UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

https://helda.helsinki.fi

Fragmented labour, punctuated temporalities : Spatiotemporal precarisation among student-migrant workers

Maury, Olivia

Ness, Immanuel

2023-01-01

http://hdl.handle.net/10138/564491

Maury, O 2023, Fragmented labour, punctuated temporalities : Spatiotemporal precarisation among student-migrant workers. in I Ness (ed.), Platform Labour and Global Logistics : A Research Companion. 1 edn, Routledge research companions in business and economics, Routledge, London, New York, pp. 274-289. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003351764

Downloaded from Helda, University of Helsinki institutional repository. https://helda.helsinki.fi
This is an electronic reprint of the original article.
This reprint may differ from the original in pagination and typographic detail.
Please cite the original version.

Maury, Olivia (2023) Fragmented labour, punctuated temporalities: Spatio-temporal precarisation among student-migrant-workers. In: *Platform Labour and Global Logistics. A Research Companion*, Immanuel Ness (ed.). London and New York: Routledge. pp. 274-289.

Fragmented labour, punctuated temporalities: Spatio-temporal precarisation among student-migrant-workers

Oliva Maury

Introduction

Many people are today subject to precarisation, which aggravates the experience of insecurity over work, income and possibilities of life altogether. Rather than being an exception, it appears as a continuation to a vast history of subjecting and governing labour. This chapter centres on migrant labour in Finland and particularly on the specific socio-legal dynamics of precarisation that assist in shaping a precarious labour force consisting of non-EU student-migrants.

Through an ethnographic insight into the lived experiences of holders of temporary student residence permits and their struggles over labour, the chapter contributes to the discussion on gig work and precarisation. The chapter asks what forms of work arise in the intersection between the constraining border regime that shape migrants as dependent on insecure forms of work, and the student-migrants' desires to grasp opportunities to further subjective goals. The chapter exceeds a cut-off focus on a particular contractual type, a specific modality of organising work or even a specific work sector. Instead, the analysis seeks to grasp the heterogeneity of work arrangements occurring in the student-migrant-workers' lives. The

chapter hence highlights the everyday perspectives of low-paid work: bodies, sweat, cooperation, movement and timetables as integrative parts of the location-dependent service-work be it mediated through platforms or zero-hours contracts. A crucial analytical standpoint is to account for the structurally unequal position of the holders of temporary student residence permits, and its effects in undergirding precarisation, which unfold against the constitutive relation between capital and difference and the subsequent production of heterogeneous exploitable figures.

The chapter argues for a focus on time and temporality in discerning the logics of precarisation and value accumulation at play, which can be grasped in the data as a threefold intersection. First, precarisation of work, which shortly said involves short-term contracts and gigs, generates a spatio-temporal fragmentation of work undertaken by the student-migrants. Second, the migrants hold temporary student permits, which punctuate their lived time and sequence it into one-year projects according to the one-year length of the permit. Third, as student-migrants they are often perceived as being young, and thereby healthy and energetic workers. Moreover, as students they are perceived as temporarily employable flexible labour. Through this analysis, I seek to understand the ways in which the legal and social architecture of work life and social status in Finland generate experiences of losing control over one's time. Thus, I strive to demonstrate how precarisation, as inflamed by both transformations of work and an insecure migratory status, crucially deprives the control over one's time.

Transforming patterns of work and precarisation

Precarisation includes both measurable aspects, such as 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 (Bourdieu 1998; Kalleberg 2009), but also subjective experiences of precarisation that emerge across capitalist societies (Alberti et al. 2018; Neilson and Rossiter 2008). According to the International Labour Organisation (2020) 61 per cent of the global labour force are in vulnerable and non-standard employment. This, perhaps underestimated, number of vulnerable workers appears as a continuation to the unequal standards of security and rights at work, which always have been partial, often excluding women and migrants (Alberti 2013; Lorey 2015; Vosko 2010). The ongoing and intensified forms of precarisation targets increasing parts of the working population, signifying a generalisation of expropriability in a situation of crisis-ridden capitalist accumulation where "sometimes the methods of accumulation that were reserved exclusively for racialised subjects bleed over and are used on those with privileged status markings" (Wang 2018: 125). It is only when posited against the Fordist norm as an era stretching roughly from the post-WWII period until the dawn of the crisis of Fordism in the 1970s (Rubery et al. 2018) that precarity appears as a deviation. However, in a wider historical perspective precarity appears to be the norm and Fordism the exception (Neilson and Rossiter 2008: 54).

Instead of employing the concept of precarisation as an exception against the backdrop of the norm of the standard model of employment, which encompasses protective mechanisms against a "pure" market relationship, sustained by employers and the state through employment rights and social protection (Rubery et al. 2018), I place analytical focus on "drivers and patterns of precarisation" (Alberti et al. 2018: 450) in order to grasp the vectors that generate experiences of precarity among the student-migrant-workers. Thus, rather than examining specific types of work or tasks, I highlight the socio-legal context of labour stemming both from the temporary legal status of the migrants and the rapidly transforming world of work towards increasingly

short term, hour- and gig-based forms. Combining these two aspects allows for a situated analysis of contemporary patterns of precarisation.

The transforming patterns of precarisation take advantage of borders that traverse nation-states and subjective lives, as well as the varying legal statuses among workers produced thereof. As Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) effectively argue, the border is a method for spurring capital accumulation. Moreover, authors such as Robinson (2000[1983]) and Lowe (1996) emphasise that capital maximises its profits precisely by configuring bearers of labour power not as homogenous and abstract, but by rendering labour power heterogeneous through the reinstitution of differences based on legal status, race, nation, geographical origin and gender (Lowe 1996). Today, the variety of migratory legal statuses has in many ways substituted distinctions made based on race and has enabled the production of a flexible and globally competitive labour force (Sharma 2020). In this way, global economic competitiveness is enhanced by increasingly issuing visas and residence permits on a temporary basis (Horton 2020), such as student permits (Maury 2020b), hence rendering migrants subject to institutionalised uncertainty (Anderson 2010). In sum, the temporal border regime and the temporal organisation of immigration controls undergird the flexibility of capital as it creates flexible workers by alternating between producing on the one hand excessively mobile workers, and on the other hand workers with hardly any access to mobility (Anderson 2020, Maury 2020b).

While international student mobility is often apprehended in a context of (future) highly skilled labour, recent research has emphasised the precarious experiences of work during the time of studies abroad describing it as a form of "educationally channelled international labour mobility" (Liu-Farrer 2009). Research has emphasised work performed in the low-paid service sector and the way in which employers take advantage of international students in need of paid

work (Campbell et al. 2016; Liu-Farrer 2009; Neilson 2009; Pan 2011; Raghuram 2013; Wilken and Dahlberg 2017). Researchers have also emphasised the "middling experience" pertaining to temporary migrants such as students and graduate workers whose experiences fall in between "elite" transnational knowledge workers who enjoy smooth mobility between global cities, and migrant workers in low-status jobs (Robertson 2014).

Migrants' precarious experiences in the labour markets are often produced in the intersection between legal, economic and the personal context (Gilmartin et al. 2020). In this chapter, I argue that the body of student-migrant-workers – centrally characterised by their legal insecurity and lack of free time due to excessive work and studies – constitutes a part of a temporally insecure and precarious migrant work force. This workforce is from the perspective of capital flexible and subjectively characterised by insecurity, exacerbated by discriminatory social structures based on legal status, nationality, race, gender and age.

Research context and data

The number of student-migrants has risen globally and likewise in Finland (OECD, 2019). The number of foreign citizens in Finland has increased tenfold since 1990, reaching a total of 258,000 in 2018 (4.7% of the overall population), while persons with a foreign background account for nearly 14 % of the total population (Statistics Finland 2019a, 2019b). The number of international students in Finland has tripled since the beginning of the 2000s to 20,362 in 2017 of which 72 % come from non-EU countries, notably from Asia (45%) and Africa (10 %) (EDUFI, 2018). Within the past five years, the number of issued first-time student residence permits per year has ranged between 5,000 and 6,000 (EMN, 2018).

The chapter draws on 41 in-depth and twelve follow-up interviews with migrants coming from outside the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA) holding a one-year student residence permit in Finland, and who were working alongside their studies in higher education. The interviews were conducted between 2015 and 2017-2020 in Helsinki face to face except for a few follow-ups online due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The interviews focused primarily on the research participants' experiences of work, their social and legal status in Finland as well as their visions of ameliorating the position of non-EU/EEA student-migrants in Finland.

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, such as the US or the UK. A few 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. The research participants consisted of 18 of women and 23 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 East Africa (2), Central Africa (3) and West Africa (4). Their fields of study included law (2), political and social sciences (7), international business (10), various fields of technology (15), 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.

Being granted a student residence permit is contingent on having been admitted to an education institution (usually tertiary education), being able to demonstrate a sufficient amount of economic resources (6720 e/year in 2021) and possessing a private health insurance as student-migrants are largely excluded from the Finnish social security system incorporating the National Health Insurance scheme (Migri 2021). The permit is issued as a temporary permit

usually for one year, but changes in the law allow for issuing two-year permit, however with doubled the financial requirements. The research participants of this study all held or had recently held a one-year student permit, and thus were obliged to apply for extension of the permit on a yearly basis. The fee for an online permit application is 350 euros for the first permit and for extending it 180 euros, but somewhat more expensive if using a paper application (Migri 2021).

The holder of a student permit has the right to work part-time alongside studies (approx. 25 hours weekly) and fulltime during holidays. The student-migrant-workers were often engaged in several different jobs on different contracts. In most of the cases, they strived to find work in their own field of interests or expertise but hardly did so. The challenge was hardest in the business sector, while the social and care sector offers more possibilities for student-migrants and for those graduated from a Finnish higher education institute.

In the chapter, I use the analytical notion of student-migrant-workers (see also Nielson 2009) in order to highlight the adversity of circumscribing lived experiences within one administrative migration category. Subjectively, the research participants often brought forth fluctuations in how they perceived themselves despite them holding a student status. Some indicated that they had forgotten that they were students due to work occupying most of their time. Others, defining themselves as "white", did not consider themselves migrants until they were confronted with the temporal and bureaucratic border regime in their everyday lives, thus signalling the socially imagined figure of the migrant as imbued with racialisation (e.g. Anderson 2020; Balibar 1991).

Student-migrant-workers within the transforming landscape of labour

Paid work performed by non-EU/EEA students is often located in the low-paid service sector, especially in cleaning and news delivery, but also in restaurants and in different types of

warehouses (Maury 2017). Work is usually performed in the evenings, nights or early mornings, outside the so-called typical work hours as configured along Fordist standards. Around half of the research participants had complemented their income-generating service work 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 (Maury 2020a). Hence, the working lives of the student-migrant-workers' appear fragmented stretching across the continuum between so-called high skilled and low skilled work.

As each of the research participants highlighted, the need to secure the necessary economic funds each year in order to extend the residence permit overshadows their stay in Finland. According to an estimation by officials working at the Immigration Service in Finland, approximately 80 % of the non-EU/EEA migrants holding a student permit work alongside studies to sustain their life and permit extension (Maury 2021a). Some get support from family members or borrow money from friends to fill the gaps in the financial statement.

A challenge for many foreigners, research participant Chris said, is that "*we have no choice but to work*". Chris had spent almost ten years in Finland studying and working in a wide range of areas from engineering to tourism. He had already completed a degree in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management in Finland and was doing another one in Media Engineering. He was for the moment employed as a chef, but he started off talking about his four years of working as a news deliverer at the Post office alongside his studies – a job that more than half of the research participants of this study had been occupied with. Chris described the various backgrounds of the people working for the Post office (Posti) with news delivery in the night, usually initiating their shift at around 2 a.m.

> [There are] a lot of other Finnish, African, Asia, Arab [workers] – everybody mixed. I did Posti for four years, the remaining two years you just have to force yourself to work.

> Posti is nothing you should do for more than four years because of health issues, because you are not sleeping. I did it as a student, it is not an ideal job, really, but as a student, it is really the only one you can do at the same time when you go to school. Now the salary has been cut, nobody can renew their permit with that, you cannot collect up to 1000 euros [a month] with that. I worked with a car. That is also a transition, in [a city in Middle Finland] I used to cycle, but in [the metropolitan area of the South] I used to do Posti by foot and a trolley sometimes, but then I bought a car. – Chris, 35, West Africa

Chris found the job as news deliverer to be one of the few jobs he was able to undertake alongside his studies. However, the work was not ideal as it steals time from sleeping, deteriorates one's health and generates little income. Chris noted that the salaries had fallen since he started working. He also described the different ways he used to get around the city by foot or trolley, to biking to using a car. Chris' experiences exemplify the way in which student-migrant-workers' lives are intimately shaped by the spatio-temporal fragmentation of work and study activities. This scattering across various locations purports ongoing movement as a condition of precarity (Precarias a la deriva 2009: 30).

Importantly, the student-migrant-workers' experiences of finding work and managing to get an income are underpinned by the ever-increasing diversification in terms of contractual forms of work, as Anna, a law student from Eastern Europe described:

> Of course, a problem for all of us is to mobilize all the funding because I still don't have an employment contract. But still, if you have an employment contract not every employer, when it is kind of small firm, wants to give you a one-year contract [according to the length of the visa], so it's the most difficult part of showing the financial part. [...] In sales, they often sign the zero hours contract, and this contract is

> not enough for working visa, so this is the problem. I don't think I will ever be able to apply for a work permit, this means I cannot get all the benefits. – Anna, 22, Eastern Europe

Mobilising the required funding is a problem for all non-EU/EEA student-migrants, Anna indicated. She described the difficulties of securing an income, when small companies seldom offer contracts for even a set period. Instead, they offer zero-hour contracts without any security for future working hours and income. Anna's concerns were not limited to the present. Instead, the inability to find other than short-term work made her worry over her future possibilities of switching to a work-based residence permit after finishing her degree. This permit would enable her to stay in Finland but is at the same time contingent on getting full-time work.

Another research participant, 29-year-old Chen from Eastern Asia studying electronics, equally found it hard to exit a constrained work position. A primary problem was that extremely few of his job applications resulted in a reply of any sort. He had been working in sales and most recently in a restaurant with *"some kind of freelance contract".* Working on what appeared to be a zero-hour contract, he explained *"now they are only using girls, I don't get any shifts at all, I have to look for something else".* Thus, according to Chen, a gendered preference from the employer's side forced him to find work elsewhere. He started working as a food courier and tried two different companies with some variation in how income was generated; per delivery and according to the hours worked. Biking around town delivering food was by no means a solution to Chen's problem with work. He was unsatisfied with the combination of physically hard work and unstable weather and therefore spent most of his free time looking for other jobs.

The different forms of insecure work arrangements encountered by the student-migrant-workers are connected under an umbrella of precarity. There exists "*no word called fired*" one

of the research participants described the situation of being dependent on getting more gigs or work hours. Moreover, the need to be available for work, while not working all the time and getting paid only for the hours worked, spurs a deprivation of control over one's time (Hardt and Negri 2009: 147). Since the initiation of the research, gig work through digital apps has become more frequent alongside zero hour and fixed-term part-time contracts, which points to how platform work often functions as one source of income among others. Thus, platformisation represents one aspect of the general growth in so-called non-standard forms of employment, while the digital management practices associated with platform work gains ground more largely across global labour markets (Gillespie 2010, Huws et al. 2019).

Employing student-migrants through an ever-increasing range of insecure contractual arrangements appears convenient for the party that is buying labour power as the stricter requirements in terms of full work hours in a circumscribed work area applied to most work-based residence permits do not pertain to student permits. The student-migrants' concern is rather to gain enough income while remaining within the maximum amount of 25 hours of work per week although the difficulty in counting the hours within a multiplicity of work bumps against the Fordist logic on which the migration system relies (Maury 2021a, Könönen 2015). Thus, the non-EU/EEA student-migrants appear as a flexible labour force with few possibilities of renouncing work offers as their possibilities of accessing welfare services in Finland such as unemployment, health and housing benefits are very limited (Maury 2017; 2020a).

The legal production of difference through temporary permits

"This semester I'm lagging behind, but I guess I will manage until the time I will apply for the extension, so far it's good", Tanya said. Tanya, who had come to Finland from Eastern Europe a few years ago to complete a degree in the social sector, described how the period for applying

for permit extension appears as a deadline to reach and manage after which the stressful situation potentially could be improved. This experience, common among the student-migrant-workers, illustrates the punctuation of lived time resulting from the need to extend the one-year permit every year (Maury 2020b, 2021b).

The difficulties regarding time management were caused by the three different jobs – cleaning, baby-sitting and children's day care – that Tanya undertook in addition to her studies, and the hourly limits to work inscribed in the student permit.

> At the moment I do cleaning because in our situation we have a 25-hour limit and it happens that you just get some hours and then if you don't have 25 hours fulfilled, so, materially like there is not enough money for you, cause you cannot get any other support and then you just turn out to work in a couple of places. At the moment I work in three places to make my hours. –Tanya, 29, Eastern Europe

As Tanya described, it is challenging to stay within the allowed 25 work hours a week, no more but neither less since that would signify a loss of income. Tanya's working hours and studying hours often clashed in the morning, making her draw into the conclusion: "*I don't have the luxury to choose which time I would like to work"*. Moreover, Tanya described her days as filled with tasks leaving no time for social life, friends and other activities. "*Basically, with my life, I started always from 8 a.m. until 9 or 10 p.m. I would work and then study and work and then I can just come home to sleep"*, Tanya said.

The expressed experiences of losing the grip over one's time results from the uninsured and contingent labour performed with a migratory student status. Thus, the temporary student permit engenders a *legal production of difference* (Maury 2021b) in relation to migrants in other legal statuses as well as in relation to Finnish nationals and EU citizens. In this way, immigration control moulds specific types of workers and subjectivities (Anderson 2010,

2020; Robertson 2014) and significantly spurs the multiplication of labour (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013), that instead of pointing solely at divisions of labour emphasises multiple subjective labour positions from the point of view of tasks, skills as well as legal statuses (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: 91).

The border regime can thus be grasped as a tool of differential inclusion (Andrijasevic 2009; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013), which produces migrant students as neither fully excluded nor fully included in the sphere of labour markets and citizenship. Differential inclusion functions as a way of controlling and exploiting labour through borders while also making use of and fuelling oppressive structures of racism and sexism (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: 161). From a temporal perspective, differential inclusion produces heterogeneous spatiotemporal experiences, which emphasise the discontinuous and nonlinear functioning of contemporary capitalism (Gago 2017: 75) and its flexible modes of accumulation (Lowe 1996: 28). Hence, the contemporary capitalist mode of production makes use of borders to advance a logic of simultaneous connection and disconnection, that is, differentiating labour power and fragmenting spaces of labour at the same time as it unifies them in varying patterns.

Efforts to remain non-replaceable

The transforming labour markets and the legally produced differences between working subjects are further socially differentiated. In the labour market, the student-migrant-workers are often regarded as students and are consequently more likely to be perceived as temporary workers, like students in general. Their precarious temporariness is structured by the legal and social production of difference based on their legal temporariness and their characteristics of youthful students, and thus appearing as subjects temporarily available for hard work. This is

reflected in the subjective experiences of the student-migrant-workers, as one research participant put it: "*I'll do this [low-paid work] until I find something better"*.

The assumed youthfulness shapes the student-migrant-workers as a collective body. Most of the research participants described experiences of stress, tiredness and deteriorating health resulting from their constrained situation between studies and work and the structuring effect of the residence permit, despite their assumed youthfulness. Moreover, some of them pointed at employers' tactics on the boundaries of legality to get access to cheap and insecure labour for example through the misuse of probation periods. Galina who studied social sciences and worked as a cleaner said:

> I think it takes six months before you have really health problems. It's easy for employers to get a student to do the work for four months when they are full of energy and then you fire them and get new students. Tiredness is growing so they're always hungry for fresh blood. - Galina, 22, Eastern Europe

The occasional habit of firing employees at the end of the probation period produces student-migrants as temporary and disposable labour. Employers looking for 'fresh blood', as Galina expressed it, encapsulates the core of the capitalist system founded on 'capital as dead labour which, vampire-like, lives only by sucking living labour´ (Marx 1990[1867]: 342). In this way, the student-migrant-worker as a figure characterised by youthfulness and temporariness suggests a nearly unlimited capacity to work and demonstrates how the student-migrant-workers become both legally and socially deprived of control over their time.

The quest for energetic workers in the low-paid service branch translates into a situation of competition over workplaces, work hours and gigs among the student-migrant-workers. As

Mai, a student of business working in a warehouse, emphasised: "*A friend says, don't make yourself replaceable, if you become replaceable that's very risky for you, to lose the job".* Not becoming replaceable demands efforts of making one's specific skills and ability to work recognized and overrules a quest for only the instrumentalised and machinelike ability to work in the low-paid industrial sector. Mai exemplified the schemes of cooperation and knowledge used to intensify production in the food-packaging warehouse, but also to avoid becoming replaceable:

> We prove that we work strong or even stronger than another 'black team'. I was team member with [other Asians], we make us together to work more efficiently and when other people see "damn the Asian people work so hard, and they are students, all of them students". In university, we have teamwork, and we even come from different universities, we work to support each other. We work faster, more efficiently and in a more organised way. –Mai, 28, Southeast Asia

Mai's experiences demonstrate how the student-migrants use their knowledge of teamwork acquired at university to work more efficiently. Marx (1976: 451-453) purports cooperation as a method that "costs nothing" and is employed by capital to increase the socially productive power of labour and consequently to enhance the exploitation of labour. The socially productive power of the student-migrant-workers that Mai described develops not only under the authority of the capitalist that subjects the labourers' activity to his purpose (Marx 1976: 450). Rather, their socially productive power is reinforced by certain groups of workers to distinguish themselves as particularly efficient in comparison to other working teams. This competition between self-constituted teams in the warehouse displays similarities to gamification as game-like elements are brought into non-game environments, generating similar experiences that games do (Woodcock & Johnson 2018; Warmelink et al. 2020). Here, however, the competition

between the worker-teams seems to be introduced “from below” but with the objective of working more efficiently within the self-organised team.

Moreover, the university studies undertaken by the student-migrant-workers forms one characteristic of them as living labour. While social cooperation and teamwork has been considered as central of the so-called knowledge economy it continues to be important also in the industrial sector and in the service and maintenance sector, in ways such as described by Mai, but also in the gig economy where individual workers make up the network of a wider functioning system. Hence, social skills and knowledge acquired at the university become the means for the student-migrants to increase their efficiency compared to other workers with other advantages such as physical skills.

The socially productive power developed by the worker teams within the workplace intersects in a foundational way with ethnic and racial markers, geographical origin, and gendered divisions. Mai used the term Asian to refer to her group of same ethnic and geographic origin while racialising and gendering another group of workers as “black men”. “Asians” need to work hard to appear as good workers as they do not have “the physical strength” like the “black team” consisting of men, Mai explained. Hence, social difference is constantly reproduced, which shapes the student-migrant-workers’ labour power. Furthermore, the cooperation between differentiated groups of workers permits them to remain efficient and non-replaceable.

Labour as Subjectivity

Even though the student-migrant-workers need to accept mostly low-paid service work unrelated to their field of studies, many were decisive of not letting go of their hopes and dreams for the future. Sergei, a 20-year-old young man from Eastern Europe studied international business and portrayed himself as an international citizen. He had ambitious plans and worked

hard; full time in the summer and 25 hours a week during studies according to the restrictions of his residence permit. He always made sure to apply for a new permit well in advance of the deadline and had plans of developing a start up in the future. Sergei acknowledged that getting a *"student job"* is very hard in Finland and described that out of 200 application he got two positions. *"0,5 % of your labour pays off. It's really hard to motivate myself, but thankfully it worked out",* Sergei said. He however expressed his frustration with the quest for Finnish language competence even in the field of business where *"there is the language of money".* Despite the obstacles that many of the student-migrants encountered, part of the student-migrant-workers managed eventually to get a desired job reflecting their experience and education.

The student-migrants, who in public and policy debates are envisioned to constitute a body of talents and experts needed for Finland to remain competitive in the global economic arena (MEAE 2020), are deemed to believe in their possibilities of getting work in the own field of study and expertise and leaving the temporary student status behind. Common for all research participants was precisely the dynamic of striving towards one's goals while accepting, at least temporarily, low-paid precarious work. This dynamic points to the combination of opportunism and cynicism, as sentiments characteristic of the Post-Fordist ambivalent mode of being, shape a professional quality which incorporates the ability to manoeuvre among interchangeable opportunities, to bear with chronic instability and the ability for ongoing innovation (Virno 2004). The student-migrant-workers cynically accept low-paid service work in insecure and unstable work arrangements, while struggling against the fragmenting impact of the temporary residence permit and its deteriorating effects to the ability of imagining "a future with oneself in it" (Anderson et al. 2009: 5). The opportunist attitude towards the future however keeps the student-migrant-workers stubbornly working towards their goals, grasping "opportunities" such as unpaid internships along the path towards a desired life. In this way, the sojourn in a

temporary legal status can be regarded as a way of reinforcing the social talent of dealing with mutable labour markets, that is, as a "training in precariousness" (Virno 2004: 85). In sum, these precarious subjects are expected to vigorously come together to produce innovations and manifest their talent while in the evening each of them returns home still in charge on their personal subsistence (Viren 2018: 310) and their ongoing concern of meeting the financial residence permit requirements.

In Marx' view, production always incorporates the production of subjects as much as the production of objects (Read 2002). The ambivalent mode of being described above thus purports the student-migrant-worker as a transient figure of subjectivity occupying a certain position within the productive circuits of capital (Read 2011). This subjective figure is produced in the space between multiple devices of subjection that confront practices of subjectivation in the capitalist mode of production (Foucault 2009; Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: 252). Thus, what the contemporary mode of production brings about is not a passive circumscription of the subject within a subject position (Weeks 2018: 153), but an active subject striving towards their goals, while constantly being shaped by the border regime and the associated legal status, as well as social structures of race, gender, youthfulness and nationality. Considered from this perspective, the objective of governing subjects through the border regime appears to be shaping the capacities of the living being: 'what the body can do' and under what circumstances, that is, "labour as subjectivity" (Marx 1990: 272; Virno 2004: 83).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how those holding a temporary student residence permit in Finland find themselves in an unequal and precarious position vis-à-vis employers and other buyers of labour power. First, the student-migrant-workers are caught within the

transformation of work towards insecure work-arrangements with no security of continued work for even short period of time. Second, their precarious position derives from their temporary legal status attached to financial requirements and the need to extend the permit on a yearly basis, thus engendering a legal production of difference. Third, in addition to the legal production of difference the chapter has highlighted how the social production of difference based on race, gender and age shape the student-migrant-workers into temporary and disposable labour but may simultaneously function as a ground for workers to come together to compete over working hours.

Throughout the chapter, I have highlighted how precarisation takes shape in relation to temporality. The required flexibility constitutes the student-migrant-workers as mobile and constantly available workers. It is not only the imposed flexibility that undermines their subjective control over their use of time, but also their legal status that is valid for only one year at a time and that incorporate an upper limit of 25 work hours a week. Hence, legal status becomes a central driver sustaining precarisation as it is within this legal framework that the student-migrant-worker needs to make sure to gain enough income (if no other form of financial security does not exist) to be able to extent the permit for another year.

The chapter has also brought to the fore how the fact that the research participants were studying in tertiary education and working simultaneously shapes them as working subjects. I pointed to the dynamic of simultaneously working in the low-paid service sector while holding on to the dreams and hopes for the future by grasping opportunities of enhancing one's work experience for example through unpaid work and internships. The subjective figure of the student-migrant-worker is thus shaped in the field of friction between efforts to shape one's life according to one's desires and the constraining effects of precarisation as a result of a legally insecure migratory status and insecurity over access to work. Thus, the loss of continuity with regards to the spatiality and temporality of work, is replaced by the

continuity of work in one's mind as one is constantly reminded of different tasks as well as the possible opportunities to be grasped (Vähämäki 2004: 20).

In conclusion, being a temporary working migrant student implies living in constant relation to the border regime: continuously subject to scrutiny by migration officials, always looking for possibilities of escaping the insecure migratory status, while simultaneously being at ongoing risk of falling out of the student status into undocumentedness. It is these transient figures that the border regime both produces and captures, and which can be inscribed within the temporal and fragmented regimes of capital accumulation. Likewise, it is here the student-migrant-workers' struggles to challenge their positioning within the current social, economic and legal order arise as well as their battels for retaining the grip over their futures.

References

Alberti, Gabriella *Transient working lives: migrant women's everyday politics in London's hospitality industry*. Doctoral dissertation, School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University, 2013.

Alberti, Gabriella, Ioulia Bessa, Kate Hardy, Vera Trappmann, and Charles Umney. "In, Against and Beyond Precarity: Work in Insecure Times." *Work, Employment and Society* 32, no. 3 (June 2018): 447–57.

Anderson, Bridget. "And About Time Too . . .: Migration, Documentation, and Temporalities". In *Paper Trails. Migrants, Documents, and Legal Insecurity*, edited by Horton S and Heyman J. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2020.

Anderson, Bridget. "Migration, Immigration Controls and the Fashioning of Precarious Workers." *Work, Employment and Society* 24, no. 2 (June 2010): 300–317.

Anderson, Bridget, Nandita Sharma, and Cynthia Wright. “Editorial: Why No Borders?”. *Refuge: Canada’s Journal on Refugees* 26, no. 2 (2009) :5-18.

Andrijasevic, Rutvica. “Sex on the move: Gender, subjectivity, and differential inclusion”. *Subjectivity* 29 (October 2009): 389–406.

Balibar, Etienne “What is a Border? In *Politics and the Other Scene*, edited by Etienne Balibar. London: Verso, 2002.

Balibar Etienne. “Class Racism”, In *Race, Nation, Class. Ambiguous Identities* edited by Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein. New York: Verso, 1991.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Acts of resistance: Against the tyranny of the market.* New York: New Press, 1998.

Campbell, Ian; Boese, Martina and Tham, Joo-Cheong. “Inhospitable Workplaces? International Students and Paid Work in Food Services”. Australian Journal of Social Issues 51, no. 3 (December 2016): 279-298.

Finnish national agency for education (EDUFI) Mikä toi Suomeen, millaista opiskelu täällä on. [What brough to Finland and what is working here like]. *Facts Express* 6A/2018.

EMN. *Key figures on immigration*. European Migration Network, Finnish Immigration Service, 2020.

Foucault, Michel *Sécurité, territoire, population: Cours au Collège de France, 1977-78*. Edited by M Senellart. Paris: Seuil/ Gallimard, 2009.

Gago, Veronica. *Neoliberalism from Below. Popular Pragmatics and Baroque Economies*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

Gillespie, Tarleton. “The Politics of ‘Platforms.’” *New Media & Society* 12, no. 3 (May 2010): 347–64.

Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio. *Commonwealth*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2009.

Huws, Ursula, Spencer Neil H & Coates Matt. *The platformisation of work in Europe highlights from research in 13 European countries*. FEPS – Foundation for European progressive studies, 2019.

Horton, Susan B. "Paper Trails: Migrants, Bureaucratic Inscription, and Legal Recognition." In *Paper Trails. Migrants, Documents, and Legal Insecurity*, edited by Horton S and Heyman J. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2020.

Könönen, Jukka. "Becoming a 'Labour Migrant': Immigration Regulations as a Frame of Reference for Migrant Employment." *Work, Employment and Society* 33, no. 5 (October 2019): 777–93.

Könönen, Jukka. *Tilapäinen elämä, joustava työ: rajat maahanmuuton ja työvoiman prekarisaation mekanismina*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Eastern Finland, 2015.

Lazzarato, Maurizio. "La forme politique de la coordination." *Multitudes* 3, no.3 (2004): 105-114.

Liu-Farrer, Gracia. "Educationally Channeled International Labor Mobility: Contemporary Student Migration from China to Japan." *International Migration Review* 43, no. 1 (March 2009): 178–204.

Lorey, Isabel. *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious*. London: Verso, 2015.

Lowe, Lisa. *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996.

Maury, Olivia. "Student-Migrant-Workers: Temporal aspects of precarious work and life in Finland." *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 7, no. 4 (December 2017): 224–32.

Maury, Olivia. “Between a Promise and a Salary: Student-Migrant-Workers’ Experiences of Precarious Labour Markets.” *Work, Employment and Society* 34, no. 5 (November 2020): 809-825. (a)

Maury, Olivia. “Punctuated Temporalities: Temporal Borders in Student-Migrants’ Everyday Lives.” *Current Sociology*, (July 2020). (b)

Maury, Olivia. “Ambivalent Strategies: Student-Migrant-Workers’ Efforts at Challenging Administrative Bordering.” *Sociology*, (September 2021). (a)

Maury, Olivia. *Punctuated Lives: Student-Migrant-Workers' Encounters with the Temporal Border Regime*. Doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki, 2021. (b)

Marx, Karl. *Capital. Vol. I*. London: Penguin Books, 1990 [1867].

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (MEAE) Talent Boost programme, 2020. https://tem.fi/en/talent-boost-en Accessed 4.5.2021.

Migri. Residence permit application for studies, 2021. https://migri.fi/en/residence-permit-application-for-studies Accessed 29.3.2021

Mezzadra, Sandro. “How many histories of labour? Towards a theory of postcolonial capitalism”. *Postcolonial Studies* 14, no.2 (June 2011): 151-170.

Mezzadra, Sandro and Neilson, Brett. *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labour*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013.

Mezzadra, Sandro and Neilson, Brett. *The Politics of Operations. Excavating Contemporary Capitalism*. Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2019.

Neilson, Brett “The world seen from a taxi: students-migrants-workers in the global multiplication of labour.” *Subjectivity* 29 (October 2009): 425-444.

OECD. *International Migration Outlook 2019*. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2019.

Pan, Darcy. “Student Visas, Undocumented Labour, and the Boundaries of Legality: Chinese Migration and English as a Foreign Language Education in the Republic of Ireland.” *Social Anthropology* 19, no. 3 (September 2011): 268–287.

Precarias la deriva. *Hoivaajien kapina – tutkimusmatkoja prekaarisuuteen*. [The rebellion of the care workers – research journeys into precarity] Like: Helsinki, 2009.

Raghuram, Pravati. “Theorising the Spaces of Student Migration.” *Population, Space and Place* 19 (March/April 2013): 138-154.

Read, Jason. “The Production of Subjectivity: From Transindividuality To The Commons.” *New Formations* 70, no.19 (Winter 2011): 113-131.

Read, Jason. “A Fugitive Thread: The Production of Subjectivity in Marx.” *Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy* 13 (2002): 126-144.

Robertson, “Migrant, Interrupted: The Temporalities of ‘Staggered’ Migration from Asia to Australia.” *Current Sociology* 67, no. 2 (March 2019): 169–85.

Robertson, Shanthi. “Time and Temporary Migration: The Case of Temporary Graduate Workers and Working Holiday Makers in Australia.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40, no.12 (January 2014): 1915-1933.

Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000 [1983].

Rubery, Jill, Damian Grimshaw, Arjan Keizer, and Mathew Johnson. “Challenges and Contradictions in the ‘Normalising’ of Precarious Work.” *Work, Employment and Society* 32, no. 3 (June 2018): 509–27.

Sharma, Nandita. “The "People Out of Place": State Limits on Free Mobility and the Making of Im(migrants).” In *Paper Trails. Migrants, Documents, and Legal Insecurity*, edited by Horton S and Heyman J. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2020.

Statistics Finland (2019a) Opiskelijoiden työssäkäynti. https://www.stat.fi/til/opty/2017/opty_2017_2019-03-14_tie_001_fi.html Accessed 12.11.2020

Statistics Finland (2019b) Foreigners in Finland. https://www.tilastokeskus.fi/tup/maahanmuutto/maahanmuuttajat-vaestossa/ulkomaan-kansalaiset.html Accessed 18.02.2020

Statistics Finland (2019c) People of foreign background exceeded the 400 000 line. https://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2018/02/vaerak_2018_02_2019-06-19_tie_001_fi.html Accessed 18.02.2020

Vähämäki, Jussi. *Kuhnurien kerho* [Society of dawdlers]. Helsinki: Tutkijaliitto, 2004.

Viren, Eetu. *Raha ja työvoima* [Money and labour power]. Helsinki: Tutkijaliitto, 2018.

Virno, Paolo. *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*. Cambridge, London: S(e)miotexte, 2004.

Vosko, Leah F. *Managing the Margins: Gender, Citizenship, and the International Regulation of Precarious Employment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Wang, Jackie. *Carceral capitalism*. Cambridge Mass., London: Semiotext(e), 2018.

Warmelink, Harald; Koivisto, Jonna; Mayer, Igor; Vesa, Mikko and Hamari, Juho. ”Gamification of Production and Logistics Operations: Status Quo and Future Directions.” Journal of Business Research 106 (January 2020): 331–340.

Weeks, Kathi. *Constituting Feminist Subjects*. London: Verso, 2018.Fan

Wilken, Lisanne and Ginnerskov Dahlberg, Mette. ”Between international student mobility and work migration: experiences of students from EU’s newer member states in Denmark.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 43, no.8 (May 2017): 1347-1361.

Woodcock, Jamie, and Mark R. Johnson. “Gamification: What It Is, and How to Fight It.” *The Sociological Review* 66, no. 3 (May 2018): 542–58.