

Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Helsinki

**PUNCTUATED LIVES:
STUDENT-MIGRANT-WORKERS'
ENCOUNTERS WITH THE TEMPORAL
BORDER REGIME**

Olivia Maury

ACADEMIC THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The doctoral thesis examines the contradictory images and realities of non-EU/EEA migrants holding a student residence permit in Finland while working alongside their studies. Drawing on in-depth interviews (N=41+12) with non-EU/EEA student-migrants, the thesis examines the multiple effects of the one-year permit in student-migrants' everyday lives. A key aspect of these experiences is the insecure and precarious work they undertake in order to obtain income and successfully renew the one-year permit, which requires a secure means of support (interpreted as 6720 €/year) and private health insurance in addition to them advancing in their studies. The thesis fills a gap in research by moving beyond conventional approaches to student migration limited to an assessment of highly skilled migration and instead focuses on the implications of borders and residence permit bureaucracy for student-migrants' everyday lives and labour.

The theoretical framework is rooted in a research discussion on the constitutive role of borders in contemporary capitalism advanced by critical migration researchers. Borders affect the political and juridical structure of labour markets, and consequently, the experiences of working migrant populations. The analysis developed in the five publications included in the thesis is structured around three core themes.

Precarisation is examined from the point of view of working student-migrants in a variety of contractual employment settings and work sectors. Unpaid work occurs across these work arrangements and creates a pool of flexible labour. At the same time, this process is sustained by the student-migrant-workers' insecure temporary migration status in the country, together with social differentiation based primarily on race, gender and age.

Temporal borders offers an analytical angle for examining the impact of the temporary one-year student permit on the quotidian lives of student-migrant-workers. The thesis demonstrates that student-migrant-workers have experiences of a punctuated lived time because of the temporary nature of their permit, which creates a fruitful ground for the differentiation of labour and, consequently, the production of a low-paid labour force in Finland.

Finally, the student-migrants' *pragmatic, yet ambivalent, strategies* for confronting and challenging the forms of administrative bordering that they face when trying to extend their permit are examined. The thesis demonstrates that student-migrant-workers creatively find ways to challenge the borders by

adjusting their work contract or by switching their migration status. Thus, student-migrants appear as active subjects embodying a drive to make a better life for themselves in Finland.

The thesis contributes to a sociological analysis of increasingly fragmented labouring figures in the context of contemporary capitalism. Theoretically, it participates in the research discussion on borders and the production of flexible labour, not solely from a spatial perspective but also from a temporal one. In conclusion, the thesis highlights mechanisms for hierarchising the labour force and demonstrates how differential inclusion is continuously reproduced.

ABSTRAKT

Doktorsavhandlingen behandlar arbetande utomeuropeiska (icke-EU/EES) studerandemigranter i Finland. Utgående ifrån kvalitativa intervjuer (N=41+12) med studerandemigranter undersöker avhandlingen hur det ettåriga uppehållstillståndet inverkar på studentmigranternas vardag och erfarenheter av arbete vid sidan om studierna. Avhandlingen visar att många utomeuropeiska studerande arbetar under osäkra förhållanden för trygga inkomsterna och för att förnya sitt uppehållstillstånd som utöver framsteg i studierna kräver säkra ekonomiska medel (6720 €/år) och en privat sjukförsäkring. Genom att frångå ett konventionellt perspektiv på studerandemigration inom ramarna för högkvalificerad migration och istället understryka gränsregimen och uppehållstillståndsbyråkratin i studerandemigranternas vardag fyller avhandlingen en kunskapslucka i forskningen.

Avhandlingen är teoretiskt förankrad i kritisk migrationsforskning med fokus på gränsernas grundläggande roll i den samtida kapitalismen. Gränserna fungerar inte bara som verktyg för att hindra eller underlätta rörelse utan spelar en nyckelroll i produktionen av tid och rum för den samtida globala kapitalismen eftersom gränsregimen påverkar arbetsmarknadens politiska och juridiska struktur och följaktligen arbetande migranternas erfarenheter. Analysen som utvecklats i avhandlingens fem publikationer är uppbyggd kring tre centrala teman.

Prekarisering analyseras utifrån de arbetande student-migranternas perspektiv i en kontext av olika avtalsmässiga anställningar samt branscher. Förekomsten av obetalt arbete i dessa varierande arbetsarrangemang skapar tillgänglig flexibel arbetskraft. Denna process upprätthålls ytterligare i och

med den osäkra och tillfälliga juridiska statusen i landet och socialt producerade skillnader på basis av rasifiering, kön och ålder.

Tidsmässiga gränser utgör en analytisk vinkel för att undersöka effekterna av det ettåriga uppehållstillståndet i studerande migrantarbetarnas dagliga liv. Avhandlingen visar att arbetande studerandemigranter upplever återkommande uppbrott i den levda tiden på grund av uppehållstillståndets tillfälliga karaktär vilket skapar fruktbar mark för differentieringen av arbetskraften och därmed produktionen av lågavlönad arbetskraft i Finland.

Slutligen analyseras studerandemigranternas *pragmatiska men ambivalenta strategier* för att konfrontera och utmana former av administrativ gränsdragning som de står inför när de ska förnya sitt uppehållstillstånd. Avhandlingen visar att de arbetande studerandemigranterna kreativt hittar sätt att utmana gränserna genom att justera sina arbetskontrakt eller byta migrationsstatus. Studerandemigranterna framstår således som aktiva subjekt som ger uttryck för en strävan att skapa ett liv i Finland.

Avhandlingen bidrar till den sociologiska analysen av de alltmer fragmenterade arbetande subjekten i den samtida kapitalismen. Teoretiskt deltar avhandlingen i forskningsdiskussionen om gränsregimer och produktionen av flexibel arbetskraft, inte bara ur ett rumsligt perspektiv utan också ur ett tidsperspektiv. Avslutningsvis för avhandlingen fram mekanismer genom vilka arbetskraften hierarkiseras och påvisar hur differentiell inkludering ständigt reproduceras.

ABSTRAKTI

Väitöskirja käsittelee työtä tekeviä, EU/ETA-alueen ulkopuolelta tulevia opiskelijasiirtolaisia Suomessa. Opiskelijasiirtolaisten kvalitatiivisten haastattelujen (N=41+12) pohjalta väitöskirja tutkii, kuinka vuodeksi myönnetty tilapäinen oleskelulupa vaikuttaa opiskelijasiirtolaisten jokapäiväiseen elämään ja heidän opiskelunsa ohella tekemään työhön. Väitöskirja osoittaa, että moni EU/ETA-alueen ulkopuolelta tuleva opiskelija tekee työtä opiskelujensa ohessa varmistaakseen riittävät tulot ja mahdollisuuden hakea oleskeluluvan jatkamista, mihin opiskelujen etenemisen lisäksi vaaditaan ”turvattu toimeentulo” (6720 €/vuosi) ja yksityinen sairausvakuutus. Aiemmin opiskelijasiirtolaisia koskevassa tutkimuksessa käytetyn korkeakoulutettujen siirtolaisuuteen keskittyvän lähestymistavan sijaan väitöskirja keskittyy rajajärjestelmän ja oleskelulupabyrokratian merkitykseen opiskelijasiirtolaisten arkipäivässä.

Siten väitöskirja tarjoaa uuden näkökulman opiskelijasiirtolaisuutta koskevaan tutkimukseen.

Teoreettisesti väitöskirja kytkeytyy kriittiseen siirtolaisuustutkimukseen, jonka keskiössä on ymmärrys siitä, että rajat ovat perustavanlaatuisen osa nykykapitalismia. Rajat eivät ole ainoastaan väline, jonka avulla kontrolloida liikkumista, vaan niillä on merkittävä rooli siinä, kuinka aika ja tila jäsentyvät nykykapitalismissa. Tämän seurauksena rajajärjestelmä vaikuttaa työmarkkinoiden poliittiseen ja oikeudelliseen rakenteeseen ja siten myös työtä tekevien siirtolaisten kokemuksiin. Väitöskirjan viidessä tutkimusartikkelissa kehitetään analyysia, joka jäsentyy seuraavien kolmen pääteeman kautta.

Prekarisaatiota tutkitaan eri sektoreilla työskentelevien ja monenlaisten sopimuksellisten järjestelyjen kautta työskentelevien opiskelijasiirtolaisten näkökulmasta. Väitöskirjassa osoitetaan, että palkaton työtä esiintyy monilla eri aloilla, mikä edesauttaa joustavan työvoimareservin tuottamista. Lisäksi tilapäinen oleskelustatus sekä muun muassa rotuun, sukupuoleen ja ikään pohjautuvat sosiaalisesti tuotetut erot vaikuttavat prekaarin työvoiman tuottamiseen.

Ajalliset rajat toimivat analyttisenä näkökulmana vuoden pituisen oleskeluluvan jokapäiväisten vaikutusten tutkimiselle. Väitöskirjassa osoitetaan, että opiskelijasiirtolaiset kokevat eletyn ajan tulevan toistuvasti katkaistuksi oleskeluluvan tilapäisyyden vuoksi. Tämä luo hedelmälliset olosuhteet työvoiman eriyttämiseksi, ja näin ollen, matalapalkkaisen työvoiman tuottamiselle Suomessa.

Väitöskirja käsittelee myös opiskelijasiirtolaisten *pragmaattisia, joskin ristiriitaisia, strategioita* kohdatessaan hallinnollisia rajakäytäntöjä ja pyrkiessään haastamaan niitä. Väitöskirjassa osoitetaan, että työtä tekevät opiskelijasiirtolaiset löytävät luovia tapoja rajojen haastamiseen sopeuttamalla työsopimuksiaan tai vaihtamalla maahanmuuttotatustaan. Opiskelijasiirtolaiset näyttäytyvät siten aktiivisina subjekteina, jotka pyrkivät luomaan itselleen paremman elämän Suomessa.

Väitöskirja sijoittuu sosiologiseen keskusteluun työtä tekevien subjektien eriytyemisestä nykykapitalismissa. Teoreettisesti tutkimus osallistuu keskusteluun rajojen merkityksestä joustavan työvoiman tuottamisessa esittelemällä niin tilallisia kuin ajallisia näkökulmia ilmiöön. Lopuksi väitöskirja korostaa työvoiman hierarkisoitumisen mekanismeja ja kuinka erottelevaa sisällyttämistä jatkuvasti uusinnetaan.

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The initial spark for this doctoral thesis dates back to the beginning of my master's thesis. Following the writing of several idea papers with varying points of focus, my friend, fellow activist and research colleague Markus Himanen asked: What about non-EU students? Thank you, Markus, for posing this question on the escalators at the Kaisa library – this instance shaped the next seven years to come.

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In addition to the theoretical and analytical perspectives acquired through participating in the No Border movement, my pathway into researching this topic has been supported by participation in various reading circles concerning Marxian and feminist theory, most importantly reading Marx' *Capital I* together with Daria Krivonos, Minna Seikkula, Elisabeth Wide, Anastasia Diatlova and Emmy Karhu. My engagement with Marx's three volumes of *Capital* was also re-enforced through my participation in the Institute for Critical Social Inquiry at the New School for Social Research with Professor David Harvey and the inspiring group of people present, to whom I owe many thanks.

As is always the case with collective thinking, it is impossible to disconnect the ideas reflected on while reading *Capital* from my earlier dedication to reading post-operaist theory together with Ina Kauranen, Thomas Södergård, Staffan Södergård, Mattias Lehtinen and Valter Sandell. Furthermore, Tenala in Theory has been a node for developing ideas together with the abovementioned friends as well as with Joanna Österblom, Mikael Brunila, Fredrik Österblom and Juho Narsakka, as have the everyday discussions with Elvira Eilittä, Inkeri Rönneberg, Fanny Södergran and Sara Huhtamies.

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Olivia

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: PUBLICATION I, II, III, IV AND V

APPENDIX 2: ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF PUBLICATION II

ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

The doctoral thesis is based on the following publications:

- I. Maury, Olivia (2017) Student-Migrant-Workers: Temporal Aspects of Precarious Work and Life in Finland. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 7(4): 224–232.
- II. Maury, Olivia (2018) International Students as a Precarious Labour Force in Finland. Experiences of Working while Residing on a Student Visa [Original title in Finnish: Kansainväliset opiskelijat prekaarina työvoimana Suomessa. Kokemuksia työnteosta opiskelijan oleskeluluvan varassa]. *Sociologia* 55(4): 334–349.
- III. Maury, Olivia (2020) Between a Promise and a Salary: Student-Migrant-Workers' Experiences of Precarious Labour Markets. *Work, Employment and Society* 34(5):809–825.
- IV. Maury, Olivia (2020) Punctuated Temporalities: Temporal Borders in Student-Migrants' Everyday Lives. *Current Sociology*.
- V. Maury, Olivia (Accepted) Ambivalent Strategies: Student-Migrant-Workers' Efforts at Challenging Administrative Bordering. *Sociology*.

The publications are referred to in the text by their roman numerals.

1 INTRODUCTION

People have a lot of assumptions of how you came here. When you say you're a student, they are like, 'ah, ok, you're a safe one'. I hate these boxes. [...] When they say, why aren't you working or why haven't you got a full-time job, they [Finnish citizens] don't know what we [non-EU/EEA student-migrants] have been through to even kind of ask that so easily.

– Lale, student-migrant-worker, Western Asia

The social status of the foreign student is riddled by imaginaries and assumptions of what a foreign student-migrant is like. At the same time, student status is informed by heterogeneous modes of life and labour. As Lale, a working student-migrant who has lived in Finland for a few years, suggests, the foreigner is always apprehended as a potential threat while the migratory category of the student – the box, as Lale calls it – comes to signal safety for those inhabiting the privileged position of being 'from here' as opposed to the 'migrant other'. A 'safe' migrant is furthermore perceived as someone who succeeds in becoming a productive labouring subject, Lale indicates, while the legal requirements and limitations faced by non-EU/EEA migrants are less widely known among Finnish citizens.

This doctoral thesis examines the social position of non-EU/EEA student-migrant-workers in Finland. I approach working student-migrants as occupying the middle ground between two global imaginaries: that of the wealthy Global North, influenced by the 'global race for talent' (Shachar 2006), and that of the aim to manage migration through the border regime and the associated migratory categories invented for administrative ends (De Genova 2013b; Geiger and Pécoud 2012). By looking behind the façades of such falsely separated spheres, the thesis reveals the complex way in which the aim to attract global talent, articulated in policies both in Finland (OKM 2017; MEAE 2020) and in the Global North at large, and the production of precarious migrant labour meet.

I approach the topic of *labour* performed by student-migrants from the perspective of the EU border regime, placing analytical emphasis on the one-year *temporary legal status of the student*. I understand borders not only as state-based entities, but as forming a regime with local specificities shaped by encounters and tensions between migratory movements and institutions of border control (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015). Moreover, the time limits that are

constitutive of the methods for governing migration are enhanced through my perspective on the temporal aspects and effects of the border regime.

Through a joint analytical focus on labour power and the border regime, the thesis challenges a conventional research angle in which foreign students are recognised primarily as subjects of commodifiable knowledge and talent for highly skilled labour markets. While student-migrant-workers do possess vital skills, talents and multitudinous knowledge, I argue that several aspects of the student-migrants' lives that enable them to become and remain students in Finland have been downplayed in public discourse and in research. Hence, the thesis critically disentangles the migratory category of student-migrant by bringing to light an abundance of experiences beyond the education context involving wage labour and extensive efforts to plan and renew the residence permit each year. The thesis's particular point of inquiry centres on how the border regime produces student-migrants as a flexibly employable labour force and how they subjectively manage to contest the everyday effects of the temporal border regime.

The central subjects of first-hand knowledge are persons holding a student residence permit in Finland with experiences of doing paid and unpaid work alongside their studies. The data consist of interviews with 41 student-migrant-workers, follow-up interviews with 12 of them and an interview with two employees in managerial positions at the Finnish Immigration Service. I argue that student-migrants have become a precarious labour force, often employed in the low-paid service sector, consequently serving as an avenue of inquiry for grasping the variety of experiences subsumed under the administrative migratory category of student. This perspective also challenges the assumption of a progressive path from studies to high-skilled work.

I approach the subjects through the analytical notion of student-migrant-worker.¹ The term both designates the blurring of migratory categories and reflects the research participants' struggles over how to position themselves in relation to these administrative categories as well as their intentions to form desirable lives. While examining the everyday experiences of living with and switching between the administrative categories of student-migrant and migrant-worker, it also aims to bring forth subjective modes of combining studies, work and cross-border movement, that is, a subjectively lived context beyond a policy-induced view of migration. Thus, rather than suggesting the natural existence of mere options of choice between the state-centric and administrative migratory categories, the notion of student-migrant-worker advances critical reflection on and de-naturalisation of these categories

¹ I borrow the notion 'student-migrant-worker' from Brett Neilson (2009), who uses it in to denote a new political subjectivity and to account for merging migratory categories.

(De Genova et al. 2021). Furthermore, approaching the research from the perspective of student-migrants instead of international students shifts emphasis from identities confined by nationality to the context of border crossings, which do not play out as free movement within the Schengen area and which bring to the fore the entanglement of migration for studies with other migratory aims such as employment or asylum seeking.

Approximately one fourth of migrants to Finland come for study purposes, 70-80 per cent of whom come from outside the EU/EEA area (EDUFI 2016, 2018). I analyse the temporary student residence permit as a local component of the EU border regime and highlight the time limits that are constitutive of the residence permit system. The student residence permit is legally defined as a temporary permit due to the temporary nature of studies (Palander and Hyytiä 2018), and it is issued for one year at a time.² By way of analysing student-migrant-workers' subjective encounters and interactions with internalised borders (Bosniak 2007), the thesis inquires not only into the location of borders, but importantly into the effects of the bureaucratic time inscribed by the border regime on everyday life and labour. This focus permits me to advance the central argument of the thesis: that student-migrants' lived time is punctuated precisely by the yearly project of renewing the student permit. To punctuate means to 'occur at intervals throughout an area or period', and the idea derives from Medieval Latin *punctuat-*, meaning 'brought to a point' (MOT Oxford Dictionary of English 2021). *Punctuated lives* thus designate how student-migrant-workers' lives are shaped in relation to the intervals between the points at which the one-year residence permit must be extended. Hence, the thesis insists on the urgency of considering migration through a temporal lens in a specific historical situation in which temporary residence permits and temporary forms of migration are on the rise (Könönen 2019; Helander et al. 2016; Robertson 2019a; Rosewarne 2010).

To legally remain in Finland, the holder of a student permit is obliged to extend the permit on a yearly basis or switch to another migratory category. The extension of the student residence permit, in itself subject to a fee (350-450 €), entails the requirement of demonstrating sufficient economic funds, interpreted at the time of writing as 6720 €/year in addition to a private health insurance plan and successfully advancing in one's studies (45 ECTS/year). The holder of a student permit is not in general entitled to Finnish welfare services but has the right to work in any sector for approximately 25 hours a week.³ The thesis demonstrates that many non-EU/EEA student-migrants

² Two-year permits for students were only introduced in 2018, but with doubled the economic requirements (Ministry of the Interior 2019). For the purposes of this study, all research participants had obtained one-year permits.

³ Further legal stipulations can be found in subchapter 2.4.

combine work and studies to collect the required amount of money to extend the student permit. The more or less economically limited resources of many non-EU/EEA student-migrants is reflected in their choice to study in Finland because higher education was still free of charge at the time when they applied.⁴ However, some made their choice on other grounds, such as an interesting education programme or social ties to Finland. Moreover, coming to Finland constitutes one alternative route to Europe and the ‘West’ (see also Ginnerskov Dahlberg 2019) in the shadow of more attractive, albeit more expensive, destinations, such as the UK, which many student-migrant-workers reportedly initially had in mind.

Bringing student-migrants’ work experiences to centre stage makes it possible to examine the production of a precarious and legally insecure labour force from an unconventional perspective that extends beyond the type of mobility categorised as labour migration. My inquiry into the labour performed by holders of student permits concentrates on the *reasons* for, and the *conditions* in which, labour takes place. Thus, it goes beyond a mere calculation of the number of foreign students and graduates working while studying and highlights the legal difference between working students from within and without the EU/EEA area. These issues have often been overlooked in the Finnish research context (e.g. Calikoglu 2018; Eskelä 2013; Korhonen 2014; Laine 2016; Shumilova et al. 2012).

I approach the student residence permit in the working lives of non-EU/EEA students as central in spurring precarisation, which operates together with the social transformation of work and oppressive social structures that differentiate the labour force. Thus, the thesis contributes to literature on precarious migrant labour by shedding light on the manifold hierarchies affecting contemporary global labour markets from the local perspective of southern Finland.

The tensions between the migrants’ desires to shape their lives in a preferred way and the constraints they face in this process figure prominently in the analysis. I examine this dynamic particularly in the administrative context of extending the one-year temporary student permit and switching to another migratory status by highlighting the student-migrant-workers’ manifold intentions and their capacity for agentic and purposeful activity. Thus, the student-migrant-workers’ capacity to create ways to navigate their way through the migration system and invent strategies to achieve their goals signifies the possibility for resistance and an excess in terms of labour that

⁴ Tuition fees for non-EU/EEA citizens were introduced in autumn 2017 (Study in Finland 2018).

capital always needs but can never completely control or domesticate (Chakrabarty 2008; Hardt and Negri 2005; Mezzadra 2011b; Revel 2008).

The thesis enters into theoretical dialogue with critical migration and border studies as well as Marxian theory of labour and capital, putting primacy on the concepts of borders and labour power (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015; De Genova et al. 2017; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013), while also drawing on Foucauldian theorisation on the dynamic of subjection and subjectification and resistance enabled within this space (Foucault 2009; Tazzioli 2016). While I employ Marxian analytical tools for examining labour and fragmented capital accumulation, I also assess them critically by mobilising scholarship on black feminism, intersectionality and global coloniality (e.g. Bannerji 2005; de los Reyes and Mulinari 2009; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2018a, 2018b; Keskinen et al. 2009).

My engagement with researching the contemporary EU border regime and the way it locally plays out, together with providing an analysis of contemporary capital accumulation, stems from a desire to put an end to the way in which precarious migrant subjects are moulded within the contemporary border regime. I am also concerned with the way in which the border regime sustains and reproduces the figure of the migrant as signifying an incompleteness (Sayad 1999), often with racialised and class-based characteristics (Balibar 1991; Gilroy 2012) as opposed to the nationally and legally configured citizen. Therefore, the study enhances how subjective understandings of student migration are embedded in heterogeneous layers of social, legal and political relations that unfold beyond and against administrative migration categorisations and national framings.

Furthermore, my inquiry approaches migrants neither as individuals without rights nor as subjects of liberal agency detached from structures, but rather analyses the intricate practices that always exceed the ability of migration policies and state authorities to control migrants categorised as students. By aligning my inquiry with the Autonomy of Migration approach, the focus does not lie solely on control mechanisms but instead recenters the dynamic relationship between multiple migratory movements and how the mechanisms of control respond to and become shaped by migration. In this way, the emphasis on subjective practices, desires and struggles articulates a critique of the economic models of migration, such as push and pull factors, the victimisation of migrants, the governmental categorisations of migration and methodological nationalism (De Genova 2017; Mezzadra 2004; Casas Cortes et. al 2015).

To pursue this research, I pose the following research questions:

1. How does the temporal border regime produce student-migrants as a flexibly employable labour force and generate experiences of precarisation among student-migrant-workers?
2. What strategies do student-migrant-workers develop for contesting administrative bordering and the precarity of life and work?

The two questions capture the centrality of the border regime in the working lives of student-migrants. The study thereby addresses the ways in which the one-year student residence permit shapes the modes of life and occupation of those holding it and demonstrates how it engenders a punctuation of student-migrant-workers' lived time. I situate the analysis and delineate the focus of the research so as to provide an in-depth assessment of student-migrants' experiences of work and how such experiences become intertwined with the need to extend their residence permit. Even still, this perspective levers only glimpses into the working lives of the holders of student permits, while a multiplicity of layers of their lives, such as the educational layer, are left untouched.

The thesis offers novel perspectives for migration studies and the sociology of work. First, by looking at the intermingling figures of the student-migrant and the migrant-worker, the linear progressive narrative that extends from being a young student to landing a highly skilled job and eventually receiving citizenship is put under scrutiny. Restrictive immigration laws and strenuous processes of obtaining permanent residency give rise to new, and perhaps provocative, means of forming a way of life that allows student-migrant-workers to switch between and pivot against different migratory statuses. Thus, the thesis contributes to an understanding of the increasing temporary forms of migration and the insecurities experienced therein by purporting the experiences of when and how the border affects the migratory subject rather than accounting for borders only as a spatial device.

Second, the analysis of student-migrant-workers points to the complex ways in which the global capitalist mode of production relies on heterogeneous labouring subjects and fragmented forms of labour. It demonstrates that the filtering of migration through the border regime, together with the legal and social production of difference between labouring subjects, gives rise to a temporarily available, precarious labour force consisting of non-EU/EEA student-migrants in Finland.

Third, the thesis fills a gap in the research on migration by moving beyond a discourse on highly skilled migration, which often takes access to mobility and rights for granted, depicting such migration as frictionless and nearly borderless. The thesis critically contributes to this research discussion by bringing forth the everyday and intimate effects of the border regime in the lives of student-migrants. Moreover, it accounts for student-migrant-workers' attempts to reduce the effects of the borders in their everyday lives and how these attempts ambivalently may come to sustain the quest for flexible labour.

The following chapters of the thesis embrace and provide context for the five peer-reviewed publications that constitute the main body of the doctoral thesis. While the publications are in the foreground of the thesis, the ensuing discussion paints the background landscape needed to establish a firmer theoretical context for the research. The second chapter begins with a discussion of previous research, which shapes the larger context of the research concerning student-migration and labour, positioning the thesis within a broader research context. The third chapter expands on the central analytical concepts and points to wider intellectual histories of borders, labour power and migrant struggles. The fourth chapter outlines the methodology and the methods employed in the research and provides reflections on ethics and situatedness. The fifth chapter summarises the findings presented in the five publications. The findings are discussed in the three subsequent chapters. Chapter six focuses on patterns of precarious work and the production of difference among student-migrant-workers. Chapter seven explains the punctuated temporalities faced by student-migrant-workers and the colonial entanglements of the temporal border regime. Chapter eight focuses on the subjectivities produced at the border and the subjective strategies of challenging the immediate effects of the borders. These findings are woven together and backed up by a few chosen data excerpts as well as theoretical groundwork to form a comprehensive body of evidence depicting student-migrant-workers' experiences of life, work and struggle. Chapter nine provides a glimpse into the lives of the research participants a couple of years after the initial interview.

The conclusion brings together the central findings on the punctuated nature of student-migrant-workers' lived time and the organisation of life into one-year projects engendered through the temporal border regime. Further, it demonstrates how non-EU/EEA student-migrants purportedly serve as a flexibly available labour force and how the student permit spurs precarisation. Last, the findings point to student-migrant-workers' capacity to take command of their lives and futures by employing pragmatic but ambivalent strategies to minimise the limiting effects of the border regime while at the same time striving to ensure a continued legal presence in Finland.

2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

2.1 STUDENT MIGRATION BEYON EDUCATION

Policy, media and even academic discourses on international students are often polarised, simplistic and stereotypical (Findlay et al. 2012; King and Raghuram 2013: 127; Ginnerskov Dahlberg 2019). In many cases, student migration has been analysed apart from other forms of migration, which has led to a negligible focus on student migration within the field of migration research (Cairns 2014: 11). The simplistic representations of student migration are rooted in the politically and sociologically uncontested classification and categorisation of migrants (Robertson 2019b). As mechanisms of control, they become highly tangible in the uses of such terminology as immigrant, expat, international student or migrant-worker. These terms have acquired underlying meaning in everyday use, where ‘the immigrant’ has come to serve as a routine proxy for race (Balibar 1991: 21; see also Bigo 2002; Gilroy 2012), while ‘the expat’ suggests mobility shaped by class and racial privilege (Benson 2012; Krivonos 2019a; Sharma 2020).

As opposed to techniques of control, lived experiences of border crossing nearly always involve choices. This spurs a rethinking of migration categories according to which student migration is perceived as voluntary and international students are personified as globetrotters (Kirkegaard and Wulff Nat-George 2016). Recent research has opened up new interpretations that dis-affirm the homogenising discourses of international students and student-migrants by linking them to broader practices of migration that dismantle the construction of the international student as a simply privileged subject from an upper-middle-class background (Findlay et al. 2012; Ginnerskov Dahlberg 2019; Luthra and Platt 2016; Olwig and Valentin 2015; Robertson 2013; Raghuram 2013). For example, Robertson (2013) questions the polarisation between, on the one hand, professional elite migrants and on the other the already suspect and often exploited back-door migrants utilising the education route for other purposes. Luthra and Platt (2016), for their part, link the expansion of international higher education to an era of ‘managed migration’ and demonstrate the need to pay greater attention to the complexity and diversity of student migration instead of merely framing international students as a cosmopolitan elite.

The present doctoral thesis contributes to this growing body of critical migration research. From the perspective of the lived experiences of migrants holding a temporary student permit in Finland, the thesis sheds light on how the category of the student-migrant easily escapes the constraints of intended governmental boundaries and controls. By focusing on legal status, the thesis avoids resorting to a 'naïve empiricism' (De Genova 2002: 432) that deploys migration categories as identities. Instead, it highlights the ways in which immigration law, policy and borders shape labouring subjects and produce legal and social hierarchies among them. Approaching student migration from the perspective of legal status permits me to make the argument that the excess of the administrative category of student-migrant can be subsumed within the value-producing circuits of capital, and in this way, respond to the global quest for flexible labour. However, while privileging an analytical focus on the migratory status of the student, the thesis seeks to avoid a static approach by addressing the ways in which migration statuses may vary over time and space, how they intermingle and become dependent on other statuses, as well as their relation to the production of other forms of social difference (Robertson 2019b).

2.2 THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF EDUCATION IN FINLAND

To set the scene for researching student-migrant-workers, I provide a brief overview of the historical context of migration and international student mobility in Finland. The history of immigration to Finland as well as the heterogeneous cultural and religious background of the Finnish population has repeatedly been undermined and homogenised in social research. The Finnish history of migration is frequently packaged into a story of the so-called first Chilean refugees arriving in 1973 (Leitzinger 2008). However, historically Finland was first part of the Swedish kingdom (until 1809) and later the Russian Empire (1809–1917). Thus, it is hardly surprising that Finland for centuries has been a crossroads between several languages and cultures, which have put their stamp on contemporary economic and cultural life. The homogenising tendency of Finnish history writing (Tervonen 2014) has contributed to the reproduction of the ordinary Finnish citizen as represented through a 'white racial ethnic-national lens' (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2018a). Within this framework, Finland is imagined as 'historically white' and racism in Finland is constructed as a novel phenomenon (Keskinen 2014; Vuorela, 2009). Moreover, history writing in Finland has participated in reproducing the common trope of European history writing, rarely accounting for the

diverse backgrounds and experiences of people already present in Europe and overlooking migration as integral to the narrative of national and European identities (Bhambra 2014: 155).

Student mobility to and from Finland was initially promoted between nation-states in Europe and in the USSR from the mid-20th century onward. Students from Ovamboland (in current Namibia), countries with which Finland had development assistance agreements, arrived in the 1960s (Leitzinger 2008). The number of foreign students was, however, small in scale before the 2000s. In 1963, there were 88 foreign students in Finland, a number that increased to just above 300 students at the beginning of the 1970s. In 1972, a 'Guide for Foreign Students' was launched in English at the University of Helsinki, as it was the primary destination for foreign students. Of the foreign students at the University of Helsinki at the time, almost half were European, 20 per cent American and less than 30 per cent Asian or African (Leitzinger 2008: 488–491).

People residing in a foreign country for educational purposes exceeded 5.1 million globally in 2017, increasing from 2 million in 2000, with half of them moving to five English-speaking countries: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States (UNESCO 2019). The number of international students has also grown rapidly in Finland in the 2000s: the number increased from 6,000 enrolled in higher education in the year 2000 to 21,640 international students in 2018, most of whom live in a metropolitan area (EDUFI 2019, 2016). In particular, the number of non-EU/EEA students in higher education has increased of late (Palander and Hyytiä 2018). International students constitute approximately 8 per cent of the student population, which is close to the percentage for Sweden (7%) and Germany (8%), but significantly smaller than such historically popular destinations as the UK (Mathies and Karhunen 2019). The increase in student-migration to Finland has developed in line with the overall growth of the foreign population in Finland in the past thirty years, which reached a total of 258,000 in 2018 (4.7% of the overall population), while those persons with a foreign background totalled 400,000 people in 2019 (13.8%) (Statistics Finland 2019b, 2019c).

The increase in the numbers of international students is the outcome of a national strategy to internationalise higher education (Mathies and Karhunen 2019). Political discussion on the internationalisation of higher education in Finland first began in the 1980s. In the beginning, focus lay on international student exchange, and in 1991 Finland became part of the EU's Erasmus exchange programme (and part of the EU in 1995). University exchange was mainly directed from Finland outward, partly because education in Finland

was primarily provided only in the national languages of Finnish and Swedish. At the beginning of the 2000s, emphasis in the national strategy concerning internationalisation gradually shifted to also include the recruitment of degree students. With passing of the 2004 University Law, universities were given the opportunity to institute English-speaking degrees (Garam 2009).

According to Hauhia (2015), the year 2007 marks a shift in educational politics in Finland with the launching of a debate on the need to introduce tuition fees in line with broader neoliberal discourses on education. The debate became quite heated because free education has for a long time been considered the cornerstone of an equal educational system and of the Nordic welfare state (Hauhia 2015: 177). In 2007, the financial autonomy of the universities increased, and the government gave them the possibility to introduce fees for non-EU/EEA students. Within this turn, the discourse on the meaning of education also shifted from one promoting human development to one in which education was approached as the basis for acquiring talent and success in the global economy. The inevitability of instituting tuition fees was rooted in discourses on competition and the need to import talent and top specialists, discourses that seemed beyond reproach. In 2009, further steps were taken by the Ministry of Education and Culture with the institution of a working group to foster the export of Finnish education through the means of marketisation and commodification. (Hauhia 2015.)

The urge to internationalise stems from a desire to both institute competitive higher education and also to attract talented students. In many places, international education is an important sector for revenues, but it is also a way to recruit desired future workers, permanent residents and citizens. International students are often perceived as culturally more flexible migrants who may transition smoothly from education to the labour markets (Chacko 2020). Moreover, foreign students are regarded as economically important future experts in the global economy and in ‘the global race for talent’ (Mathies and Karhunen 2019; Shachar 2006; Yeoh, 2006). This belief is quite evident in the Finnish government’s recently launched programme entitled Talent Boost – Attracting and Retaining International Talent (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2020). The programme’s main point of emphasis is to increase migration to Finland for purposes of work, particularly highly skilled experts, and education, and importantly, to improve the conditions of student-migrants’ ability to work and stay in Finland after graduating (Työ- ja elinkeinoministeriö 2020: 2).

The Talent Boost report is in line with earlier policy documents concerning the internationalisation of education in Finland, which emphasise the need to build a Finland brand (OKM 2016: 5) as a way to increase the attractiveness

and the pull factors of Finnish education and the economic importance of becoming a significant actor in the global 'education market' (OKM 2009, 2016). For example, one 44-page report on the need to internationalise education and research (OKM 2017) refers to talent and know-how more than 50 times, while also using the word 'top' 26 times and 'quality' 25 times in different combinations, such as top class, top research or top talent, all to promote the image of high-quality research and education in Finland. The global race for talent has also been accompanied by the fear of a 'brain drain' and the exodus of highly skilled people both from less-developed countries and also certain European countries like Finland (Habiti and Elo 2018; Zafar and Kantola 2019; see also OKM 2009). However, the recent policy reports also highlight the importance of creating structures to support those with international talent as well as their legal and social possibility for staying in Finland (e.g. OKM 2017).

In August of 2017, tuition fees in higher education were first introduced for non-EU/EEA students in Finland. By law, the fee should be, at minimum, 1500 euros per academic year (Yliopistolaki 558/2009) 8 §; Ammattikorkeakoululaki (932/2014) 12 §), but in practice the fees mount to 18,000 euros yearly (Study in Finland 2018). Universities are required to have grant systems for those obliged to pay, but the basis for issuing grants and the value of such grants may vary since the practice is not regulated by law (Palander and Hyytiä 2018). Vocational secondary schooling is still free of charge for non-EU/EEA students, but the schools typically have few programmes in English (Palander and Hyytiä 2018). However, all student-migrant-workers participating in this research project had arrived in Finland before 2017, and hence, they were not affected by the new tuition fees.

A recent study by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Weimer et al. 2019) examines how the internationalisation of education has proceeded thus far, finding that many international students are segregated from Finnish students. Weimer and colleagues (2019) argue that the relative educational equality of the 20th century has been replaced by a focus on quality aspects driven by ranking systems, reputation and international science policy in the 21st century. The authors conclude that policymakers are viewing internationalisation through 'rose-coloured glasses' (Weimer et al. 2019: 61).

Researchers have also pointed to the fragmented nature of discourses on migration and mobility in the Finnish context, especially regarding established forms of internationalisation and academic mobility and other forms of mobility and migration (Aarnikoivu et al. 2019). Most migration in a highly skilled context is mediated through an internationalisation discourse (Käyhkö et al. 2016), one that has often proved to be rather uncritical, atheoretical and

unproblematised with regard to neoliberal higher education policies (Aarnikoivu et al. 2019). Thus, the internationalisation paradigm has instead been driven in the direction of a neo-colonial framing of internationalisation and mobility, with the result being that the multi-faceted nature of so-called highly skilled mobility is insufficiently studied and the connections between varying forms of migration are treated ‘as if’ they were unrelated (Aarnikoivu et al. 2019: 217, 222).

The complex relationships embedded in student migration manifest themselves in several ways. Recent research suggests that at a time of tightening restrictions on family and labour movement to Europe, student migration may well remain the only feasible option (Luthra and Platt 2016), given that a person is able to gather sufficient economic funds and access the education system. According to Kirkegaard and Wulff Nat-George (2016), the internationalisation of higher education in the Nordic countries has provided an open and legal escape route for people looking for a means to exit countries affected by violent and armed conflict. Moreover, the status of the student is by definition high, both locally and internationally, and education offers a comparably easy way to migrate if one possesses the necessary resources (Kirkegaard and Wulff Nat-George 2016). This stance is also echoed by migration activists in Finland, who recognise that as the possibilities of obtaining asylum are tightening, work, study and family-based permits remain the most important means by which persons who has received a negative asylum decision can regularise their status (Free Movement 2019).

Furthermore, student migration is embedded in complex webs of colonial power and underlying (post)colonial trajectories, which foundationally facilitate and channel student migration to European countries (Ploner and Nada 2019). Recent research demonstrates that many often perceive migrating to study in the Global North as a steppingstone to living in the ‘West’, framed by idealised narratives of the ‘West’ (Brooks and Waters 2011; Ginnerskov Dahlberg 2019; Soong 2014) and embedded in a ‘modernistic discourse of progress’ (Valentin 2012: 71). Contemporary student recruitment has also been criticised for generating income for Western universities, forging colonial power/knowledge structures at the same time that branches of Western universities in newly industrialised countries appear more as forms of neo-colonialism (Ling et al. 2014; Ploner and Nada 2019; Waters 2012). However, new knowledge hubs have emerged in the Asia-Pacific region that are successfully competing with the hegemonic Western centres of education and knowledge (Börjesson 2017). The Finnish Ministry Education and Culture (2017: 34–35) has also noted that as both rich and developing countries have chosen education as their ‘success strategy’, the result has been a ‘jagged competition over talent’.

Despite never having had overseas colonies, Finland is complicit in colonialism through gains received via global colonial relations and through the conscious project of identifying with the hegemonic 'West' (Vuorela 2009). The desire to create Finnish overseas colonies also existed among certain Finnish elite, such as the idea to seize Ovamboland as a colony (Keskinen 2019). This never happened, but the presence of Finnish missionaries in the area from the 1870s onward influenced the naming of places and people (Keskinen 2019) and later led to the first student-migrants in Finland arriving from Ovamboland in the 1960s (Letzinger 2008). Today, colonial presence does not refer just to past overseas colonial endeavours; enduring colonial relations also exist with respect to the Arctic (Keskinen 2019). Moreover, it is clear that the logic of coloniality also sits firmly beyond the immediate presence of colonial power and becomes visible in the imaginaries and discourses of Finland being part of the 'West' (Krivonos and Näre 2019).

The colonial duress (Stoler 2016) ingrained in student-migration and the paradigm of the internationalisation of education paints a picture of Finnish higher education existing within a global framework situated at the 'edge' of the West (Krivonos 2019a). As I demonstrate, choosing Finland as destination appears for many a suitable second or third option for studying in the 'West', after the more desired destinations of the UK and the US. Moreover, at the time when the research was being conducted Finland appeared for many non-EU/EEA migrants as an economically feasible destination, offering various higher education programmes of quality in English free of charge (again, since tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students were introduced only in 2017). The production of non-EU/EEA student-migrants as a labour force, the focus of the present doctoral thesis, is situated within this political context. Having outlined the social, geopolitical and historical context of the research, I now move closer to the central object of research: student-migrants at work.

2.3 STUDENT-MIGRANTS AS MIGRANT LABOUR

International student mobility is often understood as a form of skilled mobility since many international students study abroad with the hope of joining what Yeoh and Lam (2016) call the 'international labour force'. While discourses on talent and highly skilled labourers are prominent in migration policies in many wealthy countries, recent research has increasingly delved into the lived experiences of work while studying abroad (e.g. Eskelä 2013; Raghuram 2013; Robertson 2013). One strand of research has emphasised student-migrants as

constituting an important part of highly skilled migration and the fact that they perform highly skilled work (Eskelä 2013), while another strand has highlighted international students' role in the low-paid service sector (Liu-Farrer 2009; Neilson 2009; Nyland et al. 2009; Pan 2011). In particular, the exploitative nature of employing student-migrants in low-paid jobs and the way in which employers take advantage of students in need of paid work has been brought to the forefront in recent studies (Campbell et al. 2016; Marcu 2015; Wilken and Dahlberg 2017). However, the 'middling experience' pertaining to temporary migrants, such as students and graduate workers, whose experiences fall in between 'elite' transnational knowledge workers and migrant workers in low-status jobs (Robertson 2014; Yeoh et al. 2003) has also been discussed in the research literature.

The precarious experiences of migrants in the labour markets are often produced in the intersecting legal, economic and the personal contexts of study and work (Gilmartin et al. 2020). Several researchers have associated legal status with structures of racism and sexism in channelling students into precarious and underpaid employment in different parts of Europe, such as Ireland (Pan 2011), Denmark (Wilken and Dahlberg 2017) and Spain (Marcu 2017), but also in such Asian contexts as China (Martin 2017) and Japan (Liu-Farrer 2009), in Australia and the South Pacific region (Robertson 2013) as well as in the US (Thomas 2017). Thus, student migration may often take the form of 'educationally channelled international labour mobility' (Liu-Farrer 2009: 179).

Previous research also confirms that the issue of student migration cannot be examined apart from other forms of migration because migratory statuses become intermingled and may change rapidly (Könönen 2015; Neilson 2009). It is also common that studies and work abroad influence the lives and opportunities of family members and relatives (Beech 2015; Ginnerskov Dahlberg 2019) and that difficulties in successfully finding suitable employment can be experienced not only as a personal failure but also as letting down one's family (Chacko 2020).

International students conceived as (future) highly skilled migrants bring about a conceptual discussion of skills. Skills have repeatedly been conflated with having a university degree or equivalent extensive experience in research discussions on brain drain, human capital flight or brain circulation (Liu-Farrer et al. 2020). Others have noted that student-migrants and skilled migrants face downward social mobility when migrating. Niraula and Valentin (2019), however, criticise this automatic linking of 'deskilling' with highly skilled migrants in low-status jobs since skills is a social construct firmly situated within a specific social and historical context. In fact, many migrants

acquire and develop skills through low-status jobs as well as through the migration process itself (Liu-Farrer et al. 2020; Niraula and Valentin 2019). Neither are migrants simply 'willing' to take on low-status jobs; they must often do so due to visa requirements, the lack of financial and legal support from authorities, and the structure of the labour market (Niraula and Valentin 2019).

Liu-Farrer, Yeoh and Baas (2020) write that as governments produce specific categories of skills in response to political and economic agendas, the use of a selective migration policy based on skills may appear as a rather neutral channel for the de-facto importing of a gendered and racialised labour force. Hence, skills may today function as a substitute for the way race was used in earlier forms of migration management (Liu Farrer et al. 2020: 11). At the same time, being perceived as white and having European citizenship continue to be symbols of status, often interpreted as signalling the possession of specific or sought-after 'skills'. (Liu Farrer et al. 2020.)

However, research demonstrates that student-migrants are not mere objects of migration and education policy but instead embody and invent ways to resist constraining social positions, inequalities and discrimination based on gender, race and nationality. In her research on international students switching to a migrant status in Australia, Robertson (2011) has highlighted the extent to which international students exhibit agency in their efforts at gaining residence as a way of achieving a 'flexible citizenship', thus circumventing and manipulating the state's means of control to gain personal advantage (see also Robertson 2013). Moreover, Neilson (2009) has analysed the protests by taxi drivers in Sydney 2008, many of whom were international students, as a means of challenging hierarchies of differential inclusion and as a way of claiming recognition and redistribution beyond the limits of full membership in a political community.

RESEARCH IN THE FINNISH CONTEXT

The work performed by foreign students and graduates has also been studied in the context of Finland (Eskelä 2013; Laine 2016, 2017; Majakulma 2011; Shumilova et al. 2012). Eskelä (2013: 150) notes that 'in many cases students are not only students and skilled workers are not only workers', as the roles change and overlap during their stay in the host country. They thus challenge the concept of a 'study-to-work transition' (Mosneaga and Winther 2013), which is founded on an analytical separation between labour and student migration (Eskelä 2013). However, while research to some extent has

acknowledged the simultaneity of study and work among foreign students, the tasks they perform on the job and the working conditions have received less attention both in the literature on the employment of international students and migrants in general in Finnish migration research (Könönen 2013; Näre 2016).

Prior research has highlighted that foreign students face two primary obstacles in trying to access employment opportunities, insufficient language skills and few personal contacts (Kärki 2005; Laine 2016, 2017; Shumilova et al. 2012), traits typical of research with a primary focus on human capital rather than on the capitalist organisation of production (Könönen 2013). Moreover, studies have pointed to the incongruence between demands for nearly perfect Finnish language skills and jobs in which the working language is English (Ciulinaru 2010; Kyhä 2011). Professionals are also prevented from practicing their occupation without retraining and upgrading their studies, as many qualifications gained outside the EU are not accepted on a legal basis in Finland (Kyhä 2011; Könönen 2013). Moreover, racism prevails in the Finnish labour markets, which reduces the opportunities of foreign students to access desired jobs (Alho 2020; Shumilova et al. 2012).

Against the backdrop of previous global and more locally oriented research, there is a need for in-depth analysis of the types of work that student-migrants perform, the extent to which it corresponds to their area of studies, and most importantly, the conditions in which they work. To enable such research, a singular focus on student-migrants who, by mobilising their human capital, consisting of language skills and education and social capital in the form of networks, act as individual and rational subjects in the neoclassical imagery of equal markets is insufficient. Instead of approaching student-migrants as individually responsible for their success in the labour markets, I critically examine the contemporary capitalist mode of production as being dependent on the differentiation and hierarchisation of labouring subjects. I pursue this line of inquiry by examining student-migrants as embodying *labour power*, that is to say, I adopt a Marxian perspective rather than a neoclassical economic perspective for a study of how labour power is produced today. I consider the student's legal status as a central aspect in moulding student-migrants into a temporarily employable, precarious migrant labour force in Finland, particularly since the juridical framework circumscribes the legal position of non-EU/EEA student-migrants already before they enter the labour market (see also Himanen 2012; Könönen 2013).

2.4 THE TEMPORARY STUDENT PERMIT AS POINT OF DEPARTURE

Few studies on international students in the Nordic context distinguish between EU/EEA and non-EU/EEA students and the significant difference in their respective juridical positions. Most research conducted in Finland concerning work performed by foreign students is based on combined sets of qualitative and quantitative data for both EU/EEA and non-EU/EEA nationals and does not analyse the effect of legal status on work life (*cf.* Eskelä 2013; Laine 2016, 2017). Research analysing legal status alongside other constructed social differences in a Finnish context provides valuable knowledge on such topics as Russian-speaking migrants in Finland (Krivonos 2019a) and non-EU migrant workers in Finland holding student permits or work permits or seeking asylum (Könönen 2015; see also Mankki and Sippola 2015). Hence, previous research studies done in the context of Finland touch upon the topic of student-migrants in the labour market but do not focus their analysis on the specific social impacts of the legal status of student.

The thesis draws primarily on interview data (N=41) consisting of non-EU/EEA migrants who held a one-year student residence permit and were working alongside their studies. Eighteen of the research participants were women and 23 were men, all aged between 20 and 35 years, who had spent on average two to three years in Finland at the time of the first interview. The data are accompanied by 12 follow-up interviews with the migrants, and one interview with two migration officials in charge of student and work permits in Finland.

I highlight the legal status of student-migrants since the residence permit shapes the social and political rights of non-EU/EEA students, such as their access to welfare services and their negotiation possibilities in the labour market. Moreover, hierarchical differences between student-migrants in their role as workers and as subjects striving to renew their residence permits are created as a combined outcome of legal status and other axes of social differentiation based in particular on nationality, race, gender and perceived youthfulness. In the longer run, their legal status also affects their possibilities to bring family members to Finland and their potential route to Finnish citizenship.

While encompassing broadly heterogeneous places of origin and fields of study, the common nominator for the research participants is their engagement in the continuous need to work and manage the competing tempi of life, labour and the law (Reeves 2020: 35) to ensure the legal right to stay in

Finland on the basis of studies. The common need to meet the residence permit requirements, and consequently, to renew the permit every year and the fear of failing in this task unite the experiences of student-migrant-workers from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and North and South America in Finland.

There are several reasons to critically evaluate the issue of non-EU/EEA student-migrant-workers, namely the increasing number of foreign graduate students in Finland and the share (77%) of student-migrants from outside the EU/EEA area (EDUFI 2017). The number of issued student permits has grown steadily from the beginning of the 2000s. During the past five years, the number has shifted between 5,000 and 6,000 first student permits being issued every year.

With the introduction of tuition fees for non-EU/EEA students, the number of first permits being issued has dropped from 6,348 in 2016 to around a little over 5,000 in the following years. The rejection rate for student permit applications is approximately 10–14% (Migri 2020b), but it depends greatly on nationality. For example, in 2019 approximately 65–70% of applicants from Bangladesh and Nepal received a negative decision on their student permit application (Migri 2020b). A negative decision usually results from irregularities concerning means of subsistence or counterfeit supporting documents (EMN 2020; HE 28/2018). The top nationalities receiving residence permits for purposes of studying in 2019 were persons from China (946), Russia (934) and Vietnam (437) (EMN 2020). Most foreign students in Finland come from countries that have an official Finnish embassy, even if travelling to the embassy might be difficult in larger countries (Palander and Hyttiä 2018).

Another reason for examining working student-migrants is the specific ways in which the student residence permit shapes a migrant's legal and social status in society. Residence permits in Finland are predominantly granted as a fixed-period permits or as permanent residence permits. A fixed-period permit can be of a continuous (A) or temporary (B) nature. Common A-type residence permits are work permits granted from one to four years, while B-type residence permits are granted to students, graduates looking for work and seasonal workers, among others. According to the law, studies are always of a temporary nature, hence the temporary student permit (Palander and Hyttiä 2018). Student permits are for the most part issued for the duration of one year, although as of September 2018 authorities can issue temporary two-year permits, but with double the financial requirements (Ministry of the Interior 2019).

The requirements for the student residence permit include a secure means of support, which in 2021 was interpreted as 6,720 euros for one year. This sum is also required when renewing the residence permit, either in the form of a grant or savings or demonstrated through employment. If the sum is demonstrated as savings, the Immigration Service requires the applicant to provide a bank receipt demonstrating that the money is at her/his disposal (Migri 2020c). Given the discretionary power of the Immigration Service, they may consider the flow of transactions on the bank account during a longer time as well (Palander and Hyytiä 2018). When applying for to renew the permit, the applicant must demonstrate sufficient means of income and progress in their studies. Study progress is not defined by law but interpreted by the Immigration Service to be 45 credits per academic year (Palander and Hyytiä 2018). Moreover, following the introduction of university fees for non-EU/EEA students in 2017, students must also demonstrate the ability to pay the tuition fee when applying for the permit (Migri 2020c).

The holder of a student permit can work 25 hours a week during the semester and full-time during holidays or as an internship included in the degree requirements. The holder of a student permit is not entitled to use the Finnish social security system and is required to have private health insurance. However, a non-EU/EEA student can be entitled to benefits based on employment if the wage is at least 723.69 euros a month, according to how the Social Insurance Institution of Finland interprets the law (Kela 2020). After graduating from a Finnish higher education institution, the graduate can apply for temporary one-year residence to find employment and, upon finding employment, is eligible for a work permit without labour market testing (Finnish Aliens Act 301/2004), that is, the mechanism that aims to ensure that migrant workers are only admitted after employers have unsuccessfully searched for national workers or migrants who already have the right to work (EC 2021).

The student permit has long-lasting implications for cases in which the former student decides to apply for Finnish citizenship. In the citizenship application, which commonly demands a five-year stay in Finland, a stay on a B-type permit counts as only half the time, which significantly increases the number of years a person must spend in Finland before applying for Finnish citizenship. The length of stay in Finland is accompanied by requirements that the person has not committed a punishable crime, a reliable account of one's current and past sources of income, fulfilment of one's payment obligations under public law (e.g. taxes, fines) and satisfactory skills in the Finnish or Swedish language (Finnish Nationality Act 359/2003.)

A third motive for pursuing research on student-migrant-workers is the limited amount of information on the types of jobs performed by non-EU/EEA student-migrants and the conditions in which they work. Working while studying is most often a financial necessity for student-migrants (Eskelä 2013), not least for non-EU/EEA student-migrants. In Eskelä's (2013) study, only those international students with financial support from relatives were able to migrate to Finland for study purposes without taking on paid work. International students also report that the most inconvenient aspects of studying in Finland include the difficulty of gaining income alongside studies and the few possibilities for obtaining financial support and relevant work experience (EDUFI 2018). Palander and Hyytiä (2018) conclude that the requirements of a secure means of support, private health insurance and the newly introduced tuition fees make it strenuous for all students other than wealthy students wanting to study in Finland.

No clear statistics exist on the number of working student-migrants because of the deficiency of general migration statistics in Finland (Könönen 2019). Nonetheless, research findings indicate an employment rate of around 50 per cent among international students during their studies (Shumilova et al. 2012; Laine 2017), while employees at the Finnish Immigration Service estimate an 80 per cent employment rate among non-EU/EEA citizens holding a student permit (interview data). It is also quite common for students in Finland to generally work alongside their studies, but research indicates that student citizens often work (50–60%) with the joint objective of obtaining both experience and an income through somewhat stable forms of employment (Aho et al. 2012; Saari et al. 2013; Statistics Finland 2019a). Thus, it appears that Finnish citizens have more room for action and choice compared to migrants with a precarious temporary legal status.

Most international graduates want to remain in Finland after graduation (Laine 2016; EDUFI 2016), and approximately 60–70 per cent of them actually do stay (Mathies and Karhunen 2019; Shumilova et al. 2012). Of those international graduates staying in Finland, approximately 80 per cent are in paid employment, which is 10 per cent lower than the percentage for Finnish graduates (Mathies and Karhunen 2019). Based on data obtained from taxation statistics, Mathies and Karhunen (2019) demonstrate that foreigners with a degree from a university of applied sciences earn on average 7,000 euros less a year than a Finnish graduate, while the gap increases to 10,000 euros among those with a master's degree from a university.

Based on rich data, this doctoral thesis provides an in-depth analysis of holders of student permits who work in Finland. By approaching labour from the perspective of student migration, it opens up novel perspectives for the

study of migrant labour. It provides detailed analysis of the work conditions experienced by student-migrants, depicting a wide spectrum of types of work, ranging from unpaid knowledge work to paid service work. As I demonstrate, these experiences problematise a strict separation of high-skilled and low-skilled workers, as many types of work may be performed by one and the same person and different skills may be acquired in these changing settings. Lastly, I do not take the right to study and reside in Finland for granted. Instead, I analytically stress the constraining effects of the border regime, the labour that goes into upholding the appropriate conditions for remaining a student in Finland and the subjective strategies employed to this end.

3 ANALYTICAL APPROACHES: THE EU BORDER REGIME AND THE CAPTURE OF LABOUR POWER

The theoretical endeavour of this doctoral thesis is to productively bring together reflections on the impact of internalised borders in student-migrant-workers' everyday lives via an analysis of the production of labouring subjectivities within the capitalist mode of production. The naturalised connection between the legal status of the non-EU/EEA student and the studies pursued has often resulted in other social aspects of this so-called student migration appearing as mere concomitants. One such aspect that merits close analysis is the border regime as locally and socially shaped both by institutions of border control and the migratory movements that encounter and challenge borders, which often go rather unnoticed in research focusing on migrants assumed to be more privileged. Thus, by approaching borders through the prism of a regime, I highlight migration as a co-constitutive factor of the border, one which challenges and reshapes the border every single day (Hess 2017).

A central theoretical component extending throughout the analysis of the continuously repaired and reproduced border regime is its temporal reverberations. Temporal measurement and time limits are constitutive of the residence permit system that intimately affect student-migrant-workers' subjective experiences of living, studying and working in Finland and their possibilities to shape their futures. Moreover, time is closely bound up with the production of a precarious labour force to sustain contemporary flexible and fractal modes of capital accumulation.

To situate my research within a complex field of intersecting theoretical streams, I carve out several key components of knowledge production that the thesis builds on, drawing the main theoretical concepts from critical migration scholars (e.g. Casas-Cortes et al. 2015; De Genova 2002; Hess 2016; Karakayiali and Rigo 2010; Rigo 2005, 2009; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013), as influenced by both Foucault's thinking in terms of governmentality and resistance as well as Marxian perspectives on capitalism and labour (e.g. DeGenova 2010; Mezzadra 2011a, 2018; Chignola 2019; Hardt and Negri 2005, 2009; Virno 2004). In line with critical migration studies, the thesis privileges migrants' subjective experiences and their drive to migrate in the analysis of border regimes (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013). The research

highlights the subjective reasons for migrating and the way in which these subjects come to choose a student status while also performing wage work rather than considering student migration solely from the perspective of education.

The analysis emphasises the interconnection between the capitalist mode of production and the border regime. I specify my use of the concept of labour power not as an abstract category of labour but as fragmented and hierarchised by processes of differentiation that depend on the social categorisations of race, gender, age, nationality and legal status. The intersectional analysis is informed by Black feminist theory (e.g. Crenshaw 1989; Davis 1981; Hill Collins 2009) and postcolonial analysis as developed in the Nordic countries (e.g. de los Reyes and Mulinari 2009; Keskinen et al. 2009), as well as enduring logics of global coloniality (e.g. Gutierrez Rodriguez 2018a, 2018b; Stoler 2016; Quijano 2000). With this lead in, I want to acknowledge the socio-historical context and struggles out of which the various streams of knowledge and theorisation have emerged, while enabling fruitful connections across such contexts and without disregarding knowledge and scholarly contributions that do not sit neatly within these separated streams of thought.

3.1 THE EU BORDER REGIME

To examine and understand the legal position of non-EU/EEA student-migrants in Finland, it is important to highlight that it is the production and reproduction of historically specific types of borders that makes it possible to configure these subjects as *migrants*. I am specifically concerned with the *internalised border* (Bosniak 2007: 2451) that functions as the mechanism for treating foreigners as foreigners and that defines the preconditions for their presence. Borders, together with national laws, migration policy and supranational regulations, constitute the basis for the existing residence permit system. Through the assignment of different types of residence permits to migrants, the legal status of the non-citizen within the nation-state is defined.

The governance of the borders of Finland is closely connected to the EU and the Schengen Area of free movement as well as to multilateral border agencies and private enterprises. The EU member states share a common border system consisting of the EU's external borders, common directives for the

administration of asylum seekers and a database for regulating mobility and shared practices of deportation (Guild 2009). Since the mid-1980s, the various European countries have increasingly coordinated their migration politics to hinder immigration (Rigo 2009: 85). The Schengen Agreement and the Dublin Regulation⁵ can be considered ‘laboratories’ of European migration and asylum politics (Monar 2003, as cited in Rigo 2009: 86). Moreover, the EU border regime is becoming increasingly digitised, with the introduction of ‘smart borders’ and algorithm-based border technologies (Jeandesboz 2016; Scheel 2019). However, the Schengen Border Code alone does not fully control border management in Finland, as nationally specified concerns and strategies also exist (Prokkola 2012). To inquire into the significance of the EU border regime through the specificities of student status in Finland, I begin with a theoretical examination of the border and how borders may be approached through the prism of a regime.

Balibar (2002) distinguishes three features pertaining to the contemporary functioning of borders. First, he points to the overdetermination of borders, signalling that no political border is ever only a border between two states, but exists in relation to other geopolitical divisions, and hence, has a world-configuring function. Second, Balibar highlights the polysemic nature of borders, emphasising that the meaning of borders is not similar for everyone. Borders actively differentiate between individuals in terms of social class and citizenship and thus function as an instrument of discrimination. Third, borders are heterogeneous precisely because they are dispersed everywhere (e.g. in healthcare, security checks, universities) and exceed a strict geographico-politico-administrative meaning.

In the thesis, I maintain that the border acquires meaning in student-migrant-workers’ everyday lives not only when crossing the border between two states or during border controls at entry points, but more importantly in situations where the temporary one-year student permit is put under scrutiny or when the legal stay of student-migrant-workers is seemingly jeopardised. Thus, my concern with the border is relational, as I inquire into when and in what situations the border is ‘sensed’ (Green 2012) and how it affects student-migrant-workers’ everyday lives.

I approach borders in their dispersed form, as constituting a grid over social space, spreading both across and beyond any given nation-state (Balibar 2002). Through the process of assigning legal status, borders follow migrants into the space of the nation-state (Bosniak 2006; Rigo 2009). Therefore,

⁵ The Dublin Regulation establishes the member state responsible for examining the asylum application (EC 2021).

migration categories and the ascribed legal statuses function as productive starting points for studying borders (Paasi 2009: 224). Moreover, they enable new perspectives on the production and reproduction of labouring subjectivities and citizenship (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013).

The introgression of the border (Bosniak 2006: 9) – the internalised border (Bosniak 2007: 2541) – makes it into a tool not only for distinguishing between aliens and citizens but also differentiating them within the same legal and political space (Rigo 2011: 207). Hence, the residence permit system appears as an extension of borders that allows for the governing and regulation of migration within the state (Könönen 2018b). In particular, administrative bordering (Könönen 2018b: 143) is central in the student-migrant-workers' lives, as it affects the process of renewing the temporary residence permit, and consequently, the efforts to secure a continued presence in Finland.

Administrative bordering (Könönen 2018b) offers a context in which the processual nature of borders and the ongoing struggles over the process of objectifying borders as an unquestionable and enduring reality (De Genova 2016a, 2002; Van Houtum 2010) can be grasped. It is hence important to distinguish between law in theory and practice, that is, between how the border regime is put into place and how it is acted upon. Administrative bordering points specifically to the gap between the law-on-the-books and the law-in-action (Könönen 2018b). In a Foucauldian manner, I consider administrative bordering as an 'art of government through which the activation of the border is enforced' (Walters 2002: 564) and as a process that forms a conflictual space, demonstrating how 'power as a bundle of hierarchical relations' exists but is simultaneously challenged and traversed by various forms of resistance (Chignola 2019: 9).

Approaching borders from the situated perspective of non-EU/EEA student-migrants in Finland whose everyday lives are greatly impacted by an administrative system of residence permits highlights the fact that the border cannot be reduced to a single organising logic and should not be perceived solely through the prism of the state. Instead of existing prior to the democratic state and circumscribing its sovereign space, the internal legal landscape of the state is made up of various logics of legality (Bosniak 2020). Thus, the border is a social institution, marked by encounters, tensions and contestations between practices of border reinforcement and border crossing (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: 3) and is therefore more aptly approached through the theoretical prism of the regime (*cf.* Casas-Cortés et al. 2015; Hess 2017; Karakayali and Rigo 2010). From the perspective of the *regime theory of migration* (Karakayali and Rigo 2010), knowledge, discourses and practices of migration interact with a migration politics structured by gaps and

ambiguities. Based on this perspective, borders should be approached as reactive to migratory movements. Thus, the border regime is the ‘result of continuous repair work through practices’ (Sciortino 2004: 32), and it is always a work in progress (Green 2018: 71). Instead of assuming a univocal organising logic of the state, migrants are at the core of this ongoing reconstruction of the border regime, and consequently, of the state (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015; Fabini 2019; Hess 2017; Mezzadra 2011a; Papadopoulos 2008; Scheel 2019). Hence, student-migrant-workers’ encounters with the border and their subjective attempts at reducing the immediate effects of such encounters in their quotidian lives contribute to the continuous reconstruction of the border regime itself.

The effort to regulate migration is not only a central feature of the reproduction of the nation-state and its borders (Anderson 2013; Sharma 2020) – the subjects involved also take shape through this process. From the perspective of the nation-state, migrants are constructed as the national ‘Other’, whose mobility is regulated by the state (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2018a). In this view, the presence of immigrants signals an incompleteness in the national context (Sayad 1999: 8): nationals are considered ‘people of a place’ and migrants ‘people out of place’ (Sharma 2020). However, since the figure of the migrant often becomes subject to class-based and racialised imaginaries, not everyone is equally considered out of place. For example, migrants from ‘Rich World States’ are often defined as ex-pats or backpackers (Sharma 2020: 6).

Consequently, borders do not just affect student-migrants in situations of crossing a geographical border line or in administrative contexts of renewing or switching one’s status. Legal status also affects and shapes a student-migrant’s everyday life in terms of access to the welfare state system and social position in the labour market (e.g. De Genova 2002; Diatlova and Näre 2018; Goldring and Landolt 2011; Könönen 2019; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013). The student residence permit defines the length of legal stay in Finland and how many study credits one should earn, and it limits the number of work hours for non-EU/EEA students. Thus, the temporary student permit points to how the temporary migrant is legally distinguished from migrants with continuous or permanent statuses and most importantly from Finnish citizens. The migrant’s legal status produces effects also beyond the individual, shaping wider social relations and further possibilities to switch one’s migration status (Könönen 2018a). In sum, borders function as a means of production (De Genova 2016a; Rigo 2005: 12), instituting and reinforcing hierarchical differences between subjects on the broad spectrum between citizenship and non-citizenship. These differences become central in mediating the relation between labour power and capital,

and thus, they shape how the capitalist mode of production currently operates, to which I turn next.

BORDERS AND CAPITAL

The analytical inquiry into the shaping of the student-migrant-worker from the perspective of the border regime is not limited only to acknowledging the impact of borders on the working student-migrants' everyday lives, but also brings the border regime critically into an examination of the encounter between labour power and capital. This encounter is crucial from the standpoint of governing migration (Mezzadra 2011a). Through political and administrative tools, the state attempts to reduce the excess of mobility and circumscribe into the abstract codes of value (Mezzadra 2011a: 227). This practice is manifested in the fact that borders do not organise the world according to stable lines of division but instead enable the constant recombination of spaces and times as a means of sustaining contemporary capitalist globalisation (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013). Bringing theoretical work on borders and the contemporary functioning of capitalism into a productive encounter allows me to analyse the friction between the valorisation and containment of labour in the context of migrants holding a temporary student permit.

I approach the capitalist mode of production not as a totality but as a cluster of various crosscutting relations of power and material forces (Viren 2018). This means that the systemic character of capitalism is defined by a certain openness and heterogeneity shaped by crosscutting forms of micro-power that cannot be traced back to the capitalist system nor to its logical starting point (Chakrabarty 2008; Viren 2018: 62). Furthermore, considering the system as a mode of production (Marx 1991 [1867]): 169) signals that what is in question is not only a particular economic configuration, but also a composite unity of forms of life, that is, a mode of production defined as a social, anthropological and ethical cluster (Virno 2004: 49). The openness of the system and the heterogeneity required for the capitalist mode of production to be sustained displays how various forms of livelihoods and temporalities coexist and fuel the global capitalist system without being part of its imagined progress (Tsing 2015). Hence, I approach the capitalist system with an emphasis on its heterogeneous modes of accumulation, enabling the fragmentation and unification of spaces and labour at the same time (Gago 2017; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, 2019).

Characteristic of capital as a social relation is the attempt to enforce social structures as a means of enabling endless valorisation and accumulation (Marx 1990: 711, 873; Mezzadra 2018: 40). In this perspective, the foundation of the capitalist system is not wage labour, but labour subjected to and dependent on capital enabled by various forms of unfree labour, which vary along with the development of the mode of production (Federici 2004; Hall 2021; Lowe 1996; Moulier Boutang 2005; Robinson 2000; Viren 2018). According to Moulier Boutang (2005), the legal regulation of migrants' labour market status produces hierarchical differences and often ascribes migrant labour to the sphere of unfree labour.

In the capitalist mode of production, the object of purchase is not labour as such, but the capacity to produce, that is, the productive potential inherent in the human body (Chignola 2019: 34; Virno 2004: 8). The living being as the proprietor of labour power (Marx 1990: 271), embodying various creative capacities, places emphasis on the fact that these capacities are always greater than capital as such and excessive with respect to the value that capital can extract from it (Hardt and Negri 2005: 146). Consequently, *labour power* as that which exists in the living personality of a human being (Marx 1990: 272) cannot be approached in the abstract. What is abstract is only the way in which labour is translated into the language of value through the hermeneutic grid of capital (Chakrabarty 2008: 55; Mezzadra 2011a). As Robinson (2000) and Lowe (1996) emphasise, capital maximises its profits precisely by configuring the bearers of labour power not as homogenous and abstract, but by reinstating *difference*. Let us at this point note that difference is produced via a restrictive particularity marked by legal status, race, nation, geographic origins and gender (Lowe 1996) — an issue that I will consider in more depth later in this chapter.

In sum, the thesis stresses the importance of striving to grasp the fine-tuned nuances of the workings of the EU border regime from the spatially and temporally situated perspective (Haraway 1988) of holders of student permits in Finland. I underscore the oppressive social structures, such as racism and sexism, that permeate all social formations, not least the border regime, which sustain processes of differentiation to be utilised for capital accumulation (Publication I–V; Balibar 2002: 82; De Genova 2016a; Lowe 1996; Sharma 2006). With respect to the border regime, the thesis thus examines the production of student-migrants as a flexibly employable labour force in a specific local and historical context (Publication I–V), moving also beyond strictly circumscribed forms of wage labour (Publication III), while incorporating the antagonistic elements of living labourers striving against intersecting forms of subjugation (Publication V).

TEMPORAL REGIMES OF LABOUR AND DIFFERENTIAL INCLUSION

I approach the capitalist system as fractured mode of accumulation able to transform and quickly adapt to new conditions. From this perspective, it is necessary to consider the temporary inclusion of labouring subjects in the capitalist productive structure instead of employing theoretical one-off models of inclusion or exclusion.

The captive function of the contemporary border regime (Rigo 2009) is intimately linked to time, constituting a decisive aspect of contemporary global capitalism in which the control over people's time is central (Harvey 2010). By focusing the analysis on the temporal effects of the border regime in the student-migrant-workers' everyday lives, the thesis critically engages in the 'momentum of research on temporalities in the context of migrant mobilities' (Baas and Yeoh 2019: 6) to better understand the way in which global capital invests in seemingly hybrid and heterogeneous constitutions of global economic and social spaces (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013) by way of controlling and filtering migration through temporal means.

Karakayali and Rigo (2010) maintain that the temporal regime of global labour follows the movement of people and invests where it finds people in transitional and insecure labour and life conditions. Through the temporal regime of global labour, migrants' labour power can temporarily be subsumed under capital's productive structure and also easily cast off when no longer needed. Significantly, the thesis emphasises that the border regime is not only spatial but also temporal, which opens up spaces for global capital to flexibly invest in tandem with the movement and migrations of people (Publication IV).

Migrants' conditional and precarious participation in the global labour markets demonstrate that states, rather than excluding and immobilising migrants, strive to institutionalise mobility and produce governable subjects of mobility, who are forced to adjust to the needs of local labour markets (Papadopoulos and Tsianos 2013). Hence, inclusion exists as part of a continuum of exclusion that unfolds through the hierarchising and stratifying effects of the border (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013). As Ambrosini (2001: 174) points out, 'from a strictly economic point of view, the best immigrant is [...] one who is not integrated'.

The border can thus be grasped as a tool of *differential inclusion* (Andrijasevic 2009; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013), which produces student-migrants as neither fully excluded nor fully included within the sphere of labour markets

and citizenship (Publication I–V). Differential inclusion registers how borders move to the centre of political life and functions as a way of controlling and exploiting labour while also making use of and fuelling oppressive structures of racism and sexism (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: 161). From a temporal perspective, I argue, differential inclusion produces heterogeneous spatiotemporal experiences that serve to emphasise the discontinuous and nonlinear functioning of contemporary capitalism (Gago 2017: 75) and its flexible mode of accumulation (Lowe 1996: 28). Thus, the contemporary capitalist mode of production makes use of borders to advance a logic of simultaneous connection and disconnection, that is, it differentiates labour power and fragments spaces of labour at the same time as it unifies them in varying patterns.

Having foregrounded the centrality of contemporary borders in the present-day functioning of capitalism, I now move closer to the topic of student-migrant-workers as labouring subjects by focusing on processes of precarisation and differentiation.

3.2 DIFFERENTIATED AND PRECARIOUS LABOUR POWER

In this subchapter, I delineate how hierarchisation through borders can inform our analysis of precarisation, and furthermore, how precarisation can be grasped as a regime of time. The examination of patterns of precarisation helps clarify how the possibilities to build one's future, gain access to adequate work opportunities or find temporary refuge from unstable living conditions become limited, and furthermore, how such patterns are affected by the legal and social production of difference.

PRECARISATION: LOSING THE GRIP OVER TIME

I approach student-migrant-workers' experiences of work, intertwined with their life in Finland in general, through the concept of precarisation. Precarisation is a term used to describe transformations in working life in the 21st century. It grew out of social struggles in Europe at the beginning of the 2000s organised around the concept of precarity (e.g. Neilson and Rossiter 2008). The concepts of precarity, precariousness (e.g. Armano et al. 2017), precarisation (e.g. Könönen 2014; Jokinen 2016; Papadopoulos et al. 2008;

Vuolajärvi 2018) and the precariat (e.g. Standing 2011; Savage et al. 2013) are often used interchangeably. However, as Alberti et al. (2018) critically point out, it is not only 'the precariat' as a circumscribed group or class that is affected by growing precarity, but the effects also extend to various labour-capital relationships.

Processes of precarisation include both measurable and objective aspects, such as on the one hand the transformation towards more insecure employment relationships in the form of fixed-term and part-time contracts, on-demand work, zero-hour contracts, gig work and dependent self-employment, and on the other hand subjective experiences of precarisation that emerge across capitalist societies (Alberti et al. 2018; Jokinen 2016; Jokinen and Venäläinen 2015; Kalleberg 2009). Recent contributions to the research on precarity and precarisation have sought more consistency in the various levels of analysis emphasising the difference between precarious work, precarious lives and precarious subjectivities (e.g. Campbell and Price 2016; Lewis et al. 2015; Tsianos and Papadopoulos 2014). Since precarious work affects workers differently and is contingent, it should not be assumed that everyone who does precarious work leads precarious lives. Instead, the social location and the context that influence the possible experience of precarity must be carefully analysed (Campbell and Price 2016; Fuller and Vosko 2008). Moreover, precarity need not only to be addressed within paid working arrangements; it should also be addressed within the realms of social reproduction and post-wage politics (Alberti et al. 2018; Precarias a la deriva 2009).

Precarity is not exceptional from a historical standpoint. The so-called Fordist era, stretching roughly from the post-WWII period until the dawn of the crisis of Fordism in the 1970s, incorporated the 'Standard Employment Relationship' (SER) with encompassing protective mechanisms against a 'pure' market relationship, sustained by employers and the state through employment rights and social protection (Rubery et al. 2018). However, Fordism and the SER were short-lived, concentrated in the Global North and principally a male norm (Alberti 2013; Fuller and Vosko 2008). When considered through this historical lens, precarity apparently constitutes the norm and Fordism the exception (Neilson and Rossiter 2008). The historical exceptionality of Fordism appears evident when accounting for work performed by various oppressed groups, with the theoretical and literary contributions by Black feminists being especially revealing. Davis (1981: 5) writes that 'Proportionately, more Black women have always worked outside their home than have their white sisters', that is, Black women have worked in the fields, in the factories and in other people's homes under precarious circumstances (bell hooks 2000: 100). Moreover, working women in Finland

in the 1920s and 1930s inhabited labour market positions reminiscent of today's precarious work arrangements (Suoranta 2009). Consequently, the standard of security and workers' rights was always partial since it generally applied to males and citizens while excluding women and migrants (Alberti 2013; Lorey 2015; Vosko 2010). Similar conclusions can be drawn from the statistics of the International Labour Organisation (2020), which state that 61 per cent of the global labour force today is engaged in vulnerable and non-standard employment. Thus, as Vosko (2010) notes, scholars should be cautious of dealing with precarious employment by drawing on the standard model of employment precisely because it leaves those on the precarious margins of the labour market unaccounted for.

Rather than employing the concept of precarisation as an exception against the backdrop of the norm of a standard employment relationship, I examine the 'drivers and patterns of precarisation' (Alberti et al. 2018: 450) to better grasp the experiences of precarity among student-migrant-workers. Through this analysis, I strive to understand the ways in which the legal and social architecture of working life and social status in Finland produce experiences of losing the grip over one's time, and thus, how precarisation can be grasped as a regime of time (Hardt and Negri 2009).

Precarisation functions as a mechanism of control that structures the temporality of subjects. On the one hand, this blurs the distinctions between work time and non-work time, by which labour is set free, made precarious and liberated from the confinements of the working day (Chignola 2019: 41). The need to be available for work, while not working all the time and consequently only getting paid for the hours worked, spurs a deprivation of control over one's time (Hardt and Negri 2009: 147). For student-migrant-workers labouring in fields ranging from tech start-ups to cleaning, the existential understanding of precarity, fuelled by political subjection, economic exploitation and 'opportunities to be grasped' (Lazzarato 2004), provides further analytical ground for assessing the complex ways in which precarisation informs their everyday lives.

Drawing on research that has highlighted insecure migratory legal status as a state process spurring precarisation (Goldring and Landolt 2011; Könönen 2015; Robertson 2013; Fuller and Vosko 2008), I maintain that the loss of control over time combined with the temporary legal status of student-migrant-workers juridically determines their right to work and stay in the country. Hence, legal status is central in shaping the pattern of precarisation because it affects the migrants' possibilities for remaining in the country and their capacity to negotiate in the labour market. In the next section, I discuss

legal status as a basis for producing difference, then provide an outline of difference produced in an everyday social context.

THE LEGAL AND SOCIAL PRODUCTION OF DIFFERENCE

Analysing student migration from the point of view of labour foregrounds perspectives demonstrating that all forms of migration have implications for work, not just migration categorised as labour migration (Publication I–IV). Thus, migration must always be understood from the standpoint of capital, at the very least as potential human capacity for labour (De Genova 2013b: 1184).

Every social space contains a normalised, experiential and ideological knowledge about whose labour is least valued (Bannerji 2005: 149). Thus, capital is always realised in a specific social and cultural context in which the human capacity for labour is differentiated in overlapping ways (Bannerji 2005). These differences are constantly produced and reproduced in an intimate relationship with capital (Chakrabarty 2008: 66), shaping the relation of each singular subject to their labour power (Mezzadra 2011b). Hence, various intersecting axes of difference, such as legal status, nationality, race and gender, shape the potential of ‘what the body can do’. To better understand the axes of difference between migrant workers with different legal statuses as well as within the group of student-migrant-workers, I call attention to the fact that differences are never natural but are produced through socio-legal means both institutionally and in everyday social interactions. To grasp the various, but nevertheless entwined, techniques of producing difference, I recognise the ‘*social production of difference*’ (Lowe 1996: 28) and point in particular to the *legal production of difference* as an important fracture within the broader spectrum of social differences.

I begin by exploring the *legal production of difference*, after which I account for the social production of difference more comprehensively. While social categories such as race and gender have figured strongly in prior social analyses, the impact of legal status has only recently begun to receive more attention by researchers (e.g. Alberti 2013; Anderson 2010; Bosniak 2006; Könönen 2015; Pellander 2014; Rigo 2009; Robertson 2013, 2014; Sharma 2006; Vosko 2000, 2010). My intention here is not just to add legal status to the ‘laundry lists of the vectors of subordination’, but to analyse, following Bosniak (2006: 10–11), how disadvantage based on legal status and alienage are similar to and differ from other forms of subordination and differentiation. To pursue such an intersectional (Crenshaw 1989) and situated analysis (Haraway 1988) of student-migrant-workers' position in Finland, I analyse the

axes of differentiation that figure most prominently in the data (see also Pellander 2016: 43), while acknowledging how the modes of differentiation intersect, depend on and mutually sustain each other.

I highlight the varieties of non-citizenship, which range from not having a status corresponding to an administrative migration category to the varying conditional legal statuses shaping migrants' behaviour and moulding them into labouring subjects (Anderson 2010; Goldring and Landolt 2011; Karakayali and Rigo 2010). The legal status of the migrant is an essential factor in hierarchising the labour force (Moulier Boutang and Garson 1984; Piore 1979), suggesting that a residence permit system dependent on borders is a 'differentiating machine' that assigns migrants varying positions in a legal, social and political space (Isin 2005, as cited in Rigo 2009: 51). The proliferation of legal statuses among non-citizens, combined with the varying juridical implications, designate different degrees of flexibility for migrant workers (Könönen 2019; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013). Drawing on Rosewarne (2010), Könönen (2019: 4) suggests it is precisely those configured as labour migrants who are most affected by regulations limiting their access to different sectors of the labour market, while migrants categorised as other than labour migrants (e.g. marriage-migrant-workers, student-migrant-workers, asylum seekers-workers) often have more flexibility when it comes to accepting insecure and short-term contracts (see also Robertson 2014). As I demonstrate in this doctoral thesis, many non-EU/EEA student-migrants are dependent on wage work to fulfil the requirements of the student permit. Thus, they often experience a need to engage in paid work, primarily accessed in the low-paid service sector, in order to renew their residence permits and continue residing in Finland. Thus, holders of a student permit are placed in a legal position where they are flexible enough to accept insecure short-time contracts.

Although I have analysed the varying legal statuses as legally produced differences, it is evident that the law itself is socially produced at the same time as legal stipulations organise and impact the social. In my analysis, I bring to the fore how various forms of temporal difference arise as a socio-temporal effect of the legally produced difference in the lives of student-migrant-workers in Finland. I analyse the production of temporal difference by employing the notion of *temporal borders* (Cwerner 2004; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; Tazzioli 2018). By temporal borders, I mean both the experiences of time constraints inscribed in the student residence permit and arising from it as well as the implications for the production of a flexible labour force consisting of student-migrants (Publication IV). Thus, temporal borders serve to analytically seize hold of the bureaucratic temporalities (Näre 2020) of the border regime in a historically, spatially and socially circumscribed context and explore their everyday effects in student-migrant-workers' lives. I

suggest that borders in their spatial and cartographical sense do less to structure the everyday lives of student-migrants than they do in their temporal form: it is less a question of where the border is and more a question of *when* the border is (Anderson et al. 2009). Hence, the emergence of temporal borders in student-migrant-workers' quotidian lives results in 'diachronically differentiated legal positions' (Rigo 2005) within the Finnish polity. In other words, the analysis underlines the temporal effects of legally produced difference.

Further, student-migrant-workers are affected by the *social production of difference* in various ways. Techniques of racial differentiation are central features of capitalist exploitation (Bhattacharyya 2018; Quijano 2000; Robinson 2000). For Robinson (2000: 26 [1983]), 'racial capitalism' consists of the accumulation and profit produced through the racial differentiation of labour rather than through its homogenisation. Thus, racism functions as the 'magic formula' that reconciles the objective of lowering the cost of a labour force in the name of endless accumulation (Wallerstein 1991: 33), while Hall (1986: 24) notes that capital may harness and exploit the ethnic, racial and gendered qualities of labour power and build them into regimes.

Race and racialisation are not fixed concepts but are instead relational concepts: they acquire polyvalent signatures across social, historical and geographical contexts (Stoler 2016). Race can be understood as a power-inscribed way of reading and producing difference (Bannerji 2005: 148), forming a system of social organisation that assumes 'unpassable boundaries' between groups and individuals (Bhattacharyya 2018: 3). Moreover, race as an analytical category connects different expressions of racism with the historical trajectories of colonialism and imperialist capitalism (Bannerji 2005: 149; Goldberg 2002; Seikkula 2020). Despite attempts to present the Nordic welfare state as universal, postcolonial feminist research in the Nordic countries has pointed to the existence of colonial relations and racist structures (Keskinen et al. 2009; de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005), including within the Finnish welfare state (Tuori 2009: 63–4).

The differing backgrounds and bodily appearances of student-migrant-workers result in different forms of racialisation that require closer analysis instead of just assuming such racial binaries as 'black and 'white', as these categorisations play out differently in the social and historical context of Finland compared to, for example, the US (see also Krivonos 2019a; Schclarek Mulinari and Keskinen 2020). Hence, racialisation as a process is differentially activated, it targets subjects in various manners, and consequently, it produces differing experiences of racism. I analyse the uneven patterns of racialisation in the contexts of work and administrative bordering

(Publication I–V). Moreover, as suggested by other scholars, most notably North American Black feminists (Davis 1981; Hill Collins 2009) and feminist thinkers in a Nordic context (de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005; Keskinen et al. 2009), race often intersects with gender, which together shape racialised and gendered migrant workers (Krivonos 2019b). The intersection of gender and race also shape student-migrant-workers' experiences of work and their encounters with the border regime, while the axes of differentiation are also bound up with the formation of class (Balibar 1991; Bannerji 2005; Davis 1981; de los Reyes and Mulinari 2005; Hall 1996; Krivonos 2019a; Robinson 2000). Furthermore, the perception of student-migrants as a flexible and attractive labour force is importantly shaped by their perceived age and youthfulness.

As noted, racialised and gendered differences are often subject to immigration law and migration policy (e.g. Horsti and Pellander 2015; Van Baar 2014). In her analysis of Asian immigrants in the US, Lowe (1996, 1997: 361) examines the modality through which immigration laws assist in producing a racially segmented and gender stratified labour force for capital's needs. While Lowe's focus is on immigration law and its explicit racialising features, racialisation by means of immigration law and policy may also acquire more covert forms. Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2018ab) has analysed contemporary forms of racial capitalism as exploitation enabled through migration policies and proposes the notion of 'coloniality of migration', drawing on Quijano's (2000) notion of the coloniality of power. Through restrictions, management devices and administrative migration categories, 'objects' to be governed are developed with reference to the entanglement of the White national citizen and the racially different Other (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2018a: 200). With respect to student-migrant-workers' lives, the colonial duress (Stoler 2016) of the border regime becomes tangible via the temporal aspects of the regime. I analyse in particular the temporal difference that is produced between nationals listed in either the EU's negative or positive list of nationals who can travel visa free into the EU (Publication IV), which serves to govern the EU's Others and as a tool for 'Western identity' protection (Van Houtum 2010: 964) and which also can be read as reinforcing racialised differences.

The analysis of temporal borders in relation to EU visa policies points to the ways in which global coloniality continues to marginalise non-Western subjects in relation to the Euro-centred world beyond the immediate presence of colonial power (Krivonos and Näre 2019) and how the global space of capital accumulation is foundationally shaped by the global legacies of colonialism (De Genova 2016b; Quijano 2000). Intersecting with constructions of gendered, racialised and sexualised bodies, temporal borders contribute to the production of a graded (post)colonial formation of European space (Krivonos and Diatlova 2020). Moreover, such borders demonstrate how the 'difference'

of the so-called non-West, here approached through a juridical and temporal lens, does not lie outside capitalism, waiting to be incorporated, but is constantly reproduced in an intimate and plural relationship with capital (Chakrabarty 2008: 65–71).

This subchapter has accounted for precarity as a regime of time interfering with the legal and the social production of difference. This conjuncture affects the way in which student-migrants are constituted as a flexible labour force. In the following theoretical subchapter, I analyse the subjective capacities and strategies employed by student-migrant-workers in the face of a constraining border regime.

3.3 ACTIVE SUBJECTS ENTANGLED IN ADMINISTRATIVE BORDERING

To conclude the theoretical part of the thesis, I elaborate on a crucial aspect of migration, namely the subjective drive to migrate and to shape one's life. The analytical tools delineated in this chapter knit together student-migrant-workers' experiences of working while holding a student permit and their efforts at resisting being reduced to docile objects of migration administration. I emphasise that while the border regime, through migration policy and law, shapes migrant subjects as productive subjects for capitalist ends, what is at stake is not only the production of a flexible labour force but the lives of student-migrant-workers in their entirety.

Robinson's (2000 [1983]) seminal critique of Western Marxism calls attention to the reductive and often purely economic readings of the relationship between labour and capital: 'Marx had not realized fully that the cargoes of labourers also contained African cultures, critical mixes and admixes of language and thought, of cosmology and metaphysics, of habits beliefs, and morality'. Furthermore, Marx did not consider the African resistance to enslavement and exploitation (Kelley 2000). Robinson's critique of Marx' failure to account for the place of enslaved African labour in the capitalist system prompts a recentring of subjectivity at the heart of any analysis of living labour. Shifting back to the context of student-migrant-workers in Finland, I argue that the governmental objective of creating routes for student migration are never detached from the migrants' wider social relations as well as their subjective ability to challenge and resist the aims of migration policy.

In what follows, I engage in a theoretical discussion on the production of subjects and subjectivity that exposes the dynamic relationship between attempts at resisting the immediate and subjectively experienced effects of the border regime and being configured as a flexible labour force. The discussion, hence, critically avoids a reductive analysis of push and pull factors and instead accounts for the migrants' desires, aspirations and struggles and how they play into the way in which both the border regime and capitalist production operate.

WITHIN AND AGAINST POWER STRUCTURES

The issues of subject, subjectivity and agency have been discussed extensively within the social sciences, in particular in relation to emancipation, rights, resistance, difference and recognition. Versatile discussion of the subject has been prominent especially among scholars dedicated to the analysis of power and domination since the turning point of 1968, particularly in Europe (Rebughini 2014). Contemporary studies on the subject emphasise cultural, racial and gendered differences bound up in complex relationships with techno-scientific tools and situated in certain historical and social context as the basis for developing capacities of resistance and creativity (Rebughini 2014: 9). However, the multiple definitions of the concepts of subject and subjectivity invite a need to clearly position the thesis within the various uses of the concepts. I will do so by outlining certain streams of feminist and Foucauldian thought concerning the constitution of subjects and connecting them to a Marxian discussion on the production of subjectivity within a capitalist mode of production.

I am interested in understanding how student-migrant-workers' practices of challenging the border regime are both constituted by and constitutive of the structures that organise their experiences (Weeks 2018: 5). Instead of assuming an agency–structure divide that overlooks the constitutive role of acting subjects (Scheel 2017a: 394) and approaches agency with a liberal emphasis on the singularity of the autonomous subject (Lugones 2003), I examine how student-migrant-workers incorporate 'the will and the capacity to seek alternatives' beyond being reduced to a subject constituted only by power and discipline (Weeks 2018: 10, 36). Consequently, those persons seemingly exempt from such power relations should also be viewed as successful (Lugones 2003) and as subjects capable of bringing about change (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015; De Genova et al. 2017; Mezzadra 2004).

Lugones criticises the liberal Western notion of agency, which presupposes *ready-made hierarchical worlds of sense* (Lugones 2005: 86, italics in original). It is in this ready-made world that individuals make choices and carry out actions. Agency understood in this way does not provide the tools for liberation, as the conception orders one's sense of responsibility toward predefined choices and devalues the possibility for creative activity (Lugones 2005). In shifting away from liberal approaches to agency that emphasise the singularity of the autonomous subject, Lugones (2003, 2005) focuses on what she calls active subjectivity to better understand the multi-directional efforts of moving within and against power structures. From this perspective, the moments and gestures of subjects negotiating life amidst the tensions created through alternating relations of oppression and resistance are highlighted (Lugones 2003).

It is the efforts by student-migrants to move within and against power structures that I analyse here within the context of administrative bordering. Instead of striving to grasp any 'true selves' with respect to student-migrant-workers, I approach their capacity to act within, against and across institutional frameworks and how they as subjects become connected to one another through their positioning within the relations of power created by the border regime and capitalist mode of production.

STRUGGLES AROUND ADMINISTRATIVE BORDERING

The subjects of the thesis — student-migrant-workers — are not particularly organised when it comes to political action. However, it would be a mistake to approach them as purely subjected to a politically predefined mould of the so-called international student in Finland, acquiescing to the pre-assigned paths and rules put in place by the Finnish immigration system. Instead, the thesis points to the necessity of examining the visibly less perceptible forms of resistance and border struggles that traverse student-migrant-workers' everyday lives.

Migrants' acts of resistance have often been approached as a purposeful response by the oppressed to sovereign power (Huges 2016). However, resistance does not necessarily take a particularly visible form in everyday contexts, as De Certeau (1988) and Scott (1985) famously have pointed out. Also, Black feminists have for long argued that the possibilities for resistance exist even amidst multiple structures of domination and can take such forms as rejecting external definitions of Afro-American womanhood and retaining a grip on how they are defined as subjects (Hill Collins 2004; Davis 1981). In

the context of migration, resistance may consist of the decision to escape from a certain entanglement of social relations and power hierarchies (Samaddar 1999; Mezzadra 2011a). Moreover, it can be argued that, as border controls never have succeeded in fully containing people's movement, everyday border resistance has existed for as long as borders have been in place (Anderson et al. 2009).

Against the backdrop of prior research highlighting visible and pronounced resistance, this thesis contributes to a more limited body of research by focusing on the subtle forms of resistances through which migrants enact and secure their presence and their right to legal residence (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015; Reeves 2013; Scheel 2017, 2019). In this inquiry, Foucault's (1982) method of 'taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point' for understanding and locating power relations and their specific application appears central.

The empirical context of analysing student-migrant-workers' capacity to challenge the governing of their everyday lives is that of administrative bordering. According to Könönen (2018b: 143), administrative bordering entails the 'negotiations and processes concerning the presence and access of non-citizens that are both a fundamental part and a consequence of immigration policies'.

I consider administrative bordering as a space in which we can understand how power as a bundle of hierarchical relations exists but is always threatened by the forms of resistance that intersect it. The field of power consists of a juncture of truths through which relations between subjects are organised, and it is only from the perspective of those who resist and what they are resisting that we can grasp the nature of power itself (Chignola 2019: 9). Hence, the production of truth can be located at the core of the mechanisms of subjection and subjectivation in Western societies (Lorenzini and Tazzioli 2016), which I trace in the context of administrative bordering. For example, when attempting to renew a residence permit or switching the category of permit, the applicant is 'subjected' when required to 'tell the truth about himself or herself' by filing supporting documents on economic funds, study credits and health insurance, thus allowing a certain mechanism of power to govern her/him. In this process, forms of subjectivation and counter-conduct may also resist the governmental mechanism of power trying to impose a specific form of conduct (Foucault 1982). The dynamic between subjection and subjectivation demonstrates that the practices of border control and migrants' practices are inseparable because such control hinges on the active participation of migrants in a process of administrative bordering, the original

objective of which is to regulate migrants' practices and movement (e.g. Scheel 2017).

By analysing student-migrant-workers' attempts to renew their residence permits or switch to another permit category, I analyse how border struggles are produced in the tensions between migrants' subjective aims and immigration bureaucracy (Publication V). In this way, examining student-migrant-workers' encounters with various forms of administrative bordering allows for an examination of the way in which subjects, produced as free individuals, shape their behaviour and conduct in relation to the governing devices (Chignola 2019: 23). The attempt to control mobility is always a response to people moving (Casa-Cortes et al. 2015), and the government's response in turn indicates how 'the possible field of action of others' is structured (Foucault 1982: 790), as opposed to designating direct control over people's lives (Tazzioli 2019: 11). Migrant subjectivities take shape through the workings of the border regime and the challenges to it.

Foucault's (2009) focus on counter-conduct and subjectivation does not stray far from Marx' dynamic view of the capital-labour relation, and indeed it displays several underlying ideas borrowed from Marx (see Balibar 1994; Chignola 2019: ch. 2; Mezzadra 2020; Viren 2018). As Chignola (2019: 29) writes concerning Foucault's work, 'the Marxian analytic of the relations of production casts light on the multi-laterality of power-mechanisms'. Thus, at play within the border regime is not only the objective of producing docile bodies but also the mechanisms of capture for 'synthetizing life into labour force' (Foucault 2013: 236, as cited in Tazzioli 2016: 188). As noted, living labour embodies a creative capacity and productive power — human labour's distinctly subjective vitality (DeGenova 2013b; Marx (1990 [1867]: 284). The centrality of borders in contemporary capitalism enlarges the view on student-migrant-workers' active role in administrative bordering to also include implications in terms of the production of labouring subjectivities. This underlines Marx's view of production as always incorporating the production of subjects as much as the production of objects (Read 2002). In its most basic terms, this comes down to capitalists and wage laborers as the chief products of capital's realisation process (Read 2002).

I began the theoretical discussion by illustrating my take on the border regime and the introgression of borders within the space of the nation-state and then by pointing to the intertwined functioning of the border regime and capital in mediating labour power. Following this, I focused on precarisation as a regime of time working in concert with the legal and social production of difference. I have ended the theoretical journey by tracing the production of subjects in the interstices of subjection and subjectivation within the context of

administrative bordering. The following chapter explores the methodological contours of this doctoral thesis.

4 ON METHOD

In this chapter, I introduce my methodological approach to studying labour and migration. My reflections concerning migration and the capitalist mode of production have matured within a milieu of struggles for rights without borders in a European context. This includes my engagement in activist migration networks and theoretical considerations stimulated by autonomously organised spaces of inquiry into feminist theory, the autonomy of migration and autonomist Marxist theory.

I depart from the administrative migratory category of the student as a state-based category. Thus, these categories are not initially notions of self-definition and thus function primarily as a form of government and as a modality for othering migrants, separating them from citizens (Könönen 2013: 54). The thesis critically engages with a state-thinking (Sayad 1999) founded on universalist notions, that is, based on only a limited viewpoint framed as a totality (Avallone 2018). Moreover, I underline the instability of the migration process, meaning that migration and migrating subjects should not be viewed as stable ‘objects’ of research (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015: 9–10) but rather as subjects entangled in different sets of social relations that can only be grasped as moments (Baser and Toivanen 2017).

Scholars have for decades raised the question of how to think differently and to refuse limitations brought about through concepts and categories offered by dominant languages and modes of thought. Concepts not only organise and provide stability for our conceptual world; they are also embedded in relations of force and friction that result in their own type of violence (Stoler 2016). In this way, social sciences tend to essentialise the complexity of the world through conceptual abstraction (Stoler 2016), and due to a lack of criticality, they reproduce a ‘hegemonic common sense’ (De Genova 2002: 432).

These considerations animate my examination of the administrative category of the student-migrant in its various mundane settings by inquisitively delving into lived experiences. Furthermore, to study the perception of ‘international students’ against the views and experiences expressed by student-migrants themselves spurs my interrogations of how the seemingly commonsensical approach to international student migration is made real. This prompts the following question: How do we know what we know about student migration and its effects?

4.1 APPROACHING HOLDERS OF STUDENT PERMITS

My decision to study working student-migrants derives from my activist engagement with migrants and their efforts to obtain and renew residence permits in Finland. The social context in which student permits are issued and renewed sparked my interest in the topic, both due to encounters with people in rather insecure situations holding a student permit and due to the fact that prior analysis of borders and residence permits to a large extent has focused on asylum seekers and migration based on work and family relations. To fully grasp and gain a deeper understanding of migrants' experiences with the structuring power of immigration law and bureaucracy and how their lives and activities become organised by and against borders, I decided to conduct qualitative semi-structured interviews with holders of student permits in Finland.

I chose qualitative methods because of their explorative nature (Diefenbach 2009). The semi-structured interview is a versatile and flexible method that enables reciprocity between the researcher and the research participants (Kallio et al. 2016). As the method provides space for the research participants to shape the interview, it thereby helps bring to light aspects of student migration that might not have been included in firmly structured interviews or surveys (Kallio et al. 2016).

My primary data consist of interviews with people who at the time held or who recently had held a student permit in Finland (N=41) and were working at the same time. My secondary data consist of an expert interview conducted with two (N=2) migration officials: the national chief administrator of student permits and the national chief administrator of work permits at the Finnish Immigration Service. Towards the end of the research process, I also conducted face-to-face follow-up interviews (N=6) and made several inquiries over email (N=6).

The primary interviews were conducted in two instances in the Helsinki region. The first round of interviews (N=7), conducted in 2015, focused only on holders of student permits from Sub-Saharan African countries and were initially conducted for my master's thesis. The interviews conducted between 2017 and 2019 (N=34) included research participants from various non-EU/EEA countries. My choice to focus on migrants from outside the European Union and the European Economic Area was based on my interest in the legally constructed difference between those having EU/EEA citizenship and those who do not. This demarcation is also important given that 77% of foreign

students pursuing a university degree in Finland come from non-EU countries (EDUFI 2018).

To find research participants, I sent interview requests to Facebook groups and e-mail lists of universities and universities of applied sciences in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area expressing my research interests concerning the experiences of combining work and studies among migrants holding a student permit in Finland. I also visited many of universities in the area, where I met some of the research participants. I limited participation to bachelor's degree and master's degree students, which make up 82% of the body of foreign students pursuing a university degree in Finland (EDUFI 2018). The legal status of doctoral students (18% of foreign students) varies depending on the amount and source of income, and so they were not included in the research (Migri 2020a).

Most of the research participants had made their decision to study in Finland because of free tuition, as compared to the higher costs of more desirable destinations in the 'West', such as the US or the UK (see also Eskelä 2013; Shumilova et al. 2012). Others had based their decisions on personal connections to Finland or interest in a specific study programme, while a minority had initially migrated for work or to seek asylum. Some had considerable work experience and previous degrees, while others had resorted to the student route for lack of other options. The persons interviewed in 2015 were three women and four men from Sub-Saharan Africa aged between 20 and 35, who had lived in Finland for two-three years on average. The interviews conducted in 2017–2019 included 15 women and 19 men between 21 and 35 years of age who on average had spent two-three years in Finland. They came from North and South America (3), Eastern Europe (7), South-East Asia (12), South-West Asia (7), North Asia (3) and Africa (3). Their fields of study included law (2), political and social sciences (7), international business (10), various fields of technology (17), hotel, restaurant and catering services (2), and social and health care (5). However, some of the research participants were conducting studies in several fields, both at universities and universities of applied sciences, and some had previous degrees both from Finland and abroad.

While encompassing a diverse range of areas of origin and studies, the extensive effort at securing a legal status unites the experiences of the working student-migrants from different regions. Thus, a focus on the legal status of non-EU/EEA student-migrants provides an instructive analytical angle that extends beyond a sheer focus on student migration between two nation-states while avoiding a methodologically nationalist framing of identity within the

boundaries of ‘nation’, ‘culture’ and ‘ethnicity’ (Tran and Gomes 2017), thus making it possible to move beyond an ethnic lens (Glick Shiller et al. 2006).

4.2 CONDUCTING SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Preparing a guide for semi-structured interviews implies retrieving and using previous knowledge and theory (Kallio et al. 2016). In 2014, I prepared an interview guide to respond to my research questions for my master’s thesis. This research was explorative and descriptive and helped in formulating my research questions and the interview guide for the continued data collection and research process in 2017–2019.

The interviews (2015, 2017–2019) with the holders of student permits were usually conducted in one of the group study rooms at the university library. The place appeared convenient due to its location in the centre of Helsinki and in a higher education facility that many of the participants were familiar with to some extent. All interviews were conducted in English. Discussing the topic in English was convenient since nearly all the participants were conducting their studies in English, except for two who had been residing in Finland for several years and were studying in Finnish-speaking educational programmes. The interviews lasted between 45 and 100 minutes, which for those participating in the research was valuable time that could have been spent working, studying or relaxing. However, many chose to be interviewed in order to discuss the complicated situation faced by non-EU/EEA students — a question that most participants considered quite urgent.

The semi-structured thematic interviews were angled according to my research interests but based on the research participants’ concerns. I introduced topics for discussion but left room for the conversation to flow and be shaped by the research participants. The semi-structured nature of the interviews permitted topics to be introduced in varying order depending on the direction of the discussion (Hirsjärvi and Hurme 2011: 47–48, 135). Nevertheless, the interviews often followed a similar structure, first covering relevant background information on the research participants’ lives before arriving in Finland. The subsequent themes included their reasons for choosing Finland and the practicalities of obtaining a study place and travelling to Finland, their study experiences and experiences with the Finnish higher education system. Furthermore, we discussed their experiences with diverse contractual forms of work in various sectors, associated experiences of discrimination and inequality and experiences of living with a student permit

as well as their encounters with migration authorities, residence permit requirements and feelings of (in)security. The research participants also brought up ideas for and their efforts at changing or challenging the migration system as well as their subjective experiences of being approached as both a student-migrant and a migrant-worker in different situations. Towards the end of the interview, the discussion often turned towards more mundane topics, such as friendships, social networks and living conditions as well as future aspirations and political involvement.

The conversations evolved more or less freely. Some participants talked without interruption, while others required more guidance from me. Varieties in the participants' experiences also became apparent during the interviews, as some narrated stories of successful lives with bright futures, while others anxiously shared experiences of unequal treatment, racism, stress and psychological instability. Common concerns shared by all the research participants included the constraints of living with a temporary student status, the possibility of finding adequate work and their hopes and fears for the future.

Several times interested research participants also contacted me, asking whether they could participate in the research project even though their work experience did not derive from a field related to their studies. This question was of course instructive for me, pointing to the necessity of unravelling the hegemonic, popularised understanding linking working international students to highly skilled jobs. Similar issues arose during some of the interviews. One research participant studying electronics with much previous experience in translation and customer service work in other countries of residence answered my question concerning the characteristics of work in somewhat constrained fashion as follows: *'Eh ... actually, I did housekeeping. [...] And then I was doing, like, food delivery. [...] I tried many things but, like, nothing went well.'*

Several other research participants described the inconvenience of sharing their work experiences with friends and peers. Concerning the issue of sharing disagreeable job experiences with new acquaintances, a student of social sciences explained: *'Especially when you have just started [studying], I think that's not the information you want to tell, like "Hi, we're sharing a course, I'm working as a dish washer, what about you?'"'*

Several research participants described feelings of embarrassment about their precarious labour market experiences and the difficulty of putting words to the problematic everyday situations emerging in the intersection between the boundaries of the student residence permit and precarious work, causing the

interviews to increasingly move in the direction of sociological listening (Back and Puwar 2012). Some research participants addressed the difficulty of talking about issues related to work and permits if no one seemed ready to listen to the problems they had encountered. For me, it pointed to the way in which student-migrant-workers' lived realities become 'silenced' through rigid migration categorisations and thinking developed within a policy framework detached from everyday lived experiences. Thus, my approach to the field of research grew in openness, avoiding strict hypotheses about the research results and instead putting a primacy on listening, critical reflection and sense-making of unexpected topics and viewpoints.

After the initial interviews, I kept in touch with many of the research participants to communicate with them about the stage of the research and my findings. I also disseminated my articles to those who wanted to read them. Moreover, I let the research participants know that my research had spurred interest among public officials at the Ministry of Education and Culture, who contacted me about wanting to circulate my research findings within the ministry. Several research participants responded to this news and were excited that the knowledge and data they had contributed might have political impact on a governmental level.

I decided to approach the research participants for follow-up interviews, which I conducted in 2019 and 2020. Now, I was interested in understanding whether their experiences of living, studying and working in Finland had changed, perhaps in a direction similar to Robertson's (2018: 550) observation of an initial period of excitement evolving towards a 'less rosy' view of the student status. I asked about the research participants' current situation: where they were living, if their legal status had changed and if they envisioned staying in Finland and possibly applying for citizenship or if they rather intended to move elsewhere. I also asked whether they felt their social position at this later point in time was more secure in terms of income and migration status and if they had been able to find work in their area of interest. I managed to keep in contact with roughly one third of the participants interviewed in 2017–2019. I interviewed six persons face to face, and six provided me with information about their current situation through email, partly due to the enduring Covid-19 pandemic. To my disappointment, the contact information of several research participants was no longer up to date, which prevented me from getting back in touch with some of the research participants. The data retrieved from the follow-up data collection process is not included in the publications of this doctoral thesis, but I reflect on the life trajectories described in the later data and the participants' hopes for the future in the postscript and the conclusion.

The expert interview that I conducted in 2017 with the national chief administrator of student permits and the national chief administrator of work permits had the objective of addressing contradictory information concerning the process of permit renewal that had emerged during the interviews with the student-migrants. This interview was formal and structured, with the two officials answering my pre-defined questions concerning the requirements of the residence permit, the length of the permit, the difficulties of applying for the first permit in the country of departure, status mobility while residing in Finland, the officials' knowledge and estimation of the number of non-EU/EEA students engaged in paid work, the possibility for conducting risk analysis among the applicants and typical situations in which student-migrants could be deported. The expert interview lasted 45 minutes and covered all my questions, through which certain aspects of the residence permit process were clarified while other parts of the non-transparent decision-making process were merely defended by the officials.

4.3 CODING AND ANALYSING THE DATA

To ensure confidential handling of the data, I transcribed all interviews verbatim and anonymised the transcripts by removing the names of people, places and employers, replacing them with pseudonyms where needed. During the transcription process, I began noticing similarities and disparities across the data. I collected the most thought-provoking aspects concerning borders and labour markets, which came to guide my analysis. To proceed with a systematic analysis of the data, I used qualitative content analysis (Schreier 2010). Central for content analysis is the ability to grasp the content of what is expressed in the data. I coded the interviews in Atlas.ti under the main themes of background, work, visas and borders as well as subjectivity — themes that primarily derived from my research interest. Important subcodes within the themes were discrimination, precarity, temporality and exploitation, all of which were repeatedly discussed in the interviews and tied into the main themes.

The analysis of the data proceeded in close exchange with theoretical reflections deriving primarily from critical migration studies. By weighing citations from the interviews against previous research and theoretical concepts, the analysis extends beyond an individualistic interpretation of the data (Schreier 2010). However, the thematic categories that I have used overlap in many ways within the data. Thus, to remind myself of the contexts in which certain topics were discussed, I have repeatedly returned to the

transcripts to read them in full length to ensure that I have not misinterpreted the data or that my analysis has not strayed too far from the initial context.

In retrospect, I think the data collection process was successful. The interviews have proved crucial to understanding the ongoing concerns of precarious work, overworked lives with little pay and the temporal borders imposed on student-migrants holding a one-year student permit. The focus of the research and of the interviews clearly directed the participants towards the topics of borders and work. However, I think that a broader framing of the topic at the stage of the data collection could have provided further context for analysing the complex entanglements of migration and precarity across a broader existential spectrum including both educational context and additional social and family relations. On the other hand, the criteria stipulated that the research participants should possess a student residence permit and be working. Thus, the data capture the manifold experiences of a group of migrants from varying backgrounds living within the constraints of a one-year temporary permit and being heterogeneous in terms of the social structures of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age and sexuality.

4.4 SITUATED VISTAS: REFLECTIONS ON RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

My understanding of the border regime and the law in action has taken shape through my participation in activist migrant networks, mainly the Free Movement Network in Helsinki. Consequently, my understanding of the research environment and the questions directing the research have taken shape in this context.

One issue that I have been grappling with throughout the research process was the often-occurring references in research to foreign students' lack of knowledge of the Finnish language and 'Finnish culture' (Taajamo 2005; Garam 2009). During the research process, I realised that I myself often lacked knowledge about just what researchers meant when referencing this idea of a rather homogeneous Finnish culture. Speaking the other official national language, Swedish, appeared to provide me with a certain cautiousness when speaking of 'culture' without unpacking its meaning and local differences. While being a white Finn without inhabiting a marginalised societal position, I am repeatedly reminded of how it feels to have one's fluency in the Finnish language questioned because of accent.

My position in relation to the research field often sparked questions among the research participants. Many participants read me as ‘one of them’, that is, as an international student because of my specific interest in the topic and my name, which does not resemble most typical Finnish surnames. In our mutual introductions, I usually made it clear that I am a Swedish speaker from Finland, and when asked about my surname, I answered with the facts I possessed. I confirmed that my name was not particularly ‘Finnish’ according to a constructed sense of Finnish nationhood and national language. Not being a student-migrant myself occasionally provoked feelings of betrayal on my behalf, as I was not able to share similar experiences of migration and studies abroad. However, common ground was often established in discussions based on our experiences with the Finnish higher education system. Moreover, I usually mentioned my engagement in migrant solidarity networks and the knowledge, however scattered, I had accumulated during many years of being involved in activist activities, which assisted me in contextualising and analysing the difficulties that the student-migrants faced in their encounters with the border and residence permit system.

From the start of the research project, I wanted to avoid taking a methodologically nationalist (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002) approach to the research field, for example by conducting research among a selected set of conveniently circumscribed nationalities arriving in a new nation state (Finland). As my focus was on the experiences of living with a student permit in Finland, I did not look for research participants of a specific nationality for the study. The focus on Finland can, however, be approached as a methodologically nationalist decision. It is nonetheless important for me not to simply ignore the persistent influence of nation-states on migrants’ lives. Therefore, my approach lies in taking the border regime’s attachment to the nation-state as a starting point of critical analysis to better identify particular problematics arising among people categorised as student-migrants. A further objective has been to think of possible avenues out of these constrained positions created by the border regime, configured in an everyday context.

My methodological and ethical point of departure was to produce knowledge together with the participants, which also implies emphasising the situatedness of the research (Haraway 1988). Who else would have such first-hand knowledge of the migration system in practice other than the permit holders themselves? However, this aim prompts questions regarding the hierarchy of gaze: ‘who looks at whom?’ (Avallone 2018: 49) and ‘with whose blood were my eyes crafted?’ (Haraway 1988: 585). During the interviews, I often asked for the research participants’ opinions and inquired about their subjective analyses of the situations we had discussed. Hence, I approached the participants as subjects of knowledge and experts in the field that I was

studying, with the objective of gaining a better understanding of the everyday lived experiences of the subjects in question while resisting any attempt at treating the results as final (Haraway 1988). Here, the knowledge produced together with the research participants tells stories from a locally and temporally limited point of view. Just as the lives and statuses of the research participants evolve over time, so too does my positionality in relation to the research field acquire greater fluidity, which can only be grasped as particular moments during the research process (Baser and Toivanen 2017).

For me, the effort at creating trust between myself as a researcher and the research participants was grounded in being explicit about my position as a researcher — although such a position articulates the hierarchical relation between the researcher and the researched. I believe that acknowledging this imbalance facilitates the building of trust, finding a common ground for conversation, and it helps open new avenues to building less hierarchical relationships rather than trying to efface the hierarchical positions involved in the research process.

The research participants were usually very understanding of the research process: no one expected anything more of me than the possibility to read my research later on. Although most of the research participants were familiar with the research process and often fended off my discussion on informed consent, building trust during the interviews was important. The trust that developed between each research participant and myself, I believe, helped in preventing a situation in which I would be perceived as ‘stealing the story’, something that has occurred in, for example, prior research with refugees and asylum seekers (Pittaway, Bartolomei, and Hugman 2010: 235–239). Moreover, trust also consists of leaving aside those aspects of the research participants’ lives that the participant hints are not up for discussion. As Malkki (1995: 51) writes, it comes down to ‘leaving some stones unturned’ and giving up the ‘scientific detective’s urge to know everything’.

My aim to better understand the social and legal situation of the research participants made room for them to bring their particular interests and inquiries into the interviews. Moreover, the research was conducted with a sense of reciprocity. I understand it as an approach in which the researcher not only obtains information, but also gives information and support, as well as an effort to reinforce the capacities of the research participants (Mackenzie et al. 2007: 300–301, 311). The sense of reciprocity emerged especially when discussing the practices of the Finnish Immigration Service and other institutional systems of welfare, such as the Finnish Social Security Institution (Kela), where our knowledge could meet and reinforce one another’s understandings of the system. In some situations, the research participants

were unsure about their right to certain benefits or their legal rights in the labour market, which proved to be situations where I could offer support and in the best case provide them with the tools to handle the situation.

Several research participants were eager to hear if other students that I had talked to had had similar experiences, especially concerning the arduous process of accessing suitable jobs and problems encountered when renewing permits. According to my interpretation, many seemed to be looking for confirmation of the problem being of a structural nature and not individual in scope. As my interest lies in the encounter between these experiences and state-thinking (Sayad 1999), with its categories, regulations and practices played out by state and migration officials, I aimed in these situations to provide tools for the research participants to understand the complicated bureaucratic migration system and possible strategies for relating to it.

It is possible that the research participant's active role in the interview involves modes of presenting ideas and experiences according to a preconceived understanding of what the researcher wants to hear. Thus, during the interview the research participants might produce a self-crafted narrative that seemingly serves both the researcher's needs and their own needs (Hirsijärvi et al. 2008; Oinas 2004). Given the disproportional and unequal power relations involved between the researcher and the research participants, I believe the research interview also offered the research participants the opportunity to take part in constructing and remoulding themselves as individuals as well as merely viewing them through the general imagery of non-EU/EEA student-migrants in Finland. In sum, I believe that the interviews disclose multiple temporalities and ways of being in the world and point to possibilities for understanding how the modes of being could exist differently.

Lastly, the analysis I have pursued has benefited greatly from research groups and conferences, where holders of student permits have been present and commented on my work in progress. In the publications included in this thesis, I have privileged these persons' comments on theoretical concepts and the potential for resisting the border regime over partly contrarian comments received from scholars in other social and legal positions. In sum, I hope that this doctoral thesis will contribute to the larger project of liberating migrations from assumptions already made in advance based on power relations of the state, race and geopolitics (Avallone 2018: 55).

4.5 RESEARCH ETHICS

Research ethics revolve around assuming responsibility for the subjects involved in the research process, the field of research and society at large (Van Liempt and Bilger 2012). I approach the issue of responsibility especially through the following ethical question: What is the reason for conducting this research, and why in this specific way? The aim of my research is to transform and complicate the way we think about subjects framed as student-migrants or international students by examining the lived experiences of those having a student residence permit. Moreover, my objective is to spur change regarding the complexities in how immigration law is implemented and its everyday effects on student-migrant-workers' lives.

There is no one way to ensure sufficient ethical research practices in research with human subjects, as such practices always need to be subjected to reasoning and interpretation (Van Liempt and Bilger 2012). Research ethics is important for migration studies as a field deeply permeated by intersecting power relations and structures of oppression that affect the migration processes and migrants' everyday lives. I have addressed ethical issues not only when designing the study and making research agreements with the research participants, but throughout the whole research process. I have followed the principles of the Finnish National Advisory Board on Research Ethics (TENK 2019) and the Codes of Ethics of International Sociological Association (ISA 2001). Below, I describe in more detail some of the important ethical considerations for the research project.

All research participants contacted me personally after receiving my research invitation, distributed through Facebook groups, email lists and in some cases on site at the different universities. In this way, situations in which the potential research participants would have felt pressured to participate were avoided (see Van Liempt and Bilger 2012). Before each interview, I reintroduced my research idea both verbally and on paper and asked the research participants to sign a consent form. The participants were informed about their right to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research process at any time. Contrary to my preconceived concerns, nobody opposed the research agreement, and all research participants gave their permission to use the anonymised interview data for the purpose of the study. I also emphasised that no information about them as individuals would be transmitted to state officials, such as the police or immigration officers. Several research participants interrupted me when explaining what was written on the consent form, suggesting that they as students in higher education were familiar with research ethics and wanted to go straight to the

topic of discussion. Neither did me recording the interview appear to be a problem for the participants.

Nevertheless, ethical standards extend beyond such formalities as informed consent (Krause 2017; Van Liempt and Bilger 2012). The research participants had diverse backgrounds in terms of nationality, ethnicity, age, class and gender, and each had come to Finland with various motives. Thus, the spectrum of privilege as well as the extent to which each had experienced a sense of precarity and vulnerability varied greatly among the research participants. The central node of analysis in the thesis — legal status — is crucial also from an ethical perspective. The legal status of student-migrant-workers is repeatedly scrutinised, and consequently, the possibility that their residence permit would not be extended always lay in the back of many participants' minds. Even though all the participants had or had recently had a temporary legal student status, the insecurities and the range of precarious situations affecting them varied. Several research participants had experienced unfair treatment, racism, sexism and legal violence when dealing with the migration administration, when accessing jobs and in everyday situations. Since some of the participants had sought asylum status before receiving a student permit, their social relations tended to involve more the precarity of finding refuge, obtaining a legal status and periods of undocumented residency. Others were clearly oriented towards obtaining a degree, while enjoying the economic security provided by parents. The latter group of persons more firmly stated that if they were not to find employment in a high-status job, they would have the opportunity to move elsewhere or return to an existing place called home.

To ensure that the participants remained comfortable during the interviews and in an effort to be sensitive to their experiences, I always aimed to form my questions or introduce discussion topics as a continuation of each participant's own formulations. The interview conversations were at times riddled by the participant's anxiety and pessimism about the future. In a couple of situations, the research participants brought up intimate experiences of outright and harsh racism in the workplace, coupled with complex employment agreements that they had rarely been able to discuss before. In such situations, I tried to support the research participants by listening to their experiences, by asserting what their rights were in that situation and who they could establish contact with for further assistance.

During the writing stage, ethical issues were not merely dealt with by way of anonymising all written text and presenting only analytically relevant material. In fact, I encountered the most difficult ethical dilemmas when analysing the data and ensuring that my analysis would not be distorted by

producing extraordinarily terrifying images of exploitative work relationships. I often found myself downplaying certain unpleasant experiences discussed by the student-migrant-workers so as not to produce what De Genova (2002: 422) calls 'anthropological pornography' by depicting alarming situations and letting them speak for themselves without persistent analysis on the part of the researcher. However, when returning to the transcripts, I often realised that the data exposed harsher realities than I had depicted in my writing. Thus, I often went back to including more direct quotes from the data to better capture the tone of the research interviews. In describing the heterogeneous experiences permeating the data, I decided to centre my written pieces on commonalities while recognising more severe experiences ranging from exploitation and subordination to rarer experiences of smooth border crossings and experiences of privilege.

I believe reflecting on ethics throughout the research process has not only helped me avoid misuse of the data and ethically uncertain research situations. It has also assisted me in circumscribing the core of the research and sharpening the textual outcome by focusing on the most relevant parts of the research reflecting lived experiences that exceed predefined categories of thought, policy and law.

5 SUMMARY OF THE FIVE PUBLICATIONS INCLUDED IN THE THESIS

The findings of my empirical research are presented in five publications. Below, I delineate the analytical focus and reiterate the main arguments of each article.

Publication I, entitled **Student-Migrant-Workers: Temporal aspects of precarious work and life in Finland**, focuses on the work experiences of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa interviewed in 2015–2014. It examines what kinds of work the students do and under what conditions. Situated within a theoretical framework of precarisation and critical migration studies, the article seeks to connect the characteristics of student migration to tendencies in the global capitalist economy and the border regime. With a focus on temporality, the article demonstrates how the student residence permit affects student-migrant-workers' experiences. The resulting fragmented temporalities further demonstrates how situating migrants on one side or the other of a temporary–permanent divide in residence status fails to account for the student-migrant-workers' experiences, who, despite their temporary legal status, are more or less continuously engaged in work and envision their futures as globally mobile subjects.

Publication II has been translated from Finnish into English under the title **International Students as a Precarious Labour Force in Finland: Experiences of Working while Residing on a Student Visa**. In analysing the position of students in Finland coming from outside the EU/EEA area, the article addresses student-migrant-workers' experiences of work while studying as well as their prospects of staying in Finland and of future employment. It critically engages with governmental aims to attract foreign talent and create a Finnish educational brand. As opposed to the mobility of people understood simply through state categories, I demonstrate that people arrive in Finland and end up as students for many reasons and that their attitudes about studying and engaging in paid labour change over time. Many perform precarious jobs involving different manual or service tasks at the same time as others function as underpaid experts, thus disrupting a simplistic division between highly skilled experts in the knowledge economy relying on low-skilled migrant labour in the service sector. Lastly, the article points to a situation in which the language requirements for certain jobs, in combination with other forms of social differentiation, can function as a modality of

differential inclusion through which workers are excluded from access to jobs requiring high levels of education but included in the low paid sector.

Publication III, entitled **Between a Promise and a Salary: Student-Migrant-Workers' Experiences of Precarious Labour Markets**, examines the incidence of unpaid labour within diverse contractual settings and sectors in which student-migrant-workers are employed. I analyse the extent of unpaid work in various employment relationships, demonstrating how such work becomes unavoidable both in the process through which student-migrants strive to gain highly skilled work experience and in the precarious work they undertake to secure the extension of their student permit. Moreover, the article contributes to the theorisation of unpaid work in the context of contemporary capitalist accumulation by demonstrating how unpaid labour becomes an extension of paid employment. In conclusion, the article points to the way in which student-migrant-workers' experiences of reduced autonomy over their labour instituted by the border regime reflect the exploitation inherent in them and in the largely involuntary acceptance of unpaid work. The article highlights the inequalities inherent in the precarisation of work deriving from capital's constitutive relation with difference and the systematic production of heterogeneous exploitable figures.

Publication IV, with the title **Punctuated Temporalities: Temporal Borders in Student-Migrants' Everyday Lives**, engages with the notion of temporal borders (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013) to examine how the temporary student residence permit punctuates migrants' lived experiences. It advances the understanding of how migrants in a precarious position become momentarily included in capital's productive structure. The right of student-migrant-workers to move across borders is repeatedly delayed and obstructed through slow residence permit processes, while the need to secure a sufficient economic income remains, resulting in a process of including student-migrants in the temporal regime of global labour (Karakayali and Rigo 2010) purportedly as a flexible labour force. The fracturing of time into one-year sequences according to the length of the permit reflects a contemporary project logic ingrained in society and gives rise to a punctuated temporality among student-migrant-workers. The article furthermore points to the differential activation of temporal borders depending on nationality and the length of the permit. Being positioned on the EU's 'negative list' of those required to have a visa for travelling into the EU makes the temporal border stretch further, as it creates obstacles to leaving the EU, for example to visit family, and coming back while waiting for the permit to be extended. This displays similarities to a logic of the coloniality of migration (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2018) through which those on the EU's negative list are further

othered and differentiated from another group of ‘positive’ non-EU citizens, hence providing governmental tools to manage the ‘Western’ core of the EU.

Publication V, entitled **Ambivalent strategies: Student-migrant-workers’ efforts at challenging administrative bordering**, examines the tension between student-migrant-workers’ efforts at shaping their lives in a desirable way while being subjected to borders that intrinsically affect the formation of the political and juridical structure of contemporary labour markets and working student-migrants’ biographies. Thus, for non-EU/EEA nationals migration for the purpose of studying appears as a struggle that demands innovativeness and stubbornness for them to achieve their personal and collective goals. I analyse the struggles over the right to reside in Finland in contexts of administrative bordering (Könönen 2018b) by emphasising the capacity to seek alternatives beyond being reduced to a subject constituted solely by power. I demonstrate how student-migrant-workers invent pragmatic strategies of denouncing the immediate effects of the border regime. However, the migrants’ autonomous aspirations are entwined with complex forms of labour exploitation, pointing to the ambivalence of migrant practices. Thus, the article brings forth how precarious low-paid work, undertaken by many student-migrant-workers in order to resist the immediate effects of constraining borders, ambivalently posits migrants’ efforts at striving towards their goals as fuel for capitalist value accumulation.

6 PATTERNS OF PRECARIOUS WORK

In this sixth chapter, and in the subsequent chapters seven and eight, I discuss the findings presented in the research publications included in this doctoral thesis. I approach them thematically, meaning that I link the findings from the separate publications to three main topics. I begin by discussing experiences of precarious work (6), then proceed with an analysis focusing specifically on the temporal effects of the EU border regime (7) and end with a discussion of the subjectivities engendered through dynamic encounters with the border regime (8).

6.1 'THERE WAS NO WORD CALLED FIRED'

Helen, a young student from Eastern Europe, described her experiences working at the post office, a job done by many of student-migrants, including feelings of insecurity regarding her employment situation, and thereby also of her temporary student permit. Employed on a zero-hour contract, Helen was given false promises of work for at least a three-month period. She kept receiving work gigs lasting for a few weeks, after which she no longer received any work hours. Helen commented on the loss of potential income by declaring: *'there was no word called "fired", because you cannot be fired with a zero-hour work contract'*.

Helen's statement, suggesting that 'there was no word called fired', illustrates the ongoing transformations of work towards more insecure forms of employment and work performed as gigs without proof of continued employment or income. In the context of a holder of a student permit in need of income to secure a continued legal stay in Finland, the sudden end to work without notice acquires deeper meaning on a subjective level. As the student's temporary residence is tied to financial resources besides just advancing in their studies, the lack of work is often accompanied by a fear of deportation (Publication I, II, III, V). The situation points to the way in which the border follows a student-migrant's every move and emphasises deportability as a foundationally disciplinary mechanism without primarily centring on the goal of actual deportation (De Genova 2002).

'As students, we don't have a lot of choices in front of us, so you either will tolerate [it] or ... [you] don't work, which is the question to be or not to be', another young woman from Eastern Europe told me. Treating the issue of working or not working as a Shakespearean question of 'to be or not to be' underlines the crucial role of income in matters of everyday subsistence and emphasises the tight interconnection between the student residence permit and remunerated labour. Hence, the legal status of the student further aggravates the experience of precarity, thus shaping the 'pattern of precarisation' (Alberti et al. 2018).

I closely analyse the particular way in which service work helps support student-migrants materially, while more cognitively oriented work experience is often acquired through various forms of unpaid work (Publication I, II, III). Nearly all student-migrant-workers had worked in the low-paid service sector, often at such tasks as housekeeping, news delivery and catering. Around half of them had complemented the income-generating service work performed in an unrelated field of employment with partly or completely unpaid internships in their own field of studies or poorly paid work in start-ups in the fields of IT technology and business (Publication III). Some research participants described the overwhelming amount of labour in addition to their studies as becoming 'a part of' them, ingrained 'deep in the mindset' due to their constrained legal position and the need for income. Moreover, the temporary one-year permit produces lived experiences of insecurity. This is a form of institutionalised uncertainty (Anderson 2010) through which immigration control regulates and shapes possible forms of labour and student-migrants' particular relation to employers and labour markets.

Analysing work from the point of view of temporary student-migrants brings to the fore a disconnect between, on the one hand, precarisation in terms of insecure work arrangements and, on the other, the various methods of controlling migrant labour apart from and in relation to standard employment relationships characterised by full-time work and extensive labour protection (Rubery et al. 2018). The measure of labour time creates a tension between migration management and the lived experiences of student-migrants because they have the ongoing concern of not exceeding the allowed number of work hours. The calculus of 25 hours of work a week, with the exception of holidays, reflects a Fordist regime based on the type of standard employment relationship inscribed in the Finnish migration system (Könönen 2015: 43). Thus, the ideal of calculable work hours performed for one employer bumps up against the post-Fordist forms of work performed by student-migrants. For student-migrant-workers, this disconnect is articulated primarily through the difficulty of counting hours of work performed in various locations for various

employers with different types of work contracts and ensuring that the total hours fall within the residence permit regulations (Publication III).

The thesis demonstrates that the decision to extend a student permit is eventually made by the administrative official in charge of the application, a person who has the power to evaluate whether the applicant's personal work history appears stable and lucrative enough. The two interviewed officials of the Finnish Immigration Service argued that it is 'impossible to give any comprehensive instructions' and that it 'depends on whether the applicant has, for example, been working there before or if it is a zero-hours contract and the applicant has just started working there; then, we don't know how many hours the person has [been working]' (Publication V). The work performed by student-migrant-workers seldom corresponds to straightforwardly countable work hours and creates a gap over which administrative personnel may exert discretionary power. This puzzling combination produces a need for student-migrant-workers to conform to the requirements and make it 'look good on paper' (Scheel 2017), even though this would imply slightly modifying one's work contract, often in co-operation with the employer (Publication V).

6.2 UNPAID WORK WITHIN THE PATTERN OF PRECARISATION

The student-migrant-workers' need for income in labour markets characterised by the quest for flexible workers brings about a peculiarity of contemporary capitalism, namely the constitutive entwinement of paid and unpaid work. The Global North has experienced a decrease in the number of wage earners (Moulier Boutang 2005), which has given rise to a multiplication of 'wageless lives' (Denning 2010), while forms of self-employment are increasing. Thus, remuneration for work is vanishing, but not the work itself.

By analysing unpaid work beyond a circumscribed sector, such as housework or creative work, but as part of the everyday lives of student-migrant-workers, the thesis brings to the forefront unpaid labour as one layer in a 'pattern of precarisation' (Alberti et al 2018). Thereby, the analysis brings to light various sectors and contractual settings in which unpaid work is performed, connecting such work to a broader analysis of contemporary capital accumulation, which aims to increase the share of unpaid labour and minimise all necessary labour, consequently allocating less revenue for workers (Viren 2018). I demonstrate how capital manages to utilise the precarious legal status

of student-migrants, together with a social position shaped by racialisation, gender, nationality and socio-economic resources, as well as their aspirations in terms of education and future employment to facilitate the institution of unpaid working hours (Publication III). Thus, the thesis demonstrates how unpaid work functions as a strategy of capital accumulation.

Unpaid work hours undertaken both explicitly and implicitly emerge in different but overlapping work arrangements: knowledge-intensive work in start-ups, service and manual work with zero-hour contracts, and service work mediated through platforms. Creative and knowledge-intensive work sectors are often fuelled by unpaid internships (e.g. Shade and Jacobson 2015; Leonardi and Chertkovskaya 2017). In this context, the 'political economy of promise' (Bascetta 2016) constitutes a central part of the contemporary capitalist system, in which prestige is important in establishing unpaid work as an ongoing element in these sectors, thus producing a pool of free or semi-free labour for capital to utilise. The student-migrant-workers' incentive for undertaking such explicit unpaid work lies in the promise of highly skilled work in the future, however untrue this promise may be in point of fact.

Work through staffing agencies offering zero-hour contracts is prevalent in the manual and service-oriented sectors, such as cleaning and warehouse work. Student-migrant-workers in these sectors consciously undertake unpaid work while at the same time experiencing it as rather non-negotiable given their precarious migratory status. Unpaid work hours are also prevalent among student-migrants working in the platform economy, in particular with food delivery. In this context, the work may be considered an employment relationship masked as self-entrepreneurship with extreme insecurity over the amount of work, payment and social security (Aloisi 2015; Van Doorn 2015). Consequently, the workers themselves become responsible for the costs of social reproduction and for gaps between orders and shifts not considered productive.

The focus on unpaid work hours as an extension of paid work engenders a theoretical discussion on the limits of wage labour. As other researchers have noted, a central aspect of the capitalist mode of production is not the existence of free wage labour, but the ability to circumscribe any activity under the sway of capital (Vähämäki and Viren 2011; van der Linden 2008). Analysing the role of student-migrant-workers' precarious legal position as the reason many engage in unpaid work hours allows for an understanding of the way in which the border regime facilitates exploitation of the potential of student-migrant-workers' labour power.

In other words, examining labour power beyond the limits of ‘free wage labour’, by approaching it as life in its potential shape, permits us to theoretically grasp the extent of unpaid labour within the framework of the contemporary processes shaping the precarisation and flexibilisation of labour (Mezzadra 2011a). Understanding labour power in its potential form hence liberates us from a limited focus on ‘free wage labour’, making it possible to acknowledge the existence of a varying set of arrangements determining production and the capitalist accumulation of value (Mezzadra 2011a; Viren and Vähmäki 2011). Moreover, it allows for an understanding of labour markets where mixed and hybrid forms of work co-exist in contrast to a homogeneous ideal of wage labour (Gago 2015: 64).

In sum, Publication III puts forth the argument that analysing unpaid labour as an extension of paid labour assists us in understanding how capital accumulates value in the intersection between shaping legally insecure working subjects and precarising labour markets. Weighed against research emphasising the role of informal work performed by undocumented migrants that facilitates the ‘extraction of maximum value from labour to the point of disposability’ (Rajaram 2018: 636), the thesis underscores the role of fragmenting labour and the legal production of difference in driving capital accumulation. This is central especially in Finland, constituted around the ideal of the Nordic welfare state, where official and legal documents of various kinds are rigorously scrutinised (Alastalo and Homanen 2015; Helander 2014). Thus, it is important to recognise the variety of hierarchical legal statuses that exist within the Nordic social-democratic welfare state, configured and idealised as hard on the outside and soft on the inside (Könönen 2018a).

6.3 THE HUNGER FOR ‘FRESH BLOOD’ AND THE PRODUCTION OF DIFFERENCE

The position of student-migrant-workers in the labour market is not shaped merely by the legal production of difference based on their migratory status but relies also on the social production of difference that shapes the discriminatory practices affecting them as well as employers’ perceptions of them as an attractive migrant labour force. It is therefore vital to recognise the inequalities inherent in the precarisation of work deriving from the constitutive relationship between capital and difference and the systematic production of heterogeneous exploitable figures (Publication I–V).

In the labour market, student-migrant-workers are often regarded as students and are consequently more likely to be perceived as temporary workers, like students in general, regardless of their legal status. Thus, a modality of 'legitimate domination' (Weber 1968; see also Gago 2017: 136) occurs since student-migrants' work input is viewed as temporary, bringing about a specific aspect of precarity as a regime of time. Their precarious position is structured by them being tacitly young student-migrants and temporarily available for hard work. This is reflected in the subjective experiences of student-migrant-workers. As one research participant put it: *'I'll do this [low-paid work] until I find something better'* (Publication I). Moreover, as I demonstrate in Publication I, their lives are interspersed with studies and work in various locations, purporting ongoing movement as a condition of precarity (Precarias a la deriva 2009: 30). Consequently, student-migrant-workers are both legally and socially deprived of control over their time (Hardt and Negri 2009: 147).

Their assumed youthfulness shapes student-migrant-workers as a collective body. Regardless of their youth, health and ability to work long hours, student-migrant-workers are not immune to overwork. A majority of the research participants described experiences of stress, tiredness and deteriorating health resulting from their constrained situation between studies and work and the confines of the residence permit (Publication I–V). Moreover, some of them indicated employers' tactics existing on the boundaries of legality for the purposes of gaining access to cheap and insecure labour, for example through the misuse of probation periods. These tactics create student-migrants as provocatively temporary and disposable labour, while permitting employers to avoid hiring exhausted workers since they are constantly 'hungry for fresh blood', as one student-migrant phrased it. The image of employers looking for 'fresh blood' illustrates the core of the capitalist system: the aim of 'capital is dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour' (Marx 1900[1867]: 342), thus aiming to take hold of labour power as the 'mental and physical capabilities existing in [...] the living personality, of a human being' (Marx 1976: 270). In this way, the student-migrant-worker as a figure characterised by youthfulness and temporariness suggests a nearly unlimited capacity to work.

The prevalence of the bodily appearance of student-migrant-workers is at first glance downplayed in the low-paid service sector, demanding only the instrumentalised and machinelike ability to work (Publication I). However, the perception of student-migrants as youthful, healthy and energetic ties into further intersecting discriminatory and oppressive social structures as well as the construction of social and racial privilege (Publication I–V). Hence, the thesis points to a social context in which legal status together with complex entanglements of racialisation, nationality and perceived gender and age

produce axes of differentiation that channel certain student-migrants into low-paid areas of work while barring many of them from paid work requiring education and specific skills.

By discussing student-migrant-workers' experiences together with discourses on higher education, language and multiculturalism found in the publications of the Ministry of Education and Culture (OKM 2017), I demonstrate how the requirement of sufficient Finnish language skills advances a nationalist perspective in which society becomes equated with the nation-state with the consequence of treating predefined language skills as a self-evident basis for successful employment (Publication II). This perspective fails to account for the changing nature of labour markets and the multiplicity of languages in many metropolitan areas such as Helsinki. Thus, education and, more broadly, human capital does not on its own lead to work corresponding to the educational degree (Ahmad 2010, 74; Bauder 2008; Silfver 2010). Rather, discourses on human capital give individualistic hopes of highly educated cosmopolites shielded from the social structures of discrimination and exploitation (Favell et al. 2007).

In Publication II, I further demonstrate that many student-migrants experience a division between work for non-Finnish speakers, conceived grossly as 'foreigners', and Finnish-speaking Finns. Thus, language requirements, from the point of view of employers, often become requirements that one possess a specific Finnish ethnicity, through which the knowledge of language is attached to being an 'ethnic Finn' (Näre 2013). According to Näre (2013), the requirement of a native accent can function as a form of ethnic discrimination. Moreover, Krivonos (2020) demonstrates that, for example, a Russian accent can function as the basis for racialisation embedded in historically contingent relations of power, rather than constituting separate technical properties or human capital. I emphasise that for those perceived as foreigners based primarily on accent or bodily appearance, a higher education degree and good language skills are usually not enough for them to access work requiring higher education. On the other hand, the low-paid service sector depends to a greater extent on precarious migrant labour, which limits the room for racism in the initial stage of recruitment (Könönen 2011).

Among the research participants, their chosen field of study seemingly influenced possibilities for accessing a desired job in the labour market during studies only to a small extent. Instead, privilege based on socio-economic background as well as race and ethnicity appeared to be more important differentiating aspects. The few interviewed North American student-migrant-workers, whose work experiences incorporated restaurant work and work in

start-ups, highlighted their whiteness and white privilege as well as their stable family background, from which they could draw support in case of a difficult economic situation. Experiences of overt racism and racialising practices in everyday life, such as long stares because of their darker skin, hair colour or manner of dress, or experiences of being perceived as a refugee, were brought up by participants mostly from western Asian and African countries. In particular, the African research participants mentioned experiencing outright racism in everyday situations and structural racism in the labour market and at the Immigration Service, reflecting reports on racism in Finland being experienced especially among people with an African background (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2017).

Moreover, the thesis demonstrates that student-migrant-workers have experienced being categorised by employers as appropriate for different types of work based on racialised, ethnicised, aged and gendered perceptions. Gender structures how labour is channelled into feminised work sectors, such as care work and certain restaurant tasks, accentuated by essentialised and structurally racist perceptions according to which some nationalities work more efficiently than others do. Essentialised imageries of ethnicity and race produce constructions of for example Asian women as being suitable for care work and African women fitting certain types of manual work (see also Maury 2015: 68), and they hinder upward mobility in the social hierarchy of labour, as the evaluation of competence is based on such differentiated criteria as race and gender (Alberti and Iannuzzi 2020; McDowell et al. 2008; Mora and Undurraga 2013). Hence, employers equate certain skills with a specific national group (Janssens and Zanoni 2005), a prejudice further interlocked with gendered attributes. Moreover, research participants also mentioned instances of gender-based oppression, such as sexual harassment at work. (Publication II, III.)

In conclusion, the employment of migrants must be seen as a complex and contradictory social process instead of as a natural match between employers' needs and migrant workers' preferences for temporary work (Alberti 2014). The thesis highlights the importance of an intersectional analysis in understanding and countering manifold types of discrimination in the labour markets based on racism, sexism as well as perceptions of youthfulness and health, often hidden and instead packaged as the hope that education and other forms of human capital will one day lead to adequate employment. Thus, it points to the way in which capital exploits student-migrants, among others, through the selection and reproduction of racially, culturally, gender-specific attributes of labour power while also making use of differentiated legal statuses (Lowe 1996, 1997; see also Hall 1986; Robinson 2000). However, the social production of difference is never static in character or function.

Furthermore, 'each person is multiple, nonfragmented, embodied', which makes intermeshed oppressions difficult to distinguish in a lived context (Lugones 2003: 127). Instead, student-migrants' different backgrounds, various ostensible differences, accents and nationalities become pronounced in certain situations, while they are downplayed in other situations, during their residence in Finland. In the next chapter, I expand on the production of difference from a temporal standpoint stemming from the students' temporary legal status.

7 TEMPORAL BORDERS

In this chapter, I account for the temporal borders arising in the lives of holders of a temporary student permit and analyse how the one-year permit engenders a punctuated temporality. Furthermore, the chapter indicates that temporal borders not only splinter lived time, but also serve as barriers preventing cross-border movement, and hence, produce a flexible labour force that temporarily remains in place. Finally, I demonstrate how temporal borders are differently activated in line with Schengen visa policies, reflecting a logic of the coloniality of migration ingrained in the EU border regime.

7.1 PUNCTUATED TEMPORALITIES

‘The law kills, it brings you down and pushes you back in time.’ This is how Amin, a young student from Western Asia, described the strenuous process of residing in Finland with different statuses, switching from being an asylum seeker, interspersed by instances of undocumented residence, to finally gaining legal status as a student. Every aspect of the process is time consuming: filing residence permit applications and waiting for and renewing the permit. Being pushed back in time, as Amin phrased it, provides a space for analytically approaching the temporality of the border regime and the migration control enabled by it, and to discuss it through the prism of the legal status of the student.

The experience of being pushed back in time, or of being kept on a short ‘leash’ by the student residence permit, as another research participant described the temporal effects of the border regime (Publication IV), provides a contrast to the homogeneous empty time of the nation discussed by Anderson (1983), building on Benjamin (2005 [1940]). Chatterjee (2005) maintains that empty and homogenous time is only the utopian time of capital, and thus, different from the heterogeneous and unevenly dense time people live in. Through migration, the already splintered and non-totalisable nationalist reality (Bhabha 1994) and the national experience of sharing a simultaneous context wither away and make visible the seams where those different temporal constructions and subjective experiences meet.

In the thesis, I maintain that borders in their spatial and cartographical sense do not structure the everyday lives of student-migrants as much as they do in

their temporal form. For student-migrants, the issue is not so much *where* the border is as *when* the border is (Anderson et al. 2009). In Publication IV, I use the notion of *temporal borders* (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; see also Rigo 2009; Tazzioli 2018) to grasp and examine the temporal processes ingrained in the border and residence permit system. The notion of temporal borders facilitates an analysis of both the experiences of time constraints inscribed in the student residence permit and arising from it as well as their implications for the production of a flexible labour force consisting of student-migrants (Publication IV).

The temporal borders emanating from the student permit engender experiences of a punctuated temporality among student-migrant-workers, as the need to extend the permit on a yearly basis and requirement to engage only in part-time work chafes at their ability to focus on their studies (Publication IV). Punctuated temporality designates the need to plan one's life one year at a time while attuning oneself to the additional layers of temporal borders inscribed in the residence permit and affecting the temporal organisation of life. This punctuation of time reflects a contemporary society increasingly structured around the logic of projects, with permit renewal appearing as a yearly project provoking experiences of leading a precarious 'project-based life' (Jokinen 2016: 93). The punctuated and sequenced experience of such lived time likewise affects the way student-migrant-workers experience social belonging in Finland, as it inhibits long-time planning and keeps student-migrant-workers stuck 'at the border'. Thus, EU borders and national borders are dragged to centre of individuals' lives (Rigo 2005), creating a situation in which student-migrant-workers can always potentially be expelled from the nation-state and locally from a shared social context (Publication I, II).

Temporal borders produce temporal difference both between migrants in various legal statuses and with regard to citizens. I demonstrate that the slow process of renewing the temporary student permit places barriers on student-migrants moving freely across borders, articulating a 'not yet' (Chakrabarty 2008) toward non-EU/EEA nationals (see also McNevin 2020; Rigo 2009: 216). The slow residence permit process also brings about a deferral of migrants' right to legally reside, work or study in Finland and engenders, thus, a temporal filtering of migrants. This in turn gives rise to experiences of being trapped and stuck in Finland and in low-paid jobs (Publication IV).

Through the temporary entrainment of mobility, student-migrants' lives become inscribed in the 'temporal regime of global labour' (Karakayali and Rigo 2010), which produces a flexible labour force ready to accept most types of insecure and low-paid jobs. The process of delaying student-migrants' right to obtain the document of legal residence, the right to study and work, and

their right to move across borders can be considered a contemporary modality of producing temporal difference through the postponing of access to certain rights. As Chakrabarty (2008: 65) notes, '[i]t is as though the "not yet" is what keeps capital going'.

In sum, temporal borders assist in opening up a gap for global capital to invest in a migrant labour that, at least temporarily, remains in place (Publication IV). In this way, temporal borders sustain the legal production of difference, resulting in 'diachronically differentiated legal positions' (Rigo 2005: 17). These positions emerge within the Finnish polity, which constructs modalities of the migrant 'Other' alongside such constructed differences as race and gender (Robertson 2014).

7.2 THE DIFFERENTIAL ACTIVATION OF TEMPORAL BORDERS

Student-migrants' subjective experiences of border crossing emphasise the need for a close analysis of the situations in which temporal borders arise and how they affect the migrant subjects, instead of just assuming a homogeneous temporality with respect to the functioning of borders. I demonstrate that the unequal recourse to mobility engendered by the EU's migration policies enforces a differential activation of temporal borders (Publication IV) that parallels the logic underlying the coloniality of migration (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2018a, 2018b). Thus, the EU border regime produces hierarchical differences in line with a colonial logic that acquires meaning also beyond the immediate presence of colonial power (Krivonos and Näre 2019).

Through restrictions, various management devices and administrative migration categories, 'objects' to be governed are produced within the entanglement of the White national citizen and the racially different Other (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2018a). As I demonstrate in Publication IV, the hierarchical management of migrant 'Others' become tangible in relation to the EU's list of third countries whose nationals are required to be in possession of a visa when crossing the external borders of its member states (Council Regulation EC No. 539/2001). As a consequence of this regulation, migrants on the 'negative' list, formerly known as the blacklist (van Houtum 2010; M'charek et al. 2014), designating those in need of a visa to enter the Schengen Area, suffer from unequal recourse to mobility. The positive/negative list, albeit updated on a regular basis, distinguishes between two groups of nationalities, defining one as negative, that is, less desirable and consequently

othered. This points to the way in which EU policies attempt to protect and reproduce a 'Western identity' and to act as a shield against the global poor (van Houtum 2010: 96). Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2018a: 205) writes that while contemporary EU migration policies do not explicitly operate within a matrix of racial or ethnic difference, the connection between nationality and the rights of migrants, such as the right to asylum, produce hierarchies of nationalities built on the foundation of racialised notions of the Other. In a similar fashion, the EU's positive/negative list accords people different mobility rights depending on nationality. Thus, as the temporal border becomes tangible when the migrant's recourse to mobility is delayed and as it particularly affects nationals on the negative list, I argue that temporal borders assists in producing a hierarchical order of wanted and unwanted citizens coupled with the racialisation inherent in the coloniality of power. Moreover, the temporal borders appear to reinstitute the epistemic architecture of modernity/coloniality based on temporal notions of before and after as well as to and from (Hafiz 2020: 121).

Temporal borders do not merely exist, but become activated (Bigo and Guild 2003, Rigo 2009) in instances in which the border come to intimately shape the temporal organisation of life. I specify that the temporal borders are differentially activated depending on one's nationality and positioning on the positive/negative list but also, more generally, depending on the migrant's legal status (Publication IV). Migrants holding temporary permits, such as the students leading precarious project-based lives, experience the temporal effects of the slow residence permit system more intimately since time limits and deadlines for renewal approach more quickly than for someone having a long-term or a permanent residence permit. Moreover, the differential activation of the temporal border depends on the unpredictable pace and outcome of the residence permit renewal process, which often relies on gendered, racialised, class-based and moral assumptions about the applicant (Guild 2001; Leinonen and Pellander 2014).

In this chapter, I have argued that student-migrant-workers' lived time becomes punctuated by temporal borders, which affect their right to move, work and study. Socially, the temporal borders impact student-migrant-workers' ability to plan their lives and legally define if and when they would have the right to apply for national citizenship. These restrictions on movement and settlement limit social mobility, thus making each differentiated status correspond to a position in a hierarchical order of relations (Rigo 2005: 17). Furthermore, the analysis of temporal borders brings to the fore a modality through which hierarchical othering is produced in line with the logic of the coloniality of migration. Thus, the way in which student-migrant-workers experience borders reveals but a fragment of the

constantly rebuilt and repaired colonial architecture ingrained in the global border regime. However, student-migrant-workers do not passively accept the constraints imposed by the borders. The following and last chapter provides space for examining subtle forms of resistance to being governed by borders on an everyday basis and provides an analysis of how the student-migrant-worker is produced within this conjuncture.

8 SUBJECTIVITIES AT THE BORDER

In this chapter, I examine the production of subjectivity at the border, that is, how subjects are shaped in relation — but not merely subjected — to the border regime. I discuss the ways in which the student residence permit affects the subjects and their everyday struggles to minimise the impact of the border and residence permit system. The efforts to resist being governed on an everyday basis are driven by student-migrant-workers' desires for bright and successful futures that are shaped by and articulated as an open horizon devoid of borders and structural barriers to advancement.

Instructive to the analysis of student-migrant-workers' subjectivities are the ways in which the research participants defined themselves in relation to their border crossings. Did they see themselves as international students, expats or migrants, and how did they reflect on the racialised and class-based notion of being a migrant? As emphasised by one research participant defining himself as a white man from North America, it was only in the encounters with the migration administration that he became aware of the fact that 'also he' was a migrant. Others were keen to define themselves as belonging subjects who had come to stay in Finland, thus rejecting the superimposed condition of temporariness assigned by the student residence permit (Publication IV, V). As one man from western Asia said: *'There is always a joke with my friends, as they like to refer to themselves as expats and I as mamu,⁶ [so] I decided that I like it here and I lived here for a while; for me, this is my home.'*

However, the decision to stay in Finland and to define it as one's home was experienced in various ways. Several student-migrants experienced a need to invest energy in making sure that they are able to renew the one-year permit for another year, which most of the time was conflated with the need to work in order to gain enough income to fulfil the requirements of the residence permit (Publication I–V). In this way, borders can be analysed as moulds that attempt to produce certain types of migrant subjectivities (Robertson 2014): they produce 'hard workers', 'good wives' and 'good parents' (Anderson et al. 2009). From this productive perspective, borders generate power relations marked by divisions and inequalities between people with different legal statuses (Anderson et al. 2009; Anderson 2010).

⁶ Finnish slang for immigrant.

8.1 AMBIVALENT STRATEGIES

A mere analysis of subjection to the border regime does not suffice to provide an understanding of how subjectivities at the border take shape. A closer look reveals cracks in the surface of subjection. By examining the subjective practices of encountering and challenging the administrative migration system, the complex interconnections between border control and precarious labour become tangible.

One primary site of tension and struggle is the context of ‘administrative bordering’ (Könönen 2018b), through which the activation of the border is enforced. I discuss these border struggles (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013) as arising through encounters with the residence permit system, not as ‘political’ battles demanding something ‘in particular’ (Casas-Cortes et al. 2015), but as struggles with the aim of reducing the immediate effects of the border, which consequently shape the subjectivity of the student-migrant-worker.

In Publication V, I demonstrate that for many non-EU/EEA nationals, migrating for the purpose of studying demands innovativeness and stubbornness for them to achieve their personal and collective goals. I argue that one way to bend the boundaries of the legal framework and subvert the aim of migration categories as a means of securing the right to legal residence in Finland can be achieved by resorting to paid service work. Nonetheless, this is certainly not the only strategy, just the one most prevalent in the data collected for this thesis.

The troublesome combination of ensuring enough income while having the right to only a limited number of work hours can pragmatically and preliminarily be solved in co-operation with the employer by modifying the employment contract in a way that best fits the legal framework of the residence permit. In seeking to circumvent the legal framework, co-operational agreements based on the performance of a number of unpaid work hours reinforce dependence on the employer and opens up potential situations for increased exploitation. Thus, co-operating with employers and performing the script of the good worker not only provides student-migrants with the means to attain their personal life goals. It simultaneously creates an intensified field of exploitation, which rather than bringing forth a romanticised vision of migrants’ resistant practices displays instead pragmatic everyday border struggles.

Gago (2017, 2015) suggests that the active engagement by many migrants just to ‘get by’ is pragmatic and driven by the ‘will for progress’. Student-migrants’ ways of creatively making use of the existing residence permit system by

modifying documents or finding meaning in other migration categories can be grasped as a *pragmatic strategy* with the objective of holding on to the right to reside in the country and thereby taking the necessary steps towards a desired future. Consequently, I do not comprehend resistance only as a reactive form of refusal, but as a creative and active (Foucault 1982, 1984: 95-96; Lugones 2003; Weeks 2018) way of challenging, while simultaneously making use of, the constraining migration system.

The analysis provides a nuanced picture of resistance to the constrained position of student-migrants within the border regime, one that diverges from the often visible and spectacular forms presented in the mainstream media. These strategies do not unfold within a ready-made hierarchical world of sense but appear in the active form of negotiating life in the tensions created in relations between oppression and resistance (Lugones 2003, 2005). That student-migrant-workers' strategies appear pragmatic is furthermore rooted in the experience of a punctuated temporality and a type of decision-making that appears preliminary and ongoing rather than planned (Publication I).

Moreover, I argue that the analysis of student-migrant-workers' efforts at renewing their residence permits cannot be separated from an analysis of the capitalist mode of production. The pragmatic strategies employed by student-migrant-workers unfold within the terrain of capitalist production, exposing an irreducible tension between the subjection to administrative bordering and subjectivation as a reaction to the various forms of bordering, as well as the creative solutions invented therein (see also Lorenzini and Tazzioli 2018). Thus, the analysis brings to light the *ambivalence* of migrant practices (Mezzadra 2011a) that coincide with capitalist production. Despite struggling against various forms of disciplining migrants through administrative bordering, student-migrants' means of overcoming the constraining effects of the border are often found through the performance of low-paid work, consequently constituting many student-migrants as a precarious labour force. The empirical examples of modifying work contracts to remain within the allowed number of work hours and switching from a student permit to a work permit in order to escape the precarious and legally insecure position of a temporary status have the side effect of reinforcing the student-migrants' bond with precarious low-paid work (Publication V).

The analysis put forth suggests that the search for autonomy and freedom articulated by student-migrant-workers may translate into fuel for the ongoing processes of capital accumulation (Publication V). By addressing the ambivalence of the strategies employed, the thesis contributes to research emphasising the role of immigration law and policy in producing migrants as a cheap and flexible labour force (Anderson 2010; Könönen 2019; Lafleur and

Mescoli 2018) by highlighting not only coercion but also migrants' capacity to act and invent solutions, albeit preliminary, in their trajectories towards a desired future. Thus, their efforts at escaping a temporary and precarious legal status and gaining a legal status with more encompassing rights finds its legal foundation in the requirement to work (Rigo 2009: 66). Thereby, the migrants' efforts become inscribed within an idea of citizenship in which work functions as its *normative* criterion and as the rule for what a citizen should be like (Rigo 2009: 65).

8.2 PRODUCING THE STUDENT-MIGRANT-WORKER

The thesis suggests approaching the student-migrant-worker as a transient figure of subjectivity occupying a certain position within the productive circuits of capital. Following Read (2011), the student-migrant-worker appears as a collective situation of subjectivity that capital attempts to utilise. By framing the issue as a collective situation of subjectivity, my aim is not to describe the personhood, personality or self of these subjects. Neither is my concern solely with the subject *positions* that point to a structural positioning within the socioeconomic totality, signalling a passive circumscription of the subjects involved (Weeks 2018: 153), nor with mere administrative migrant figures. Rather, I consider subjectivity as cutting across such binary divisions as subject and object, hence purporting a perspective on the 'social individual' that can only be produced and articulated in a social setting (Read 2011: 114–119). Thus, subjectivity, as intended here, refers to the field of friction between multiple devices of subjection confronted with practices of subjectivation in the capitalist mode of production (Foucault 2009; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: 252; Lorenzini and Tazzioli 2018).

The student-migrant-worker provides a momentary glimpse of the subjectivities taking shape at the intersection between the formative power of borders over subjects as bearers of labour power and their efforts at challenging and shaping this process, while being attuned to the ways in which race, gender, youthfulness and nationality permeate both modalities of subjection and possible resistances. The emphasis on labour power reminds us that what is at stake are the capacities of the living being: it is labour that is not yet objectified but appearing instead as 'labour as subjectivity' (Marx 1990: 272; Virno 2004: 83). Considered from this perspective, the objective of governing subjects through the border regime appears to be shaping 'what the body can do' and under what circumstances. Hence, the biopolitical aspect of managing mobility is emphasised, since what is designated and captured in

such instances is labour power configured as the general capacities of a living being.

The student-migrant-worker not only takes shape in the dynamic of challenging the confines of the residence permit. It is also formed in the entanglement between promises of a desired future and the actual salaries gained primarily in the low-paid service sector (Publication III). The dynamic of striving towards one's goals while accepting precarious low-paid work points to a certain combination of opportunism and cynicism — sentiments characteristic of the post-Fordist ambivalent mode of being (Virno 2004). Thus, the experiences of student-migrant-workers bring together opportunistic visions of the future in which one's degree and experiences will lead to a desired life and work within a preferred area, with cynicism concerning one's current involvement in an exploitative mode of production. Following Virno (2004: 85), the sojourn in a temporary legal status can be regarded as a 'training in precariousness and variability'. Student-migrant-workers learn to be flexible as they keep up with the most sudden conversions of their status and orient themselves among a limited number of possibilities. In the hope of finding paid work corresponding to their degree and expertise, student-migrants develop a variety of other talents as they strive for greater opportunities, such as unpaid internships, while cynically working for monetary income in the service sector.

My attempt at explicating the transient subjective figure of the student-migrant-worker allows me to bring forth the central argument of the thesis: the punctuated lived time experienced by the student-permit holders plays into a capitalist system in need of flexible labour (Publication I–V). The student-migrant-worker also points to the transgression of administrative migration categories and how lived experiences are by no means confined to those categories. The transience of this labouring subject is enhanced by the need to perform precarious part-time and short-term work during a limited period of study while holding a temporary residence permit. From a subjective point of view of the student-migrant-workers, their status is transient also in that the student residence permit will come to an end one day or another. However, the question remains as to whether the change in migratory status will alter the condition of precarious employment and whether the situation will allow for less insecurity or just enduring temporariness.

To conclude, being a temporary working student-migrant implies living at the border: always subject to scrutiny, always having the possibility of leaving the insecure migration status behind, while always being at risk of falling out of the student status into that of undocumentedness. It is these transient subjective figures that the border regime both produces and captures and

which can be inscribed within the temporal and fragmented regimes of capital accumulation.

9 POSTSCRIPT TO THE FINDINGS

A GLIMPSE INTO 2020

The twelve research participants that I managed to contact a couple of years after the initial interview were all still residing in Finland. Some of them were studying and struggling with their precarious legal status. Those still students were actively planning how to rid themselves of the temporary legal status once and for all.

A man from Southeast Asia hoped to be able to start a small business based on his work experience in his current job at a company located in his home country and thereby apply for a business residence permit. Another Eastern European research participant, Irina, was in her fifth year of studies and working as a freelancer. She described her current situation as stressed, mostly because of ongoing concern about renewing and securing a residence permit. She said:

I don't care about my master's degree anymore; I just know that I need to graduate to continue with the visa. I know in the long term it [the degree] will be beneficial and blablabla, but right now it is just a formality. [...] I would appreciate [it] if I would not have to stress about my visa, it would be nice to take off a year from studies, like Finnish students can do. I have been squeezing myself as a lemon to renew my visa. That part was killing me at some point.

Irina explained that the easiest way to continue her stay at the moment was to complete her master's degree and obtain a residence permit issued temporarily for a one-year period after graduation so she could look for a job. Earlier she had been considering a business permit, but after having gotten a taste of the startup world, with the exhausting need to network, and having been stuck doing free-lance work that included undertaking work not written in the contract but expected of her as if she was on the payroll, Irina stated: 'I developed a lot of new skills but another way to look at it is, well, being exploited as a free-lancer.' Her current aim was to graduate and find a full-time job instead of free-lance work. This would help her obtain a residence permit based on employment, which according to her seemed to be the least

'bumpy road'. Her goal was to obtain an ongoing residence permit in Finland, giving her time to think and dream.

The challenges faced by non-EU/EEA nationals was also brought up by a man from Southeast Asia who was still finishing his studies in Finland. He had tried to work in the business and IT field but considered it impossible due to the fact that most of the time the jobs were unpaid, so he was therefore still continuing with office cleaning work. He described experiences of having his applications denied both for travel to Finland in the first place and then to the UK for a student exchange. According to him, the reason was that he did not have a desirable profile due to his nationality (appearing in the EU's negative list) and the fact that he was a young single man. The UK application, he explained, was denied specifically on the ground that the immigration administration suspected he would overstay the visa.

A man named Michel, who was from Central Africa, had finally been granted a permanent residence permit after ten years of struggle at renewing the permit, allowing him to purchase a monthly mobile phone plan instead of just a prepaid one, open a bank account, and freeing him from buying lousy health insurance without actual coverage. Moreover, according to him the climate in Finland had become clearly more racist. He described several everyday racist incidents in the street and racial profiling by the police. Michel defined racism as *institutionalised*: 'it is at work, in school, in families', he said. He brought up an example in which he was doing care work in a facility for children where a child below the age of elementary school had asked him how many times he had been in prison. The enduring racism, he said, provoked feelings of it being 'you against the world'.

Some of the research participants I managed to contact had been able to complete their studies and had for the most part been able to change their permit to one based on work. Full-time work, required for the permit, was unequivocally experienced as providing stability and security. Some of the research participants had received Finnish citizenship, while many were thinking of applying for it. An Eastern European woman, Vera, who after eight years had become a Finnish citizen, noted that she was finally part of a company, accounting for all the employees' needs and their healthcare. Her gaze was now directed abroad toward developing an international career. She was also convinced of continuing her habit of helping other international professionals by providing them with advice, mentorship and connections. One problem that she grappled with was the fact that her parents, living in Eastern Europe, had health problems and were in need of care. Vera commented: *I find it quite strange that it is possible to get a residence permit*

based on family ties for a partner of a Finnish citizen (without even needing to be married to them) but not parents.'

Other suggestions for improving the conditions of foreign students and graduates had to do with making the transition from student status to the status of a worker. One Eastern European woman emphasised that soon-to-be graduates should be fast-tracked for work permits, which would imply being able to apply for a work permit on the same day as applying for graduation, not when the paper copy of diploma has been received. Moreover, she suggested that online services for meeting people in similar branches of work or with similar interests could be developed more in Finland. A man from South America brought up the impact of the newly introduced tuition fees. In his field of social services, there had, according to him, been a decline in applicants from outside the EU. The result was an English-language degree in the social sector consisting mostly of Finnish students wanting to study in English.

To conclude, although many of the research participants that I interviewed were tired of struggling to create less insecure lives, it seemed that some of them had been able to find more suitable jobs and had managed to leave the precarious student status behind. Considering the rather similarly experienced conditions of non-EU/EEA student-migrants residing in Finland on a student permit, the experiences appeared much more heterogeneous after graduating. At the same time, when considering Michel's experiences as well as research and reports accounting for the racism experienced in particular by the black African community in Finland (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2017; Keskinen et al. 2019), the findings suggest that leaving the precarious legal status behind might considerably ameliorate one's status in terms of access to social and political rights even as racism continues to affect the everyday lives of many migrants. However, in the follow-up interview I only managed to reach around one third of the research participants, leaving a large gap in knowledge about the trajectories of the rest of the research participants.

10 CONCLUSION

This doctoral thesis has shed light on the ways in which the temporary legal status of student as a local and tangible facet of the EU border regime dynamically affects student-migrant-workers' experiences of work and study and their desires for shaping their lives. I have demonstrated that inhabiting the migratory category of student incorporates a variety of experiences ranging from seeking asylum to migrating closer to relatives, obtaining a higher education degree and aspiring to become a politician in Finland. Thus, the thesis has rendered the idealised figure of the international student more heterogeneous in background and experience, first by emphasising how non-EU/EEA student-migrants are produced as a precarious labour force through the border and residence permit system, and second, by depicting how student-migrant-workers attempt to challenge the borders in their everyday lives. I bring the findings together in three central points and thereafter elaborate on their implications for future research.

First, my examination of the temporary one-year student permit has demonstrated the way it engenders a **temporal punctuation of student-migrant-workers' lives**. This implies the need to organise one's life as a one-year project while attuning oneself to further layers of temporal borders inscribed within the residence permit (e.g. 25 h work/week) and arising as temporal consequences of it. The strict requirements of the residence permit also cause student-migrant-workers to move between principal occupations and different legal statuses, incorporating periods of study, full time work, reuniting with family members and returning to their studies. Obtaining a residence permit requires alternating from a more secure lived time to periods of struggle over labour and residence. As one research participant summarised such sequences: *'it wasn't easy to arrive; it took me many years.'*

Second, the thesis has brought to the forefront the central **role of the temporal border regime in generating experiences of precarisation**. I have demonstrated that because student-migrants need to make money in order to renew their residence permit and sustain their lives in Finland, they take on precarious low-paid work in the service sector. Since the only legal restriction on employment is an upper limit on how many hours a student-migrant can work (ca. 25h/week), student-migrants constitute a flexible labour force capable of being employed in various sectors with insecure work arrangements, such as zero-hours contracts and platform-mediated gigs. Moreover, I have demonstrated that in their efforts to overcome the barriers constructed by the border and residence permit system, student-

migrant-workers undertake unpaid work in the service sector as a way of remaining competitive as workers. Student-migrant-workers nevertheless exhibit agency and engage in such work in an effort to acquire experience in their preferred branch, however often it is either completely or nearly without pay. This results in tension between the promise of work in a field related to one's degree and expertise and the actual salary received mainly from the low-paid service sector. Furthermore, the student-migrants are constantly on the move between different workplaces, education institutions and home, highlighting how such precarisation affects the temporal organisation of life. Thus, the legal and social architecture of work life and social status in Finland produce experiences of losing a grip over one's time, while the imaginary of international students as 'VIP-migrants' (Ministry of Education and Culture 2017: 26) slips further away.

Precarisation as a feature of the contemporary capitalist mode of production is lubricated by the production of difference. I have analytically emphasised the **legal production of difference** as an aspect of the broader dynamic of the **social production of difference** (Lowe 1996). The legal production of difference indicates varying access to social and political rights between migrants holding different legal statuses compared to legal citizens. Moreover, legal status along with other EU visa policies engender a temporal difference among student-migrants, decelerating the movement of some while permitting the movement of others. This, I have argued, reproduces a colonial architecture ingrained in the border regime with Europe as the centre of gravity of the world pitted against a racially different 'Other' (Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2018a; Hafiz 2020).

The legal production of difference is bound up with the wider social production of difference, including intersecting axes of social differentiation and discrimination. In my analysis, I have pointed to the way in which capital exploits through the selection and reproduction of racial, cultural and gender-specific attributes of labour power while also making use of differentiated legal statuses (Hall 1986; Lowe 1996, 1997). In particular, I have demonstrated that the labour power of student-migrant-workers is shaped by them being perceived as youthful and embodying vital energies on offer for work in the service sector, perceptions that intersect with race, gender, nationality and legal status. These interlocking axes of differentiation channel certain student-migrants more easily into low-paid service work and hinder many student-migrants from working in their own field of expertise. However, the social production of difference is never static in character or function. Instead, student-migrants' different backgrounds, various ostensible differences, accents and nationalities become pronounced in certain situations while they are downplayed in other situations during their residence in Finland.

Third, the thesis has advanced understanding of **student-migrant-workers' subjectivity** and their capacity to take command over their lives and futures. I have demonstrated that student-migrant-workers employ pragmatic strategies to minimise the restrictive effects of the borders while striving to ensure a continued legal presence in Finland. These strategies often include undertaking precarious low-paid work, which ambivalently posits migrants' efforts at striving toward their goals as fuel for capitalist value accumulation. Thus, moments of freedom and autonomy arise precisely in the context of administrative bordering, supposedly regulating their possibilities for creativity and freedom.

The focus of the thesis has been on the entanglement of borders and labour power, meaning, in a narrower sense, a close assessment of the forms of labour and labouring subjects produced as a consequence of the migratory legal status of the student. The thesis elucidates the experiences of subjects holding a student permit working alongside their studies and hence examines specific situations in which the combination of work and studies produces a flexible and precarious work force. However, the thesis does not account for all non-EU/EEA student-migrants, particularly those wealthy or otherwise economically supported who do not experience the need or the desire to work. Thus, this doctoral thesis contributes to the discussion of borders and production of labouring subjects, while it speaks less to the field of migration in relation to studies and academia.

Effectively, the thesis makes abundantly manifest the fact that there is a body of talented people present in Finland struggling to secure their residence and to find work corresponding to their education and ambitions. Given this situation, the thesis questions the calls to attract fresh global talent repeatedly articulated in policy documents, as these calls do not sufficiently consider migrants with multitudinous skills and knowledge already in Finland. Neither do they account for the socio-legal structures hindering student-migrant-workers from becoming the desired highly skilled workers that migration and education policies pursue. Moreover, when considering the residence permit system that pushes many student-migrants to undertake precarious paid work, discussions on the 'abuse of visas' (e.g. Suter and Jandl 2006, see also HE 21/2018: 18) appear counterproductive. Rather, I maintain that it is precisely the tight space for action created by the residence permit system that results in manifold modes of living with a migratory status and switching between them in order to achieve personal and collective goals — a dynamic that consequently shapes the border regime itself.

The thesis makes a case for a politics that breaks with the stringent ways of curtailing migrants through stipulations of financial resources and multiple time limits, both of which reduce migrants' subjective opportunities for choosing where and how to work, study, live and settle. As I have suggested, processes of differential inclusion purporting student-migrant-workers as neither fully excluded nor fully included in the sphere of labour and social rights are ongoing and actively reproduced during the period of residing on a student permit in Finland. The yearly renewal of the permit and the search for income-generating work while striving to grasp at opportunities to further one's goals, punctuates and fragments non-EU/EEA student-migrants' lived experiences. Moreover, the ongoing process of differential inclusion keeps student-migrant-workers on the threshold of a more secure legal status and having access to work that reflects their skills and expertise. The temporal take on differential inclusion advanced in the thesis highlights the heterogeneous spatio-temporal experiences of student-migrant-workers, which unfold within a capitalist mode of production based on flexible and fractal accumulation (Gago 2017; Lowe 1996; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013, 2019).

To conclude, I would like to reflect on temporality in relation to the aims of equality and a legal status offering more encompassing rights and potential citizenship. It appears that many migrants today live amidst fragmented time, labour and social life, while the promise of access to social and political rights and equality is deferred to an indeterminate future. Thus, hierarchical legal statuses that are legitimised as part of the homogeneous and linear progress of time embedded within the promise of citizenship still pertain from a legal standpoint (McNevin 2020; Rigo 2005). The requirement that a person reside in Finland for five years before acquiring Finnish citizenship is extended for those holding a temporary permit, as their time of residence counts as only half the time allotted to those with other types of permits. The need to play within the tight space created by the border regime and perhaps switching between statuses necessarily introduces an *element of calculation*, which requires that student-migrants organise their lives within the constraints of the temporal border regime. Calculating work hours, income and the time required for extending the permit or applying for a new one becomes a necessary step in paving the way towards a legal status with more encompassing rights.

The tensions inherent in the relationship between capital and temporal difference continuously reproduced between those who are already citizens and those who are not yet citizens arises as an avenue for further research. These tensions also require research attention with regard to the suggested promise to resolve the inequalities pertaining to legal status along the political route to citizenship. This line of inquiry is vital because only a limited number

of residence permits in Finland are permanent (ca. 30%, EMN 2020), while temporary and precarious migratory statuses are proliferating both in Finland and globally. Additionally, for holders of temporary student permits the recently introduced tuition fees, the long-term effects of holding a temporary residence permit and political efforts to improve student-migrant-workers' precarious situation emerge as crucial concerns for further research.

From the subjective standpoint of student-migrant-workers, however, the best course of action in pursuing justice does not always lie within current political alternatives. I end with a quote from a young research participant who already had accumulated a long history of migration and struggle, and who had lost his hope of receiving justice through the existing migration system. He placed his vectors of change in a future beyond the present political terrain of nationally configured statuses:

*I think that the world will [someday] be without governments,
without borders.
Or, that there will be an international government.
People don't want these kinds of systems anymore.*

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