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STRUGGLES AGAINST PRECARITY: CHALLENGES IN GERMANY FOR TURKISH NEWCOMERS

The Case of Migrants' Experiences in Call Center Work

Submitted by

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1 INTRODUCTION

“we know things with our lives and we live that knowledge, beyond what any theory has yet theorized.” (MacKinnon, 2007, p. 23)

In the last decades, precarious work has become a more prominent subject in academic and policy debates. No doubt, Guy Standing's book (2011) “The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class” increased the popularity of the concept by describing an increasing part of world population as a new social class becoming precarious in a context of globalization and economic neoliberalism. Many theoreticians have emphasized the socio-economic changes in North America and Western Europe since the 1970s and its effect on major changes in the work regulation, production and organization (Jessop, 1994; Barbier, 2004; 2011a; Vosko, 2006). In their efforts to understand forms of precarity in work organization, they have highlighted the initiation of neoliberal labor market reforms which led to a decrease in the importance of the standard employment relationship (Duell, 2004a; Standing, 2011; Barbier, 2011a). The Standard Employment Relationship (SER) is representing full-time permanent employment, a fixed wage, benefits and regulatory protections. Rodgers & Rodgers (1989) in their research for the ILO¹ on precariousness in labour market regulation emphasize the decline in norms such as regular wage and permanent work, which are among the Standard Employment Relationship (SER) forms, and indicate that precarious forms of employment have become visible. However, there was no clear statistical measure of ‘precarious employment’ and instead one of the indicators extensively used for measuring was ‘atypical employment’ which differentiates temporary from permanent contracts (Laparra, 2004b, p.15–17).

Duell (2004a, p.10) explains how, a couple of years later, Rodgers and Rodgers extended this measure to include uncertainty regarding the continuity of employment, individual and collective control over working conditions, income, working hours and level of social

¹ ILO (International Labor Organization - International Labor Organization) is an institution established for the purpose of developing and advancing standards in labor laws and practices. Its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland.

protection, protection against unemployment and insufficient income or economic vulnerability. In this operationalization several dimensions are examined and considered in how far they underwent flexibilization, leading to an understanding of how their degrees of flexibility go hand in hand. There is a range of flexible-precariousness from the upper level of highly skilled workers to the lower level of atomized individuals held at low wages (Noack & Vosko, 2011b). An important point to note here is that these forms not only create work-based inequalities, but this precariousness due to flexibilisation can interlink with inequalities in social context and social position, gender and race (Manolchev, Saundry & Lewis, 2018).

As the Polish sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman (2000) argues, these new forms of capitalism, the neo-liberal conditions, not only created precarious work conditions but additionally they led to precarious life conditions. He emphasizes that it is necessary to consider carefully how the instruments of power interact with the conditions of economic exploitation and submission (2000, p.48-52). Further he says that precarious conditions created new forms of subjectivation and, as an important aspect of this subjectivation, immigrants as a group can easily be in the more insecure positions in society and become subjects of precarity (see also Standing, 2014). The academic discussion shows that the term 'hyper-precarity' is used to describe the more precarious position of immigrants in the work life, especially in Western Europe (Lewis et Al. 2015).

Immigration is a complex process both legally and with regards to individual lives, therefore the complexity of immigrants' legal statuses in the labor market and society more broadly becomes a determining factor for their chance to succeed. If immigration law and labor laws are not well adapted to migrants' and the labor markets situation, the vulnerable status of immigrants can make them obliged to work in even more insecure positions in their country of migration (Fudge, 2011c). Especially based on current research in Canada (Frenette & Morissette, 2005) and Germany (Schittenhelm, Schmidtke & Weiß, 2014a; Mayer, 2018a) it can be shown that highly-skilled migrants are generally employed in jobs where they are less-skilled or over-skilled in the country they immigrated to. As an important resource for the labor market, the fact that highly skilled immigrants work in their area of expertise and skills in the labor market, poses questions about the reasons behind this situation. In order to understand the adaptation mechanism of the existing expertise and skills of highly educated immigrants to the country of immigration I will follow Bourdieu's (2010) cultural capital theory. In the current economic and social order, the use of cultural capital has great importance and Bourdieu's

theory is crucial to help us understand the role of individual qualities - from attitudes to worldviews, educational certificates to social networks. Bourdieu (1986) analyses the meanings of these dispositions for general relations of power within society from a transnational perspective.

This is where I start my inquiry and ask in which ways do migrant workers experience precarity? What are the characteristics of their employment patterns that could be embedded into the latest academic debates on precarious labor? My aim here is two-fold: first, to narrow down these broader questions I will focus on migration as a biographic rupture which makes it necessary to transfer cultural capital. What is the role of migration in this process of precarity? My second aim then will be to analyze what kind of limitations and feelings precarity creates in the lives of workers, beyond their work spaces.

In order to elaborate on these questions in more detail, as my study group I will focus on Turkish newcomer workers of the last 10 years in Germany. According to research conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute, In the last decade the number of people who migrated from Turkey (especially to Germany) has visibly increased. While in 2017, the number of migrants was 113,326 in total, in 2018 it increased by no less than 27.7% to reach 323,918 people. Two out of five people who migrated from Turkey were in the age group of 20-34 year olds while also the percentage of women increased from 37% in 2017 to 42% in 2018 (TUIK, 2019). Considering these numbers, an important breaking point of this remarkable increase seems to be the military coup in 2016. On 15 of July, 2016 Turkey experienced an attempted military coup which failed. Shortly after, the government declared a State of Emergency which continued for two years. Over the course of this period, a number as high as 6081 academics were dismissed from their jobs due to the so-called Decree Laws. Among the academicians dismissed were 406 academics who had signed the Academics for Peace declaration against human rights violations in the Kurdish provinces (Akgönül & Öztürk, 2017). As a result of the economic fluctuations experienced in the current political conjuncture, it has become more and more difficult for well-trained and educated people to find jobs in their area of expertise. An additional factor leading to increased migration is the government's pressure on individuals and organizations conducting scientific research or active in business and culture.

As my field of study, I chose the four call centers Convergys, Sykes, Booking and Arvato / Majorel² in Berlin. Recent academic studies show that the telecommunications service sector as a highly competitive business area often linked to outsourcing is very open to precarity (Matos, 2012). Call centers usually provide information, technical support or operate in the area of product sale, and can be connected to many different sectors such as banks, insurance companies, shoe companies or telecommunication providers. Call center employees must follow a number of established discursive and emotional procedures such as not being rude, using positive words, engaging with customers and being empathetic (Matos, 2012). The help lines which can also provide support in different languages are overseen by international employees or subcontractor companies striving for profit maximization. Due to the location and international population of some cities, and because labor costs are lower, customer service activities are moved from one place to the other. Due to these features, Call-Centers have been used in recent research as an example of economic globalization and mobility (Costa & Costa, 2017a, p. 5-7). The companies I focused on in my research, Convergys' "Nike" and "Facebook" projects, and Sykes' "PlayStation" project, all provide call-center works outsourced from US-American companies. Arvato / Majorel's "Facebook" project is different from the other call centers because the main services offered are not typical call-center tasks and therefore one-to-one communication with customers is more limited. Employees here work on checking content from Facebook's social media platforms according to the company's ethical communications policy, decide which accounts are fake ones and which ones belong to real people, or provide support to customers who lost their passwords. This so-called content moderation job includes checking complaints about content on Facebook as to whether they include a number of categories such as violence, hate speech, bullying, nudity, harassment, suicide and self-injury, terrorism, spam, unauthorized sell etc. The task of the Content Manager then is to decide whether this content can stay online or not, in the latter case delete it or add an "over 18" content warning. The content controlled by Content Managers and the possible effects of this content on their psychology have come to the fore in recent media coverage in the US-online magazine The Verge (2019a) and the German weekly political commentary magazine Der Spiegel

² The company which is part of the Berthelsmann Group changed its name from Arvato to Majorel in 2019. Since Arvato/Majorel is part of a bigger conglomerate of service sector companies of the same name, for better recognition I continue to use its old name alongside the new one.

(2017b). Content management centers not only exist in Germany and The US, but also have been reported to operate in countries like India, the Philippines³, and Poland.

As a former employee of a call center myself I noted the high percentage of highly skilled Turkish newcomers as workforce in these companies. Since it was impossible for me to find a job in a field more related to my studies which required no German skills, my personal experience at the call-center company I was able to work in for three and a half years in my native language gave me a another perspective to look at the work conditions common in call centers and provided me with many contacts in the field. Conversations with my co-workers and other newcomers employed in similar conditions made me notice patterns of employment structures which further stirred my interest in theories of precarity.

My thesis will be structured in five parts. First, in order to situate the subject of this study, in the following chapter I will introduce the theoretical framework and perspectives which inspired and guided my analysis. Based on a review of the current academic debates relevant to perspectives on precarious employment and work-related precasiousness, in the same chapter I will also focus more more specifically on the transformation of cultural capital linked to processes of migration. Chapter Three details the methodology chosen as well as the motivation behind choosing a qualitative approach and traces the research process in more detail. This chapter also discusses sampling and access to the study area and respondents as well as the data collection process and design of the interviews. The Fourth chapter reports on findings from eleven semi-structured interviews and analyzes them in relation to the literature and earlier research discussed in Chapter Two. The last chapter finally draws a conclusion based on the research questions and discusses objectives for potential future reseach.

³ The 2018 documentary movie “The Cleaners” has made the phenomenon of content management for social media platforms and the problematic issues surrounding this particular service industry known to a wider public.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Chapter Outline

This chapter seeks to elucidate the concept of precarious employment and migrant precarity with a two-fold objective. In the first part, the primary aim will be to explain the foundation of the formation of precarious working conditions and to analyze the changing production system, work organization, and regulation. By providing relevant academic debates on precarity as background information, this section will lay the foundation for how one should understand that there is a precarious work condition and the dimensions of precarity.

In the second part of this chapter, the aim will be to examine migrants who have legal and institutional limitations, on how easily they can work in vulnerable positions. One of the reasons why migrants find themselves in these positions is the difficulty to convert from their personal cultures.

2.1 ALL THAT IS SOLID “MELTED” INTO AIR⁴: BECOMING PRECARIAT

“There followed, on the birth of mechanization and modern industry in the last third of the eighteenth century, a violent encroachment like that of an avalanche in its intensity and its extent. All bounds of morals and nature, of age and sex, of day and night, were broken down. Capital celebrated its orgies.” (Marx, 1996, p. 240)

The rise of neo-liberalism, with its ability to move commodities, its productive capacities, and the conditions of spatiality has dramatically changed the general working conditions in the industrialized societies of North America and Western Europe. In fact, the 1970s economic

⁴ Here I reconstructed Marshall Berman's book title “All That Is Solid Melts Into Air” which is influenced by the quote of "All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind" in the communist manifesto, written by Marx and Engels in 1848. By referring to Berman's use of Marxist texts my intention was to identify the self-destructive aspects of the current economic system within a changing framework of capitalism.

crisis marked a turning point for capital in the labor and commodity markets. In response to this crisis, an economic wave known as “the new capitalism” evolved (Sennett, 2006a). The term “new,” however, does not mean that the previous system radically transformed into a completely different type of capitalism. It does mark the observation that capitalism has entered a new phase in order to sustain itself (2006a, p. 19). The decline in the mass demand for goods, as well as the complexity and diversification of goods have made it necessary to enter into the new phase. After the reign of Keynesian macroeconomics, this new phase came with a close connection to factors such as economic development, globalization, and flexibility in former stable work conditions. This affected three important dimensions of work: work regulation, production and work organization (Castells, 1996a, 1998; Harvey, 1982).

2.1.1 AN OVERVIEW TO ROOTS OF PRECARITY

The new Post-Fordist mode of production encouraged subcontracting and the rise of the service sector, while abandoning the employment-enhancing policies of states and pushing them to support a market-based understanding. The main feature of this political style was to abolish all national and international regulations restricting financial movements, in order to force the state to give up its social policies for public interest, and to create a self-functioning market mechanism by capitalizing globalization, and see its spread all over the world (Levy, 2017c, p. 483-510). Subsequently, a significant transformation in production formed and the nature of labor class relations ensued. At the same time, basic values and principles of capitalism remained in place as important impulses, such as the orientation towards profit and productivity, the possibility of unlimited capital accumulation, and free competition. In the new era, capital owners sought to avoid the risks of over-production:

“The situation of present-day capitalism is fundamentally different. In the current conjuncture, capital prefers, when possible, to bypass the risky business of production. Simplifying the circuit of accumulation, investors find profit in the buying and selling of money and of new financial products that commodify risk—thereby avoiding dependence on labor, whose role is in any case further reduced by new technologies.” (Fraser, 2013, p. 124)

As Fraser states, the need for capacities emerged to produce a variety of products at the same time rather than a series of products or overproduction. Unnecessary production was to be avoided, while the importance of flexible, demand- and order- based small-scale production capacity increased. Companies sought to recruit exactly the number of workers needed

according to current demands, and letting them go as soon as demands decreased. This tactic helped to decrease labor costs since unnecessary production was cut and storage costs for produced goods reduced.

The necessity to accommodate work to required demands has become a new guiding principle. The increasing flexibility, simplification of accumulation, and decentralization of production has also decreased the industries' dependence on paid labor (whose role diminished with advancing technological developments). Josef Esser and Joachim Hirsch (1989a), in their critic of Fordism, emphasize the change in the relationship between workers and their work. According to these authors (1989a, p. 417-420), workers are required to respond rapidly to changing demands in employment, which have also changed the structure of work organizations. In order to keep up with demands, the production process was fragmented in order to shift workers quickly from one job to another without too much cost (Standing, 2011, p. 30). Thus, a new part-time and subcontracting system in the production process was created. The former predominant Standard Employment Relationship (SER), meaning full-time and unlimited employment, transformed into temporary (part-time and limited) forms of employment (Duell, 2004a). In addition to wage workers, self-employed workers, trainees, care workers, students, and unemployed persons entered a similar transformation process. The demolition of old institutional structures with the replacement of flexible organizations, has led to three social deficiencies according to Sennett (2006a). These include the foundation of reduced informal trust among workers, low institutional loyalty, and the weakening of institutional knowledge. Likewise, work regulations and the quality of authority and control also changed (2006a, p. 63-69). In contrast to bureaucratic rigid chains of command, companies developed the idea that a flexible working life will increase freedom (as cited in Kalleberg & Vallas, 2017d, p.5). The single authority figure to which workers could organize against disappeared. With a multi-layered umbrella of managers in charge, it became much more difficult for workers to see and address their working conditions to a single individual. This division in many professions, has led to the transformation of hierarchies and changed the understanding of authority. Social status became more related to a person's profession. Those with a higher status were those individuals closer to governance (Goldthorpe, 1997a). However, this status system crystallized in this "new" capitalistic system. This division in many professions has led to the transformation of hierarchies and understanding of status (Wright, 2016; Savage et al., 2013a).

2.1.2 THE FORMATION OF THE PRECARIOUS CLASS' CONSCIOUSNESS

The 21st century witnessed increased technological innovations and transforming conditions of spatiality (friction of distance). Not only were relations to production and distribution transformed, but also class consciousness, class structure, and workers' relations to the state. Increasing inequalities, the power of capital over labor and fragmentation, and varying statuses among workers based on education and skills, occupation, ethnicity and citizenship, gender and age shaped the existing class structure (Bottero, 2004c, p. 985-987).

Many social and economic scientists have proclaimed the 'death of class' in the 1990s (Pakulski & Waters, 1996b, p. 4-10), and social scientist Guy Standing (2016a) has even described the birth of a new class:

“We are in the middle of a global transformation, the painful construction of a global market economy. In the initial period dominated by financiers and rent seekers, a new global class has taken shape: the precariat” (2016a, para.1).

Standing defines the 'precariat' as a class separate from the 'working classes' or 'proletariat' (2011, p. 6). The term proletariat refers to a group of workers with long-term contracts, stable working conditions, fixed working hours and alternative employment at the local level.

Standing points out that since these characteristics no longer apply, the new class of workers should have a new label. Standing also mentions that in addition to being different from traditional socio-economic classifications, the precariat is still a class in the formation process (2016a). The precariat represents a global class of people increasing in number and who even lack even of the smallest job security despite having qualifications. This includes workers who fear being pushed out of the market, have no guarantee of regular income or permanent employment, and are exploited in harsh market competitions (2011, p. 9) Employees in the service sector for example, which are often marked by flexible employment, are included in this new class of the precariat. However migrants, women and even those employed in sectors traditionally associated with higher security and status, like academia, are also included (Grosser et al., 2008).

Whether the so-called precariat can be considered a new class or whether the label represents a social dissolution within the traditional class structure, is among high debate in Marxist circles (Doogan, 2009).

One Marxist critique put forward by Erik Olin Wright, criticized Standing's reconceptualization of class within the precariat as a contradictory conceptualization (2016). In order to differentiate the precariat as a separate working class, Standing describes the group with distinct material interests from those of the working class (2011). Wright argues (2016, p.124) that this is not always the case, and that although material interests are defined, there is it is generally not possible to define class borders. According to Wright, people in a particular class should share largely similar optimal strategies. However, in the case of the precariat, its different segments, as described by Standing, share different strategies with survival and progression strategies. Wright contradicts that there is no division in the class of precariat and he renounces the study as an inaccurate analysis (2016).

Richard Seymour also brought forward a critique of the precariat and found Standing's analysis to be a populist interpellation (2014b, p. 962). Seymour (2014b) argued that precarity, rather than affecting only a limited segment of society, represents radical majoritarian politics with an anticapitalistic core:

“So, what does it mean to be working class today? Who can speak for “the class”? In a way it may actually be the most marginal and precarious workers, the disposable young, de-skilled and casual labourers, migrant workers and others at the bottom of the pile. For precarity is something that isn't reserved for a small, specialized group of people – “the precariat” or whoever. It spreads. It affects us all. The whip of insecurity disciplines even those who were recently comfortable.” (para.11)

The following thesis aims to draw on the notion of the precariat in the sense of “being precarious” instead of the precariat as a social class of its own. The status of those who experience the consequences of their exposure to precariousness is reference. In other words, people who work in the form of precarious employment are vulnerable to being precarious workers and experience the consequences of precarity. In addition, the class consciousness (or lack of) argumentations, especially on how the class consciousness can affect the strategies of combating precarious conditions, and how this can have an impact on unionization and collective acts will also be analyzed.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF PRECARIETY

The development of the term precariat and its use for sociological analysis is recent and the term has been re-shaped under neoliberal economic conditions. However, the origin of the word is much older. The first record of the word “precarious” in a dictionary dates to the 1600s and it has undergone significant changes in meaning and usage since this first entry. The word “precarious” is derived from the Latin word “prex” or “prec” (genitive precis) meaning “prayer” or “obtained through prayer” (etymology, n.d, para.1). According to the Oxford dictionary, its meaning extended to “the right to occupy precarious land” (“precarious”, n.d, para.2). In this prayer context, it was later used to describe the way in which people not protected by the law and who were not granted citizenship or litigation rights, were dependent on God or the land owners, “dependent on the will of another,” to a certain extent (“precarious,” n.d, para.2).

In the 20th century, the term precarious became more commonly used in the exact sense as referring to a physical uncertainty, meaning a vulnerable position rather than just momentary physical danger. After the late 1970s, the term gained a new meaning and was used as the combination of precarious (adjective) and the (noun) proletariat (Standing, 2011). This new usage accelerated the popularity of the term precarity in social movement activism and critical theories (Biglia & Bonet Marti, 2014c).

In 1960s Italy, the term used as “*precarito*” often described the changing working conditions and the state of temporary work without social security (Barbier, 2004, p. 11). In the same way, in France, Bourdieu used the term “*précarité*” much more specifically for his research in Algeria in the early 1960s. He referred to the social divide that separated permanent workers from temporary and seasonal workers ‘*les travailleurs intermittents*’ (Bourdieu et al., 1963, p. 361). In Germany, the term “*Prekarität*” referred to temporary workers and unemployed people with no hope of social integration (Barbier, 2004, p. 11-12). However, in many different countries and in many literature studies, precariat was used together with different conceptualizations. Sociological approaches to the precariat notion also have shown different orientations and among these, two important forms have become prominent. The first of these is the one combining economic studies and precariat as a notion to explain the increasing precarious working conditions in the last three-four decades. The second form is the approach

of contemporary thinking that combines modernity studies and ontological studies, and the basis of life course studies (Mayer, 2000a). Although these two macro perspectives seem to be separate, they are complementary to each other.

In the late 1970s and 80s, “*précarité*” entered academic vocabulary in French sociological research as a concept linked mostly to poverty instead of employment. Agnès Pitrou (1978) pioneered the term in France. Pitrou (1978) emphasized the features that defined *précarité* as: the absence of labor market skills; scarce as well as irregular financial resources; instable or unsatisfactory housing conditions; health problems; uncertainty about the future number of children; relative lack of social links; and the precarious balance in terms of the life of the couple (1978, p.51-64).

Later, C. Offredi (1988) emphasized the importance of both poverty and employment as dimensions to her concept. According to Offredi, being in a precarious position also meant experiencing poverty in one sense. She underlined that poverty related dimensions should be first checked in the precarity analysis. Shortly after Offredi's work, another important work in the French debate was proposed by Schnapper (1989b). Schnapper focused on social policy and she questioned how working conditions became precarised based on contract systems and working laws. Schnapper (1989b) emphasized the categories of employment in labor law, and tried to understand how precarity entered labor law with different employment statuses. These employment statuses especially focused on jobs that transformed to “non-status” jobs, which was based more on private open-ended contracts and fictitious jobs. Schnapper concluded that for a long time there were no provisions for the precarious labor situation in labor law or anything defining this new employment (Barbier et al., 2004, p. 10).

Precarity then became a widely used concept in the social sciences in the 1990s. These cited studies added new dimensions to the progressive precarious employment concept between early to late 1990s (Schnapper, 1989b; Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999; Bourdieu, 1993).

2.2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW: PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT

The following section presents an introduction to the dimensions of the precarious employment concept. As a relatively new field of study, many different researchers working on precarious employment concepts created their personal dimensions. Therefore, a conceptual guide is determined to create standardize dimensions such as: employment instability (temporary contracts, unstable roles), non-standard working arrangements (unpredictable schedules, flexible hours, etc.), low material benefits (low income, lack of benefits, etc.), erosion of workers' rights and social protection, lack of employee representation (e.g. trade union representation), and imbalanced interpersonal power relations with employers and colleagues (Rodgers, 1989; Kalleberg, Reskin, & Hudson, 2000b; Van Aerden et al., 2014d; Bosmans & Lewchuk et al., 2017e).

Concepts of employment conditions

According to these dimensions, the contract system based on Vosko's research (2006) on employment standards will be focused first. Vosko's focus is on forms of flexible-insecurity and its deterioration of standard employment relations with the dramatic increase of atypical contracts and its effects on workers. Vosko (2006) emphasizes that the proportion of temporary part-time, temporary full-time or freelance workers in Canada has increased by 50% since 1970. According to the numbers, one in every five workers in Canada is employed under these conditions. Vosko emphasizes that flexibility and uncertainty in work contracts creates a high risk for job loss and drives workers to precariousness (2011b, p. 58-70). In the same way, Rubery and Grimshaw in their relatively new study (2016b) on precarious work and the commodification of the employment relationship in Britain and Germany, have pointed out that temporary and open-ended contracts provide the ease of hiring and also firing employees to the employers in these countries (p. 236)

Another precarious employment factor, which comes from functional flexibility, is the ease of employers to change worker job roles. If employers have a one-sided ability to demand change in worker's tasks, the control of employees over their work lives is reduced and undermines the concept of self-actualization through work (Van Aerden et al., 2014d).

In their study on employment strain and activation among temporary agency workers in Canada, Bosman & Lewchuk et al. (2017e) emphasize that in cases of non-standard employment, the terms and conditions of employment and this changeability remain uncertain and is an important precarious form of employment. They say that this uncertainty creates an employment fragility, and the increasing workload that can lead to changeable positions which are stressful experiences regarding the nature of the employment relationship (2017e, p. 3-4).

As mentioned before, functional flexibility manifests not only in work contracts, but also in the working hours. Many studies show that temporary workers have fewer regular working hours than permanent workers, and these working hours can often change according to labor demands (Aletraris, 2010a; Kalleberg, 2000c, 2011d) Uncertain business hours are an important factor affecting employee short-term and long-term plans. Employee programs rely on the needs of client-employer which means they must work flexible hours. (Bosman et al., 2016c). Collins and Murphy (2016d) analyzed the low pay economy in Ireland, and emphasized the unpredictable employer scheduling and uncertainty as an amount of weekly required work. According to them, uncertainty has become a normal way of working in Ireland. They demonstrate through their study that the uncertainty of working hours not only affect employee working conditions, but also their private lives, free days, and holiday plans making their lives less predictable (2016d, p. 77).

Another dimension explained will be employee wages, which is a popularly studied theme in precarious employment (Pocock et al 2004d; Hanniff & Lamm, 2005a). Unpredictability and low wages versus the increasing amount of work to be done, have created unequal working conditions. According to Pocock et al (2004d), an employer's ease in hiring and firing workers based on temporary contracts have caused employees to accept obligations towards unpaid trainings and increased work demand unproportioned to their wages. Hanniff and Lamm's study (2005a) on two call centers in New Zealand, emphasize the productivity payments offered to motivate workers to be more productive, so called "bonuses". In their research, they analyze that these bonuses are not obligatory for employers, depend on worker's contracts and its decision on frequency belonging to the employer'. These bonus offers often lead to involuntary work without pay (p. 326-327).

Concepts of Employment Relations

After emphasizing the concepts of employment conditions, concepts more related to employment relations will be explained. In the last decades, there has been a decline in the average length of time a person spends with his or her employer (Auer & Cazes, 2000d, p. 379). Similarly, Standing mentions that working temporary and insecure jobs create a lack of work-based identity, resulting in feelings of alienation to the workplace and colleagues. While it is difficult to establish long-term relationships in the workplace, relationships outside the workplace are also very difficult to form (2011, p. 12-13).

Worker's representation regarding their rights and social protection are also an important factor considered in this thesis. As mentioned earlier, many workers have partial labor law protection, especially since temporary contracts reduce this labor protection because of its temporality resulting in fewer binding sanctions in the contract articles (Vosko, 2006). The political deregulation and labor protection of market institutions, which enable the spread of precarious employment as a result of numerous economic, social and political factors, and company level staffing policies, support the employment uncertainty (Bosmans et al., 2016c, p. 7-12). Organizational protections have given employers greater discretion, not only in wage-setting, but also in the use of "flexible" or non-standard business arrangements.

Another important deprivation created by the non-standard working system deals with union relations. Many studies focusing on labor unions have shown that factors such as a poor workforce regulations and limited worker protection legislations have reduced access to union representation (Pocock et al., 2004d; Hyman & McCormick, 2017f). According to Pocock's research on the effects of atypical work in the Australian labor market, those working with union memberships have complicated feelings about trade unions (2004d, p. 4). While some workers might be afraid to join unions, some workers did not want to be marginalized at work for their union membership. However, many found their union membership very useful. An important point mentioned in the study, is that similar responses to emotions about unionizing at work were also present 20 years ago, but the work conditions have changed. Pocock points out that there is a "difference in perspective of different kind of workforces." For example, between permanent and temporary workers and shows this as an important factor affecting unionization in the workplace (Pocock et al., 2004d, p. 20-25). Likewise, union membership among part-time and temporary workers appears to be much lower than that of normal full-time employed workers (Biebeler & Lesch 2006b; European Commission 2014e). Considering the

studies mentioned above and results of the European Commission's data, the collection power loss of unions has an important impact on decreases in collective representation and collective bargaining. It can be said that with less union representation, the social, economic and psychological interests of the employee erodes.

These conclusions are inferences from case studies made for more Western European Countries and the Global North. The specific focus of this thesis has been directed to this area. Of course, not all of the dimensions come forth in these countries, but it should be considered that similar patterns can be seen in various countries. As earlier mentioned, these dimensions emerge as the elements obtained from studies indicating precarious working conditions. However, it is important to understand that when only one of the mentioned dimensions is seen clearly in a country when others are not, it does not mean that said country is free off precarious conditions.

2.2.2 THE ONES WITH PRECARIOUS LIVES

The second important precarity approach to consider is based on the effects of precarity on the individual's well-being. Since precarity is a notion closely related to both work and daily life, it would be quite inadequate to limit its analysis to the field of production alone. Peck (2010b) states that precarity is often associated with production but emphasizes that labor is not merely a commodity and therefore, simply cannot be related to demand. He points out Polanyi's concept of "embeddedness" (2013b, p. 1537-1540), and mentions that markets cannot effectively regulate labor alone. Markets need the support and mutual interaction of social relation networks.

At the beginning of the 1990s, researchers like Anthony Giddens (1991) took their work in this field one step further by focusing on the psychological effects on individuals as social actors. According to Giddens, social actors who increasingly take on more precarious positions in society perceive this consciousness of theirs to what Giddens refers as "ontological insecurity". In the same way, to the researcher Bauman (2000) states that the size of the economic growth and the weakening of stable institutional structures increases the insecurity and instable feelings of individuals. Therefore, Bauman says that these feelings have created insecurity against the worker's future, body and even to their self-being (2000, p. 160–161). These unstable life conditions have caused precarious feelings in individuals to permanently live in a "state of

flux,” referring to indefinite life conditions. This instability, as Bourdieu previously mentioned, weakens rather than strengthens the collective movement:

“Casualization profoundly affects the person who suffers it: by making the whole future uncertain, it prevents all rational anticipation and, in particular, the basic belief and hope in the future that one needs in order to rebel, especially collectively, against present conditions, even the most intolerable” (Bourdieu, 1998a, p. 82).

Bourdieu summarizes these precarious working conditions as "a mode of domination of a new kind" (1998a, p. 85) which is a structure that does not fit into the definitions of classical class struggle, it is ambiguous and therefore cannot be put into a single pattern.

According to Butler (2004e), the ambiguity in a precarious system creates a new network of norms. Butler mentions that the consequences for anyone not living in this normative system include the risk of exclusion, harassment and violence. As an example Butler analyzes the events on 11th of September, 2001 and explains that this situation was not only related to economic precarities, but is also "precarity is not a passing or episodic condition, but a new form of regulation that distinguishes this historical time" (2015a, p. 7). Butler concludes that the precarity has become a regime and "hegemonic mode of being governed and governing ourselves" (as cited in Kalleberg & Vallas, 2017d, p.4). According to Butler, the ones most affected by this regime are the ones in the most vulnerable position in society. On the other hand, Butler states that everyone is dependent on each other through social and material needs and that is why individuals have to “trust” each other through economic and political relations. Therefore, no one can be invulnerable and Butler says, “Everyone is precarious” (2012a, p. 170). However, Butler also states that some individuals are more precarious in this regime and it is impairing certain populations. The question here is, “who belongs to the precariat and who is more precarious?”

Standing, answers the question of who belongs to the precariat as “everybody, actually” (2011, p. 59). The reason for this is that even those who feel secure can become precarious in situations such as an economic crisis, war crisis...etc. Standing does emphasize that there is a distinction:

“Some enter the precariat due to mishaps or failings, some are driven into it” (2011, p. 59).

The results of researches like ESOPE (as cited in Barbier, 2011a)⁵ and EuroStat (as cited in Duell, 2004a)⁶ suggest that some segments of society may be in more precarious positions. Demographic characteristics in these studies women are compared to men, and young people are compared to older ages and migrants are observed in more precarious positions (2004a, p. 101-117). Some groups are observed to be more concentrated in some sectors and is referred to as marginalization. This not only affects unskilled people, but it can also affect people with certain levels of education defined as qualified.

Precarity is distributed through economic stratification and political measures in modern welfare society. Citizens can find themselves in a more precarious situation while fulfilling social expectations in order to not face the risk of becoming unemployed. Insecurity increases with the mechanisms of welfare states and western nation states (Lapara, 2004b; Barbier, 2004, 2011a). Fear has become more evident since precarity also affects well-educated, and relatively privileged groups. Precarity is a dynamic and constantly changing position in which one may be not called precariat today, but tomorrow may (Barbier, 2011a; Schierup & Jørgensen, 2017g). According to Standing, some people may confirm this situation, but some people may not question the precarious existence they are in. However, this does not change the fact that there is a precarious form of existence (2011).

The next section will describe immigrants or highly skilled migrants, who are the main target group of this study, as a “more precarious group.” Migration, a topic of its own, has a long history in the social sciences and is a phenomenon that needs to be discussed in its complexity. Nowadays, and often, immigrants are blamed and found responsible for the increase of precarious work while being victims of precarity themselves (Standing, 2011, p. 90). It is important to understand the fundamentals of their precarious work and the grounds that create precarious employment for them.

⁵ Precarious Employment in Europe: A Comparative Study of Labour Market Related Risks in Flexible Economies, final report published in 2004.

⁶ National statistics are treated by Eurostat Labour force surveys 1990s-2009.

2.3 EXPLOITATION OF HIGHLY SKILLED MIGRANTS IN PRECARIOUS WORK CONDITIONS

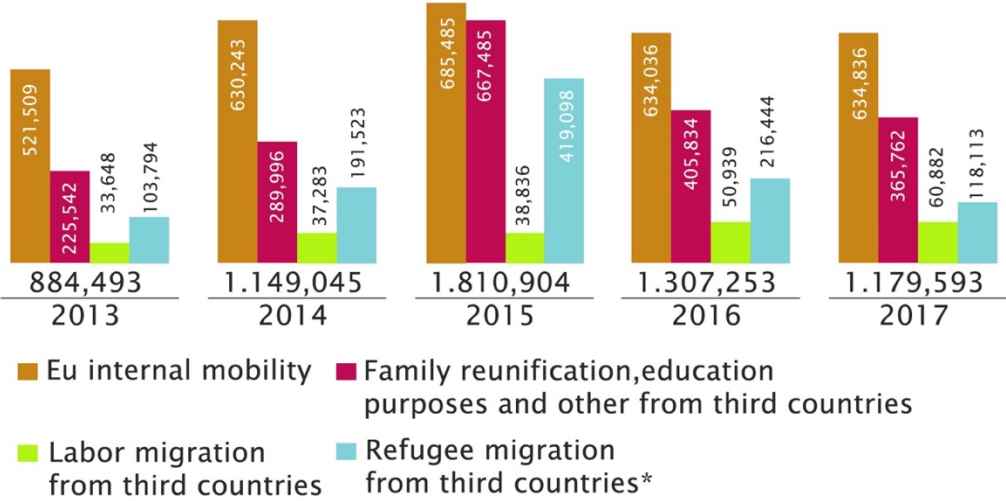
Migration to industrialized countries has always been a phenomenon of market-oriented globalization that increased after the 1970s and has grown with mass immigration (Schittenhelm & Schmidtke, 2011e). Between 1970 and 2013, the number of international immigrants in the world increased from 82 million to 232 million (United Nations, 2013c)⁷. Especially in the 21st century, the free movement of goods as well as the free movement of people became an important factor. As a part of the European Union integration process, the Maastricht Treaty introduced EU citizenship. In 1997, with the implementation of the Schengen Region, all citizens of one EU-Schengen Region country were granted the right to live and work in another EU-Schengen Region country. In 2004, particularly with the participation of Eastern European countries in the EU, the immigration rate to Western Europe increased (Kasperek, 2016e). According to Eurostat 2019 results (2019b): In 2017, 4.4 million people migrated to one of the EU-28 member states. Of the 4.4 million people mentioned, an estimated 2 million people were citizens of a non-EU countries; 1.3 million people were citizens of a different EU member states. Similarly, about 1 million people were thought to be returning nationals or nationals born abroad. Almost 11,000 people were in a stateless position. It should also be taken into the consideration that many undocumented immigrants are not considered in the numbers. Two key factors in the recent rapid increase in migration have been the 2008 financial crisis and the civil war in Syria that began in 2011 (Mayer, 2019c, para 1). Migrant mobility has continued to increase. Bearing this in mind, it should be noted that immigration is a highly complex process where a migrant's socio-economic and legal status in the labor market plays an important role.

According to the immigration figures (Mayer, 2018a, p.3-4) of Europe, there has been an important rise in the number of highly skilled immigrants. Highly qualified migrants have increased in demand in the international competitive market. Among the European countries, Germany has always received a large number of qualified immigrants. The country's highly skilled migrant figures surpass those of other EU nations such as Austria, France, and the Netherlands in the recruitment of labor from non-EU countries.

⁷ The International Migration Report 2013, prepared by the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

An important point, unlike post-war guest worker patterns where the demand for migrant labor is more general, is that the new wave of immigration has a much different profile in which it can be shifted rapidly to the developing sectors of the economy. The current economic system appreciates labor immigrants with education and specific skills. A study by the Bertelsmann Stiftung, based on the data from Germany’s Central Register of Foreign Nationals (AZR), found that skilled labor migration is increasing in Germany (see figure 1). More than 60 % of those immigrants are from EU countries with university degrees or have completed a vocational training (Mayer, 2018a, p. 3). The number of residence permits for workers from EU and non-EU countries has increased to 38,000 in 2015 and 60,000 in 2017. Family reunification appears to be an important reason for immigrating to Germany. In particular, the quality of incoming spouses is an important source of skilled labor. An increasing number of immigrants are coming to Germany as students and staying in Germany after completing their education (Mayer, 2019c). For example, in 2017, the number of immigrants on student visas that have continued to live in Germany after graduating was 9,217. These people have increased the number of skilled labor among immigrants (2019c, para 4).

Total migration of EU nationals and third-country nationals, by selected types of residence permit (2013–2017)



* Persons with a residence permit on humanitarian grounds, whose removal has been postponed or asylum applicants.

Figure 1: Total migration of EU nationals and third-country nationals, by residence permit (2013–2017). Adapted from BMI/BAMF (2015, 2016, 2016), BAMF (2017, 2018), by Mayer (2018a, p.3) retrieved from https://www.bertelsmannstiftung.de/fileadmin/files/Projekte/Migration_fair_gestalten/IB_Factsheet_Skilled_Migration_2017.pdf Copyright 2018 by Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Most recently the German parliament has discussed the immigration law package prepared by the coalition government under the leadership of Angela Merkel. Previously, employers were obligated to explain to the authorities that an employment position could not be done by a German or EU citizen in order to employ an applicant from abroad. However, a new law provides the opportunity for people who speak German, and have completed their education or a professional qualification certificate, to come to Germany for six months and seek employment or vocational training without any prior explanation. This visa is known as a “job-searching visa.” The two prerequisites for this visa are that applicants must have the necessary funding to sustain their living expenses for six months and they must submit their educational or professional qualification documents. With this new regulation, qualified labor migration is allowed in every field of business. Earlier legal arrangements only allowed qualified labor migration in occupied professions (2019d, para I).

Ironically, the demand for high-skilled immigrants continues to increase while their integration into the labor market remains inefficient. There is a serious inconsistency between their importance in the job market and their working conditions as well as professional careers (Kogan, 2004f).

2.3.1 TRANSFORMATION OF THE CULTURAL CAPITAL OF HIGHLY SKILLED MIGRANTS

Most research (Nowicka 2012b, 2018b; Frattini et al., 2017h) done in the past decade has underlined that large amounts of immigrants are working below their qualifications and for lower wages. With the guidance of employment agencies, immigrants are directed to low-paid and difficult-to-fill positions. Thus, they become both a cheap source of labor and a labor force to fill undesirable jobs (Stenning and Dawley 2009a; McCollum, Findlay, Coulter & Gayle, 2015b). Their educational background and existing work experience do not directly correspond with their desired income levels and employment (Frenette & Morisette, 2005). Immigrants, no matter how highly skilled they are, can be locked into precarious working conditions.

The bounded and limited status of immigrants makes it difficult for them to transfer their professional and educational skills into the market. Professional and educational certificates have a significant impact on entry for employment in Germany. However, immigrants with sufficient qualifications still have limited access to employment opportunities (Kreyenfeld &

Konietzka, 2002). It is important to examine how immigrants transfer their intercultural skills and attitudes across various geographies in a new social order. Highly skilled immigrants are expected to present their cultural capital in an international arena. Yet the criteria of professional and educational values in the country they immigrate to may differ from the value's experienced in their home countries (Nohl, Schittenhelm, Schmidtke & Weiß, 2014a).

Undoubtedly, Bourdieu (2010) is one of the most important persons to discuss how the value of cultural capital in the labor market changes in different countries, and even changes in different professional fields. In order to understand the working experiences of immigrants and how they are involved in the labor market, one needs to understand how their cultural capital, one of the most important keys to open doors in this market, is transferred. The concept further described to understand this difference utilizes Bourdieu's habitus concept and its reciprocal relation with cultural capital (2010). The concept of habitus is an important factor that allows one to understand the habits migrants bring to a new country, as well as how they develop these dispositions over time in a new social environment (Nowicka, 2015c, p. 9-12).

Bourdieu presents the habitus concept as an individual's attitudes, thoughts, intercultural encounters, symbolic relations between social actors, and the social praxis embedded in these complex structures. Habitus represents categories of habits based on the possessed capital that one owns. However, according to Bourdieu, "habitus, as the product of social conditionings, and thus of a history (unlike character), is endlessly transformed either in a direction that reinforces it when embodied structures of expectation encounters, or in a direction that transforms in harmony with these expectations or in a direction transforms it and for instance, raises or lowers the levels of expectations and aspirations" (1990, p.116).

In his major work 'The Forms of Capital', Bourdieu focuses on the relation of capital with not only accumulated labor, but on its relation to incorporated and embodied forms of it . His aim is to show how the inequality of social groups is organized by the perspective of political-economic structures as well as cultural and social structures (1986, p. 244-245).

Bourdieu does not simply conflate the social realm into a single form. According to him, there is a "first-level objectivity" created by the distribution of material resources and the economic, social cohesion of obtained goods. There is "the second-level objectivity," which is the form of mental and physical features functioning as symbolic images of the practical activities and behaviors (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 110-112).

Importantly, Bourdieu explains how in this second-level objectivity, the social production of reality is constantly reconstructing itself. Second-level objectivity represents habitus, referring to constructed and inherited values to make one believe that they are “natural” and “spontaneous” behaviors, postures, tastes or interests. Bourdieu tries to underline how these seemingly natural features are in fact socially constructed. According to Bourdieu, a person’s past and present circumstances and how they behave, move, or think are the result of their “practice of knowledge.” (1986, p.170-175). The situations based on one’s habits, the physical properties one owns, and the approval of one’s capital by a power authority all constitute one’s cultural capital:

“Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the *embodied* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the *institutionalized* state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee” (1986, p. 243).

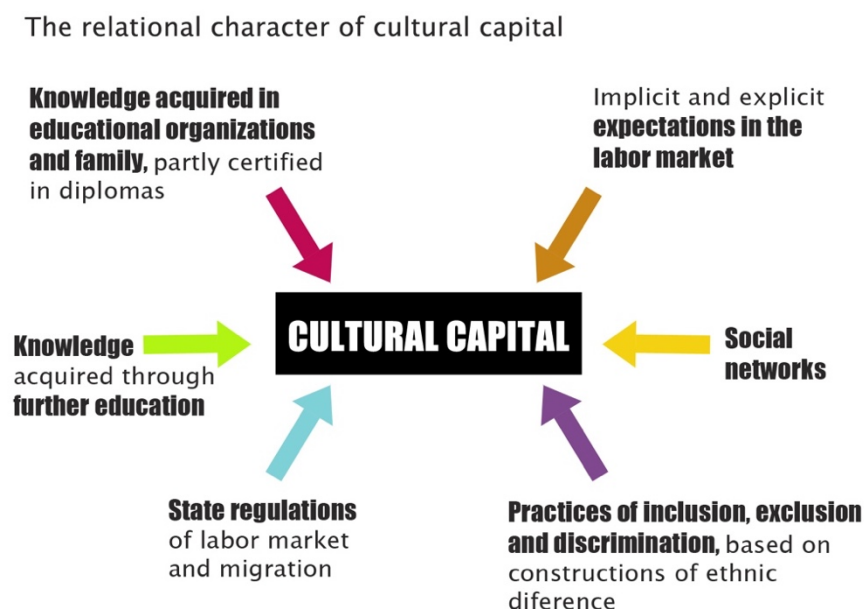


Figure 2: The relational Character of cultural capital. Adapted from Nohl, Schittenhelm, Schmidtke & Weiß (2014a, p. 48). Copyright 2014 by the University of Toronto Press.

According to Bourdieu (2000e), an immigrant's ability to carry their embodied states or institutionalized objectifications from their home country is one of the most important struggles of habitus and space changes. According to Bourdieu, there are differences between cultural capital possessed at a given time effectively by a person and cultural capital built at another time in another society. The tendencies, attitudes, and worldviews of individuals rather than qualifications can be evaluated differently within complex power systems. The knowledge and skills of immigrants also depend on the value of some notions of international capital in transnational situations (Nohl, Schittenhelm, Schmidtke & Weiß, 2014a). In Bourdieu's studies, the validity or transformability of educational certificates is an important function.

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Bourdieu emphasizes the notion of "quality of education" and states that it can vary from country to country. Depending on an immigrant's country of origin, the "quality of their education" can be judged poorly according to the immigrating country's judgements (Nohl, Schittenhelm, Schmidtke & Weiss, 2006c, p. 2-3). If the education level of migrants is not recognized by the country to where they are immigrating, it is difficult for the immigrant to transfer their cultural capital to the new chapter in their lives. According to data from *Bildung in Deutschland 2008*, the educational status of foreign-educated immigrants is significantly lower than that of German-educated immigrants and natives (as cited in Nohl, Schittenhelm, Schmidtke & Weiß, 2014a). A possible reason for that "may be seen in the inadequate employment or in an education which does not meet the expectations prevalent on the German labor market". Similarly, the analysis conducted by the German Federal Statistical Office reveals that immigrants between the ages of thirty-one and forty-five are less employed than their companions who were trained in Germany. In Germany, 28.87% of the population of qualified foreign-educated immigrants, do not seek or are not employed in the jobs for which

they qualify for. The non-employment rate of women is higher, with 40.38% of educated women being unemployed (Mayer, 2018a,p.4-6). The employment rate of immigrants with academic degrees is lower than that of Germans.

Similarly, the research conducted by Weiss (as cited in Nohl, Schittenhelm, Schmidtke & Weiß, 2014a, p.31-33) shows that foreign-educated migrants are employed in areas where they are over-qualified. 19.8% of immigrants with foreign education “work in basic professions” while only 2.75% of Germans or 6.21% of German-educated immigrants work in these areas. These numbers show that receiving education certificates abroad can causes migrants to be excluded from qualified positions in the German labor market. Moreover, even immigrants with German university degrees have lower job positions in the labor market than their native counterparts. This situation is not only due to their certificates not being recognized. If employers find it difficult or time consuming to judge foreign training, they may refrain from employing foreign trained personnel (p. 33).

2.3.2 AS AN EXPLOTATION OBJECTIVE: MIGRANT LEGAL STATUS

Immigrants based on their citizenship status, have often had “partial citizenship” and based on that “partial” social, cultural, political and economic rights. Depending on their legal status, positions like “less than permanent” or “less than full citizen” statuses on their social, economic, and cultural rights have changed (Fudge, 2011c). It can also be said that there are important differences between legal entitlements and societal practices. The fact that legal recognition problems cause big insecurities, like being labeled in an “illegal/irregular” migratory position, can worry one for the fear of being deported. Those who do not have documents that comply with immigration laws are removed from the normative system. However, there is a status of disadvantage between those with formal legality and citizens, to those undocumented immigrants since they have already been alienated from this system. The educational diplomas or work experiences that “illegal immigrants” have obtained from their countries lose validity when they are completely out of legal conditions to work in the foreign country. They have the right to find a job in very limited or illegal conditions. Likewise, refugees and asylum-seekers also must various criteria in the integration process with their limited legal statuses (Lewis, Dwyer, Hodkinson & Waite, 2015).

Legal Statuses of Highly Skilled Migrants

This section returns to the focus of this study, who are the immigrants in possession of a foreign education title acquired before migration and with legal access to the labor market in the host country. One of the groups mentioned are students, who are immigrants who have come to complete their higher education studies. Master studies have an advantage, allowing a maximum of 20 hours of work per week. Upon completion, graduates must find a job suitable in their professional field with a special “job seeking” visa for the duration of 18 months. The second group of immigrants, migrate with a special “blue card” visa due to pursue professional careers or who comes to Germany through a family reunification visa (BAMF, 2006d). For these immigrants, their visas depend on their work qualifications or marital status. Spouse-visa recipients, who seem more fortunate of course, at first are dependent on their spouse for obtaining the visa (BAMF, 2008a).

Likewise, in cases where the host country’s work permit or residence permit relies on employment, these migrant workers become more dependent to their employers. Skrivankova emphasizes that the “fewer options a worker has to change employer, the easier it is for an employer to put under pressure on as the worker in regards to performance, conditions of work, or terms of employment” (2006e, p. 222). The members of this group may be exposed to threats such as dismissal, withdrawal of sponsorship, disruption of family unity, and the financial support which allows them to exercise their basic working and living rights. In this case, these workers can become dependent on the institution or person guaranteeing their stay in the country. These workers may find themselves working in more precarious conditions, saying yes to what one can call emotional labor, or “caregivers” to their private lives (Waite, Lewis & Skrivankova, 2015d)

Could Union be a Combat Strategy against Precarity?

Lastly, the thesis focuses on the legal status of immigrants, and their length of stay in the host state which may affect engaging in union activities. For this study, it is necessary to narrow the circle to the immigrants, and analyze the relationship with unions and their strategy to cope with these conditions. The unionization rates of migrants, based on many different European country studies, have been found to be lower than those of natives (Arnholtz and Hansen, 2013;

Gorodzeisky and Richards, 2013e; Marino et al., 2015e). McKay et al. argues (2013f) that those who are more embedded in the local community and the labor market can gain more expectations for wages and working conditions, which increases the likelihood of participating in union activities. Another reason is that immigrant workers are generally less inclined to contact local unions if their earnings are much better than in their country of origin (Berntsen & Lillie, 2016f). Another reason, for the low trust in the unions is because the immigrant workers are afraid of losing their jobs (2016f, p.176).

Low union membership of immigrant workers is also due to the fact that they often agree to work under lower wages and poorer working conditions because they lack the information on working regulations of the country where they have immigrated (Rubery & Grimshaw, 2016b). At the same time, if the conditions in this country are better than in their own country, the workers in their home country become the “reference group” of immigrant workers (Refslund 2018c), and this may actually push the immigrant workers to accept working in precarious conditions (Refslund 2018c: 176).

This raises a key question under which institutional and organizational conditions a union can include immigrant workers to national labor market institutions such as collective bargaining organizations...etc. If the institutional and organizational environment is not sufficient enough to fully involve migrant workers, it makes it very difficult for migrant workers to involve themselves in these activities. Another reason for lower union membership showed by Refslund (2018c, p. 180) is the lack of employee representation in precarious employment, shorter-term contracts, and non-standard forms of work to disconnect workers from longer term, collective fighting strategies. For this reason, unions seem to have reduced their power under precarious working conditions. The union organization plays an important role, but the question is if the unions are to organize all workers against unfair employment conditions, including the special case of migrants?

German unions have long been arguing precarious employment and inconsistency of the traditional German legislation model to response the social market economies' working conditions (DGB 2007a). Unions are also calling for the development of the German labor market for access to social and employment rights, to prevent further spread of precarious employment. German unions, in order to influence precarious workers, are developing various information platforms (<http://ratgeber-ungesicherte-jobs.dgb.de/>) and advice booklets (Ver.di 2011f). Likewise in 2007, the regional organization of the DGB Oldenburg-Wilhelshaven,

opened the first "information offices for precarious workers" which aimed to reach both union members and non-union members (Bispinck & Schulten, 2011g, p. 28-30). However, one of the important deficiencies in all these examples that it does not include immigrants and it does not take into consideration of their barriers to reach these informations,

As Refslund mentioned in his case study on immigrants who were working precarious conditions in a fish processing plant and a demolition company in Denmark, his focus was on the union relations of immigrant workers. He emphasize that immigrants have little to no knowledge of the local labor market and they experience cultural and linguistic barriers, resulting in these barriers putting them in vulnerable positions (2018c: 14). He concludes that, unions must take into account more than one identity of migrant workers, and must consider including ethnic and language barriers when communicating with migrant workers (Refslund 2018c; Alberti et al., 2013g). Unions can be effective in reducing the labor market insecurity of immigrant workers, with the power to develop mechanisms to put pressure on companies and activities that foster collective movements.

3 METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapters, the theoretical basis and objectives of this study are outlined. The purpose will be to further explain the research design and methodology used for the study. To do so, the research setting, the sample, and the recruitment of participants are described. This will be followed by a description of the relevant aspects of grounded theory, highlighting the similarities and differences of the analysis method employed in this study compared to the analytical methods used in grounded theory. Lastly, ethical concerns and issues with confidentiality in the process of this study will be reflected.

3.1 QUALITATIVE METHOD

A qualitative approach is appropriate for this research since it aims to reveal, interpret, and analyze the experiences, views, and perceptions of the participants (Pope, Van Royen & Baker, 2002a, p.148). This method helps to further investigate the character of the research topic while at the same time, enabling the participants to share their knowledge about the topic more freely and contribute their own interpretations of their experiences. While qualitative methods allow to develop and adjust categories used during the data collection and analyzing process, social interactions in daily life gives further importance to this method (Quick & Hall, 2015f). One of the important advantages of the form of qualitative interviews is that they provide a chance to identify current interests of the individual regarding the topics discussed while the social interaction during the interview can offer additional differentiated insights.

This kind of data collection allows one to focus on perceptions of the researched subject, as opposed to following more strictly the categories developed by the researchers which can be seen as a limitation of standard surveys and quantitative management (Barnes, 1992a, 115-116). Thus, the interpretive character of the qualitative method allows one to understand the views of individuals about specific events and details. On one hand, the interviewer has a framework of questions and topics which can serve as a guidance to begin or continue the interview. On the

other hand, there is enough space for the interviewees to interpret and respond to the questions from their perspective (Gläser & Laudel, 2009b, 41).

Semi-Structured Interviews

For this study, the Semi-Structured Interview method was chosen as its structure leaves vast space for the interviewee's perspectives and personal experiences while allowing the interviewer to act and react flexibly (Dunn, 2010c, p.102). Because semi-structured interviews follow a structure that the interviewer has already built, it therefore provides relative freedom within this structure. Depending on the process of the interview within the existing structure, the order of questions can change, allowing one to follow the line of inquiry believed to be useful in a specific interview situation (Bryman, 2016g). Likewise, it enables the interviewer to flexibly fill information gaps and blank spots during the interview and to add topics which they did not focus on while preparing their question framework. It also gives the interviewee the opportunity to talk about the topics which they are comfortable with, as well as topics they feel competent to speak about. A wide variety of different views and perspectives can also be gathered on topics that may be potentially controversial. In order to collect qualitative data, a list of specific questions (see Annex 1) was developed in advance. However, from the first interview onwards, new questions were included in this list and already existing questions were adjusted to reflect on participants' answers.

3.2 SAMPLING

Beyond the theoretical considerations, the sampling process factors such as the cost of the study, the demand for accurate information and time limitation had to be taken into account (Bryman, 2012c, p. 416) As a method for strategic sampling, only people who work, as their main occupation, in the field of either call center, 'content management', or similar work often characterized by being outsourced from multinational companies, have been considered to get an adequate insight into the experience of highly skilled migrants in the German labor force. One of the reasons to study this field was from the personal observation that an increasing number of highly skilled Turkish migrants, who came in last decades to Germany, specifically to Berlin, have been working in one of these so-called low skilled jobs.

In order to avoid bias with regards to demographics, close attention was paid to assuring as much diversity as possible concerning gender, age, previous area of (higher) education, and professional background during the recruitment process. Factors external and internal to the study, such as time restrictions and the unpredictability of the snowball method, did, however, influence the sample group and needed to be taken into consideration in analyzing the material (Bryman, 2012c, p. 420-429) For the purpose of the study, participants were required to come from a highly skilled educational background and therefore a minimum entrance criteria for the study was a bachelor degree or equivalent. Another demographic commonality of the sample group is that all participants have Turkish citizenship and have spent the majority of their life in Turkey. Sample selection in the knowledge and expertise was also considered and “key” sources were created during the interviews (Dunn, 2010c).

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

The data on the individual experiences consists of eleven semi-structured interviews of a duration of approximately one hour each. Interviews were conducted in various settings ranging from public places such as cafés or private places such as the interviewees’ apartments. Interview subjects were asked whether they agreed to the interviews being recorded, to which each gave permission. The voice memo function of a smart phone was used to record the interviews and transferred them to Data Analysis Program NVIVO 10 in m4a format.

The starting question for most of the interviews, according to the interview framework prepared beforehand, was either about the beginning of the participants’ life in Berlin or about their past education and work experience. With this open-ended starting question, the aim was to both facilitate autobiographic reflection and to establish a biographical timeline with questions about the concrete tasks performed in the work place, job security, workplace autonomy, income, and working hours in order to learn about the interviewee’s background . In this section of the interview, to the aim was to get to know the work environment of the interviewees. In later stages of the interview questions regarding the interviewee’s job satisfaction were asked to understand how their work affected their subjective well-being. With a last set of questions, information regarding the interviewee’s knowledge of the German union system and any possible involvement in trade union activities was collected. The main reason here was to learn about the interviewee’s perception of unionization related to their ability to protect their rights and assure job stability.

The data collected from the interviews were coded and categorized based on the concepts mentioned in the theory chapter. The data was handled and categorized within a certain systematic framework (Bryman & Burgess, 1994a). The interviews were coded by combining the data that is suitable for the precarious employment dimensions (employment instability, non-standard working arrangements, low material benefits, erosion of workers' rights and social protection, lack of employee representation, imbalanced interpersonal power relations with employers and colleagues), as previously mentioned earlier. Likewise, the cultural capital dimensions (educational certificates, job experience, access to labour market, networks, legal status) were coded, which are based on Bourdieu's Cultural Capital theory (2010). Finally, the perspectives regarding the union mechanism and how the union works for all the interviewees were recorded.

In this context, the study has become understandable and explainable by adopting an inductive approach from events to concepts to categories through coding technique. The categories determined for the subjects were developed based on frequently repeated words and sentences, used in the concepts of this study's theory conceptualization (Bryman, 2016g). All participants gave informed consent for their participation (see information sheet in Annex 2).

Participants Recruitment Strategy

To reach the sample group according to the criteria outlined above, personal connections to the field, which were established in previous personal work experiences, were utilized. To reach participants from other call-centers and service providers in the area of content management, messages and postings on social media platforms were advertised. The first recruitment advertisement included a short introduction of the study program, the intention and aim of this research, and the criteria participants had to fulfill in order to be appropriate respondents for this study. In addition to posting on social media platforms, the advertisements were shared with personal contacts among the target group in Berlin to ask them to forward the advertisement to friends and colleagues. Additionally, in the advertisement was shared to social media groups with Turkish members who have moved to Berlin within the last few years, such as the Facebook group "Turkish New Comers to Berlin." Over the course of four weeks, around 20 people agreed to participate in the study. In the process of organising meetings for the interviews, around half of the potential participants turned out to be unavailable due to their

working hours or other various reasons. With the remaining eleven participants the initial goal of recruiting at least ten participants was reached. Interviewing the Turkish newcomers did not create any language barriers as the interviews were conducted in Turkish. The interviews started with prior personal work colleagues from the company Arvato/Majorel in the period of 2016-2019. Close personal ties and trust were already established with some of the respondents and facilitated further recruitment.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

In the analysis of the qualitative interviews, the coding procedure and principles developed in Strauss and Corbin's Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990a) were used as a foundation. Due to the restrictions of this study, their method could not be strictly adapted, but its principles were followed. The approach of grounded theory aims at building theories in the process of data collection and supports the idea that sociological theory is never independent but in fact closely entwined from the data production process. Grounded theory emphasizes the "discovery and theory development," by evaluating meaningful data, combining and defining the categories obtained, and putting forward the theory as a product (Charmaz, 2007b). The data material, which are then systematically collected and analyzed, can include resources such as in-depth interviews, field observations, documents, diaries, recordings, biographies, and various audio and visual recordings (Strauss & Corbin, 1990a, p.24; 1994b, p. 273). One of the important differences to be considered here is the dilemma in grounded theory that questions whether the literature studies will be held before or after the discussion (Glaser 1998b, p.143). In this study, Strauss's approach and focus on concept formation by doing a literature review, data collection and analysis is adopted and includes theoretical sampling and note writing. In order to avoid repetitions and gain access to the field, however, comprehensive literature review before and during the data collection process but prior to analyzing the data was conducted (Heath & Cowley, 2004g, p.143).

With this study, a constructivist approach which minimizes the distancing and clear-cut separation between researcher and participant, rather than a positivist approach that clearly differentiates between researcher and subject is pursued (Briggs, 2002, p. 242-250). Since four of the participants were personal work colleagues, the hierarchy between the researcher and the subjects normally established in interview situations was partly broken (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009c). The goal was to actively eliminate the imbalance of power between the

researcher and the participant. In addition, the transfer of the ownership of the research to the participants rather than the researcher was attempted (Karnieli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009c, p. 279-280). Even though the power balance between the researcher and participants was broken, a slightly removed position that would not disrupt professionalism as a researcher both during the interviews and during the analyzing process was established.

In the constructivist approach (Ellis & Berger, 2003a, p. 156-184) the research was inspired by the idea that a researcher cannot act completely independently of his or her own ideas and values when entering a field. According to Strauss and Corbin, “we cannot completely divorce ourselves from who we are or from what we know” (Strauss and Corbin 1998c, p. 47). Instead of attempting to eliminate personal sensitivities on the subject, they were employed both for devising the research, for adjusting the thematic framework of the interviews, and during the interaction with the interviewees during the interview as a former colleague turned researcher. While maintaining the professional perspective, the shared process of knowledge construction between the researcher and the participants was emphasized, and especially the participants’ contribution to retrieving and structuring the information gathered in the interview process.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical evaluations were made before starting the research and ethical principles were applied during and after the research. Before the interviews, the purpose of the study and meaning for academic knowledge production, as well as where and how exactly the data would be used, was explained to the participants. It was stated that participation in the study was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw at any stage in the process, even after the interview. Nicknames /pseudonyms were used instead of the real names of participants in order to comply with the confidentiality, privacy and anonymity granted to them at all times. The nicknames were assigned randomly and not based on any system. A voice recorder was used in the interviews only with the knowledge and on the basis of consent of the participants while notes were taken where it was necessary. In addition, participants were given a written document stating that the researcher would act in accordance with ethical principles and rules (Annex 3).

Confidentiality remains an important aspect of the ethical considerations in this research as employees often have to sign confidentiality agreements with their employers which bars them from sharing information about the processes, organization and content of their work (Bruun,

2016h). Because of this, anonymity had to be ensured so that participants could talk freely about their experiences without running the risk of exposing their name, occupation, or any other detail revealing their identity.

4 RESULTS

4.1 UNCERTAIN FORMS OF WORK

This chapter aims to explore the precarious work and living conditions of highly skilled Turkish newcomers and how the transformation of their cultural capital has led to experiencing precarity. As previously mentioned, an endless state of uncertainty and mobility are immanent characteristics to a precarious nature (Standing, 2011). From a broader perspective, flexible, instable, and highly-fragmented work develops into insecure and uncertain labor conditions. The thematic analysis of the data collection is based on grounded theory and constructivist methods mentioned in the method chapter.

Therefore, different themes that have been identified are used to structure this chapter. To begin, I will analyze the working conditions of the employees in order to understand which kind of uncertainties they are surrounded by. Aspects such as job description, working hours, and contracts will help understand their precarious employment conditions. Second, the role that the rupture of migration creates in transferring cultural capital will be discussed in order to understand how it leads to precarity.

4.1.1 UNCERTAIN JOB DESCRIPTIONS

By definition, a job description summarizes the basic tasks and expected performances that a person is to perform. Job descriptions are a key to recruitment applications and serve as a reference point for employees and the hiring managers. In this study, it can be seen that the absence or ambiguity of job descriptions is an important factor influencing precarious employment patterns (Van Aerden et al., 2014d).

Specifically, all of the interviewed participants employed for the Facebook project at Arvato/Majorel said that their job descriptions appeared quite ambiguous before they started working. However, other similar positions at call-centers like Convergys, Sykes and Booking.com offered slightly more specific job descriptions. In most cases, the persons interviewed did not have a well-defined and stable role for the future of their work.

Starting with Arvato/Majorel, all of the interviewees who were once employed or still working there, similarly mentioned they did not know what was to be done in the job announcement, after the interview, or even when they accepted the employment position. In the job announcement, the job title “Turkish Back Office Agent” was changed to “Turkish Content Moderator.” Nadide (November 6, 2019, para. 11)⁸ explains the situation as follows:

“In the beginning I didn’t realize what kind of a job I will be doing, then it became clearer with time. During the interview, and when reading the job description, you see the name of the company (Arvato/Majorel)... but you don’t understand what kind of a job you will be exactly doing. During the job interview, they described themselves as the world’s biggest social media company. I only found out when I was hired and while signing the contract, for the exact company I would be working with, Facebook. I found out that this project was to be done for Facebook only when I signed the contract.”

Likewise, in the case of Hale (October 11, 2019, para 7), who had previously worked for Arvato/Majorel, she states that she was accepted for an employment position without a job interview. She did not know what the job demanded and even thought that it was a fake job announcement. Almost all of the interviewees working for Arvato/Majorel learned the content of their jobs when they started the employment training.

“Are you affected by the violent images?”

Another feature specific to the content of the work at Arvato/Majorel, is that some of the interviewees were asked “whether they would be affected by the violence they see on social media” (Nadide, November 6, 2019, para. 13). Some people responded by saying, “I will be affected but I will not reflect this to my job” (Rüzgar, December 1, 2019) or, “I can motivate myself by thinking that I have done a positive job” (Nadide, November 6, 2019, para. 14). However, the interviewee Sila (November 5, 2019, para.13) responded to the experience of working with said content with the following statement:

⁸ To ensure anonymity of my respondents I changed all personal names. For the purpose of brevity, in the references I will use only first name pseudonyms. The references indicate the date of the interview and paragraph in the Turkish transcript. A translation of the excerpts used in this chapter can be found in the electronic version of this paper.

“To be honest, I couldn’t know that the things I will see would be this horrible. There are beheading videos and the other stuff...I didn’t imagine it to be like this.”

In the same way, Hale who went on to the training phase without a job interview process and without knowing what kind of job she will do explained her feelings when she learn the content of the work would be on videos and shared content that includes violence, pornography, and hate speech on social media in the following sentences:

“During the training I was very surprised when I found out about the content of the job/work. Of course I didn’t get the feelings of “what a nice training” or “what great things I am learning here.” But I felt like I have to do this, I am new here (Berlin). I continued working and thinking that I can have different opportunities later” (October 11, 2019, para.8).

It can be said, that people who are working in other call centers have slightly more specific job descriptions with the knowledge that they will work in customer service. For example, the interviewees working for Convergys’ Nike project, mentioned that they did not understand the actual job in the job announcement or for which project they would work with, but they learned in the interview that the employment position was to be a customer service job providing support in matters such as paybacks or refunds. A similar situation occurred for employees of Sykes’ PlayStation project, mentioning that they learned the employment was to be a customer service job and a customer support line.

4.1.2 WORKING HOURS

Another focus of the interviews were the working hours. It was observed that the working hours of the interviewees change over time while they were employed. The following paragraphs will aim to demonstrate the degree of control of the employer or “client” over on working hours and how flexible it can be.

In all of these different call centers, working full time for 40 hours per week is a possibility. The eight hours of daily working time do not include a 30 minute lunch break, which is unpaid. While the possibility of part-time work was available at all call centers except for booking.com, some companies terminated their part-time contracts. For example, when Convergys switched from the Nike Project to the Facebook project, they terminated all part-time work and fired all part-time employees.

Based on the information gathered from interviewees, the working hours at Arvato/Majorel can be described as flexible with many employees coming in and leaving around a certain time. Afterwards, two permanent shifts were made with one from 08:00-16:30, so called morning shift, and the other one from 13:30-22:00, so called the evening shift. These shifts were not mandatory at first, only for volunteers, but soon became mandatory for everyone. Afterwards, a 24-hour working system was launched, upon the request from Facebook, that contents are viewed 24 hours a day. Interviewees mentioned that at first, the company said that this was not mandatory and only those willing to work in these shifts could do so. At Arvato/Majorel, it is also possible to work seven days a week, as Hale explains:

“In the beginning, we were going to work depending on the volume –incoming “ticket” (content that has to be checked). Then it was told to us that the content had to be checked every 24 hours. So then we started working for 8 hours a day, either day shift or night shift depending on the amount of work. Which meant sometimes working 6 days in a row. Here (Germany) by law, you can only work 6 days in a row, after that you should receive a minimum 24 hours break.” (October 11, 2019, para 52).

Interview (Oya, November 13, 2019, para. 10) emphasize that part-time employees have to come for four hours five days a week, two full days are not accepted. Merih (October 16, 2019, para. 4) mentioned that he was able to complete his 20-hour period in two and a half days a week on the PlayStation Project (Sykes) due to his student status. However, at Arvato/Majorel, students do not have a chance to work like this.

Another important point is that in the call centers, working is mandatory during all public holidays, both the ones in Turkey and the ones in Germany. This latter is the case mainly because these dates are not official holidays in Turkey and work life there is continuing. Another point that the interviewees mentioned is, except for Arvato/Majorel, that the workers in the call centers can take holidays on Sundays, but the problem with this option is that the employees would not have compensation two days in a row.

Interviewees who work for Arvato/Majorel and Sykes, described that the entrance and exit times of the employees are monitored through personal ID cards with the tracking program employed by the company. This tracking program, which is used after the employees log into the system with a username and password, records working times automatically. However, it is

necessary to report all breaks and other commands, including lunch, and exiting the program. One of the biggest problems here is that because all of the computers are disconnected at the end of the day, due to data protection, computers do not function for the first fifteen minutes of the day, and consequently, the time is not paid. As a solution, Team Leaders recommended that the employees come fifteen minutes early so that they do not appear in the system as tardy every morning. According to Hale, at Arvato/Majorel, it is compulsory to call the company, even after only three minutes late. Otherwise, people who do not call, may receive a warning which is a valid reason to be fired (October 11, 2019, para. 61-64).

Another important issue is the break system. It is a time period for a total of 15 minutes every four hours, which is a legal break called the “5 minutes eye-rest”, as well as a one 30 minute unpaid lunch break in an eight hour time span, which is valid for all call centers. All breaks are required to be entered in the tracking program, but what happens when they are not entered?

There is a second system at Arvato/Majorel that tracks whether the employees are working on required content on their computers or not. This system gives an alert if the person has not made an action within five minutes. In other words, the system tracks if they are working or not. Team Leaders can see when the program alerts as well as following the commands given by people in the tracking program. If the employees did not issue the break command and are not sitting in front of their screens, Team Leaders can detect it and warn those people, which can be an influential reason to not extend a contract. Likewise, in Convergys, people have to be on their phone and are told by Team Leaders that they should not take “so many breaks.” As a solution, Filiz mentions that they have developed a system:

“For example, I was still online when I was going to the kitchen so I could hear if there is a call. Its ok if I don’t answer the first ring but when it rings the second time I could put the headset on and start talking immediately.” (October 18, 2019, para. 14)

Likewise, Filiz said that the need for toilets should be used also within the fifteen minutes total break that they have. She said that once her colleague had been warned because she used the toilet too long:

“Once, a friend started going to the toilet very often. We knew that she had some bowel issues. Then the Team Leader asked to see our friend and said “Ms. X, I have checked the time that

you spent in the toilet, do you mind cutting this time a bit?” She said “forty people are using the same toilet here, are you aware of the hygienic conditions here?” By saying, how hard it is for women, especially during menstruation, she had to explain to him the importance of hygiene during women’s cycle”(October 18, 2019, para. 14).

Hale, who also worked at Convergys, said that she was confronted with an even more daunting situation. There were always two cards in the middle of the office. One was the toilet card and the other was the lunch card. A worker who wants to go to the toilet has to take the toilet card and show it to the Team Leader. Then, the Team Leader decides whether the person has permission to go to toilet. Even if there was an empty cabin in the toilet, and if the card was taken, the employee had to wait. Hale says that this break system caused a great emotional stress on the employees (October 11, 2019, para. 73)

4.1.3 CONTRACTS

Although all interviewees had the opportunity to unilaterally terminate the employment contract, there was a wide variety of job insecurity problems. All interviewees started working with temporary contracts. The length of the extended contracts varied on the first 6 months’ probation period. Afterwards, the option to sign a total of 1 year contract is given, which then leads to a 6 month extension. According to Paragraph 14 (2) of the Teilzeit- und Befristungsgesetz, once an employee has completed two years, they are entitled to an unlimited contract according to German law (BMJV, 2000f).

“The first six months are a trial period. Will I stay or will I go? It was very stressful for me, because this is my first job abroad. I was in a different country and I needed this contract so that I could be guaranteed to work. It was a real pressure on me. You have to keep your performance high so that the contract time will be extended” (Sila, November 5, 2019, para. 30)

Sila stated that some of her colleagues were registered with the job center (arbeitsamt) and she mentioned that it was a very stressful process they were going through when the contract renewal period approaches. However, Sila states that for her, the most stressful process was the time that she was expecting an unlimited contract:

“When I noticed the tension during the period for an unlimited contract, I realized that I was striving to keep the job that I didn’t like. I was worried to stay. These all made me feel angry. And this is nonsense. At some point, I remember saying, it’s better I quit before they extend my contract. But then I thought it would be better if they fire me, since I could take advantage of my rights. Actually, I don’t want them to extend it. On the other hand, I thought, I can change my visa type without depending on someone. That’s why I continued to work at the same place” (Sila, November 5, 2019, para. 30).

Important criteria used for analyzing contract extension include, but are not limited to, performance, discipline, and sick leave. According to Hale, with German law, it is not possible to fire a person based on sick days. However, in her experience, it was a very important non official factor in deciding whether or not to extend a work contract. While the sick rate limit is 10 percent of working days in one year when she started working at Arvato/Majorel, this figure decreased to 4 percent of the working days per year. She said it was clearly stated that the contracts of those who were above 4 percent would not be extended (October 11, 2019, para. 46).

4.1.4 INSTABILITY

There are frequent discourses about work flexibility, as seen in the media or heard from politicians and employers. One can often hear calls for greater flexibility in work and the economy. Flexibility can range from contract, hours, wages, and/or employer roles at work.

The Only Thing That Does Not Change is “Literally” Change Itself: Performance Expectations

The flexibility of work gives employers the convenience to change their employees’ roles at work. Obviously, if employers have a one-sided ability to demand that workers change tasks, worker’s control over their work lives is reduced and this undermines the concept of self-actualization through work.

According to Oya (November 13, 2019, para. 25), the change is inevitable for call center companies like Booking. According to her, the positive impression given in the first period is called the “honeymoon phase.” She says that in this phase at Booking, everyone was focused

on doing only his or her job by establishing very positive relationships. During this phase, the stress level slightly decreases since the performance expectation is only 85 percent, even though the workload is not low at all. However, this figure increased to 96 percent and then to 98 percent in just two years (November 13, para. 25). These success rates were calculated, based on the satisfaction tests conducted at the end of these interviews, from the amount of phone calls they receive. There is no limit to taking a call, it is necessary to take as many calls as you can. Oya states (November 13, para. 27) however, that the customer reviews can be subjective, as they are expected to talk to customers briefly so that they can receive more calls. As a result, the customer feels unsatisfied because of the short phone call. Sometimes, she receives a poor review from the customer because she did not spend enough time on the call with the customer. However, if she talks long with a customer there is a risk that she can face critique from the Team Leaders.

Likewise, Hale, who started working at Arvato/Majorel at the beginning of the project, said that a daily amount of work when they first started and that they were motivated by Team Leaders saying that “we have no great expectations from you”. However, she says eventually the expected amount of work gradually increased. Nadide, who is also an employee at Arvato/Majorel, stated that the increase in the number of employees involved in a project does not decrease the workload yet the pressure of performance expectations increases:

“You go on working with this kind of logic to not take any notice from the Team Leader, and that everyday there’s a goal to reach. I must work so many hours without a break or check somany profiles. There’s no such thing that today we have less to do, You have to sit in front of the computer and check the profile that changes every ten seconds. There is always a pressure to not make mistakes. They’re expecting a 98% success rate and when I’m below this, I start to feel stressed. At some point it doesn’t matter if you are a good worker or not, because there is always a risk to be below 98%”(November 6, 2019, para. 22)

While performance expectations are constantly changing, the system evaluating this performance is of particular importance. At Arvato/Majorel, every one out of one hundred successful contents are checked randomly by Quality Analysts. These analysts, who are selected among successful employees, make a decision about the same job. An important point here is if the call agent’s and quality analyst’s decisions are not same, the call agent’s success rate decreases. But if the agent is sure about their decision they can escalate this specific job to

Facebook itself. If the agent is found to be right by Facebook, then the quality analyst's success rate decreases (Hale, October 11, 2019, para. 25).

According to Hale, the fact that Facebook's rules are sometimes not black and white, tension and conflict can arise between these the call agents and quality analysts. For both sides, the contract extensions become more and more dependent on their success rates and therefore can became more dependent on each other (October 11, 2019, para. 26).

Increased Workload

Apart from meeting the increasing expectations for performance, another flexibility expectation is the increase of new workloads not previously mentioned in the job descriptions at the start of employment.

At Arvato/Majorel, there were obvious changes in the workload that appeared after the change of relationship between management and its customer, Facebook. Nadide says (November 6, 2019, para. 20) that when the business relationship with Facebook increased, the workload increased and new departments opened up. In the beginning, the job differentiation was focused on content check on Facebook and a decision on fake accounts. Later, after Facebook bought Instagram, the work included checking accounts in this other platform as well.

Another situation at Convergys, Booking, and Sykes that increased the workload occurred in the beginning of the project, when the workers were only working for the Turkish language calls but at the same time began to help other language groups. Especially when there are not many calls on the Turkish customer line, it was imperative to answer the English-speaking phone calls from anywhere in the world. Merih mentions that this aim was to ensure that the employees do not stop working during their shift:

“Here is the situation: The Turkish team is silent and there are no calls, this should be the time for you to rest, shouldn't it? But, in a way, even today, there was a problem in the German team, I wrote German emails about the emails to back up the German team. Or, when the South African or Dutch line cannot keep up with the work, then the customers are connect to us. And especially, if these occurred during Christmas, everything gets out of hand. Most of the people do this or are made to do this. After all, in the contract it says that the employer sometimes can give work to the employee according to his/her skills and the employee should do it. Of course

nobody says no to this. Nobody discusses and nobody can because everybody needs the money.” (October 16, 2019, para.31)

Likewise, Filiz and Hande (October 18, 2019, para. 13; November 11, 2019 para. 22) said that they did not refuse over-time requests from Team Leaders because they knew that this was taken into account when extending the work contracts.

4.1.5 WAGES

Most of the interviewees generally earned the minimum salary or just a bit over an hourly minimum wage and they benefited from the protection required by the social system of the state. For example, Rüzgar, who started working part-time for Arvato/Majorel in 2016, started with a gross salary of 755.50 €, which was around 9.5 € per hour. This was slightly above the minimum wage of 8.5 € and other call centers were also paying similar wages. In the evenings, on weekends or public holidays, they work legally for a slightly higher hourly wage. In the same way, sick days and holidays, which are also legal obligations, were paid time off (Nadide, December 1, 2019).

If we continue with the Rüzgar example, after almost four years of work, the gross wage has increased to 919.50 €. This appears to be a normal figure when legal values and inflation in Germany are taken into consideration. However, Oya summarizes that the following point should be considered:

“The targets requested from you change, where they always increase. But after a while you begin to ask, “The salary I received from the company does not increase!” When this occurs, your dissatisfaction begins”(November 13, 2019, para. 28).

With Arvato / Majorel positional changes, a 10 to 20% salary increase can occur. However, positions also exist where the salary remains constant despite the change of position. For example, Hale worked in the "Back-Up SME" position, which helps Quality Analysts, for a long period of time. As a matter of fact, while continuing to do her tasks as an agent, she devoted one or two hours a day to doing tasks meant for people in the SME department (October 11, 2019, para. 29). The motivation to do this job, which has no economic reward, is to be able to rise to a “real” SME position when the opportunity arises (and leads to a 10% increase in salary). However, in Hale's case, they did not consider her even though there was a free position in the

SME group. Hale stated that the number of people who work as “Back-Up SME” in Arvato/Majorel is increasing day by day, but there is still no economic reward for people working in those positions (October 11, 2019, para. 20).

In the same way, Nadide stated that there was a never-ending training required by Facebook for the agents. The schooling was almost every month with even every week learning new policies from Facebook. However these trainings were not paid because they occurred in the shift hours. In the same way, people in the SME position stated that they fulfilled the duties of the Trainer position and did not receive any extra compensation, by training workers to be able to work according to updates of Facebook (November 6, 2019, para. 28)

“Bonuses are not transparent”

Another important issue are the bonuses and how they are calculated by the companies. Hande, who works for Sykes, said that they were attempted to create a sort of salary increase effect with bonuses. However, she stated (November 11, 2019 para. 22) that these bonuses were not continuous every month and it was not completely transparent on how they were calculated by the company. Turning off the phone in a short time, being more polite to someone and receiving good ratings from evaluations were considered as the criteria for the bonus, but there was no system available where workers could see the calculations clearly. In the same way, companies do not have to give these bonuses continuously based on the contract, and it is completely at the employer’s discretion. Merih describes the bonuses “like fake rabbits thrown in front of the greyhound races,” as it allows employees to work more in hopes of earning a bonus (October 16, 2019, para. 23)

4.1.6 IMBALANCED POWER RELATIONS

The final dimension analyzed concerns “precarious employment” and will describe the power relations made in these companies and their hierarchical structures. The changing corporate bureaucracy, mentioned in the theory section from Goldthorpe’s theory (1997a), states that in the new capitalistic system “the boss against which workers can organize is gone” and the managerial authority system that develops is representative of the invisible bosses. In this way interviewees don’t always know who is their boss is, but they always know the person above them, who is responsible for them. These employees are a responsibility of the Team Leaders,

and the Team Leaders work under their managers who are in a superior position in the company. It represents a hierarchy in which the highest leader cannot be seen by those in the lowest position. With this, it becomes clear that the system constantly controlling performance, also increases control through the hierarchical ladder.

An important point to be addressed, is that as the number of employees in a company increases, the importance of Team Leaders also increases in order to gain control. For example, the number of team leaders started to increase in Arvato/ Majorel. According to Hale (Hale, October 11, 2019, para. 35), to provide better employee control at Arvato/Majorel, a certain number of employees were given the responsibility of becoming team leaders. Thus, the team leader is only authorized to check on these workers only. The task of Team Leader is to check whether employees present, late, answering phones, or sick and in the possession of medical reports. The Team Leader also organizes employee training, arranges employee work shifts, and arranges their holidays. Finally, the Team Leader also has duties to also warn and discipline employees (Hale, October 11, 2019, para. 22).

Hale, who has been working as a Team Leader for a long time at Arvato/Majorel, says that this demand, of Team Leaders to control workers created a lot of responsibilities for her and his colleagues working at the same level. They should work in coordination with HR and management at different levels. For this reason, Hale says that she has a lot of pressure, especially in the withdrawal and contract extension processes of other employees. Luckily, with her suggestions, a final decision was to be made by the group leader and management regarding contracts. She mentions a story about the contract extension of a person which ended badly:

“He was a decent worker as I observed him closely by myself. I have only evaluated his performance without taking our social relationship into consideration. When you look at the numbers, his performance was very high, one of the highest. This person’s contract was not extended, since he received many sick leaves over a certain percentage. In my opinion, if you are sick, you are sick. That’s it!” (October 11, 2019, para. 45)

Hale says that although she feels irritated as a Team Leader and thinks that she is sometimes crushed under the responsibilities. She also mentions that she didn’t see herself as becoming a Team Leader because there are limited promotions after that.

“Hole”

Nadide had a bad experience with one of the Group Leaders at Arvato/Majorel. She mentions that position changes can cause differentiation on one’s behavior. She gives an example of this Group Leader who was working in the same position as Nadide, but he rapidly rose as Team Leader and then Group Leader. His behavior with the employees experienced a very problematic transition. Nadide says that this person intended on establishing intimate relationships with the employees and distancing became very problematic:

“Of course, I do not want to attribute my loss of motivation to a single person, but first of all, the problems I experienced at the company started with the troubles I experienced with my Group Leader. The reason I do not want to reduce this problem to a single person is... I mean yes, in this case, his personal characteristics also had an effect, but eventually he is the Group Leader and the person representing the management. He is the bridge between company management and employees. But his behavior towards the team was as if he were our father and we were his children or minions. Although he was supposed to mediate our relationships with the management, he became a defender of the administration instead. Of course, in every company, there are people who abuse the resources of the company, but this created an unnecessary stress on the employees who worked fairly and did what they were expected to do in the company.”(November 6, 2019, para. 25)

This stress and oppression manifested itself in many different ways for Nadide. She says that used to feel in control in every sense, including her private life. In one incident, when she was ill, she was questioned by the Group Leader with, “why did not you come?” She stated that he did not believe her to be sick enough because “she shared photos while eating ice cream from Instagram.” (November 6, 2019, para. 25)

Similarly, control situations in other companies occurred to Filiz and Oya, who said that they were warned that they “talked too much” with their co-workers, even when they had no calls. According to Filiz (October 18, 2019, para. 20 ;November 13, 2019, para 29), this pressure is not connected with the personalities of Team Leaders. She thinks that it is connected with management’s pressure on Team Leaders. Filiz stated that when she first started working for Convergys, employed Berlin locals were working more enthusiastically in order to be

promoted. She says that people who move to Berlin later, like her, see the employment as a transition process, and that there is no such will to be promoted.

Another remarkable speech was the experience of Sila:

“In fact, everybody is in the same hole, but even in that hole, I observed things that I consider as “being mean to each other.” Every other day, I had to remind myself that I should not pay attention to these behaviors” (November 5, 2019, para.18).

4.2 ENCHANTMENT OF CULTURAL CAPITAL DURING THE TRANSITION PHASE

The growing wave of skilled immigrants in the last 10 years from Turkey to Germany (especially to Berlin) has increased, as highlighted in the previous chapters. Among those who are the subjects of this migration, are also people working in academia, the IT sector, graphic designers, web designers, as well as people working in the service sector of bars and bakeries. However, especially highly qualified immigrants who work in the jobs categorized more so with low-qualifications was very fascinating to study. For this reason, their difficulties that may be encountered in the use of cultural capital during migration and the difficulties put on workers during precarious employment cycles was of high interest in this study (Nohl, Schittenhelm, Schmidtke & Weiss, 2006c). Possible conflicts that might arise with their education levels when they reevaluate their value criteria to their home country are emphasized. Therefore, mentioned in the method section, while listening to their experiences, a biographical method was followed to try to understand the immigrants’ life stories to in regards to their cultural capital (Nohl, Schittenhelm, Schmidtke & Weiß, 2014a).

4.2.1 TRANSITION OF EDUCATION AND ACCESS TO JOB MARKET

“I feel like I have thrown everything that I achieved until now into the bin. I feel like I have thrown myself into the bin as well as my education.” (Sila, November 5, 2019, para. 24)

Sila a thirty-eight year old engineer, and working for Arvato/Majorel since the last two years summarizes her migration from Turkey to Germany with these words. Sila completed her bachelor degree in one of the best universities in Turkey (Bogazici University), and completed

her master in the other best university (Middle Eastern Technical University). Since her mother and father were doctors, she states that she comes from a family that gave too much importance to education, and therefore had a successful education. After her studies, she worked in one of Turkey's major energy companies as an research and development engineer. However, she said that working for energy companies in Turkey, brought on the necessity of having close relationships to the government and entails a political imperative to not have any anti-government attitudes with the people in her professional circle. Sila said that this pressure exhausted her to the point that she quit her job (November 5, 2019, para. 1-4). Meanwhile her boyfriend who works in the IT sector, found a job in England and they married and moved to small town in England. Later her husband found a better job in Berlin and they decided to settle back in Berlin (November 5, 2019, para.5).

In a short time, Sila realize that finding a job in her field in Berlin without knowing German was difficult and she was affected by fear of rejection when applying to jobs. She always felt that she was not good enough. She describes an experience she had as follows:

“When I moved here, I went to the Turkish market. I started talking with the cashier and from my accent , she understood that I had just arrived here. The cashier thought that I was here for holiday. I said we moved here and I was looking for a job. She tried to help me and mentioned that they needed someone for the cheese section. I didn't want to offend anyone, so I said yes. The store manager came. Talked down on me and said “ What do you do” .I said, I can speak Turkish, German, English and I am a chemical engineer. “Do you speak German?” he asked. “If you dont speak German you are nothing here,” he said. I have only seen the manager as rude, so I didn't want to work in the cheese section. I was laughing at the situation but on the other hand I wasn't even able to get the cheese section job.” (November 5, 2019, para. 32)

In the same way, Karan, who studied architecture and completed an MBA in London, came to Berlin because of positive recommendations from his friends about city. Karan applied for jobs in his field when he first came to Berlin, but he said that he was found inadequate by employers because he had a language disability. Even if he would find a job in his field, his earnings would be lower than someone who knew German better than him. Therefore, because of the need to work, he started to apply to call center openings , to which he believed he would not feel inadequate (October 16, 2019, para.1)

Filiz who studied psychology in Bogazici University Istanbul, and had a Master degree from Ankara, worked as a counselor for a school in Turkey. After moving to Berlin she was rejected for a couple of her applications and she says she realized that it would be almost impossible to find a job in her field (psychological counseling). She job searched on Google “Turkish jobs in Berlin” and also applied to jobs offered on Ebay Kleinanzeigen (October 18, 2019, para. 4). Later, it was learned that this method was used by almost all of the interviewees, to which they found the call center jobs with this method.

Likewise, Hande who possesses a Master in Sociology and worked as a court reporter in Turkey, said she also applied to jobs in her field. However, even with sufficient English and B2 level German, she did not even receive a job interview invitation. Even though, with a quite respected journalistic experience in Turkey, Hande says that because these experiences were not in any European country, the German labour market does not pay much attention to her experiences (November 11, 2019, para. 27). Hande says that, applicants with a foreign name when applying to the same job with a person with German name, even if the person who has a foreign name has the same skills including language as the one with German name, the one with a German name more likely to be invited to the job interview than the one with foreign name. This correlated to a similar statement proposed by Koopmans, Veit and Yemane (2018d). Hande said that she believes employers will hesitate to hire a foreigner because it would be difficult to culturally integrate worker (November 11, 2019, para. 30).

4.2.2 LEGAL STATUS

As mentioned, one of the most important problems for foreign immigrants after not being able to transfer their cultural capital, is the legal access difficulties which they may have when entering the German labor market. During the interview, some of the interviewees had the freedom to engage in full time employment, while the majority had limited access. In particular, it should be noted that those with full access to work did not have this status when they first arrived in Germany, but later acquired this right.

Considering that the majority of the interviewees came to Germany with a student visa, it would be useful to summarize the right of students in Germany to access the workforce. Students from the EU/EEA have the same rights as German students and free access to the labor market. They have the right to work up to 20 hours a week during their education period. People from non-EU / EEA have the right to work for 120 full days or 240 half days a year. However,

non-EU students are not allowed to work in self-employed or freelance capacities (BMJV, 2000f). At this point, the story of Merih will be a good example to show how these limitations can affect foreign students.

In Turkey, Merih worked as an assistant in the department of musicology, and then immigrated to Berlin because of the suspension of permanent employment positions after the Turkish military coup in 2016. He decided to study at the Humboldt University, a very valuable institution for musicology. Since Merih previously had a training on education formation, he started to work as an educational teacher in schools called “welkommenklasse,”⁹ which is open to students with a refugee background (October 16, 2019, para.1). Merih said that one of the most important factors in finding this job is that his friend was already working there as a teacher. However, another important advantage that Merih had was his good knowledge of the German language. He thinks that the increasing number of refugees in Berlin and the inadequate number of available teachers were effective in finding this job. However, he only worked for a short time because the school wanted him to work more than 20 hours a week (October 16, 2019, para. 2).

Later, he found a job in a record company as an archive inspector. However, he was legally not allowed to work in this job, because the job was five hours per day, four days a week. According to the German law, even though it is 20 hours a week, the five hours per day legally exceed “half a day.” He was legally not allowed to work there. He says that in Turkey, he was able to work as a freelancer and make many stage design, sound design, music or theater exhibition installations all over the country. In Germany, however, even though he found many similar jobs, he was not allowed to work as a freelancer. He explains the special conditions that he was allowed to work under in the following:

“I received an offer to present Iranian and Middle Eastern music at the Modern Iran Music Festival. After facing a lot of bureaucratic obstacles, I was able to get special employment permission as it was a project financed by official institutions. The authorities cancelled my existing working permit, and printed almost the identical permit again with an arrangement that I could only work freelance within the given dates. This was the only legal way I was able to

⁹ *Willkommensklasse* means daily courses for pupils without prior knowledge of German before they are allowed to join regular classes alongside their peers.

work in that job. It took me 4 days to get this legal permission for a job only lasting 4 days. That is why, with the working rights I am allowed, only have this job (call center)” (October, 18, 2019, para. 4).

Another important point that should be emphasized regarding legal statuses, is that students from non-EU countries who wish to work in Germany after graduating are allowed to extend their residence permit for up to 18 months. With this so called “job-seeking visa,” foreign graduates are allowed to take up unrestricted employment while they find a suitable job related to their studies in order to further extend their residency in Germany. Another way that some students and also non-students who have worked in Germany can extend their visa is through the Ankara Treaty. The Ankara Treaty was signed in 1963 by the members of the European Common Market in Germany, France the Benelux countries and Turkey in Ankara, Turkey. The Ankara Agreement Visa, created by this treaty, it is a type of visa that gives citizens of member countries of the agreement, the right to start their own businesses or work in a company in one of these European countries mentioned above (BMI, 2013h, p.38). Conditions of this visa type require Turkish applicants either to prove sufficient funding to start a business in Germany or, in the case of Turkish nationals having worked in Germany, to have completed “one year of employment in a position which is subject to social insurance contributions”, meaning the employer and employee both share the costs of the social and health insurances. This allows the worker the right for renewal of his or her work permit for work for the same employer. After three years of work with the same employer, Turkish workers can apply for any job opening in the same field of work or area of occupation within Germany. After four years of working in the same field of work or area of occupation, Turkish workers may work and apply for any open position within Germany (BMI, 2013h, p. 40).

According to this, students on a job-seeking visa or non-students working close to four years in a same company, can have the opportunity of applying for permanent residency. However, of course, due to the obligations of the “same” work place, people become dependent on their current work spaces. For example, interviewees such as Hande and Ruzgar are hoping to be able to extend their visa through the Ankara Agreement.

Another important factor shared by many of the interviewees is that some of them are getting married to European citizens in order solve their visa problems. Oya decided to leave her Master’s program due to the difficulties she experienced at the university and decided to marry

with her boyfriend to not risk her student visa immediately being canceled. Likewise, when Nadide was not content with her Master's program, she was not able to search for new studies or didn't have the chance to think about a new way for her life because of the fear of her visa cancellation. In her case, she also married her European boyfriend. When I asked if this situation made them dependent on their partners, Nadide said that this was not the case for her. In the same way when asking Sila, who came to Berlin because of the work of her husband and who is bound to the visa of his residence permit, she explains the effect on her with the following:

“Even if I do not want to, I still remain in this job (call-center) in order to have my own income and to be able to change or extend my visa without being depended in case I want to stay in Germany.”(November 5, 2019, para. 30)

4.2.3 FROM PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT TO PRECARIOUS LIFE FORMS

The previous section has showed how the interviewed workers experienced precarity as a consequence of their precarious employment. In this part, the ways in which the emotional or psychological aspects of precarity were experienced by the interviewees is explained. Uncertainty about the future of the job, vague job descriptions, and over qualifications for these jobs cause tremendous internal tension and stress. Most of the interviewees shared that their employment created much more stress in their lives.

Nadide says that:

“Having a certain phone call target that we need to reach, the fact that even two-minute or three-minute calculations expected from us are important, made me feel like a robot. You talk to your colleague from time to time, you're socializing, but the company is openly asking you to stop and not leave the computer” (November 6, 2019, para. 25)

Likewise, Sila states that sometimes she feels like she is just a keyboard key, and has no contribution to the world:

“I have no contribution to anything. I don't have any to myself either. Not to my environment. Not to the world. And that sounds like a hurtful thing.”(November 5, 2019, para. 24)

In the same way, Rüzgar who is on a short leave from Arvato / Majorel, mentioned, “I do not know how to return to that darkness again.” She said that she felt very weak and her negative experiences at work affected her private life deeply. She said that she has to “prove herself and her talents” and she should “never be good enough”:

“I lost my own voice and I couldn't be heard. What I am experiencing here right now is a system that constantly tells me (sometimes through the voice of concrete people) that I should actually be more than I am and I should acquire other better skills. It is impossible for me to establish a dialogue because I find myself as a permanent object.” (December 1, 2019)

Among the interviewees, there are people who have left their call center jobs and have now start working in different areas. For example, Karan is working in the marketing field as an E-Commerce Consultant. He decided to utilize his master’s degree in business for better job opportunities in Berlin. He described the four-year employment at the call center as an experience for him, but now he has much better work conditions:

“I don’t have to enter anything in the phone or system when I go to the toilet. I am comfortable interviewing with you today. I don't need permission from anyone to have a tea here. Time management is allowed for everyone who completes their job. In short, it makes people much happier because they are much more humane conditions.”(October 16, 2019, para. 44)

Likewise, after getting fired from a call center job, Filiz used her unemployment benefits (she receives this income because she is married to an EU citizen, otherwise students are not allowed to receive unemployment benefits) to fund her German language studies. She started a bachelor study program on social services at the Alice Solomon University and she is currently working as a student assistant:

“I chose a more practical way for myself. If I want to stay here, I needed a job here because I am doing my bachelors for a second time. However, I see it in a way that I need further information in some of the classes I have already taken. At the same time, I am trying to improve my German. I probably see my life from a more positive perspective than two years ago. I see more options.” (October 18, 2019, para.41)

Could unionization be a strategy to combat precarious conditions?

In this study, the last element to be emphasized will be on employee representation and unionization. As previously mentioned, unions and the relationship of the employees with the union in precarious employment conditions can weaken their relationship. Especially for a group immigrants, the union may have a different perception and relationship regarding to the country they come from. In the same way, various prior insecurities in the immigrant's country may affect the relationship with the union.

Of all the interviewees, only Merih, Janset and Rüzgar were members of a union. When asked about their perspectives towards the union in general, the majority of the interviewees confused the union with the workers council. Generally, they thought that the "Workers Council" was an external institution like an independent union where they could go for help when experiencing trouble at work. However, most of them learned of the workers council in their company when they experience a problem at work Filiz said that she did not know that she could go to the workers council during business hours. After learning this, she said that the council was helpful with unpleasant situations regarding her team leader (October 18, 2019, para. 23). Likewise, Merih, also mentioned that he went to the workers council several times and "raised his voice few times without shouting" over the troubles in the workplace. However, he stated that the workers council is a new concept for Turkish employees, and comes with various disadvantages:

"The workers council, is an organization that does not exist in Turkey. When a problem occurs at work and employees take it to the workers council. Usually a sympathetic person is found there, so it is an institution with many actors. It is an institution with people who have worked for the company for many years and have organic ties with it rather than people who have just started working there with a lower position than them. So, after a while we can observe that these people work in favor of the company." (October 16, 2019, para. 26)

A representative of Verdi, which is the union who has a majority of members who are employed by call centers, also shared some comments. According to Johannes (Verdi), the workers council occupies an important position for the protection of employee rights. He gives an example that if the workers council does not approve new hires because there are employees whose contracts are not extended, than the company must go to court every time when they

want to hire someone, which is an undesirable situation (October 30, 2019, para. 2). However, Johannes says that when the workers council is not working well, it is difficult for the union to protect the rights of the workers. He says, “Good workers councils work with the union, bad workers councils do not” (October 30, 2019, Para. 3)

According to him, when the workers council works better, it is reflected onto the employee work conditions. He especially emphasizes that in the call centers, the workers council are not the best. He mentions that people who are working temporary jobs in these companies are less willing to make changes in their employment conditions. Additionally, the workers council usually consists of long-time employees of the company. According to Johannes, the workers councils are mostly under the influence of the company management. This can be similar to the Team Leaders, who are in a close relationship with the management, who are elected in these positions. The team Leaders often do not care for the interests of the employees, but of the interests of the management. He adds that there is not much change to make when the workers council is uncooperative to employee rights, because they are elected for the next 4 years (October 30, 2019, para 4)

Janset shared that she and her friends were elected to the workers council at Arvato / Majorel 2 years ago. She said that this process started positively for her but she later realized that the process was more of a political process than what she was expecting. Although the group won the majority vote, a colleague with longer employment, and with no communicative English language, won the election for Workers Council president (November 7, 2019)

When the interviewees were asked about their approach to the union, most said they had little knowledge of the union and they were hesitant about making contact with union. Hande said that she was afraid because she does not know the German language. She noticed that people speaking fluent German or more integrated in Germany are the ones to become a member (November 11, 2019, para.35)

Similarly, Merih said that their union rights are not well-known, especially to those who are employed part-time, or students who cannot find a motivation to devote themselves to this task because, “what we live now, this is not our life.”(October 16, 2019, para.26)

4.3 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF EMPRICAL RESULTS

This chapter aimed at providing an analysis of precarious working conditions in the case of highly-skilled Turkish newcomers' experiences in Germany. The focus was to understand how they perceive their work conditions and to analyse factors compelling them to work in these positions as well as their coping strategies. First, I focused on understanding their concrete employment conditions and determine in which ways these conditions can be called precarious. As I have emphasized while describing the findings from the eleven semi-structured interviews, due to the high degree of uncertainty of employment, employees do not have control over determining their working hours, nor do they receive employment benefits like bonuses. At the same time employers benefit from high flexibility regarding schedules and bonus systems and within a relatively broad framework can change their employees working hours, job description and tasks according to current demands. As I mentioned according to the analysis of Pocock et al. (2004d), when employers have these unilateral abilities worker's jobs become more insecure and dependent as they have little control or certainty over their working hours, role or income, which can be understood as a form of precarious employment produced by employer-side flexibility. In addition, uncertainty about the amount of income to be expected and the working hours makes it difficult to plan other responsibilities regarding the respondents' social life and responsibilities towards their families, which shows the direct impact of precarious work conditions on precarious life situations.

Likewise, similarly to the Canadian example of Vosko (2006) mentioned in Chapter Two in our examples there is a high preference for temporary contracts instead of unlimited ones. The main problem linked to temporary contracts is of course that they frequently cause feelings of insecurity about future employment (Vosko, 2011b). As Lewchuk et al. (2017e) mention, temporality and low employment stability also causes constant pressure on employees to perform well, constantly evaluated their own efforts and always adapt to flexible conditions. In the examples discussed above is also evident that the respondents' success as employees is related to evaluation reports, compelling them to always stay positive and refrain from complaining about their situation, since their future in the company depends on a range of performance indicators (Lewchuk et al. 2017e, p. 12).

In terms of employment relationships, much in the same way as Auer & Cazes (2000d, p. 379) have described, the average length of time that a worker spends with his / her employer is declining in my examples. The strict hierarchy between managers, whose faces never appear

on the work floors of large companies, down to the individual worker was present in all call centers. As the interviewees describe, a series of steps from simple “Agent” to “Team Leader” to “Group Leader” as well as from Group leaders to managers above them was clearly evident for them at all times. In this hierarchy, less evident is an identification of workers with their work and the company's identity. Quite to the contrary, the relationship between owners and employees can generally be described as weak. Therefore the experiences of my respondents relate quite well to Standing's (2011, p.12-13) analyses of a lack of work-based identity or alienation of workers' feelings towards their work and colleagues as an effect of temporary and insecure jobs.

However, in contradiction to what Standing has emphasized, for the same respondents there is a remarkably close relationship of solidarity among employees of the same nationality in the companies included in the sample. Respondents described how they created their own network within an employee relationship in their companies. As Nohl, Schittenhelm, Schmidtke & Weiß (2014a) have stated in their analysis of highly-skilled migrants, while living in a common environment is always shaped by national migration policies, workers are able to create their own networks in order to exchange useful information about legal issues, job opportunities and other information that will be useful in their new country of residence. At the same time, through my interviews I was able to trace workers' movements from one company to another. Several of the persons interviewed started out in one company and later switched to another one after their contract was not extended or for another reason. I learned that, based on networks formed in any of the call centers included in the sample, also people working in different companies know each other and in their networks inform each other about new hires. This shows that immigrants have created and used their own networks as a coping strategy in their new country of residence.

As I have explained in Chapter Two, my second focus was on how the process of migration and transferring cultural capital affected the respondents' situation of working in precarious conditions. To understand what kind of limitations these workers interviewed encounter, I analyzed their biographies and career paths. I observed in my interviewees how their knowledge and skills collected and documented with diplomas drastically decreased in value as soon as they transferred to another country. I learned that especially the lack of knowledge of the German language makes it difficult for the respondents to find suitable jobs in their areas of expertise. As Bourdieu (2010) emphasizes, language does not only have a functional power,

but also serves to create a profitable distinction in the form of “linguistic capital”. It can be seen in the experiences described by my respondents that not having this capital creates an important problem of self-confidence and self-esteem in the new country of residence. Interviewees who learn(ed) the German language mentioned this as a good strategy helping them to return to academic life or, in some cases, to find better jobs. A majority of interviewees also mentioned that learning the German language was or would be a precondition for them to find better jobs.

One more central finding concerns the immigrants’ experiencing legal restrictions connected to their residence permit in Germany. For example, some of my interviewees were still students at the time of the interviews and as such they have limited work permits. This situation, instead protecting them as is the laws intention, forced them to work in more precarious jobs. In a few cases, the interviewees got married in order to change their visa status. In other cases they had to continue to work in the same work places to reach the same goal. However in these cases, as also Waite, Lewis & Skrivankova (2015d) have described, the respondents become dependent to their work places or partners. As another noteworthy point, in their Call-Center work which is said to not require important qualifications, some of the Turkish Newcomers were from time to time were required to work also in other floors, that is, different languages. While they could use the cultural and linguistic capital they bring due to a cosmopolitan background, employers freely disposed of this capital without granting the workers additional economic return.

Finally, the low union membership observed in studies in different European countries (Arnholtz and Hansen, 2013d; Gorodzeisky and Richards, 2013e; Marino et al., 2015e) was also visible in my study. Most employees interviewed were either less knowledgeable about the German union system or too afraid to participate in any union activities. Likewise Berntsen and Lillie (2016f) in their study encountered employees who feared that their contracts would not be extended because they would look ‘too political’ in the eyes of their employers if they joined a union. However, as also Refslund (2018) has mentioned for the case of Denmark, several interviewees mentioned that when it comes to the social security system Germany still offered them good conditions compared to Turkey. The German system, as my interviewees point out, for example allows to stay home when sick and even allows to receive full salary or part of their salary when sick over longer periods of time. These factors taken together also cause them not to fight too much in order to change their working conditions. Lastly, even those among my interviewees who would like to acquire more knowledge about the German union system do not have this chance since almost all informational material provided and distributed by major

unions in Germany is in German only. Language barriers therefore prevent also highly skilled and well educated migrant call center workers to reach out to unions and organise themselves.

5 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to explore how highly-skilled turkish new-comers experience precarity and what are the charecteristics of their employment patterns and the role of the transferring cultural capital in this process of precarity. According to my study, for newcomer Turkish immigrants the loss of major parts of their cultural capital seems inevitable. A lack of language skills, lack of recognition of their foreign education certificates and a lack of information about the country, its union system and workers rights as well as legal obstacles experienced in Germany make this loss inevitable. As Lewchuk et al. (2017e) have emphasized, the high level of legal barriers and insecure forms of employment negatively affect the private lives of these workers. In addition to that, it can have negative effects on their mental well-being and cause less motivation to pursue and rebuild their career in their new country of residence, resulting in a high probability to experience self-confidence and self-worth problems.

In this study, I have brought together studies of working conditions and studies of immigration, as two major fields of social sciences research. At this point, clearly a qualitative study of limited reach as the one presented in this thesis cannot yield results representative in the sense of a more comprehensive, large sample quantitative research. Since precariousness as a concept has proved to be very difficult to standardize and operationalize for quantitative research, however my study is able to contribute from an analysis of individuals' experiences to developing terms and questions that might help define it in the future. It therefore can be seen as a qualitative pre-study for further, more extensive studies, both qualitative and quantitative. A more comparative study of workers accross differing identities, nationalities and workplaces would yield a more comprehensive picture of the field of precarity in migrant and non-migrant labor, its processes and cross-cutting effects. As a starting point, listening to the underestimated voices of precarious workers can provide important hints for future academic debates on precarity. Understood in a broader sense, the structures of exploitation of highly skilled migrant labor reveal important insights for scientifically backed responses to the frequently assumed effect of immigration leading to increased labor market competition and any current right-wing discriminative discourses linked to these phenomena.

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Annexes:

Annex I: Semi-structured Interview Questions

Q1: Where were you born and grow up?

Q2: What did you study?

Q3: What was your reason for coming to Berlin?

Q4: How did you start working at the Call-Center?

Q5: How was the application process and the admission process afterwards?

Q6: How is your working hours?

Q7: What kind of contract did you have and how did the extension process take place?

Q8: How would you describe your relationship to companies that you are working for?

Q9: What effect did your visa status have on your life?

Q9: When you compared the experience to work in Germany to Turkey how can you describe it?

Q10: How did this work affects you physically and mentally?

Q11: How was your relationship with the union? What do you know about German unions?

Annex 2: Interview Information Sheet and Ethical Consideration

Student Researcher's Name: Secil Kalenderoglu, BA Sociology, Freie Universität Berlin MA Candidate

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Supervisor's Name: Harold Wenzel, Professor Dr. at Freie Universität Berlin

Phone: (+49) 3083852702

E-mail: sociology@jfki.fu-berlin.de

Title of Thesis: Exploring perceptions and impact of precarious employment on subjective wellbeing amongst Newcomers from Turkey to Berlin.

Purpose of Research: The purpose of this research is to hear the voices of people who came from Turkey to Berlin in last 10 years and the impact of precarious employment on their subjective wellbeing.

Participants will be: *people who came from Turkey to Berlin in last 10 years *grow up in Turkey (who does not have to call themselves Turkish) *female or male (no age restriction) *experiencing precarious, limited, underpaid employment or unemployment *living in Berlin.

Role of Participants: Your role as a research participant is to complete one interview to explore the impact of precarious/limited/underpaid or unemployment work situations. It is expected that interviews will take approximately one hour to complete.

Who will have access to responses?

Only Secil Kalenderoglu (student researcher) and Prof. Dr. Harold Wenzel (First Academic Supervisor) and Prof. Dr. Sergio Costa (Second Academic Supervisor) will have access to the information gathered in the interviews.

Storage of Information: Information provided by you will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the student researcher. The student researcher will be the only person who will have access to the locked cabinet. Any electronic documents will be password protected. Notes, transcripts and audio-tapes will be kept in a location separate from the consent forms.

Anonymity and Confidentiality: No names or identifying information will be used in transcripts, analysis, interviews or written results. All identifiers will be stripped from the data and no one will be able to link participant names with what is said. Pseudonyms will be used to differentiate individuals' words. The researcher will make every effort to ensure that participant identity is not revealed directly or indirectly. Information provided by participants

may be reflected in the final report, publications or presentations, however, names and identifying information will not be used.

Sharing of research Results: Upon completion of this project, results will be distributed through multiple mechanisms including: community-based publications and presentations as well as through peer-reviewed conference presentations and possible journal articles. Results will be made available to all study participants who indicate they wish to receive them. For More Information: If you have any questions regarding this research study, please do not hesitate to contact Secil Kalenderoglu or Harold Wenzel (supervisor). With consent of participant, the interview will be audio-taped.

THIS RESEARCH IS PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIOLOGY FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF FREE FOR SECIL KALENDEROGLU, STUDENT RESEARCHER

MA Soziologie – europäische Gesellschaften
MA Sociology – European Societies

Eidesstattliche Erklärung zur Masterarbeit

von

(Name, Vorname(n), Matrikelnr.)

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die Masterarbeit – bei einer Gruppenarbeit meinen gekennzeichneten Teil der Arbeit - selbständig und lediglich unter Benutzung der angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel verfasst habe.

Ich versichere außerdem, dass die vorliegende Arbeit noch nicht einem anderen Prüfungsverfahren zugrunde gelegen hat.

Ich bin damit einverstanden / nicht damit einverstanden, dass ein Exemplar meiner Masterarbeit in der Bibliothek ausgeliehen werden kann.

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(Signature)

MA Sociology -European Societies

Declaration in lieu of oath

by

(Name, student ID No.)

This is to confirm that my Master's thesis was composed/authored independently by myself, using solely the referenced sources and support.

I additionally assert that this thesis has not been part of any another examination process.

I agree / I do not agree (please delete as necessary) to my Master's Thesis being held in the University library for lending purposes.

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(Signature)