'We *are* modern people'. The derogatory and joking comments about Neo-Protestants, which I heard amongst my Romanian Orthodox interlocutors, indicated that they wanted to establish themselves as superior to Neo-Protestant Romanians because they considered themselves to be less old-fashioned and religious (just as my Neo-protestant interlocutors made their moral evaluations of Romanian Orthodox people). At the same time, they were making boundaries to Danish people by ascribing them certain characteristics, such as being too formal and less talkative. These characteristics of Danes did however not necessarily diverge from the characteristics of Danes I heard from my Neo-Protestant interlocutors such as Nicoleta. Processes of categorisation thus continuously created "the others" in the form of other Romanian migrants or "the Danes." Such processes of categorisation, I will show, also served to redefine geopolitics of post-socialism and the ways that post-socialism was produced and reproduced across European borders.

The migration of post-socialism

In this section I reflect upon my interlocutors' community-making in a perspective of studies of post-socialism and the status of post-socialism today. In the article "Thinking between the Posts: Postcolonialism, Postsocialism, and Ethnography after the Cold War", Chari and Verdery (2009) use post-colonial and post-socialist studies to illuminate each other. Following the fall of socialism in 1989, the former socialist countries, according to these authors, came to be considered as "underdeveloped countries" in comparison with Western Europe. According to Dzenovska (2018), representations of the former socialist countries have implied that these countries were backwards and had to be developed through economic and political liberalisation as it has been established in Western Europe. A development path was

therefore laid out for the former socialist countries. The inclusion of these countries into the EU constituted part of this "developmental path."

Studies of post-socialism tend to focus on post-socialist countries within their geographical areas (for example, Burawoy and Verdery 1999, Verdery 1996, 1995, 2004, Mandel and Humphrey 2002, Humphrey 2002, Hann 2002). This chapter shows that such analysis is obsolete, and that post-socialism is reproduced socially across borders in the EU.[38] Processes of categorisation and boundary making amongst my interlocutors meant that they also constructed themselves as "the Romanian other" from an Eastern European country, in contrast to the wider Danish society. Previous chapters have demonstrated how they were created as "an other" in the Danish labour market, because of their socio-economic positions and statuses as migrant farm labours (see Chapter 3). By developing their social roles within ethnically and religious defined communities, this "other" was reinforced socially. The sections above demonstrated how the formation of communities took place according to historical narratives and current opportunities for developing particular ways of being Romanian. In this way, their experiences in Denmark continuously created their positions as post-socialist, Romanian and European citizens: *post-socialism, therefore, is created across borders alongside people's movements and the continuity of their experiences*. Post-socialism may thus be said to migrate.

The concept of post-socialism has been widely contested, and the viability of the concept can be discussed. In the early 2000s, Humphrey argued that anthropologists should be wary of the category of post-socialism, as other more meaningful frameworks of analysis might appear:

> I have the impression that many younger people across a wide swathe of the region are already beginning to reject the term, which can be seen as a constricting, even insulting, label, something imposed from outside that seems to imply constraints on the freedom of people in these countries to determine their own futures. If people themselves reject the category, we as

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[38] The current project "Socialisms and Postsocialisms in a Global Context" also does not limit the study of postsocialism to a geographical area but studies postsocialism in a global context: https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/event/postsocialisms-in-a-global-context-work-in-progress-seminar-series/

anthropologists should not cling to it, but pay attention to whatever other frameworks of analysis arise from within these countries themselves. (Humphrey 2002: 13)

I agree with Humphrey that anthropologists should not maintain a category that people resist. Nor do I think that anthropologists should necessarily replicate categories that people use to make sense of the world. Humphrey, however, wrote before the European Union's expansions towards Eastern Europe from 2004. At this point, the "post-socialist countries" were preparing their mergers with the European Union. In 2019, 30 years after the Berlin Wall was demolished, I think it still makes sense to use the category which seems to be accentuated in the situation of European integration. Perhaps now, though, the category of post-socialism has been replaced in linguistic divisions between "old" and "new" EU member states. I do not intend to analytically reproduce the distinction between East and West. Rather, I seek to highlight a persisting tension which is reproduced between people in their everyday lives: boundary making between communities are not evaporated because of the integrated European market economy. Instead, I have shown how boundaries are produced and reproduced through everyday interaction in the light of historical transformations and everyday opportunities for people's abilities to develop their social roles within processes of categorisation and the making of communities.

Conclusion

So why was I so reluctant to write about "migrant communities"? I can see two major reasons. Firstly, I had clear political reasons as such community making amongst migrants is a topical issue in Denmark and Britain (Fumanti 2010). I was concerned that I would be reproducing a Danish debate on so-called parallel societies. Showing the ways that my interlocutors distinguished themselves from what they considered to be Danish characteristics risks reproducing an idea of parallel societies that develop "their own norms" separately from the wider Danish society. However, my underlying focus in this thesis on empty signifiers I hope resists an idea that the communities presented in this chapter contain a universal "Romanian essence." Rather, I have wished to show the strategies that my

interlocutors employed to make their social lives and identities. In Chapter 7 on gender and family, some of the social norms described in this chapter will be challenged.

Secondly, my concerns about communities also reflect a fundamental issue of my research focus which I have continuously been wary of (as mentioned in the Introduction). In a similar vein to Rytter's (2013) research focus on Pakistani migrants in Denmark, my issue has been the potential 'methodological nationalism' in my fieldwork and the analytical implications of this focus (cf. ibid.: 13). My aim has thus been to balance my interlocutors' emic conceptualisations of themselves as Romanians and my etic understanding of their processes of categorisation: that is, by analysing their own processes of categorisation I have wanted to understand how and why it made sense for them to categorise themselves and other people in particular ways.

Processes of categorisation demonstrated the importance for my interlocutors of forming networks where they were able to receive practical assistance when getting by in the Danish countryside, including when dealing with the public services. But making communities was also important in order not to be identified with "certain Romanians." With the current hostile attitude towards migrants, in Denmark and elsewhere, I suggest that such community making might become even more important as migrants try to avoid the negative implications and xenophobic attitudes that they often meet in their host countries. My interlocutors were particularly concerned about the ways that they were perceived as Romanians in Denmark, and it was for this reason important for them to portray themselves in a manner they found most suitable to their positioning in Denmark. As I have shown, their community making had consequences for people who did not comply with the established social norms. As Silvia's case demonstrated, becoming part of a community could also be a contrived form of socialising because no other opportunities were available: that is, they could feel obliged to comply with norms and socialise with people who they did not really get on with. My interlocutors' community making thus both provided them with and limited them from certain ways of identifying themselves. In the next chapter, I will focus on the implications of community making to the ways that my interlocutors consolidated family and gender.

Chapter 7

CONSOLIDATING GENDER AND FAMILY

It is the land with the name of a girl and the fiery soul of a fiery man! [...] Romania is my natal land, the land of my origin, with which I am so much and so fervently in love that if I should happen to die who knows where, in a distant and foreign place, I would rise up again on my feet and I would walk back here, to my country, to these loved and known places! But let us not speak of death, now when it is more appropriate than ever to speak of life, of that which was and will remain imperishable in the soul of this land with the name of a girl and the rough steadiness of a rough man. (Lăncrănjan 1982 in Verdery 1996: 76-77)

The uneasy issue of gender

Whereas in the previous chapter I analysed processes of categorisation, I will in this chapter analyse the implications of these processes for my interlocutors' family lives and perceptions of gender. My own position as a woman in the field allowed me to become particularly close with my female interlocutors and explore how their migration to Denmark had affected their family lives. Perhaps to my surprise (at least sometimes), neither my female nor my male interlocutors maintained one specific position regarding attitudes towards family and gender. Rather, they shifted their positions according to the subject and context. One aspect, however, remained clear: the *family,* including the gender roles of the conjugal family unit, persisted to be an important framework of reference. Throughout this chapter I will analyse the intersections between my interlocutors' shifting positions on gender and family and show how they maintained the family as a dominant discourse. The analysis draws attention to the consequences of changing relations between capital and labour for people's intimate lives. Such issues feed into existing debates within the anthropological scholarship of gender – often a sensitive debate with political and personal connotations.

Gender analyses within social anthropology remain a hot topic for debate. These analyses often have political and representational implications in terms of our interlocutors' gender dynamics. Also, gender has practical implications for the female fieldworker, who may form connections with female interlocutors on the basis of shared biology and presumed shared views on the world (Moore 1994b, Strathern 1992). Gender debates have orbited around the question of women's resistance to patriarchy, and whether notions of patriarchy and female resistance are based on Western ideas of non-Western gender roles (Mahmood 2005, Abu-Lughod 1986). Scholarship on gender in Eastern Europe is by now vast and has presented multiple critical perspectives on how both socialism and transitions to capitalism have had negative consequences for women in particular (for example, Gal and Kligman 2000b, a, Kligman 1998, 1992, Verdery 1996). Such scholarship raises important points about the gendered consequences of drastic socio-economic transformations and increasing poverty rates. But it could also be criticised for its potentially orientalising effect on Eastern Europe and narrow focus on the region's "backwards patriarchy". As I will show through the stories of family relations and gender issues, these analyses are obsolete to provide an understanding of family relations and gender amongst my interlocutors: in Denmark, where I encountered them, they often drew on multiple and conflicting understandings of gender and family. Though family remained a main priority for many of my interlocutors, I was not able to develop a singular framework for understanding the ways that my interlocutors understood themselves in a gendered perspective. One of my key priorities in this chapter is therefore to analyse the implications of the intersections between the ways that my interlocutors shifted between ways of "gendering" themselves.

Arriving at this chapter has to some extent been a struggle for me. When I embarked on my fieldwork, I was hoping not to end up writing about gender, in order *not* to reproduce myself as a *female* scholar who sees the world through the eyes of a woman, or, indeed, sees herself as a victim of womanhood. This is a part of female scholarship which I often find more disempowering than empowering, as it seems to lock both men and women into specific and essentialised positions. Ortner (1972) for example proposed that women's secondary status in society was a 'pan-cultural fact' (ibid.: 67), though she acknowledged the importance of

analysing the tension between local variations and this apparent pan-cultural fact. Critiquing scholarship such as Ortner's, Strathern (1988: 23) pointed critically to feminist scholarship's tendency to promote *the* perspective of women and warned against an absolute focus on 'the problem of women' (ibid.: 29). Inspired by Strathern's viewpoint I did not pay much attention to issues of gender in the beginning of my fieldwork. The public debate on migrants in Denmark furthermore has very negative perceptions of migrants' gender inequality and patriarchal family structures (see Introduction), and I wanted to keep an open mind and not immediately focus on such "migrant issues" framed by the public debate. As I gradually became more integrated in my interlocutors' everyday lives, however, gender and family seemed increasingly important. The importance of such issues was accentuated by my interlocutors' processes of categorisation. This meant that they to some extent developed typologies of Danish and Romanian gender roles. It was with this realisation – and a touch of repentance – that I sat down to write a chapter on gender and family. When I use both gender and family as analytical foci, this is because of their close connection: a discourse on the conjugal family, for example, has profound implications for the ways that the roles of women and men within the family are perceived. And the competing discourse on, for instance, women's independence from the conjugal family obligation likewise means that family and gender interrelate. Sometimes, I thus refer directly to family and sometimes mainly to gender.

Gendered subject positions

To understand the dynamics between the family as a dominant discourse and the ways that this was challenged by everyday life, I analyse how my female and male interlocutors inhabited multiple gendered subject positions. To do this I draw on Moore's (1994b) post-structuralist feminist framework. According to Moore (1994b: 53-56) a person's gender identity does not necessarily represent a single coherent way of understanding gender. Rather, a person may shift between various subject positions and discourses which provide diverging gender identities. By analysing the ways that people shift between such subject positions and discourses, it becomes possible to explore the complexities around gendered identities and overcome a deterministic analysis of how gender practices and discourses are direct effects of

biological and ethnic determinants. Overcoming such deterministic analysis will be one of my main aims in this chapter.

A subject position refers to the position that a subject can take in relation to gender within a particular gender discourse. But when using the idea of subject positions, Moore also allows one individual to take up several subject positions:

> The basic premise of post-structuralist thinking on the subject is that discourses and discursive practices provide subject positions, and that individuals take up a variety of subject positions within different discourses. Amongst other things, this means that a single subject can no longer be equated with a single individual. Individuals are multiple constituted subjects, and they can, and do, take up multiple subject positions within a range of discourses and social practices [...] Some of these subject positions will be contradictory and will conflict with each other. (Moore 1994b: 55)

In terms of gendered positioning, the individual in Moore's perspective is never fixed. Rather, the individual moves between subject positions – discourses and practices – according to the positions available across contexts. Depending on the individual's appearance, education and parental background, some subject positions make more sense for the individual to invest in and select than others. This does not necessarily imply that the individual consciously selects and invests in a subject position at the expense of another (ibid.: 59-60). But, as I will return to, the multiple and conflicting subject positions available to my interlocutors to some extent made them aware of their gendered subject positions, and their reasons for investing in a particular subject position.

Though Moore's approach offers a useful analytical framework to understand how people are not bound within a singular gendered identity, one may ask to what extent her approach offers a possibility to analyse how people's gendered identities are structured by social life and norms? Her attentiveness to the unconscious aspects of the psyche (ibid.: 53) suggests that we should understand at least some of people's gendered identities and actions from a psychoanalytic point of view, and not only through the view of social life. Moore herself draws attention to the intersection between unconscious and conscious aspects of gendered

identities (ibid.: 53). But to what extent does her position allow the individual to consciously invest in a subject position? Is it ethical to claim that our interlocutors unconsciously subject themselves to particular subject positions? And how would we know they did? As already discussed in Chapter 5, I am as an anthropologist not able to read my interlocutors' minds and take an authoring position of their inner monologues, and it would be problematic for me to claim that I could unveil unconscious aspects of my their psyches. However, in my interactions with my interlocutors I was able to record the ways that they continuously shifted between diverging ways of understanding their gendered identities, and the ways that they justified their investments in some subject positions at the expense of others. This enabled me to analyse how their shifts between gendered subject positions intersected with some of the norms for how to be a man or a woman which were developed within their communities.

With subject positions, the analytical focus thus centres on an understanding of how and why the individual shifts between subject positions, and which implications this has for the individual. Nonetheless, amongst multiple and often competing gender discourses, one discourse often becomes the most dominant one; leading to the creation of a hierarchy of discourses. This hierarchy is often developed alongside historical changes, individual biographies and experiences (Moore 1994b: 59, 65). In the next section I will thus turn to the ways that the family has gained a particularly important role in Romanian history. Here, the family has been presented as a pure unit and "safe haven" compared to corrupt institutions and socioeconomic upheavals in society around.

Family as a dominant discourse: a Romanian perspective

When Silvia and I one day discussed the future and what we would like to do, she emphasised, 'the *family* is the most important thing'. Likewise, the Neo-Protestant Church services often included a focus on the importance of family and the maintenance of family life when living in Denmark.

Gender discourses take form in conjunction with economic and political changes at both national and global level (Moore 1994b: 63). In Romania, the family has a specific history with particular connotations to the role and importance of the conjugal family. The discourse

of the family has evolved alongside the country's drastic economic and political upheaval, and the family has historically been considered to be a unit which brings a reliable structure to one's life. Both during and after socialism, the family was portrayed as a sacred entity and as a pure unit against the corrupt government in Romania: '... the family with many children was a fundamental aspect of Romanians' historical continuity since the time of the Dacians, over two thousand years ago' (Verdery 1996: 68). According to this perspective, the family provides the stable unit in life, from which people are able to create stability and feel safe.

Ideologically, the socialist state was supposed to bring greater gender equality and diminish the importance of the conjugal family structure with the woman as a housewife and the man as a provider. Instead, the socialist state was supposed to be the new family. In daily life, however, women often faced a "double burden", as they were required to participate at the labour market *and* take care of the household within the conjugal family (Gal and Kligman 2000a). During socialism in Romania, women had an official status as equal to men. However, the system also saw women with a natural role as "child bearers". Abortions were banned and Ceaușescu's goal was to create a large nation. This made women the subject of pro-natalist policies, where women aged 16-45 were forced to undergo gynaecological controls to 'verify that their reproductive health was satisfactory' (Kligman 1992: 23, see also Verdery 1996: 65). This was a traumatising and dehumanising experience for many women, whose bodies were controlled so intimately by the state. Ceaușescu stated: 'The foetus is the socialist property of the whole society' (Băban 2000: 227). Despite the ideologically gender egalitarian state, women were equal to men in the way that they contributed to the socialist state in their reproductive capacity to support a strong socialist state (Verdery 1996: 67-68). During my fieldwork, only Laura touched upon the topic of reproduction policies – once during a knitting club – when she said that she was never examined in one of these gynaecological controls even though, being in her mid-forties, she had been just old enough for this kind of examination during socialism. As such, the conjugal family was an important tool in Ceaușescu's national socialist project. It had to form the backbone of society and as such kept women in their child-bearing capacity. Nonetheless, a Romanian acquaintance told me that the family was during socialism also a safe place from the state's repressive methods and a

place where one could share everything with the other family members (I am not sure everybody would agree with my acquaintance on this, but this might depend on *her* family's experiences).

According to Verdery (1996: 78), the socialist system taught people to perceive the world through dichotomies of "us and them". In the same way, she argues, men and women in Romania are constructed through dichotomies of what it means to be a woman or a man. This division naturalises the man's duty to protect the female body. A similar perception is seen in the idealised family, where the man as the head of the household protects the family, and where the woman is the receiver of the man's protection. This perspective on men's and women's relations feed into a nationalised narrative which claims that Romania as a country is a victim of other countries' invasions and systematic exploitation, as Adam mentioned in Chapter 3 and Silvia alluded to in Chapter 4.

Following the fall of socialism, gender dynamics in Romania and other former socialist countries were uprooted – at least in the public discourse. Many people in Romania distanced themselves from the gender egalitarian ethos and the "socialist version of gender equality" (Gal and Kligman 2000a). In a Polish context, Pine (2002) for example analysed how many women, after being on the labour market during the years of socialism, retreated to the household domain to devote themselves fully to family obligations. This meant that with the transition to a capitalist market economy, the labour market also became gendered: men were the breadwinners with work outside the household, and women had their work inside the household. Similar tendencies took place in Romania, where both men and women started to emphasise the woman's place in the home. To some men, it even became a status symbol to have a housewife, in contrast to a career orientated wife (Gal and Kligman 2000a: 74). Feminism and its protagonists were often disregarded as folk devils against the family as the backbone of societal order. Feminism was associated with "the West" (Grunberg 2000: 323-324).

Together with the distancing from the socialist past and its officially egalitarian gender roles, Romania was exposed to the highly desired and imagined North American and Western European gender models. The exposure to North American popular culture meant that many

women in former socialist countries began to imagine an individualised sexualisation of themselves and their bodies. This contrasted sharply with the fear that many Romanian women had had of their bodies during the socialist period, due the state control of their reproductive health. In this way, sexualising one's body in the eyes of a man could be seen as a way of rejecting the socialist past. The men, on the other side, were inspired by an 'aggressive masculinity', which they observed in new magazines and job adverts (Gal and Kligman 2000a: 83-84, 112). Job advertisements saw men seeking 'explicitly young, attractive, unmarried, and childless women' (Băban 2000: 229), and sexual harassment and sexual requests apparently became a normal part of everyday working life for many women in Romania (Băban 2000: 247). The transition from socialism to capitalist democracy thus again led to changes in gender perceptions, and these posed new challenges for the maintenance of a family, as they provided new opportunities – in particular for women – outside the family sphere.

Historically, we therefore see how the state has played a part in promoting various family models. Nonetheless, the conjugal family unit has remained as a dominant discourse for the creation of stability in life. In the coming sections we shall see how my interlocutors renegotiated the family. Living in Denmark, the role of the welfare state, including new discourses and practices, meant that they negotiated their perceptions of family and gender within this context. In this way, consolidating family and gender also became a way negotiating one's belonging. This could lead to a sense of crisis in the family.

Crisis in the family

In the article "Is there a crisis in the family?" (1994a), Moore writes that perceptions of crises in family life are not new, as family patterns have been changing alongside historical developments. She argues that discussions of a family crisis often take place within contexts of socio-economic transformations, where factors such as migration and increasing poverty rates affect families (1994a: 6). The idea of a certain type of family, based on the conjugal unit with children, however, seems to persist despite this apparent crisis. Whether there is an empirical reality corresponding to the idea of the family in crisis, or whether more focus on the matter draws attention to existing family practices, is not necessarily easy to determine

(Moore 1994a: 4). When I refer to "crisis in the family" I do not only refer to the experiences of crisis in my interlocutors' everyday family life. I also refer to a crisis *of* the family: that is, the ways that the family as a dominant discourse was questioned and challenged by discourses on gender equality in Denmark.

I therefore analyse how my interlocutors' experiences in everyday life intersected with discourses about how they thought the family should be. Discourses and practices of family life and gender thus became intertwined with questions of belonging and moral positioning. This possibly reflects wider public debates in both Denmark, where notions of liberal gender roles have provided a framework for how to position oneself morally in relation to "the other", and in Romania, where the competition between discourses on family structures and European and so-called liberal gender dynamics make people take up firm moral positions about what is right or wrong. This came across particularly evident the day after Dorina's and Mihail's daughter's baptism.

When we met up the day after Dorina and Mihail's daughter's baptism, Silvia showed Boris pictures from the church ceremony and the party afterwards. Boris did not attend the party, which was on a Sunday, because he had to work. When Boris noticed that the women in the church did not wear scarves, he was surprised and made the sign of the cross: he took three fingers and pointed them to his forehead, then his navel, then to his left shoulder, and then to his right shoulder. He said that this would never have happened in his church in Romania, as women without scarves could tempt the men. Though Boris was an Old Believer, I observed women with scarves in both Neo-Protestant and Romanian Orthodox Churches in Romania, Denmark and Germany (I attended a Neo-Protestant service in Flensburg once). Upon his reaction to the women's lack of headscarves, I asked him, 'So what's the men's responsibility?'. 'Yes?' (*da*), Silvia said, smiled and looked at Boris in a self-satisfied and interrogatory way. Boris looked at me surprised and replied, 'Men are fiery!' (*bărbații sunt fieri*). Overhearing the talk between Silvia, Boris and me, Adam came to the table and told us to stop the discussion, whilst he waved down his hands to quieten us down.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, Adam was proud to label himself a 'peasant' (*țăran*) who valued "traditional" Romanian peasant values. He insisted that a man should take care of the

household and be the breadwinner. 'The woman has to be pure', he claimed. He highlighted his grandmother, who wore a scarf, as an example of this. Adam admitted that men and women are intellectually equal but thought that women are physically weaker than men. He also thought that hitting one's wife would be 'the most terrible thing to do', but he thought that there could justifiably be a reason for *wanting* to hit one's wife. Several times during my fieldwork, Adam made me aware that he did not like feminists and the ways that some women today prioritised careers over having children. He thought that the woman who had been leading the feminist movement was a 'fat and sad woman.' Adam made a mime to imitate such a woman, implying that the woman became a feminist because she was fat and sad.

Morality feuds in the family of Denmark

I did not tell Adam that one of these women in Denmark was my ancestor, Astrid Stampe (1852-1930), after whom I am named. She was the head of the Danish Women's Society (*Dansk Kvindesamfund*) when Danish women received the right to vote in 1915. She fought to help the situation of prostituted women and to improve unmarried women's rights in Denmark at the end of the 19th century. By the end of my fieldwork I told Silvia that I was previously a member of the Danish Socialist Folk Party (*Socialistisk Folkeparti*) and of feminist organisations. I explained that getting older had made things around these issues more complicated and I did not find myself able to be so ideological about this anymore. Silvia seemed pleased about my previous affiliations but also slightly concerned about the ways that I would analyse gender dynamics amongst Romanians. She had observed many differences between Romania and Denmark on this issue and would sometimes refer to practices in Romania as old-fashioned (I will return to these observations below).

Denmark is known for a high level of gender equality (though the actual practice of such equality remains – I think – open to discussion). The country has a long history for *frisind*, which is a form of liberalism that emphasises sexual freedom and distances itself from marriage and family as central units of society, as well as highlighting the importance of respect for different viewpoints. This has roots in the Danish thinker Georg Brandes' (1842-

1927) rejection of Romantic ideals and his participation in the so-called 'morality feud' (*sædelighedsfejden*) in 1885-1887. This feud concerned the liberalisation of sexual morals, marriage and diverging perspectives on gender equality (Stangerup and Jansen 1971: 47-48). Participants in the feud argued for or against marriage as a central and necessary institution in society and debated in what ways and to whom marriage was a benefit for or restriction against human nature. The feud led to what is termed as 'the great Nordic war about sexual morality' (*den store nordiske krig om seksualmoralen*) (Rømer Christensen 1995: 49). Astrid Stampe argued that Brandes' approach to sexual liberation was mainly a way of providing *men* with greater sexual freedom. This did not support her fight against prostitution. In contrast to Brandes, Stampe argued that equality between the genders could be obtained if husbands learned to restrict themselves as much as wives were expected to (Stampe 1888). Already in 1885, Stampe had argued for marriage as a community between two equal people (Rømer Christensen 1995: 43). Of particular relevance to this equality, Stampe highlighted, was an equal access to wealth within a marriage, which she thought had to be inscribed in law (Stampe 1888: 44). She criticised Brandes' translation of and foreword to the Danish translation of John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* from 1869 (in Danish: *Kvindens Underkuelse*), and argued that Brandes used Mill in his own communist project and wish for liberation from marriage – which, to her, was mainly going to benefit men (Stampe 1888: 26-27). Stampe became a central figure in the morality feud and the question of what equality meant – and for whom it was designed – in sexual liberation (Rømer Christensen 1995: 49).

Following the morality feud, liberalisation of gender roles continued and was further supported by the Danish welfare state's expansion in the 20th century, including the extensive provision of child-care opportunities. This means that Denmark today has a high female employment rate compared to other countries (Olwig and Paerregaard 2011: 7). In 1969, Denmark was the first country in the world to legalise picture pornography, and in 1989 Denmark was the first country in the world to legalise registered partnerships for homosexual couples (ibid.: 7). Homosexuality was decriminalised in 1933 and is generally socially

accepted.[39] In Denmark, it is relatively easy to divorce; this is done online, and one does not need to provide motives for divorce. A divorce might be over in a few days. Economic independence is particularly important to the welfare state's gender ideology and a person's ability to leave a marriage or relationship. This implies that citizens should not be dependent on the family's support but should be able to rely on the state to support them. Parents have an obligation to support their children until the age of 18, and children are not obliged to support their parents. If people do not live up to their obligations – for example, if a parent does not pay child contribution – the state will support the child instead.[40] The Danish state has, therefore, played a significant role for establishing a framework for gender equality and women's economic independence. Paradoxically, however, though the welfare state has increased women's economic independence, it has simultaneously promoted the idea of the conjugal family through its welfare provisions. The institutionalisation of welfare provisions for the family means that men's power in the wider society has to some extent been maintained (Andersen and Larsen 2011: 168-169). Despite a strong focus on gender equality, the idea of the conjugal family unit seems to have been maintained through the gender egalitarian welfare state. The idea of the family is even reproduced in a national image of 'the family of Denmark' (*Familien Danmark*) which is based on values such as coherence, solidarity, security and happiness – values that are considered integral to the ideal family and to Denmark as a perceived family entity (Rytter 2013: 109). The guiding dominant discourse of the welfare state and the ways that welfare provisions are designed to support the family and women's economic independence, thus to a large extent relies on the dominant discourse of the family. Seen as such, the gender equality of the Danish welfare state relies on conflicting discourses of both ensuring gender equality (for example, through legal measures to strengthen a liberal approach to gender equality and ensure equal rights to men and women across sexualities), and simultaneously reinforcing the idea of the conjugal family through the state's welfare provisions. The dominant discourse of the family is, as such, not particularly

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[39] In Romania, homosexuality was decriminalised in 2001. Same-sex marriages remain unrecognised (https://www.equaldex.com/region/romania).

[40] https://mbarral.webs.ull.es/dk-grundloven_letdansk.pdf

"Romanian"; but the ways that the dominant discourse has unfolded within different countries may vary according to the design of the national welfare states.

In Denmark, debates about migrants have particularly concerned the ways that they are considered to lack a liberal approach to gender equality. Olwig and Paerregaard observed a paradox between liberalism in Denmark and the often hostile approach to migrants who are in many cases considered to enact oppressive and conservative social norms:

> In the eyes of the Danes, however, notions of cultural homogeneity do not imply a regime of social conformity, but rather one insisting on individual freedom, personal choice and social engagement. These are values that Danes believe are generally shared by the ethnically Danish population, but which they see as being challenged by immigrants and refugees [...] Indeed, in the minds of many Danes, the welfare system depends on the existence of a national community of people who value a modern European way of life based on respect for individual choice and autonomy as well as a sense of social solidarity. (Olwig and Paerregaard 2011: 7-8)

In Olwig's and Paerregaard's perspective, therefore, a paradox exists between ideas of individual freedom in Denmark and the conformity to a specific set of values within the Danish state that residents in Denmark are expected to comply with. Or, in other words: one has to be liberal in the "right way". That is, one is expected to conform with the values of the Danish national community, which is based on individual choice and autonomy. But acceptance into this national community is ironically based on the individual's lack of freedom to choose values and lifestyle.

Despite this paradox, some migrants in Denmark have publicly voiced the ways they have benefitted from a liberal approach to gender equality and homosexuality in Denmark, and have criticised their own "conservative and oppressive" background. A recent prominent example of this is Sara Omar (born 1986), of Kurdish origin. She published a semi-biographical novel which portrays horrendously damaging effects of religious oppression of women (Omar 2017). Omar has already received prizes for her novel but has needed to receive police protection following the publication. Omar's novel led to debates about ways to approach critiques of religion, and the ways that Omar's novel could be used and misused for (right-

wing) political purposes. Gender equality and female emancipation have become central themes in the politicised Danish public debate on migration, and Omar's publication has highlighted the internal disagreements in migrant communities on these issues.

The politicised nature of this debate poses critical questions to the ways that anthropologists may ethically analyse and present issues of gender equality and family life amongst migrants. These are issues that I have continuously considered and addressed when writing this chapter. Reflecting about the anthropologists' role in such debate in Norway – where there is, like in Denmark, a lot of focus on gender equality – Eriksen (2009: 36) critiques Norwegian anthropologists for a reproduction of political questions and public problem formulations in their anthropological analyses; for example, in the case of gender roles in Norwegian-Pakistani families. Eriksen blames this on the anthropologists' 'homeblindness' (ibid.: 36) which he thinks hinders the anthropologists in asking critical questions to the framing of their research questions. Eriksen, I think, has a very important point. And by highlighting some of the inherent paradoxes of the Danish welfare state my aim has been to draw attention to the ways that this context shapes a contradictory framing for understanding gender and family amongst migrants – a highly topical issue in migration debates in the Scandinavian countries. However, by also acknowledging and analysing the gendered nature of migration I wish to understand the ways that state policies and changes in labour and capital influence people's intimate lives, understandings of family relations and gender positioning. I do not consider this to be an essentially "migrant issue" or let alone "Romanian issue", but I see this as a part of finding ways to become through fundamental life transitions.

Gal and Kligman (2000a: 67) compare different types of states' effects on gender roles, and in particular women's positions within the welfare state. The Scandinavian welfare states are in their perspectives known to be particularly active in the creation of gender equality. The state is an active part in the private sphere in terms of providing enough welfare services to be able to ensure a higher level of gender equality. In former socialist countries, however, the state (whether socialist or capitalist) is, according to these authors, to a larger extent opposed to the private sphere and the family (ibid.: 67-68). This also makes it possible to maintain the image of the uncorrupted core family unit as independent from the state's

"corrupting influence." In Denmark it is, by contrast, considered to be part of the state's responsibility to ensure gender equality through people's economic independence. This thus allows the state to intervene in people's private lives – something which might otherwise be associated with a socialist state. Silvia, for example, told me that she thought Romanian women had had more equal gender roles during socialism than they have now. She thought that the Danish state reminded her about the socialist attitude to gender equality. As we shall see below, this had implications for the possibilities of my female interlocutors.

I have now explained some of the ways that family and gender have been framed both in Denmark and Romania, and the historical developments of the ways that ideas of the family have been promoted through the states. Such developments have also provided people with various discourses and subject positions to – more or less consciously – choose from. In the next section I will show how in particular my female interlocutors positioned themselves within diverging ways of understanding family and gender.

Subject positions as investments

So how did my Romanian interlocutors deal with the discourses and practices in relations to gender and family which I have presented in the previous sections? Drawing on the work of Holloway (1984 in Moore 1994b: 64-65), Moore argues that individuals invest in the subject positions that make most sense according to the situation. Despite the economic undertones of the terminology of "investment", the investment in specific subject positions also rely on emotional attachment and 'vested investment' (ibid.: 64). To invest in a specific subject position thus involves a consideration of one's emotional attachment but also the material, economic and social benefits that the individual gains from a specific subject position. Seen as such, subject positions are embedded in relations of power, as the benefits of particular subject positions are dependent on the power connected to the image of oneself in a particular subject position (ibid.: 66). Likewise, depending on the situation, the investment in a subject position may be more or less conscious (ibid.: 59-60). Investing in a subject position did not prevent my interlocutors from drawing on multiple subject positions.

But it may be a "better investment" to invest in one subject position at the expense of another. In the stories below I will show how they actively reflected upon and justified their investments. On the one side, my interlocutors shifted between multiple subject positions. And on the other side they also tried to consolidate the family as a dominant discourse. The stories thus demonstrate how my interlocutors maintained and negotiated diverging ways of becoming a man and a woman. As will be particularly evident from their accounts, their reflections about family and gender were embedded in the ways that they through their migration to Denmark had changed their becomings. As such, the consolidation of gender and family became an integral part of *their* migration experiences.

Changing men

During my numerous conversations with my female interlocutors, I gained an understanding of how they felt that their male partners had changed after their migration to Denmark, and how this affected their relationships and experiences of living in Denmark. According to Silvia, Vasile did not cook so much as he had been doing when they were living in Italy. Working alongside Adrian in the pig farm (as the two only farm labourers at the farm, apart from the farmer himself), Vasile had also begun to use different language with a lot of swear words, and to talk about pornography and make sexualised jokes. Apparently, Adrian would sometimes entertain Vasile with accounts of pornographic films and sex whilst they were working together at the pig farm. Silvia expressed her concerns with this change in Vasile's behaviour. 'He did not speak like that earlier', she underlined almost as an excuse for Vasile's occasional sexual jokes and statements which he came up with in the group when we were socialising. Silvia wished to discuss her own concerns and anxieties with Vasile, but, 'he has his own problems', she said. She told me that he was annoyed with her when she raised her issues with him. In the summer of 2017, Silvia and Vasile were planning a trip to Italy to visit an old friend of Silvia. At first, Vasile did not want to go, because he thought it would be too warm in the South of Italy. Silvia thought he was being silly and that he did not like changes. In our knitting club one day, Silvia told Anca and me, 'I'll just go on my own!' In the end however, Vasile went together with Silvia. The trip was apparently only a moderate

success. Silvia and Vasile thought they had gained some habits in Denmark, which made socialising with Silvia's friend from Romania and her Italian husband difficult. Silvia for example thought that her old friend was too controlling of her husband.

Silvia and Vasile initially only shared their experiences with fertility treatment with me. Silvia told me early on in my fieldwork that she had never been very keen to have children. When she had told this to a Romanian friend in Denmark, the friend apparently responded, 'it's not normal' (*nu-i normal*). Silvia tried to confirm with me whether I thought this was normal or not. In all honesty, I said to Silvia that I did not find her abnormal and that I knew several women who were not entirely sure if they wanted to have children. According to Băban, a woman's success in Romania is often hinged on her ability to establish herself as a mother. One of Băban's female interlocutors said, 'To reject having children is a refusal of nature's law [...] Perhaps she is unable to have children, and out of shame, she says she doesn't want them' (2000: 236). Lack of reproductive ability in this view is associated with personal failure and a deflated self-image (ibid.: 236). Whether Silvia actually did not want children, or whether she now told herself and me she did not want any, I did not know. Her and Vasile's fertility treatment suggests that they at least wanted to try. When Silvia and I one evening returned home from our knitting club, she told me that she was hoping that a child could bring another meaning to her life.

Silvia was, as I have already discussed, frustrated with her life in Denmark. She nonetheless maintained her dream of a future family in Denmark, with a child. Despite the issues that she and Vasile seemed to have internally in their relationship, she stressed the importance of the family. In such way, she invested in a dominant discourse of the family as something which was going to bring purpose into her life; that is, she consolidated the family through a possible future in the conjugal family unit that she thought she needed.

Roxana, in contrast to Silvia, had two children and was always busy with taking care of the family. Though family life occupied most of her time, she, similarly to Silvia, complained about the ways that Mirei has changed following their move to Denmark. According to Roxana, Mirei had become mainly focused on their house building project in Romania. And she was right: when I visited Roxana and Mirei, he would very often be on the phone in front

of the laptop, taking care of building arrangements with the house in Romania. Roxana complained that they would never go for walks in town anymore, and that Mirei was only thinking about the things they needed to buy for the house in Romania. She also thought that Mirei only wanted to buy the cheapest things for the house, which she was annoyed about because she would sometimes like nicer (and more expensive) things. But, Roxana told me, Mirei could decide because it was '*his* money' (*bani lui*). She often complained about Mirei to me. 'I could get divorced every day!', she said. Once I visited them, they started a loud quarrel. In the middle of this Roxana said to me in a mix of annoyance and sadness, 'We don't understand each other' (*nu ne înțelegem*). Roxana had had a job in Romania, but in Denmark she was a housewife. Mirei preferred that she stayed at home to take care of the two children.

Roxana and I sometimes went on excursions together to Sønderborg town and to the support group meetings for new mothers. Once, in late February 2017, we had difficulties finding our way, and Roxana doubted she would be able to get us in the right direction. 'I have faith in you' (*Am incredere in tine*), I said to her whilst she nervously struggled behind the steering wheel. '*I* don't have faith in me [*eu n-am incredere in mine*]. It's better that I say that I can't... But if I'm with you, I know it will be fine', she said. Suddenly I felt like I was the one who was expected to protect her. She had difficulties keeping an overview of things, and Mirei was the one who mainly seemed to do this for the entire family. At some point, when she had forgotten that Silvia was coming over for a haircut (Roxana was a talented hairdresser), Mirei shouted at her, 'You are so slow [*ești așa dormita*]! Roxana... Roxana...', he said as if he was disappointed, giving up. Roxana had an uncomfortable and restrained look on her face but did not say anything. Once, I let her cut my hair. She was very keen to do this, but seemed nervous about doing a good enough job. I think she gave me an excellent haircut.

When Roxana and I went out driving to our various activities, Mirei often called her several times to check that everything was okay. If Roxana did not pick up the phone, he called me instead to get through to her. Once, we had to go on a visit to some friends in Aabenraa, around an hour from Sønderborg. I was going to drive to Aabenraa, and Mirei asked me in a concerned manner if I was going to go on the motorway. I confirmed that we would drive on the motorway to Aabenraa, because it would be the easiest way to get there. Though he did

not object to me, he was clearly concerned about this trip. When Roxana and I arrived at our destination in Aabenraa, he called again to hear if we had arrived safely. I heard Roxana confirming to Mirei on the phone that we had been driving on the motorway. At this point I was getting annoyed with Mirei, but I did not say anything. Several times during our visit in Aabenraa, Roxana said that 'Mirei loves [us/her]'. According to Roxana, Mirei had apparently been very protective after they had had their daughter. 'He loves her. He takes too much care [*Iubeşte pe ea. Are prea multa grija*]', Roxana explained as if she was excusing him. Mirei approved of my companionship with Roxana, and I gradually became her access to the world outside the house. Andrei told me that Roxana was bored with spending her entire day at home on Kegnæs, and he was happy that I often spent time with Roxana to keep her company.

Roxana and Mirei had migrated to be able to provide a better future for their family. But what we also see is that the family and its future became a place for intense disagreement. The family no longer provided the stable backbone of life. Mirei was working a lot and often had issues at work (for example with his wounded hand and teeth, as described in Chapter 4), and he focused his energy mainly on the house which was supposed to be their future home in Romania. Roxana, by contrast, wished that Mirei invested more of his energy in the family in the moment in Denmark. Both Roxana and Mirei, therefore, maintained and invested in the family as a dominant and meaningful discourse in life, although their priorities for ways to consolidate the family diverged. This created a crisis internally in their relationship and a lot of the time disrupted the ideal of the family as a safe and stable place. To Roxana meaning was to be found in the present consolidation of the family in the intimate relation between her and Mirei (for example, by going for walks in town). For Mirei, however, the consolidation of the family relied upon the return to their house in Romania.

Silvia's and Roxana's accounts of the Vasile's and Mirei's changing behaviours show how their statuses as migrant farm labourers in Denmark influenced their intimate relations. Silvia and Roxana interpreted their frustrations, pain, anxieties, fears and disappointments in a migratory context, whilst they were also trying to find new ways of consolidating the family as a backbone in life. In this context, investing in their relationships with Mirei and Vasile and the ideal of the family appeared to be the best investment – and possible the only one they

thought was available. In some cases, however, the migration to Denmark could lead to a crisis which was impossible to overcome through consolidation of the family. In Dorina's story, which I turn to now, such crisis led to divorce.

Dorina's divorce

In late June 2017, a few weeks after I returned from our May holiday in Germany (see Chapter 3) with Silvia, Vasile and Ionut, I went to visit Dorina, Ionut's sister. I had not seen her for a while, and she was still on maternity leave after giving birth in February.

I went to her and Mihail's one-bedroom apartment in a block in the centre of town. Inside in the living room I found Dorina and her daughter. Mihail also came into the room. He had red eyes and looked very tired. He was working in evening shifts, and usually started work in the afternoon. Judging from his tired look, I asked if he was waking up a lot during the night because of the baby. But he did not answer my question and just said that he *was* able to sleep. He seemed in a bad mood. Dorina brought coffee into the living room. Without looking at me, Mihail asked if I could perhaps help with 'the documents' (*actele*). Dorina told him to relax and let me drink my coffee, but he was impatient and brought the computer into the living room. He opened his mailbox. I thought I was going to help with some documents for the day care which the daughter had to start later in the year. But Mihail instead showed me an email that was talking about *børnebidrag* (child contribution). First, I thought they might have mistaken the Danish word *børnebidrag* with *børnepenge* which is a state contribution given to all children. I then said that *børnebidrag* is for when you are divorced. 'Yes!' (*da*), Dorina said with a determined voice. Mihail did not say anything, and I went through the documents with him, which he had to sign electronically. Everybody was silent, and as we went through the documents, I realised that they were divorcing. My stomach was in knots in the tense silence and the unpleasant atmosphere between them. I thought they were happy new parents and was deeply surprised by this divorce. When he had submitted the documents, Mihail left to go to work. I sat down in the grey chaise long. I did not say anything but was awaiting a reaction from Dorina. She said in a confirming tone that she and Mihail were divorcing. 'You might as well know', she added. But she told me *not* to tell the

others, including Silvia and Vasile who were the daughter's godparents (*naşii*). I promised that I would not.

From the start of my fieldwork, I had found Dorina unusually restrained: she did not say much, and never laughed or smiled. I rarely saw her dressing up or wearing anything else than jogging trousers and a t-shirt, except at celebrations. She told me that she used to wear make-up and dress up daily when living in Romania. To me, her long beautiful black hair seemed to be enough decoration for her delicate face.

I found Dorina difficult to read, but her well-hidden secrets seemed to come to the surface on this day in June 2017. 'You think you know a man', she said with tears in her eyes, whilst looking at me on the sofa. Mihail and Dorina had been a couple for 15 years. 'But when violence is involved... Many things have happened'. She sat down on the sofa with her beautiful daughter with large curious eyes. Then she stood up to go to the kitchen, and I asked, 'What has changed?' (*ce s-a schimbat*). Promptly, she responded, 'It's because of money!' (*e din cauza banilor*). In Denmark, she explained, Mihail had been earning more money than he had been doing in Romania. According to Dorina, this had changed him. At some point, for example, he had apparently taken all their money and the car and had gone to visit his cousin in Aarhus (a couple of hours' driving from Sønderborg). Dorina was paying for everything in the household, and the flat was in her name. One day however, she had had enough, and she wanted to take the daughter to go to Ionut's place. But Mihail had not let her do this and had prevented her from leaving. Dorina did not tell me more about the violence, and I was unsure about the details of what had happened. Given her state of mind, I did not pressure her for more information. 'We still love each other' (*incă ne iubim*), she said, and kept repeating 'many things have happened'. She blamed herself, saying that she knew she could be 'difficult' (*dificila*). I assured her that this would never legitimise violence.

Dorina, who was in her late 20s and trained in accountancy at the university in Iaşi, came to Denmark in the beginning of 2015, initially to stay with her brother Ionut. She had stayed with him at the farm and had initially been helping him in the farm work. Later, she started to work in newspaper delivery, before she eventually had a job at the factory where Silvia was also working. Dorina became pregnant in the early summer of 2016, and she and

Mihail went back to Romania to get married. Already on this trip, Mihail had started to say things to denigrate her family. After the trip they moved from Ionut's house to a flat in Sønderborg and left Ionut alone in the house on the farm. I met Dorina for the first time in August 2016, when she and Mihail had just moved to the flat.

Dorina told me that she had been thinking about divorce several times but had dismissed the idea again, thinking that it would get better. 'But when there is violence… [*violența*]', she said. According to herself, her and Mihail's relationship had worsened over a longer period. After having given birth in February, Dorina refused to listen to her own mother's and mother-in-law's advice, which she labelled 'old fashioned' (*pe veche*). She wanted to find out for herself what worked well and what did not work in relation to the baby. Silvia had also told Mihail to help with changing diapers. He rejected her order, however. Dorina's mother-in-law had suggested clothes to cover up the belly she had after giving birth. Dorina however kept telling me that she was proud of how she looked like and she would sometimes stand in the mirror to tell herself how good she looked, with the belly. She told me that she disliked men who call their female partners fat – and made a gesture with her two hands as if she was strangling the man, to demonstrate her point. Still, when we went through some photos on her phone, I could see how many photos of health and weight-loss advice she had downloaded. Shortly before divorcing Mihail, Dorina claimed in front of our entire friend group that she would not mind trying a swingers' club (a club where adults can meet to exchange partners and experiment with sexual practices). Mihail looked at her and said, 'You talk too much!' (*vorbești prea mult*). She then looked at me and told me that talking about a swingers' club is still a taboo (*tabu*) in Romania.

The disagreements between Dorina and Mihail could be seen as ways in which they were trying to manage each other's sexual behaviours and asserting their own (cf. Moore 1994b: 66-67). Mihail had been working in the Romanian army and was in Denmark working at the factory together with Silvia and Dorina. This change to an unfamiliar context and a job could have led him to feel a loss of status and a need to assert himself to feel more secure of his own gendered identity. At the same time, Dorina asserted herself when he acted in degenerating ways towards her. Ultimately, their mutual assertions culminated in divorce.

Dorina's and Mihail's divorce was not only a surprise to me, it also surprised the other people in our group. During the summer of 2017, I found out from Silvia that the situation between Dorina and Mihail had escalated when we had been on our holiday to Germany. Neither Dorina nor Ionut talked about the divorce when we were meeting up, but Mihail simply just stopped coming to our social gatherings. I was not sure who knew what and when they found out. I did not tell anybody, and I was not sure if anybody else knew and if they knew that I knew. The atmosphere around this was notably silent. I never found out about the scale of the violence, except from the fact that Mihail prevented Dorina from going to Ionut. Dorina and Ionut had gone to the police, but Dorina did not want to open a case against Mihail.

I did not talk about the divorce with Mihail and my information about what had happened was limited to Dorina's accounts, and what I heard from Silvia and Vasile. They found out about the divorce from Mihail who had come to their place one day to tell them that they had divorced. Dorina had never mentioned the divorce to them. When Silvia heard about the divorce, and told me about it, she immediately blamed Dorina for changing her behaviour after giving birth, and raised the possibility that Dorina was going through a post-natal depression. When Silvia heard more about what had been going on between Dorina and Mihail, she changed side and supported Dorina instead. Divorces amongst Romanians in Denmark were not unknown to Silvia, who told me that she knew many Romanian couples in the Sønderborg area who had divorced after coming to Denmark.

Following Dorina's divorce, I went to her place to visit her more frequently to hang out with her and go for walks with the daughter. She seemed keen for me to visit her more often. On our walks she told me about her plans for the future: she wanted to complete a Master's programme in Denmark and go travelling. She had many places that she wanted to see. Dorina kept telling me that she would be fine on her own and that she was used to living on her own. But she acknowledged that she also felt lonely.

It is not possible to know whether Dorina's and Mihail's relationship would have faced similar problems if they had still been living in Romania. Though, as Silvia mentioned, many divorces apparently took place amongst Romanian migrants in Denmark, I was also told that

divorce rates in Romania had increased. But what we see from Dorina's divorce is that she blamed Mihail's changing behaviour on the move to Denmark, and that her way of being able to tackle the situation was shaped by her position in Denmark – both as part of the Romanian Orthodox community and as part of the wider Danish society where she could receive support from the state and the police. In this way, her life transition in the form of a divorce was embedded in her migratory context.

Without being able to read Dorina's mind, it is possible to assume that she – despite her determination to do something about the situation – felt some level of shame, since she was so reluctant to talk openly about this. Dorina was a believer and often referred to God in her daily speaking. She kept the Romanian Orthodox traditions of for example blessing the baby quickly after the birth, before the baptism, and she stressed that she would like more children than only the one daughter. At the same time though, her claim that she would not mind trying a swinger's club showed that she used other discourses of gender and sexuality to challenge conventional perceptions of family life that she was used to. And she was keen to emphasise that men should not tell women that they were fat, and that she did not want to listen to old-fashioned advice from her mother-in-law. Her situation with Mihail's changes and her new opportunities in Danish society thus offered her different opportunities and incentives to draw on multiple and contradictory discourses of gender and family affairs.

Gender equality and gender-based violence came up as topics for conversation several times during my fieldwork. Vasile did not think that gender-based violence was something new in Romania. But he thought that more attention might be placed on the subject now, than had been done earlier. However, he made me aware how a woman in Romania might still go to the police because of domestic violence, and then be blamed herself for the occurrence of violence. 'Many women in Romania do not have a good life', Sergiu (from Chapter 2) told me when we were discussing Romania more generally. Also, a Danish man – with more than 25 years of experience of travelling in Romania – told me, 'Women in Romania are nothing' (*Kvinder i Rumænien er ingenting*). When I participated in a women's prayer meeting at the Romanian Neo-Protestant church in Sønderborg, we once had to fill out a questionnaire about our marriages. One of the questions asked if we had problems with

violence at home. Roxana at some point made me aware that 'this [violence] can be a problem in Romania'. Aura (from Chapter 6) said to me, 'Romanians are racist and sexist!' She explained that violence today occurs in Romania, but that the rate of domestic violence is not as high as before. 'We *have* become a member of the EU', she underlined to support her statement. This indicated that she thought of domestic violence as something backwards and not in line with EU standards. Today, statistics across European institutions place Romania at the bottom of the rankings when it comes to gender equality across the EU. According to the European Union Gender Equality Index, Romania is one of the worst performing countries across gender equality indicators. Sweden, Denmark and Finland are the best performing countries (Barbieri et al. 2017: 7). Taking such statistics and Aura's comment together, gender equality and gender-based violence may be considered to be part of a so-called Europeanisation process and "development" of Romania (see Chapter 6).

By the turn of the millennium, Gal and Kligman (2000a: 112) wrote that domestic violence was no longer normalised in Romania but was considered a social problem. Divorces took place but could be stigmatising for a woman and seen as a result of the woman's lack of ability to satisfy and keep her husband (Băban 2000). According to the Romanian psychologist Adriana Băban (2000) sexuality in Romania is considered to be part of men's nature and right, whilst women are expected to fulfil their marital duties and not go against their husband's wishes. Women, by contrast, are required to suppress sexuality and desire, and to devote themselves – preferably first as virgins – to their husbands. Not doing this could encourage the husband to seek sexual pleasures elsewhere and possibly leave his wife – which would then demonstrate the failure of the wife. Also, by the turn of the millennium, Băban wrote critically – and in somewhat generalising terms – on this issue:

> ... for many women, life is anything but rosy. Not only are their lives shaped by a patriarchal ethos, which defines violence against women as a husband's right and as a woman's due, but they also suffer the consequences of violence perpetrated by the former regime. The socialist state used violence as a tool of repression, and whether it was physical or psychological, Romanians learned that violence is a tool to get what you want. Not surprisingly, domestic

violence is common; women and men alike understand it to be part of private life. (Băban 2000: 245)

In this view, violence has become normalised, and the socialist regime is blamed for having taught people violence as a tool. Though this perspective might be valid psychologically, it omits the impact of external socio-economic factors that position people in situations of crisis with deflated self-perceptions and self-evaluations (cf. Moore 1994b: 67-68). As we have seen, migration to Denmark and the changes in socio-economic circumstances could mean that my interlocutors' family lives were affected by such changing circumstances. By reinterpreting and negotiating ways of becoming a man or a woman, they were also consolidating family life within the migratory context. Whereas Silvia and Roxana in the previous section kept investing in their families and relationships, Dorina did not (at least in terms of her marriage). Drawing on and selecting between multiple subject positions became part of reflections and debates with and between my interlocutors and their experiences of how migration impacted their family lives. In the final section I will analyse how their shifts between subject positions related to the ways that they were negotiating their becomings as gendered persons.

Becoming a woman and a man

During our holiday in Germany (see Chapter 3), Silvia, Vasile, Ionut and I were discussing the roles of men and women, and the equality between them. Silvia said, 'I have a theory. I think that Romanian men are weak. They don't know how to do things on their own. They want the woman to do it'. Vasile and Ionut looked at me to see what *I* would have to say about this. Trying to soften Silvia's theory as if only pertaining to *Romanian* men, I said that I knew cases from Denmark where the woman has two jobs and is pregnant, and where the man does not do anything. 'But you know Astrid. Perhaps they are bad men [*barbarți răi*]', Ionut responded. Vasile then added to the discussion, 'You know who is guilty here? The woman. Because the mother does everything for the son, and the man wants the wife to take on the mother role'. Vasile and Ionut continued complaining that women make men

incapable of taking care of anything, because women interfere with everything. Later in the week Silvia told me that, according to the Bible, the woman was the one who led the man into sin. When Eve made Adam eat the forbidden fruit, she created the Fall of Man. This meant that the *woman* created a fundamentally sinful and guilty humanity. Silvia thought that this meant that women would often be blamed for failures and for tempting men into sin. As Vasile's statement above expresses, it is ultimately the woman's fault that 'bad men' (*barbarţi rǎi*) are created. And Silvia – despite her criticism of the exact same thing – at first hand, when Dorina divorced, blamed Dorina for having a post-natal depression. In this way, she reproduced her own criticism

This was not the only time Silvia would voice her criticism of Romanian men. She would sometimes criticise and challenge the men in front of our entire group, when we were discussing issues of gender and family. For example, when she and I one evening at Adam's and Boris' place discussed gender equality with Vasile, Ionut, Boris and Adam, she told me that many Romanian women 'still' (*incǎ*) believe that sex is a marital duty. Vasile however broke into the conversation and said that lack of sex would be a justification for divorce. He looked at me and said, 'Right?' I did not know what to respond. Silvia complained about violent Romanian men and said that she did not want to live with 'an animal' (*un animal*) – an expression which she emphasised strongly in front of the men, whilst looking at them in an interrogatory way as if they were a little group of children.

Though Silvia herself invested in the family discourse and dreamt about having a child, she was not submissive to a discourse of a patriarchal ethos. Rather, she and other of my female interlocutors were bouncing between discourses and practices that valued different and competing aspects of how they thought men and women should live together. The previous sections have shown how this bouncing between discourses and practices could be difficult to manage and balance in everyday life. Both my female and male interlocutors contrasted and evaluated their experiences of family and gender against their past, present and future.

Silvia and Vasile would sometimes tell me about the gender differences that they had observed between Denmark and Romania. They often told me about their observations in a

way that emphasised Romania's gender roles as old fashioned, and, according to Silvia, like an 'Arabic mentality' (*mentalitate arabă*). In line with Danish public debates, she would complain about lack of gender equality amongst Muslims. One difference between Denmark and Romania was, according to Silvia and Vasile, that women and men in Romania mainly keep separate; a woman in Romania was apparently not supposed to socialise with men and vice versa. Women were also not supposed to engage in joking and should keep a straight face – otherwise she might not be taken 'seriously' (*serious*). Laura, in her forties, confirmed that she had been taught never to smile, and that she had been taught to mainly look down. She had however observed how people in Denmark often smile a lot – and she liked this. During her fieldwork in Romania, the Danish anthropologist Trine Korsby was told that her face was 'too open' when meeting people on the street. According to her interlocutor, this could provoke unwanted attention (Korsby 2017: 115). I never received such reprimands from my interlocutors, which could be due to the observations that they had made in Denmark which meant that they did not find me unusual. Other reasons could be that they did not want to reprimand me in "my country", or that they simply did not find my face as open as did Korsby's interlocutor.

Another difference that Silvia and Vasile made me aware of was that some Romanian men do not greet women by shaking hands. For example, they had had to tell Mihail that he should greet women by hand in Denmark. According to Silvia and Vasile, Mihail did not like this. In my experience, the extent to which men greeted women by shaking hands differed; sometimes, the men avoided shaking hands with women (including me), and only shook hands with other men. Later in my fieldwork, some men started to shake hands with me – perhaps when they realised that I reached out my hand to them. Some men shook hands with women all the time. According to Nicoleta, men did not shake hands with women in Romania. The tradition for this could depend on religious, educational and geographical background in Romania, but I never detected a clear pattern – neither amongst my interlocutors in Denmark nor during my travels in Romania.

Though Silvia and Vasile's observations highlighted their critique of Romania, I nonetheless experienced that my male interlocutors would monitor each other's "manliness",

and contrast their manliness to how they perceived Danish men to be. Showing signs of "feminine traits" would lead to derogatory comments about homosexuality: for example, if one wore a pink shirt, hung out with the women instead of talking about cars with the other men, or was cooking. Adam, for example, told me that he preferred to talk with the women when we met up to socialise, because he did not find it interesting to talk about cars when standing outside smoking. He told me that he had experienced a man hitting on him, and he was clearly upset that some people might think he was homosexual. Silvia made fun of Adam's close relationship with his mother and said that he had a 'woman's soul' (*suflet de femeie*). She was surprised that Adam had not married one of his female co-students from his agricultural university. Adam preferred not to come along to our socialising that often. When Ionut went with all the women in our group to watch the film "Fifty Shades Darker" he was the subject of ridicule. At the same time, Vasile would make fun of himself, when he joined the knitting club occasionally to work on a tapestry depicting a peasant girl. Ionut likewise made fun of himself when he joined the knitting club. His grandmother had apparently taught him to knit, and he sometimes showed of his knitting skills to the rest of the knitting club.

As such, my interlocutors often displayed a particular attention to behaviours that could be classified as either male or female behaviour. Men were talked about as being calmer and better at keeping a rational overview of situations. Even Silvia said that she preferred to have a male boss, instead of a woman. By contrast, women were talked about as being more 'sensitive' (*sensibile*) and 'weak' (*slabe*). Men and women were in this way ascribed specific characteristics. Vasile however still expressed that he thought it would be nice if women behaved more rationally, like men. He also considered it a 'step forward' (*pas înainte*) to have female priests. Neither the Romanian Orthodox Church nor the Neo-Protestant Church have female priests. Denmark has had female priests since 1948 and female bishops since 1995. Vasile emphasised that Danish women certainly do not put up with anything, and that they do not let the husband spend the money as he wants to. He thought equality was important but emphasised that men and woman naturally each have their roles in the relationship. This became particular apparent in his perception of the local cooking club for men. Vasile would sometimes complain that it was difficult to establish relations with Danish people. On

Kegnæs, some local Danish men would sometimes organise a cooking club specifically for men (in Denmark, cooking clubs for men are common). Silvia suggested Vasile to go to the cooking club to make some Danish contacts. Vasile, however, refused because he did not want to be like one of the Danish 'castrates' (*castraţi*). Participating in the cooking club would, as such, disconnect him from being a *Romanian* man, though it could have established closer connections to local Danes. Vasile was continuously assessing what it meant and what it should mean to be a man or a woman. As with some of my female interlocutors, he was shifting between his evaluations of gender equality. Being critical towards the ways that he thought women in Romania were treated, gender equality seemed to become too much for him if he had to participate in a men's cooking club.

Similarly for women, ideas about what it means to be womanlike were raised throughout our discussions when we met up. Despite Silvia's "emancipating tendencies", she said that she thought Danish women look like men. Emil said that he would *never* have a relationship with a Danish woman, and Adam told me that he also did not think Danish women are womanlike and that many of them look like men. He and Silvia did not think that you can tell the difference between men and women on the streets in Denmark. According to Adam, Romanian women took better care of their looks than Danish women do.

Nicoleta dismissed discourses on complete gender equality and thought that Danish women treated men disrespectfully – 'like a dishcloth' (*som en klud*), as she noted in Danish. Jørgen had apparently insisted that they were equal in the household. But, Nicoleta had disagreed with him on this. She preferred him to have the overall responsibility for the family. At the same time, Nicoleta rolled her eyes at Mirei when he talked about Roxana's cooking, and she complained that Jørgen did not do as much housework as he had apparently been doing when living with his Danish ex-wife. Though Nicoleta insisted on the conjugal family with the man as the head of the household, she also drew on other discourses and practices. So depending on the situation, she took upon her diverging understandings of how family life, and the woman's and man's position, should look.

In a similar vein to Nicoleta, Aura thought that Danish women put too much emphasis on feminism and gender equality. She explained that she preferred the woman to be below

the man in the household hierarchy, so the woman can support the man as the head of the household. She showed me with her two hands how the woman should be slightly below the man in the household. She labelled herself a 'traditionalist' (*tradiționalista*), as did Adam. Aura's outspokenness, physical strength, criticism of conservative interpretations of the Bible, support for homosexual couples, tattoos and piercings did not give an immediate impression of a female traditionalist (in *my* own preconceptions). But to my surprise she emphasised her traditionalism, and in the late summer of 2017, she married her partner at a traditional style wedding in a Romanian village. Though she challenged many of the social norms that she raised her criticism about, she nonetheless also voiced her support for the "traditionalist" lifestyle, based on the conjugal family. A singular gender identity thus did not define my interlocutors' personae; rather, they flexibly shifted between gendered subject positions.

In Aura's and Nicoleta's cases one may ask to what extent they were able to choose the gender discourse they wanted to invest in. Nicoleta was working for Jørgen, and her economic dependence on him was unquestionable. Aura was also economically dependent on her partner, at least when she first arrived in Denmark. Later she was employed as a dish washer in the restaurant where her partner was working in the kitchen. My questioning of their choice of the conjugal family as a dominant discourse is not an attempt to reduce their lifestyles and convictions to a matter of financial resources and economic dependence. But their explanations of how they preferred to have a family, and that they found it better in this way, could also be a way of gaining a sense of control of their gendered subject position as they were not likely to be able to change this without the financial means to become independent. By claiming that this was the type of family they preferred, they also avoided a potential victimisation of them as housewives and financially dependent (perhaps especially in the meeting with the Danish anthropologist who seemed keen to talk about these issues, and who was not afraid to go living on her own). Investing in a particular subject position is, in this perspective, not necessarily a choice. But the rationale given for the investment may imply a choice on how to explain oneself to maintain a sense of control of one's gendered position.

Though people may not be able to choose their gendered subject positions, they are not excluded from drawing upon other and competing gender discourses (Moore 1994b: 60).

As the excerpts from my fieldwork material have shown, the dominant discourse of the family did not exist on its own. Rather, the family discourse appeared as the dominant discourse amongst my interlocutors but did not exclude other discourses that both challenged the dominant discourse and co-existed alongside it. My interlocutors were at times trying to consolidate their family lives, including the gender roles attached to the conjugal family, through a dominant discourse of the family and what family should be to them; for example, through living with a child, being at home with the family in Romania, a traditionalist wedding or specific ways of being a man or a woman. But over the course of my fieldwork I discovered the multiple and competing discourses they were also drawing on to make sense of their lives and their gendered positioning. Verdery's (1996: 78) dichotomies of men and women in Romania were in this way challenged by my interlocutors who questioned the validity of such dichotomies. With Moore's subject positions in mind, one may ask whether Verdery's dichotomies ever existed as rigidly as she presents them, or whether these dichotomies mainly presented *one* way of interpreting gender and family amongst several understandings.

My interlocutors' frequent shifts between gendered subject positions should be understood alongside their processes of categorisation, described in Chapter 6. Whereas they sometimes embraced what they perceived to be "more Danish" gender and family patterns, they at other times distanced themselves from this; for example, when Vasile labelled the Danish men in the cooking club 'castrates', or when Nicoleta said that Danish women treated men as a 'dishcloth.' In such ways, their consolidation of gender and family both reinforced and were uphold by my interlocutors' negotiation of social norms in their communities, and gender and family could be important to challenging existing norms, discourses and practices.

Consolidating gender and family thus also became a process of continuous renegotiation of what it meant to be Romanian, and what it meant to be a man or a woman. Different gendered subject positions offered various ways of becoming a man or a women and in this way also different ways of positioning and interpreting oneself in relation to one's own self-perceptions, other people and a meaning of one's migratory movement to Denmark.

Conclusion

By studying gender and family I have shown how my interlocutors' migration to Denmark became part of their intimate relationships. With this analysis I am not arguing that various life transitions and family crises would not have taken place if my interlocutors still lived in Romania or Italy; that Mirei and Vasile would not have changed if they had not left Romania; that Dorina would not have divorced; or that they would not have debated family and gender roles. As a matter of fact, family life and gender are major concerns in Romania. It is impossible for me to know if such changes had taken place or not without their migration to Denmark. Increasing divorce rates in contemporary Romania suggest that not only migrant families experience co-called crises in the family (if a divorce *has* to be seen as a crisis and not just a fact of life?).

But what I have shown is that life transitions, such as establishing oneself with a partner, having children or separating from a partner, were embedded in my interlocutors' experiences of their migration. These transitions were influenced by their ways of perceiving themselves as Romanian migrants in Denmark and the opportunities they thought they had gained from their migration to Denmark. At the same time, the consolidation of the family as a dominant discourse was also seen in contrast to what several of my interlocutors considered to be "Danish gender roles", where women and men were considered to look too much like each other and where women were seen to behave disrespectfully towards their male partners.

I therefore suggest that my interlocutors' life transitions gained a particular meaning in their migratory context in Denmark, where state policies and discourses to some extent shape people's opportunities for moving through life transitions. Drawing on various subject positions and discourses allowed people like Silvia, Dorina, Aura, Nicoleta, Vasile, Mirei, Adam and Ionut to navigate through life transitions according to their situations and the ways that it made sense for them to position themselves and become as men and women. The ways that my interlocutors' becomings were embedded in their migration will be one of the focal points in the next and concluding chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION

August 2017: wondering of wandering

I began this thesis with the story of Ionut. His story prompted me to ask how we can understand the intersections between his desires for money, material well-being, social status and individual transformation. By exploring how Ionut and other Romanian farm labourers, and their family and friends, identify themselves in a range of ways across different contexts in Denmark, I have aimed to understand how structural and existential power come together in their work and lives: that is, how their migration is part of their becomings amidst contemporary European transformations and socio-economic inequalities.

Through a focus on *becoming* my aim has been to transcend the dichotomies of structural and existential power (Rapport 2003), and understand how the lives of my interlocutors unfold in a continuum between their abilities to become in different ways. In the proceeding chapters, I have taken the reader through a variety of the contexts in which I became part of my interlocutors' lives. This has allowed me to understand the multiple ways that they were making themselves within different constraints, structures and opportunities. Two themes, and interrelated questions, emerged from this: 1) Did the migratory movement from Romania to Denmark influence their becoming, and if so how? And, 2) What do we learn from my interlocutors' lives about contemporary European transformations? By reflecting on these questions, I will in this concluding chapter also respond to the main guiding questions that Ionut's story led me to in the Introduction.

Is migration a different form of *becoming*?

According to Nail, 'we are all becoming migrants' (2015: 1), and according to Grønseth (2013), we are all migrants who migrate through our lives (cf. Rapport and Dawson 1998). Writing this thesis, I have continuously asked myself whether my interlocutors' becoming was different from mine and my sense of other people's becoming; also, how this related to the ways that we were becoming before we met each other as part of the field encounters, and how our previous becoming and knowing shaped our ways of becoming together in the field. The time of my fieldwork only provided a glimpse of my interlocutors' becomings: before they came to Denmark, and after I left the field they were continuously becoming. So, if migration is a different form of becoming, how did it change my interlocutors' becomings? By analysing people's migratory movements through a lens of becoming, I suggest, we may gain an understanding of the ways that people make their lives across space and time, and we may gain an understanding of the ways that their particular positions as migrants influence their ways of interpreting themselves, their relations to other people and their beliefs and cosmologies. It is this intersection between universal and particular ways of becoming that I wanted to explore.

Dorina might still have been divorced if she was living in Romania, and it might still have been difficult for Andrei to find a new job as a manager even if he was living in Romania. But *their own conceptualisations of their lives depended on their migratory movements*: that is, Dorina blamed Mihail's changes on their movement to Denmark (as did Silvia and Roxana in terms of Vasile and Mirei). Andrei blamed his situation at the farm on his Romanian migrant background in a Danish workplace. But he may still have struggled if he had stayed in Romania. Similarly, Adam blamed his situation on, amongst other things, Western countries' exploitation of Romania, and Vasile thought Romanian migrants were working as slaves in countries such as Denmark and Germany. We cannot know if they would have faced similar or other – perhaps even worse – problems, if they were still living in Romania. But from their own ways of making sense of their situations, we see that their ways of becoming changed alongside their movements to Denmark: meaning that their migration to Denmark influenced

their ways of becoming. Their ways of conceptualising their becomings, I have shown, had consequences for the ways that they perceived themselves, positioned themselves and shaped their everyday lives, their memories of the past and their futures. Silvia thought that Ceaușescu's regime in Romania had at least meant that Romanians did not have to leave the country, and Adam planned his future in Romania so he could become someone with importance to himself and other people. But their becomings in Denmark also allowed them to gain new insights which for instance made them frown upon what they considered to be old-fashioned gender roles.

My interlocutors' becomings in Denmark in these ways relied on continuous reassessments of themselves and their relations with other people in the past, present and future. By identifying themselves in a range of ways they were continuously making sense of their migratory logics and the ways that they positioned themselves alongside their migratory experiences. In some cases, this meant that they identified themselves as opposed to, for example, ideas of how Danish people are. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 in particular showed how the intersections between their socio-economic backgrounds in Romania, the principle of free movement, their access to the Danish labour market and positioning in that labour market influenced the ways that they identified themselves as Romanian farm labourers in Denmark (and Western Europe). As such, the structural and social forces that they were part of played an important role for the ways that they positioned themselves in contrast to other people. Again, this brings me back to the ways that migration shaped my interlocutors' becomings. The ways that they were able to move to Denmark and enter the labour market intersected with the ways that they identified themselves.

This should not overshadow the potentiality of thinking through communities, as I did in Chapter 6, where people's own categorisations of themselves and other people shaped the ways that they created their own holistic truths of their moral worlds. But this is not enough. Chapter 6, for example, only showed a partial aspect of the ways that my interlocutors created their own self-perceptions, their relations to other people and their cosmological and spiritual worldviews. My interlocutors had in this way no essential identity contained in categories of being a "migrant", a "farm labourer", a "Romanian", a "woman" or a "man", or a "Christian."

These were empty signifiers, and my interlocutors flexibly shifted between the ways that they positioned themselves at the farm, when meeting up and dancing or cooking, when going to church, when being a mother or a father, when going to the hospital, etc.

According to Jackson, 'psychological multiplicity' (2013: 203) is not a problem to be solved through an Oedipal imagination of the true and stable essence of the self. Rather, it demonstrates people's ability to adapt to changing social worlds; that is to say, to other people. This ability to become in relation to other people means that people are able to endure and creatively adjust to movements, hardship, suffering and difficult circumstances (ibid.: 204). Through such processes of becoming, I suggest, my interlocutors were able to creatively make their ways through a variety of identifications of themselves. This should not be understood as a romanticised becoming where they were necessarily able to make life as they wanted to and circumvent the structural forces that their lives were in many cases deeply embedded in. Chapters 2 and 3 in particular showed how my interlocutors' positions as migrant farm labourers had consequences for their bodies and self-perceptions. And in Chapter 6 I demonstrated how their becomings within their communities were not necessarily desired becomings; for example, in the case of Silvia who would like to socialise with other people. But in this way, we see how people's becomings are continuously being made and unmade. 'You become a wanderer', Adam suggested in Chapter 5. And I want to hold him to this: wandering through life as a Romanian, migrant, farm labourer, man or woman, a Christian, or a peasant, Adam and my other interlocutors were able to become human beings amidst difficult circumstances and opportunities that they met as part of contemporary European transformations.

Contemporary European transformations

> **Priority statement from the European Commission:**
> *A deeper and fairer internal market*
> *The single market is one of Europe's major achievements and its best asset in times of increasing globalisation. It is an engine for building a stronger and fairer EU economy. By allowing people, goods, services and capital to move more freely it opens up new opportunities for citizens,*

*workers, businesses and consumers – creating the jobs and growth Europe so urgently needs. [...]
Better worker mobility will let people move more freely where their skills are needed.[41]*

On a larger scale, this thesis has alluded to the social implications of contemporary European transformations alongside individual, emotional and bodily transformations. Inequalities, I shown, permeate people's lives on multiple levels: their sociological, political and economic positionings in society, their subjectivities and self-perceptions and their bodily experiences of being subjects to structural powers in the world.

This draws attention to an important, though politically sensitive, issue about the integration of nation-states into the global and European economy. In Chapter 2, in particular, I showed how inequalities between EU countries impact people's movements across borders, and how these movements create problems within Denmark, where migrants from poorer countries may be considered a threat to the Danish labour market with its idiosyncratic historical, political and economic background. This should not be understood as a critique of globalisation and European integration *per se*, as people (including myself and my husband) have benefitted immensely from the opportunities provided by, for instance, the principle of free movement. Giving in to right-wing populism and rhetoric will not, I think, solve the fundamental problems of what is at stake. My critique concerns the implications of socio-economic inequalities which cannot be ignored in connection with the European and global economy, and which position people unequally and disconnect them from a range of opportunities, though EU citizens have in principle equal rights.

It appears to me that the "European project", which was formed after the Second World War to avoid stark internal conflicts in Europe, has reached a point where the inequalities between EU countries to some extent work against the intention of "integration" between countries. The idea of the 'United States of Europe' that British Prime Minister Winston Churchill put forward in his 1946 speech seems to have been shaken in its fundament.[42] This makes me want to recall the Jewish, Latvian-born philosopher Isaiah Berlin.

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[41] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/internal-market_en
[42] Council of Europe: "Winston Churchill, speech delivered at the University of Zurich, 19 September 1946": https://rm.coe.int/16806981f3

Searching for a specific, singular truth of life, and a perfect and completed system of society, has occupied thinkers throughout history, according to Berlin. Writing in the context of the collapse of the socialist system and the "victory" of capitalism, Berlin (1990) argued against societal dogmatism and the pursuit of the ideal world. Quoting Kant, he wrote: 'Out of the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made' (ibid.: 19). According to Berlin, we keep asking ourselves the important question of how we should live. Some, like Tolstoy, have leaned towards a romantic idea of the unspoiled peasantry which has not been corrupted by money and greed for civilisation. Others have searched for truth through atheism, science and rationalism. To Berlin, such search risks creating totalitarian regimes that force all people under one ideal umbrella; by contrast, people should aim to manage an 'uneasy equilibrium' which should be continuously interrogated by its human inhabitants (ibid.: 20). Human existence is not necessarily based on a singular ideal but consists of an eternal struggle to create a balance between the different circumstances of life: according to Berlin, being human does not mean that one can find one true and dogmatic answer for the meaning of life. He writes about this idea of arriving at a dogmatic state of satisfaction with one truth of life:

> I can only say that those who rest on such comfortable beds of dogma are victims of forms of self-induced myopia, blinkers that may make for contentment, but not for understanding of what it is to be human. (Berlin 1990: 14)

Philosophically and politically, Berlin's argument is interesting as it scrutinises the implications of any version of the ideal society. One may however ask if this 'uneasy equilibrium' is realistic with contemporary global inequalities and social hierarchies between Eastern and Western Europe? I argue that with the inequalities that so many people face at the moment, it is inevitable that people might search for dogmatic truths in life which will bring the prosperity and realise the hopes and dreams they are longing for. In this way, dogmatism becomes a way for people to make sense of and overcome everyday problems.

During recent years, migration has been on everybody's lips and has played a major role in recent political and economic crises and transformations. National governments, civil

society and international bodies all over the world have been struggling to identify the "right way" of dealing with various types of migration; including forced migration, undocumented migration, refugees, educational migrants, labour migrants, etc. The categories for migrants are many, reflecting the attempts to manage the migratory flows. This thesis has presented just a small sample of some of the issues arising from migration, based on – if I may say – one "category" of migrants. The concerns about migration, including what type of migrants are "considered welcome" and in what quantity within the nation-states, perhaps reflect a moment in time where the victory of capitalism at the end of the Cold War has come to a halt. It is not necessarily any longer considered the only and true way forward.

The contemporary environment of migration, the presumed collapse of sovereign states, the changing structures of welfare states and provision of welfare policies and further commercialisation of a sector like agriculture, I suggest, trigger the need to try and define new, different truths about the ways that we should live together within nations and across borders. The search for these truths makes us want to become in new ways, to understand ourselves and other people, and to find truths of life that though not singular are still compatible with our various senses of becoming.

EPILOGUE

Figure 11. Windmills on Kegnæs

Since October 2017

Since I left the field, everyday life has gone on for both myself and my interlocutors. In this epilogue I will sketch some of the developments that took place for central people who appeared in this thesis. Silvia, Vasile and Adam visited my husband and me in Copenhagen in December 2017, and I then had a chance to catch up on their lives. Otherwise, I have been in occasional contact with some of my interlocutors, mainly on Facebook Messenger. In April 2019, when I was myself in Romania, I had a chance to visit Anca (from the knitting club), when she was at home with the parents in her hometown in Romania. This also gave me an opportunity to catch up on people's lives.

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Shortly after I left the field, Silvia was fired from her factory job. When I spoke with her on the phone about this, she told me that she was not too dissatisfied with being fired, as

this gave her an opportunity to start something new. Later, she took up training as a social- and health service assistant. Vasile continued the work at the farm, and when I last time heard of him in April 2019, he was still working at the farm. I never heard anything about a pregnancy.

Ionut moved away from the house on the farm and found a girlfriend. When I last heard of his job situation in December 2017, he was still working at the farm. In January 2018, Dorina returned to work at the factory after her maternity leave. In May 2018 however, she quit because she did not get on with the boss. In the late summer of 2018, she was still looking for a new job, and was awaiting an upcoming holiday in Romania. She sent me multiple pictures of the daughter, and the cake she had made for the daughter's birthday in the day care in Sønderborg.

Following his aspirations, Andrei managed to leave the farm. He took up a cooking-training course instead. When I was last in contact with him in February 2018, he was planning to start working in a restaurant. He married a Romanian girl from the Neo-Protestant Church and sent me multiple photos from their wedding ceremony. I congratulated him, commented on the beautiful photos, and he replied to me in the Facebook Messenger text: 'I'm happy that I finally received from God such a wonderful person, who is a blessing for me' (*Mă bucur că am primit de la Dumnezeu însfarsit o persoană atât de minunata, care este o binecuvântare pentru mine*).

Roxana and the two children moved back to the house in Romania in the summer of 2018. When I was in contact with her in August 2018, they were waiting for Mirei's return. He was still working in Denmark. In her Facebook Messenger texts full of emoji smileys, she wrote that they were very happy to be back in Romania. Mirei's suffering and endurance in Denmark seemed to have resulted in the realisation of their dream of moving back to Romania in the house they had been constructing for years.

I continued my life as a PhD student and spent time in both Denmark and Scotland. Occasionally, I have been contacted by Danish journalists who wanted me to speak in the media about my project. I accepted one request from a Danish journalist. On 6 December 2018 I went "on air" on the Danish radio programme *P1 Orientering* to speak about my project.

I was quite nervous, which I think came from the political nature of the public debate on migration and my concerns about being "cornered" with questions. Luckily, the journalists gave me a pleasant experience. From December 2018 – June 2019, I took leave of absence from my studies at St Andrews University and worked instead as a counsellor in the Royal Danish Embassy in Bucharest during Romania's first presidency of the European Council. This was a tremendous experience. Shortly after I returned from Bucharest, my mother passed away from cancer.

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Appendix
LIST OF ORGANISATIONS INTERVIEWED

In Denmark

Agricultural colleges and companies
- *Landbosyd* (agricultural association)
- *Agrinord* (agricultural association)
- *LandboUngdom* (countryside association for young people)
- *SEGES, Landbrug & Fødevarer* (Danish Agriculture & Food Council)
- *Agrojob Denmark* (recruitment company)

Agricultural schools
- *Danske Landbrugsskoler* (national association of agricultural schools)
- *Grindsted Landbrugsskole* (agricultural college)
- *Gråsten Landbrugsskole* (agricultural college)

Labour market partners
- *3F Vojens* (labour union)
- *3F Kongeaaen* (labour union)
- *Gartneri-, Land- og Skovbrugets Arbejdsgivere* (Employers for Horticulture, Agriculture and Forestry)

Regional and local organisations
- *Grænseforeningen* (border association for the border between Denmark and Germany in Southern Jutland)
- *Sønderborg Iværksætterservice* (municipal entrepreneurship service)
- *Udvalget for Landdistrikter, Sønderborg Kommune* (municipal council for rural districts)
- *Landsbylaug*, Kær peninsula (village council)
- *Landsbylaug*, Kegnæs (village council)
- *Kegnæs Friskole* (private school)
- *Kegnæs Brandstation* (fire brigade)
- *Kegnæs Landbrugsmuseum* (agricultural museum)
- *Østeuropæisk Børnehjælp* (NGO)
- *Dansk Landbrugsmuseum* (national agricultural museum)

In Romania

Agricultural colleges and companies
- *Liceul Tehnologic Agricol "Mihail Kogălniceanu", Miroslava* (agricultural college)
- *Liceul Tehnologic "Haralamb Vasiliu" Podu Iloaiei, Iași* (agricultural college)
- *Agrojob Denmark Iași* (recruitment company)

Regional and local organisations
- *Radio Iași*
- *Muzeul Etnografic al Moldovei, Iași* (ethnographic museum)