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1. Introduction

The arrival of forced migrant newcomers¹ in cities and municipalities across Germany is perceived by many local residents, political actors, social service providers and researchers as a societal and organizational challenge. Especially the social and economic 'integration' into 'the host society' and 'the labour market' respectively seems to be identified as the most prominent concern throughout the discourse on an unprecedented humanitarian situation which has been widely labelled as 'refugee crisis' due to recent influxes of forced migrants which reached their peak in autumn 2015 (Degler and Liebig 2017: 15ff.). Researchers and policy makers have frequently claimed that formal paid work facilitates the settlement of forced migrant newcomers (Thränhardt 2015: 4-9). For example, aside from enabling them to “become financially independent” (Jackson and Bauder 2013: 372), research has shown that employment may facilitate asylum seekers to regain a sense of “being socially valued and contributing members of society” (Lacroix 2004: 158), provided that employment conditions do not deteriorate already precarious livelihoods. This can help to counter “the loss of social subjectivity” (ibid.) in the course of often protracted asylum procedures (ibid.: 158f.; see also Luimpöck 2019: 306-311, Dünwald 2017: 188-192).

1 Forced migration has been defined “in contrast to voluntary migration” (Zetter 2019: 19) viewed as motivated by “economic or other reasons” (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014: 221) which do not amount to “persecution or conflict” (ibid.) that force people to flee and seek refuge elsewhere. Following Bloch and Donà (2019), “[f]orced migration is a general term that includes both refugees and asylum seekers and those who are internally displaced” (ibid.: 3; see also Zetter 2007: 189). Hence, the category 'forced migrant' goes beyond strictly legal definitions of the refugee status and a range of other “far less preferential categories of temporary protection” (Zetter 2007: 182), or “sub-labels of 'refugee'” (ibid.: 185). The latter are institutionalized “by government bureaucracies in the 'global north'” (ibid.: 176) in response to “globalized processes and patterns of forced migration and 'mixed migration flows' in the contemporary era” (ibid.: 174). In the light of these global complexities, the category 'forced migrant' can be understood in a wide and processual sense as referring to people who migrate in connection to “multiple and mixed drivers of forced displacement” (ibid. 2019: 28). While the decisions of forced migrants to “leave their habitual places of residence and their countries because of a multiplicity of reasons” (ibid.: 29) can be justifiably described as predominantly “involuntary” (ibid.: 30) and “reactive” (Richmond 1994: 61), Zetter (2019) highlights the complex processual and ambiguous facets of the phenomenon and states “that forced migration paradoxically incorporates compulsion *and* choice as well as agency *and* constraints” (ibid.: 28, emphases in the original; see also Richmond 1994: 47-74; Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014: 221f.; Bloch and Donà 2019: 11f.) For the purposes of this thesis I use the term 'forced migrant' to refer to persons who have formally applied for asylum in Germany. This includes asylum seekers in the sense of “those who are waiting for their case for refugee status to be determined” (Bloch and Donà 2019: 5) as well as persons who have already received positive or negative decisions on their asylum applications which have resulted in a particular protection status in the former case or a toleration as a rejected asylum seeker in the latter (Ronte 2018: 16-35). I will use the term 'forced migrant newcomers' in order to focus on forced migrants who have arrived in Germany in the years 2015 and 2016 in relatively large numbers and are associated with a wider range of societal and political-economic responses, processes and shifts concerning the reception of forced migrants (Altenried et al. 2017: 58-84). In addition, individual processes of forced migrant settlement in terms of attaining relatively secure legal statuses and stable socio-economic positions in places of arrival are lengthy and can last many years (Thränhardt 2015: 6ff.; Aumüller 2016: 16-19; Altenried et al. 2017: 75-81; Schmidt 2020: 17, 126f., 135-137). For this reason I use the term 'newcomers' partly also for forced migrants who have arrived in the years prior to 2015. Among the informants with whom I could generate ethnographic data mainly between winter 2017 and summer 2018, the earliest year of arrival in Germany was 2011 (see Ch. 3.2).

Jackson and Bauder (2013) state that asylum seekers in Canada may perceive employment as intrinsically beneficial for learning the dominant language, having and fostering social contact, “developing a sense of belonging, and putting down roots to combat feelings of transient impermanence” (ibid.: 374). Povrzanovic Frykman (2012) argues that employment featured as a significant source of “hope and satisfaction” (ibid.: 77) for the forced migrants of her research in Sweden. However, she recognizes that “their perception of well-being coming out of the feeling of meaningfulness and purposefulness did not depend only, or primarily, on labour market integration” (ibid.: 78) but was derived from various “relevant context[s]” (ibid.), including, for instance, family life or non-work activities (ibid.: 77-79; see also Luimpöck 2019: 312-318). With regard to the UK it has been concluded that “[e]mployment is an important aspect of structural integration and may facilitate access to new social networks, increase prospects for learning English, and provide opportunities to regain confidence and economic independence” (Cheung and Phillimore 2014: 521).

Similarly, recent statistical research published by Germany's Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) concludes that “especially the workplace or the educational institution seem to offer favourable opportunity structures for contact between forced migrants and Germans” (Siegert 2019: 1, my translation; see also Vallizadeh et al. 2016: 63). As they are generally assumed to be more knowledgeable about “the institutions or culture of the host country” (Siegert 2019: 2, my translation) than their contemporaries who are ascribed migration backgrounds, native locals are expected to be the most helpful providers of information and support with settlement for forced migrant newcomers. Furthermore, statistical correlations have been argued to indicate that forced migrants who have also stated much contact with “Germans” (ibid.: 5, my translation) in the context of their personal networks may have initially encountered these relationship partners at work or in educational institutions (ibid.: 5f.).

My research interest in forced migrant settlement with a focus on social relationships mediated through work is rooted in personal interactions and relationships with asylum seekers in the Munich city region in Bavaria, Germany. From late May until early October 2015, I was befriending and supporting forced migrant newcomers who had been allocated to a makeshift asylum camp in the wealthy southern municipality of the Munich district in which I was living. The camp consisted of a gym of a middle school and accommodated approximately 100 men from various African, Middle Eastern, Asian and South East European countries who were facing the challenge of living together under cramped and inappropriate conditions for about six months. During the first days after their arrival from reception camps

elsewhere in Bavaria, I decided to visit the camp.

While I had always been largely ignorant and critical about my home municipality which has nevertheless felt familiar since childhood days, I considered it important to show up in my position as a local resident and welcome the newcomers because I had been learning about migration and settlement in the course of my socialisation, university studies and side job in a therapy centre for traumatized refugees in Munich. When I was on my way to visit the gym for the first time, I ran into a group of around 15 camp residents as they were given an introductory tour through the municipality by a few members of the local voluntary support association which had been recently formed to facilitate the communal reception of asylum seekers and in which I was not involved. Beginning with this immediately friendly encounter during which first conversations emerged as we were strolling through quiet streets garnished with expensive cars and bounded by driveways to often luxurious single-family homes, I was going to the gym almost every day and spent extensive time with its residents and others who interacted with them. In the course of my encounters I noticed that opportunities to access paid work were among the most prominent concerns of the asylum seekers.

Over the following years which I spent in Vienna, Austria, to continue my studies, I was staying in variously close contact with around 20 of the asylum seekers I had come to know in 2015. When I was preparing my thesis research in spring 2017, another impulse from within my personal network which strengthened my focus on the employment of forced migrants and “the social implications” (Kjaerulff 2015: 2) of formal paid work was that my father, a self-employed electronics engineer who ran a small development workshop in Munich, had hired an asylum seeker in 2016 and was telling me about his experiences with the new co-worker. Hence, my localised first-hand exchanges, relationships and connections allowed me to gather first exploratory insights into everyday experiences and difficulties of forced migrant newcomers who were living and partly working in one of the most prosperous urban regions of Germany (Referat für Arbeit und Wirtschaft München: 2018: 13-15). This convinced me that the Munich city region could be a suitable field for my thesis research, in particular because I considered it an advantage rather than a shortcoming that I was to some extent familiar with the region and had already established several contacts in the past which could themselves constitute, or facilitate access to, potential research participants (see Ch. 3.2). In sum, due to the preceding social processes of getting personally entangled with the wider field and topic of my study, I decided for ethnographic fieldwork² in the area which had practically

2 Ethnographic fieldwork can be understood as a strategically open and processual research approach that comprises combinations of various complementing methods which ethnographers reflexively choose and adjust in accord with the informants, circumstances and questions of their research projects (Fontein 2014a: 58; Beer

been my home for most of my life and in various respects continued to be the main point of reference for my social belonging (cf. Lofland and Lofland 1995: 11-30).

Against the backdrop of these debates, insights and experiences concerning the nexus between forced migration, economic activity and the formation of social ties, this thesis addresses the settlement of forced migrant newcomers from an anthropological perspective which focuses on the social implications of employment and working along with others in social contexts of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)³ located in the Munich city region. For the purpose of illuminating this topic, I have generated ethnographic data and concentrated my analysis on four workplaces which serve as main cases: a painting company, an electronics workshop, a catering company and a garden centre. The argument I set out to elaborate is that employment and social contact at work cannot be assumed to invariably constitute a sufficient condition for the formation of social relationships which allow displaced people to socially and personally re-establish themselves in places of arrival (e.g. Valenta 2008: 167-174; Wessendorf and Phillimore 2019: 132-134).

Partly emphasizing the social and subjective significance of paid work, existing research has predominantly attended to the labour market participation of forced migrant newcomers (e.g. Altenried et al. 2017; Gericke et al. 2018; Thränhardt 2015; Scheibelhofer and Täubig 2019; Luimpöck 2019; Täubig 2019; Povrzanovic-Frykman 2012; Lacroix 2004; Jackson and Bauder 2013; Mayblin 2014; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2006). However, beyond the mediation of employment opportunities and the fact of having and doing a job, workplaces and employment conditions as social contexts and the interactions and relationships between recent forced migrants in Germany and their co-workers and employers have been identified as a widely neglected “*Black Box*” (Birke, Bluhm and Mayer-Ahuja 2017: 118, emphasis in

2003: 11f.; Breidenstein et al. 2015: 34f., 37-40; see Ch. 3.3). Moreover, “[e]thnographic research is based in and depends upon social interaction (...) between specific individuals” (Davies 2002: 78), which implies that “the ethnographer him or herself is the central tool of research” (Fontein 2014a: 60). Hence, the quality of insights developed by ethnographers is crucially shaped by positions of power and social roles and categories which researchers and participants ascribe and align in their interactions (Davies 2002: 78-82; Hauser-Schäublin 2003: 50-52; Breidenstein et al. 2015: 62-70) and processes of “establishing rapport” (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011: 48) in the sense of forming respectful, attentive, reciprocal, trustworthy and confidential relationships of cooperation (ibid.: 47-53; Breidenstein et al. 2015: 60-66). This fundamental “social dimension” (Fontein 2014a: 59) of ethnographic fieldwork necessitates constant reflection of the ethical implications of research practices and the relationships with informants (Breidenstein et al. 2015: 69; Hauser-Schäublin 2003: 52f.; DeWalt and DeWalt 2011: 211-226).

3 With regard to numbers of employees, SMEs have been defined differently by various institutional actors (Popal 2020: 15-17). According to the European Commission, companies employing not more than 249 people could be categorized as SMEs, while enterprises with less than ten employees are further specified as micro and those with less than 50 employees as small (ibid.: 16). The Institut für Mittelstandsforschung Bonn sets the upper limit of the general SME category at 499 employees and comments that “[t]he difference reflects the enterprise structure in Germany, marked by on average larger company sizes than in the EU” (IfM Bonn 2021). For the purposes of this thesis I adopt the latter definition of the SME category (see Ch. 3.2).

the original). These blind spots call for more research attention in order to arrive at nuanced understandings of the complexities which inhere the narrative of employment as a major facilitator of “societal participation” (ibid.: 117, my translation), “social rights and claims” (ibid.: 118, my translation) and forced migrant settlement more generally (ibid.: 117-120). I contribute to filling this research gap with my ethnographic investigation of particular social contexts of work and the intersubjective relationship processes they mediate.

Based on this argument and in response to the indicated research gap, I will pursue two interrelated research questions in this thesis: How do SMEs and the work relationships they entail constitute social contexts which provide opportunity structures for the formation of “sociabilities of emplacement” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 130)? Moreover, what aspects and dynamics of sociabilities of emplacement could be recognized among the participants of my research, i.e., through which sociable practices and approaches and on what intersubjective bases were personally significant relationships established which may facilitate migrant settlement?

In order to address the above outlined research questions in the following chapters, I will draw on a set of key concepts (Ch. 2). The settlement of migrants in globally interconnected urban contexts can be understood as facilitated “by forming social relations” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2011: 10) of various kinds with a potentially wide range of people whose lives are entangled with the particular localities in which migrants arrive as well as other places beyond (ibid.: 10-12; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1002ff.; Brettell 2015: 156ff.). Hence, my literature review in chapter 2 will include an outline of the processes of relationship formation (Ch. 2.1), characteristic dynamics of work relationships in SMEs (Ch. 2.2) and types and functions of social relationships which facilitate forced migrant settlement (Ch. 2.3). Against the backdrop of these fundamental relational aspects, I will map the concept of sociabilities of emplacement which shall serve as the main theoretical perspective through which personally significant relationships of forced migrants are approached for the purposes of this thesis (Ch. 2.4).

Having presented the theoretical framework which orients my ethnographic account, I will further discuss my ethnographic fieldwork in the Munich city region in chapter 3. This will include a summary of background information on the Munich city region as an ethnographic field and context of forced migrant reception (Ch. 3.1), an account of gaining access to informants and fieldwork settings (Ch. 3.2) as well as reflections on the methods of generating and interpreting the ethnographic data on which my statements are based (Ch. 3.3). The next main chapter will address structures and characteristics of work in SMEs (Ch. 4). Based

on the insight that work organizations shape the structure and contents of relationships between co-workers through complexly interrelated context factors (Sias and Cahill 1998: 276; see also Schmidt and Müller 2013: 363), I will discuss spatial proximity (Ch. 4.1), organizational structures, in the sense of employing actors, social structures of workplaces, divisions of labour and working hours (Ch. 4.2), and heterogeneity of workforces (Ch. 4.3) as aspects of social context for the formation of emplacement sociabilities and other social ties in SMEs.

In chapter 5, I will shift the focus to the ways in which interactive patterns and processes of working together may serve as social context that offers opportunities for the formation of sociabilities of emplacement. For this purpose I will outline how work relationships were represented and practised by my research participants (cf. Fuhse 2009: 53). Accordingly, fragments of “subjective perceptions” (ibid.), assessments and concepts which were expressed about relationships in which forced migrants featured as co-workers will be summarized and represented in the first subchapter from the perspective of employers and co-workers (Ch. 5.1) and in the second subchapter from the perspective of forced migrant newcomers themselves (Ch. 5.2.; cf. Atkinson 2008: 451). My informants’ “individual accounts” (Fuhse 2009: 53) as well as my own observations of intersubjective practices of cooperation will be interpreted in the third subchapter (Ch. 5.3).

Against the backdrop of having discussed how the researched organizations and practised work relationships may have constituted opportunity structures for the formation of personally important relationships, I will turn to the second research question which refers to establishing sociabilities of emplacement (Ch. 6). Throughout the last three subchapters, I will take a closer look at how opportunities to form and foster relationships with people known through employment were perceived and responded to by my informants in the light of their subjectivities and social lives. I will present one particular relationship as a guiding case and elaborate various aspects and dynamics of sociabilities of emplacement which I could recognize with a wider range of research participants. In subchapter 6.1, I will interpret various practices and approaches of sociability which my informants pursued. Subchapter 6.2 provides insights into shared “domains of commonality” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 124) on which sociabilities of emplacement may be based, whereas subchapter 6.3 discusses the functions of mutual support which could be associated with particular relationships. In the conclusion of this thesis I will bring together the key findings of the ethnographic chapters in a comparative summary (Ch. 7).

2. Key Concepts

Following the introduction of my topic, argument, research questions and chapters, I will continue with reviewing and defining the key concepts which constitute the theoretical framework for the ethnographic interpretations presented throughout this thesis. Resembling a systematic movement from rather general to more specific interrelated theoretical tools and premises, a conceptualization of processes of relationship formation (Ch. 2.1) lays the groundwork for outlining the role of reciprocity and subjective orientations in work relationships (Ch. 2.2), reviewing relationships of migrant settlement (Ch. 2.3) and, lastly, focusing on sociabilities of emplacement (Ch. 2.4).

2.1 Processes of relationship formation

Social relationships can be initially approached as involving “[t]wo parties who interact with some regularity over a relatively extended period of time and who view themselves as ‘connected’ to one another” (Lofland and Lofland 1995: 106). From the perspective of sociological network theory, Fuhse (2009) further conceptualizes social relationships as “interpersonally negotiated expectations and other interpersonally established forms of meaning” (ibid.: 59) which two actors form about each other and which define their relationship and shape their identities, habits and attitudes. These sets of mutual expectations facilitate and stabilize the orientation and interpretation of interaction between the partners (ibid.: 52-55, 59-62; Blumstein and Kollock 1988: 480f.). However, they are “never fully settled” (Azarian 2010: 328) and relationships develop and transform as their underlying meanings are interactively realigned over time (Fuhse 2009: 59-61). Put briefly, as they consist of patterns of interaction which are guided by simultaneously durable and changeable matches of meaning, social relationships constitute “dynamic systems, both structure and process” (ibid.: 60).

The complexes of “structural features” (Hollstein 2001: 52, my translation) which characterise different social relationships and shape their outcomes include, for instance, interpersonal commonalities, the times, spaces and numbers of actors a social tie is associated with and the extents of freedom of choice in relating, mutual knowledge about each other and institutionalization of the connection, e.g. in terms of norms of reciprocity or formal rights and obligations (ibid.: 51-144; ibid. 2010: 93f.). Intersecting with these and other aspects, “the emotions prevailing, the degree of interdependence, the amount of trust, [and] the parties’ relative amounts of power” (Lofland and Lofland 1995: 106) have been highlighted (Blumstein and Kollock 1988: 468ff.). Different combinations of structural features can be conceptualized through notions such as “closeness” (ibid.: 478) or “strength” (Granovetter 1973: 1361)

of social ties and have been associated with particular types of relationships. Regarding their processual nature, it has been found that social relationships of any kind “have histories of change” (Lofland and Lofland 1995: 107), as they “are constructed – developed, modified, sustained, and ended – by individuals acting in contextualised settings” (Adams and Allan 1998: 3). Hence, processes of relationship formation can be understood as consisting of a complex interplay between individual actors and structural contexts which both facilitate, as well as constrain, the interactive emergence, practice and reproduction of particular relationships over time (Hollstein 2001: 174-192; *ibid.* 2010: 96-102; Allan 1998: 71-73; Thelen 2015: 509; Sias 2009: 15-18; Sieder 2014: 150-153).

The interacting individuals who are involved in relationship processes can be understood as exerting human agency based on their subjectivities (Ortner 2006: 110, 126f.). In her anthropological approach to practice theory, Ortner (2006) suggests that subjectivity refers to “the ensemble of modes of perception, affect, thought, desire, and fear that animate acting subjects” (*ibid.*: 107) and are induced and constituted by “cultural and social formations” (*ibid.*), including powerful institutions and hegemonic discourses (*ibid.*: 107ff.; see also Lacroix 2004: 152ff.; Bloch and Donà 2019: 11f.). Resonating with this understanding, various aspects of subjectivity which may influence how actors contribute to the construction of their social ties have been defined in terms of “individual orientations” (Hollstein 2001: 175, my translation). These may include e.g. perceptions, priorities, interests and social norms and expectations which are formed and embodied in connection with social-structural positions, relations and categories such as class or gender, socio-cultural backgrounds, biographical experiences and other individual capacities and circumstances of life and livelihood (*ibid.*: 15, 145ff.; *ibid.* 2010: 94-96; see also Diewald 2003).

In turn, similar to the acting subjects who form them, social ties “develop and endure within a wider complex of interacting influences which help to give each relationship its shape and structure“ (Adams and Allan 1998: 2). This entails dynamic combinations of mainly social, cultural, temporal and spatial “contextualising factors” (*ibid.*: 3) which are conceptualized as external to the interacting partners (*ibid.*: 3ff.). Hence, besides physical “opportunity structures” (Fuhse 2009: 53) which facilitate and constrain encounters with others, context may comprise dominant social “categories and relationship models” (*ibid.*: 53), such as “gender, age, and ethnic descent” (*ibid.*) and “love, kinship, and friendship” (*ibid.*) respectively, which are bound up with “culturally and institutionally given roles” (*ibid.*: 62; see also Eriksen 2015: 63-71). These and other forms of historically contingent social meaning circulate within wider networks and may thus prevail in and across the boundaries of particular so-

cio-spatial settings, including workplaces. While they structure expectations, interactions and identities in relationship processes, social categories, relationship models and status roles are simultaneously reproduced, idiosyncratically appropriated and contested in intersubjective practice (Fuhse 2009: 53f., 60-67; *ibid.* 2016: 165f.; Adams and Allan 1998: 9-12; see also Allan 1998; Thelen 2015: 507-511; De Neve 2001: 134-136; McDowell 2008: 491f., 497, 504).

In addition to patterns and contents of social networks which influence the constitution of social ties (Hollstein 2001: 15f., 53f.; Fuhse 2009: 62-64; Adams and Allan 1998: 7f.), the interpersonal structure and dynamic of an already established relationship itself can be viewed as confronting the individual partners as a constraining and enabling context for the practice and further development of their tie or the construction of other bases and types of relations between them (Hollstein 2001: 16, 152-155, 180-190; Simmel 1908: 5ff.; Blumstein and Kollock 1988: 481-486). In this regard it is particularly relevant for my argument that work relationships which are widely considered as based on formal role expectations and “commoditized and contractual” (Narotzky 2015: 176) exchanges in “the public sector of impersonal organizations” (Marks 1994: 844) can constitute opportunities for the involved individuals to interactively embed allegedly private or personal elements, such as affect, expressiveness and support, into their existing connections. This may facilitate the creation of friendships or other more informal, voluntarily chosen, multiplex and personally significant forms of sociality and sociability which are rather based on interaction “as particular people” (Blumstein and Kollock 1988: 469) and go beyond formal roles, positions and practices in the work context (e.g. Thelen 2014: 163-191; Kjaerulff 2015; Sias and Cahill 1998; Sias 2009: 90f., 99-109; Marks 1994; Fine 1986; Yakubovich and Burg 2019; Kurth 1970; Weber 1984: 69-72).

In connection with being based on social roles in work organizations (Mikl-Horke 2007: 129-139), work relationships shall be understood for the purposes of this thesis as “all interpersonal relationships in which individuals engage as they perform their jobs” (Sias 2009: 2), or, in the words of Burawoy (1979), as “relations in production” (*ibid.*: 14) which together with actual work practices constitute the labour process and take particular shape under capitalist “relations of production” (*ibid.*: 15). The latter are defined by the exploitation of wage workers through capital owning employing actors who increase and secure their wealth through this particular form of “expropriation of surplus labor” (*ibid.*). Hence, work relationships are distinctively defined by distributions and dynamics of power, authority and status on the grounds of contractual employment relations and the existential interdependence between labour and capital in capitalism (*ibid.*: 13-30; Flecker 2017: 45-51, 179-187).

Relationships among co-workers have been recognized between “colleagues” (Fine

1986: 192), or “workplace peers” (Sias and Cahill 1998: 274), who encounter each other on the same or similar levels of hierarchical power and authority as well as between co-workers who relate as “subordinate employees” (Sias 2009: 20) and more powerful and higher-ranking direct co-workers, i.e., employers themselves or managers and supervisors, who control and coordinate aspects of the labour process in order to maintain the work organization and ensure the realization of profits (ibid.: 19ff.; Burawoy 1979: 15, 26-29). As their initiation is dominated by the instrumental necessities and interests of employers as well as workers, work relationships have been characterized as “compulsory ties” (Sias and Cahill 1998: 275) in which individual employees are “thrown together” (Kurth 1970: 139) and “typically have little say, if any, in choosing” (Sias and Cahill 1998: 275) each other as cooperation partners (Kock and Kutzner 2018: 451; Thelen 2014: 165f.). In the following section, I will review the dynamics of reciprocal exchanges at work and the roles which subjective orientations may play when people are working together in SMEs. These aspects shall serve as conceptual cornerstones for the interpretation of work relationships as social contexts for the formation of personally important relationships (see Ch. 5).

2.2 Reciprocity and subjective orientations in work relationships

Work relationships in SMEs and the perspectives on them can be viewed as influenced by the reciprocal exchanges of work efforts which employers demand from their employees in return for certain rewards (Atkinson 2008: 450-462; Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 152-155). These exchanges involve a continuous trade-off between a range of beneficial as well as disadvantageous aspects of a job and are not explicitly discussed and agreed upon (Watson 2017: 290-296). They therefore constitute “the implicit contract which can be seen to be at the core of every employment relationship” (ibid.: 290). In addition to the reciprocity involved in relationships with employers, it has been argued that employees also expect something in return for their economic performance from their direct co-workers. They may engage in comparisons and calculations of their own and others' efforts which follow the principles of commodity exchange and immediate transactional balancing (Kock and Kutzner 2018: 452).

At the same time, “the logic of the gift exchange which aims at social ties” (Kock and Kutzner 2018: 452, my translation) enters work relationships as co-workers acknowledge that they depend on each other to reach shared goals (see also Narotzky 2015: 183). Individual utility and interests have to be complemented by “motives of solidarity” (Kock and Kutzner 2018: 452, my translation) because work processes would collapse when co-workers refused to support and help each other in the event of unforeseeable complications at work which ap-

peal to their commitment beyond formal work obligations (ibid.). Thus, “a widely (...) implicit order of reciprocity” (ibid.: 453, my translation) is established and reproduced also between direct co-workers “in the course of everyday cooperation” (ibid., my translation) in which they institutionalize exchange practices and relations that are guided both by capitalist purposes and constraints as well as hegemonic moral values and obligations that shape sociality at work and beyond (ibid.; Kjaerulff 2015: 1-5, 9-19). Acknowledging this complexity which has been conceptually grasped through notions of “collegiality” (Kock and Kutzner 2018: 447),⁴ Kjaerulff (2015) suggests to think of “contemporary capitalist work practice as a 'flexible', that is, ambiguous matter of exchange and sociality exceeding the commodity form” (ibid.: 2). As it is the case for employees more generally, what forced migrant workers expect and are able to accept from their employers and with regard to the social relations and working conditions at their workplaces can be understood as shaped by their “priorities, the resources which they take to the labour market and their personal circumstances” (Watson 2017: 290).

Concerning the role of subjective orientations for working together with heterogeneous others, research has shown that work relationships frequently induce the interacting individuals to hold back and contain their personal attitudes, opinions and interests because these are seen as potential causes of conflict and difficulties which would compromise the efficient accomplishment of the work (Schmidt 2020: 166f.; cf. Fuhse 2015: 42-44). Especially under organizational conditions of instrumental interdependence based on doing “complementary tasks” (Fine 1986: 188), co-workers see themselves confronted with the requirement of interactively establishing and reproducing at least “pragmatic cooperation” (Schmidt and Müller 2013: 370) or “friendly” (Fine 1986: 187) work relationships which have been argued to provide the foundation of a productive and “smooth” (ibid.: 188) workflow (see also Kurth

4 Kock and Kutzner (2018) define collegiality as “relationships of solidarity which are interactively created in the course of practices of cooperation in the workplace” (ibid.: 451, my translation) and consist of reciprocal exchanges (ibid.: 448ff.). The cooperative practices of working together give co-workers the opportunity to proactively share work support and personal knowledge, get familiar with each other and establish a sense of “moral, emotional connectedness and mutual understanding which goes beyond the impersonal-functional relation” (ibid.: 451, my translation) of formally required cooperation. This allows them to intersubjectively “develop social ties, mutual obligations and trust” (ibid.: 448, my translation) in work relationships (cf. Schmidt 2006: 469ff.; Goffman 2017 [1983]: 146-152). Hürtgen (2013) similarly highlights the ways in which human subjectivities are “integrated and acknowledged as components of the work process” (ibid.: 253, my translation) and discusses collegiality as social relations which are characterized by two intertwined, variously balanced and potentially conflicting forms of mutual recognition among co-workers that are respectively related to “aim-oriented cooperation” (ibid.: 241, my translation) and “cooperation between 'human beings'” (ibid., my translation). This includes the recognition as productive, knowledgeable and responsible member of a work organization who interdepends with other co-workers for cooperatively accomplishing instrumental goals as well as the recognition as human subject and individual person with particular characteristics, needs and capabilities (ibid.: 241-260).

1970: 137; Kock and Kutzner 2018: 451-454). Where “resentments and prejudices of employees” (Schmidt and Müller 2013: 371) persist and oppose dominant universalistic workplace rules of “equal treatment” (ibid.: 375) and anti-discrimination as well as “role expectations” (ibid.: 373) of collegiality and cooperation on the part of employers and co-workers, they tend to be kept implicit as they are not supposed to guide interactions at work (ibid.: 370ff.). Fine (1986) aptly describes this pragmatic requirement of getting along with heterogeneous others as “a push toward friendliness or toward leaving the job if this proves impossible” (ibid.: 188).

In their research on work relationships in three large factories, Schmidt and Müller (2013) have found that co-workers, works councils and managements accomplish the suppression of resentment for the sake of getting the work done together by continuously orienting their interactions along the hegemonic discursive distinction “between the world of work and the private sphere” (ibid.: 373). This means that personal opinions, attitudes and “cultural differences in general are regarded as a private matter” (ibid.) that would disrupt cooperation and cause social conflicts if it was allowed to openly govern the workplace (ibid.: 370ff.; see also Schmidt 2006: 475-478; ibid. 2020: 17-22, 180ff.; Spittler 2016: 65ff.; Faist 2010: 303). As I will show at later points (see Ch. 5 and 6), attempts to reproduce the workplace as a differentiated sphere of instrumental rather than social exchange by deliberately keeping private matters out of work relationships in order to get along with others may be encountered also in SMEs as a component of normative arrangements, everyday practices and subjective expectations of the individual actors who cooperate with each other.

Discussing the reception of forced migrant newcomers in small firms which often imply “a high extent of personal proximity and immediate encounter” (Schmidt 2020: 205f., my translation) as well as lower extents of formalization, Schmidt (2020) emphasizes that under these conditions “mutual acceptance among co-workers” (ibid.: 206, my translation) emerges less on the basis of formal enforceability of universal regulations but rather due to “an intensified form of everyday cooperation” (ibid., my translation) which gives rise to direct intersubjective processes that may be crucially shaped by dominant actors in the workplace. Along with established members of workforces, owner-managers who are often also direct co-workers may strongly influence work relationships in SMEs through their personal and occupationally oriented perspectives (Schmidt 2020: 206f.; see Ch. 4.2). Building on this introduction of some characteristic dynamics of work relationships in SMEs, the next section offers a conceptualization of relationships which support migrant settlement and may be mediated through employment.

2.3 Relationships of migrant settlement

The manifold types of social relationships which may contribute to migrant settlement have been conceptually grasped by Wessendorf and Phillimore (2019) who distinguish between “brief and often serendipitous encounters, more regular 'crucial acquaintances' and friendships” (ibid.: 124). To this have to be added kinship relations in places of arrival as well as departure (Brettell 2015: 159-163). Analysing the stories of settlement of recent migrants in various cities in the UK, Wessendorf and Phillimore (2019) show that each of the types of encounters and relationships they discuss can be attributed “different degrees of depth and importance” (ibid.: 129) at different moments in the migration and settlement trajectories of newcomers. Their suggested typology of social relations which facilitate settlement resonates with Granovetter's (1973) notion of strong and weak social ties⁵ which has been widely applied in the analysis of social networks and relationships of migrants (e.g. Glick Schiller, Çağlar and Guldbrandsen 2006: 614; Faist 2000: 100-102).

Having outlined possible types of social relationships of migrants, it has to be clarified how social ties can facilitate settlement, i.e., what beneficial functions they can enfold for migrant newcomers. Migrant settlement refers to “practical aspects” (Wessendorf and Phillimore 2019: 123), such as finding housing and work, as well as coping with emotions and affects related to subjective experiences of major life changes, ruptures and stresses (ibid.). For forced migrants this can include “experiencing social isolation” (Strang and Quinn 2019: 2) in the context of their reception in national asylum systems, unfamiliar socio-cultural environments and xenophobic attitudes by the wider public (ibid.: 2, 16f.; Siegert 2019: 8f.; Wessendorf and Phillimore 2019: 133f.). Hence, social relationships of settlement have been associated with practical as well as emotional support functions and their effects on establishing a meaningful social existence (Siegert 2019: 2), including “notions of belonging” (Wessendorf and Phillimore 2019: 125) and getting attached to new places of residence (ibid.: 124f.). In fact, these functions cannot always be clearly dissected into “instrumental and affective benefits” (ibid.:

⁵ For this general conceptual distinction, “the strength of interpersonal ties” (Granovetter 1973: 1361) has been defined as the “combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize” (ibid.: 1361) a particular social relationship. Strong ties are understood as durable relationships “characterized by intensive transactions” (Faist 2000: 101) which “involve obligations and often emotions” (ibid.) between close affiliates. This may include long-standing friends and members of “small, clearly defined institutions such as households, kinship groups, and communal organizations” (ibid.). Weak ties, in turn, tend to exist with actors who are “only marginally included in the current network of contacts” (Granovetter 1973: 1371). The weak tie contacts of an actor comprise people who differ from her or him in terms of socio-economic position and other characteristics. They are only occasionally met or indirectly known through others (ibid.: 1362ff.; Faist 2000: 101). Overlapping to varying extents with the types of fleeting encounters as well as more regular but not personally close relations identified by Wessendorf and Phillimore (2019: 130f.), weak ties are formed with acquaintances who may be e.g. (former) co-workers or people briefly known from institutional or public settings (Granovetter 1973: 1371f.).

126) and may appear as interwoven complexes of meanings which may characterize a social tie (ibid.).

Addressing in particular the more practical aspects of “migrants' socio-economic or educational advancement” (Wessendorf and Phillipmore 2019: 124) in terms of gaining access to “material rewards, such as money, as well as employment, training, social recognition, social connections, and prestige” (Glick Schiller, Çağlar and Guldbrandsen 2006: 614), the concept of social capital has been deployed to analyse how social relationships influence processes of settlement in particular localities. Portes (1998) reviews several definitions of social capital and identifies a growing consensus that the concept “stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures” (ibid.: 6). In this sense, social capital is an immaterial form of capital which “inheres in the structure of (...) relationships” (ibid.: 7) and mediates transactions of resources. Moreover, a systematic application of the concept of social capital requires a distinction between, first, those who possess social capital and claim resources; second, those actors who constitute the sources of social capital and whose agreement on these claims is based on forms of internalized values, reciprocity, solidarity or trust; and third, the resources in question (ibid.: 6-9).

In the course of my research, forced migrant newcomers were approached as potential possessors of social capital, co-workers and employers as possible sources and all the information and materials that were reported to support settlement as mediated resources. While elaborating my ethnographic insights, I chose “the accumulation of obligations from others according to the norm of reciprocity” (Portes 1998: 7) as an analytical focus with regard to the social processes which underpin the sources of social capital (see also Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993: 1324; Warren 2007: 139f.). In addition to resonating with the conceptualization of work relationships reviewed above, my emphasis on reciprocity directly corresponds to the more general conclusion that “[r]esources obtained through social capital have, from the point of view of the recipient, the character of a gift.” (Ibid.: 5)

Whether their networks supply forced migrant newcomers with helpful information or other resources depends on the characteristics of their social relations and the actors they involve (Strang and Quinn 2019: 18-20; Gericke et al. 2018: 54-58). Especially weak ties are widely recognized as “important form of social capital” (Glick Schiller, Çağlar and Guldbrandsen 2006: 614) which effectively facilitates settlement while strong ties have been ascribed supportive outcomes as well (Dahinden 2013: 44; Faist 2000: 101, 111-115). Following Granovetter (1973), weak ties are particularly beneficial because of their “bridging func-

tion” (ibid.: 1364) which links different social circles and facilitates diffusion of resources beyond directly related actors. The various weak tie contacts of a person are unlikely to know each other and tend to be involved in their own social circles of stronger network relations. In effect, the information and resources an actor is able to access via weak ties tend to be new and different from those which are circulating through her or his interconnected strong ties with people who share similar socio-economic backgrounds and resources (ibid.: 1362ff.). This means that “bridging weak ties” (ibid.: 1370) connect a person also indirectly to significantly different others and serve as “the channels through which ideas, influences, or information socially distant from ego” (ibid.: 1370f.) can become accessible.

Many forced migrants initially lack extensive personal networks and social capital in their localities of arrival and may not possess regionally recognized cultural capital such as language skills and secure legal statuses which could support their efforts to establish relations (Schmidt 2020: 123; Wessendorf 2017: 7-14; Siegert 2019: 3-10). This may be especially the case for those who came alone, have no family ties in places of asylum and partly also face “difficulties establishing trust” (Strang and Quinn 2019: 16) with individuals and institutions after having experienced socially disruptive effects of violence and conflict at home and during flight (ibid.: 7-18). In addition, long-term residents including already settled migrants may perceive forced migrant newcomers as disturbing competitors for socio-economic positions, which can induce the construction of differences along intersecting social categories such as ethnicity and legal status that underlie the marginalization, discrimination and social exclusion of newcomers (Dahinden 2013: 51-58; Schmidt 2020: 118-123, 165-180).

Hence, benefits and support mediated through bridging social ties with established locals can become especially crucial for forced migrant newcomers because their strong ties in places of arrival may predominantly comprise people with similarly unfavourable endowments with economic, cultural and social capital, most importantly family members, such as spouses and siblings, as well as friends from same countries and regions of departure or known from migration journeys or reception in asylum camps (Gericke et al. 2018: 52-58; Siegert 2019: 2, 7f.; Strang and Quinn 2019: 11-16). Nevertheless, established locals cannot be assumed to be always knowledgeable about the more specific resources forced migrants may be in need of e.g. professional legal or psychological support (Strang and Quinn 2019: 19f.). Moreover, social capital which inheres weaker or stronger ties with individual actors or associations of people who share same or similar backgrounds and experiences of migration and settlement, including e.g. ethnic, national or religious affiliations as well as socio-economic positions, legal statuses or discrimination, have been likewise found to support the set-

tlement of forced migrant newcomers in various respects (ibid.: 16-18; Wessendorf and Phillimore 2019: 124-126, 134f.; Cheung and Phillimore 2014: 531-533; Gericke et al. 2018: 52-58; Altenried et al. 2017: 89f.; Cederberg 2012: 63-65; Zetter 2007: 187; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993: 1327-1332).

Lastly, it has to be pointed out that relationships which mediate social capital can simultaneously have negative consequences, especially for people who experience disadvantages based on being excluded from the benefits which circulate within bounded social networks (Portes 1998: 15f.; Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 100-115; Warren 2008: 127ff.; Putnam 2000: 21f.). Beyond that, included members may likewise face adverse limitations posed by the social structures they are involved in and which constitute favourable social capital to them (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993: 1321; Portes 1998: 15-18). Addressing the latter type of negative effects of social capital, Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) stress that “the same social mechanisms that give rise to appropriable resources for individual use can also constrain action or even derail it from its original goals” (ibid.: 1338). In other words, “individual autonomy” (Faist 2000: 115) and “economic success” (ibid.) of actors who are members of rather strongly tied network structures such as families, wider kinship groups or “tightly knit immigrant communities” (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993: 1340) may feel negatively restricted and controlled when expectations and norms of reciprocity, solidarity and trust on the part of their network peers – i.e., the same dynamic components of relationships which also facilitate the benefits of social capital (Faist 2000: 104-115) – become “too demanding” (ibid.: 115; see also Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993: 1322-1346).

Instead of searching for strong community or family bonds in the course of the following chapters, I will primarily address the social ties between individual forced migrant newcomers and the various locals they met in contexts of employment in the Munich city region. While social capital can have negative outcomes, it is its positive function “as a source of network-mediated benefits beyond the immediate family” (Portes 1998: 12) which has been widely used to explain employment access and other aspects of migrant settlement and is therefore of relevance to my argument (ibid. 9ff.). Nevertheless, I could also gain insights into stronger ties and various ways in which negative social capital effects may interrelate with the constitution of closer relations with co-workers. Having reviewed key aspects of relationship formation, work relationships and relationships of migrant settlement, I will now turn to the concept of sociabilities of emplacement.

2.4 Sociabilities of emplacement

The concept of sociabilities of emplacement facilitates the ethnographic analysis of the formation of social relations between migrant newcomers and already established migrant or non-migrant locals who interact in various urban settings “within the context of opportunities and constraints of a particular historical conjuncture” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 130) which implies globe-spanning networks of unequal power and interconnected processes of capital accumulation and urban restructuring. Because it provides an empirically backed theoretical approach to workplaces as locally situated social settings in which new arrivals and already established locals meet and partly form personally significant relationships (ibid.: 121-146), I will apply the concept of sociabilities of emplacement in order to illuminate my research questions.

The theoretical foundation of the concept of sociabilities of emplacement consists of Simmel's (1949) classical approach to sociability (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 19). Simmel (1949) has formulated sociability as a sociological concept in order to describe a “pure” (ibid.: 254) social form which is based on a “feeling of the worth of association as such” (ibid.: 255). In contrast to other forms of association which are initiated and shaped by contents external to them, e.g. subjective purposes, functions and interests which actors pursue to reach their aims, sociability can be viewed as autonomously structured by its own form once it has been initiated solely in order to satisfy the human desire for relating with others. In other words, pure sociability in the sense of Simmel (1949) is not a means to an end but an end in itself (ibid.: 254ff.). Although it is realized, similar to art and play, in a realm outside of the purposes and consequences of “real life” (ibid.: 255), sociability remains bound up with practical concerns because these provide the themes and limitations for sociable relations.

Most crucially, Simmel (1949) discerned in sociability an inherently “democratic structure” (ibid.: 257) in that it can only lead to individual satisfaction if a reciprocal balance of exchanged “sociable values” (ibid.) such as pleasure and joy prevails. To achieve this satisfaction conditioned on mutuality, actors of different social positions and personalities have to bracket out their personal features and contents in interactions of sociability and encounter each other “purely as 'human beings'” (ibid.) who imagine everyone involved as “sociably equal” (ibid.). This means that each actor views and approaches the others “as though all were equal, as though he especially esteemed everyone” (ibid.). Simmel's (1949) understanding of sociability has been summed up as an “idealized version of egalitarian sociality among autonomous individuals in modern social venues” (Anderson 2015: 98).

Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2016) have adopted core aspects of Simmel's (1949) take

on sociability and state that sociabilities of emplacement refer to social relationships which rest on mutually presumed equality between partners who may differ in terms of categorical differences, access to resources and subjective characteristics and experiences (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 19; Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 123-125, 128-130). More precisely, sociabilities of emplacement can be defined as “significant affective and supportive dyadic interpersonal relationships” (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 26) which go beyond differences of national, ethnic, racialized, religious, gender or other categorizations along social boundaries and are instead built on the basis of “partial but significant domains of human commonality” (ibid.: 30). The latter imply “positive affect” (ibid.: 18) towards each other, “mutual respect” (ibid.), “shared sensibilities” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 123) and other elements of a “shared set of experiences, emotions and aspirations including a desire for human relationships” (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 29f.).

Reviewing their main effects and outcomes, Wessendorf and Phillimore (2019) find that sociabilities of emplacement capture “the fuzzy boundaries between instrumental and affective functions, and that many of the social relations formed by migrants during settlement combine both” (ibid.: 126). First and foremost, it has been argued that sociabilities of emplacement give the actors involved a “mutual sense of being human” (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 19) which results in “pleasure, satisfaction and meaning” (ibid.) for each of them. In addition, and similar to the other types of social relations touched upon above, sociabilities of emplacement can mediate affects of belonging and may fulfil practical support functions that assist migrant newcomers with settling down in a new place by “providing help, protection, resources and further social connections” (ibid.). Hence, while Glick Schiller and Schmidt (2016) clarify that emplacement sociabilities are partly also “constituting what social capital researchers describe as weak ties” (ibid.: 12), Phillimore and Wessendorf (2019) remark that sociabilities of emplacement are mainly introducing a stronger focus on shared affects and sentiments and highlight that the emphasis on “mutuality represents a shift away from the focus of 'social integration', which, particularly in policy thinking, places the onus on migrants to become part of a society through building bridging capital” (ibid.: 127).

This conceptualization of sociabilities of emplacement can be understood as a recent contribution to the ongoing specification of the transnational migration paradigm and has been elaborated in critical response to a range of tendencies and “blind spots” (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 325) of mainstream migration studies and urban ethnography, in particular the methodological presumptions, conceptual tools, objects of study and units of analysis through which social relationships of migrants have been predominantly approached (ibid.:

308ff.; Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 3-26, 125-128). Most importantly, sociabilities of emplacement constitute an attempt to go beyond “methodological nationalism” (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 302) which continues to frame large parts of research on migration, settlement and social life more generally (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 3f., 125-128). Methodological nationalism refers to “the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world” (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 302) and has been entrenched in the social sciences under the influence of ongoing historical processes of nation-state building on a global scale. Put briefly, this methodological principle implies that social life is mainly studied and theorized within the territorial borders of nation-states which are imagined as congruent with the social boundaries of national populations. The latter are ideologically construed as exclusive corporeal units whose members form a culturally homogeneous community and share a singular national identity, enjoy citizenship rights, exert democratic sovereignty and act as a social solidarity group (ibid.: 302-311; Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 3f.; see also Beck 2006: 24-33).

Against this presumption of an internally homogeneous and territorially bounded national population and the expectation that “social cohesion” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 125) rests on these commonalities and congruences of national culture, territorial space and individual identity, migrant newcomers are often conceptualized as dangerous outsiders who are “inherently threatening the social fabric of community and state” (ibid.: 126) because they are ascribed cultural differences and loyalties to other nation-states. Assuming that migrants as well as non-migrants can have “only one country and one identity” (ibid.: 4), many policy makers and researchers alike have therefore concluded that migrants need to switch their identity and political allegiance through socio-cultural integration or assimilation (ibid.: 3f., 125f.; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 308-324). As a result, these principles of methodological nationalism are obscuring the fact that the national citizens of countries which become destinations for migrants are not by default socio-culturally homogeneous and unified merely because they “are designated as native to the territory of a nation-state” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 4). Nation-state populations have rather been found to be heterogeneous along various other crucial but often neglected characteristics besides “national origin” (ibid.), in particular “[c]lass, gender, and subnational regional and cultural differences” (ibid.; see also Phillimore and Wessendorf 2019: 135). In addition, methodological nationalist perspectives disregard that social practices, relationships, networks and processes which involve people who cross international borders as well as non-migrants are not contained within nation-states (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 307-311; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1007ff.). Instead,

they enfold in and across globally interconnected localities which can be found further within and far beyond the demarcations of nation-state territories, especially in cities and various urban sites of human encounter and exchange (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 7-13, 21-24, 216-222).

Due to the pervasiveness of methodological nationalism, migration researchers have projected the presumption of cultural homogeneity and essentialist notions of singular identities onto individual migrant newcomers. This means that the social lives of migrants are frequently analysed through an “ethnic lens” (Glick Schiller, Çağlar and Guldbrandsen 2006: 613; see also Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2013: 495; Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 3-5, 127). The latter implies that newcomers and long-standing residents with migrant backgrounds who are associated with particular places of origin are generally assumed “to share a common homeland identity and culture” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 4). They are therefore expected to establish relationships primarily with co-ethnic, co-national or co-religious individuals and community organizations which have been depicted as main facilitators of migrant settlement (*ibid.*: 127). In other words, the socially constructed nature and internal heterogeneity of groups that are based on markers of ethnic identity remain unnoticed when the lives of migrants are viewed through an ethnic lens (*ibid.*: 4; see also Dahinden 2013: 40). The subjective and social importance of identities and relationships built on ethnicity as well as the existence of strongly tied ethnic groups or community structures are taken for granted and become “the primary or exclusive unit of study and analysis” (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2013: 495; see also Glick Schiller, Çağlar and Guldbrandsen 2006: 612f.).

In sum, the essentializing homogenizations and categorizations induced by methodological nationalism and the ethnic lens result in “a deeply embedded binary between migrants and the mainstream of society” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 5) which is reproduced in the discursive distinction between 'migrants' as 'foreigners' and 'non-migrants' as 'natives' to the nation-state of settlement. Against a priori presumptions that social categories and boundaries of nationality, ethnicity or migrant status are most important for the structuring of identities and social relationships and in order to avoid the confinement of social analysis within the hegemonic ideology of a world divided up into nation-states, the concept of sociabilities of emplacement shifts the focus from cultural group differences onto relationally emerging interpersonal commonalities. It thus allows to see a broader spectrum of the social relationships migrants and non-migrants may form as human beings who share the similarity of facing global political-economic forces that articulate in urban localities of everyday life (*ibid.*: 4f., 127; Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 20f.; Glick Schiller and Schmidt 2016: 2ff.).

This last point refers to the social settings in which immediate relationship processes of migrant newcomers may take place. The relational bases of sociabilities of emplacement in the form of shared domains of commonality emerge from sporadic as well as more durable social interaction in specific urban spaces which are constituted under the influence of “the differential positioning of cities and their residents within globe-spanning networks of unequal economic, political and cultural power“ (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 18). The latter have been specified as hierarchies of “intersecting multiscale networks of power“ (ibid.: 20) within which cities play key roles in processes of capital accumulation and their leaderships compete for favourable positions of the cities they represent by pursuing neoliberal urban restructuring agendas which include the creation of marketable city narratives. Besides locations in neighbourhoods and institutional spaces such as libraries, workplaces have been identified as such globally entangled and constituted social settings in which sociabilities of emplacement may be forged which support migrant newcomers with settling down (ibid.: 20, 24-29; Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 7-16, 130-146).

Processes of migrant settlement through the formation of sociabilities in urban spaces which are constituted by complexly interrelated networks of power have been framed as a variant of emplacement. Emplacement is viewed as an individual actor's response to different forms and dynamics of displacement that are part of global political-economic processes (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 16-24). Based on the premise that ongoing capital accumulation pursued by powerful actors in current day capitalism implies dispossession of relatively less powerful actors, Çağlar and Glick Schiller (2018) state that “displacement is the outcome of people losing their access to various social means of subsistence” (ibid.: 19). Displacements are understood as processes that affect not only those who are spatially mobile but all actors who experience the impacts of various forms of dispossession, such as neoliberal austerity programs, privatization or urban restructuring. As a form of displacement, forced migration across international borders is often caused by violent conflicts and war sparked by geopolitical struggles over resources which result in comprehensive and multiple dispossessions (ibid.; see also Zetter 2019: 28-33). For many urban residents who did not migrate or have already spent considerable amounts of time in a city or region, socio-economic displacements result in precarity understood as “a state of insecurity and unpredictability brought about by neoliberal restructuring of both the terms and the conditions of working and living” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 19). This can imply downward social mobility and loss of social positions, e.g. due to job losses. Also “forced migrants are likely to experience precarity in multifaceted and interconnected ways” (Bloch and Donà 2019: 11), including “physical, so-

cial, economic, political, legal and psychological” (ibid.) problems and uncertainties. Once forced migrant newcomers manage their arrival and settlement in cities they may “face another cycle of displacement and insecurity within urban regeneration” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 20).

Against the backdrop of displacement based on various disposessions of migrant newcomers as well as all other residents of a city, emplacement has been defined as “the social processes through which a dispossessed individual builds or rebuilds networks of connection within the constraints and opportunities of a specific city” (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 21). The forced migrants with whom I conducted the research for this thesis can be viewed as such dispossessed individuals who tried to build social networks and establish a life under the specific constraints and opportunities they faced in the Munich city region. Moreover, bound up with the structurally conditioned settlement and network formation of individuals, emplacement also refers to the processes through which urban residents are shaping and reconstituting the cities in which they live in social, economical, political and cultural terms (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 11-13, 21, 129f.; Glick Schiller and Schmidt 2016: 4-13).⁶

Due to its inclusion of workplaces as social settings of encounter and interaction, the concept of emplacement sociabilities facilitates the analysis of personally important relationships mediated through work between recently settling migrants and their already established co-workers. Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2016) exemplify this with an ethnographic account on social interactions and relationships between migrant and local co-workers in the disempowered city of Manchester, USA. Their findings reveal that sociabilities of emplacement among co-workers of similar ethnic or migration background can be based on the domains of commonality of shared language skills and perceptions of marginalization based on racial categorizations. But even when novices and established co-workers do not share legal status, racialization,⁷ language, culture, gender or other facets of social positions and capabilities,

⁶ With a focus on this aspect of “city-making” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 21), emplacement has been understood as “the relationship between, on the one hand, the continuing restructuring of place within multiscale networks of power and, on the other, a person's efforts, within the barriers and opportunities that contingencies of local place-making offer, to build a life within networks of local, national, supranational, and global interconnections” (ibid.: 20f.; see also Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2013: 495). In the face of the limited scope of a master's thesis, the research data I could gather and my focus on the formation of interpersonal relationships in particular workplaces, I will primarily address the ways in which opportunity structures shaped the relationship processes of forced migrants and refrain from systematically tracing the ways in which my research participants may have contributed to city-making in the course of working and living in the Munich city region.

⁷ Silverstein (2005) clarifies the interconnected concepts of 'racialization' and 'race.' The latter “is defined as a cultural category of difference that is contextually constructed as essential and natural—as residing within the very body of the individual—and is thus generally tied, in scientific theory and popular understanding, to a set of somatic, physiognomic, and even genetic character traits. Racialization correspondingly refers to the

they may come together and interact on the basis of their work (ibid.: 26).

In other words, working together can constitute a decisive “commonality of practice” (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 26) which gives rise to the further development of work relationships into sociabilities of emplacement that are cultivated when co-workers are finding and forging domains of human commonality as they interact in the context of their job and partly also beyond. Along with the shared affects and sensibilities already mentioned above, these commonalities may include shared but differing “experiences of feeling out of place” (ibid.: 27) in terms of physical, social and/or economical displacement. While language differences can be a barrier to the easy establishment of social relations with many co-workers, they may be overcome in more focused relations of sociability between only two persons who establish idiosyncratic ways of communicating (ibid.: 26f.).

Referring back to the concept of social capital, the latter becomes reciprocally accessible when mutual ties of sociability are fostered in work settings. In particular, sociabilities can be supportive for newly arriving migrants when they involve employers or owner-managers who are likely to have diverse and multiple social connections which imply resources that may be harder to reach for forced migrant newcomers (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 26f.). However, constituting another aspect of the negative consequences of social capital, these relationships can result in exploitative work arrangements. By granting favours to asylum seekers who are in a weak position for accessing alternative sources of income and settlement support, paternalistic employers may entangle them in binding reciprocity relations and confront them with excessive claims. As a return for offered resources, services and other forms of support, they may expect repayments in terms of e.g. acceptance of volatile, precarious, dangerous or illegal working conditions (ibid.: 28; Morales 2016: 511ff.).

processes through which any diacritic of social personhood—including class, ethnicity, generation, kinship/affinity, and positions within fields of power—comes to be essentialized, naturalized, and/or biologized; (...) Racialization thus indexes the historical transformation of fluid categories of difference into fixed species of otherness.” (Ibid.: 364) Highlighting the discursive nature of socially constructing and fixating group differences and boundaries, Castles, de Haas and Miller (2014) state that the concept of 'racialization' is used within migration studies “to refer to public discourses which imply that a range of social or political problems are a 'natural' consequence of certain ascribed physical or cultural characteristics“ (ibid.: 60; see also McDowell 2008: 498-500).

3. Ethnographic fieldwork in the Munich city region

In the introduction, I have already touched upon my social and personal embeddedness in the fieldwork area with which my research engages from the theoretical perspectives outlined above. In this chapter, the field of the Munich city region will be further mapped and unravelled along the lines of various historically and globally shaped demographic, political-economic and socio-cultural characteristics of urban localities which form a complex of opportunities and constraints that crucially shape the reception and settlement of migrant newcomers (Jaworsky et al. 2012; Ch. 3.1). This is followed by a summary of the objectives, challenges and outcomes of establishing access to informants and fieldwork settings (Ch. 3.2) and a description of the chosen ethnographic methods, strategies of data analysis and empirical main cases (Ch. 3.3).

3.1 Background

In official administrative terms, the “Munich region” (Planungsverband Äußerer Wirtschaftsraum München 2021: 5, my translation) comprises the city of Munich, which is the capital of the federal state of Bavaria, and its eight adjacent districts (ibid.: 5f.). The main regional focus of my research, i.e., what I refer to as the ‘Munich city region,’ is the city of Munich and the Munich district.⁸ In 2018, 20,5% of the 2 908 664 people living in the Munich region were non-German citizens and there has been a steady population growth for several decades, mainly because of net inflows of migrants but also due to excess of births over deaths.⁹ By 2019, 50,7% of the population was living in the city of Munich where also 59,9% of jobs in the region were located (Planungsverband Äußerer Wirtschaftsraum München 2021: 9ff.).

Regarding the proportions and dynamics of migration to Munich, the city administration concludes that “there is no numerically dominant group of foreign nationals” (Sozialreferat München 2018b: 47, my translation) and emphasizes a long urban “migration history” (ibid.: 47, my translation) which is associated with a wide range of countries of origin.

⁸ The Munich district is closely interconnected with the city. Instead of having its own district capital like the other seven districts of the region, the administrative district office of the Munich district is centrally located in the city of Munich (Landratsamt München 2017: 4).

⁹ In comparison with other large German cities, statistical reports for the years 2013 and 2016 show that the city of Munich consistently had the second largest proportion of residents without German citizenship, after Frankfurt am Main. By the end of 2016 this pertained to 28,3% of the city's population and slightly more than half of this fraction were EU citizens (Sozialreferat München 2018b: 35). In addition to this legal category of “foreigners” (ibid., my translation) in terms of citizenship, the statistical category of “migration background” (ibid., my translation) was officially ascribed also to 14,9% of people who had the German citizenship but had themselves immigrated after 1955 or had at least one parent who had arrived after this point in time when the Federal Republic of Germany enforced the first agreement on migrant worker recruitment with Italy (ibid.). Based on the combination of these figures for non-German as well as German citizens, 43,2% of Munich's population were categorized as “people with migration background” (ibid., my translation) for the end of 2016 (ibid.: 36f.).

Hence, accounting for 8,9% of all non-German citizens, people with Turkish passports topped the list of the largest “immigrant groups” (ibid., my translation) in 2016, closely followed by Croatian, Italian and Greek citizens (ibid.). In the course of enlargement of the European Union (EU) and the lifting of labour market restrictions, Croatian, Romanian and Bulgarian EU citizens were among the largest groups of new arrivals to the city between 2013 and 2016, together with people from Afghanistan, Syria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and four other EU countries (ibid.: 46). Beyond the Munich city, most residents without German citizenship living in the Munich district in 2016 were counted as Austrian, Italian, Turkish or Croatian citizens (Landratsamt München 2017: 11).

The regional demography of forced migrant newcomers is interrelated with recent influxes of asylum seekers across the nation-state borders of Germany. For the period between 1st January 2013 to 31st January 2016, Kroh et al. (2018) provide insights into official statistics of the Central Register of Foreign Nationals and conclude for their large statistical sample that 58% of adults who formally applied for asylum within this time have not been older than 30 years and roughly one quarter has been registered as female (ibid.: 18-25). Being the urban centre in closest geographical proximity to Germany's south-eastern border, the Munich region constitutes a major point of arrival and transit for forced migrants who enter mainly via Austria (Vallaster, von Wallpach and Zenker 2018: 55; cf. Egger 2013: 248f.). Statistics for the city of Munich likewise show that the majority of forced migrant newcomers was young and male. 45 962 people with forced migration backgrounds were living in the city by the end of 2016 and 21 541 of these had been arriving between 1st January 2012 and 31st December 2016. The main countries of origin for this latter population were Afghanistan and Iraq, with each around 17%, Syria with nearly 12% and Nigeria, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina with each close to 7%. While around 63% had received a safer legal status, a small fraction of 722 people were merely tolerated. One third was still in the asylum process and 2 263 Afghans together with 850 Nigerians constituted the largest proportions of these applicants (Sozialreferat München 2018a: 21-27). End of July 2016, additional 4 610 asylum seekers lived across the 29 municipalities of the Munich district. Here as well, Afghanistan with around 30% and Nigeria with almost 15% were the main countries of origin (Landratsamt München 2017: 12f.).

Together with demographic structures and processes, economic characteristics of the Munich city region can be viewed as shaping the reception and settlement of forced migrant newcomers. They appear to be especially relevant to my research topic and questions because they co-define which employment opportunities can be accessed by the regional population,

including various categories of migrants (Jaworsky et al. 2012: 78-83). Regarding the general economic and labour market conditions, Munich has been depicted as “one of Europe's most enduringly successful cities” (Evans and Karecha 2013: 3) after the Second World War. Its high attractiveness and powerful position in global competition for capital has been mainly traced back to the high quality of living and “diverse economic structure” (ibid.: 5) which has emerged over several decades throughout the Munich region (ibid 4-7; see also Egger 2013: 27ff.). The latter is to large parts aligned to the knowledge economy and shaped by an official policy approach of facilitating innovation, especially through “specialist growth clusters” (Evans and Karecha 2013: 17) in the hi-tech sector. Accordingly, a significant labour market demand for skilled workers and highly qualified professionals has been emphasized for the city and its region (ibid.: 9ff.; Referat für Arbeit und Wirtschaft München 2018: 9ff.).

Employment statistics are underpinning the dominant narrative of outstanding and “continuing success and resilience” (Evans and Karecha 2013: 18) as a business location. The number of jobs in the Munich region had been increasing by 32% during the ten years until 2019. The unemployment rate had been steadily falling from 4% to 2,8% over the period between 2014 and 2019 (Planungsverband Äußerer Wirtschaftsraum München 2021: 36-45). In 2017, the large majority of employment relationships could be found in a steadily extending service sector, while 15,9% of employees worked in the manufacturing sector which continues to be economically relevant for the Munich region. This includes, for instance, automotive, chemical and printing industries, which are to large parts export oriented, as well as a flourishing and growing segment of skilled crafts and the construction and food industries. The large and heterogeneous service sector is dominantly shaped by insurance and financial services as well as a variety of knowledge-intensive high-tech industries, especially related to internet and communication technologies and life sciences (Referat für Arbeit und Wirtschaft München 2018: 25-42). Along with the strong policy priority on knowledge and innovation which also involves a large number of variously interconnected and subsidized institutions of scientific research and higher education, weapons industry has a long entrenched history in the Munich region and contributes to its powerful positioning as an economic location (Evans and Karecha 2013: 7ff.; Egger 2013: 15, 39f.). Lastly, Munich has an active culture and media industry and an exceptionally lucrative retail and tourism sector which capitalizes on the paramount prosperity and purchasing power in the region and among many of its visitors (Referat für Arbeit und Wirtschaft München 2018: 34-36, 43-45).

Of the 92 400 businesses which were registered in the city of Munich in 2016, 91,1% were of smallest size and had zero to nine employees while 8,4% were categorized as SMEs

because they had between ten to 49 or 50 to 249 employees. 250 or more employees were on the payroll of 0,5% of companies. Regarding the larger organizations, Munich has the highest concentration of publicly traded corporations of all German cities, including e.g. Allianz, Munich Re, Siemens and BMW (Referat für Arbeit und Wirtschaft München 2018: 18f.). In sum, formulating it as a strength in competition with other urban centres which may be in the grip of more homogeneous economic structures, the city administration makes the assertion that “Munich as a business location is less dependent on the economic success of individual companies due to the large number of important enterprises and in particular the broad diversification across the different industries” (ibid.: 19, my translation; see also Evans and Karecha 2013: 7).

The economic structures and dynamics which characterize the Munich city region co-define the context of reception of forced migrant newcomers in combination with specific legal and more broadly socio-cultural conditions which govern access to employment opportunities (cf. Wessendorf 2017: 6ff.; see Ch. 4.3). Compared to other migrant categories, refugees and asylum seekers have been found to face more and different barriers when accessing labour markets, especially in the form of “interpersonal and institutional racism” (Torezani, Colic-Peisker and Fozdar 2008: 39) as well as disadvantages related to a lack of marketable language and work skills, social capital, certified qualifications and work experiences in the place of settlement (ibid.: 38f.; Jackson and Bauder 2013: 365f., 369-371; Bloch 2008: 25-35). In addition, the physical and psychological health of many forced migrants is negatively affected by experiences of displacement, flight and reception and may compromise employment relationships and vocational training (Johansson 2016: 77-85; Anderson 2016: 18-20; Brückner et al. 2019: 2-4, 15; Povrzanovic Frykman 2012: 67-69). Another structural barrier to the establishment and maintenance of employment relations are wide ranging uncertainties associated with the “precarious legal statuses” (Jackson and Bauder 2013: 375) of forced migrants who are caught up in the bureaucratic procedures of national asylum systems (ibid.: 370ff.; Bloch 2008: 22-25; Aumüller 2016: 13f.; Degler and Liebig 2017: 34f., 44-48).

The various legal statuses forced migrant newcomers are given in Germany imply different rights to access the labour market which are specified and adjusted through laws, directives and bureaucratic practices which reflect particular policies on all levels of Germany's federal system (Aumüller 2016: 17; Degler and Liebig 2017: 44-48; Cragg 2016: 354-357). At the time of my research, asylum seekers and tolerated persons were allowed to access the labour market three months after their registration in the German asylum system, provided that they did not come from places which were officially categorized as “safe countries of origin”

(Crage 2016: 360) and had already been allocated from initial reception centres to municipalities across Germany.¹⁰ Upon finding a job, apprenticeship place or internship, they were required to apply for a work permit for the employment in question at the Foreigners' Registration Office of the district or city to which they had been allocated (Voigt 2019: 5ff.; Degler and Liebig 2017: 45).¹¹ While recognized refugees and applicants who received subsidiary protection statuses and temporally limited residence permits after a positive decision of their asylum cases enjoyed unlimited access to the labour market (Dünnwald 2017: 199), rejected asylum seekers who were merely tolerated in Germany could face general prohibitions of employment, e.g. when the main reason for the suspension of their deportation was deemed to be a self-inflicted impediment (Voigt 2019: 12-15).

When deciding on applications for work permits, officials in Foreigners' Registration Offices in the Munich region were bound to directives which were issued by the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior. These stipulated a rigid and restrictive interpretation of the federal laws on access to employment of asylum seekers and tolerated persons who were not officially ascribed good prospects of staying and/or did not fulfil other prerequisites (Dünnwald 2017: 194-197; Bayerisches Innenministerium 2016: 8ff.; cf. Ronte 2018: 18f.). The Bavarian directives reflected a generally more exclusionary policy approach to migration and asylum when compared to other German federal states (Dünnwald 2017: 196f.) and the city of Munich (Sozialreferat München 2018a: 15-17, 74f.; Crage 2009: 77). The Bavarian government has been dominated by the right-wing conservative Christian Socialist Union (CSU) since the end of Second World War and has consistently pursued a “security paradigm” (Crage 2009:

10 In the face of rising numbers of arriving forced migrants in 2014 and 2015, in order to comply with EU law and with the intention to gain control over the economic utilization of recent newcomers who were increasingly construed as human resources, the German government adopted laws which selectively facilitated easier and earlier access to integration courses and the labour market for those asylum seekers whom the Federal Ministry of the Interior ascribed good prospects of attaining a legal status because of their citizenship. This categorization served as a policy tool for dividing those seen as deserving humanitarian protection from allegedly spurious applicants and included people from Syria, Eritrea, Somalia, Iran and Iraq on the grounds that more than 50% of asylum cases involving each of these countries had been decided in favour of the applicants during the previous years. Individual applicants from other countries of origin who were generally attested bleak prospects were widely sidelined because they were variously suspected to abuse the asylum system to gain access to employment in Germany (Frings 2017: 167-176; see also Scherschel 2017: 153-161; Crage 2016: 360f.; cf. Schacht 2021: 99-105; Zetter 2007: 174ff.). Continuing the trajectory of federal asylum policy changes of 1993, 2005 and 2014 (Crage 2016: 354-361), the Integration Act of 2016 included not only unequally supportive corrections but also further restrictions, sanctions and demands of 'integration' for all forced migrants and not only with regard to work and vocational training (Carpenter 2018; Degler and Liebig 2017: 25-27; Aumüller 2016: 14, 43; Frings 2017: 171-176).

11 In many cases Foreigners' Registration Offices across Germany could not issue work permits independently but had to pass applications to the regional branches of the Federal Employment Agency which was checking whether a job arrangement complied with minimum standards of employment. In the Employment Agency district for Munich (consisting of the Munich city and the Munich district) and a minority of other districts, the Employment Agency also continued to conduct priority checks which aimed at favouring available job seekers with unconditional work rights, in particular German and EU citizens (Degler and Liebig 2017: 45f.). In August 2019 this priority review was abolished in all employment agency districts across Germany (Voigt 2019: 6).

78) in respect of forced migration. Highest priority was given to deterrence, deportation and prevention of forced migrants who were predominantly understood as social, cultural and economic threats (ibid.: 76-78; Dünnwald 2017: 191ff.).

In contrast, the city of Munich, which was mainly governed by the centre-left Social Democratic Party (SPD), has been pursuing a more inclusive “humanitarian paradigm” (Crage 2009: 77) in reaction to rising numbers of asylum seekers since the mid-1980s. This implied “respecting (...) human rights and preventing personal and social problems” (ibid.) of forced migrants and taking active measures to support settlement right from the beginning of the asylum procedure, i.e., including also the larger proportion of asylum seekers and tolerated persons in Munich who stayed for long periods of time, even when their claims were not successful (ibid.: 76ff.; Sozialreferat München 2018a: 7-10, 15-17, 74f.).

In consequence of the Bavarian policy approach, forced migrants in precarious legal situations were often facing considerable difficulties with getting a work permit, which could result in involuntary, protracted and demotivating inactivity and social exclusion (Dünnwald 2017: 201-203; see also Müller and Schmidt 2016: 141). In addition to the state directives, this could also be related to the fact that every Foreigners' Registration Office was required to exercise discretion in case-by-case decisions on work permits (Degler and. Liebig 2017: 47; Aumüller 2016: 44). These bureaucratic practices were variously dismissive in the Munich region. While I was told by one official social service provider that “there are districts or cities where hardly any work permit is obtained during the asylum procedure” (Interview Employment Service Coordinator 23.01.2018), the City of Munich officially declared to always grant work permits whenever this was legally possible (Sozialreferat München 2018a: 74).

The long-standing orientation of policies along humanitarian and socially inclusive ideals which defines Munich's “formal municipal response” (Jaworsky et al. 2012: 84) to forced migrants implies that the city offers newcomers a fairly established and eclectic infrastructure of support services and makes efforts to recognize their heterogeneous needs and capacities as well as the institutional challenges and shortcomings of addressing them (Sozialreferat München 2018a: 6ff.). Complementing official service providers such as municipal departments, welfare organizations or religious associations, “civil society initiatives and volunteering actors” (ibid.: 9, my translation) have been facilitating the reception of forced migrant newcomers in Munich (ibid.: 98-101) and the Munich district (Landratsamt München 2017: 12). This became especially discernable when thousands of forced migrants who had entered the EU via Greece and boarded trains in Hungary and Austria (Kasperek 2016: 98-

105) were empathetically welcomed and supported by many city residents and variously organized volunteers at Munich's central station in September 2015 (Sozialreferat München 2018a: 6, 99; Britzelmeier and Blum 2016; Moser 2018: 20; Vallaster, von Wallpach and Zenker 2018: 55-57; see also Vollmer and Karakayali 2018: 126-128).

The overall welcoming stance towards recent forced migrants in Munich seems to correspond with the city's historically informed “self-representation and ethos” (Jaworsky et al. 2012: 85) as a tolerant, open-minded and cosmopolitan “world city with a heart” (Crage 2009: 81). Many inhabitants and institutions of Munich and its region could be attested a long-standing familiarity and transnational connectedness with people and impulses associated with other places of the world (Egger 2013: 248; cf. Jaworsky et al. 2012: 82; Hannerz 1996: 128-139).¹² Having experienced Munich himself as a member of its knowledge elite, Beck (2006) has recognized “conceptions of cosmopolitanism mixed with local ethnic, religious and national traditions” (ibid.: 13) in the city. He interprets these forms of “openness to the world” (ibid.) and appreciation of socio-cultural diversity as resulting from Munich's “relation of reflexive distance to itself” (ibid.), i.e., to its central historical role for the rise and rule of the National Socialists in Germany: “Munich had become the anti-cosmopolitan ‘capital of the movement’ out of which a state-organized racist insanity emerged. Cosmopolitan Munich stands for the institutional memory of this madness and for the readiness to adopt the perspectives of others.” (Ibid.) Representing the official recognition of “migration from abroad” (Sozialreferat München 2018a: 6, my translation), the mayor of Munich, Dieter Reiter, prefaces the current municipal “master plan for the integration of refugees” (ibid.: 10, my translation) with the assertion that migrants are constitutive actors who make valuable contributions to Munich's economic prosperity, “cityscape” (ibid.: 6, my translation) and “attractiveness” (ibid., my translation) as well as its “diverse, open and tolerant society” (ibid., my translation). Surveys conducted in 2016 for the city of Munich suggest that the majority of residents with as well as without German citizenship identified with the city and had positive attitudes towards migrant newcomers and the settlement of forced migrants (Sozialreferat München 2018b: 82). Probing sentiments after the increased arrivals of September 2015, the statement “I am proud of how humane inhabitants of Munich have received the refugees”

12 Considering merely the time after 1945, this is mainly due to the active presence of various types of labour migrants from the 1950s onwards (Engl and Hess 2009; Odukoya 2009: 25f.; Egger 2013: 248-252), forced migrants who arrived in significant numbers in the aftermath of the Second World War as well as during the 1980s and 1990s (Sozialreferat München 2018a: 15f.), members of business, knowledge and artistic elites (Moser 2018: 23) and tourists who have been attracted e.g. by influential local events of more or less global reach, in particular the 1972 Summer Olympics and the yearly staged Oktoberfest (Evans and Karecha 2013: 10).

(Sozialreferat München 2018b: 81, my translation) has been fully or rather endorsed by 80% of respondents regardless of ethnic-national origins (ibid.: 80f.).

While it can be summarized that Munich and its region are largely characterized by more or less consistent opportunities and attitudes which may favour the reception of forced migrants, racist and xenophobic resentments, discrimination and violence¹³ in combination with neoliberal displacement which mainly takes the form of a severe and long-standing shortage of affordable housing (Sozialreferat München 2018a: 84ff.; Odukoya 2009: 26f.) are also present to considerable extents. Statistical findings show that discrimination of Munich residents who were ascribed migration backgrounds was primarily perceived with regard to access to housing and secondarily on the labour market (Sozialreferat München 2018b: 230f.). Insights into the case work of an independent counselling centre for persons affected by racist and right-wing violence and discrimination which has been initiated by the city council in 2016 suggest that offences mainly took the form of slurs, threats, acts of social and institutional exclusion, breaches of anti-discrimination legislation and partly lethal physical assaults. While incidents occurred in all areas of life, workplaces featured as a main setting for discrimination (BEFORE e.V. 2018: 22ff.).

As it has been the case across Germany and other European countries more generally (Espahangizi et al. 2016: 13f.; Schmidt 2020: 13-16; Vollmer and Karakayali 2018: 128-134), varieties of racist, xenophobic and nationalist anti-migrant attitudes and activities in the Munich region have been viewed as being captured and reinforced by right-wing populist and extremist groupings which have been gaining popularity and discursive power. Unwelcoming

13 Castles, de Haas and Miller (2014) define 'racism' "as the process whereby social groups categorize other groups as different or inferior, on the basis of phenotypical or cultural markers. This process involves the use of economic, social or political power, and generally has the purpose of legitimating exploitation or exclusion of the group so defined." (Ibid.: 59) The authors go on to clarify that "[r]acism (or xenophobia) towards certain migrant (and non-migrant) groups is to be found in virtually all countries. Racism means making predictions about people's character, abilities or behaviour on the basis of socially constructed markers of difference. The power of the dominant group is sustained by developing structures (such as laws, policies and administrative practices) that exclude or discriminate against the dominated group. This aspect of racism is generally known as *institutional or structural racism*. Racist attitudes and discriminatory behaviour on the part of members of the dominant group are referred to as *informal racism*." (Ibid.: 60, emphases in the original; see also Wieviorka 1999 [1997]: 298-301; Modood 2013: 41; Schacht 2021: 52-58) Pager and Shepherd (2008) further illuminate the term 'discrimination' with a focus on racial and ethnic categorizations: "According to its most simple definition, racial discrimination refers to unequal treatment of persons or groups on the basis of their race or ethnicity." (Ibid.: 182) In addition to unequal treatment, more institutional forms of discrimination that correspond to institutional racism may consist of "disparate impact" (ibid.) which "occurs when individuals are treated equally according to a given set of rules and procedures" (ibid.) that are biased towards members of particular groups and result in "producing or reinforcing racial disadvantage" (ibid.) for individuals associated with other categories (see e.g. Schmidt 2006: 476f.). Discrimination has been researched in various "domains" (Pager and Shepherd 2008: 182) of society, can be based on a broad range of social categories, such as gender, age, class or religion, and "may be motivated by prejudice, stereotypes, or racism" (ibid.) while it is constituted by organizational, institutional and socio-cultural contexts, structures and histories (ibid.: 192-200; see also Roscigno and Yavorsky 2015; Ogbonna and Harris 2006: 383-385, 400-402; Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 141-154).

and hostile stances have been most vocally represented by the party politics of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and protests of the Munich branch of the anti-Muslim movement Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West (PEGIDA) which gained momentum in late 2014 in connection with increasing numbers of forced migrant newcomers (BEFORE e.V. 2018: 50; Vallaster, von Wallpach and Zenker 2018: 55-58).

Lastly, it should not remain unmentioned that in 2016, especially members of lower income households were among the 60% of respondents of a city-wide survey who answered that “social differences” (Sozialreferat München 2018b: 72, my translation) in Munich would be too large (ibid.: 71f.). This suggests that even though the Munich region has the highest average of purchasing power in Germany (Referat für Arbeit und Wirtschaft München 2018: 13), socio-economic inequalities and precarious livelihoods likewise shape the lived realities of many inhabitants of the city region. In connection with high living costs and the dominant prioritization of neoliberal competitiveness and commercialization, Munich has been ascribed the image of a “‘posh’ and ‘boring’” (Vallaster, von Wallpach and Zenker 2018: 55) city in which less profit driven activities and life scripts are underappreciated and displaced (cf. Evans and Karecha 2013: 7, 17f.).

3.2 Access

The ethnographic fieldwork for my research project in the Munich city region started in August 2017 with first exploratory meetings and conversations with three forced migrant newcomers who later became research participants. The main period of systematic data collection consisted of three research trips that lasted two, five and six weeks during which I could stay in my parents' place in the Munich district municipality in which my key encounters with asylum seekers had taken place in May 2015 (see Ch. 1). This main period of data collection began on 23rd November 2017 and ended on 1st May 2018. In July 2018, I returned to the Munich city region for another two weeks during which I revisited some of my informants.¹⁴ From summer 2018 until summer 2020, I was visiting my home municipality five times for several days and could partly also meet some research participants in the course of these short stays which I did not preconceive as deliberate research trips. In addition, I stayed loosely connected with several protagonists of my research via phone calls, online messenger services and social media platforms after the main phase of fieldwork had already ended in 2018. In reaction to the ongoing personal involvement with a few of my informants and the concomit-

14 The first trip began on 23rd November and ended on 6th December 2017, the second trip took place between 23rd December 2017 and 31st January 2018 and the third trip lasted from 15th March to 1st May 2018. My stay in summer 2018 lasted from 20th July to 2nd August 2018.

ant exposure to additional information and insights I occasionally collected data until I finally stopped taking notes in April 2020.

When I prepared my fieldwork in spring and summer 2017, I planned to gather verbal and observational data (see Ch. 3.3) which would allow me to clarify what forms of social relationships emerge between formally employed asylum seekers in the Munich city region and their already established co-workers and how variously communicative and cooperative work environments influence the formation of sociabilities of emplacement. Considering these initial questions, I preconceived the structure of my sample of informants as comprising first and foremost asylum seekers who were, or had been, formally employed in workplaces of all sorts in the Munich city region. In addition, other actors directly involved in social contexts of work who could be viewed as potential relationship partners should be included, i.e., co-workers on all hierarchical levels as well as employers who were hiring forced migrants.

In the light of the continuously negotiated nature of social relationships (see Ch. 2.1), tracing the various subjective perspectives of the participants in relationship processes can be understood as an attempt of gaining a detailed and multifaceted understanding of the potentially deviating meanings and affects associated with relationships mediated through work. This cannot be achieved when only one interaction partner in a dyadic relationship is considered. Hence, I started out with the aim of conducting research with both participants in social ties wherever this would be possible (cf. Sias and Cahill 1998: 279-283; Fuhse 2016: 129-131). Complementing the perspectives of those who may directly engage with each other in social contexts of work, I planned to contact professional social service providers as well as local volunteers who may act as employment brokers for newcomers. Especially my personal experiences with various actors offering support to forced migrants suggested that some of these supporters have profound and practically rooted expert knowledges about the social lives, labour market participation and working experiences of forced migrants in the Munich city region which may help to understand my topic and arrive at answers to my questions. In order to find further informants through “snowball sampling” (Bernard 2006: 193), I planned to ask professional and voluntary supporters and employment brokers whether they could refer me to other actors in their social networks who qualified as research participants, in addition to asking forced migrants themselves.

Beyond interviewing informants, I planned to access various workplaces and conduct participant observation (see Ch. 3.3). This seemed to serve my research objectives because much of the contexts and intersubjective dynamics of social relationships can be directly observed and experienced (Fuhse 2009: 53; *ibid.* 2016: 139-146), including spatial-temporal as-

pects and shared practices of working and interacting which manifest themselves in situations of everyday life at work and go beyond subjective memories and reports after the event (Spittler 2014: 4ff.; Smith 2007: 220-225). Contexts of work should constitute the main fieldwork settings of my project and serve as comparable cases for the interpretation and presentation of my empirical insights (cf. Breidenstein et al. 2015: 46-50). I assumed that access to workplaces as field-sites would be granted or denied first and foremost top-down by authorized managing and employing actors in powerful positions who could act as “organizational gatekeepers” (Smith 2007: 226).

Ultimately, the main strategy I applied in order to find informants and fieldwork settings which suited my topic and guiding questions can be described as open-ended “purposive sampling” (Bernard 2006: 189) in the course of the research process which implied reflexive readjustments of my approaches and criteria of selection (ibid.: 189-192). Smith (2007) argues that especially for ethnographic studies of work, “the twin problems of access and time (...) shape and limit the research activities of scholars” (ibid.: 226) who have frequently proven their flexibility in adapting their fieldwork to the limitations they faced (ibid.: 226f.). In keeping with my initial plans and hopes, my personal network contacts in the Munich city region turned out to be the most effective way of directly gaining access and/or being referred to additional research participants. Nevertheless, gaining access to working forced migrant newcomers, employers and workplaces constituted one of the major problems of my fieldwork (cf. Breidenstein et al. 2015: 50ff.).

Finding informants was aggravated by the overall relatively small population of forced migrants who fulfilled my initial sampling criteria of having arrived in 2015, seeking asylum and being formally employed (cf. Brücker et al. 2019: 9ff.). I encountered many working forced migrants who turned out to be already accepted newcomers or whose legal situations had changed while they had been employed. Although asylum seekers remained the main group of research interest, I therefore decided to also include forced migrant newcomers who had recently received a positive decision of their asylum cases or were tolerated after a final rejection. Moreover, some potential participants did not react or agree to my research requests and it partly became apparent that forced migrants may meet such investigations with suspicion, mistrust and fear.¹⁵ Having expected the sensitivity of flight experiences and asylum pro-

¹⁵ Previous research has shown that forced migrants may identify research interviews with the official hearings in which they have to disclose their personal stories of displacement. These accounts are conveyed under the pressure that they have to be approved by decision makers as sufficiently justifying a need of protection and therefore a safer legal status (Täubig 2019: 344; Schmidt 2020: 48f.; Schacht 2021: 128f., 132). Hence, newcomers may perceive any further investigations by others which could contradict their statements in official hearings and touch upon issues viewed as private, secret and/or painful as a risky nuisance which is better avoided

cedures from the outset of my project, I had not planned to treat them as a central aspect of my topic and tried to comfort my informants by clarifying that I was interested primarily in their relationships, practices and experiences in the Munich city region.

Compared to working asylum seekers, employing actors who suited my sample criteria of hiring newcomers seemed to constitute a no less “hard to find and study” (Bernard 2006: 192) group of informants. In most cases of gaining access to employers, I depended on the networks, knowledge and goodwill of mediating actors who could introduce me to suitable employers and convince them through their own credibility that I and my research project could be trusted (cf. Breidenstein et al. 2015: 53f.).¹⁶ In order to accommodate possible reservations of employing actors, I tried to make explicit in my e-mails, calls and visits that I could flexibly adapt my research practices to their terms and capacities. However, the gatekeeper contacts and recommendations of supportive mediating actors did not always lead to substantial research relationships, e.g. when my requests were explicitly rejected or remained unanswered. Due to the time pressure I perceived with regard to gathering data, I decided to focus on access to amenable workplaces instead of tenaciously investing my research resources in attempts to reach and convince employers who seemed inaccessible (cf. Smith 2007: 225-228; Breidenstein et al. 2015: 50-52). Towards the end of the main period of my fieldwork, it became clear that most of the workplaces I had managed to access and learn about were SMEs. This outcome foreshadowed a narrower analytical focus on small and medium-sized contexts of work (see Ch. 3.3).

Having touched upon the main difficulties of access, I will summarize the actual process of establishing initial contacts with my informants. In sum, eight of the forced migrant newcomers I already knew and with whom I had been sustaining connections since 2015 agreed on participating in my research project. Although the majority of these informants did not lead to additional research participants, one of them mediated a research relationship with one additional asylum seeker who was a flatmate in the same asylum shelter, while another one enabled me to approach his employer. The first employer who became an informant and granted access to a workplace was my father. Through this strong family tie, I came to know

(cf. Bernard 2006: 191).

¹⁶ Access for ethnographic research in work organizations has been depicted as frequently inhibited by suspicion on the part of managing and leading actors who may be “concerned – not unreasonably from their point of view – about the uses to which the research data will be put” (Smith 2007: 226). This may include undesired exposure, critique and accusation of power relations in companies, informal, discriminating, exploitative and unlawful policies and practices and other “potentially explosive” (ibid.) aspects which may be taken note of by ethnographers (ibid.: 223-226). More immediately related to the modalities of fieldwork, the presence and practices of researchers may be viewed as counterproductive disturbances of work processes (Breidenstein et al. 2015: 57).

the asylum seeker he employed and who in turn introduced me to one of his room-mates in a large asylum camp who also became an interview partner. A friend of my mother living in a neighbouring municipality referred me to a local councillor of the Green Party who had started to volunteer in spring 2015 as an employment broker for asylum seekers who had been allocated to her municipality. She connected me to the employing actors of three workplaces to which she had mediated asylum seekers. In consequence, I could include several forced migrant newcomers and already established employees of these three settings as informants. My sister and two friends who were no forced migrants referred me to one working newcomer and two employers who also connected me with their employees. Another acquaintance facilitated cursory insights into the temporary employment agency for which she was working as a recruiter. Moreover, I drew on my contacts among the staff of a therapy centre for traumatized refugees in Munich for which I had been working part-time in 2014 and 2015 and met one social worker who was among other things involved in supporting forced migrants with finding employment.

Besides resorting to my personal contacts, I could establish access to two employers through a career information day for forced migrants which I attended in January 2018 and on which several representatives of regional employers and employment support organizations informed about work-related opportunities and services. While I could directly approach one of these employers, I got connected to the other one by a refugee support coordinator of a professional association which presented its work on the career information day. The employer I came to know through the latter contact allowed me to conduct further research in her company and thus facilitated access to one forced migrant employee and some locally established co-workers. I had come to know about the career information day when it was announced on a regional radio programme. In a similar way, sensitivity for my topic and coincidence helped me to establish contact with the main coordinator and a social worker of a crucial municipal institution for mediating employment to forced migrants. I found out about the right point of contact when checking the notice board in the department of ethnology of Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München in January 2018. Through the social worker I gained access to the coordinator of an educational project of a professional association which aimed at preparing forced migrants for apprenticeships. Lastly, I also made efforts to establish contact via e-mail or phone calls with employment brokers and employers whom I had found on the world wide web, e.g. on job search portals which were partly addressing forced migrant newcomers as job seekers. While this strategy remained overall unrewarding it led to interviews with one employer and one leading actor of an association which was connecting forced migrants with

employers and offered support with applications for employment.

In sum total, my approaches of finding informants resulted in research contacts to 27 forced migrant newcomers who were all male and between 18 and approximately 45 years old. Of this entirety, 17 informants were still waiting for final decisions of their asylum procedures and one was tolerated at the time of my research. Eight informants had already received positive decisions and legal statuses which allowed them to stay in Germany for various lengths of time. Yet, the specific legal situation remained unknown for one and not entirely clear for six informants. While most forced migrant newcomers of my research had arrived in or around 2015, one had been living in Munich already since 2011. Countries of origin mainly included Nigeria, Mali, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria and Turkey. Five forced migrants were doing apprenticeships and 19 were working full-time, with three of these also having an additional minor employment. Two informants were working part-time and another one was doing an internship with the prospect of being employed in the near future.

Aside from those who were formally learning an occupation, the majority was working in jobs which implied a wider range of manual and auxiliary tasks and no professional skills or qualifications as entry requirements, e.g. store clerk, workshop assistant or kitchen help. Most forced migrant informants were reporting on their employment experiences in service sector workplaces, including three restaurants, a catering company, a hairdressing salon, an alteration shop, two gardening companies, a garden centre, three logistics centres of online retailers, a car workshop, a waste management company, an organic grocery store, a grocery store on a company campus and a nursing home for the elderly. Three of my research participants had found jobs and apprenticeships in the manufacturing and crafts sector, i.e., in an electronics workshop and two painting companies. Eight workplaces were located in the Munich city, nine in the Munich district and three in various other districts of the Munich region.

With several exceptions, these workplaces could be characterized as SMEs on the statistical basis that they featured less than 50 employees. While 20 people constituted its workforce, the organic grocery store was one of 20 branches of a regionally active company with around 450 employees which could be defined as a medium-sized enterprise in the more encompassing sense of the so called *Mittelstand* in Germany.¹⁷ Similarly, one of the restaurants had a workforce of approximately 15 people and was owned and run by a regionally based

¹⁷ This social-historically idiosyncratic category of medium-sized businesses is less rigidly defined in terms of numerically small workforces (Popal 2020: 16f., 20-22). Instead it has been viewed as comprising enterprises with up to 500 or possibly more employees which have in common that they “feature the typical characteristics of smaller firms that distinguish them substantially from large shareholder-owned corporations” (ibid.: 17; see Ch. 4.2).

family company which possessed another eight gastronomy establishments and suited the category of maximum 500 employees. The garden centre was also a branch store of a larger organization with around 1600 employees. In connection with its origin as a small family firm which had been growing and expanding over several generations, this company was officially represented as part of the *Mittelstand* (see Ch. 3.3). In contrast, a few workplaces did not correspond with the quantitative and qualitative criteria of SMEs (cf. Popal 2020: 16-22). In particular, this concerned the nursing home which belonged to a non-profit organization employing around 2000 people across the city and one large-scale logistics centre that was part of a complexly structured retail company based in the Munich region. The latter had more than 1600 employees and was to major parts owned by a private equity firm. Lastly, additional minor employment which I did not discuss in detail with my informants was done for a cleaning company, a petrol station and a fast food restaurant.

In addition to the forced migrants and aside from the recruiter of the temporary employment agency, ten employing actors who were hiring newcomers and represented ten different workplaces participated in my research. Of these informants, five were female and five male. My requests for getting connected to the forced migrant employees of their workplaces remained unsuccessful with a human resource manager of a large hotel with more than 400 employees and a main manager of a large newspaper delivery service employing around 700 people. Concerning the remaining eight workplaces with which the other employing actors were associated, there were intersections with 16 of the forced migrant informants in my sample who were working in the same workplaces. Put more simply, for eight workplaces I could conduct research with forced migrant newcomers as well as the actors who were employing them. This pertained to the electronics workshop, one painting company, the catering company, the garden centre, one restaurant, one gardening company, the hairdressing salon and the grocery store on the company campus. Finally, as already outlined above, I could talk to five professionals and one local volunteer who provided social services to forced migrant newcomers and were partly involved in brokering employment.

Aside from visiting the workplaces for interviews, I was granted more extended access for participant observation in six of the eight companies for which I could interact with newcomers as well as employers. In this context it is crucial to disclose that I encountered two employing actors, ten forced migrant newcomers and 15 co-workers of my total sample of informants exclusively during participant observation in these six workplaces (see Ch. 3.3). The cases in which I did not establish access to the everyday work practices and environments were the hairdressing salon and the grocery store. In both of these workplaces, I could ex-

change with one co-worker who participated in my interviews with other key actors, i.e., with two forced migrant newcomers in the hairdressing salon and the owner-manager of the grocery store. Hence, in total I could generate data with 17 co-workers.¹⁸

3.3 Methods

In addition to “secondary research” (Fontein 2014a: 57) of literature and documents, the predominantly qualitative methods I applied in the course of my ethnographic fieldwork included semi-structured and unstructured interviews as well as participant observation with the informants I could access and with whom I established variously close, continuous and multifaceted research relationships. During the period of my fieldwork, I informed all interaction partners with whom I was having contact beyond brief and singular encounters in freely accessible public spaces about my research project and the activities and aims it implied. This should ensure that they could consent to or reject participation in my project and decide for themselves what they were willing to share with me. In line with what I assured all informants, their real names do not appear in this thesis and significant places and organizations are likewise anonymized (cf. DeWalt and DeWalt 2011: 214-219).

Participant observation requires ethnographers to “balance” (Davies 2002: 71) the two interrelated yet contradicting practices of participating and observing according to the circumstances and characteristics of the fieldwork settings and actors as well as the aims and questions of the research project.¹⁹ In consequence, during interaction with their informants and field-sites, ethnographers face a “methodological and personal tension” (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011: 28) as they flexibly establish social roles which may be located somewhere between the conceptual ideals of a fully participating insider or group member and an exclusively observing outsider or anonymous analyst (ibid.: 21-38; Davies 2002: 71-84; Breidenstein et al. 2015: 66-69). Crucial for “the study of work” (Smith 2007: 221), actively and extensively participating has been acknowledged as a way of “eliciting (...) perceptual and embodied knowledge” (Fontein 2014b: 75) because it allows researchers to make their own immediate experiences with particular situations, practices and perspectives (ibid.; Spittler 2014: 4f., 11, 17-28; Smith 2007: 221-223; DeWalt and DeWalt 2011: 10-12; Breidenstein et al. 2015: 33-

18 The presented list of research contacts and field-sites remains incomplete; I have talked to a few other employers, many more forced migrant newcomers and their social contacts as well as several supporting actors who lastly did not sufficiently suit my sampling criteria.

19 According to DeWalt and DeWalt (2011), “participant observation is a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions, and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routine and their culture” (ibid.: 1). This has been grasped by Fontein (2014b) as a process of “learning through doing and experiencing as much as through watching and listening” (ibid.: 75) which generates information and understanding that is recorded mainly in the form of written fieldnotes and thereby transformed into interpretable data (ibid.: 85-88).

36). On the other hand, however, Davies (2002) has highlighted that participation mainly serves as “a means of facilitating observation of particular behaviours and events and of enabling more open and meaningful discussions with informants” (ibid.: 71; see also Fontein 2014b: 75).

In the course of my fieldwork, I could apply participant observation in the social and practical settings of six workplaces as well as numerous non-work contexts (see Ch. 3.2). Opportunities for participating and observing varied across the six workplaces and called for situational adjustments of interaction and research strategies. In the restaurant, the catering company and the garden centre, I could attend to everyday life at work only one time in each case, i.e., for around two hours, three and a half hours and seven and a half hours respectively. In the painting company and the gardening company, I could be co-present on two occasions which amounted to around eight hours in each of the settings. In the electronics workshop, participant observation was most extensive and took place on six occasions which in sum lasted 17 hours. In other words, I mostly did not repeat my participant observations on numerous occasions due to challenges of access and temporal constraints. Frequently repeated co-presence which I could approximate only in the case of the electronics workshop may have helped to gain further insights into routines, variations, unusual events and crises which could have contributed to a fuller and more complex picture of the social contexts and relationship processes mediated through these workplaces (cf. Burawoy 1998: 14-19; DeWalt and DeWalt 2011: 90f.; Hauser-Schäublin 2003: 45f.; Breidenstein et al. 2015: 76f.). Nevertheless, despite this methodological deficiency, I could still take note of a rich variety of different situations, practices and interactions in all six workplaces (cf. Smith 2007: 220ff.).

Concerning the possible practices and roles of participant observation, I did not participate in the sense of assuming the role of a member of the workforce who actively works together with informants on a recurring basis (cf. Burawoy 1979: 33-35; Smith 2007: 220, 224). However, engaging myself in simple work tasks which were also done by forced migrant employees defined most of my stay in the catering company and was occasionally possible in the electronics workshop. Aside from these first-hand experiences of work practices, I frequently found myself in situations of being a fairly disconnected and strange observer who watched and listened to others from the side while they were working together (cf. DeWalt and DeWalt 2011: 23). Hence, as I wanted to achieve more active involvement, I often supplemented my quiet and receptive co-presence with asking questions, starting conversations and following different informants on their ways through the workplaces, listening to their explanations and likewise responding to their questions and comments (cf. Breidenstein et al. 2015: 67f., 77-

79). The main focus of my overall not strongly prestructured activities, observations, jottings and fieldnotes were the social interactions between co-workers while they were working and taking breaks, the organization of work tasks and procedures and the spatial, temporal and socio-cultural characteristics of the workplaces (cf. DeWalt and DeWalt 2011: 89-91; Hauser-Schäublin 2003: 45-48).

The large majority of informants in the six workplaces did not know me when I approached them and seemed to accept me in the role of a learning student researcher who depended on the benevolence and cooperation of the people he was interested in. Yet, in some cases the role as an outsider was accentuated by my different social position and biographical experiences as a student who was largely unfamiliar with many of the occupational fields and social worlds of work I could research. Some members of workforces seemed to subtly express a sense of distance and superiority to the elitist academic social world with which they seemed to associate me when they asked questions about my personal life plans and economic activities. Again others interpreted my research aims and practices through their notions of journalism and seemed to embrace them as opportunities to speak their minds. My research interactions in the painting company were shaped by my friendship with the forced migrant employee who did his apprenticeship in this work context and whom I had met first in 2015. In the electronics workshop, my role as a student researcher was more difficult to establish because it was overshadowed by my social position as the son of the owner-manager.²⁰

Building on and resembling my personal explorations and social interactions with asylum seekers which began in May 2015 (see Ch. 1), participant observation in non-work contexts constituted the starting point of my fieldwork and continued throughout the entire research process. It mainly involved interactions with seven of the eight forced migrant newcomers in my sample whom I had met first in 2015 as well as some of their friends, companions, acquaintances, room-mates and neighbours. I also spent time outside of work with the forced migrant employees of the electronics workshop and the gardening company whom I came to know in the course of my research project. The practices of participant observation which I pursued could be summed up as “hanging out” (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011: 5, 87; see

20 This strong family tie, which was overall not defined by grave conflicts, seemed to imply a productive personal familiarity and much context knowledge along with particularly deep-seated and hard to reflect preconceptions about each other which seemed to unavoidably find their way into the research interactions with my father. Arguably more important, it cannot be ruled out that the forced migrant employee of the electronics workshop perceived my strong family tie as an alliance with the capital owning and thus dominating party in his employment relationship. Although our interactions appeared overall frank and sometimes more confidently guided by the employee than myself, this family relationship may have sparked his doubts about my trustworthiness. This may have kept him from disclosing information and opinions that he viewed as potential threats of his employment position and reputation as a worker.

also Fontein 2014a: 58f.) which allowed me to “catch utterances and opinions not expressed in other contexts” (Fontein 2014b: 77), gain more wide ranging insights about my informants' social relationships and life worlds, explore interview questions, develop rapport and find additional informants (cf. *ibid.*: 76f.; Hauser-Schäublin 2003: 37-45; Beer 2003: 22-24). This took place in the course of more than 20 visits in seven asylum camps and accommodations which entailed often lengthy conversations and discussions along with other sociable practices such as cooking, eating and drinking together, listening to music or taking strolls. I also engaged in free-time activities and public events such as parties and concerts with mainly two of my personally close West African informants and their social contacts.

Generally speaking, the research practices I pursued with the eight forced migrant informants whom I had been knowing since 2015 were facilitated by our already existing relationships which I perceived as characterized by interpersonal familiarity, trust and implicit notions of rather delayed reciprocity which appeared to be traceable to the fact that I had approached and supported them during their very first months in the Munich city region. In a few cases, my responses to participation in the project also took more direct and situational forms of giving back, but the hospitality and support of my forced migrant informants who often invited me for coffee or food and spent much time contributing to my research also left me with the uncomfortable feeling of capitalizing on unbalanced reciprocity relations, even though some seemed to enjoy opportunities for encountering me as hosts and supporters.

During my participant observations I could engage in a range of unstructured topic-centred interviews that were hardly pre-arranged, not guided by interview schedules and to large parts shaped by my informants and the social contexts in which I could be co-present (cf. Schlehe 2003: 77f.; Davies 2002: 94f.).²¹ In the six contexts of work, unstructured interviews were part of my strategy of gaining deeper insights into the subjective perspectives of my informants while being co-present and consisted of spontaneously and partly repeatedly initiated encounters which were framed by the practices, interactions and movements that constituted the work processes. They lasted between a few minutes and about half an hour, depending on the demands of various work situations. With 15 co-workers, eight forced migrant newcomers, two employers and two social service providers, unstructured interviewing which

21 According to Bernard (2006), unstructured interviewing “goes on all the time and just about anywhere” (*ibid.*: 210) in the course of ethnographic fieldwork. While it may be “very close to a ‘naturally occurring’ conversation” (Davies 2002: 94), an unstructured interview is characterized by the fact that the participants nevertheless recognize the situation as an interview in which the researcher pursues the aim of learning about issues and experiences which are freely expressed and viewed as meaningful by informants themselves (Bernard 2006: 211-217; Schlehe 2003: 77f.). In short, ethnographers “keep the conversation focused on a topic, while giving the respondent room to define the content of the discussion” (Bernard 2006: 216).

mostly happened at workplaces was the main method of eliciting verbal data. In non-work contexts, unstructured interviews with forced migrant newcomers as well as my father took place on several occasions and in the light of previous or anticipated participant observations, conversations and/or semi-structured interviews (cf. Hauser-Schäublin 2003: 45; Davies 2002: 94). Broadly speaking, topics of discussion mainly included subjective experiences, approaches and meanings concerning practices of sociability and the formation of social relationships as well as work, migration and personal networks in the Munich city region and beyond.

The majority of verbal data I could gather resulted from 26 interviews which featured many characteristics of “semi-structured interviewing” (Davies 2002: 94; see also Schlehe 2003: 78-83; Bernard 2006: 210-212).²² Semi-structured interviews aim at “open-ended” (Davies 2002: 95) responses which are expressed in the informants’ “own words” (ibid.) and do not merely reflect “the preconceived notions of the ethnographer” (ibid.). As they are based on interview schedules, semi-structured approaches allow for some extent of comparability of data generated through multiple interviews and facilitate effectively gaining rich information from informants who are not available on more than one occasion (Schlehe 2003: 78; Bernard 2006: 212). For these reasons, I planned to use them in my project.

I conducted 14 semi-structured interviews with 16 of my forced migrant informants. One of these interviews included two forced migrants and one already established co-worker. Another one which took place in an asylum camp featured two forced migrant informants as well as three room-mates who were co-present and occasionally commented on the interview. Among these 16 interview partners were the eight forced migrants whom I had come to know in 2015. I met one of them only once for the purpose of the semi-structured interview and not during additional occasions of participant observation. This was also the case for four of the other eight forced migrant interviewees with whom I did not have longer relationship histories. While my established ties seemed to confer larger extents of familiarity, trust and frankness to my interview encounters with the informants I already knew, all forced migrant interviewees were willing to answer my questions once they had agreed to give a semi-structured

22 Following Davies (2002), semi-structured interviews are prearranged and “set off in time and space as something different from usual social interaction between ethnographer and informant” (ibid.: 95). On the one hand, they are given structure by “some sort of interview schedule” (ibid.) which is prepared by the researcher, especially in the form of “a set of written questions” (ibid.). On the other hand, ethnographers implement these guiding schedules with flexibility and acknowledge that “the interview context and the relationship between participants” (ibid.) have a defining influence. Scripted questions and topics can be rephrased, reordered, dropped, supplemented and extended according to the interactive dynamics of the interview. Aside from being mainly confronted with guiding questions, this situational openness implies for informants that they can assume active roles and “are encouraged to expand on a response, or digress, or even go off the particular topic and introduce their own concerns” (ibid.; see also Schlehe 2003: 79).

interview. Many seemed to do so with high degrees of openness and deliberation and I rarely sensed stronger mistrust, confusion, irritation or fear during the interviews.

However, a few forced migrant informants, regardless of how long I knew them, seemed to refrain from detailed accounts of their personal difficulties and points of critique as newcomers and rather pursued the creation of favourable impressions of themselves and their efforts to 'integrate' in the Munich city region, e.g. when they strongly emphasized the importance of learning German or assured me of their superior diligence when they compared themselves to allegedly less committed co-workers. These favourable self-representations could be interpreted as influenced by dominant discourses about the significance of paid work (Spittler 2014: 2f.) and deservingness of forced migrants in social welfare systems of European nation-states. They may have been induced by my own social position as a white, male, upper middle-class German citizen of local origin, i.e., as a privileged member of what is often referred to as the dominant majority society which confronts many people categorised as migrants with the pressure of constantly justifying their existence in a nation-state territory where they are labelled as non-belonging foreigners who are suspected to cause economic burdens and security threats (cf. Vollmer and Karakayali 2018: 120f., 128-134; Jackson and Bauder 2013: 362-365, 371-374; see Ch. 2.4).

While two of the interviews were done in the place where I was staying during my fieldwork trips, four took place in cafes and restaurants, six in asylum camps and shelters and two in backstage areas of workplaces. Most of them lasted between one and two and a half hours, with three interviews lasting between three and four and a half hours. The interview schedule I used with the forced migrant newcomers focused on the subjective experiences and meanings of work and the formation of social relationships and should induce also narrative-biographical responses. It included questions concerning five major topics: the work context, practices and relationships; language and communication at work; social relationships and activities beyond work; individual skills, qualifications and work biographies; the Munich city region as place of arrival and settlement (cf. Schmidt 2020: 43). In combination with questions which aimed at insights into subjective experiences and meanings, I also posed questions which could be found in standardized interviews on ego-centred networks and focused on quantities such as self-reported frequencies of social practices and interactions or amounts of relationship partners (cf. Fuhse 2016: 117-137).

Regarding the challenges and limitations of my semi-structured interviewing with forced migrants, language differences, which influenced my research interactions more generally, seemed to play the most apparent role. Due to my incompetence to converse in the non-

European main languages of my informants, nine semi-structured interviews were conducted in German and five in English, with one informant occasionally switching from German to English. Verbal communication did not seem to pose a major impediment to understanding in most cases. Nevertheless, it was a downside of my lack of appropriate language skills that the openness and richness of semi-structured interviews and other verbal exchanges during fieldwork was suffering with several informants who had limited skills in the dominant languages I could use. Similar to what Schmidt (2020) reports for his recent interview research with working forced migrants (*ibid.*: 43, 45f.), some of my informants were linguistically bound to produce short answers which often called for further explanations and more interviewer questions. In consequence, mutual understanding was sometimes especially supported by facial expressions, gestures and vocal dynamics and I partly resorted to suggesting alternatives between German words and answer options. While the latter strategy appeared to be helpful for clarifying together what an informant wanted to say, it gave my personal assumptions a stronger influence on the insights generated through interviews and conversations.

I could conduct eight additional semi-structured interviews which included one employing actor in each case, took place in the workplaces these informants represented and lasted between 50 to 90 minutes, with the exception of the interview with my father which lasted two and a half hours. The guiding questions I prepared for these encounters were shaped by my assumption that other than employees, employing actors can be viewed as providing broad insights into the organization of work from the vantage point of powerful managing positions and interests (*cf.* Schmidt 2020: 41f.). Yet, I also considered more personal aspects of the social lives of employers at work and beyond when I discussed four main topics with them: the characteristics and requirements of work organizations and the employing actors' own roles and perspectives; the work context, practices and relationships; motivations and practical aspects of employing and interacting with forced migrants; the Munich city region as place of arrival and settlement.

My semi-structured interviews with the employing actors of the electronics workshop and the gardening company took place in the context of preceding encounters during participant observations at workplaces. The interview with the manager of the newspaper delivery service was arranged against the backdrop of an initial encounter during the career information day I had attended. In the five other cases, semi-structured interviews constituted the first face-to-face interactions with employing actors. In the garden centre and the catering company, they seemed to result in rapport with the organizational gatekeepers and were followed by further access for participant observation and second encounters. Overall, the employing

actors accommodated me with cooperative friendliness, readily answered my questions and openly voiced some of their concerns, experiences and approaches. This seemed to be supported by the fact that styles of speaking and contexts of interacting tended to be rather informal and not strongly influenced by the lower position of power and status which I sensed for myself in relation to the employers. Yet, this was less the case for more formal and diplomatic encounters with the official representatives of the hotel and the newspaper delivery service which constituted large companies (cf. Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 25f.; Schlehe 2003: 88-90).

What is more, even though many employers clarified at the outset that they could not spare much time, they still did not hurry during the interviews and often talked longer than announced. Similar to what I recognized with forced migrant newcomers, many of the employing actors seemed to evoke rather favourable impressions when they talked about their work organizations. While difficulties, drawbacks and conflicts were not withheld, work relationships with forced migrants were frequently depicted as overall harmonious, the ability of management and established workforces to solve problems was highlighted and employment conditions and environments were partly presented as exceptionally fair, decent and tolerant in comparison to other employers in the same sectors.

Lastly, four interviews which I conducted with three professional social service providers and the local volunteer who had acted as employment broker could be likewise described as semi-structured and lasted between one and one and a half hours. While they were guided by questions about institutional and personal strategies, practices and experiences related to offering support with regard to employment, these exchanges also included open discussions of my project and access to additional informants (see Ch. 3.2). Except for one of these interviews with a professional social service provider which I documented in the form of fieldnotes, I digitally recorded and fully transcribed the other 25 semi-structured interviews. Shortly after each interview encounter, I wrote fieldnotes in which I reflected upon the context and interpersonal dynamics of the interactions and included information which was conveyed before or after I had started the recorder as well as observations of the interview settings.

After the phase of generating most of my fieldwork data had come to an end, I was shifting the focus to data analysis (cf. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011: 171). The main process of data analysis began in late August 2018 with taking stock of the interview transcripts, fieldnote entries and additional materials I had gathered in the field, such as photographs and short videos, newspaper clippings and institutional reports and brochures. In parallel to these efforts

of managing and overviewing the data (cf. Hoek 2014: 106-109), I was re-reading my research proposal and interview guides and continuing with literature research in order to re-view my initial aims, research questions and “theoretical perspectives” (ibid.: 112) which “set the parameters for analysis” (ibid.) of ethnographic data (ibid.: 111f.). Against this backdrop, I started to attentively read my material and use “open coding” (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011: 177) as an analytical practice which initiated the “close examination of, and reflection on,” (ibid.: 175) significant portions of my data (cf. ibid.: 171-185; Breidenstein et al. 2015: 126-134). The approach I adapted resembled “a strategy of *selective* open coding” (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011: 185, emphasis in the original) by hand which referred to longer passages of four transcripts of interviews with forced migrant newcomers and resulted in more than 300 open codes.

In a next step, I scrutinized, merged and clustered my open codes in order to create a preliminary list of already more general, integrated and thematically focused codes and categories. This first coding scheme was fed into the qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti and has been continuously developed as I used it for interpreting, denoting, sorting and inter-relating the contents of ultimately 20 interview transcripts and 43 field-note entries which I processed in the computer program.²³ The central heuristic outcome of these analytical coding procedures were six interconnected main categories which each comprised several subordinated codes (cf. Breidenstein et al. 2015: 135-138). Aside from categories for opportunity structures and non-work activities in the Munich city region, subjectivities and characteristics of forced migrant newcomers as well as employers, co-workers and social service providers, types and aspects of social relationships and various factors of work contexts, I created a separate category for my reflections on the research process. Like the process of initial open coding, the elaboration and application of a systematic scheme of main categories and subordinated codes was accompanied by writing and editing memos on the definition of codes as well as interpretations, interconnections and other analytical aspects which I recognized as I engaged with my data (cf. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011: 185-188, 193-197).

While a thematic focus was already implied in the emerging system of codes and categories and all preceding phases of my research, I continued the analysis with reconsidering and identifying “core themes” (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011: 188) which resonated with my ethnographic data and could conceptually frame the concerns of my thesis (cf. ibid.: 188-191; Breidenstein et al. 2015: 117-120, 156-162). For the purpose of exploring themes, but also

23 In the course of my analysis I considered the contents of several more field-note entries and the remaining interview transcripts by closely reading them, searching more purposefully for information and assigning the codes I was developing by hand and in less stringent ways.

during the ensuing process of more focused and comparative analysis of particular cases and their characteristics, I repeatedly examined my coding scheme, memos and the data they referred to and chose particular codes for in-depth analyses when they appeared relevant to my further unravelling research interests (cf. Breidenstein et al. 2015: 135f., 139-156). This practice bore traces of “focused coding” (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011: 191) in the sense that it consisted of interpreting, differentiating, interrelating and summarizing the textual contents assembled under specific codes in separate documents and memos (cf. *ibid.*: 172, 191-197; Breidenstein et al. 2015: 135f., 140). In response to the more detailed empirical insights and based on my understanding of migrant settlement and sociabilities of emplacement which constituted the theoretical points of departure of my research, I focused my reading of literature on conceptualizations of social relationships. I lastly selected processes of relationship formation as the organizing core theme through which various aspects of my data and argument could be interconnected and presented in separate chapters of the thesis (cf. Breidenstein et al. 2015: 157f., 166-174; see also Ch. 1).²⁴

The empirically as well as theoretically informed choice of an organizing core theme was followed by a reconsideration and selection of suitable ethnographic cases which would allow me to elaborate my research questions in detail. From my total sample of analytical cases which I defined as work contexts I narrowed my focus down to SMEs because most of my informants were working in workplaces which suited this category. I chose four example workplaces on the basis of the range of perspectives and quality of ethnographic data I could gather for these four main cases, my personal familiarity with two of them and the contrasting variance of the types of social worlds, organizational structures and employment relationships they represented (cf. Breidenstein et al. 2015: 140f.). The data I had generated for ten other SMEs which I considered as supporting cases as well as the remaining larger employing organizations of my research were not the centre of attention. Nevertheless, they are implied in my more general analytical conclusions and selectively drawn into the presentation of my argument.

To conclude this summary of research methods, I will briefly introduce the four ethnographic fieldwork settings which serve as the main cases of work contexts to which the following statements of my thesis are predominantly referring. To give an example of the work context of mobile craft work, I describe a small self-employed painting company which was

24 Especially the sociological approaches by Hollstein (2001, 2010) and Fuhse (2009) facilitated a better understanding and framing of my data and research questions because they outline the interplay between structural context factors, social interaction and subjective perspectives and orientations of partners in personally important relationships (see Ch. 2.1).

based in the wealthy, suburban municipality bordering Munich's southern city limits in which I grew up. Due to the small size of the painting company it was accommodated in the private home of its owner which featured an office and a shed where most of the painting materials and tools were stored. The company had been founded in 2009 and offered a wide range of expert painting services to mostly private customers. One asylum seeker was doing his apprenticeship with the master painter who ran the company and I include this workplace in my analysis because it exemplifies the significance of apprenticeship relationships in SMEs for forced migrant newcomers in Germany.

As a case which shall illustrate the work setting of workshops, I will refer in detail to my father's electronics workshop in which high voltage power supply machines used for propelling and controlling laser, piezo and plasma applications in various fields, ranging from industrial production to research and development, were developed and produced. The workshop was a small self-employed enterprise founded in 1994 and it was accommodated on the ground level of an old back building which was surrounded by apartment blocks in a well connected southern city district. The direct neighbours in the same house were a carpenter workshop and some private households. At the time of my research, my father, to whom I will refer as the boss of the workshop in the following, and one asylum seeker worked together in this workplace. The electronics workshop is included in my argument because it highlights the potential heterogeneity and idiosyncrasy of small firms in which forced migrant newcomers may find employment.

The work setting of kitchens shall be exemplified by a catering company specialized in organic food which was offering the service of cooking and delivering meals to public as well as private kindergartens and daycare centres on a daily basis. The caterer was a family business founded in 1996. It was also located in a municipality at the southern fringe of Munich, on the ground level of a multi-storey residential complex close to the suburban train station and the centre of the municipality. Three forced migrant employees were among the ca. 30 people working for the catering company in April 2018. The catering company is included in my sample because it represents employment in manual service sector jobs which many forced migrant newcomers tend to find shortly upon arrival.

In order to give insights into the work setting of retail stores, I will refer to a large-scale garden centre which was selling a broad range of gardening products to private consumers. The garden centre was one of over ten branch stores spread across Germany which belonged to a mid-sized trade group that had been founded as a family company in the early 19th century. This workplace was part of an extensive commercial area located in the same

municipality like the catering company. Similar to several huge chain stores which dominated its neighbourhood, the garden centre had a car park for around 650 vehicles which had to be crossed to reach its large entrance portal in the front. 12 forced migrants were employed by the garden centre and its workforce comprised around 100 people at the time of my research. While this company arguably exceeded the size of a small firm, it is nevertheless included because the workforce of the branch store can still be viewed as medium-sized. In addition, the large garden centre shall serve as a contrasting case which helps to comparatively trace the characteristics of social relationships in smaller work organizations.

4. Work in small and medium-sized enterprises

The first main chapter engaging with my ethnographic data will address structures and characteristics of work in SMEs as factors of social context for the formation of sociabilities of emplacement and other social ties. Beginning with an exploration of spatial structures and manifestations of proximity (Ch. 4.1), I will proceed to scrutinizing various organizational structures, including working hours (Ch. 4.2). Then I will move on to tracing the heterogeneity of workforces with reference to existing research on the positionalities of forced migrant newcomers in segmented labour markets (Ch. 4.3).

4.1 Spatial proximity

The central question discussed in this subchapter concerns the ways in which the spatial structures of the four example workplaces offered opportunities to meet and interact with people co-present at work. Physical “opportunity structures” (Fuhse 2009: 53) in the form of places, spaces and localized activities which are shared with others and associated with particular social “categories and relationship models” (ibid.: 54) play a crucial role for facilitating “contact in the first place” (ibid.). Hence, the spaces and times of meeting others act as interconnected physical dimensions of context which shape social relationships in that they enable and constrain more or less continuous interactions of certain kinds. This constitutes a potential foundation for further relationship processes (ibid.: 53f.; Feld 1981: 1016ff.; Hollstein 2001: 16; Adams and Allan 1998: 3-5). In this sense, the workplace has been recognized as a type of site which offers opportunity structures for social contact that may lead to particular forms of social relationships which are personally significant for individual co-workers (e.g. Fine 1986: 187f.; Sias 2009: 1f., 89ff.; Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 136-141; Thelen 2014: 163-191; Hodson 1996: 733; Marks 1994: 845ff.; Granovetter 1973: 1371f.).

Instead of assuming that social contact can be taken as given for any context of employment in SMEs, I suggest to apply the notion of spatial proximity which allows a more refined consideration of the opportunity structures my research participants experienced at their particular workplaces. How spatial proximity between individuals or groups shapes social relationships has been researched with a focus on the diverse and changing ways in which shared physical space articulates with manifestations of social and affectual closeness, distance and position (Reed-Danahay 2015; Simmel 1908: 685-691; Hollstein 2001: 81-87). In an interview research on perceptions of friendship development among work peers, Sias and Cahill (1998) conceptualize spatial proximity between co-workers as a major context factor which influences relationship formation and state that closer proximity increases “the amount of interaction among employees” (ibid.: 277). The authors describe proximity as “working alongside or near to the other person, [...] in the same department or the same shift” (ibid.: 285) and conclude from their findings that this is a key prerequisite for developing closer ties “in 'traditional' work environments characterized by physical co-presence of employees” (ibid.: 290), especially during the initial phase of moving from acquaintanceship to becoming friends (ibid.: 290f.).

This conceptualisation of spatial proximity as context factor implies that distance and separation at work translate into having less opportunities for contact in which relationships could be fostered and it can be argued that not all workplaces provide favourable opportunity structures in terms of spatial proximity. For the majority of occupations, Fine (1986) claims that “workers are expected to remain together throughout most of their workday” (ibid.: 188) and even those who work separately often have contact at work when they frequent common spaces for certain occasions, e.g. during breaks. Nevertheless, whether co-workers “work in close proximity” (ibid.) or rather at a distance or separated from each other depends, in conjunction with temporal, organizational and social factors, on the spatial structures and requirements of particular work settings. These may be thought of in terms of physical shapes and sizes, divisions and boundaries, movements and fixations as well as density in the sense of numbers and distributions of co-present individuals and work objects in relation to space (Mollona 2009: 20-24; Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 259f.).

Put briefly, different kinds of work which may involve different aims, and therefore a great variety of actors, objects, technologies and procedures, have to be carried out in certain places, spaces and environments with corresponding characteristics (Spittler 2016: 67): while “dockers need ports (...), bureaucrats need offices” (Wallman 1979: 12). Because of their heterogeneous characteristics and the wider range of economic sectors in which SMEs can be

found (Popal 2020: 15-22), it would be misleading to suggest that they have uniform spatial features which similarly shape physical proximity in all of them. Yet, due to their limited organizational scope it has been argued that small firms can be more generally expected to constitute “a context of smallness and proximity” (Marlow 2005: 5) in which “distance will be less than in large ones” (Tsai, Sengupta and Edwards 2007: 1782) and work relationships are therefore defined by frequent and close contact and interaction between co-present actors (ibid.; Marlow 2005: 4f.).

Lastly, social contact and mutual exposure resulting from spatial proximity do not always act as enabling opportunity structures but may as well constrain or attach further conditions to the formation of significant relationships (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 134f.; Anderson 2015: 106-109). In her discussion of urban cosmopolitan notions of shared public spaces as sites of connectivity between people who perceive each other as different in various ways, Valentine (2008) identifies “a potentially naïve assumption that contact with 'others' necessarily translates into respect for difference” (ibid.: 325). Based on empirical data, she argues that often “proximity does not equate with meaningful contact” (ibid.: 334) which leads from particular positive encounters to more encompassing forms of respect for other human beings and the mitigation of prejudices and hostile attitudes (ibid.: 325). Especially under conditions of perceived socio-economic deprivations, inequalities and injustices, spatial proximity has been found to generate comparisons and competition in terms of “access to resources and special treatment” (ibid.: 327), violence and other forms of “resentment, from rudeness in one-to-one situations to the threat of vigilante action“ (ibid.), as well as avoidance, “defensiveness” (ibid.: 326) and the assertion of social boundaries and identities (ibid.: 326-330).

Dissociation, competition and resentments in reaction to spatial proximity have been found in social contexts of work as well, where they can be related to the fact that co-workers mostly share spaces and activities not voluntarily, as it may be the case e.g. for friendships, but on the basis of their contractual employment relationships (Schmidt and Müller 2013: 370-374; Sias 2009: 90; Tsai, Sengupta and Edwards 2007: 1802f.). Furthermore, close proximity and visible exposure on central spots in bounded workspaces can be related to close supervision and control of workers through bosses, colleagues or customers (Dyer, McDowell and Batnitzky 2010: 645ff.; Birke, Bluhm and Mayer-Ahuja 2017: 133f.). How spatial proximity and contact in the workplaces of my research were entangled with social and organizational dynamics will be further examined throughout the following chapters. In order to set the scene for these ensuing arguments, I will now use the above discussed conceptual underpinnings to describe and assess the spatial structures of the four example workplaces before I

address the context factor of spatial proximity for each of them.

Spatial structures of workplaces

In order to trace some of the spatial aspects of work in my empirical material, I will resort in this subchapter to the orienting distinctions provided by Spittler (2016) who understands workplaces as spots of activity where tools and objects of work are assembled, often close to the body of the worker. Workplaces can be arranged within workspaces. The latter are defined as physical spaces of various sizes and structures which are materially and symbolically demarcated for the main purpose of work. Workspaces can be closed, such as factories, workshops or department stores which assemble a certain amount of authorized persons under their roofs and wall them off as well as protect them to certain degrees from surrounding influences. On the other hand, while they are likewise demarcated, open workspaces such as fields or construction sites are much more exposed to the natural work environment which implies e.g. rain or sun exposure (ibid.: 67). In addition, some work processes cannot be realized in one stable workspace but imply shifting locations and mobility of individuals or groups of workers.

Except for the painting company which featured work on different worksites that were revisited over varying periods of time, the other three example enterprises were operating in stable and closed workspaces which varied in their sizes and structures. In contrast to the spacious garden centre, the electronics workshop and the catering company were housed in relatively small premises. The changing worksites of the painting company were predominantly living houses and other privately used buildings located in the quiet and wealthy city districts and suburban municipalities in the southern Munich region. These real estates were either already inhabited or still under construction or renovation. Among them were larger houses with several floors, garages and gardens and a few villas which mediated insights into the living standards of the rich. Only a few work projects were done deeper in the city. Besides working indoors, work orders implied outside work, e.g. on facades, walls, fences or doors.

The electronics workshop presented itself from the inside as a dense arrangement of worktables, boxes, bowls, cabinets and shelves which were crammed with machines, tools, electronic and mechanic components, business documents, technical books and plans as well as various personal items of the boss which were of no instrumental use, such as old photo cameras, film projectors and radios. Most of these objects were converging in one main workroom of about 30 m² which included two parallel windows at the front and a section of glass bricks in the back. A small vestibule connected this central workspace with the entrance door

at the right side of the front and the back right corner of the workshop where a restroom and a second, much smaller workroom were located. The second workroom was filled with a worn out tabletop on which more robust machines were set up. These were needed for drilling, grinding and cutting metal, plastic and other working materials. The few square metres of the vestibule in front of the second workroom were occupied by a vertical drilling machine and a circular table saw. The main workroom, the vestibule and the second workroom were not separated by closed doors, which resulted in a rather open and seamless interconnectedness of workspaces.

Compared to the electronics workshop, the catering company was accommodated in a somewhat larger and more fragmented spatial structure. It comprised an entry area leading first to an office and a separate break room. Deeper inside the building, a separate scullery and a room where the cooked food was packed into heat-insulating transport boxes were both directly next to the spacious kitchen so that one could quickly pass from there into the other two rooms. The scullery was a small room of about 10 m² which had a window at one end and featured an automatic dishwasher which was set up beside three steel kitchen sinks. The wall opposing its entrance across the corridor was covered by a rack in which the transport boxes were stored. In addition, there were several smaller storage rooms and a restroom which could be reached through a narrow, winding and windowless corridor which connected all the separate spaces of the catering company.

The garden centre was housed in a rectangular metal and glass construction which was composed of five large and openly interconnected halls with transparent roofs through which much daylight could enter. Besides the sales floor of the garden centre which measured ca. 6500 m² in total, the building also accommodated a separate break room, offices and a warehouse. The latter was connected to the sales floor through a roll-up door and densely packed with the whole range of products offered by the store which were placed on high shelves and most of the floor space. A small office booth was set up in the middle of the warehouse and a yard with large waste containers could be reached from here. This was where the garden centre disposed of flowers and plants which did not fulfil its quality norms, e.g. when they had not been sold within a couple of days and began to wither. Besides the workspaces of the garden centre, some additional small businesses such as a shop selling cut flowers, a bakery and a restaurant were assembled around its entrance and immediately after its checkout area which consisted of a broad row of numerous tills.

Proximity, exposure and separation

Having sketched their basic spatial characteristics, I will consider in which ways the four example workplaces fostered spatial proximity and mutual exposure among the people co-present at work. From my observations and interviews I gained the impression that, despite differences in terms of size and structure of spaces, all four example workplaces provided spatial conditions which facilitated close, frequent and partly almost constant social contact and exposure. But the scullery of the catering company and some sections of the warehouse of the garden centre can be considered as examples of relatively isolated and secluded workplaces which involved less social contact.

As the painting company was not active in one fixed worksite, the condition of spatial proximity at work could vary from one job to the next. Yet, the painting company mainly received the order to work inside a certain amount of rooms of a house. This meant that most of the time the forced migrant apprentice and his self-employed master were directly co-present in the same space during work or in close calling distance. Although some jobs implied wider spatial separation between them, the apprentice concluded that “most time I'm always working close to him” (Interview Tony 02.01.2018) and he explicitly stated that this close spatial proximity would promote social interaction with the master. This was also apparent during my observations when the painting workers revisited a construction site where they worked on about 15 m² in the basement of a completely gutted, grand old villa which was going through a general refurbishment. Furthermore, in order to reach its dispersed worksites, the painting company depended on being spatially mobile. The master therefore owned a small transporter which had the label of the firm printed on each side and two seats in the front. While in the car, the master and his apprentice were sitting directly next to each other in close proximity. This can be understood as an opportunity for engaging in verbal exchanges on a wide range of topics not necessarily related to work tasks and procedures alone and the apprentice likewise depicted the car as a space where much informal exchange took place.

The majority of work in the electronics workshop was done within its main workroom in which several distinct workplaces for specific tasks could be identified. At the windows in the front, an office niche was installed which featured a computer, a telephone and other office devices. Next to the office niche, a small space on a table had been carved out for preparing instant coffee and tea between a trolley for tools and rows of cable spools. There was no separate break room. Along the left wall which connected the front with the back, a continuous worktop was attached. On the tabletop that ran along the back wall, several oscilloscopes together with other measuring devices were gathered around a free spot on the table where

machines could be placed to test their circuits and performance, detect errors and work on solutions to specific problems. This testing and development workplace resembled an experimental operation table more than a standardized stop on an assembly line. Right in the middle of the main workroom, two tables were put together and constituted two opposing workplaces. Many different precision engineering tools, such as screwdrivers, pliers, electric soldering irons and handy drilling machines were sorted into receptacles and lined up close to the edges of the two tabletops where they could be swiftly reached. Most of the routine assembly tasks were accomplished at these two central workplaces and at the long worktop along the left side of the room.

From every position in the main workroom, eye contact between co-present persons was possible and voices did not have to be raised for clear verbal communication. One had to speak only slightly louder to be heard across the vestibule in the second workroom which was occasionally frequented for belabouring raw pieces of metal and plastic. While the tools and machines made noises, they rarely drowned out conversations and were not used continuously. The sonic atmosphere could rather be described as mostly calm and concentrated, with a radio playing music and sounding a good deal of news and reports in agreeable volume. All in all, the above described spatial conditions of the main workroom of the workshop appeared to strongly expose co-workers to each other. This observation was supported by a statement of the boss who said it would be inevitable that the close spatial proximity within the walls of the workshop led to frequent interaction during work in the sense that each worker would continuously check or notice what the other one was doing at the moment.

Similar to the main workroom of the workshop, the kitchen of the catering company featured a range of openly connected workplaces where most of the work was done. It was divided into two sections by a wall in the middle of the room which had wide openings on each end. The section right at the entrance to the kitchen was slightly smaller and featured several steel shelves and worktables, a fixated mixing machine and a radio which played music that could be heard in the entire kitchen. Along the walls of the larger main section of the room, additional racks, shelves and worktables constituted workplaces which were equipped with different kitchen tools such as scales, knives and spoons in receptacles, big pots, lids and metal bowls. At one side of the main section a small sink, a big cooker and two large ovens were placed and the long wall to its opposite featured several narrow windows which lighted the kitchen. Another doorway in a rear corner lead to a small room with a large fridge, bins and an automatic potato peeler. The spatial structure of the kitchen allowed co-workers to easily communicate verbally and exchange signs and glances in the main workspace, also across the

two openings linking the interconnected sections. For instance, during my participant observation, a kitchen help who was working in the smaller section could see and supervise from there how I was getting along with a task I was assigned in the main section. The scullery was another central workplace of the catering company. As a consequence of its spatial separation from the kitchen and the fact that only one person was supposed to work on this post, this worker was separated from others and direct social contact barely occurred during work in the scullery. For this and other reasons, washing dishes was assessed as an unattractive and boring job by several informants and the chef of the catering kitchen described the scullery as a socially isolated workplace. She did not see the dishwasher during her days at work and therefore regularly visited him in the scullery in order to greet him and check how he was doing.

In the garden centre, work activities were much less focused in one or a few main workspaces but distributed across several sections of the large sales floor which constituted eight distinct departments for different groups of products. Besides sections for indoor, garden and plot plants, there was also a department for outdoor pots, home decoration, gardening furniture and tools, fish ponds and an outdoor area with trees, shrubs and earth. A department for pet articles sold various small animals and featured a wall full of aquariums and terrariums. The sales floor was structured along a broad main aisle which led customers through all the halls of the store and made every product section accessible. Each of the different departments was characterized by rows of shelves along their walls and on the floor space besides the aisle as well as platforms and pedestals filled with various articles and special offers. In addition to the visual stimulation of customers, recorded cries of rainforest birds were continuously aired through speakers on the entire sales floor. Furthermore, each of the departments had a central point in the form of a wooden counter which was equipped with a computer and other office devices needed to organize the work in the departments. The counters were tagged with signs which made them recognisable to customers as spots they could approach to get information from employees. Although the sheer spaciousness and high density of objects could evoke a peculiar sense of seclusion in some peripheral corners of the garden centre, most of the time employees and customers who were steadily roaming the sales floor moved in close proximity or conglomerated at the info counters and seemed to be constantly exposed to each other's eyes and ears.

Apart from the departments and the tills, the warehouse was a third major workplace of the store. Several employees were co-present here as well. But customers had no access to the warehouse and in some corners it resembled a wildly growing jungle of consumption goods which kept co-workers apart during their work. When I visited the yard which was con-

nected to the warehouse, the only person I met was a forced migrant employee who was throwing several loads of expired flowers into one of the waste containers. Hence, from my observations in the warehouse I gained the impression that it could partly be a rather secluded and socially isolated workplace when compared to work on the sales floor where workers were in more direct and frequent contact with customers as well as each other.

4.2 Organizational structures

The previous subchapter has shown that the conditions of spatial proximity at the four example workplaces allowed for overall closer contact and interaction between co-workers. I will now turn to the organizational structures of the workplaces and ask how they shaped work interactions and relationships and thereby co-constituted the social context for the formation of personally significant relationships. Aspects of work organization are crucial in this regard because they have been found to affect the subjective experience of work and the social interactions and relationships at the workplace, e.g. in terms of “solidarity with coworkers, peer training, and social friendships” (Hodson 1996: 724).

Most concisely, the organization of work can be equated with division of labour²⁵ which facilitates efficiency in realizing complex work aims while it is simultaneously used by employers as a means of securing control over the labour process and capitalist employment relationships (Moldaschl 2018: 359f.; Flecker 2017: 154ff.; Hodson 1996: 719-722). Furthermore, work is purposefully divided, coordinated, controlled and accomplished in work organizations which can be understood as “the outcome of the interactive patterns of human activity” (Watson 2017: 128) and not merely as reified, static and bounded technological entities (ibid.: 128-130; Mollona 2009: 20f.). Complementing their practical, relational and processual aspects to which I will turn in chapter 5, the more institutionalized side of work organizations in the sense of a “social structure of the company” (Schmidt and Müller 2013: 363) shall be

25 Division of labour refers to the different practical activities, responsibilities, requirements and conditions of work in certain job positions and occupations (cf. Mollona 2009: 25-31). Different management approaches towards controlling employees and rationalizing the labour process in various economic sectors largely define how work tasks are divided and coordinated (Flecker 2017: 154ff.; Hodson 1996: 719-722). Especially in contexts of highly standardized mass production or services, employers may tend to seek “direct control over workers” (Flecker 2017: 178, my translation) by allocating each of them one or a few narrowly predefined tasks for which no extensive work-related skills or qualifications are required upon entry. Jobs defined by such restricted task profiles have been described as low-skilled, repetitive, dull, alienating and tedious (Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 88-91; Mollona 2009: 35-37; Ogbonna and Harris 2006: 390). On the other hand, workers such as craftspeople and other providers of more customised products or services may be prescribed more “responsible autonomy” (Flecker 2017: 178, my translation) over the accomplishment of a broader complex of work tasks. This can imply indirect guidance by employers through target agreements and the official requirement of certified qualifications, expert skills as well as workers' subjectivities, e.g. in the sense of personal experience and creativity. Hence, workers are granted more freedom of choice concerning the ways in which tasks are completed to reach an overall work aim for which clear-cut standard procedures may be hard to define in advance and uncertainties have to be dealt with on the way (ibid.: 164ff.).

grasped first by approaching the four example workplaces as sets of formal organizational relationships between job positions (Mikl-Horke 2007: 97-106).²⁶

The leading actors in three of the example workplaces represented their organizations as small self-employed enterprises or small-scale family businesses. Also in the fourth case, the large garden centre with a medium-sized workforce, family history and continuing family ownership was emphasized as retaining some influence over the ways and dynamics of working together (see Ch. 3.2). Hence, it has to be clarified how work organization plays out as a context factor for relationship processes in particular settings of SMEs which are “often family-owned and run” (Edwards et al. 2006: 702). Research has shown that the organizational characteristics and the continuous negotiation of employment relationships in small firms are rarely shaped by small numbers of employees alone. The factor of firm size has to be considered in conjunction with subjective choices, available resources, organizational features, institutional contexts such as economic sectors and labour and product markets (ibid.: 703ff.), relations of interdependence with larger companies (Barrett and Rainnie 2002: 423-426) and embeddedness in kinship ties, other social networks as well as legal and occupational frameworks (Kloosterman, van der Leun and Rath 1999: 257-263; see also Marlow 2005; Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 57-79; Popal 2020: 15-22). Nevertheless, while the risk of “forcing a false homogeneity on small firms” (Barrett and Rainnie 2002: 419) has to be kept in mind, findings based on survey data have indicated some size-related common tendencies regarding the “experience of work” (Tsai, Sengupta and Edwards 2007: 1780) in SMEs (ibid.: 1801f.).

The complex of organizational aspects which I will single out in relation to the size of the companies in my research includes the characteristics of employing actors and the social structures of the workplaces in connection with managing approaches, organizational rules and division of labour. Working hours will be addressed at the end of this subchapter. In the following sections, I will briefly review these interconnected organizational aspects and trace some of the ways in which they may contribute to the social context for relationship processes in SMEs. As this conceptual outline shall also serve the purpose of further introducing organizational aspects which will become relevant at later points in the thesis, it has to be noted in advance that I will not explore them in their entirety in the ethnographic descriptions of the

26 These interconnected posts are not primarily defined by the individuals who occupy them but are viewed as predetermined by official company rules and prescriptions which associate each post with specialized tasks and functions in the division of labour and corresponding work requirements and ranks in hierarchies of power, status, prestige and rewards in the workplace as well as in society more generally (Mikl-Horke 2007: 97-106). In this sense job positions can be viewed as confronting individuals with formal work roles which they are somehow expected to act out in the context of their work relationships (ibid.: 129-136; Blumstein and Kollock 1988: 469f.; Fuhse 2009: 61f.).

organizational structures of the four example workplaces which are also part of this subchapter.

Employing actors, social structures and divisions of labour

Employing actors frequently assume influential roles for the qualities and dynamics of work and social life in SMEs. In their empirical study of the social worlds of small and medium-sized industrial workplaces in various regions of Germany, Kotthoff and Reindl (2019) conclude that the social practices and relationships which evolve among co-workers are to large parts shaped by the personal and social characteristics of entrepreneurs who do not merely act as managers but also own their businesses. They are thus directly connected and committed to all economic risks and circumstances of their firms (ibid.: 9). The subjective aspects which flow into instrumental and social practices and processes in the workplace include e.g. the biographical relationships of owner-managers to their companies, the meanings they give their firms in their lives, their personal work attitudes and their “appreciation of co-workers” (ibid., my translation).

In terms of organizational scales and structures, small or medium size implies that businesses may not consist of extensive and rigidly fixed sets of formal relationships between numerous ranked and specialized positions. In fact, job positions and work roles may not be formally established and predefined to the extent it could be observed in larger workplaces which may be stronger governed according to bureaucratic principles (Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 98f.). This forestalls complexly graduated hierarchies and results in “flat organizational structures” (Tsai, Sengupta and Edwards 2007: 1794) which do not offer many opportunities for upward mobility within the company (ibid.: 1794f.; Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 38). Some small firms may therefore feature rather small, solidary and weakly competitive groups of workers while they offer limited opportunities to encounter a larger variety of differently positioned people (Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 115).

According to flat organizational hierarchies in contexts of close spatial proximity, small firm work relationships have been typified through notions such as “personal face-to-face relations” (Barrett and Rainnie 2002: 418). These characterizations allude to the direct verbal and practical exchanges and experience-based knowledges and expectations about each other which may constitute the main intersubjective basis of work relationships in smaller work settings (Tsai, Sengupta and Edwards 2007: 1802; Marlow 2005: 4-6; Schmidt 2020: 206; Popal 2020: 18f.). In many small firms co-workers in similar as well as differing hierarchical positions approach each other rather informally as particular individuals and not

merely according to formal rules, normative expectations and status differences which could be viewed as underlying their work roles (Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 436). The often holistic involvement of many owner-managers can mean that they are frequently co-present in work-spaces and actively work right beside their employees or in direct cooperation with them. This facilitates interaction and first-hand familiarity not only among colleagues but also between employers and their employees (Tsai, Sengupta and Edwards 2007: 1802).

Nevertheless, the tendency towards flat organizational structures and personal work relationships does not mean that hierarchical differences of power, status and authority do not crucially define work relationships in small businesses (Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 8f., 428f.; Sias 2009: 19f.). In how far hierarchical divisions between co-workers are of significance for social life at work can be viewed as shaped by different approaches to managing employment relationships and the labour process (Edwards et al. 2006: 710f.). Management approaches are not “determined solely by the market” (Marlow 2005: 5) as external influence but are among other things also oriented along “the personal preferences and histories of individual owners” (Edwards et al. 2006: 714) and may assume “authoritarian or participative variants” (ibid.).²⁷

Bound up with management approaches, certain organizational rules and principles have been found to shape work practices and relationships in small firms (Marlow 2005: 5-9; Edwards et al. 2006: 710f.). These may be thought of as “either *universalistic* and formalized, or *particularistic*, unwritten and informal” (Edwards et al. 2006: 710, emphases in the original), with more particularism meaning that a firm allocates more “privileges to some workers, based on [e.g.] kinship or length of service, that it does not permit to others” (ibid.: 710f.). Marlow (2005) further specifies the notion of informality as “emergent, flexible and loosely structured” (ibid.: 5) management practices and clarifies that “formality and informality co-exist in all firms but the degree to which this occurs and the manner in which it emerges will be influenced by firm size” (ibid.: 7).

In contrast to large companies which may rely more on the enforceability of formal bureaucratic rules that explicitly and universally define working conditions, procedures and relations, members of small firms may interactively establish more informal work arrange-

27 While more authoritarian management “is based on the power of the manager and (...) can entail the arbitrary use of sanctions” (Edwards et al. 2006: 710), more participative approaches are characterized by the prevalence of “a degree of discussion and the flow of opinions up as well as down the hierarchy” (ibid.: 711). Where participation is strongly endorsed, “workers are treated as the equals of managers” (ibid.: 712), their concerns are acknowledged and they are not thought of as “mere factors of production” (ibid.). More authoritarian approaches have received much attention especially where family concepts are used as frames of reference for controlling the labour process (Barrett and Rainnie 2002: 418f.). According to Edwards et al. (2006) the literature on employment in small businesses reveals “that in many firms there are reasonable working relationships and a degree of respect for workers' interests” (ibid.: 712, 714; see also Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 8f.).

ments. This higher degree of organizational informality has been explained with reference to close “spatial and social proximity” (Marlow 2005: 8) between workers and managing actors and other interconnected factors, such as “the need to respond flexibly to market shifts and employer/employee dynamics” (ibid.: 7). Organizational informality is part of the survival strategy of many small businesses, but for employees it also bears the risk of arbitrary and unequal treatment by employers and precarious working conditions (ibid.: 6-9). Securing “a sense of substantive fairness” (Tsai, Sengupta and Edwards 2007: 1803) may become a more tacit and complexly interpersonal issue when formal rules and labour legislation are not institutionalized or implemented only in ways which do not compromise employers' economic interests (ibid.: 1802f.; Schmidt 2020: 206f.; cf. Ogbonna and Harris 2006: 398f., 402f.; see Ch. 2.2).

Corresponding to their generally low numbers of employees, often flat hierarchical structures and comparatively low degree of formalization, it has been claimed that SMEs often feature a less extensive division of labour, more task-related flexibility and informality and thus allow for considerable autonomy over work when compared to larger and stronger formalized companies (Tsai, Sengupta and Edwards 2007: 1781-1783). Different tasks and responsibilities may be less rigidly contained within bureaucratically imagined boundaries of ranked and separated job positions which means that jobs in small firms can imply a more variable “breadth of tasks” (ibid.: 1792) and “the range of roles that workers take on may be wide” (ibid.: 1781f.). In particular, entrepreneurs who possess the necessary knowledge, skills and authority are able to act beyond their manager roles and may commit themselves to every task and responsibility of their businesses whenever the need arises (Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 98f.).

Without much interruption by management's attempts to impose ideals of rational procedures, work tasks and mutual assistance may be flexibly shared and coordinated among co-workers themselves according to situational demands at work (Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 101-108) and along social bonds and preferences within the workforce (Edwards et al. 2006: 705). However, high levels of autonomy and self-responsibility can be mainly expected for skilled and qualified workers and the fact that small firms are involved in many different economic sectors implies that more fine grained divisions of labour, close supervision and low levels of autonomy can be found as well, e.g. in low-skilled and low-paid jobs in manual food manufacturing (Tsai, Sengupta and Edwards 2007: 1791f.) or machine-assisted production work in the clothing industry (Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 88f.).

How do the organizational aspects reviewed so far feature as context factors for rela-

tionship processes? Considering the strong influence of employers, flat hierarchies, direct, personal and cooperative work relationships and participative, respectful and weakly formalized but fair organizing practices, it can be argued that these features may allow for, or even favour, the formation of collegial and personally significant relationships because they alleviate the disassociating effects of strong hierarchies and status inequalities, competitive pressure, bureaucratic anonymity as well as uncompromising management dictates and formal regulations (Sennett 2013: 148-157, 166-178; Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 114f.; Hodson 1996: 733f.; Kock and Kutzner 2018: 452f., 464f.). In particular, different positions of power, status and authority in the workplace which are intertwined with different resources, interests and normative expectations of relationship partners have been identified as a decisive and persistent limiting factor of social ties across hierarchical boundaries (Fine 1986: 199f.; Kurth 1970: 148). The formation of sociable and reciprocal relationships has been considered less likely in the context of these structurally unequal work relations and it has been claimed that peer co-workers “with approximately equal, or at least complementary, resources find it easier to establish relationships of exchange” (Fine 1986: 199; cf. Thelen 2014: 173-175; De Neve 2001: 138-149, 155f.; Allan 1998: 76-78).

However, different kinds of personally significant relationships between subordinates and supervising actors may emerge not only under the conditions of the ideal type small firm summed up above and have been empirically traced in a wider range of organizational and political-economic contexts (Thelen 2014: 170-175, 180-185; Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 139f.; Sias 2009: 99f.). On the other hand, weak insistence on formal hierarchies or promotion of equitable relations do not imply that structurally unequal co-workers automatically favour the development of sociabilities of emplacement or other personally significant relationships. For example, Kotthoff and Reindl (2019) provide evidence for a small firm in which hierarchical work relationships were flat, close, equitable and not ridden by excessive top-down management pressure to perform. Nevertheless, the structurally antagonistic yet interdependent positions between the workers and their employer were persistently perceived as a dividing factor due to the specifically regional influence of trade unions on the employees' “wage worker consciousness” (ibid.: 116, my translation).

Regarding the effects of organizational rules and managing approaches, less formalization and more participation of co-workers and reliance on their involvement as experienced, trusted and situationally acting subjects may provide conditions under which social interactions at work are less circumscribed by formal scripts and can thrive more freely according to interpersonal dynamics (Sias 2009: 106; Kock and Kutzner 2018: 447f.). But injustices result-

ing from informal double standards or particularistic company policies could turn out as barriers to further relationship processes when they spark conflicts related to “competition, jealousy, and political strife” (Sias 2009: 106) among co-workers, especially with regard to racist discrimination of forced migrant newcomers and ignorance of labour legislation (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 138).

Lastly, the practical tasks which have to be accomplished in small firms and the ways in which they are divided, coordinated and controlled can be considered as an organizational context factor for relationship processes in so far as they shape the degree and quality of working either separately and alone or in direct proximity, cooperation and coordination with others. Rigid and extensive divisions of tasks, coupled with strong technological barriers to the formation of social relations as well as strict and direct management control, could isolate workers on rationally circumscribed workplaces and generate work settings in which “social interactions are restrained by production“ (Mollona 2009: 25). In contrast, less formalized and more flexible and/or autonomous practices of directly sharing and coordinating work may constitute “commonalities of practice” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 137) which provide favourable conditions for the formation of sociabilities of emplacement or collegiality in the context of close work relationships in small firms because they entail task-related social contact, interactions and exchanges.

As I will further elaborate in chapter 5.3, this social dimension of practising work tasks can offer opportunities for intersubjectively developing mutual respect, trust, reciprocity and solidarity, communicating informally as well as gaining impressions, accumulating knowledge and forming expectations about each other (Kock and Kutzner 2018: 449ff.; Sias and Cahill 1998: 277, 284-287; Sias 2009: 104f.; Fine 1986: 188; Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 136-138; Hodson 1996: 724, 731-735; Sennett 2013: 150-157; Hürtgen 2013: 242-254). Yet, connections between the division of tasks and the characteristics of relationships may be better understood as tendencies and not as structural determinisms (Barrett and Rainnie 2002: 426; Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 8). There are also small firm contexts with strong division of tasks and low autonomy in which co-workers may nevertheless find opportunities for interacting and exchanging, e.g. in the course of job rotation between fixed machine-workplaces which requires “a lot more coordination, communication, cooperation and improvisation” (Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 90, my translation) than being constantly tied to a single task and workplace in a large-scale factory (cf. Hürtgen 2013: 247).

All in all it can be argued that there are more and less sociable organizational contexts and job positions which connect working people as social beings. For instance, Valenta (2008)

reports very few opportunities for fostering relationships for those forced migrant workers of his research who were employed in jobs which included lonely, non-complementary, non-co-operative as well as mobile tasks such as cleaning, delivering newspapers in the early morning hours or working as cabdrivers (ibid.: 168f.; see also Jackson and Bauder 2013: 374f.). I will now turn to the description of my empirical data along some of the reviewed organizational aspects of SMEs and their enabling and constraining effects on relationship processes.

Regarding the organizational scales and structures of my four example workplaces, the two self-employed businesses can be roughly contrasted to the catering company and the garden centre which represented larger work organizations. In both the painting company and the electronics workshop, the employers had undivided liability and were fully responsible for organizing as well as practically realizing the work processes. In other words, the organizational roles of company owner, manager and skilled master of most aspects of their occupations were fused in the persons of the employers (cf. Spittler 2016: 127f.). The companies did not consist of extensive and stable sets of organizational relationships between numerous ranked and specialized formal positions. Instead of complexly graduated structures of hierarchy, there were only few job positions. All work relationships between the owners and subordinate employees can be described as rather informal and personal.

In the case of the painting company, the leading key actor was a 37-year-old, certified master painter who originally came from Baden-Wuerttemberg and identified himself as Turkish. After he had married in 2008, the master had moved to his wife who was an established local of Turkish background living in the southern Munich municipality. They had two young children and his forced migrant employee described the master as a “family man” (Interview Tony 02.01.2018). While the master explained that working as a contract worker in various painting companies in the past had allowed him to gather valuable work experiences, he also recollected negative experiences with employers and stated that by and large he enjoyed self-employment because of the variation of work projects it implied. Except for the asylum seeker who worked with him full-time as an apprentice after he had attained an officially required entry certificate in an occupational qualification measure in Munich, the master did not employ any additional workers.

Talking about the division of tasks in the company the apprentice said he would basically do the same work like the master and merely alluded to differences in how skilfully and routinised each of them would act. The correspondence and frequent sharing of tasks across hierarchical positions he described can be identified as a more general characteristic of apprenticeship relationships which in principle aim at transferring all the skills and work know-

ledge required to turn novices into full occupational members (Spittler 2016: 129). While the main task of the apprentice was painting and otherwise working on surfaces according to the instructions and orders of the master, many manual assistance tasks such as covering the floor with tape and masking paper, carrying materials and tools or cleaning up before they left the worksites were also the domain of the apprentice. The master rather took care of more sophisticated practical tasks as well as more complex organizational and communicative aspects of the job which required the skills, experiences and feeling of a master painter, business manager and flawless German speaker. In particular, the master was coordinating the work orders and communicated with customers on the phone and on the worksites where he clarified in brief dialogues which services should be delivered. He managed the company's purchases of working materials and tools and his main practical tasks can be summarized as assessing, preparing and painting the surfaces which had to be worked on. This implied choosing procedures such as cleaning, sanding or plastering walls or ceilings before painting them with particular techniques, materials and tools. Mainly bound up with these skilled practical work tasks, the master was responsible for training and supervising the apprentice, often in a close “hands-on” (Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 10) manner.

The electronics workshop was run by a 64-year-old male electronics engineer of upper middle-class background. The boss was a married German citizen born and brought up in the wider region around Munich who had gathered expertise as well as financial and social capital in a larger laser technology company during the 1980s. This had allowed him to venture into self-employment, which he personally preferred to working in larger company structures, since he perceived them as overly bureaucratic, hierarchical and constraining. In sharp contrast to the latter, the boss defined his workshop as unconventional and “strange” (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017) and compared it to “a small art studio” (ibid.) which would offer a large extent of “freedom” (ibid.). During my research, the boss was employing one asylum seeker as workshop assistant on full-time basis. The two co-workers mostly did separate tasks at different workplaces in the workshop and a division of labour along the mostly clear and sometimes blurry lines of conception and execution in the context of technical development work was prevailing.

The main tasks of the boss included the technical development of new machines, organizing stocks and purchases of working materials, communicating with customers and business partners via e-mail and telephone as well as coordinating and controlling the work activities and results of the workshop assistant. Most of these tasks were done at the testing and development workplace and the office niche between which the boss frequently moved back and

forth. Prior experiences or skills and qualification in the field of electronics and mechanics were not a necessary requirement for the post of workshop assistant which implied a wide variety of simple manual tasks, such as closing the casings of machines, storing away working materials, emptying the bins and other general maintenance work. But most of the time during my observations the workshop assistant sat at one of the two worktables in the middle of the room and independently assembled machines and electronic components according to established procedures he had been interactively instructed by the boss. This often resembled widely standardized, yet self-responsible, manufacturing work and required sharp eyes, light hands and the precise and knowledgeable use of tools and materials, e.g. when drilling small printed circuit boards, wrapping high voltage coils, soldering cables or filling the casings of machines with elements (cf. Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 68-71). Besides the assistant worker, the boss employed three mini-jobbers for accounting, occasional transport services and the mounting of printed circuit boards respectively. However, these jobs were not done inside the workshop.

The catering company and the garden centre had larger numbers of employees and were constituted through more complex sets of organizational relations. The catering company was a family business with limited liability which was owned and led by a local married couple in their early fifties. The wife was managing and mastering every aspect of processing foodstuffs into meals in the kitchen and thus worked in a position similar to a chef in a restaurant kitchen who is directly involved in production as well as organizational work and the recruitment of new employees (Fine 1996: 88-92). Her husband did not work in the kitchen and was instead responsible for supplying institutions, which had their own cooks and kitchens, with groceries. The chef was a mother of six children and had migrated to Germany from Turkey when she had been twelve years old. Although she was a trained child care worker and had no certified qualifications in cooking, she stated that preparing food on larger scales had always been her passion which she had managed to turn into her profession.

At the time of my research, the business employed around 30 people in various positions which were associated with different work tasks and skills. Besides the two manager positions, there were two administrative posts in the office of the company. Minimum six part-time workers were hired as drivers who delivered the cooked meals with transporters. The number of cooks was fluctuating slightly, but usually there were two skilled and experienced cooks working full-time in the kitchen, along with the chef and several kitchen helps. The cooks had the main job of cooking two different set meals every day of a work week. Besides her managerial responsibilities, the practical tasks of the chef included cooking extra

meals for allergic children, packing in the cooked food into transport boxes, supervising and coordinating her employees and substituting missing workers. While they never cooked themselves, the kitchen helps were given “all the work which may arise in the kitchen” (Interview Kitchen 04.04.2018), especially cleaning, making salads and desserts or otherwise preparing food, e.g. peeling and cutting vegetables. They were not required to have certified skills and qualifications or experiences in kitchen work and some of them were employed full-time while others worked on part-time basis. Lastly, the company offered one full-time position as dishwasher which was bound to the workplace in the scullery and implied the task of cleaning the equipment used in the kitchen and the numerous metal bowls in which the food was delivered.

During my participant observation in the catering company, all kitchen workers were much in motion, either when they were working at one place for a longer time or moved between several different spots. In sum, while the kitchen work was divided along a hierarchical order based on work skills and formal authority, with the chef at the top followed by cooks, kitchen helps and dishwashers, this could be described as a flat and partly flexible hierarchy. Work relationships appeared to be informal and personal and tasks were situationally switched and shared across work roles by co-workers themselves. Newcomers in the workplace were mainly introduced and trained by the chef, but colleagues were also giving instructions to each other. In terms of its organizational structure, the catering company widely represented the other ten workplaces with workforces of six to 25 people about which I could gain insights in the course of my research.

Belonging to a mid-sized trade group with an annual turnover of more than 50 000 000 € whose headquarter was located in another city in Germany, the garden centre did not fulfil the criteria of a small firm in which management and ownership coincide in the same persons. Instead, it was led by one branch manager who was in charge of the entire store. The branch manager was a 46-year-old man from Baden-Wuerttemberg who had started to work in the retail store in 1998. His leading position entailed personnel management responsibilities, such as hiring, dismissals, promotions, fixing wages and planning work schedules in coordination with several department managers and the workers. The branch manager was directing and controlling rather than practically participating in the everyday front line work in the garden centre and there was a chain of command which mediated his relationships to employees on the lower ranks of the work hierarchy. Nevertheless, he was actively pursuing frequent and direct exchange of information with co-workers on all positions.²⁸ In comparison with the

28 Bound up with his various other managerial responsibilities, the branch manager held regular meetings

three small firms, work relationships in the garden centre appeared to be most formalized and least personal. For instance, colleagues partly addressed each other with formal personal pronouns and surnames.

With a workforce of approximately 100 people, the garden centre was by far the most extensively structured work organization to which I could gain access. The employees worked in a range of different job positions distributed across the store's eight departments which were defined along particular groups of products. Regarding the formal hierarchy, each of these sections was led by a department manager who supervised about three to ten subordinates who formed a work group consisting of store clerks with various certified skills and qualifications related to plants and retail, unskilled or differently trained employees as well as young apprentices. In addition, the warehouse was likewise headed by one manager who supervised several workers and numerous cashiers did their work in the checkout area.

The employees on the sales floor usually did one or more practical work tasks which they had to accomplish while being constantly “besieged” (Fieldnotes Store 10.04.2018) by the customers, as one young store clerk expressed it. The customers often stopped the employees on their ways through the store or approached them at the info counters and while they worked somewhere in the aisles. Servicing customers required expertise and language skills as it usually consisted of direct interactions in which the workers listened to questions and answered by giving information or practical support regarding a particular product or service. The practical tasks which had to be done in addition to servicing customers included various unskilled jobs such as refilling and rearranging shelves and tables with products, sorting out expired plants and flowers or attaching price tags to products with the help of electronic devices and computers which were used to create and print labels. These less communicative tasks were mainly done alone and independently in particular sections of the departments and the warehouse which constituted personal workplaces with which each employee became familiar over time. According to one department manager, there was no regular rotation of workers between these areas of routine and specialization because everyone should function as thoroughly and reliably as possible in his or her work position. While the managers of the departments also serviced customers and did many of the practical jobs on an everyday basis, their core tasks were training new employees, coordinating and controlling the work of their subordinates and organizing the stocks of their departments which included submitting product orders.

with the workers directly on the sales floor and with members of various hierarchical strata of the branch store and the company. In addition, he was occasionally supervising and controlling the work activities of employees and servicing customers himself on his frequent walks through the garden centre.

Both socially interactive service tasks and practical work with products involved a lot of bodily movement, e.g. when customers were guided through the store, movable carts full with products were pushed along the narrow ways in the warehouse and pots, plants or pet-food were carried to their particular places on the sales floor. The day of my research in the garden centre was a busy one in Spring and the majority of employees was constantly walking around. Yet, some workers and department managers were partly working at one spot for a longer period of time, especially when they used the computers at the info counters and re-filled product tables and shelves.

Working hours

Having introduced the main managing actors and the different social structures and divisions of tasks in the four example workplaces, I will now turn to the working hours during which the enterprises operated. Here my focus will lie on the temporal structures of the different work organizations and how they defined the times shared by co-workers during work and breaks. Like for the preceding organizational context factors of relationship processes, my empirical material will be interpreted against the backdrop of a conceptual introduction.

The durations and frequencies of time spent together with interaction partners are among the main structuring factors of social relationships and their processes of constitution, maintenance, change and dissolution (e.g. Hollstein 2001: 87-91; Granovetter 1973: 1361f.; Blumstein and Kollock 1988: 468f., 480-486). Long lasting and temporally unlimited relationships are viewed as more stable and allowing for higher degrees of predictability and reliability than relations which are intended or assumed to be short lived (Hollstein 2001: 88f.). Interacting with each other frequently and with some continuity may foster social ties because shared time can be seen as a necessary precondition for the formation and ongoing negotiation of intersubjective expectations and social bonds such as “interactional habits, norms, rules, and shared world views” (Blumstein and Kollock 1988: 480), mutual trust, a history of shared experiences, knowledge about each other as well as loyalty, reciprocity and interdependence (Hollstein 2001: 88f., 105-108). Yet, especially when they are less voluntarily chosen, relationships which involve much sharing of time cannot be assumed to automatically become socially close and personally important (ibid.: 89f.).

These temporal effects also apply to relationships mediated through work. Relatively large numbers of hours shared with co-workers in the company or beyond and longer durations of employment in the same workplace with the same co-workers have been considered as favourable conditions for relationship processes (Thelen 2014: 168, 173, 177; Sennett

2013: 156-163, 168; Sias 2009: 101). When measured against full-time employment as the established standard, short term contracts or temporary work, fewer working hours in the context of part-time or mini-job employment, shift work and temporal flexibility understood as variability of start, finish and extent of daily working hours mean that co-workers share relatively low amounts of time during which they have the opportunity to cooperate, interact and form social ties (Flecker 2017: 100, 106; Valenta 2008: 169; Schmidt 2020: 157f.). Moreover, flexible working hours may give rise to uncertainties about the actual length and timing of work which can complicate the alignment of times spent on the job with social activities and responsibilities outside of the workplace, especially for employees in less powerful positions who have little influence on managerial decisions concerning the allocation of time (Flecker 2017: 107-109; 121-123). The social lives of working people may be curtailed by working hours which intersect with institutionalized social and reproductive times, such as bank holidays, weekends, evenings and nights (ibid.: 110f.; Valenta 2008: 169; Sennett 2013: 165f.).

In SMEs, the above outlined tendency towards informal and flexible managing practices may also pertain to the ways in which the capacities of workers are temporally organized in connection with the extent and timing of orders and workloads as well as various forms of work organization in particular firms and sectors (Edwards et al. 2006: 704f.; Marlow 2005: 7; cf. Flecker 2017: 106-109, 118-124). Depending on the interplay of these factors, some small firm contexts can feature rather informal temporal agreements and flexible work plans based on core times, project work and the pressure of deadlines while others may also imply more rigid schedules around steady rhythms and quantities of production or services (Tsai, Sengupta and Edwards 2007: 1796-1798; Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 101-112, 124-129, 257-259). Besides work itself, different practices and regulations concerning breaks, overtime, permissions to leave the workplace and taking holidays have to be considered as parts of the different temporal structures in small firms.

The workdays in the painting company usually started between 8 and 9 a.m. and had about eight hours of core time. The apprentice and his master usually worked five days a week which were mostly spent on different worksites. While larger projects such as the old villa under renovation extended over several weeks and months, the majority of jobs in private homes consumed from a couple of hours to five days. Due to the mobile nature of the work setting, it was not uncommon that more than one hour of a day was spent in the car. Overall, the co-workers spent most of their workdays together, which included sharing breaks of about 30 minutes around lunch time, and also ended them at the same time. This could be

viewed as partly conditioned by the apprenticeship relationship which implied continuous guidance of the newcomer by the experienced professional and thus depended heavily on directly sharing the same working hours, spaces and tasks. The small size of the company meant that there was no one else the apprentice could alternatively work with whenever the master was absent for more than a few hours.

The workshop assistant was employed full time with 38,5 hours per week and mainly worked from Monday to Friday. A regular workday in the electronics workshop started around 9 a.m. and ended around 5 p.m. But the boss usually left later in the evening, around 7 p.m. When deadlines for new developments approached, meetings with business partners had to be prepared or serious defects of machines ate up much time before they were finally found and rectified, he often stayed until around 9 p.m. or later. While the assistant worker and the boss usually spent most of the normal days at work together, they mostly took several short breaks independently from each other around lunch time or whenever the work flow afforded it and left the workshop separately at different times. Aside from this, both of them also spent time alone in the workshop when the other one had external obligations to fulfil.

The working hours in the catering kitchen also differed across the various organizational positions. Kitchen helps worked from Monday till Friday, came in between 7 and 7.30 a.m. and left the workplace usually around 2 to 2.30 p.m. Sometimes they had to stay longer until 5 p.m. The workdays of the cooks started and ended earlier, at around 5.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. respectively, and they were the first to enter the kitchen. But at the time of my research in April 2018, the chef was substituting the cooks who were both absent and started with cooking all meals herself in the early morning. Apart from the other work obligations which occupied her time, she said that she would spend around seven to eight hours per day together with the employees in the kitchen. Although the workers in several positions in the kitchen started and ended work at various times, there was a significant overlap of shared working hours and around 11 a.m. they also shared a general lunch break together. This break was also taken by the dishwasher who started work later than the kitchen team, at 10 a.m., and stayed until 6 p.m.

The garden centre was open for customers Monday to Saturday from 9 a.m. till 8 p.m. and work started at 8 a.m. Usually, the full-time employees worked as per contract 38,5 hours per week in a rotating shift work model with an early, day and evening shift. In addition to the regular workdays there were shifts on several Sundays throughout the year. The branch manager spent most of his full-time week either moving around in the garden centre or working from his desk in a small office close to the checkout area. It can be concluded that due to the

large spatial structure of the store, many employees who shared the same work shift would nevertheless not spend much time with each other because they were not spatially close. Merely the immediate colleagues working in the same or directly adjacent departments seemed to interact more frequently with each other. This impression was confirmed by one of the employees I talked to as well as other informants who had worked in workplaces of comparable size and structure. In addition, the breaks in the garden centre were differently scheduled every day along predefined time slots for each employee so that it was not always the same set of co-workers who took a rest of half an hour at the same time.

Overall, whereas the temporal orders of the kitchen and the garden centre seemed to be more stable because they entailed consistently recurring and formally regulated time requirements, the two self-employed businesses operated on a decisively more flexible and deregulated basis than the enterprises with larger workforces and daily customer service obligations.²⁹ While the core times outlined above constituted a routine which widely structured their flow of work, both self-employed entrepreneurs were used to breaking out of these frames and adjusted their working hours according to their personal work rhythms, the extent of orders and the status of work projects. For instance, the boss frequently entered his workshop also on Sundays and bank holidays, not only when work was overdue to be finished. Besides working during times which are predominantly associated with non-work, this flexibility could likewise imply not working during the core times. Both the master and the apprentice told me that when the work targets of a day were reached earlier than expected, they would simply go home.

Flexibility of working hours was partly also associated to seasonal cycles which influenced the workload and thus the extent of stress at work. In the painting company and the garden centre, there was generally more work during spring and summer. Especially for the garden centre, spring was the most profitable and busiest time of the year because purchases of goods used for cultivating gardens increased once winter came to an end. In contrast, there was much lower customer frequency and turnover between July and February. The painting company likewise had much less orders in winter and workdays were shorter and less “stress-

²⁹ Resembling the work rhythms of restaurant kitchens (Fine 1996: 54ff.), the working hours in the catering company were mainly structured by the external schedules of the customers who expected to receive cooked meals at regular times every day. Accordingly, the work process crucially depended on punctuality and the right timing among co-workers. The monthly work schedules of the garden centre employees were planned ahead and the shifts on Sundays were fixed for an entire year in advance. The branch manager described these practices of formal planning as securing the predictability of leisure times for the employees. In the two self-employed enterprises temporal fluctuations occurred frequently and working hours were to large extents informally negotiated between employers and workers. Flexibility seemed to be mainly caused by current workloads and general order situations. Working hours were largely defined by aims or targets which had to be reached according to project plans and deadlines that could partly be influenced in negotiations with the customers.

ful” (Interview Tony 02.01.2018) according to the apprentice. These seasonal differences meant that the workers were required to accept overtime during the warmer period of high workload and accommodate to less work during times of low demand. Beyond that, the branch manager explained that no holidays could be taken during the peak season. When the store stopped depending on each and every worker later during the year, the extra hours were compensated and individual preferences regarding holidays and free days were granted.

Regardless of seasonal changes, times of stress and slack can be expected to manifest themselves in all kinds of workplaces. For example, stressful phases in the electronics workshop were associated with the pressure of high workload and deadlines, organizational and technical mishaps or the uncertainty and shortage of orders which had repeatedly threatened the existence of the business. In the kitchen of the catering company, almost every workday was composed of a stressful phase, or “rush” (Fine 1996: 64), during which the main work had to be accomplished and a more slackened period which followed this phase of working highly concentrated and in a high speed. The meals had to be ready by 7.30 a.m. so that they could be packed into the transport boxes within half an hour and the chef described these time windows as very narrow. Because everyone had to focus on getting her or his work tasks done in time, the implication of the stressful phase on social interaction in the kitchen was a general lack of time for informal exchanges. This changed once all the ordered meals had left the kitchen and the end of the rush was finally reached. During the more relaxed part of the day the kitchen workers could take their time with preparing food for the next days and were able to divide their attention and engage in social interaction with each other (cf. Sias and Cahill 1998: 285f.). The chef had observed that conversations among co-workers were more frequent during these times and when I was in the catering kitchen on a slow day during Easter holidays, I could witness a generally stress-relieved but nevertheless busy working atmosphere in which my own social interactions with the kitchen workers did not seem to interfere with work-related urgency.

4.3 Heterogeneity of workforces

In the preceding sections, I have already introduced the employing actors and described the social structures of the four example workplaces in the light of how the organization of work in SMEs may enable or constrain the formation of significant social ties. In this subchapter, I will turn to the interacting human subjects who occupied the described job positions and enacted formal relationships in everyday work life and examine the heterogeneous composition of the workforces in the four example workplaces as a contextual precondition for relationship

processes. This will include a discussion of my empirical material along several socio-cultural characteristics and aspects of subjectivities of co-workers and their positions in the researched workplaces after I have further clarified how the heterogeneity of workforces is of relevance to relationship processes mediated through work.

Workplaces have been described as social contexts in which people with different socio-cultural and subjective characteristics meet, interact and relate (e.g. Schmidt and Müller 2013: 361ff.; Schmidt 2020: 19-24; De Neve 2001: 133ff.; Kurth 1970: 147-149). This heterogeneity of workforces can be viewed as a central shaping factor for the formation of personally significant relationships because the latter are based on various forms of commonality between interaction partners (Hollstein 2001: 96-100; Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 128-130; Marks 1994: 846; Sias and Cahill 1998: 277f.; Sias 2009: 99-104; McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook 2001). Social constructions of commonalities and differences in capitalist contexts of work have to be considered as shaped by larger socio-cultural and political-economic processes, including industrialization and the “structural differentiation” (Marks 1994: 845) of spaces of production and social reproduction which brings “unrelated others” (ibid.: 846) together beyond the bonds of kinship or community (ibid.: 843ff.).

Other recent influences on the composition of workforces are globalization and economic restructuring (Watson 2017: 105-114) which can result in “neoliberal displacement” (Morales 2016: 514) of people who have few choices but to migrate in order to secure livelihoods (ibid.: 509f., 514; Delgado Wise and Márquez Covarrubias 2010: 155-169; see also Lamphere, Grenier and Stepick 1994). In this regard of highest relevance to my argument is the observation that European cities such as Munich constitute main destinations for various kinds of migrants and have therefore been depicted as centres of “increasing heterogeneity” (Faist 2010: 297) or “diversity as social fact” (Berg and Sigona 2013: 355) which has been analytically approached as “the multiplication and increasingly complex intersection of axes of difference” (ibid.: 352) between individuals who share geographic spaces.

In work organizations, increasing urban heterogeneity related to global migration has been widely recognized with a focus on different “cultural characteristics” (Faist 2010: 301) in the sense of “a plurality of languages, religions, and ethnic groups” (ibid.: 300) among employees, managers and customers (ibid.: 300f.; see also Dyer, McDowell and Batnitzky 2010: 635ff.; Sias 2009: 192-194; Pries 2013: 17f.; Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 187-202; Ogbonna and Harris 2006: 379-385, 388-400). Yet, regardless of the cultural otherness ascribed to migrants in opposition to a putatively homogeneous national community of non-migrant natives (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 125f.), co-workers with as well as without migration experi-

ences and backgrounds may perceive each other as different or similar not merely along the social boundaries of ethnicity, nationality or religion and orient their relationships with reference to a complexly intersecting variety of social categories and aspects of identity and subjectivity, including, for example, age, class, gender (Faist 2010: 297-303; Sias 2009: 101-104) or status positions related to work and occupations (Schmidt 2020: 22-25; Schmidt and Müller 2013: 363, 370ff.). Furthermore, as already outlined above (see Ch. 2.4), sociabilities of emplacement may be established in workplaces beyond categorical differences, i.e., in terms of “domains of commonality” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 128) which emerge during interactions at work and can consist of similar and relatable life experiences, interests, attitudes and affects between people who recognize each other primarily as human beings and not as living proxies of sociological distinctions (ibid.: 128-131, 136-141).

Forced migrant newcomers in segmented labour markets

The heterogeneity in particular workplaces is intertwined with hiring practices which can be seen as mainly shaped by the authority and preferences of employers, members of existing workforces and clients or customers (Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 31-80, 141-180). Especially in small firms in which “the lines of authority are clear and influence is tightly controlled by a single boss, preferences can be translated into action with relative ease” (ibid.: 181) when the choice of new employees is concerned. Within the limits of anti-discrimination laws and organizational rules (Roscigno and Yavorsky 2015: 277-279), and in connection with socio-spatial dynamics and regulations of regional labour markets (Samers 2011: 52-56), employing actors in particular sectors and occupations have been found to hire candidates who suit their economic rationalities and practical requirements in terms of work and language skills, formal qualifications and attributed social categories and personality traits, such as friendliness, docility, commitment or loyalty (Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 14-17, 31-80; Birke and Bluhm 2020: 44f.).

This implies that hiring decisions are influenced by discrimination based on notions of “racialized hierarchies” (Samers 2011: 54), cultural stereotypes and prejudices about the eligibility of different groups of people for particular jobs and tasks (Roscigno and Yavorsky 2015: 274ff.; McDowell 2008: 495-502; Pager and Shepherd 2008: 183-188, 192-197; Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 141-180). The insight “that people's chances of getting jobs depend not only on their human capital (i.e. their education and skills) but also on gender, race, ethnicity and legal status” (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014: 259) has been conceptualized through the notion of labour market segmentation, in particular with regard to the employ-

ment opportunities and acceptance limits of migrants who are classified along various legal categories which confer different extents of citizenship rights (Samers 2011: 52-56).³⁰

The labour market conditions around 2015 have been depicted as widely favourable for welcoming refugees in workplaces across Germany because unemployment rates of migrants had been falling significantly for about one decade and general unemployment was low (Degler and Liebig 2017: 31f.). In addition, many newcomers arrived with applicable skills and qualifications (Scherschel 2017: 148; Schmidt 2020: 67f.). Nevertheless, there seems to be a broader consensus that the large majority of forced migrant newcomers who have been accessing formal employment throughout the last five years tends towards the lower segments of the labour market and enters precarious low-wage sector jobs for which many are overqualified. These jobs have become the domain of relatively disempowered, marginalized and often lower skilled workers, including, for instance, underprivileged and economically displaced locals, migrants from economically less powerful EU countries, earlier arrived forced migrants or the children and grandchildren of people who had immigrated under the German guest worker regime (Scherschel 2017: 148f., 158; Schmidt 2020: 131-138, 142-145; Birke and Bluhm 2020: 43-47; Birke, Bluhm and Mayer-Ahuja 2017: 120-124, 128f.; Altenried et al. 2017: 81-84, 94; Johansson 2016: 17-23; Worbs and Bund 2016: 6-8).³¹ Across and beyond various migrant categories, female co-workers who are often employed part-time when they face additional care work obligations are likely to be met in many low-wage sector

30 Research on the incorporation of migrants into segmented labour markets suggests that unless non-discrimination prevails and newcomers possess officially recognized and marketable skills and qualifications which might increase their employment options, they often fill “the demand for migrant labour in post-industrial economies” (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014: 241) which emerges as a consequence of “poor wages, conditions and social status in certain sectors” (ibid.). In many European countries, these lower segments of labour markets mainly comprise physical labour and jobs in the service sector, such as “the construction industry, hotels and restaurants, hospitals and aged-care” (ibid.: 242) which are “avoided by natives” (ibid.: 241; see also Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2006: 214-217; Jackson and Bauder 2013: 368, 371). Members of the latter group of native locals are less negatively affected by discrimination and social inequality along intersecting categorical differences than people who are ascribed migrant statuses. They often possess more of the social network contacts, knowledge about the regional work system and opportunities to acquire certified qualifications that are needed to access higher labour market segments, i.e., stable, skilled and higher status employment, better payment and generally less precarious and dangerous working conditions (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014: 244-246, 259f.; Flecker 2017: 61-66; Dyer, McDowell and Batnitzky 2010: 639ff.; Jackson and Bauder 2013: 376; Schmidt and Müller 2013: 368f.; Schmidt 2020: 116-123; Altenried et al. 2017: 32f.; Faist 2010: 307-309). Hence, as Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006) highlight for segmented labour markets in Australia, forced migrant newcomers may also be barred from better employment even when they do not lack suitable human capital, including skills in the local language which dominates at work (ibid.: 206f., 221f.).

31 Especially subcontracted labour in low-wage sectors has been depicted as one of the most relevant pathways to employment for forced migrant newcomers, yet on the condition of unequal status and treatment when compared to permanently employed co-workers and high frequencies of workplace changes which may preclude longer-term relationship processes (Schmidt 2020: 157-159; see also Birke and Bluhm 2020). While two of my informants who worked in warehouses of logistics centres were employed by temporary employment agencies, I do not consider this form of employment in detail because I did not encounter it in the SMEs which are the focus of this thesis.

workplaces (Flecker 2017: 63; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2006: 206).

Apart from working, and often in addition to a job (Degler and Liebig 2017: 35), many forced migrants in Germany and the Munich region absolve language classes, practical trainings, occupational orientation and official pre-vocational schooling. These and other types of educational measures are cooperatively provided by state, municipal, civil society and employing actors and aim at various forms of labour market incorporation. In particular, they facilitate many young newcomers who arrive without extensive work and/or educational biographies to acquire information, German language skills, practical experiences in the course of internships as well as certified qualifications which are required for starting a formal apprenticeship (Anderson 2016: 6ff.; Aumüller 2016: 10ff.; see also Schmidt 2020: 138-157; Worbs and Bund 2016: 6). Besides institutional structures of education, practical training and social support, chances of getting an apprenticeship place are also shaped by segmentation dynamics of regional labour markets (Anderson 2016: 29-37). Employers in occupations which are deemed rather undesirable among the numerically shrinking cohorts of young locals who prefer better alternatives open to them are currently troubled by a growing number of unfilled apprenticeship places. This situation arising from demographic changes is viewed as leading to a shortage of skilled labour, especially in the hospitality industry, retail and care work as well as manual crafts such as carpenter, mechanic, painter, baker or plumber (*ibid.*: 30f., 35; Degler and Liebig 2017: 32; Schmidt 2020: 139f.; Thränhardt 2015: 7).

Some of these vacancies have been taken by forced migrant newcomers who were partly welcomed in SMEs as bearers of hope for securing the future labour supply while much larger and renowned industrial employers have been assessed as less economically dependent on training newcomers in formal apprenticeships.³² Large-scale companies rather offered mostly unpaid and often state subsidized internships which aimed at mediating first experiences with the system of work in Germany (Schmidt 2020: 138-143, 150; Birke, Bluhm and Mayer-Ahuja 2017: 126-128). With regard to the characteristics of people met in the context of dual apprenticeships, some of my younger research partners reported that they were working and learning together with locals as well as other (forced) migrants who were often of similar age and can also be seen as peers on the basis of the shared apprentice status. Yet, as Anderson (2016) argues for trade school classes in Munich, these categorical commonalities do not automatically give rise to closer relationships because forced migrant apprentices may perceive stronger differences with local peers in terms of learning processes, socio-cultural

³² According to country-wide statistics for the second half of 2017, 5% of the forced migrants above 18 years of age who had arrived in Germany from 2013 onwards were enrolled in formal apprenticeships (6% of males and 2% of females of this total group of newcomers) (Brücker et al. 2019: 8).

orientations, life experiences, personal interests and topics of conversation (ibid.: 35).

For the four example workplaces and several other small firms included in my research it can be concluded that the current economic situations of the businesses gave rise to a demand for labour power which was depicted by several employing actors as difficult to meet in the context of a regional labour market that was perceived as generally emptied, especially in the manual and low-wage segments (cf. Sozialreferat München 2018a: 79f.). Hence, constellations of pressing demand and low supply of suitable workers were frequently invoked as a key factor when the initial decisions for hiring forced migrant newcomers were rationalized in the course of my interviews.

The master of the painting company and the boss of the electronics workshop explained that they had been continuously adjusting the structure of their workforces to the fluctuating order situations of their self-employed enterprises. This meant that the master was usually employing between one and five assisting workers. The boss only periodically managed to sustain a full-time position and constantly relied on more flexible mini-jobbers as well as family support and occasional informal labour. Accordingly, both employers told that they had decided to hire an asylum seeker because their businesses were going through prosperous and labour intensive phases when the opportunity to employ newcomers had emerged rather coincidentally through “chance and significant individual encounters” (Povrzanovic Frykman 2012: 74). In both cases, the first contact with the forced migrant employees had been mediated by attentive local volunteers who supported asylum seekers and were merely weakly tied to the master and the boss. The master had agreed on the asylum seeker's wish to be formally trained by him after they had worked together in the course of an internship. The apprenticeship in the painting company had started in autumn 2017 and provided the master with a full-time worker for whom he had to pay merely the training salary of less than 600€ per month. The boss of the electronics workshop had needed a cheap and flexible worker in October 2016 when he had faced the challenge of completing an exceptionally large number of machines ordered by a Chinese corporation. This had motivated him to employ the asylum seeker full-time for a gross salary of around 1600€ per month after an informal trial week which had convinced him that this employee would meet his selection criteria more than any already established local candidate (see Ch. 5.1).

The customer base of the catering company appeared to be reliably established and the chef and several employees emphasized that the workload was generally high. Hence, a consistent demand of labour power seemed to prevail and the business frequently recruited new workers. The chef had started employing forced migrant newcomers in mid 2016, after a local

volunteer who had systematically acted as employment broker for asylum seekers had approached the business. The chef's initial worries about difficulties with communicating in German had been outweighed by her strong presumption that asylum seekers would be more committed than already established locals because she considered them more dependent on and grateful for comparatively undesirable employment opportunities which involved physical labour and no attractive salaries. This impression had solidified in connection with the disappointments she had experienced with finding employees on the regional labour market and through the official employment agency.³³

In the garden centre, the number of employees was seasonally increased in spring when the workload was at its highest while lower sales in winter did not mean that long-term employees were laid off for this period. The branch manager had begun to employ forced migrants in April 2016, when the same voluntary employment broker who had later also approached the catering company had suggested him to hire asylum seekers. After no objections to the idea had come from within the established workforce when it was discussed internally, the branch manager had agreed. As he frankly explained, he had mainly done so with the considerable regional labour shortage in mind which he also perceived as affecting several unskilled and labour intensive vacancies that he had not been able to fill in the past. As an additional reason which would keep established locals from taking the open positions in the store, the branch manager mentioned the working hours in the retail sector which he assessed as generally unattractive. The garden centre had started with five candidates who first completed internships before they had been given one year contracts. Later, these contracts had been prolonged and the number of forced migrant employees was increasing due to overall positive experiences. Like several other employers I interviewed, the branch manager pursued the aim of training and keeping forced migrant employees on the long run and in April 2018 he was about to give unlimited contracts to six forced migrants who had entered the workplace during the initial phase of hiring two years earlier.

33 In a similar way, the owner-manager of the landscape gardening company in my research sample highlighted that the three forced migrant newcomers she employed would not object to simple manual work which would be rejected by more skilled local employees: "They are people who also don't say: 'I don't do this work.' Or: 'That's too dull for me.' But rather they are people [...] who are happy about any job they can get because otherwise they would have none at all." (Interview Gardening 25.07.2018) Moreover, this employer exemplified how forced migrants were partly viewed as crucial source of labour power which allowed SMEs in the Munich city region to deal with the workloads they faced: "So, in the end I need them. Here in these exurbs around Munich we don't have enough workers. With two per cent unemployment. Two per cent! [...] I wouldn't be able to do my work orders. I need the immigration. [...] Whether it comes via asylum or [from] somewhere else. We need immigration here in this region. Because also from other parts of Germany nobody is applying here [in the gardening sector]." (Ibid.) The two leading actors of a grocery store on a company campus where one asylum seeker was employed likewise told me about a regional labour shortage in the food retail and service sectors which would make it difficult to find motivated local workers who accepted the working conditions of shop assistants.

Heterogeneity of forced migrant newcomers

Having touched upon the social environments in the labour market segments and employment sectors forced migrant newcomers have been found to be most likely to enter, I will now turn to the socio-cultural characteristics of asylum seekers who have arrived in Germany around 2015 and partly entered various forms of employment. Forced migrants, “while all displaced” (Malkki 1995: 496) and sharing the experience of a rather reactive than proactive type of migration (Richmond 1994: 47-74), can be considered as otherwise very heterogeneous along “different socioeconomic statuses, personal histories, and psychological or spiritual situations” (Malkki 1995: 496). In connection with basic demographic features such as age, gender or family status, this heterogeneity may include various legal statuses, places of origin and languages; occupational biographies, social backgrounds and dispositions, e.g. in terms of education, class, religion and familiarity with urban life and socio-cultural differences; subjective perceptions, aspirations and strategies of migration and work; as well as various social network ties, responsibilities and expectations in relation to localities of settlement and transnational involvement (see e.g. Al-Ali, Black and Koser 2001: 593-597; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2006: 207-210; Altenried et al. 2017: 85-99; Anderson 2016: 26-29; Sozialreferat München 2018a: 12-15; Brettell 2015: 174).

Instead of trying to dissect the entire complexity of social characteristics and subjectivities of forced migrants, I will merely summarize some relevant aspects of heterogeneity that have been selectively recognized in official studies which investigate statistical samples with a focus on the labour market incorporation of recent newcomers in Germany (e.g. Brückner, Rother and Schupp 2018; Worbs and Bund 2016). These empirical research reports have been conducted on behalf of government ministries and offer overviews on demographic characteristics, educational and occupational backgrounds, involvement and interest in qualification measures as well as language skills and “cognitive potentials” (Pagel, Richter and Schupp 2018: 75, my translation). In other words, they reflect the interest of policy-makers in data needed to legitimate actions which aim at the economic utilization of particular categories of forced migrants as human resources (Altenried et al. 2017: 61f.).

In addition to the demographic characteristics that I already sketched above (see Ch. 3.1), educational and occupational backgrounds and biographies which comprise formal schooling, certified qualifications, practical skills and work experiences before entering Germany are not homogeneous among recent forced migrant newcomers and vary significantly along age, gender and country of origin (Brenzel and Kosyakova 2018; Jaworski, Pagel and Schupp 2018; Worbs and Bund 2016: 4-6; Degler and Liebig 2017: 20f.). While the majority

of adult men and women in the sample of Brücker, Rother and Schupp (2018) had arrived with an average of ten years of formal education, many also came with much lower as well as higher educational attainments and experiences. Post-secondary education in the form of college degrees and doctorates were reported by ca. 11% of forced migrants, mainly from Syria, Iraq, Pakistan and Iran and other unspecified countries of origin. On the other end of the spectrum, people of 18 years or older who had merely received primary education mainly came from Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea and Somalia. Some adult newcomers had experienced no formal schooling, especially 23% of women across all countries of origin, 34% of people from Afghanistan and 23% of those from undifferentiated other places of departure (Brenzel and Kosyakova 2018; Jaworski, Pagel and Schupp 2018).

Regarding vocational training and apprenticeships, it has been acknowledged that many newcomers have acquired uncertified work skills in informal practical settings and not in a formalized system of dual vocational education and training which is institutionalized across Germany but does not exist in most countries of departure or transit migration. Thus, unless they are officially scrutinized and approved by German authorities, skills and certificates which have been acquired abroad may not be evaluated as equivalent to the national standards (Jaworski, Pagel and Schupp 2018: 40; Jacobsen and Siegert 2018). This can drastically reduce the employment opportunities of skilled and professional forced migrant newcomers who try to access their occupations and fields of expertise upon arrival. Besides making efforts to get certificates recognized or formalizing their qualifications in the first place by absolving vocational training in Germany,³⁴ many of these newcomers who wish to continue working have to accept jobs in the above described low-wage sectors in which no certified skills are required (Scherschel 2017: 148f.; Bloch 2008: 29f., 32-34; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2006: 209-214). Facing jobs below achieved qualifications in contexts which are often very much unrelated to previously practised occupations or studies may be a frustrating and subjectively disruptive experience which can contribute to the corrosion of social identities (Lacroix 2004: 157-159; Jackson and Bauder 2013: 369f.) and the degeneration of professional skills and networks (Smyth and Kum 2010: 512-520; Valenta 2008: 169-174).

Discussing the impact on social relationships with co-workers, Valenta (2008) argues that such “occupational misplacement” (ibid.: 169) situates occupationally skilled forced migrants in social environments that differ from the higher-status contexts of work which they got used to before arrival (ibid.: 169f.). This can inhibit the perception of commonalities and

³⁴ In my research, this was the case for Abdullah, a 30-year-old professional tailor who had been training apprentices himself in Afghanistan before he had decided to commence an apprenticeship as he could see no other way of attaining the required certificate which would allow him to re-enter his occupation in Munich.

the formation of significant relationships with co-workers when differences in terms of social class prevail. Newcomers who identify with a “middle-class taste and lifestyle” (ibid.: 170) have been found to “feel uncomfortable with their co-workers” (ibid.) in low-wage sector jobs and may actively distinguish themselves along the lines of e.g. attitudes, personal interests or level of education (ibid.: 170f.; cf. Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 134). However, for the city of Munich statistical data on newcomers who use the services of several employment office institutions suggests “that the educational level and inquired qualifications of forced migrants (...) are on average very low” (Sozialreferat München 2018a: 78, my translation). This finding alludes to the possibility that some forced migrant newcomers, including adults who have already gathered rich work experiences elsewhere, may not necessarily feel misplaced and downgraded in workplaces in the Munich city region (cf. Brücker et al. 2019: 10f.). They might experience their jobs and apprenticeships instead as opportunities to acquire additional skills, status and social relations than as catalysts of further displacement in the sense of downward social mobility and undesired confrontation with discrepancies of class and education which could be perceived as divisive (cf. Schmidt 2020: 65-72).

Above and beyond personal characteristics, backgrounds and work biographies, language skills are crucial for relationship processes mediated through work. Sharing a language in which co-workers can exchange information with ease, confidence and certainty does not only decisively favour cooperation, coordination and learning work tasks from others (Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 65-80; Sias 2009: 59-67). It also facilitates various forms of verbal interaction which influence and characterize the construction and continuous negotiation of relationships (Sias 2009: 100f.; Sias and Cahill 1998: 278-280; Marks 1994: 846-854, Fuhse 2015). These forms of talk in work contexts, which I will address in ethnographic detail at a later point (see Ch. 6.1), include e.g. jokes, gossip and rumours (Fine 1986: 192-195), conversations, discussions and arguments on work or non-work topics (De Neve 2001: 156-159; Mollona 2009: 37-40) as well as “more intimate and less cautious” (Sias and Cahill 1998: 289) disclosure of personal information, problems, “opinions and feelings” (ibid.: 288) which depends on sufficient mutual “trust” (ibid.) and may be responded to with advice and support from co-workers (ibid.: 288-292; Marks 1994: 849-851).

The study edited by Brücker, Rother and Schupp (2018) shows that the large majority of recent forced migrant newcomers did not possess German skills upon entry but steadily accumulated them to varying extents in the course of time. The authors argue that this language acquisition process has been supported by higher levels of education, access to language courses in Germany and familiarity with learning and using multiple languages in places of

origin. Reading and writing skills in mother-tongues, official languages or third languages have been found to strongly correlate with the extent of experienced formal education. Hence, the fraction of less than 10% of newcomers who reported no or very low literacy is mainly explained by a lack of formal schooling. Aside from first languages, official languages and English, for which around one fifth of respondents reported good or very good verbal skills, 38% of newcomers can use other languages, especially of their home regions or French, Italian, Turkish and Arabic which may have been learned also in places along their migration routes. These additional linguistic skills increase the chance of having a language in common with locals and this can make communication easier when German is still challenging (Rother, Schacht and Scheible 2018).

Heterogeneity in the researched workplaces

Against the backdrop of the above outlined labour market dynamics that can be seen as sources of heterogeneity at work, I will provide variously refined summaries of my ethnographic material on some socio-cultural and biographical characteristics of the working people in the four example workplaces and some of the other small firms in my sample. It will be central for my argument to clarify whether there were already established locals among the co-workers of forced migrant newcomers because these would qualify as potential partners for sociabilities of emplacement. Co-workers may also feature as weak tie contacts which constitute sources of social capital, especially when they differ from newcomers in the sense that they are in more powerful, knowledgeable and recognized social positions, e.g. on the basis of their material and financial resources, legal status or language and communication skills which may allow them to provide support with settlement in the Munich city region (see Ch. 2.3).

In the case of the painting company and the electronics workshop, there were usually no other co-workers present besides the employers and their forced migrant employees. The newcomer who was doing the apprenticeship with the master painter was a 27-year-old man from Lagos, Nigeria, whom I will call Tony. In May 2015, Tony had arrived as an asylum seeker in the same municipality of the Munich district in which also the master lived and worked. Tony was accommodated in a small dilapidated house which was rented by the municipal authorities as an asylum shelter for six people. By the time of my research, Tony's asylum case was still processed after he had filed a suit against an initial rejection of his application. Tony had left Lagos on his own in order to make his journey out of harsh and dead-end living conditions he had observed and experienced in his home city. Instead of learning or

practising a particular occupation, he had been steadily looking for money and various kinds of work during and after secondary school. For most of the time, Tony had worked as cleaner and occasionally as a waiter, kitchen help and office assistant. Envisioning a different, less precarious and more personally fulfilling future for himself, Tony had migrated via Niger to Libya, where he had worked in various cities as a day-labourer on construction sites and in the car-wash business. He had also gathered about one year of experience in doing painting work in Libya. After crossing the Mediterranean Sea and entering the EU via Italy in 2014, he had moved on further north.

A few months after his arrival in the Munich city region, Tony had continued to work in formal and informal painting jobs and internships, as dishwasher in an upper-class inner city cafe and as assistant worker in a building supplies store before he could enter a certified qualification measure which had been implemented by the professional association of painters. This had allowed him to start the apprenticeship as painter in the German dual educational system which he was about to complete in autumn 2020. Regarding his social responsibilities at the time of my research, Tony was unmarried, had no children and pointed out that he did not envision his future as necessarily fixed in one place. His mother and various older siblings continued their lives in Nigeria. Yet, his German girlfriend had given birth to their first child in early 2020. Tony had been learning German to the solid extent that he was able to follow conversations and express himself, although he repeatedly mentioned that it was challenging to him to read, write and listen in the trade school. His main languages were Pidgin, English and Igbo. While he described himself as a Christian, Tony was not attending church and seemed to give religious belief and convention a less central role in his life than many other forced migrants I met.

The forced migrant newcomer who worked as a full-time workshop assistant was an Afghan asylum seeker whom I will call Akhtar. Akhtar was a family father in his early 40s who represented himself as practising Muslim and hard worker with rich experience of life. In addition, he identified as Hazara and his first language was the Hazara version of Dari. Akhtar had arrived in Munich on his own in late 2015, after he had entered the EU via the Greek island of Lesbos, while his wife and their two adolescent sons still lived in a town near Kabul. As he had been migrating since the 1990s to find work and support his family via remittances, Akhtar had gathered working experiences in the Iranian construction sector and later as an industrial worker in a glass factory in Dubai. The latter job had ended when the factory was closed down during the global economic crisis of 2008. In Munich, Akhtar lived together with three room mates on the fifth floor of a large and run down office complex which the city had

turned into an asylum camp with beds for up to 780 people. Before he had started to work in the electronics workshop, he had first made a brief and disappointing attempt as construction worker in the context of an internship and had managed to acquire basic German skills mainly outside of the formal setting of language classes.

Beside his full-time job in the workshop, he was doing a second formal mini-job as cleaner. According to his boss, Akhtar tried to work as much as possible in order to increase the amount of family income he could remit. In particular, Akhtar repeatedly highlighted that he was familiar with the violence, hardships and deprivations associated with the protracted war in Afghanistan and wanted to facilitate his children a safer and more prosperous future. His older son was about to finish high school and it was Akhtar's wish to facilitate him to study outside of Afghanistan. Akhtar planned to return to his family within the following years and the family had managed to temporarily move to India in 2019 via a higher education scholarship which had been granted to Akhtar's wife. In early 2020, Akhtar was still employed in the workshop and his asylum procedure was finally decided negatively which meant that he was supposed to leave the country in the near future. End of September 2020, Akhtar returned to Afghanistan and reunified with his family in Herat.

Among the three mini-jobbers who were not working together with Akhtar and the boss but infrequently visited the workshop was a Slovene retiree in her seventies who lived in the neighbourhood and had started to work for the boss from home around 1998. Her job was the mounting of the printed circuit boards which were needed for the machines produced in the workshop. She had migrated to Munich under the German guest worker regime in 1970 and possessed high precision skills which she had acquired during her working life in the local electronics industry. Another mini-jobber was the wife of the boss who took care of the personnel and material accounting of the enterprise in addition to her own full-time job. Lastly, a male retiree in his sixties who owned a car was hired for occasional transport services within the city.

In the catering company, the two positions in the office were occupied by two children of the owner-manager couple, a daughter and a son in their twenties. The drivers were all male and most of them were middle-aged and long-standing employees. Besides one kitchen help and the chef, there were no female workers in the kitchen. The chef guessed that about half of her employees were from Munich or the region while the other half would mainly consist of people who had migrated mainly from European countries such as Poland and had been living in or around Munich for longer periods of time. Besides the catering company, the ten other small workplaces with workforces of six to 25 people for which I could collect ethno-

graphic data were often depicted as employing comparably significant proportions of people with mostly European but sometimes also non-European migration experiences and backgrounds. Many of these could be viewed as locally established on the basis that they had been living and working in the Munich city region for several years or had migrated at a young age. Merely one of my forced migrant research partners in these workplaces, Abdullah from Afghanistan, mentioned co-workers whom he identified as already settled migrants with whom he shared similar geographical origin and languages and who had arrived decades before him.

In terms of gender composition, the majority of the ten other small-firm workforces constituted similarly male dominated social settings like the catering kitchen, with one having been led also by a female owner-manager. Among them were two gardening companies, two restaurant kitchens, a painting company, a car workshop and a waste collection company. Informants who were employed in an alteration shop and an organic grocery store reported more mixed workforces. One small grocery store on the company campus of a large semiconductor corporation was predominantly staffed by female workers and led by a female owner-manager and her daughter. Family members were part of the workforce also in one of the gardening companies which was managed by two brothers.

Depending to some extent on the economic sectors in which they were employed, my informants worked together with people of various ages, occupational backgrounds, personal statuses and lifestyles. This included young apprentices, workers and supervisors as well as often long-standing middle-aged or older employees, superiors and owner-managers, e.g. in the waste collection company, the two stores and the alteration shop. These more established co-workers were partly described as well experienced and highly skilled. While most answered that they were working together with others of similar age, some forced migrant newcomers perceived themselves as exceptionally young in comparison to the average age at their workplaces. This was the case e.g. for Sayed, a 23-year-old Afghan man working in the organic grocery store. However, Sayed, as well as the research participant working in the small grocery store on the company campus, also mentioned that he had occasionally worked along with part-time employees of similar age, some of whom had been students.

While I did not collect extensive data with colleagues themselves, employers and forced migrant employees of several companies were making statements about family relations, personal plans, lifestyles and backgrounds of their co-workers and revealed that some of them had partners, were married and/or had children. For instance, Habib, a 30-year-old asylum seeker from Mali, referred to the two unmarried and childless brothers who ran the gardening company in which he had worked when he mentioned his generalized impression

that German men would be single or with life partners, “[b]ut they don’t make family” (Interview Habib 03.12.2017) in the sense of marrying and having children. Emanuel, an asylum seeker from Nigeria who worked in a car workshop, expressed similar impressions. However, he also told me about the attempts one of his male colleagues was making to find a three-room flat suitable to set up a family “in an expensive area” (Interview Emanuel 12.01.2018) in Munich because “[h]e like[s] to see people [...] he like[s] music, he like[s] high life. Don’t you see? (laughs)” (ibid.). The manager of one of the restaurants represented several statements I could note from people working in the food and beverage service industry when he made clear that gastronomy, in combination with being hard work, could be equated with “life” (Fieldnotes Restaurant 21.04.2018) in that it implied a mode of vivid and continuous social involvement among co-workers. The owner-manager of one of the gardening companies was convinced that the overall comparatively high educational backgrounds among her employees resulted in a social environment which she experienced as “very clever, very open-minded, very reflective” (Interview Gardening 25.07.2018) and therefore accepting, respectful and supportive towards forced migrant newcomers.

Turning back to the catering company, in addition to the already established workers, the chef employed three forced migrant newcomers who had arrived in the Munich region in the course of the previous five years and were still in the asylum procedure. They comprised one man from Pakistan and two from Nigeria. One of the latter whom I will call Michael had already been working with the chef for two and a half years full-time as a kitchen help. Michael was in his late twenties, lived in the same municipality where his workplace was located and financially supported his mother and siblings in Nigeria, where he had worked as salesperson in the garment and clothing sector. In Munich he had already worked for shorter periods of time in a warehouse and as a cleaner before he had entered the catering company with no prior experience in kitchen work. The other young man from Nigeria, Mohammed, had just started working as a dishwasher one month ago. He had come to Germany around 2013 and worked a second job in the kitchen of a fast-food restaurant. Arif, the employee from Pakistan, was also in his twenties and had already completed one year in the catering company. He was working as a kitchen help and before joining the catering company he had worked in the kitchen of a restaurant serving South East Asian food. All three forced migrant employees had rudimentary German skills. According to the chef and evident from my personal interactions with them, they frequently struggled to understand German sentences and had a rather limited range of words and phrases at their disposal which they combined in short concatenations. Furthermore, Arif had told the chef that he could not read and write in Latin

alphabet. During my participant observation at the catering workplace, Michael, Arif and Mohammed were present and worked along with the chef and another experienced kitchen help who was a white German man around the age of 40.

As it could be expected from the relatively large number of people working in the garden centre, its workforce proved to be highly heterogeneous in terms of social-structural characteristics. The branch manager of the garden centre emphasized that there was a high proportion of women, especially also in managerial positions. Regarding migration biographies and cultural diversity, he gave an unspecific account in which he guessed to be knowledgeable about the ethnic-national affiliations of 70% of the workers and stated that the garden centre featured “many different cultures” (Interview Store 04.04.2018). The forced migrant employees not included, he mentioned several European countries of origin, such as Italy, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine, and highlighted that “we also have Muslims here” (ibid.). He clarified that while he was aware that many saw them as foreigners, he would not think of people as migrants when they were brought up in Germany by parents with non-German citizenship. Instead, he drew attention to the fact that many co-workers had internally migrated to Bavaria from other federal states of Germany, such as Thuringia, Saxony or Berlin. Besides German, some already established co-workers possessed additional language skills and according to the branch manager most of them spoke English.

I could gain additional insights into some individual characteristics through direct observations as well as verbal exchanges with seven employees who held different full-time positions in various departments. All of them spoke German as their first language and could be identified as established locals. They comprised two store clerks in their mid-forties, i.e., one woman who had started to work in her occupation in 1988 and one family father of three. I also encountered two department managers in their late thirties. One of them was a married university graduate who frequently visited his home-town in Thuringia and the other one a man from another region in Bavaria. Belonging to the younger generation of the workforce, one female and one male store clerk I talked to were around twenty years old, had recently finished their apprenticeships and started their work lives in the garden centre. One female department manager was in her late twenties and filled the post left behind by a former employee who had been mentioned independently by several workers as someone who had actually established a social tie beyond work with a forced migrant co-worker. Overall, the branch manager's assessments of the composition of the workforce tended to correspond with my own partial observations.

At the time of my research, 12 forced migrant newcomers were employed full-time in

the garden centre, one in each of the eight sales floor departments and at the tills and three in the warehouse. While most of them were employed as unskilled workers for mainly practical tasks, one had been promoted to the position of department manager because he had quickly learnt sufficient German and other skills required for this job. In more general terms, the forced migrant workers were in their early twenties to late thirties and one of them was female. Several of them had a safer legal status in Germany, but the large majority was still in the asylum process or their deportations were suspended. While most of them came from African countries, one man had fled Syria and another one Pakistan. One of their local colleagues claimed to know that while at least one was planning to marry soon, most of the newcomers had no family ties in the Munich region.

In the course of my research in the garden centre I interacted with seven of these 12 employees. Three of them were Nigerian men in their thirties, Gabriel working in the warehouse and Femi and Tunde in departments on the sales floor. Gabriel had already worked for several months in a large hotel in Munich and remembered a diverse list of unlearned jobs which had been the basis of his livelihood in Nigeria. Markus, a Christian man from Pakistan, was the newcomer who worked as department manager. He had arrived in Germany together with his brother and told me that steel worker was his actual occupation. Amadou, a 29-year-old man from rural Mali, had been working for more than one and a half years in the garden centre. He had not attended formal schooling in Mali and his supervisor mentioned that he had not learnt to read or write. Brhane, a young Eritrean man, had begun to work in the warehouse six months before my research and Travis, a man from Sierra Leone, was just having his first week on the sales floor. Before that, he had already worked as a dishwasher in the kitchen of a luxurious inner city hotel. All of the newcomers had been still at the beginning of learning German when they had entered their jobs and not everyone was speaking English. The level of German skills each of them had been developing since they had started their jobs varied and some assessed their own German skills as not very good. Nevertheless, it appears safe to say that all of them had a basic understanding and many were already establishing a routine in speaking and understanding German.

In all four example workplaces as well as the other companies of my research, German was present and crucial as the main language used in verbal and written communication. But differences existed in terms of usage and significance of German and other ways of communicating. Talking in English or other languages was partly not possible or actively banned and avoided by employers and colleagues. In both self-employed example workplaces, German was the only shared language which could be used by the co-workers because the master of

the painting company and Akhtar in the workshop did not speak English. While the boss of the workshop generally considered language to be of secondary significance for doing technical work, the chef assessed German language in written and spoken form as essential for working in the catering kitchen. However, due to the low German skills of Michael, Arif and Mohammed, she partly communicated with simple hand signs to circumvent specific terms for kitchen tools which could be expressed with particular body motions, e.g. circling one hand to symbolize an eggbeater (cf. Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 71). While the chef also did not speak English, she reported that various other languages shared by co-workers were sometimes used at work, also among forced migrant newcomers. But according to her, it was still “everything open” (Interview Kitchen 04.04.2018) in the sense that allowing the use of languages besides German had not resulted in social closure among work partners with linguistic commonalities.

In contrast to the workplaces in which communication took place only among co-workers for most of the time, German language skills were given a more central role in the painting company and the garden centre, mainly because service interactions with predominantly German speaking customers were a core aspect of these occupations (cf. Spittler 2014: 2). This could be observed best in the garden centre, in which the branch manager had established an official rule that only German should be spoken at work. His declared intention was to further the learning progresses of the forced migrant employees through constant confrontation with German and thus enable them to service customers as soon as possible. Yet, despite this rule which was mentioned by many local as well as forced migrant workers, some co-workers, including the branch manager himself, partly resorted to English when this was a possible alternative and allowed for quicker or more reliable mutual understanding. I also found some forced migrant employees exchanging in a language only they had in common when co-workers or customers were not within earshot, e.g. inside the warehouse and the break room.

Beyond the use of German in general, more specific professional jargon was dominating each of the four workplaces which each represented a different occupational field (cf. Fine 1986: 186). These technical vocabularies included words for tools, work materials and components as well as colours, numbers, directions and verbs and adverbs which clarified what task should be done in which way. In the painting company, for example, brushes and scrapers in different shapes and sizes were addressed with idiosyncratic names which were repeatedly used by the master during work and taught in the trade school. Many forced migrant newcomers had mentioned that these special languages, along with Bavarian and other dialects

which partly obscured communication, posed additional challenges of understanding German at work (cf. Anderson 2016: 36; Schmidt 2020: 64f.).

5. Working together

It has been pointed out above how work relationships are shaped by organizational context factors of SMEs. Having addressed these more or less institutionalized structuring environments, I will now turn to the intersubjective and relational patterns and processes of working together. Dyadic work relationships can be understood as constituting social contexts for the initiation and formation of personally significant relationships because they variously induce, require or even “force” (Yakubovich and Burg 2019: 1019) co-workers to work together and interact on the basis of their more or less formalized and interdependent work roles (ibid.: 1013ff.; see Ch. 2.1 and 2.2). In other words, these work-related face-to-face exchanges may serve as “commonalities of practice” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 137) around which sociabilities of emplacement may develop between the participants as human beings and individual persons (see Ch. 2.4). Before I will interpret practices of cooperation in the form of introducing and training, directly sharing and coordinating tasks as well as informal help and support (Ch. 5.3), I will begin my characterizations of the lived work relationships of my informants by representing the subjective preconceptions, expectations and assessments of employers and co-workers (Ch. 5.1) as well as forced migrant newcomers (Ch. 5.2).

5.1 Perspectives of employers and co-workers

Central to my discussion of subjective perspectives on social ties at work in this and the following subchapter is that friendly and collegial work relationships, which are established on the basis of formal role relationships and serve predominantly instrumental purposes, have been identified as favourable contexts that may precede the potential formation of personally important relationships (Fine 1986: 187f.; Kurth 1970: 136-138, 149-; Sias 2009: 99-101; Sias and Cahill 1998: 283-289; cf. Schmidt 2006: 469-478). Correspondingly, it can be argued that the ways in which newcomers are welcomed, recognized and accepted as well as ignored, rejected and disrespected by co-workers and employers influence whether work relationships may be understood as rather open and collegial or hostile and conflictual; i.e., whether they may constitute rather enabling or inhibiting opportunity structures for the formation of personally important relationships (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 128-130, 136-141; Schmidt 2020: 168ff.).

How forced migrant employees were imagined, received and treated by members of already established workforces can be traced with reference to notions such as respect, acceptance, tolerance,³⁵ discrimination and racism which were repeatedly invoked during my interviews and conversations. In the sections below, I will approach the prevailing perspectives on work relationships of employers, supervisors and colleagues by first outlining the more generally mentioned aspects of specific efforts related to working with forced migrant newcomers and familiarity with heterogeneity. This will be followed by a discussion of individual assessments and socially and experientially shaped images and expectations through which work relationships seemed to be perceived.

Expected efforts

How forced migrant newcomers were received in workplaces could be related to particular experiences, expectations, attitudes and preconceptions regarding socio-cultural heterogeneity and working with people variously categorized as migrants which were indicated by employers and several other research participants (cf. Schmidt 2020: 165ff.). First and foremost, the employers I interviewed explained that they would not think of forced migrant newcomers as fully fledged skilled workers. They rather expected them to be motivated and reliable employees who should manage to learn all that was needed directly on the job (cf. Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 42-48, 59-62). In this context and partly based on their previous experiences, the majority of employers and co-workers seemed to agree that working together with forced migrant newcomers required them to endorse the investment of considerable amounts of time and additional efforts into introducing and training people who mostly started with low German skills, had unrelated work experiences and were often associated with socio-cultural origins and orientations “which have nothing to do with us” (Interview Store 04.04.2018), as the branch manager put it.

Work relationships with forced migrants were therefore described as involving extensive and at times especially thoughtful and patient communication in the form of e.g. everyday conversations and discussions, asking questions to avoid misunderstandings, repeating explanations several times, rephrasing German sentences, switching between languages or visu-

35 The notion of 'tolerance' is discussed by Modood (2013) as “toleration, that is to say, one tolerates difference” (ibid.: 58). One necessary condition for toleration is disapproval on the part of those who tolerate in the sense that “if one approves of, or even if one is simply indifferent to, the attributes, beliefs or behaviour in question, then there is nothing to tolerate – the behaviour is simply part of what is normal.” (Ibid.) As a second condition Modood (2013) mentions that “one must have the power, or believe one has the power, to suppress the behaviour in question. That is to say, there is an alternative to tolerating the disapproved difference, the deviant behaviour.” (Ibid.: 58) Accordingly, tolerance is bound up with dominant social positions and takes place in unequal power relations (ibid.: 50f., 58).

alizing work tasks and objects. Apart from giving an understanding of task-related skills and German language, introducing newcomers to the workplace could also include the transfer of computer skills, knowledge about local ways of working and socio-cultural conventions which were relevant for service interactions with customers as well as everyday exchanges with co-workers.

In addition, most employers I talked to highlighted that hiring forced migrant newcomers implied additional paper work, bureaucratic procedures and legal uncertainties related to the asylum procedure which were predominantly depicted as unnecessarily complicating and restricting employment relationships and working together. This mainly concerned the regional authorities' lengthy and elusive processes of issuing, renewing and frequently denying work permits for asylum seekers or tolerated forced migrants whose asylum applications had already been rejected (cf. Dünnwald 2017: 190-199; Schiffauer 2018: 26-28; Aumüller 2016: 13f., 44). Several employers I talked to voiced their opinions that the official regulations and decision making practices regarding legal statuses and work permits were actively working against their efforts of employing newcomers. In particular, it was criticized that asylum seekers who had already been incorporated as reliable employees or were willing and able to start a job were either told to leave the country when their asylum cases were denied or were not given work permits although they had to stay in Germany for considerable lengths of time because the authorities still had to decide their asylum cases or had suspended their deportations for various reasons.³⁶ Some of my informants had observed that uncertain and precarious legal statuses and living situations of forced migrants in the Munich city region could have unsettling, distracting, unhealthy and depressing effects on newcomers which partly also impaired their capabilities to focus on working, learning and cooperating with others.

In the face of the manifold challenges which the asylum procedure often meant for forced migrant newcomers and indirectly also for their co-workers, several employers considered it worthwhile that they themselves and members of their workforces were gaining knowledge about asylum policies and administrative practices as well as the individual circumstances, flight histories and asylum cases of the forced migrants in their workplaces. As the owner-manager of a gardening company exemplified, the active engagement with difficulties specifically related to asylum bureaucracy was widely highlighted as a necessity for

36 Especially the branch manager of the garden centre emphasized his hard feelings about the contradicting mismatch he identified between actually restrictive policies and the widely publicized encouragements by state representatives that employers should be open to employing newcomers after the increased influx of forced migrants in 2015. He concluded that the main complicating factor of employing forced migrant newcomers was not their personal characteristics or skills and qualifications but the official regulations of the asylum procedure which he characterized as “no humane treatment” (Interview Store 04.04.2018) of the individuals involved.

achieving and maintaining employment relationships with forced migrant newcomers:

[A]s employer I say: 'If you receive any [official] letter, please give it to me. And then I take a look at it, what do they want? How do they want it? Actually, what is it all about?' So if something like this, such an assistance, is missing, the asylum seekers have problems in the background which I don't realize. [...] And these problems which they have also block very much. And then they cannot come [to work], for whatever reason. [...] But if I were an employer and said: 'That's none of my business. You come [to work] and otherwise we don't talk to each other.' [...] That's actually not possible. (Interview Gardening 25.07.2018)

All in all, from the employer perspective the outcomes of initial training phases were frequently described as impressive achievements of individual newcomers who had rapidly learned and improved in their jobs and German language despite unfavourable circumstances of life. But employers and direct co-workers partly also experienced training and working with forced migrants as challenging, exhausting, frustrating and conflict ridden, e.g. when legal decisions enforced the termination of employment relationships, forced migrants were frequently absent because they had to attend inflexible appointments with the asylum bureaucracy or mistakes and misunderstandings persistently recurred at work.

Familiarity with heterogeneity

Besides the general narrative that working with forced migrant newcomers would amount to additional efforts and costs for the members of established workforces, especially during often protracted phases of initiation, many employers conveyed the impression that they and their co-workers were in various ways familiar with people who are different in terms of socio-cultural characteristics and subjective experiences and orientations and partly also related their own experiences of “feeling out of place” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 140) and being ascribed “categories of racial, ethnic, and religious difference” (ibid.: 145) to the situations of forced migrant newcomers. Hence, some statements of my informants suggested that this familiarity with heterogeneity constituted part of the reason why forced migrants were hired and predominantly accepted in the SMEs (cf. Schmidt 2020: 165-176, 188).

The newcomers who worked in the two self-employed businesses could be viewed as successors of heterogeneous employees in the histories of these workplaces. Shortly before Tony had started the apprenticeship, the master had employed a male painter in his late thirties who had migrated from Mozambique to Germany in his childhood and lived in the city with his partner and their child. The master also highlighted that he had made “distinctively formative” (Çağlar 2016: 957) experiences related to growing up and learning the painting occupation in Germany as a member of a family which had been living in Baden Wuerttemberg for several decades since his grandfather had migrated from Turkey to Ger-

many as a labour migrant. He stated that he had been incessantly labelled as *Ausländer*, i.e., foreigner, by people he identified as German and alluded to prejudices, social exclusion and personally challenging complexities of subjectivity which were bound up with the hegemonic discursive distinction between migrants and non-migrants (see Ch. 2.4). During my observations in the painting company, the master described himself along the lines of nationality as Turkish and explicitly not as German and assumed that it would take several more generations until descendants of Turkish labour migrants who arrived during the guest worker regime could identify as German (cf. Mannitz and Schneider 2014: 80-88). His account seemed to imply that this was bound to the precondition that categorical exclusion would stop in the sense that descendants of Turkish 'guest workers' would be "counted as being part of the majority population" (Faist 2010: 304). Thus, it can be argued that the master related to Tony's situation as a forced migrant newcomer also on the basis of his subjectivity which he presented as, among other things, shaped by "the immutable traces of a particular past (...) experience of cross-border mobility or its memory in the present" (Çağlar 2016: 958) and that encompassed his familiarity with being categorized as migrant or foreigner (ibid.: 957-960).

In the electronics workshop, the long list of prior workshop assistants who had been working with the boss included e.g. a refugee from Iran, an ex-convict and many students and young adults who had needed a side-job. Reflecting on his former co-workers, the boss stated that they could be described best as "outsiders" (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017) or persons who were caught in intermediate phases of life and would not easily find a place for themselves in rigid, inflexible and competitive large-scale company structures and work groups. In his social position as asylum seeker, Akhtar seemed to correspond to this pattern. The boss highlighted that he himself would share the commonality of being an outsider and therefore preferred working with others whom he likewise ascribed this label with pragmatic and partly positive connotations (see Ch. 6.2). Moreover, he referred to work-related trips further abroad as crucial experiential sources for his rather open and welcoming approach towards heterogeneity in the workshop, which could be interpreted as revealing aspects of a "cosmopolitan sense of self" (Hannerz 1996: 105). When he had repeatedly travelled to his customers in China during the previous years in order to solve technical problems, he could familiarize with cooperating despite language differences, socio-cultural boundaries and different ways of working together. Hence, the boss said "through that I have created a certain .. base for somehow getting along with everybody in the world." (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017; cf. Hannerz 1996: 102-111)

The interviews with the leading actors in the catering company and the garden centre

evoked the impression that the heterogeneity of their workforces at the time of my research (see Ch. 4.3) was no unprecedented novelty to them. For example, the chef of the catering kitchen recalled that she had already worked with around ten forced migrant newcomers since the voluntary employment broker had approached her in 2016. These hiring decisions were not exclusively explained with her economic demand for labour power but also with her personal preference for a heterogeneous workforce. She stated that “first of all, I like it motley, I enjoy that” (Interview Kitchen 04.04.2018) and considered forced migrant newcomers as contributing to the positively valued socio-cultural diversity in her company (cf. Faist 2010: 300-303).

In the garden centre, I was explained that migration related heterogeneity had been long recognized as an unproblematic normality. The branch manager reflected on the twenty years he had already spent in the company and mentioned that there had always been employees from various German federal states and other places further away, especially European migrants from Poland or former Yugoslavia. He ascribed cultural differences in relation to local ways of life in the Munich city region not only to international border crossers but also internal migrants, including himself, and likened his forced migrant employees to earlier migrants he had encountered in the work context. I was asserted that previous migrants had by and large managed to settle down over the years, were widely accepted and lived their lives “here among us, completely normal” (Interview Store 04.04.2018). Put briefly, the branch manager presented his impression of earlier settlement processes which he evaluated as successful as a point of reference for his serene vision of “the present” (Çağlar 2016: 958) of the forced migrant newcomers in the garden centre. His experiences and perceptions nurtured his confidence that they would similarly “integrate” (Interview Store 04.04.2018) in the workplace and beyond with the passing of time in the sense of accomplishing “a linear (...) transition *towards* a normative future” (Çağlar 2016: 958, emphasis in the original) which promised an “ideal state of full integration” (ibid.).

Nevertheless, while no research participant directly voiced outright animosity and only very few tentatively alluded to their own reservations and objections, I was also told that co-workers in some companies perceived forced migrant newcomers as introducing new cultural differences and social dynamics which were not always met with respect and acceptance but suspicion, prejudices, envy or other forms of resentment that seemed to be connected with wider discourses beyond the permeable boundaries of social contexts of work (cf. Schmidt 2020: 165-171, 213-218; Spittler 2016: 65-67; De Neve 2001: 136, 154-157). This became especially clear during my interview with the owner-manager of the small grocery store on a

company campus and her daughter. The latter also worked in a leading position of the enterprise and was supervising Yunis, a 28-year-old asylum seeker from Pakistan who had been permanently employed for already one and a half years. During my interview with the two leading actors of the store the owner-manager exposed the problems of envy and xenophobic attitudes she had noticed on the part of some of her employees:

Well, with the colleagues it is not always quite so easy, you know? [For instance,] when Yunis gets some winter clothes from supporters. And then we have families here who, let me just say, [...] well, live in a two- or three-room flat. And then here we go: 'Why do you get winter clothes? I have to buy mine myself.' And there is very much envy. Honestly. And what we find most astonishing, that Hungarians and Poles and partly people who are married to Tunisians are really hostile to foreigners, or envious, or I don't know how to call that. So we really have to struggle to cope with this here. (Interview Company Store 06.04.2018)

As the quote makes clear, the owner-manager had not expected that also locally established employees whom she apparently assumed to be familiar with heterogeneity due to their own experiences with migration to the Munich city region would have resentments towards Yunis and forced migrants more generally (cf. Dahinden 2013 54-57; Schmidt 2020: 176, 217f.).

The daughter of the owner-manager added her insights about manifestations of envy in connection with senses of injustice and deservingness among some of the already established workers of the small supermarket:

Or when Yunis mentions that the bathrooms of his asylum shelter in which he is permitted to reside are renovated. And when we have co-workers who are not going on holiday one year because they want to renovate their flats and also their bathrooms, then envy is aroused. Like: 'Why are you paying your bathroom with my taxpayer money when I have to [pay myself]?' So this is difficult. [...] This is really the only issue around which conflicts actually emerge sometimes. No real disputes, but there is simply short bickering when it comes to private life. [...] the extreme ones, with whom you sense the resentment during such private conversations, are maybe three [employees out of twelve]. So it's not gaining the upper hand, but [it's] noticeable indeed. [...] Tax, it is very often about taxes. [...] And you also notice when you talk about politics, very bad topic at our place (laughs), that it is said: 'Yes, and everything is so unjust!' and what not. Then you also become aware of the political attitudes of those co-workers who are a bit more extreme. (Interview Company Store 06.04.2018)

While she did not report any forceful arguments, Yunis' supervisor estimated that one quarter of the established co-workers would make resentful and envious remarks in “private conversations” (ibid.) which uncovered that they claimed to be disadvantaged in the sense of not receiving benefits and being dispossessed in a competitive “zero sum game” (Schiffauer 2018: 12, my translation; see also Hokema 2018: 73-76, 88f.; Mannitz and Schneider 2014: 70f., 76f. Desplat 2018: 118f.; Sennett 2013: 83-86). These established co-workers seemed to imagine asylum seekers, regardless of their employment status, as unearned, illegitimate and undeserving welfare recipients who “are not meant to be part of the system of social security that the national community developed (...), because they come 'from outside' into the national space of solidarity” (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 310; see also Frieze 2017: 33-45,

73-90; Jackson and Bauder 2013: 373f.). Similar to her daughter, the owner-manager of the store explained the observed resentments against Yunis with reference to political attitudes nurtured by right-wing populism which she suspected for some of her employees. She depicted the latter as “simply those typical, let me say, AfD voters. 'They have everything, we have nothing. And this is why we vote [AfD] this time round.' [...] they only see [...] black and white.” (Interview Company Store 06.04.2018)

Lastly, it has to be mentioned that familiarity with heterogeneity was partly also combined with deliberate indifference towards differences. Especially the manager and the chef of a restaurant in which an Afghan forced migrant was employed part-time as kitchen help made clear that they were experienced in working together with people of various backgrounds. At the same time, these leading actors emphasized that they would generally disregard the origins, biographies and subjective orientations of kitchen employees as long as they could reliably communicate and were “functioning” (Fieldnotes Restaurant 21.04.2018) in the kitchen team. Having touched upon the more widely mentioned aspects of additional efforts and various forms of familiarity with heterogeneity, assessments and expectations of work relationships and social environments of reception will be sketched next. These aspects of the perspectives of employers and co-workers related to particular roles, categories and “relationship models” (Fuhse 2009: 53) which were associated with forced migrant newcomers as employees and colleagues.

Assessments and expectations of work relationships

The master of the painting company assessed his work relationship with Tony as sometimes ridden by minor work-related frictions and difficulties, but he also expressed his appreciation for working with the apprentice when he highlighted that Tony was always around when he needed him, showed high commitment and continuously improved in the job and German language. He further characterized the work relationship through his notion of mentoring in the context of the formal apprenticeship. This implied simultaneously supporting as well as challenging the apprentice by confronting him with certain work-related demands and new learning contents. Hence, the master declared his intention to actively train and discipline Tony in all aspects of the occupation and not merely exploit him as a cheap and useful absorber of simple work tasks. Because he remembered how he had also needed a guide during his own apprenticeship, the master explained that he wanted to act as a mentor Tony could turn to any time. His biographically informed concept of a rewarding apprenticeship seemed to feature intensive working and practising and clear distinctions of hierarchy and authority. For instance,

while he mentioned to be aware of the fact that this was not always pleasant to Tony, he was convinced that occasional outbursts and scoldings were an effective technique of teaching the occupation. Despite the authority inhering the relationship, interactions appeared to be generally informal and direct and both co-workers used the informal German personal pronoun for each other. However, the master had recognized that Tony would mostly address him formally as 'master' while the employer would call Tony by his first name.

The expectations the master associated with Tony's position as an apprentice as well as a forced migrant newcomer implied that he wanted him to constantly think for himself and show diligence, interest and self-initiative during work and when learning the painting occupation and the German language. Tony was expected to work autonomously whenever he could and thus act as a reliable and supportive assistant whose position was right beside the master. In connection with this requirement of working with an active mind rather than blindly following orders, one of the most important rules at the workplace was that Tony should always ask questions about the work whenever task or language related aspects were not clear to him. More generally, the master also advised and prompted Tony to converse as much as possible about what they were doing at work and sometimes asked him for his opinion. He was convinced that asking and talking would allow Tony to avoid mistakes, learn the occupation and practise his German skills on which he also strongly depended in the trade school. Aside from these demands, the master assumed that it was part of the normal routine of working with apprentices that they would make mistakes and forget particular tasks or procedures from time to time. Hence, he said he would not perceive it as a major difficulty when Tony sometimes struggled to recollect particular work practises which he had already been shown before.

The boss of the electronics workshop depicted his work relationship with Akhtar as close in the sense of very direct, not strongly guided by formal organizational rules and sometimes unrestrained when work mistakes occurred: "We are absolutely without distance, I also have my outbursts." (Fieldnotes Workshop 04.12.2017) However, this informal directness seemed to be cultivated rather asymmetrically by the boss and much less by Akhtar, whom the boss explicitly attested a generally high degree of unobtrusiveness, friendliness and respectfulness. With regard to his work role in the workshop, the boss expected Akhtar to adapt aspects of a self-responsible partner as well as a subordinate assistant and illustrated this combination with reference to his notion of work on a big farm: "[Akhtar] is actually like a farm servant on a hacienda, without subservience. [...] he is taking care of everything." (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017) This comparison implied that the boss did not want Akhtar to be

merely a specialist who dealt with a narrowly defined set of tasks. Instead, he preferred to see him in the role of a flexible all-round worker who did all the manual jobs which were necessary to keep the workshop going. This breadth of responsibilities also went beyond the narrowly productive labour process and involved several rather reproductive projects of the employer which Akhtar did in the context of the paid hours of his employment contract, e.g. repairing the car of the boss or helping him with renovation works. Illustrating the role of hierarchy and authority in his work relationship with Akhtar, the boss formulated clear-cut differences in status and power which were reflected in their work tasks and the ways in which they interacted with each other: “Well, I surely give him the low-down. And he respects it.” (Ibid.) While the boss called Akhtar by his first name and used the informal German personal pronoun to address him, Akhtar generally used the formal personal pronoun when talking to the boss who was more than twenty years older than him.

In connection with his ideal concept of a versatile, flexible, autonomous yet nevertheless subordinated employee, the boss referred to the socio-economic positions of migrant newcomers when he revealed that he preferred to employ Akhtar rather than already more settled and emplaced persons whom he attested subjectivities which would be less docile and utilizable for the purposes of his enterprise (cf. Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 141ff.; see Ch. 4.3): “I appreciate Akhtar for that flexibility. That he embarks on this, and I don't know how I get someone like him on the normal labour market. It's a huge advantage.” (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017) This statement was further illuminated when the boss explicitly compared Akhtar's life and subjectivity as an asylum seeker in Munich with the stereotypical image he had formed of European 'guest workers' and Chinese labour migrants whose social existence he depicted as entirely governed by the pressure to secure an income for their far away families and the readiness to work without temporal limitations and regulations.³⁷

However, the boss seemed to assume that Akhtar's wide ranging adherence to his demands of work efforts and flexibility was not only based on the more powerful position of the employer and the precarious situation and subjectivity of asylum seekers. He claimed it would

37 Addressing the latter migrant category on the basis of his personal insights the boss stated: “what is also great, a Chinese, .. he has always time [...] because they are far away from their family. The young.” (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017) He thought that these workers would be indifferent about how much time was left beyond their working hours because “where they live may be even uglier than where they work” (ibid.). Hence, when he had been in China, the technicians with whom he had cooperated had not objected against working with him until up to 10 p.m. for an intense period of several days. Against this backdrop of experiences and stereotypes, Akhtar was assumed to be similarly indifferent and flexible because the boss was sure that the conditions in his workshop would constitute a less devastating environment than the asylum camp in which Akhtar was living: “as an employee you cannot imagine a better one [than Akhtar] because he has no time needs whatsoever to go home. At home it is ten times uglier than in my workshop. And all camp-mates are getting on his nerves. And here [in the workshop] we have Wi-Fi [...]” (ibid.).

also result from the fact that he would offer Akhtar reasons to accept his authority by likewise showing him respect, e.g. through recognition of his performance, experience and opinion as a worker (cf. Sennett 2013: 150-152). In addition, the boss put high trust in Akhtar, e.g. in the form of giving him a key to the workshop and offering him to enter the workplace whenever he wanted (see Ch. 6.3). Akhtar was also granted temporal flexibility and several other freedoms which the boss represented as aspects of a particularly tolerant working environment that would legitimate his expectations as employer. Hence, the boss was convinced that he could offer “a deluxe workplace with regard to tolerance” (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017) when compared to other jobs in which forced migrant newcomers would face e.g. stronger hierarchies, rigid regulations and less recognition and respect. This included, for instance, that Akhtar could have longer transnational phone calls with his family during work, take breaks for practising the Muslim prayers, was not bound to strict punctuality and was released from work on the basis of trust and without asking for formal attestations when he had important appointments. In particular, on Fridays Akhtar mostly left the workshop earlier, around 12.15 p.m., in order to attend the Friday prayer in a nearby mosque. All in all, in the account of the boss a certain degree of employee participation and autonomy, mutually reciprocated respect and flexibility as well as high trust seemed to feature as major bases of the work relationship and implicit employment contract which the boss deemed “extremely fair” (ibid.).

The chef of the catering kitchen assessed the social environment at her workplace as generally harmonious, tolerant and informal, stating that “our relations are very good” (Interview Kitchen 04.04.2018) and that she perceived her exchanges with forced migrant employees as no less open than with everyone else in her company: “I joke with them, I also tell them some nonsense. Simply the exact same way I always do it. (laughs)” (Ibid.) According to her, no co-worker openly expressed resentments against forced migrant colleagues and she had observed that rather the opposite seemed to be the case: “they sit together, they eat, they show photos to each other, talk with each other. Ehm, all sorts of things. [...] It is nice.” (Ibid.) In connection with these assessments, the chef used the metaphor of a “big family” (ibid.) to describe her workforce and explained the adaptation of cooperative kinship ties as a model for work relationships with reference to her own personality: “this is simply how I am. [...] I like that. This is my family. [...] My people, everybody shall be fine. Never mind, when somebody has a problem and comes to me, I'll be there immediately.” (Ibid.) This statement suggests a generalized sense of care and responsibility towards members of her workforce. In fact, many of the employees were perceived by the chef in roles similar to her biological chil-

dren, also because they partly were about the same age. She presented herself in the organizational role of an unconventional owner-manager in the sense that she would not overly stress the formal power and authority associated with her leading position in the workplace hierarchy. Accordingly, hierarchical status differences and social distinctions based on the evaluation of specific tasks and job positions were generally not supposed to dominate work relationships in the catering company.

Rather than calculating with the achievements of individual workers, the chef focused on reciprocal interdependence and collegiality among co-workers. She postulated that strong feelings of belonging to a we-group were a precondition for the cooperative accomplishment of work: “I think it is important to say 'we'. We belong together and we stick together. And because we stick together, we can do it. I want to give this feeling. I actually don't mind whether one is doing it better and the other one worse.” (Interview Kitchen 04.04.2018) While the organization of work in the kitchen depended on specialization of tasks along formal work positions (see Ch. 4.2), the chef emphasized that every work task should be valued as equally important in the context of the work process as a whole. She rejected the categorization of particular jobs such as washing dishes as 'menial' or 'dirty' because the use of such labels negated the central significance of the practices thus described and perpetuated the ascription of low prestige and inferior status to the workers who were doing them.

In line with comparing the workforce to a cooperative family group, the chef presumed that her own high work commitment which also included tasks commonly described as 'dirty work' as well as her disregard for hierarchical divisions and excessive professional pride in work relationships served as a conspicuous example from which each individual co-worker could derive what was expected in the catering company. Instead of explicitly formulating her expectations, she relied on her employees' subjectively perceived urge to balance reciprocity in work relationships and justly share the workload together (cf. Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 108-111). Like the other employers in my sample, the chef of the catering kitchen also wanted and appreciated employees who “see what needs to be done“ (Interview Kitchen 04.04.2018), do not need much attention by others and work autonomously.

However, she narrowed this work requirement of thinking and acting for themselves down to the German speaking cooks and kitchen helps whom she expected to have the necessary skills and knowledge:

Well, thinking for yourself is a bit difficult. Especially with the refugees it is really hard. [...] I don't want to ascribe them any ill will, but there are the language difficulties alone. So that [...] what they think what might be expected from them does not correspond at all to that [which actually is expected from them]. And then they do something completely wrong and I know exactly they were only acting

with good intentions, but .. was not necessarily so good. (laughs) (Interview Kitchen 04.04.2018)

Hence, the chef merely demanded from forced migrant employees that they understood and executed what they were ordered to do and asked questions whenever something was unclear. As alluded to in the quote, these expectations had formed after mistakes and problems in the work process had repeatedly occurred when newcomers had resorted to their own understandings of how particular tasks might be dealt with. The chef therefore generally assumed that most forced migrant newcomers had to be controlled and supervised more directly “[b]ecause they simply cannot grasp what it is all about” (ibid.) and could not productively apply the basic principles of the work on their own. According to her, “it is too much. They can't do it. And this is why, ehm, it is actually really better if they/ They should ask me: 'What can I do?', or: 'SHOULD I do this and this?' And then I say: 'YES. Do this, very good. Good thinking!’” (Ibid.)

Although this generalizing view on forced migrant workers seemed to congeal into rather rigid stereotypes, the chef and the already established local kitchen help I encountered during my research also drew attention to individual differences in learning and adapting to the work. The chef explained her approach of aligning organizational expectations to the variation of skills and experiences within the workforce with reference to “tolerance” (Interview Kitchen 04.04.2018) defined as a necessary awareness on the part of employers for what they could realistically expect from forced migrant newcomers: “I simply have to understand: They cannot do certain things. Some things are simply different. So I don't have to force things but have to distribute tasks according to their skills, according to what they can do.” (Ibid.) As she chose to largely tolerate and endorse existing skills and individual processes of learning and engaging with the work, the chef did not pursue a strong agenda of actively impelling further skills development among her forced migrant employees. Nevertheless, in the past she had exemplified that she was open to their further incorporation into the catering company, e.g. when she had suggested Michael to do an apprenticeship or had planned to promote an asylum seeker with the right work attitude for a leading position of a second branch she had wanted to establish.

The local kitchen help similarly differentiated his forced migrant co-workers along the learning achievements and commitment to the work which he attested them in relation to the length of time they had already spent in Germany and the catering company. In his ranking, Michael was depicted as showing least commitment and having advanced less than Mohammed who had been staying in Germany for a comparable length of time. Arif in turn was viewed as making more efforts and the local kitchen help highlighted that working with him

was going well. In sum, the above outlined remarks as well as the insights I could gain about work interactions in the catering kitchen and other workplaces suggest that co-workers with as well as without recent experiences of migration and settlement may develop preferences of working together with newcomers whom they experienced as diligent, dedicated and suitable for the particular tasks which practically bind them together (see Ch. 5.3).

Addressing the attitudes of the garden centre employees towards working with forced migrants, the branch manager had no illusions that everybody would fully tolerate and welcome the newcomers. He pragmatically accepted this as an expression of the “many different characters” (Interview Store 04.04.2018) one would find among any group of about 100 people. Nevertheless, the branch manager depicted resentments or discrimination in relations with forced migrant co-workers as an exception at his workplace. He sweepingly claimed that this would concern not more than two employees and conveyed his impression of largely collegial and supportive work relationships. Backing the assessment of the branch manager, several employees depicted the social environment in the garden centre as predominantly good and cooperative and mentioned that some employees would have closer ties and knew each other more than others who viewed their work relationships as rather formal and impersonal and/or did not directly work together in the same department. With regard to forced migrant co-workers, one store clerk mentioned that language differences posed limitations on cooperation. Two others had the impression that the newcomers were rather sticking to themselves and formed groups based on categorical commonalities such as language, religion or skin colour. This seemed to be interpreted by one of these two employees as an undesirable sign of lacking openness towards the established local workforce.

Nevertheless, it was widely reported that working together with newcomers worked well and was not dominated by major problems and difficulties. One long-standing employee appreciated that the branch manager had hired a comparatively large number of forced migrants and remarked that the newcomers would often smile and emanate positivity in the workplace. The young female store clerk I talked to similarly revealed her perception of the newcomers as jolly and sociable and stated “I like them all very much” (Fieldnotes Store 10.04.2018). One of the department managers likewise depicted the forced migrant he supervised as exceptionally friendly and upbeat and went on to point out that he had become an indispensable worker who was learning fast, showed high commitment, patience and perseverance and did his tasks independently and very thoroughly.

Regarding the concepts and expectations of work relationships, the branch manager of

the garden centre claimed that in the entire company and the store he was leading, a socially responsible orientation and residues of family values which were viewed as historical legacy of the organization predominated and were pursued by management as much as the larger scale and the practical necessities of the work process allowed. He described this as “making sure that we think very informally” (Interview Store 04.04.2018), for instance in the form of offering social support to employees when they faced problems with which the employer could help or granting opportunities to participate in organizing the work and directly voice opinions and preferences. In addition to frequent informal social exchanges in and partly also beyond the garden centre, shared company activities such as breakfasts, sports events or Christmas parties were mentioned by the branch manager as well as several employees as institutionalized sociable practices which were believed to promote cohesion and collegiality among co-workers, including forced migrant newcomers (cf. Fine 1986: 195f.; Schmidt 2006: 477-480). In sum, although less emphatically than the chef of the catering kitchen, the branch manager made clear that his perspective on relationships with and among co-workers included traces of family-like solidarity and disapproval for rigid formalization of interaction constrained by hierarchical divisions. Yet, his statements also revealed that work relationships in the garden centre were overall rather oriented along notions of universalistic rules and equal treatment on the basis of the shared employee status instead of particularistic entitlements and obligations or discrimination along categories of migration and origin (cf. Schmidt and Müller 2013: 377).

As it was the case in most of the workplaces in my research, forced migrants were hired by the garden centre without insisting on established requirements of skills, qualifications or prior experiences (see Ch. 4.3). However, the branch manager as well as several other co-workers emphasized that newcomers were expected to show commitment towards 'integrating' on the longer run in the sense of making progresses with learning German and the work tasks and adapting to dominant cultural norms and values which were associated with working and living in Germany more generally. The declared aim was that forced migrants acquired all that was necessary to become full members of the workforce who could independently accomplish their jobs.

Relying on his own observations, the branch manager confidently reported that many of those who had been already employed for up to two years were not depending on close supervision any longer. He argued that “integration“ (Interview Store 04.04.2018) of forced migrant newcomers decisively depended on the quality of their work relationships and their involvement in and exposure to the full range of everyday work practices and interactions with

already established locals. For instance, a significant proportion of forced migrant employees attended company events and the branch manager stated that

you notice it straight away, the one who goes along is the one who integrates himself best. This means he gets the best access into society because he then knows what it is all about. They are talked to in a normal way. Ehm, .. one has the same topics [of conversation] after a while, let's put it this way. And this is why I am convinced [that] it only works this way. (Ibid.).

In connection with viewing work relationships as most effective catalyst of 'integration', the branch manager pursued several strategies to enhance the development of skills among forced migrant employees. Besides the already mentioned rule of always using German at work (see Ch. 4.3), this included that forced migrant workers were supposed to participate in language courses outside the workplace for which their work schedules would be adapted accordingly. When the branch manager found out that somebody was not attending classes despite being registered, he discussed the issue with the forced migrant employee in his office. The branch manager was also deliberately communicating incentives in the form of chances of promotion to higher ranked and better paid positions for those newcomers who would manage to steadily improve their German skills and understanding of the work, assuming that “of course they integrate when they get ahead” (Interview Store 04.04.2018).

Towards already established workers, the branch manager had formulated the general expectation that they should supportively welcome the newcomers, “accept them how they are” (Interview Store 04.04.2018), e.g. in terms of religious differences, and “go along with them” (ibid.) after no substantial opposition had been voiced when the plans of hiring asylum seekers had been put up for discussion. In addition, a local human resource employee was entrusted with assisting forced migrant co-workers, especially with bureaucratic issues such as reacting to official letters which required advanced German skills. The existing workforce had to recognize the practical contribution of the forced migrant workers and was required to accept that the newcomers provided necessary labour power. In fact, from the managerial perspective it was depicted as difficult to make the established workers' opinions about employing forced migrants a primary concern: “everybody can have different views on this, but we need them” (ibid.).

Through this and similar statements, the branch manager and one department manager made clear that the forced migrant workers absorbed large portions of the manual, simple and tedious work which otherwise would be distributed as an additional burden among the established employees. Hence, the branch manager mentioned that he had successfully rebutted occasional criticism and complaints related to working with forced migrants by reminding established workers of the advantages they would ultimately get from it. Likewise pointing to the

regional shortage of labour power in the gardening sector, the department manager argued that there were no conflicts and animosities on the basis of labour market competition because established employees would not perceive forced migrant newcomers as threats to jobs, positions or wage levels (cf. Müller and Schmidt 2016: 9f., 129; Ogbonna and Harris 2006: 396).

Even though swiftly learning German and finding one's place in the new working environment was strongly emphasized and highly appreciated by the branch manager and several employees of the garden centre, it was also acknowledged that this could not be easily and equally accomplished by each and every forced migrant worker. In the light of these individual challenges, the shared collective efforts of supportively welcoming, training and 'integrating' newcomers in the garden centre were represented as core aspect of the deal of employment. Besides promising profitable longer-term outcomes for the garden centre, they were expected to be recognized as rewards by the forced migrants in the sense that they would precipitate the newcomers' personal advancement and work satisfaction. Lastly the branch manager argued that his forced migrant employees could easily find work somewhere else in the Munich city region. In his narrative, the extra efforts his store was willing to accept served as part of the explanation for the low turnover among forced migrant newcomers in the garden centre.

5.2 Perspectives of forced migrant newcomers

Having traced the prevailing perspectives on work relationships of the employers and colleagues in the four example workplaces, I will now address the perspectives of the forced migrant employees. A wide range of different subjective meanings and socio-culturally shaped views on work relationships could be found in the personal accounts of the newcomers in the four example workplaces as well as the ten other small firms in my sample. Before I will discuss in detail some of their assessments and expectations concerning work relationships, I will outline several more widely recurring relational themes which I could identify in my ethnographic data.

Preconceptions about collegiality, conflict and social categorizations

From my interviews, I gained the impression that most forced migrant newcomers associated workplaces with socio-cultural heterogeneity as well as different opinions, attitudes and other subjective orientations among co-workers. Accordingly, several informants mentioned that alongside collegial and friendly relations at work, conflicts, antagonism, resentments and power struggles were similarly expected aspects of working together in the sense that "it hap-

pens everywhere like that” (Interview Yunis 26.04.2018). Racist discrimination in the workplace and beyond was a recurring topic and many depicted racism as a universal social phenomenon which was not seen as confined to certain nation-state borders or spheres of life: “There is nowhere without racist.” (Interview Jonathan 02.12.2017)

An example for the more general subjective attitudes and approaches towards work relationships and their potential for interpersonal conflicts was offered by Saliou, a Malian asylum seeker who had been working in a large warehouse and not in a small firm. Saliou expected that being new in a European workplace as a forced migrant would make it necessary to immediately negotiate power relations with already established employees whom he a priori ascribed cunning, exploitative and disrespectful intentions to reduce their own efforts by shifting work onto novices: “when you enter a new work, the people think you are an animal” (Interview Saliou 06.01.2018). He therefore concluded that one would not get ahead at work and “turn into an animal” (ibid.) after a few years unless one carefully reckons the interests of co-workers, does not always agree on their excessive work demands, instantly counters unjust and oppressive treatment and thus defends and reaffirms one's self-concept and human dignity in the workplace (cf. Hodson 1996: 733):

You always have to think like this: 'I am not an animal, I am a person. With character, with experience. I also have done different school in Africa. You always have to [remember] this experience, to work with your head. But when the people think you are an animal you also have to say: 'I am not an animal, I am a person.' (Ibid.)

Saliou had acted out these assertions through verbal arguments and disputes, e.g. when he had felt disrespected through work orders by colleagues which he depicted as illegitimate because they were not issued by a supervisor of higher status in the workplace hierarchy.

In connection with their subjective preconceptions and rather subtle sentiments or memorable incidents such as conflicts and difficulties in the workplace, some forced migrants also appeared to form and foster negative as well as positive stereotypes about certain groups of co-workers (cf. Schmidt 2006: 471f.; Dyer, McDowell and Batnitzky 2010: 642-645). For instance, people who had themselves arrived as migrants during earlier decades or were identified as descendants of migrants to Germany were partly depicted as generally more reserved, hostile and “jealous” (Interview Idris 18.04.2018) towards forced migrant newcomers than people who were labelled as native “German people” (ibid.; cf. Schmidt 2020: 169-177; Dahinden 2013: 54-57; McDowell 2008: 500; Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 189f.). Stereotypes and prejudices could likewise refer to nationality groups with which forced migrants either identified themselves or other forced migrant newcomers (cf. Schmidt 2020: 175f.). For instance, Jonathan, a Nigerian asylum seeker who worked in another logistics warehouse of

online retailers, had found a sociability partner in a colleague who was an asylum seeker from Sierra Leone. He remarked that

most Sierra Leoneans, they are very friendly. [...] Unlike most of our Nigerians. They, you know, they misbehave. I must tell the truth. [...] The way they talk, the way they do things. Honestly, I do not like people who are hostile. As, people who are just gangstas. [...] I don't like gangstas. I don't associate myself with them. (Interview Jonathan 02.12.2017)

Statements of several other research participants similarly alluded to suspicious, criticising and distancing attitudes towards forced migrants who were associated with particular ethnic and national origins.

In addition, different reservations and socio-cultural preconceptions about working with women, which are often traced back to an initial unfamiliarity or alleged cultural incompatibility with “the notion of gender equality which is valid in Germany” (Schmidt 2020: 100, my translation), are frequently observed and debated when work relationships of forced migrants are concerned (ibid.: 100ff.). They were also highlighted by a minor fraction of forced migrant newcomers as well as employing actors of my research. The chef of the catering kitchen and the branch manager of the garden centre mentioned that some of their forced migrant employees had rather tacitly than vociferously avoided to interact with female co-workers and had preferred to cooperate with men upon entering their jobs. In the garden centre, this had included, for instance, not accepting to subordinate to female supervisors or refusing to shake hands with women. However, interpersonal conflicts associated with diverging conceptions of gender relations were depicted as transitory and exceptional phenomena and newcomers had widely adapted to the official notion of gender equality after several months in the garden centre as well as the catering company (cf. Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 185-187)

In the interviews with my forced migrant research participants, working with women was rarely discussed as a challenging or conflictual aspect and mainly went without saying when cooperative relationships with female colleagues and supervisors or owner-managers were described. Among the few informants who talked about their attitudes towards working with women, Habib provided the most explicit subjective account. He outlined his preference to have exclusively male co-workers and related it to his general expectations about legitimate authority and ways of communicating at work. These aspects came to the fore when Habib recollected that he had quit a job in a gardening company after two weeks because he had disliked cooperating with several female co-workers at this workplace: “But I don't like the job. Because somehow there is a small girls, command you. So, I like them, but I don't like somebody like, you know, something like that. You know? So I just decide to leave there. [...]

There was no problem. I just, I don't feel to work with them.” (Interview Habib 03.12.2017) Habib's statement suggests that there had been no general hostilities and open conflicts with his female co-workers. However, he seemed to consider it inappropriate and personally intolerable that women whom he derogated as “small girls” (ibid.) were encountered in more powerful positions which required men like himself to acknowledge their authority by adhering to their orders (cf. McDowell 2008: 497f.).

Preferences of discretion at work

The second point Habib outlined as a reason for generally preferring not to work with women was his persuasion that female co-workers would be more communicative and interested in the personal lives and problems of others than male co-workers who would generally focus on their own work tasks (cf. Hollstein 2001: 146-155; Sias 2009: 73f.; Fine 1986: 191f.). This allegedly female mode of personalistic communication was depicted as an undesired source of stress:

Well, because women, they talk too much. Ya. But men, sometimes not too much stress. Everybody is busy. With his own work. [Women] just like talking and [...] they always want to have contact with you. Maybe they ask questions, 'Where are you from?' Bla, bla. 'Why did you come here?' Like that. Something like that. [...] And [in] the end they cannot [...] help you. Nothing. [...] They just want to know. Your own personal problems. [...] I don't like it. I, ya, normally I answer them, but I don't like that. Because I explain you. And at the end you just open your eyes on me, you say: 'Oh.' And in the end you cannot even help me, even anything. That's also, is a little bit strain. But [when] you explain your problems to somebody, maybe he can give you some ideas or find you some ways how to mingle with your life. Something like that. Ya. (Interview Habib 03.12.2017)

As Habib's statement shows, his gender stereotypes apparently combined with his declared dislike for being exposed to sensitive questions about his uncertain and debilitating situation as an asylum seeker. He had made frustrating experiences which led him to the generalizing conclusion that sharing his personal difficulties with established locals would not lead to the somehow rewarding outcomes he expected in return. Instead of being reciprocated with practical or emotional support and constructive impulses, his involuntary self-disclosure would be reacted to with clueless pity. In sum, it seemed as if Habib expected that not working with female co-workers, whom he essentialized as overly sociable and interested in personal matters, meant circumventing informal investigations about his person which he presumed to be pointless, stressful and disempowering. The prejudice inhering these statements about work relationships with women was underlined by the fact that Habib indeed reported more vivid and personal exchanges with male co-workers while he had, on the other hand, found several closer female friends in non-work contexts.

Habib's preference to focus on the practicalities of work instead of extensively disclos-

ing personal problems and information at work alludes to perceptions of the discursive separation between the spheres of instrumental work and personal life which could be noticed with several of my research participants. Similar to some already established locals, some forced migrants revealed which topics of conversation and types of information they considered appropriate and convenient for being exchanged in the course of work relationships and which contents they seemed to view as more or less restricted to their personal lives and relationships beyond work (cf. Kock and Kutzner 2018: 457-459; Sias 2009: 64-67; Kurth 1970: 138-141). This was also exemplified by Kingsley, an 18-year-old forced migrant from Nigeria who did an apprenticeship as cook in a well-known inner-city restaurant. While he confirmed that rather general and work-related topics would be permissible, he clarified that he did not want to discuss his personal life and topics he considered confidential with people known from work. Partly coinciding with the above-quoted statement of Habib, this included questions about Kingsley's family, country of origin and "the story" (Interview Kingsley 28.11.2017) of his flight which would also imply his future plans and the question "Why are you in Germany?" (ibid.) which would pressure him to legitimize his border-crossing movements and presence as a forced migrant towards co-workers. Although he and several other informants regarded these topics as unwanted, Kingsley told that he could partly comprehend the interest and curiosity of some co-workers. For the painting company, Tony reported that customers would frequently confront him with questions he often disapproved and felt obliged to answer out of politeness, e.g. about his origin, migration story and life plans, his short dreadlocks as well as 'Africa' in most general terms.

Significance of favourable impressions and German skills

Furthermore, many of my forced migrant informants pointed out that showing high commitment and diligence in learning and doing their work as well as being attentive and supportive towards co-workers would be essential for leaving a positive and appropriate impression on employers and colleagues (cf. Goffman 2017 [1983]: 19-71; Dyer, McDowell and Batnitzky 2010: 638f.). Solidarity with co-workers and dedication to the job was widely expected to be recognized as an advantage by members of established workforces, especially when they made their work easier. This perception ascribed to co-workers was partly thought to facilitate the emergence of collegial work relationships or even more personal ties based on respect and recognition in the workplace. The importance of evoking a favourable impression at work was mentioned by Emanuel who explained that as a newcomer to the workplace he felt self-responsible for finding ways of learning his tasks without demanding too much attention and ef-

forts from his co-workers (cf. Ogbonna and Harris 2006: 398f.): “I cannot expect him [a co-worker] to explain twenty-four hours every day, so I have to look with my eyes then.” (Interview Emanuel 12.01.2018) Nevertheless, corresponding to the requirements stated by the employers in my research (see Ch. 5.1), many forced migrants were aware that asking questions whenever necessary in order to avoid mistakes was expected from them.³⁸

Lastly, the great majority of forced migrant employees named initially low German skills as a crucial factor which complicated working together, especially during the early days in their jobs, apprenticeships or internships. Yet, several newcomers told me that they were learning German mainly at their workplaces and interactions in the context of work relationships were approached and valued by many as opportunities for further practising their German skills. Some informants preferred and appreciated work positions which exposed them to communication with German-speaking co-workers and customers. These were seen as helping them to pursue the potential learning outcome of work relationships and further develop social ties. In the following sections, I will more specifically focus on how forced migrant newcomers in the particular work contexts assessed and conceptualized their work relationships and characterized their co-workers.

Assessments and expectations of work relationships

Similar to the master, Tony explained that working together in the painting company took place in the context of a work relationship between supervising master and subordinate apprentice which he assessed as overall positive and personally rewarding. Although he said that they were getting along well and also mentioned the notion of “friendship” (Interview Tony 02.01.2018) when he occasionally described the work tie during my research, Tony explained how he did not consider the master a friend. Friendship was rather evoked in connection with their generally friendly and informal mode of interacting:

We talk as friends, you know, but when it comes to work, work is work. And play time is play time. So I don't mix them together. I always have it at the back of my mind: 'This is your boss. No matter what.' But, I'm not scared of him. I respect him. But if we're in a playing mood, we're in a playing mood. Forget work. No more boss. You know? Though he's still my boss. But, at that playing mood, I just try to

³⁸ In fact, rather than complaining about too many questions of clarification, many employers mentioned it as a problem that their forced migrant employees would not ask and talk enough because extensive communication as a way of dealing with uncertainties at work was the preferred form of extra effort when compared to other more expensive rectifications of mishaps. The employers assumed that these tendencies were a negative side effect of attempts to create and maintain favourable impressions of being knowledgeable and having fully understood orders and instructions in German (cf. Sias 2009: 24-28, 64f.). Besides practices of pretending to know and avoiding to ask in order to avert appearing incompetent and feeling embarrassed, the chef of the catering kitchen and the branch-manager of the garden centre had regretfully encountered stronger and more rigid notions of hierarchy in work relationships with subordinate forced migrant employees than it was common for their work organizations. However, I was assured that once it was actively countered, the focus on hierarchical difference would gradually give way to less status-bound and more task-oriented and informal scripts of work interaction.

free myself and come to the playing mood, you know? Not like carrying the work things on my mind anymore. And when we're working, even when we're having a discussion, I always have it in mind that: 'Okay. This man is just being too nice, or is just being himself, or he's just trying to make you feel comfortable with him.' You know? And I try to understand that also. So, I don't, I don't mix it. No, I don't mix it, so. I see the relationship like .. if I'm to say, a boss, if I really want to be sincere, a boss and an apprentice. (Ibid.)

As this quote reveals, even though Tony engaged in instrumental as well as sociable practices and situations with the master, he seemed to consider their hierarchically unequal work roles and their purposes as persistently dominating the relationship at any moment (cf. Scheibelhofer 2019: 297).

While I was assured that he was “a nice person” (Interview Tony 02.01.2018), Tony further described his master as the “type of boss” (ibid.) who occasionally got angry and scolded him and whose reactions could be blunt and hard to predict. At the same time, the master would also “play” (ibid.) at work, e.g. in the sense of joking and initiating conversations about non-work topics. Put briefly, Tony seemed to perceive the master as a simultaneously supportive, sociable and respectable as well as criticizing, difficult and at times capricious co-worker. This relational complexity and ambiguity was also revealed in Tony's statement that his master sometimes appeared “crazy” (ibid.) to him. However, he made clear that this impression did not compromise his appreciation and respect for the master and his overall positive assessment of their work relationship because during the months they had already worked together, Tony had developed an understanding of the master which allowed him “to know whom you're dealing with” (ibid.; cf. Kock and Kutzner 2018: 457f.). Besides being cognizant and tolerant of the moods of the master, Tony presented himself as focused and diligent co-worker: “I myself, when I work I'm like a beast. Ya, I'm like a monster. I don't want to talk. I just want to keep working. And just want to focus on what I'm doing. Because I don't want any distraction.” (Interview Tony 02.01.2018) This statement reveals that Tony preferred not to have too much informal talk during work and it preceded his assertion in the interview that it was not him but the master who would be the driving force behind conversations in the context of their work relationship (see Ch. 6.1).

While Akhtar told me that he generally liked and appreciated working with the boss in the electronics workshop, he also revealed further insights into the complex set of subjective expectations and assumptions which were associated with his work relationship. Akhtar highlighted that the boss would be frequently under pressure during work and he related this stress level primarily to the older age of the boss in connection with the high concentration which his technical development work required. In other words, viewing the boss as “an old man” (Interview Akhtar and Hakim 21.01.2018) appeared to be a way of dealing with his nervous-

ness, short outbursts and other stress reactions which Akhtar seemed to benevolently condone as normal side effects of older age. In particular, Akhtar made clear that he would not feel affected when there was “sometimes a bit of a difficulty” (ibid.) with the boss and instead claimed that the stress would only have negative effects on the health of the boss himself. Illustrating this perception, Akhtar remembered telling his employer: “You can do anything. You can beat me. I laugh and [have] no problem. But it is not good for you.” (Ibid.) Complementing these first-hand characterizations of the work relationship, the boss recalled that Akhtar had discerned multiple types of relationship partners in him: “[Akhtar] said: 'Now I've been here [in the workshop] for one year. I hope you are happy with me. It is unbelievable how it is here. [...] You are very peculiar. You are in fact [...] partner, or also father, or also supervisor, or boss.'" (Ibid.) Even though this statement mainly represents how the boss imagined to be seen by Akhtar, it also serves as an indirect allusion to Akhtar's perspective and the potential for multiple and ambiguous meanings which he might have associated with his work relationship.

Moreover, Akhtar seemed to perceive the boss in his employer role as a more powerful actor of capital accumulation than the electronics workshop may have afforded him to be. During my interviews and conversations, Akhtar revealed his assumption that the boss would steadily realize significant profits from the products of the workshop and worried too much about money. The boss in turn strongly emphasized the mostly volatile order situation and his periodically returning fears of bankruptcy. It appears safe to say that Akhtar had not gained extensive knowledge about the economic situation of the workshop and was not very familiar with the processes of running the self-employed enterprise, especially when it came to production costs and attainable market prices of high-voltage power supply machines as well as the German taxation system. Hence, while he indeed acknowledged that missing orders meant lower sales, Akhtar also voiced his opinion that the boss worked much and stressed himself mainly because he would not be satisfied with the profits he was supposedly making. He seemed to assume that the machines they produced more or less continuously would by default yield sufficient revenue to sustain the workshop and secure his full wage as well as the steady increase of the employer's wealth.

My situationally embedded observations and interactions in the catering company were rather focused on practical aspects of working together and did not result in extensive verbal data on how Michael, Mohammed and Arif subjectively perceived and conceptualized their work relationships. More than with other forced migrant research participants, language differences turned out to strongly curtail the scope of interviews and conversations with the

three kitchen workers. I merely managed to ask Michael about his work relations and he replied that he would frequently interact and exchange with his co-workers in the kitchen as well as the drivers. The slightly baffled smirk which accompanied his answer left me with the impression that he perceived this as a normality in his workplace. While the lack of verbal data for the case of the catering company cannot be compensated, I will at this point resort to a presentation of some of my findings on how forced migrant newcomers who worked in enterprises of comparable size and organizational structure like the catering company depicted and assessed their work relationships.

Most of the ten forced migrant newcomers who worked in various other SMEs with up to 25 co-workers reported overall good and collegial work relationships which they variously characterized as e.g. friendly, cooperative, supportive, communicative, respectful, fair and close. These generally positive and productive assessments were pronounced by Habib who remembered that in the gardening company in which he had been working along with five already established male co-workers for seven months, everybody had “work[ed] together“ (Interview Habib 03.12.2017), his questions had been gladly and patiently answered and fairness and generalized “friendship“ (ibid.) had prevailed. Making clear that his co-workers were “all good people” (ibid.), Habib explained that he had felt widely accepted and appreciated: “I communicate[d] with them a lot. And they enjoyed me too much.” (Ibid.) Reporting on his experiences of working with six co-workers in a car workshop, Emanuel seemed to perceive his work relationships in a similar way: “I have good friends. Those people [...] who worked there before I come. [...] There is no racist. Nothing nothing. [...] we are nice, there are no problem[s]. With nice people, you know?” (Interview Emanuel 12.01.2018) Especially when he referred to established sociable practices such as eating together during breaks or celebrating birthdays at work, Emanuel also compared his work relationships to family ties, e.g. by stating that he and his co-workers would be “just like brothers“ (ibid.).

These positive evaluations shall not hide the fact that, at the same time, difficulties and conflictual relationships with co-workers were reported and sometimes highlighted as dominating the experience of working together with others. When I interviewed Kingsley, he made clear that in the restaurant kitchen “not everybody is friendly. But me, when I am at work, I always laugh, no matter how bad you have talked to me, I don't care.” (Interview Kingsley 28.11.2017) He depicted his work relationships as partly unpleasant, rude and intimidating, also because of racist remarks and unrestrained outbursts of superiors in stress situations. However, according to Kingsley, there was little choice aside from avoiding conflictual co-workers whenever possible and pragmatically cooperating and maintaining impersonal

friendly relations despite the sometimes quite explicit hostility and debasement (cf. Fine 1996: 38-42, 67-69; Schmidt 2006: 478-482; Sias 2009: 32f., 68f.; Ogbonna and Harris 2006: 393-403). Yunis, the asylum seeker who worked in the small grocery store on a large company campus, described the social environment at his workplace as “many times good relationships [...]. But sometimes politics as well” (Interview Yunis 26.04.2018). He explained that “politics” (ibid.) would generally include gossip, rumours and accusations of inappropriate performance and passing work on to others. These issues would not be openly discussed but could be felt circulating behind each other's back while friendliness in direct interactions was kept up.

While Yunis did not explicitly mention the envy and resentments his employer and supervisor had ascribed some of his local co-workers in a separate interview (see Ch. 5.1), similar interpersonal dynamics were sketched by Abdullah, the 30-year-old asylum seeker from Afghanistan who did an apprenticeship in an alteration shop. Abdullah was avoiding one particular co-worker, an already settled, middle-aged migrant from Iran whom he experienced as antagonistic and envious because of the comparatively quick settlement progress Abdullah had made in terms of learning German and re-entering his occupation by doing an apprenticeship. In addition, Abdullah considered religious differences as a possible content of his conflictual relationship with this co-worker:

Well, I am Muslim. Some others are different, so there is also an Iranian. [...] Don't know whether he is Muslim or not. But in the beginning I haven't talked to him at all. Now he is a little bit [...] envious. Yes. Because soon I will be done with the apprenticeship. And then [I'll have the] apprenticeship certificate. Also of course a very good workplace [in the alteration shop]. And of course a few times my boss has also said: 'Be careful with him. He is envious.' But I also noticed it myself. [...] Also of course he cannot at all [speak German on] B or A2 language [level], cannot talk. [...] Has been in Germany for 20 years. [...] [He speaks] just like me. If I had lived in Germany for 20 years. That means my language has to be completely 100 per cent perfect. [...] That's why I try to avoid interacting with him. (Interview Abdullah 13.01.2018)

As the account of Abdullah suggests, this work relationship appeared to be characterized by interpersonal suspicion and avoidance from the very beginning. Also the employer seemed to be sure that the colleague who had migrated decades earlier would begrudge the forced migrant newcomer his success and ambition in the workplace. Abdullah's perception of envy on the part of his co-worker could be interpreted as related to his subjective confrontation with the dominant normative expectation that migrant newcomers should make sufficient efforts to 'integrate' and learn the German language (cf. Jackson and Bauder 2013: 371-373, 376f.; Schacht 2021: 93-121, 135ff.; Mannitz and Schneider 2014: 89f.; Lanz 2009: 109-116). He endorsed and reproduced this public discourse on the obligations of integration when he asserted that his long-standing co-worker would have failed to learn German to an appropriate ex-

tent and contrastingly highlighted his own progresses in attaining certified skills and qualifications. Against the backdrop of partly shared and partly unequal socio-cultural categorizations and positionalities as migrants and addressees of institutionalized support, Abdullah's commitment and his opportunities of social mobility in the alteration shop may have provoked a process of competitive comparison in which the already established migrant co-worker was associated with various individual deficits and failures of successful settlement which Abdullah and his employer viewed as arousing his envy (cf. Hughes 2020: 192-195, 200ff.; Tapias and Escandell 2011: 79-91; Desplat 2018: 117-123, 130-132; Schmidt 2020: 176, 187-197, 217-229).

Abdullah further explained which practical “manifestations of envy” (Hughes 2020: 194) and antagonism he ascribed his co-worker and how he coped with them in accord with his employer:

He always talks bad about me with my boss. And of course also scolds me sometimes. I keep calm. And simply ignore it. Until my apprenticeship is over. Because I also told my boss several times: 'Boss, I don't feel very good right now.', for example. Then my boss has said: 'Alright Abdullah, that's different opinions, different people. Now you really have to watch out. Don't talk to him, don't have anything to do with him.' [...] I don't mind what he does or what he talks or what he rants. [...] There are also friendly people. And to me my boss is most important. She has taken very good care of me. My [...] other colleagues, it doesn't matter if there is one or two among them. One person of this kind, I don't mind. I continue my apprenticeship. (Interview Abdullah 13.01.2018)

The quote shows that complaints and scoldings of the co-worker made Abdullah feel uncomfortable and insecure at work. In order to deal with this situation, he tried not to lose his temper and actively excluded the co-worker from his circle of other, more friendly interaction partners on whom he could focus at work. This suggests that based on difficult and unpleasant experiences with one particular co-worker Abdullah was not forming a stereotyping persuasion that all co-workers of the alteration shop would be envious antagonists (cf. Schmidt 2006: 471f.). It could be argued that the strategic approach of avoidance was only possible because Abdullah did not strongly depend on the problematic co-worker as a direct cooperation partner. In addition, Abdullah tried to concentrate on his more important individual interest of completing the apprenticeship which seemed to serve as a valid justification to himself for transitionally tolerating the hostilities of the co-worker. Lastly, the fact that Abdullah was approaching his boss to discuss these interpersonal difficulties and declared that she would be the most important co-worker to him can be interpreted as exemplifying how forced migrant newcomers may consider supportive local employers or supervisors as more benevolent and trustworthy than direct peer co-workers. The latter may qualify as potentially envious and competitive rivals in contexts of inequality which relate to intersecting commonalities and dif-

ferences concerning, for instance, languages, migration experiences and ethnic or religious ascriptions and identifications.

Moreover, two research participants emphasized dissent and discrimination in smaller work teams which resulted in negative assessments of work relationships with particular co-workers. This was the case for Tesfay, a 35-year-old Eritrean forced migrant who was employed in a gardening company and told me that he had worked in a negatively evaluated dyadic work team. According to Tesfay as well as the owner-manager of the gardening company, one senior local foreman had imposed most of his own equal share of physically exhausting labour of shovelling a large quantity of sand on the forced migrant newcomer when they had been assigned to do a work project together. In addition, he had pressured Tesfay to go without a proper breakfast in the morning and shorten his break. Tesfay had reacted to this incident by voicing his feeling of being exploited towards the assistant of the owner-manager. The employer had then discussed the issue with the local foreman and decided to avoid assigning Tesfay to work together with this co-worker whom Tesfay described as unfair and always interested in benefiting from exploiting his industriousness.

Similar conflicts were reported by Idris, an asylum seeker in his twenties who had fled Mali and was employed as dustman in a waste collection company. Together with a driver and another colleague, Idris had formed the crew of a bin lorry and depicted his work relations as dominated by racist, exclusionary and exploitative attitudes and actions of his two established co-workers. He seemed to perceive their entrenched dyadic work tie as a closed off alliance within which mutual favours and benefits were exchanged while he would confront this strong social structure from a rather powerless and subordinate outsider position: “Because the first time I didn't know it. .. [The driver] just say, ya he just say [to] one colleague: 'Ya I just like [name of Idris' colleague] like my own son.' [...] Then one time I hear it [...] [from the driver]: 'I didn't have something to do with black man. Only to work.'” (Interview Idris 18.04.2018) Hence, this triadic constellation of the bin lorry crew could be read as a variant of the “negative consequences of social capital” (Portes 1998: 15) in the form of “exclusion of outsiders” (ibid.) from strong group relationships through which benefits become accessible and undesirable expenditures are “externalized onto others” (Warren 2007: 128) who are not accepted as members of an informal group (ibid.: 127ff.).

According to Idris, the exclusionary dyadic work tie implied that he would have to work more than the two co-workers who would frequently criticize and mock him and ignore his opinion in everyday decisions regarding how to work and take breaks. In consequence, Idris had retreated and distanced himself from the co-workers after several confrontations, e.g.

by making them believe that he would not understand all they said in German, including their derogatory remarks about him which they would occasionally exchange with each other: “Yes, because I know for sure, they are racist. And then I also always act like I don't understand so much German. But what he [the driver] says, I understand it all. I understand EVERYTHING.” (Interview Idris 18.04.2018) Hence, Idris' negative impression of the two co-workers had been silently fostered before he ultimately, after several months of working together, had asked his employer to join another bin lorry crew in order to end the conflict-ridden cooperation. However, Idris more generally referred to his newcomer status in the workplace, black skin colour and young age and bodily strength which would allow him to be more productive than older colleagues as significant dividing factors which he presumed as sources of friction and envy with several members of the established workforce.

Finally, in the garden centre I could talk with four forced migrant employees, Femi, Gabriel, Tunde and Markus, about their work relationships which they represented as overall friendly but not particularly close. While they reported rather low extents of interpersonal exchange at work, Markus and Gabriel highlighted that they attended mainly sport-related company events and seemed to perceived them as occasions on which they had more contact with co-workers. Thus, the claim of the branch manager and established employees that a widely shared interest in sports activities would connect the co-workers of the garden centre appeared to be partly reinforced by newcomers. My unstructured interviewing with Femi, Gabriel and Tunde, the three forced migrants from Nigeria, mainly took place while they shared their break together in the break room. Racism was the first topic they mentioned when we discussed their work relationships in the garden centre. Similarly including people deemed German natives as well as migrants, the three colleagues agreed that there would be a longer list of “good” (Fieldnotes Store 10.04.2018) co-workers, but before that they emphasized that they had also encountered people at work whom they depicted as racist.

Resonating with the way in which Abdullah depicted his employer as trusted and considerate key contact in the alteration shop (see above), Femi told a story which made clear that he highly esteemed and respected the branch manager and had strong reservations towards cooperating with women. When he had started the job, he had been told by a female co-worker he identified as German to quit because of his insufficient German skills. He had then decided to report this unsettling incident to the branch manager whom he assured that he wanted to continue working in the store. The branch manager had dissipated his doubts about keeping his job by promptly replying that in this case he would not have to leave but to make efforts to learn German over time. Femi had been impressed and encouraged by the response which had

proven him that the branch manager had the qualities “of a father” (Fieldnotes Store 10.04.2018) who knew what it meant to take responsibility and put confidence in others, thereby articulating mutual obligations and the implicit contract of employment. As Femi was talking about his interpersonal conflict, he explicitly declared his persuasion that female co-workers from Germany would be generally hostile and racist towards him and other forced migrant newcomers while he remarked that there would be several male colleagues with whom he would get along well. He refrained from depicting cooperation with men as a fundamental problem.

In addition to the illustrations and sweeping assessments of the forced migrant co-workers I encountered in the break room, conflicts and difficulties related to racist discrimination experienced by forced migrant employees were illuminated by the branch manager who mentioned that the newcomers would have a high sensitivity for injustice and readily informed him about being treated unequally. He recollected an incident which exemplified how “perceptions of discrimination” (Pager and Shepherd 2008: 183) could be intricately bound up with work requirements and the division, coordination and evaluation of labour in the store. One morning in winter, the simple and tiring task of snow shovelling had been delegated exclusively to black forced migrant employees. This had given rise to conflict and confusion:

Sometimes we have to clear the snow outside, right? And I have called the departments and said: 'It has been snowing a lot. From each department one [employee] has to go out to clear the snow.' And as ill luck would have it every department manager sent one of his dark-skinned people outside. And so there were six dark-skinned employees standing outside, clearing the snow. Then they were getting upset and one started [to argue that] [...] because they were black they would always have to do this [...], they would always be taken for something like that [menial physical labour]. (Interview Store 04.04.2018)

This description by the branch manager shows that the black forced migrant employees seemed to consider the situation of clearing the snow without being joined by others who did not share a similar visible marker of racialized difference as proving a more general organizational pattern of unequal treatment in the form of passing on unpleasant low-status tasks according to racist distinctions (cf. Ogbonna and Harris 2006: 396f.; Roscigno and Yavorsky 2015: 275f.; Pager and Shepherd 2008: 182f., 187f., 192-196).

The branch manager presented the incident as an unfortunate “misunderstanding” (Interview Store 04.04.2018) and explained that he had realized that it would convey the impression of racist discrimination among the forced migrant workers. He elucidated and legitimated the course of events with reference to the rational demands of the work process in the garden centre and the different skills and capabilities of individual employees:

But basically it was simply the case that in each of the departments concerned the department manager and his [...] asylum seeker were present. There was nobody else. [...] Of course [the department man-

agers] did not discuss this with each other. Because I indeed recognized it and then called the departments, and I said: 'Why are you actually sending only them?' [...] And then they said: 'Mr. [last name of branch manager], I am alone here. I can also send myself outside, but who serves the customers in the store then?' We were already open and [...] then I said: 'Okay, I got it.' (Interview Store 04.04.2018)

When the department managers were confronted with their decisions, they were invariably using the justification that the forced migrant co-workers would lack German language skills and work knowledge which were deemed essential for independently servicing customers on the sales floor. As there had been no other employees available, the department managers had claimed that they had had no choice but to delegate the simple and non-communicative labour to the forced migrant co-workers, provided that the customer focus of the work process should not be compromised. According to the branch manager, when he had personally approached the forced migrant workers to clarify the issue, they had also accepted this justification of unequal treatment and he had assured them again that the differently evaluated work tasks in the garden centre would be generally distributed on the avowedly legitimate basis of organizational rationality and skills requirements of service sector work and not along the illegitimate lines of racist discrimination (cf. Ogbonna and Harris 2006: 396-401; Roscigno and Yavorsky 2015: 278-281; Waldinger and Lichter 2003: 144-149; 197-200).

5.3 Practices of cooperation

After having approximated the prevailing perspectives on work relationships in the previous subchapters, intersubjective practices of cooperation among co-workers will be examined next. While both are inseparably interwoven, the focus will be shifted from subjective perceptions, expectations and assessments regarding work relationships to the ways in which my research participants were practically working and interacting together. Relying on my informants' own recollections as well as my direct observations of social situations at work, I will refer to various forms of cooperative practices and ask how these could be recognized and interpreted as opportunities and constraints for the constitution of significant social connections. Before that, I will briefly recapitulate and further specify the argument that practices of working together may propel more or less deliberate processes of relationship formation.

As I have already stated above, practices of cooperation understood as various forms of sharing and coordinating tasks, along with shared breaks and company activities (Schmidt 2006: 477-480), have been found to facilitate and coincide with social practices, interactions and exchanges which contribute to the development and reproduction of personally significant relationships (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 136-138; Thelen 2014: 168ff.; Sias and Cahill 1998: 277, 284-287; Sias 2009: 101, 104f.). For instance, depending on the organizational

context in which they are done, work-related practices can give rise to “workplace friendships” (Rumens 2017: 1156) because they may imply “conversations, daily encounters between employees, interactions with managers and clients, acts of caregiving and support, and activities of work associated with and beyond performing an assigned job” (ibid.). In their qualitative interview research on the social construction of collegiality in various organizational contexts, Kock and Kutzner (2018) likewise identify practices of directly working together through which “co-workers develop social ties, mutual obligations and trust” (ibid.: 448, my translation). They refer to relationships that do not assume the stronger personal significance which can be associated with friendships and approach collegiality “as reciprocal exchange relationship which is constituted and reproduced in interactive practices” (ibid.: 449, my translation) that give co-workers the opportunity to proactively share personal knowledge, get familiar with each other and establish a sense of “moral, emotional connectedness and mutual understanding which goes beyond the impersonal-functional relation” (ibid.: 451, my translation) of strictly formal cooperation (cf. Schmidt 2006: 469ff.; Sennett 2013: 148-178; Hürtgen 2013: 242-254; see Ch. 2.2).

Various forms of work-related practices which may offer opportunities to engage in the interactive formation of sociabilities of emplacement can be conceptualized in order to examine the social implications of the “commonalities of practice [which] brought people together” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 137) in the workplaces of my research. Discussing cooperation in the varying contexts of division of labour and forms of organization in the SMEs (see Ch. 4.2), I will refer to three types of intersubjective work practices which intersect and blend in empirical reality and shall only be dissected for interpretive purposes: introducing and training new employees; directly sharing and coordinating tasks with co-workers; and informal help and support. Before these practices will be further defined and substantiated with the help of excerpts and vignettes from my ethnographic data, I provide a brief overview on cooperation in the four example workplaces.

Cooperation between Tony and the master of the painting company mainly took place in the form of complementing each other by doing different and often also the same types of tasks in order to reach one shared work target, e.g. by distributing among themselves the walls which had to be painted in a room. In addition, the co-workers also attended to a single work procedure at the same time, especially when Tony learnt something new or received further instructions about some practical aspects of his occupation in the course of the jobs they had to accomplish. In the electronics workshop, the two co-workers only very rarely shared the same work tasks at one particular moment. While Akhtar and the boss mostly worked side-by-

side and on their own on separate projects for which they had the appropriate skills and experiences, many of their tasks inter-dependended beyond the spatio-temporal boundaries of particular work situations in that they consisted of different contributions to one and the same end product at different points in the longer economic process of creating and selling the high voltage power supply machines. In addition, everyday cooperation was characterized by brief orders and instructions, exchanges of work-related information and helping each other whenever necessary.

Other than in the painting company and the electronics workshop, cooperation in the catering kitchen took place between various employees in similar as well as different positions of the workplace hierarchy. In their positions as kitchen helps and dishwasher, the forced migrant employees worked together with the chef, the cooks, each other as well as other local kitchen helps and the drivers. From the interview with the chef and my own participant observation in the catering company, I gained the impression that helping each other and directly sharing and coordinating certain tasks was a central feature of this work setting. In the garden centre, practices of directly sharing tasks were presented as a rarity by some informants and I could not participate in them. Although the employees mostly worked on their own and were responsible for specific contributions within the larger complex of interdependent tasks, the various jobs still needed to be coordinated within and across the departments and training new employees was emphasized as a crucial aspect of cooperation in the garden centre.

Introducing and training

Among the first forms of intersubjective cooperation which forced migrant newcomers experienced once they had started to work was their introduction into workplaces and jobs. Partly addressed under the topic of “mentoring” (Fine 1996: 53; Sias 2009: 59), introducing and training new employees can be identified as crucial practices of relationships with supervisors and bosses while colleagues frequently also provide assistance to those who enter new workplaces. Through their co-workers, newcomers can gain access to necessary knowledge about the work organization and its norms, procedures, tasks and relations as well as feedback and recognition (Sias 2009: 24-31, 59-65; see also Hodson 1996: 724). These exchanges of information and assessments may help them to reduce initial “uncertainty about the nature and requirements of their new job” (Sias 2009: 64), their personal competence and work performance as well as “their relationships with their new peers and their ability to fit into the social networks of the organization” (ibid.). Corresponding to these aspects, being introduced and

trained by co-workers has been conceptualized as a process of “[s]ocialization” (Fine 1986: 190) into an established work group and occupational field which involves testing and initiating novices and thereby “ensures that new employees are 'worthy' of trust and deserve to be integrated into the group. Once they have passed, they have committed themselves to a set of close ties, at least while on the job.” (Ibid.; see also Fine 1996: 49-53)

Besides the focus on rather general social dynamics in groups of co-workers, practices of “training or orienting” (Sias and Cahill 1998: 284) in dyadic constellations have been identified as forms of directly working together which facilitate the formation of personally significant relationships (ibid.: 284-286). With regard to sociabilities of emplacement, Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2016) provide empirical evidence which shows that migrant newcomers' initial dependence on others in yet unfamiliar jobs may be met with acts of welcoming, guiding and assisting by co-workers (ibid.: 26). These kinds of interactive involvement may gain momentum during the very first days in a new working environment and can constitute opportunities to extend cooperative work relations into sociabilities that transcend instrumental “sharing of workplace knowledge” (ibid.) and imply interpersonal commonalities as well as mutual affect and personal support (see also Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 137f.).

While many of my research participants reported that instructions were also exchanged between colleagues, introducing and training forced migrant newcomers mainly took place in the context of work relationships which were characterized by differences of power, hierarchy, authority and seniority and involved owner-managers and other experienced supervising actors. The role and practical involvement of supervisors as well as colleagues in introducing newcomers was for instance highlighted by Sayed, a 23-year-old Afghan asylum seeker who was working part-time in an organic grocery store after he had done an internship in this workplace:

First I went to [the organic grocery store] for an internship. My bosses have helped very much. [...] one male boss, one female boss. [...] These two people helped so much. [...] This was very important, until today. [...] And my boss has also said: 'I'm here. Don't worry. I help you.' [...] I have said: 'This is, this is very good.' (Interview Sayed 05.12.2017)

This quote shows that Sayed singled out and appreciated his bosses as the main introducing actors who assured him that he could rely on their support and did not have to figure out all by himself how he was supposed to do his new job. In terms of concrete practices, the introduction by the bosses included controlling Sayed's work, making corrections and advising him how to avoid mistakes:

I've also made mistakes. [When] I have first sorted some things on the shelves. I have sorted it wrongly, one or two [products]. Then my boss has said: 'This is wrong, can you look at the number [of the barcode]? Then you sort it. This way you don't make mistakes.' Then I broke three bottles [of wine]. [...]

Then my boss has [said]: 'Yes, it doesn't matter, sometimes this happens, also to us.' [...] this is no problem. Sometimes my boss as well breaks something. [...] Such things happen, this is work. At work, things happen. (Interview Sayed 05.12.2017)

Rather than sparking angry scoldings, Sayed's mistakes seemed to be recognized as inevitable part of everyday life at work and were responded to with rectifying explanations rather than personalized blaming of the newcomer.

In addition to mentioning his bosses, Sayed made clear that his colleagues had been supportive as well in the beginning: "Also my colleagues helped so much. [...] When I have asked any of these colleagues 'Where is this [product in the shop]?' every colleague was willing to help me." (Interview Sayed 05.12.2017) Especially when customers had been challenging Sayed with questions about specific products he could resort to his colleagues:

Yes, at first it was a bit difficult. [...] I didn't know anything where is the coffee or where are the biscuits or other things. [...] And then I have said [to customers]: 'Okay, I have to ask my colleague, I don't know. I am entirely new, I am doing internship now. This means I am learning now. I have to tell my colleague. My colleague will come and help you.' (Ibid.)

In this statement, Sayed put emphasis on the need for assistance by others based on his initial lack of knowledge about the product range of the store and did not refer to language differences which other research participants in similar service sector jobs depicted as complicating their interactions with German-speaking customers. However, Sayed also exemplified that job-related tasks and knowledge were often quickly picked up by forced migrant newcomers when he further explained that "working in the market, at the cashier or sorting shelves, [...] that's no problem, I have learned all this. It's not so bad." (Ibid.) In conclusion, several accounts of my forced migrant informants resembled Sayed's exemplary depictions of supportive and considerate practices of introducing and training. It can be argued that the latter may favour the creation of sociabilities of emplacement with welcoming co-workers which was also suggested when Sayed named his bosses as the co-workers he would turn to if he had to ask at his workplace for support with a problem not related to work.

In the case of apprenticeship relationships, introducing and training could be recognized as an institutionalized and defining form of work practices. During my observations in the painting company, I could gain insights into the teaching processes between Tony and the master. Initial instructions and further training appeared to follow an interactive pattern in which the master first verbally explained and then practically demonstrated tasks, procedures, tools and machines. For instance, Tony was instructed how to prepare surfaces with a high-pressure cleaner before painting them. The master first revealed some general background information in German about the features, technical terms and proper handling of the cleaning

machine. Then he completed about one half of the job of cleaning a garden fence of a private home on his own while Tony was silently following and assisting him and paid close attention to his actions and comments. In addition to visually accessing work practices, the mode of verbal communication on which the transfer of work knowledge seemed to largely depend in the painting company was characterized by the mostly respectful, clear, direct and not hurried parlance of the master who did not mind repeating himself and readily answered questions when Tony did not understand his words or some unfamiliar aspects of the work.

Once the part of the master was done, Tony was supposed to finish the job by practically applying the insights he had just received. When he made his first attempts of cleaning his share of the garden fence, the master watched him closely, took over again after only a few movements and told Tony: "Look at how I do it and do it exactly the same way. And not somehow differently." (Fieldnotes Painter 27.03.2018) Then it was Tony's turn again and upon a short moment of direct supervision the master left him alone with the task. In the interview which preceded my observations, Tony described similar practical patterns of being taught his occupation. He mentioned that his actions at work would generally attract the controlling gaze of the master who either directly supervised him or left him alone after instructions and came back for a final assessment of his work results. In any case, Tony would be given feedback which could include uplifting approval as well as harsh complaints by the master:

Like we have a room to do. And he does first wall, second wall, the third wall. Maybe the fourth wall, he will just tell me: 'Okay, this is [...] how I did it in the three wall, then you finish it up.' Then he'd watch me while I do it. Or sometimes he just leave me alone. Because I always tell him: 'I don't like it when you are looking at [me] if I'm working. [...] When you look at me I make mistakes, but if you are not there I get it right.' So most time he just, he just (...) talking: 'Tony, do what I've done here.' And he goes. And when he comes back [he is] like: 'Ah, very nice Tony. Ah, good, well done!' (laughs) You know? But when he stays there, he would [be] like: 'Ah Tony! What the hell is this! I've not done it like that, I've!' (imitates loud and upset tone of the master), you know? [...] Because when he's there [...] it frightens me most time, you know, like I want to be [...] careful, you know, I want to impress him more then because he's there. But if he's not there I just [be] like: 'Okay, this is [how] he does it. Maybe just do it. If he comes back and if there is anything wrong, he will see it.' But fortunately when I do it when he's not there, when he comes back he always [be] like: 'Wow, cool!' Maybe sometimes he complains, but most of the time he doesn't complain. (Interview Tony 02.01.2018)

These depictions make clear that Tony often felt pressured when he was exposed to the master's direct and thus arguably more comprehensive supervision. He therefore preferred being left alone when figuring out for himself how to accomplish what he had been shown. Nevertheless, although the presence of the master often disconcerted Tony, he did not seem to be afraid of frankly telling the master to better leave him alone while he was working. This could be interpreted as validating Tony's assertion that he would perceive his work relationship as decisively characterized by mutual respect and not merely as determined by fear of the master

as the more powerful party (see Ch. 5.2).

At the same time Tony revealed that he had to accommodate conflicting feelings when the master occasionally reacted to mistakes and wrongdoings with angry scoldings:

[W]hen he complains [...] I feel like: Ah man, I fucked up. [...] I don't like him complaining [...] but I like it as well when he complains because, ehm .. I learn, you know? And I understand (...) somebody who says what is right, you know? And if somebody corrects you, you don't just have to feel special, you just have to feel being corrected, you know? You just have to accept the correction and forget about the stress and maybe the insult that's coming with it, you know? [...] But he doesn't knock for no reason, you know? Sometimes I just do some stuff and I think: Okay, ah, this I've got it right. And he will just come back like: 'Tony, what the fuck have you done here? What the hell is this, Tony?' (imitates upset tone of boss) (laughs) And at this time I will feel very remorse. [...] I don't like it when he knocked at me, you know? We are all humans. You know? And sometimes when he does that he always come back to his senses most of the time, like: 'Okay, Tony, I have to talk to you this way, if not you won't learn.' [...] But the feeling is always like, man, I don't know, but the feeling makes me like: Okay, I just want to learn this shit. And get this fucking certificate. [...] Probably work for some while, [then] be a boss of myself. And nobody talks shit to me. Even if I'm getting just .. ten Euro monthly and [...] I can feed myself and take care of myself (...). I'm okay. Those are the feelings I have when/ Sometimes, ya.” (Interview Tony 02.01.2018)

While Tony acknowledged that the master's forceful complaints constituted a way of being corrected as apprentice, he likewise stated that they could make him feel humiliated and disrespected as a human being. Hence, it can be concluded that rather than fostering positive affect and trust and/or inviting informal communication in which attention is shifted from work onto other aspects of life, the disciplining nature of introducing and training which defined many interactions in the painting company seemed to be perceived as a source of stress and insecurity by Tony which accentuated the experience of authority and hierarchical differences between master and apprentice (cf. Sias 2009: 31-33).

Aside from the apprenticeship context, harsher and less considerate corrections and disciplining interventions could also be part of starting regular jobs. This was exemplified by Idris, the asylum seeker who was working for a waste collection company: “[In the beginning] I don't understand this work. [...] But the colleague: 'HEY!' (imitates loud and angry tone of co-worker) – because a lot of times I've done [something] wrong – 'HEY! Neatly! So! So! So! So!’” (Interview Idris 18.04.2018) Idris narrated his first days on the job as dominated by complications and confusion about how the work should be done and the resulting scoldings of a senior co-worker who had kept an eye on him. This appeared as a reception in the new workplace which had left Idris with feelings of uncertainty, mistrust and pressure to perform and proof himself.

In the catering kitchen, practical instructions were mainly given by the chef and Michael mentioned her when I asked who had introduced him to the work in the beginning. Yet, other members of the workforce were instructing newcomers in the kitchen and the scullery as

well. This included exchanges of corrections, advice, questions and reminders which were initiated by long-standing local co-workers as well as recent forced migrants who had already experienced longer times in the company than the newcomers they were addressing. For instance, during my participant observations in the catering company, Arif corrected Mohammed several times and told him how he should do his work as dishwasher. Arif had spent the first six months of his job in the scullery while the current dishwasher was new and had only a few weeks of experience. For example, Mohammed was explained that the transport boxes in which the food was delivered had to be cleaned every Friday when Arif realized that his new colleague was not implementing this established practice. The two co-workers then briefly and calmly clarified in broken German how the workload resulting from the necessity of cleaning the boxes today should be divided up between them. Arguably also because of my presence, no longer discussions or tensions noticeably surfaced during this and similar other instructive interactions between these two colleagues which could be interpreted as serving the socialization of the new employee into the workplace. Along with these organizational functions, it can be argued that the co-workers in the catering kitchen could also form more personal impressions, knowledge, trust and expectations about each other in the course of their shared practices of introduction to the work.

Talking about his apprenticeship as cook, Kingsley provided further insights into training and guidance through direct co-workers rather than formal supervisors or bosses. He explained that he would learn the occupation not from the chef of the restaurant kitchen but from an experienced cook who was frequently sharing the saucier post with him as well as more advanced apprentices and other colleagues at his workplace (cf. Fine 1996: 50-53). When Kingsley worked together with Nawin, the experienced cook, the latter seemed to act as a buffering mediator of the numerous orders which were descending upon the entire kitchen team at busy times. In Kingsley's own words, this co-worker

is very good and ... I always get along with him. And every time when I am at work and when I haven't understood [an order] at all, doesn't matter which task it referred to, I simply turn to him [...], I think he is totally awesome, and say: 'Nawin, I didn't understand this.' Maybe something about first course or [...], for instance, *Kaiserschmarrn*, do you know *Kaiserschmarrn*? He then says: 'Go get two eggs, [...] get some flour.' And he shows me immediately. (Interview Kingsley 28.11.2017)

The quote refers to situations in which Kingsley had difficulties with following orders practically and/or understanding them verbally. It reveals that he highly esteemed his work partner at the saucier post for promptly repeating and explaining incoming orders and demonstrating work tasks which were new to him. At other points in the interview, Kingsley remarked “when I am there he is not angry, [...] I like how he talks to me“ (ibid.) and attributed Nawin

a generally calm and respectful way of correcting, instructing and otherwise interacting with him in German. Because of the support, guidance and recognition he received from him, Kingsley stated that he preferred to work with this particular co-worker as much as possible, especially in the face of a social work environment which he perceived as frequently harsh and unrelenting when high workload was provoking stress.

Moreover, Kingsley reported that his work relationship with other apprentices included practices of mutual teaching as an effective strategy to learn. In particular, he referred to Ludwig, an advanced apprentice who was an established German local and readily shared work knowledge with other apprentices such as Kingsley when they needed answers or were interested in certain aspects of the work:

[W]hen we are so many apprentices, you learn from each other. Not directly from the chef. [Ludwig], for example, is in the third year of apprenticeship, [...] yesterday he showed me [how to prepare] a duck. I didn't learn it from the chef. 'Ah Ludwig, how does this work?' I want to know how you learn it, voluntarily. (Interview Kingsley 28.11.2017)

Mainly in connection with being granted these opportunities to learn and deal with the challenges of the apprenticeship, Kingsley was expressing his personal appreciation and positive affect for this apprentice colleague: “I like him very much and he shows me things [...]. He is very friendly with me. Very friendly indeed.” (Ibid.)

In the garden centre, the branch manager insisted on the official rule that all newcomers should be introduced to the job exclusively by their department managers and not by colleagues. He explained that many colleagues had established their own ways of working which would not always sufficiently represent the instructions and guidelines defined by their supervisors. Training newcomers was thus depicted as a chance for department managers to form the work practices and routines which would be internalized by new members of their work teams in line with official norms and ideals. In practice, this meant that each new employee should closely accompany his or her department manager for four weeks upon entering the garden centre. This implied “intensively working together” (Interview Store 04.04.2018) in the sense of doing the same shifts and sharing work tasks with the supervisor.

After the intense and insightful introductory phase with a department manager, novices would be “left alone” (Interview Store 04.04.2018) and were expected to work on their posts autonomously based on the information and general idea they had gained about the work. This form of closer cooperation between supervisors and newcomers while learning the ropes could also feature as a favourable context for the formation of more than work-related interactions and relations. In fact, Markus, one of the forced migrant employees in the garden centre I could interview, mentioned that the male supervisor in his early twenties who had introduced

him to the job had become a personally important contact with whom time was spent also beyond work, e.g. for free-time activities such as skiing. On the other hand, the example of instruction procedures and practices which were confined to supervisors suggests that co-workers on similar hierarchical levels like newcomers may be formally excluded from relationship processes which could arise from this form of working together. Similar conclusions could be drawn from the statements of Abdullah, the asylum seeker who did an apprenticeship in an alteration shop. He strongly emphasized that any new worker like himself “has only contact with the boss” (Interview Abdullah 13.01.2018) during the apprenticeship and would address other co-workers with questions only when the boss was occasionally not present in the workshop.

Talking about cooperation during the training phase in the garden centre, one department manager remarked on how initially strong language differences could be circumvented. He told that he communicated his instructions first in English and would then immediately repeat them in German in order to support English-speaking newcomers with learning the new language. Besides this bi-lingual strategy which seemed to aim at effectively communicating as well as mediating German skills, two English-speaking forced migrants who worked in other SMEs reported that they had been mainly introduced by co-workers who spoke English with them most of the time. Emanuel who worked in a car workshop was one of these informants and explained that during the first months on the job, he had preferred to work with one particular colleague who readily communicated with him in English:

It was little tough [in the beginning]. [...] You have to understand, [...] I was not that very fluent in [German] language. You know? That's why this English guy, he helped me a lot. And that (...) time I was really with him. Because he understand me very fast. I understand him very fast. So I like to work with him. So when I was getting better, better, better, better, then I start working with the others. (Interview Emanuel 12.01.2018)

As the quote reveals, the English-speaking colleague became Emanuel's main work partner because verbal exchanges with him were much less time consuming and challenging than with co-workers who had to be addressed in German. Only after he had gained the necessary knowledge and confidence in the new workplace during the introductory phase with “this English guy” (ibid.), Emanuel had begun to approach also other co-workers with whom he had to interact in German.

Although Emanuel assured me that sharing a language other than German made co-operation easier, he also identified the “disadvantage” (Interview Emanuel 12.01.2018) that his initial preference to work mainly with the English-speaking colleague had protracted the advancement of his German skills which he assumed to be favoured in situations with co-

workers who were only using German. With regard to the formation of relationships through practices of introducing and training forced migrant newcomers, Emanuel further considered that efficient instructions in English may have influenced his relationships with co-workers:

Then you can really see that the kind of relationship I will have [with the English-speaking colleague], then it will be kind of different [than] with the other. Because whenever I speak, he understand[s] me first. [...] So sometimes I will even go to search for him to ask question. Because I understand that he will understand it very fast. More than the other. [...] Maybe I'm closer [to the English-speaking colleague] than [to] the other [...] because of language barrier. (Ibid.)

This quote illustrates Emanuel's impression that easier intersubjective communication based on a shared language may lead to more frequent interaction and “closer“ (ibid.) work relationships in connection with the “language barrier“ (ibid.) that is experienced with others and may situate forced migrant newcomers in a socio-linguistic context of heightened reliance or even dependence on those who understand them best at work. However, while language commonalities may facilitate verbal exchanges and thereby efficient cooperation, they cannot be presumed to be sufficient bases for personally significant relationships (Weber 1984: 71f.; cf. Ogbonna and Harris 2006: 393f.). Reflecting on why his co-worker had implicitly agreed on talking English with him, Emanuel expected mainly instrumental rationalities and not a desire to develop more than a friendly or collegial work relationship: “He's a nice guy. But why he like to speak the English with me is that because .. in his mind he will get quick understand[ing] to whatever he needs from me. Or whatever I need from him. [...] So that's why he like to speak English with me.” (Interview Emanuel 12.01.2018)

Directly sharing and coordinating tasks

The second form of cooperating I could identify during my research were practices of directly sharing and coordinating work tasks which were part of the official work process. In line with the often rather informal and partly participatory organization of work in SMEs (see Ch. 4.2), forms of cooperation in these settings may not be dominated by rigid systems of industrial technology and bureaucratic management (cf. Böhle 2018: 185f.). Instead, while authoritarian control of individual managers and employers should not be ruled out, practices of directly sharing and coordinating tasks may be interactively shaped and accomplished by co-workers themselves in the course of the work process (Kotthoff and Reindl 2019: 101ff.; Edwards et al. 2006: 705). This implies that the practical execution of work tasks becomes bound up and supplemented with work-related social interactions and discourses which consist of “information sharing” (Sias 2009: 24) and “exchanging arguments and opinions” (Kock and Kutzner 2018: 455, my translation). In the course of these predominantly verbal exchanges, co-work-

ers define and acknowledge shared work aims, distributions of interdependent tasks and ways of working and relating (ibid.: 454-457).

In addition to the negotiation of work which involves co-workers as communicating subjects, directly sharing tasks with others has been found to “provide opportunities for interaction that further the development of relationships among employees” (Sias 2009: 105). In connection with the human fact that “people want stimulation” (Sennett 2013: 155), this interaction may take the form of informal exchanges such as “joking, teasing and flirting” (De Neve 2001: 156) or “gossip” (Sennett 2013: 155) and “chit-chat which relieves boredom” (ibid.) while sharing work tasks with others, especially in highly routinised and monotonous jobs (ibid.: 154f.; De Neve 2001: 149-156). Although social interaction induced by formal requirements to work together may not necessarily lead beyond pragmatically friendly or widely self-interested and “superficial” (Sennett 2013: 169) work relations, being obliged to directly cooperate in the sense of doing “formally interdependent activities” (Yakubovich and Burg 2019: 1018) face-to-face in contexts of small work teams has also been identified as a significant catalyst for the formation of dyadic relationships which can have a higher impact than “the exposure mechanism” (ibid.) based on spatial proximity and more freely chosen interaction (ibid.: 1015ff.).

How tasks may be interpersonally coordinated immediately within the work process could be observed as part of everyday work life in the electronics workshop. This mainly included interactive practices such as brief orders and instructions as well as exchanges of information and opinions which often referred to an already established stock of work-related context knowledge. These coordinating exchanges seemed to occur mainly in connection with particular situations and events in the work process which interrupted longer phases of several minutes during which the two co-workers did not interact with each other and only worked on their respective tasks and projects. When the boss addressed Akhtar with orders and instructions regarding what task to do next or how to go on with a piece of work, he explained verbally with specific technical terms and by pointing at the relevant objects, components and tools to be worked with. In these ways he was clarifying, for instance, where to drill holes, which size and type of screws should be used or where particular electronic parts had to be placed on aluminium plates or inside the casings of machines.

Akhtar was calmly watching and listening to these instructions and signalled that he was following and understanding the boss, e.g. by keeping eye contact, nodding and using short confirming sounds and words. When the instructive situations I could observe during my participant observations came to an end after a few minutes, Akhtar rarely asked any ques-

tions and continued working while the boss went back to his own tasks again. All in all, the interactions in which orders were given appeared to be characterized by clear, hierarchically direct and sometimes nervous but mostly also trusting and respectful communication. For instance, one time after the boss had given some explanations he rather boldly concluded with the order: “Okay, then you are doing this piece tomorrow!” (Fieldnotes Workshop 04.12.2017) Akhtar answered: “Yes, I do.” (Ibid.) and returned to his work.

In addition to giving work orders, the boss was occasionally sharing work-related information and insights with Akhtar, e.g. when he let him know about an error he found in a machine which a customer had returned for repair works. He showed and explained Akhtar the technical problem and asked him about a plastic component which was needed to get the machine going again, assuming that Akhtar knew whether they had such a part in stock. Then they figured out together that the part was not tucked in one of the many drawers in the workshop and the boss decided to cut a new plastic element at the table saw. This instance exemplified how sharing information on stocks and systematically storing components and materials were also part of directly coordinating work in the electronics workshop. In another situation, Akhtar remarked that they had run out of a particular component which was needed for a machine and the boss praised him for keeping the stocks in mind and communicating the information he had.

Information was also shared when Akhtar occasionally asked questions during work in order to clarify how a new type of machine should be worked on and get quick feedback and approval by the boss so that faults and mistakes could be avoided. But Akhtar did not strongly depend on supervision and additional explanations when he was doing his main job of assembling machines he was already familiar with. Hence, based on my participant observations and interviews with Akhtar and the boss, it can be argued that Akhtar had a comparatively large degree of autonomy in accomplishing the work tasks he was ordered to do. This could be related to the skills, knowledge and confidence he had managed to gain during the first year in the workshop as well as the work requirements defined by the boss who expected employees to do their jobs “not extremely bound by instructions” (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017).

Instead of directly controlling Akhtar and rigidly predefining every work step in advance, the boss emphasized that Akhtar's knowledgeability and his ability to work independently in the workshop should increase over time. In line with this approach and resonating with Tony's statement cited above, Akhtar had given the boss to understand that he preferred to work on his own already from the beginning of their cooperation:

So we've assembled the Chinese [high-voltage power supply machines for a Chinese corporation]. And we've assembled one or two. And [Akhtar] has said: 'I understand it now. I assemble them all on my own.' [That was] his aim. [...] Not only piecework, just anything. Always the same or something like that. No, no, no, no. Just like he says: 'Okay. I now assemble this machine for Jena,' this difficult one, 'I assemble it on my own. You can count on me.' And so on. And then there simply are a couple of mistakes. But he's assembling it by himself. (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017)

Apart from his own demands of autonomous employees, the boss depicted Akhtar's opinion on how the task of assembling the machines should be distributed and accomplished as a driving force behind the emergence of the rather self-responsible arrangement of working together in the electronics workshop.

The last quote from the interview with the boss also suggests that it had become an accepted part of the work process that Akhtar would make mistakes which resulted from working autonomously. This was arguably the case because the kind of work he was doing was in many respects still unfamiliar to him. In addition, he did not always fully or correctly understand the sometimes hurried and blunt orders which the boss issued in German. According to the boss, Akhtar's mistakes would relate to, for instance, working with low precision and a lack of awareness for finer details and aesthetics. There were days on which it seemed as if Akhtar had forgotten what he had already learned and sometimes he would forget to complete tasks, such as tightening all screws of a machine or soldering all joints on a printed circuit board. These imperfections were then detected by the boss occasionally as they occurred or systematically when the finished machines went through a general performance check. In short, Akhtar's mistakes produced additional work for the boss who stated that he had adjusted to the situation that finding and partly rectifying the errors in the end had become his part in the work process of assembling machines since Akhtar had started to work with him.

Although many of Akhtar's mistakes were claimed to be accepted as part of the routine, the boss frequently reacted with irritation and short angry outbursts and scoldings, especially when errors recurred and seemed to be easily avoidable. While Akhtar evoked the impression that he was not very intimidated by these rampages, the boss depicted his outbursts as short disciplinary interventions which should not be mistaken for hostile ruptures that resulted in protracted grievances (cf. Sennett 2013: 150-152): "we have found a level [of understanding], when [Akhtar] messes things up there is a short outburst. But this is not grave. After five minutes it's over. It's totally forgotten. It plays no role at all." (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017) Moreover, the boss assured me that "mostly we manage to start laughing anyway when something has been completely messed up again" (ibid.).

Humour apparently played a significant role in the co-workers' ways of dealing with

mistakes and discursively coordinating tasks more generally. In particular, they joked that work without mistakes would be too boring and the boss had begun to mockingly evaluate the technical and aesthetic quality of Akhtar's work with the attributes “made in Germany” (Field-notes Workshop 24.01.2018) for satisfying outcomes and “made in Afghanistan” (ibid.) for unfinished or deficient results which called for corrections:

[Some of Akhtar's work] doesn't fit. It looks like shit and I say: 'This is not made in Germany. This is made in Afghanistan.' [...] So, also rude remarks. (laughs) But [Akhtar] is laughing. (laughs) [...] And I say: 'Ah it has to turn into made in Germany.' So we laugh, we laugh, we laugh. It's not, ehm, pejorative or something like that. [...] Well, to be honest, this is how you learn it. (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017)

While the boss seemed to be aware of the discriminating and racializing implications of these “rude” (ibid.) labelling practices (cf. McDowell 2008: 498-500), he did not worry about affronting Akhtar because he would also interpret them as ironic expressions. Indeed, this joking dichotomy between Afghanistan and Germany was actively adapted by Akhtar and I heard it from him during my participant observations in the workshop when he used it in a joking remark after the boss had told him to revise a job which did not yet meet the quality standards (cf. Schmidt 2006: 473-475). Nevertheless, my ethnographic data also suggested that irritated and angry responses to errors and wrongdoings sometimes crossed the red line and amounted to inconsiderate and disrespectful offences which could be interpreted as impediments to the emergence of personally important relationships beyond work.

I have already mentioned above that practices of directly sharing and coordinating work tasks appeared to be especially noticeable in the case of the catering kitchen. In the interview the chef explained that the most crucial task which forced migrant employees directly shared with her was packing the meals into transport boxes. She highlighted that this job would be “the most responsible” (Interview Kitchen 04.04.2018) aspect of work for the kitchen helps because it implied the reliable distribution of different meals into boxes which had to be tagged with address labels, “so that the right food arrives in the right institution” (ibid.). More than other tasks in the kitchen, packing the meals depended on German language and organizing skills. As outlined above (see Ch. 5.1), the chef was coordinating tasks according to the impressions she gained of the capabilities of forced migrant workers during testing periods and concrete situations at work. With regard to her selections of particular newcomers for packing the meals she mentioned that the forced migrant employees would compete for directly cooperating with her because “working together with the chef, that is cool. (laughs) That is privileged. For them.” (Ibid.) Despite her personal de-emphasis of hierarchical status differences in the catering company, the chef sensed that directly sharing tasks and exchanging with

higher ranking and more powerful co-workers was desired and preferred by newcomers due to the social recognition and privileged position this was assumed to confer (cf. Fine 1986: 199f.; Sias 2009: 31f., 38f.; Fuhse 2016: 169f.). It could be added that working together with superiors may also offer opportunities to form supportive interpersonal relationships which imply bridging social capital when they involve managers or employers who are able to access a wider range of resources than may be available through work relationships with colleagues in similar positions of status and power (cf. Warren 2007: 134f.; see Ch. 2.3).

In the catering kitchen, I had the opportunity to participate in the work process and experience how tasks could be directly shared. On the day of my research in this workplace, Michael was peeling a larger quantity of kohlrabies in preparation of the meals for the next week. He was doing this task on his own near the central kitchen table for the second consecutive day and agreed that we could do the work together. I then positioned myself where Michael was working, directly facing him across a plastic box which served as a bin for the peels. Michael handed me a knife which he deemed eligible for the purpose and I started doing what I thought he was doing after I had watched the way he handled the knife and the kohlrabies for some moments. It was possible to engage in an uninterrupted conversation during our cooperation which we carried out on one spot and which rather involved mechanically repetitive movements of our hands instead of heightened concentration or verbal exchanges with others. Hence, it could be argued that this and similar forms of sharing the same manual tasks offered rich opportunities for informal interactions which may contribute to processes of forming personally significant relationships during work.

After I had worked and talked for about one hour with Michael in the kitchen, I approached Mohammed in the scullery and asked him whether I could assist him. He gave me the job of handing him the more or less empty metal bowls in which the food was delivered and which had to be taken out of the numerous transport boxes which the drivers brought back from the customers in the course of the morning. This had to be done in the hallway between the entrance of the scullery and the rack in which the transport boxes were stored. Once he had explained the job to me with hinting gestures and short instructions in German, Mohammed returned to his post at the sinks and I began with emptying one box after the other for him. In contrast to the direct cooperation with Michael, Mohammed and I did not do the exact same tasks but distributed and interdependent steps of the procedure. He instructed me and cleaned the metal bowls, I followed his orders and carried the items to the sinks. Ongoing verbal interaction was hardly possible in this form of directly working together because we were moving on different spots and focused on different activities.

Aside from interacting with customers, the employees of the garden centre were also frequently communicating with their co-workers in a predominantly friendly, concise and not rigidly formal parlance in order to coordinate their work together. The central significance of situationally exchanging work-related information was indicated by the fact that many garden centre employees were equipped with wireless telephones which constantly kept them connected to each other throughout the entire store. In addition, short verbal exchanges frequently took place in direct face-to-face encounters on the aisles or at the info points in the departments and seemed to occur as spontaneously as the need for information, orders, approvals or support from co-workers arose. The coordination of work and exchange of feedback and other significant information between management and workers were also pursued in the institutionalized practice of weekly meetings the branch manager held with each department work group right on the sales floor.

Regarding its implications for processes of relationship formation, the various practices of interactively coordinating work tasks in the garden centre could be viewed as contexts of social exchanges in which co-workers got familiar with each other as they were facing their mutual interdependence in accomplishing the work together. This was reflected by two local store clerks who remarked that they were directly coordinating work tasks with the forced migrant colleague in their department on a daily basis. One of them added that apart from the newcomer who directly worked with him, he would barely interact with other more spatially and practically distant forced migrants who worked in the other departments of the store.

Informal help and support

In addition to the assistance which may be given in the course of introducing new employees and official workplace rules of generally supporting each other which were especially highlighted by informants who worked in kitchen teams, exchanging informal help and support constitutes another variant of intersubjective cooperation which can decisively influence the relationships of co-workers more generally. Especially when largely unforeseeable problems and “disruptions” (Sennett 2013: 155) occur in the work process, informal support and ways of shared coping may be enacted which can consist of “non-routine, cooperative communication” (ibid.) and situationally attending to “other people's jobs” (ibid.: 148) regardless of contractual arrangements such as working hours and divisions of formal hierarchy and responsibilities (ibid.: 154-156; Böhle 2018: 186).

Overcoming challenges together may also include help with correcting individual mistakes or supporting an overburdened co-worker. Thus, informal help and support may depend

on sufficient temporal resources as well as mutual consideration for individual characteristics and different capacities to perform (Kock and Kutzner 2018: 462-464; Sennett 2013: 166-168). As I have already alluded to earlier (see Ch. 2.2), Kock and Kutzner (2018) situate giving work-related informal help and support in the domain of gift exchange because these practices can be viewed as based on notions of solidarity, interpersonal obligations and connectedness rather than utilitarian interests. In consequence, informal help and support have been ascribed effects of social bonding which ignite relationship processes based on established and emerging expectations of reciprocity among the actors who meet in particular working environments (ibid.: 452f., 462-464).

Some co-workers in my research were practically supporting each other with certain tasks, e.g. in the scullery of the catering company where Arif started to help Mohammed with the work of cleaning the transport boxes after he had explained the dishwasher that this task had to be done every Friday. Although he was not working as dishwasher any longer and had work to do in the kitchen, Arif took all boxes out of the rack and began to wash them at one of the sinks in the scullery so that Mohammed could continue with cleaning the returning metal bowls at another sink right beside his colleague. Another instance of a co-worker who did not stop short of getting involved in work beyond his formal obligations was given by Idris. He told that one of the bin lorry drivers he cooperated with in his job as dustman was not only living up to his personal preference of a fast pace of working but also lent a hand with carrying and emptying the dustbins: “He is driving fast and then sometimes he helps me.” (Interview Idris 18.04.2018) Idris seemed to interpret the informal help he was receiving from the driver as acts of benevolence and further explained in the interview that he preferred to work with this co-worker more than with others, also because he would frequently buy coffee and snacks for Idris when they shared breaks together. Similar interpersonal gift exchanges involving food, coffee or cigarettes which were consumed together during breaks were mentioned by Tony, Habib and Emanuel as well (see Ch. 6.1). Lastly, the positive impression Idris had gained about his favourite driver has to be understood in the context of the contrasting experiences he had previously made with another driver of the waste collection company whom he depicted as a rather antagonistic cooperation partner who “doesn't come out [of the driver's cabin] to help” (Interview Idris 18.04.2018) and would stay away from Idris when they shared breaks as a bin lorry crew of three co-workers.

Also after sometimes intense and lengthy phases of training and introducing, many forced migrant employees were continuously supported by their co-workers with regard to German language, mainly in the form of explanations and translation services. In the painting

company, the master's dedication to repeating and explaining German words and phrases in the course of overall informal interactions at work were recognized by Tony as major assistance with continuously learning German. He emphasized that the personal expressiveness of the master would be a decisive factor which captured his attention and made him memorize in the sense of letting "the words always ring in your head" (Interview Tony 02.01.2018). Tony was also pointing out that based on their frequent verbal exchanges, the master would understand better what he wanted to say in German than other people. In effect, Tony would be more confident to talk German with the master than with others and feel more comfortable to practise, ask again for clarification and make mistakes with him. No matter how crudely and wrongly Tony put it, the master would understand what he meant most of the time and then repeat it for him in correct German. In addition, Tony mentioned that he was happy to receive positive feedback and appreciation from the master not only for his general commitment to the work but also for his steady improvement in German.

Although similar dedication to informally teaching newcomers was reported for several workplaces of my research, this seemed to be much less the case in the electronics workshop and the catering kitchen. Especially the boss of the electronics workshop felt that he was not sufficiently supporting Akhtar by consistently correcting and explaining him so that they could move beyond the basic and idiosyncratic mutual understanding they had reached in their dyadic work relationship. On the other hand, Akhtar remarked that systematically advancing his German skills was no personal priority to him and he assured me that his level of speaking and understanding would suffice his current needs.

In the garden centre, one English-speaking newcomer who worked in the warehouse reported that since he had started the job, a colleague had been helping him with understanding the instructions of his supervisor who did not speak English. How language and work-knowledge as aspects of informal support could combine became apparent as well in the store. Related to the fact that many newcomers were still in the process of expanding their limited German skills and knowledge about the products, a central support practice among co-workers on the sales-floor was doing the work of servicing customers for the forced migrant workers. When a customer approached one of the newcomers who was not able to fully understand and answer particular questions, the worker could refer the customer to an already established co-worker who would then take care of the request. Moreover, regardless of language differences the store clerks of different departments sometimes had to help each other when they faced customer questions which did not concern their own areas of specialization.

Aside from receiving informal help by already established co-workers, it should not be

ignored that forced migrant newcomers also give work-related support to locals with whom they work together. This was most explicitly stated by Yunis who emphasized the importance of good work relationships and described his approach of proactively forging them: “I don't know about others, but I always try my best to have good relations with my colleagues. [...] I try to win their heart, doing good thing with them. Try to be polite.” (Interview Yunis 26.04.2018) Yunis further elucidated that his attempts “to win their heart” (ibid.) through “good” (ibid.) and “polite” (ibid.) acts included various practices of informal support such as small favours and courtesies which he pursued especially with the middle-aged owner-manager of the small grocery store he was working in:

[The owner-manager] is very nice lady and I always try to help her. Whenever she is trying to do anything. Or whenever she comes to shop and I feel that she wants to have coffee now. So I will just make coffee for her. And then we have some chocolate powder, for example. And I put some chocolate powder on the top. And if you put chocolate [powder], it comes in heart shape. (Ibid.)

Supportive practices such as making coffee for supervising actors can be viewed as making work more pleasant for the co-workers who directly and indirectly benefit from them. As the quote implies, these practices may depend on a feeling for and familiarity with the personal needs and work habits of co-workers and can include expressive elements which symbolize the desired character of interpersonal ties. Similar attentive gestures could be observed, for instance, in the electronics workshop in which Akhtar had at some point started on his own initiative to make coffee for the boss.

Yunis also mentioned that he supported the owner-manager with work tasks and in the interview he went on to explain that he would generally offer his help to older co-workers who were facing work he deemed too heavy and inconvenient for them:

Or, for example, if they're doing any work, for example, I said: 'Oh, don't do it. I will do it.' Some of my colleagues, they're old. For example, there was a colleague before. She's left now. She was, I think, fifty plus. And [...] I always look into their eyes, it just/ she is my mother, for example, so I always help her. For example, if she wants to bend herself, to taking anything from down, from floor, for example, I've said: 'No problem, I will do it for you.' [...] If they want to change the bin, for example. [...] I said: 'No, no pro/ I will do it for you.' (Ibid.)

Discerning his older female co-workers in a similar social position like his own mother, Yunis seemed to feel compelled to act towards them according to the social expectations about the need and entitlement to be supported which he arguably associated with the kinship role of mother (cf. Thelen 2015: 505-507).

While his co-workers would partly view his practices of kindness and support with suspicion, Yunis seemed to consider it more important that his acts resonated with his normatively informed subjective orientations. He was sure that they allowed him to make a positive lasting impression at work, especially on the owner-manager and her daughter who was his

direct supervisor:

And some of my colleagues, we joke and they said: 'Ah, you are a bootlicker!', for example. (laughs) But eh, but my heart knows that I'm good. With them. [...] I just want that they get happy. And they remember me. For example, if I'm not here tomorrow, they always say: 'Oh yeah, he was a nice guy.' (Interview Yunis 26.04.2018)

In combination with his declared wish to be kept in good memory for his helpful and caring way of working, Yunis explained that the main reason which motivated his practices of informal support at work would consist of anticipated personal benefits in his current situation as an asylum seeker who wanted to settle down in the Munich city region:

If you are more close to someone, for example, if you do extra things [...] for someone, [...] [some colleagues] think [...]: 'I think he needs something.' You know what I mean? [...] But, why I'm going with this, why I'm doing like that, it's just because I'm new in Germany. And I want to have more and more contact with German people. Just because I want to, I want to live in Germany. So it's good when you have more contact with German, because they can help you. Help, not financially, just because maybe sometime you need any good reference, for example. If you want to have work, for example, somewhere. So, if they ask you: 'Hi, where did you work before?' If I say: 'Ya, [name of the grocery store].' If they: 'Oh, can I have [the grocery store's] number?', for example. If they ring and say: 'Hi, hi. We want to know something about Yunis.' [...] Ya, it's just like that. (Ibid.)

Based on this statement, giving informal work-related help can be interpreted as an interactive strategy which Yunis viewed as facilitating “more and more contact with German people” (ibid.) whom he depicted as especially valuable network contacts because they may feature as sources of social capital which supports forced migrant newcomers with emplacement, e.g. through a “good reference” (ibid.) by a satisfied former employer. In other words, Yunis seemed to be aware of the principle of reciprocity and was helping his already established co-workers also due to his expectation that his acts of giving would promote the constitution of more informal and durable social capital ties in which he might be given back in the form of support with his personal efforts of settling in the Munich city region (cf. Phillimore, Humphris and Khan 2018: 219-229; Portes 1998: 7). Later in the interview, Yunis also reflected this line of argument when he made clear that he considered fulfilling formal work obligations as well as giving informal support to the powerful leading actors in his workplace as a way of forging an alliance which would protect him from suspicion and resentment on the part of some of his colleagues: “I think if you are good with work and if you are good with [the owner-manager], for example, no one can beat you.” (Interview Yunis 26.04.2018)

6. Establishing sociabilities of emplacement

While I have discussed how the researched organizations and practised work relationships may have constituted social contexts for the formation of significant relationships, it is now time to return to the second guiding question of this thesis concerning the formation of sociabilities of emplacement. Work contexts as opportunity structures for social tie formation do not mechanically determine relationship processes and need to be considered in combination with actions that are based on the subjectivities of individual actors and embedded in personal and social networks (see Ch. 2.1). Hollstein (2010) conceptualizes this entanglement between structure and agency in relationship processes and argues that structural factors “mark off a range of opportunities, yet what is actually realized within this range is co-determined by the actors” (ibid.: 95; my translation). Personal priorities, perceptions, capabilities and orientations which may guide individual action can be understood as forming a complex of subjective meaning through which particular relationships in a person's network, as well as various types of relationships more generally, are continuously interpreted, evaluated, preferred and otherwise endowed with meaning and importance in interrelation with each other (ibid.: 95-102; see also Kurth 1970: 137f., 141f.). Especially the initial formation of social relationships has been found to be decisively influenced by individual actions that are motivated by subjective aims, affects and desires (Simmel 1908: 5-9; Azarian 2010: 330-332), such as “a desire for human relationships” (Glick Schiller, Darieva and Gruner-Domic 2011: 415) that are based on shared domains of commonality which has been identified as a major driving force for establishing sociabilities of emplacement (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 129).

In the remaining three subchapters, I will examine how variously positioned informants perceived and responded to opportunities to form and foster social ties with people known through employment. Although the relationship processes between Tony and the master painter turned out to be the main guiding case for this chapter, I will also refer to traces of sociabilities mediated through the other workplaces. Aside from interpreting various practices and approaches of sociability pursued at work and beyond (Ch. 6.1), I present shared aspirations, forms of human commonality, experiences of exclusion and ascriptions of difference as “domains of commonality” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 124) which may substantiate sociabilities of emplacement (Ch. 6.2). Finally, functions of mutual support mediated through employment will be discussed and connected to perceptions of need and dynamics of paternalism which may arise from social capital based on reciprocity (Ch. 6.3).

6.1 Practices and approaches of sociability

Subjectivities and human agency in relationship processes can be interpreted in the course of researching concrete social practices (Glick Schiller, Darieva and Gruner-Domic 2011: 403f.; Fuhse 2015: 45ff.). With a focus on empirical realities and possibilities of cosmopolitan relations and identifications, Glick Schiller, Darieva and Gruner-Domic (2011) argue that “forms of competence and communication skills that are based on the human capacity to create social relations of inclusiveness and openness to the world” (ibid.: 402) give rise to “various forms of relational practices” (ibid.: 403) through which sociabilities are enacted. In processes of urban emplacement, these “sociability practices” (ibid.: 410) may comprise a wide spectrum of informal, supportive, affective and virtually equal human interactions, exchange practices and shared activities at work and beyond the context of employment (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 128-146; cf. Anderson 2015: 102f., 106-109; Thelen 2015: 507-511; Sias and Cahill 1998: 278-280, 284-293; Rumens 2017: 1156f.; Allan 1998: 73-80, 83-89).

Approaches of sociability can be understood as referring to social practices which individual actors pursue in order to establish contact and significant social ties with others. This may involve the more or less proactive initiation of sociable encounters and relationships through, for instance, statements, questions, suggestions, invitations, requests or exchanges of gifts and favours such as food, information, material goods or emotional support (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 131-138, 142-146; see also Phillimore, Humphris and Khan 2018: 216, 219ff.; Fuhse 2015: 47-52; Kurth 1970: 149-157). The ways in which subjective concerns and needs of forced migrant newcomers are responded to by institutional support actors may influence whether and how particular interaction partners are approached in connection with the desire to initiate or deepen social ties. Çağlar and Glick Schiller (2018) identify migrant newcomers' motivations to form sociabilities of emplacement in a disempowered urban context which offered “few resources for settlement” (ibid.: 130) and state that their “respondents searched for individuals who might help them: in many cases, migrants took the lead in establishing forms of sociability.” (Ibid.: 131) In the following sections, I will elaborate a selection of practices and approaches of sociability at work and beyond which does not include exchanges of mutual support, as these will be examined below as the main function of sociabilities of emplacement (see Ch. 6.3).

Practices and approaches of sociability at work

According to Tony, informal and sociable interactions during work were occurring frequently and on an everyday basis when he and the master were working close to each other as well as

in the car, during breaks and after finishing a job on a worksite. Complementing their verbal exchanges about work-related topics, this could include discussing a wider range of contents associated with each other's lives, families and social networks, sharing personal opinions and plans or joking and making fun. Based on my participant observations and several interview statements, it could be concluded that Tony was talking to the master about these topics in a mostly confident and frank manner.

For the remaining three example workplaces and the ten additional small firm cases of my research, variations in terms of quantity, quality and significance of sociable practices were noticeable. Less frequent and extensive sociability was reported and could be observed, for instance, in the electronics workshop. According to the boss, private and socially reproductive interests, information and problems were deemed secondary and would remain widely unaddressed in the face of pressing instrumental necessities and work-related questions, answers and orders:

To be honest, it is totally weird. We barely talk about private/ about such things like: 'What do you cook?' [...] No, this all gets drowned in this working. [...] And this is also the nice thing about work, that .. this private sphere steps aside a little bit. And you simply work. Because you need this. (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017)

Rather than seeking sociability at work, the boss seemed to appreciate work as a break from non-work life and personal concerns (cf. Kock and Kutzner 2018: 459).

Sociable practices in the catering company mainly took place when work stress was low and during shared breaks when the kitchen workers could be found “sitting around and talking relaxedly with each other” (Interview Kitchen 04.04.2018). In the garden centre, several employees engaged in sociable practices especially during lunch and cigarette breaks as well as company events such as football matches, Christmas parties and day trips. The heterogeneity and larger size of the garden centre workforce accentuated how the extent of mutual knowledge and engagement with each other may vary individually among co-workers. While some established local employees reported regular sociable exchanges and knew about the migration experiences and personal situations and backgrounds of particular forced migrant co-workers, others made clear that they had less contact and did not really know the newcomers or, for that matter, other local and established colleagues. The branch manager was among those who appeared more interested in sociable practices with forced migrant employees and had made the experience that “[y]ou can have good conversations with them” (Fieldnotes Store 10.04.2018). He had gained insights into their local and transnational living situations and biographies in the course of frequent talks.

Of the ten forced migrant interview partners who were working in other SMEs than

the four example workplaces, three informants explicitly stated that they had one or a few special co-workers who were partners in relationships at work which featured various social practices, bases and outcomes that could be viewed as elements of sociabilities of emplacement.³⁹ The remaining seven interviewees were not emphasizing significant dyadic ties with supportive and likeable key actors. Some of them described social life at their workplaces in rather collective terms and did not seem to strongly differentiate individual co-workers along personal characteristics. In other words, they would generally talk and joke during breaks and partly also in the course of shared tasks and working close to each other (cf. De Neve 2001: 149-156; Anderson 2015: 106f.), e.g. in the context of interactive team work which Habib reported for his employment in a gardening company.

Many of the ten forced migrant informants told that politics, languages, religions, lifestyles, “mentality” (Interview Idris 18.04.2018) and other aspects of socio-cultural difference and commonality would be talked about with already established co-workers. This was illustrated by Emanuel, who described collective interactions during breaks which seemed to be characterized by “the impersonal egalitarianism of generalized sociability” (Anderson 2015: 107) as “our good time” (Interview Emanuel 12.01.2018):

Then we act funny, make fun of each other. They ask me about Africa. Then I also ask them about Germany. Then sometimes I will cook food, you know? Then I bring my food there, oh then when they see it! You know, (laughs slightly) they're sometimes just: 'Oh man, ah wah.' [...] Sometimes they taste it, you know? And say: 'Wow, it taste nice, it taste nice!' [...] Sometimes then they also bring their traditional food, you know? Like the *Weißwurst*. Then I love it, then I eat it. It's nice. (Ibid.)

Emanuel's interview statements left me with the impression that he and his co-workers found pleasure in learning about the cultural differences which they seemed to associate with each other. His practices of sociability at work seemed to follow a pattern of mutuality in the sense that there was a reciprocal give and take of potentially humiliating and racist jokes, national-cultural mores and narratives and unfamiliar food of different regional cuisines.

However, Emanuel lastly concluded that his social ties at work were mainly based on dominant social categories and reproduced boundaries of cultural difference:

I think, what they really know about me, it's not much, because they know I'm a refugee, you know? From Nigeria. [...] They ask me some certain question about African tradition, you know? Then I have to sometimes/ what I know I tell them, you know? Just like that. That is how we interact to know about each other then. There's nothing much, you know? (Interview Emanuel 12.01.2018)

In sum, Emanuel made clear that the discursively shaped category “refugee [...] [f]rom Niger-

39 Aside from Yunis and Kingsley (see Ch. 5.3), this included Hakim, a 20-year-old Afghan asylum seeker who was doing an apprenticeship as painter in a company with nine employees. Hakim reported extensive communication with one particular colleague who was also an apprentice: “In our company is one guy. He is also young. He is very good, I always talk with him. And he tells everything. With the others [...] I don't talk so much.” (Interview Akhtar and Hakim 21.01.2018)

ia” (ibid.) was the overriding ascription which would prescribe the potential contents of his interactions with co-workers. Even though mutual knowledge seemed to be widely constrained by impersonal role expectations and stereotypes, Emanuel emphasized that he experienced his relationships with co-workers as personally satisfying and significant (see Ch. 5.2; cf. Anderson 2015: 106f.).

With regard to approaches towards sociabilities at work, Tony seemed to appreciate conversations despite his repeatedly declared preference for focusing more on his work tasks than on sociability and explained that he had developed an interpersonal sensitivity for the situations in which informal exchanges would be tolerated:

I do have a really nice time with [the master], like, a good conversation with him, one on one. And .. ya, I might be frightened sometimes when he's angry. Then I just have to know: 'Okay, this time I just have to be on my own.' But, when he's in a good mood, I know. And I try to, you know, make it lively up the environment. [...] I always watch his mood. Once I see: Okay, this man is like, he's a bit crazy today, and I just give him some space. I wouldn't want to say anything, unless if he say something. (Interview Tony 02.01.2018)

In this statement, Tony depicted staying calm and merely reacting to communicative impulses when they came from the master as a way of containing uncertainties and avoiding potential conflicts and difficulties.

However, also aside from situations in which Tony felt that informal talk would be disapproved by his employer, interactive approaches which could favour the development of a sociability of emplacement in the context of the apprenticeship relationship seemed to be mainly pursued by the master rather than Tony. As Tony made clear, it was often the case that the master

just wants to come up with, you know, with the conversation. He always has something to say. Like, he always wants me to tell him something about Africa, you know? (laughingly) [...] He always wants me to tell him something about my siblings and, you know, he always wants to know how I feel, he always wants to know if I .. if I like the life I'm living in Germany. He always wants to know [...] like, sometimes, how many friends I have and how good are your friends? Or how much do I like my friends? [...] And most time we just, we just keep talking. And talking and talking. (Interview Tony 02.01.2018)

The master would ask initial questions and actively show interest in Tony's personal background, experiences and current living situation. Arguably much more than when he was facing inquiries by curious customers (see Ch. 5.2), Tony did not perceive the ensuing interactions with the master as indiscreet asymmetrical interrogations but as truly reciprocal dialogues in the sense that “[w]hen I talk, he talks” (ibid.). This could be understood as deepening mutual knowledge and trust and thus strengthening the social tie between the two co-workers in the painting company. Several employers of other workplaces correspondingly emphasized that sociable interactions at work were mainly initiated by themselves or other estab-

lished co-workers and less by their forced migrant employees.

Nevertheless, illustrating how the master acted as initiator of informal exchanges during work, Tony revealed that he seemed to feel challenged by invitations to have a conversation because he had to reconcile them with his subjective preference for sparse informal talk in order to avoid distraction from his work and the pressure to find suitable topics:

We are at work and I wasn't saying anything. I was just working. Before my boss came. And he was also working. And everywhere was just silence and he told me like: 'Tony, say something. You're not saying anything, you're just working.' (laughs) I was like: 'This man is crazy. What do I say now?' (laughingly) And at that day I didn't say anything. [...] And I left him. And the next day I had to think about it again. I was like: 'No, let me come up with a conversation.' So I came up with something. And from there we started talking. Like if I want to come up I have to say something which will make us to reason deep, you know? And talk more and more. And if we are talking more, you lose a little bit concentration from the work, which I don't like. [...] And that day when he told me to say something, that: 'Tony, you don't say something. You always want me to talk first.' (laughs) I didn't say anything, I was just laughing. I didn't let him know I was laughing. [...] He knew, he knew I heard him. You know? But [...] I pretended like as if I didn't hear, because I didn't want to say anything. I will just focus on my job. (Interview Tony 02.01.2018)

In addition to situations of exposure while working side by side, Tony mentioned that the master would be the main driving force of informal exchanges also during breaks at work. For instance, he sometimes brought warm food which had to be eaten before it got cold and thereby urged Tony to interrupt his work flow and take a rest. In Tony's own words,

you should consider the fact that somebody drove outside to get you stuff [...]. And at the end of the day .. he wants you to eat, maybe he might just want us to sit and have some rest and have some talk, you know? And I'm just busy, working as if the ai/ (laughs) as if the work is not gonna finish or something, you know (laughingly)? So, sometimes I consider this and I just say: 'Okay, let me just go to eat.' (Interview Tony 02.01.2018)

Tony seemed to interpret such interventions as caring gestures he felt obliged not to decline and as expressions of the master's intention to spend some sociable time together. This was also the case when he was sometimes invited to have lunch at the place of the master which was prepared by the master's wife. Tony reported that he felt welcome and enjoyed contact with the family of his employer when breaks were spent in this way. How forced migrant newcomers may manage and adjust their reactions to approaches of sociability at work was also discussed by other research participants who referred to various degrees of openness, reservation, initial mistrust and rigid notions of hierarchical divisions which were partly ascribed to forced migrant employees and represented as impeding and complicating sociability suggested by employers and supervisors.

However, the statements of the master himself seemed to contradict Tony's account of experiencing his employer as the main initiator of sociability at work. This reflects the conceptual insight that social relationships are characterized by the possibility for dynamic incongruence between different subjective perspectives on them (Azarian 2010: 326-328; Sias and

Cahill 1998: 279f.) and discrepancies between declared or ascribed intentions and actual social interactions and practices of relationship partners (Fuhse 2016: 130f.; *ibid.* 2009: 52, 58-62; cf. Breidenstein et al. 2015: 31-33, 37-42). During my observations, the master claimed that they would only infrequently exchange a few sentences during work because in his opinion as well informal talk would have a negative influence on the work performance, especially for Tony who would not yet be sufficiently routinised in his tasks. Instead of exchanging personal information, I was assured that conversations should be focused on work-related topics and support the transfer of skills and knowledge in the context of the mentoring relationship the master perceived with Tony. Yet, when we were driving in the car the master exemplified how he initiated and encouraged informal talk. He asked Tony what he had done the last weekend and how he had been generally spending his free-time during the previous weeks. In return to Tony's rather reluctant responses, the master also disclosed some information about himself and how he had spent his time beyond work. When asked whether he had gone to a club, Tony responded that he would generally avoid clubs and preferred to meet people at concerts. The master seemed to presume that a young man like Tony could be interested in weekend nightlife and club-culture and he shared his own love for old-school hip-hop and going out around ten years earlier, when he had been as old as Tony was by the time of my research. Tony then further revealed that he had been at the river with a friend on Saturday and had spent Sunday alone at home in order to relax. The master reacted by approvingly commenting that he would personally value spending time outside in nature.

In the course of my fieldwork, I could also witness how Tony and the master were having informal conversations in the practical context of doing work tasks together. On one early afternoon, I encountered the two co-workers in the garden of the house in which Tony was living. They had already finished their main job of the day on another worksite. Hence, relatively free from time pressure, they were using up some old paint before it would spoil for painting the wooden window shutters of the unrenovated accommodation. Together with other materials of the painting company, the old paint was stored in a small shed in the garden of the asylum shelter which the master had seized and converted into a second storage facility of his company. While they were working, Tony narrated how he and a friend had gone to see a “cultist” (Fieldnotes Painter 05.04.2018) in Lagos, i.e., a provider of magical services who operated with cowrie shells, in order to identify the person who had stolen the mobile phone of Tony's friend. In this situation which appeared rather informal and was characterized by working together beyond the demands and constraints of a work target arranged with a customer, the master listened carefully and took his time to support Tony's storytelling with German

words and clarifying questions. Their sociable exchange seemed to be granted comparatively more attention than the work tasks in this stress-relieved atmosphere.

Practices and approaches of sociability beyond work

From my descriptions above, it can be concluded that some work-related activities, such as breaks and organizing the stock of work materials, were partly merging with the private spaces of the master as well as Tony. In addition, the two co-workers were also interacting beyond the physical, organizational and practical boundaries of the work context. When I asked Tony whether he would spend time with the master outside of work he mentioned several shared activities which would be pursued on an infrequent basis:

Eh, frequently, no. But [...] we spend time. Aside from work. Like, we do play basketball together. We do eat together at his place. Like .. ya, we do play games once in a while. [...] Like, this type of PS [Play Station] two or PS three. [...] Eh, we play basketball, because he does play basketball. [...] So we just go and play together. He trains also. And we have a chill, we just talk and talk and he talks about life and how he grew up. You know? How I grew up at home, I also tell him as well. And talk about .. you know, this doesn't have anything to do with maybe job or something. Like, [...] the city where I came from, and he talks about the city where he came from and/ [...] He was born and brought up in Stuttgart. [...] But he's a Turkish. (Interview Tony 02.01.2018)

As Tony made clear in this and other statements, their activities beyond work included e.g. commensality, sports and playing games during which they would have informal verbal exchanges about their personal and place-related backgrounds as well as “about life” (ibid.) more generally. In the course of another conversation in March 2018, Tony also remembered that his master had come over to his place at least two times since we had recorded the interview in the beginning of the year. On these occasions, they had been cooking, eating and talking together.

For the other three example workplaces and the ten supporting cases, practices of sociability beyond work which featured forced migrant co-workers were mostly depicted as non-existent or rarely occurring. Akhtar had never mentioned meeting the boss in a non-work context and the latter gave a concise negative answer when asked whether they would spend free-time together: “Nothing. We always work.” (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017) Reflecting on what she had heard from and about her forced migrant employees, the chef of the catering kitchen felt confident to claim that “nobody is making friends outside of work. [...] There is nothing going on. [...] It's not happening.” (Interview Kitchen 04.04.2018) Merely the drivers who delivered the catering food would partly cultivate less context-bound friendships which had been emerging over several years of working together.

Some employees of the garden centre reported to have generally no significant rela-

tionships with co-workers outside of work, while several others stated to have them with a small number of established locals, but not with forced migrant newcomers known from work. One department manager remembered two unrelated occasions on which he had met several co-workers outside of work, including forced migrants, as rare exceptions. Yet, although the branch manager had no first-hand insights into the non-work lives of his employees, he knew that some would go out for drinks in the evening or watch football together from time to time. He was sure that local co-workers did not “ignore” (Interview Store 04.04.2018) forced migrant newcomers with these sociable activities. Characterizing his own practices of sociability beyond work, the branch manager mentioned that “it's mostly related to sports when I do something with [forced migrant employees]” (ibid.). Several times per month, these practices would take place in the context of events and group activities rather than dyadic relationships with a more personal focus.

As already touched upon above (see Ch. 5.3), one newcomer in the garden centre mentioned a closer relationship with his former supervisor who had introduced him to the job in the very beginning. This sociability partner was a 23-year-old man from northern Germany who was working somewhere else in the Munich city region at the time of my research. The two former co-workers had been doing free-time activities together, such as going to skiing, and continued texting each other with their mobile phones after the supervisor had changed jobs. Several of the established local workers reinforced my impression that similar kinds of sociability had not frequently emerged in the garden centre when they referred to this social relationship as an exceptional example of a closer tie which went beyond work. Finally turning to the ten additional forced migrant interviewees, it can be concluded that Yunis was the only respondent who reported repeated sociable practices outside of work which he shared with his locally established supervisor and her boyfriend and which did not take place in collective group constellations of more than three related actors. For instance, the couple had invited Yunis to a football match and for cooking and having dinner in their place and Yunis told they had also gone out together on the weekends.

During my observations in the painting company, the master likewise mentioned that they would spend time beyond work only infrequently, which he explained with his personal priority of reserving non-work time for his family and not for activities with co-workers. He explicitly stated that in his current situation as a husband and father of two young children, he would be generally not interested in closer relationships beyond work. Commitment to family obligations was depicted as more important than fostering existing friendships or developing new ties (cf. Allan 1998: 71f., 81-89). For instance, when a job was finished earlier than ex-

pected and no other maintenance work was waiting, the master would prefer to send Tony home and use the additional after-work hours for his family life. However, he also assumed that others with less family commitments and a stronger subjective desire for relationships would establish closer relations mediated through the opportunities for interpersonal exchanges which he attributed to work contexts in the painting and building trades. Especially in the course of my conversations with several middle-aged local employees of the garden centre, family responsibilities and personal priorities of time use were similarly mentioned as a main reason for not relating with forced migrant co-workers outside of work. On the other hand, many forced migrant newcomers of my research likewise explained how time and energy constraints resulting from their employment combined with social obligations, personal preferences and efforts of establishing a life in the Munich city region and shaped the composition, construction and reproduction of their personal networks in a wider ranging sense.

Touching upon several aspects which were mentioned also by other informants, Kingsley made clear that the educational side of his apprenticeship, the additional tutoring for German and trade school assignments he was receiving from a social service institution and frequent official appointments would keep him busy for most of his free-time. He felt that sociable practices had been generally reducing since he had started his apprenticeship and illustrated this with reference to his personally meaningful relationship with Tony:

Well, I honestly have to say, since I've started the apprenticeship, I've lost more friendships. [...] That is to say we don't see each other very often. [...] For example, Tony. So, our relationship remains. Then we call/ He also understands, because [...] he is in apprenticeship right now. [...] But the people who are not yet in apprenticeship, they don't understand at all. 'Well, Kingsley has abandoned us since he has an apprenticeship place. And he doesn't call.' [...] Some call me and say: 'You don't text-message, you don't call any more, that's not okay my friend! Since you are in apprenticeship.' -I'm very sorry. It doesn't work out like it used to do. It doesn't work out with the time. I have no time, have things to do.' Yes. Difficult to understand. It's only when you do such thing [like an apprenticeship], or work. Then you know, in a week you have two days off. (Interview Kingsley 28.11.2017)

As Kingsley explained, forced migrant relationship partners who did not share experiences of, or awareness for, employment-related temporal constraints had confronted him with incomprehension and accusations of not fulfilling their expectations of commitment which had formed in the less temporally structured context of early asylum reception (cf. Täubig 2019: 347f.). When viewed through the lens of negative consequences of relationship structures which may simultaneously inhere beneficial social capital, it could be argued that the “social pressure” (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993: 1342) to prove loyalty and solidarity which Kingsley seemed to associate with his existing friendship ties could have kept him from focusing on new bridging weak ties and dedicating his remaining free-time to relationships mediated through his apprenticeship although these may have been more effective in terms of

facilitating access to settlement resources (cf. *ibid.*: 1342-1344).⁴⁰

In connection with the situatedness of dyadic relationship processes in personal and social networks, particular role expectations, categorical social boundaries and notions of a division between public and private spheres were highlighted when some locals and newcomers depicted approaches towards co-workers beyond work as pointless, inappropriate or unnecessary (see Ch. 2.2 and 5.2). For example, while Kingsley deemed it appropriate to approach peer apprentices of similar age, he did not expect practices of sociability beyond work across divisions of seniority and hierarchical rank. Hakim described co-workers as lastly always confined within their work-roles and ruled out that they could turn into personally important relationship partners: “You cannot be friends with a colleague, indeed.” (Interview Akhtar and Hakim 21.01.2018)

With regard to the garden centre and several other workplaces, I was told that co-workers would rarely relate beyond work because the more or less constant, proximate, interactive, stressful and involuntary mutual exposure at their workplaces prevented the wish to spend free-time together as well (cf. Anderson 2015: 106-109). Hence, life beyond work was frequently depicted as a necessary break from co-workers and work-related contents of conversations. An ostensibly clear-cut division between the world of work and private life was especially emphasized by Idris, who perceived no need for relationships beyond work: “I didn't need it. Because of my private things, you know? [...] I go home. Do what you like, I do what [I like.] You know? But in work, we are working. [...] If I just close work, it's finished. By me it's finished with colleague[s].“ (Interview Idris 18.04.2018) Similar to Abdullah who told me about his personal strategy of securing his privacy by not fostering informal ties during his apprenticeship, Idris was suspicious towards getting closer acquainted with his colleagues. He stated that this would be related to his prior experiences in other contexts of work

40 Feeling the need to choose between social ties which are mediating differently evaluated resources was emphasized by Isar, a Kurdish forced migrant from Turkey who had been living in Munich already since 2011 and was doing an apprenticeship as a geriatric nurse, yet not in a small or medium-sized work context. After Isar had started his apprenticeship he had decided for himself to disassociate from the friendship and acquaintance groups of local Kurdish people that had been constituting his main social focus as a newcomer in Munich. According to Isar, these ties had been largely based on commonalities of language and ethnic-national affiliation and would rather impede than enable the realization of his vocational plans because they had mainly featured social contacts who would follow illusive short-term perspectives on life which coincided with socio-economic stagnation and marginalization in precarious low-wage sector jobs, especially in restaurants and supermarkets run by migrants (cf. Cederberg 2012: 63-65; Morales 2016: 521-525): “So I've really thought about it, whether I want such a life or not. Such a life? I've said no. No, no. Better do some years of schooling. It will be a bit tough. [...] But after a few years you have everything. [...] I've then kept distance. Otherwise you cannot concentrate. You cannot grow. When you're always hanging out with these people. You only talk in your mother tongue. You always only do the same things. And keeping distance, I can recommend this to everybody.” (Interview Isar 20.01.2018) As he had been rethinking his life situation, Isar had begun to approach his workplace and trade school as significant settings for creating new social ties which he perceived as more supportive to his settlement efforts.

during his flight via Libya and his generalized expectation of hostile judgements of his person and lifestyle by co-workers.

Regarding approaches of sociability beyond work, the master had reached out to Tony with suggestions of free-time activities and variously signalled his openness towards spending time together. Again, he did so despite his declared reservations towards sociability mediated through work, in this case the personal priority he attributed family ties over other social relations. During my research, he communicated his interest in attending a charity event together with Tony which had been initiated by local supporters of another forced migrant of the municipality in which he and Tony were living. When Tony mentioned his weekend plan of seeing a concert at Bellevue di Monaco, “a residential and cultural centre for refugees and other Munich citizens in the heart of the city” (Bellevue di Monaco 2021, in original with emphases), the master wanted to join him and was eager to learn more about the location which presented itself as an open and welcoming space where the mediation of encounters and exchanges between newcomers and longer-standing locals would be facilitated and organized (ibid.). Aside from this, the master declared his plans of spending more time with Tony on refurbishing the asylum accommodation and preparing its small garden so that they could use it for gatherings and parties in the summer.

Another example was that the master had repeatedly asked Tony to join him for walks through a nearby forest which he seemed to associate with recreation and recollecting oneself in nature. Tony remembered that he had rejected these suggestions:

We .. sometimes we make plan to go to, maybe, in the forest. [...] Ya, but most time I don't go with him because I don't like going. And I told him: 'Even if I want to go with you. It's not something I like doing.' But he always wants to give me a reason why I should do something like that, you know? Why I should visit the forest once in a while. You know and he always want to tell me: 'It's healthy for your, for your meditation. For your brain to relax and calm.' And all that. Which I find [...] interesting and sense-making, you know? It's just that I'm too lazy because of [...] taking the cold and you know, like sitting in the forest when I have a bed I can lay on. (laughs) [...] The forest has a very good air, you know, but I mean, it's not something I grew up with, you know? And you can, ya, I can .. I can have a try, I can try it you know? But [...] it's not something I can be so comfortable to. You know? But maybe if I try it I might now find it interesting, I go: 'Okay, let me keep doing it.' But I never tried and each time he talks about it my mind always like (laughs): 'So how (...) I will just leave my bed and go and sleep in the forest.' (laughs) (Interview Tony 02.01.2018)

Addressing the reasons for not going to the forest, Tony emphasized that they would not be related to the person of the master or the arguments he put forward to persuade him. They rather concerned the purposes and modalities he seemed to associate with the activity as such which he depicted as unfamiliar and unpleasant. Also during my observations, the master mentioned that he would enjoy going to the forest while Tony made clear that he had never joined him and preferred to stay at home.

Hence, after I had come to know about Tony's opinion on this sort of recreational activity, I was surprised when I could accompany him on a short trip into the forest in July 2018. An 18-year-old local friend of Tony had asked him to act as a fashion model for the do-it-yourself streetwear brand he had recently created. The improvised photo shooting took place between the trees and on a glade which were lighted by the early evening summer sun. As a compensation for enacting the brand, Tony was given one of the hoodies he had presented. It could be argued that the context of this trip was not recreational and Tony seemed to consider the creative and business-minded purposes of his youthful friend who was offering him an opportunity to act and express himself as more convincing reasons to enter the forest than the narrative concerning health and well-being which the master had provided.

While Tony had not accepted the master's approach due to his personal preferences, Yunis let me know that he had deliberately agreed to a suggestion of a sociable activity beyond work although he had not been interested in it. His supervisor had asked him whether he liked to accompany her and her boyfriend to a large commercial football match. While the supervisor was aware that “in Pakistan football is not so much celebrated” (Interview Company Store 06.04.2018), she had gained the impression that Yunis had enjoyed the sports event: “He was very delighted, I honestly have to say.” (Ibid.) However, Yunis told that he had agreed on joining his supervisor not because he liked football. Instead he had wanted to show appreciation for his supervisor by accepting the gift she had been offering (cf. Mauss 1978: 27-29, 76f., 123f.):

Like, as I told you, the daughter from boss, she's very nice lady. And last thirty of March, she had three tickets from Bavarian football. Arena. So when we was at work, she asked me: 'Would you like to go to see this football match? We have three tickets. Me and my boyfriend going there. Would you like to go with us? We have one extra. And this is top secret, you not gonna tell to your colleagues. Because we have only one card. And I think that you deserve this card.' And I smiled, I said: 'Okay, then.' I said: 'Yes, why not?' Even though I don't like to watch football [...], because I more play cricket. Because we have national team in Pakistan. So, I thought if I say to her no, she will think that [...] I didn't respect her. [...] So I said: 'Yes of course, I will come.' And I didn't tell her so far that I didn't like the football stuff like that. (Interview Yunis 26.04.2018)

By letting Yunis know that he would deserve the ticket for the match more than any of his established co-workers, the supervisor communicated her readiness to act as a source of social capital and “provide privileged access to resources” (Portes 1998: 7). Based on other statements of my interviews with Yunis and the leading actors of his workplace, this disposition could be interpreted as deriving from the supervisor's persuasion that forced migrant newcomers should be supported and the norms of reciprocity which defined the implicit contract of employment (see Ch. 2.2). In combination with his challenging living situation, the diligence and collegiality of Yunis seemed to be recognized as high commitment that justified re-

wards beyond the formal terms of employment. Yunis had felt obliged to accept the supervisor's benevolent invitation because he had feared that a rejection could have been interpreted as disrespectful ingratitude which may not have been conducive to the relationship and his stock of social capital which he considered essential in his situation as a forced migrant newcomer (see Ch. 5.3). The outlined incident therefore suggests that neglecting one's personal will and preferences by conforming to normative expectations of reciprocity even when no direct benefits are associated with the accepted gifts as such could be identified as a way in which social capital relationships which take the form of ongoing reciprocal exchanges may have transient negative consequences for recipients, in addition to the individual benefits they mediate at other times. More concretely, the overarching aim of avoiding the decline or stagnation of overall supportive and promising social ties could compel forced migrant newcomers to engage in actually undesired activities and sociable practices if these constitute obligations of reciprocity.

Resonating with these considerations about the possible outcomes of rejecting suggestions, in the electronics workshop I came to know that further approaches towards sociability beyond work had been stopped without particularly hard feelings after offers had not been affirmed. The boss had refrained from making suggestions once he had arrived at the conclusion that he would not share sufficient subjective interests and orientations with Akhtar. He believed that Akhtar was ignorant about the city in which he had arrived and told that he had rejected his invitation to have dinner together after work: "I have said: 'Let's go eat a pizza.' -'No, let's go home directly.'; 'What's the matter?' -'It's not halal.' And so on. So you cannot go out and eat pizza with him. This is also boring. Well, one could be a bit, a bit more tolerant indeed." (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017) In other words, Akhtar was critically attested a lack of tolerance and openness for the dominant local ways of life as they were defined and practised from the upper middle-class position of the boss. This had turned him into a rather complicated or even ineligible partner for sociable activities beyond work and the boss had abandoned his initial plans of showing Akhtar around Munich. Nevertheless, he concluded that at work, they would "not bore each other" (ibid.) despite not sharing much common ground. Different personal interests and orientations of life were mentioned as an impediment to significant relationships outside of work also by locals in the catering kitchen and the garden centre.

Overall, I could not recognize that Tony made extensive attempts towards spending free-time with the master. Nevertheless, he reported that he had also come up with initial suggestions for activities beyond work. In particular, Tony had asked the master to meet the

former co-worker of the painting company with whom he had worked together only a few times during his internship and in the beginning of his apprenticeship. As the former co-worker had become father recently, Tony had been telling the master that they should visit the fresh parents and the baby and depicted this gesture as “a way of sharing love” (Interview Tony 02.01.2018) and wishing them well, i.e., as a sociable practice which would be socially expected as appropriate and desirable in the context that the master and the former co-worker had “had a very good relationship” (ibid.) in the past. When he explained that friends should visit each other on the occasion of the birth of a child or other crucial life events such as bereavement, Tony argued that his subjective relationship model of friendship would be socio-culturally shaped by what he referred to as “my tradition” (ibid.). Moreover, he mentioned that the master had told him he would be likewise familiar with this type of visit as a social institution which symbolizes and reproduces the very friendship tie which simultaneously generates the obligation to show up.

Yet, the master was reacting to the suggestion by repeatedly postponing the visit which Tony seemed to criticize as betrayal of his obligations as a friend:

Although I understand the fact [that] he's a very busy person. You know? But .. even like that, I mean it's something we can just take out time, maybe two hours or something like that, [...] just to say hello [...]. But he hasn't done that and which I think it's kind of eh/ I don't support the idea, you know? And I always make him understand, like: 'I mean, boss, we should check on this guy.' [...] I think he's a nice guy, you know? And my boss [...] always want to let me know .. that: 'We will go, we will go, we will go. Okay, don't worry, we look for a time.' But at the end of the day, we still don't go. [...] Man, they are not far from each other. Sometime my boss could just drive to him and like: 'Hey, where's your baby?' [...] I've called him [the former co-worker], but I don't want to go there alone because I want I and my boss to go. (Interview Tony 02.01.2018)

It can be inferred from this quote that Tony seemed to consider it legitimate to set work aside and use working hours for fostering and reproducing a closer social relationship while he had arrived at the conclusion that the master would not be willing to sacrifice work as well as non-work time for this shared activity beyond work. After all, it could be asked whether Tony's perception of the relationship between the master and the former co-worker as a friendship did actually correspond to the way in which the master may have understood the character and personal significance of this social tie.

My data from the other small firms allows the conclusion that some forced migrants were approaching their co-workers and declared that they desired and expected the formation of personally significant ties mediated through work over time. This was exemplified by Sayed, who explained that “so far I have not met, with my colleagues” (Interview Sayed 05.12.2017). Nevertheless he was sure that based on collegial and communicative work relations with at least three of his colleagues, sociability outside of work would follow in the fu-

ture: “I think one day we [will] do this.” (Ibid.)

6.2 Shared domains of commonality

Having addressed the practices and approaches of sociable relationships at work as well as beyond, I will now discuss the shared domains of commonality which were invoked by Tony and the master, as well as several other informants, as possible bases for sociabilities of emplacement. Along with shared aspirations, I could recognize forms of human commonality, experiences of exclusion and ascriptions of difference.

Shared aspirations

Talking about the commonalities he perceived, Tony mentioned that the master would comprehend and affirm his personal life-plans and “vision” (Interview Tony 02.01.2018) of the future when they were discussing them in conversations. Summarizing it with the phrase “we share ideas” (ibid.), he went on to illuminate this interpersonal commonality in a longer statement:

Like .. ehm, my boss sometimes can ask me: 'Okay, Tony, if you finish your apprenticeship .. what do you want to do? Or if you leave, if you're no more in Germany?' [...] I always tell him .. different things. But I can remember I always tell him one thing. I always tell him that I want to invest big in Africa. You know? I want to invest big in Nigeria. And I can do that, I can achieve that if I work maybe two years. In Europe. You know? And he always encourage me. And he always tell me: 'You can do it.' You know? And he always tell me like, okay, if there is any way I think we could work together in getting that, or in achieving that, that I should share it with him. You know? And [...] I always give him instances of what somebody can do to get money in Nigeria. You know? Like, for example, [...] if I finish my painting work now. Like finish learning. I could go to Nigeria and put up a big painting company. If I don't want to do that, I think I can invest my money into music as well. Entertainment. [...] There are a lot of people who play music and they don't have money to finance, to start theirself. [...] There are a lot of things. And he always tell me: 'Tony, you have too much ideas.' [...] I don't know, but I just think there are a lot of things you can do to get money [...] And, you know, he always buy my idea, you know? He always tell me like: '*Genau!*' (laughs) 'Exactly, you're right!' (laughs) So this is where I think we have things in common, you know, we share ideas. [...] We share the same idea. Just from talking. [...] I mean a little bit, I'm not saying hundred percent. But I mean, because he buys my ideas. You know? And I think my boss is somebody who is very open. (Ibid.)

This quote makes clear that Tony perceived the master as showing interest in his life plans and opportunities as an asylum seeker in the Munich city region and offering his help with realizing them. What Tony addressed as 'sharing ideas' could be interpreted as sharing a common understanding of “aspirations” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 129) in life which was underlying the master's “identification” (ibid.: 146) with Tony's situation and his declared willingness to support him with formulating and reaching his personal aims. In line with the conceptual insight that domains of commonality can be understood as “partial but significant” (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 30), Tony also remarked that the sharing of ideas he mentioned would not imply a total interpersonal congruence of subjective attitudes and approaches to

life.

In other contexts of work, “shared aspirations of safety, justice, and family life” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 146) of forced migrant newcomers could be identified as a domain of commonality which served as basis for relationships which featured various aspects of mutual affect and support. The boss of the electronics workshop recognized Akhtar's wish to foster his transnational family ties and strive for the safety and prosperity of his wife and two sons. For instance, he remarked that “it is great indeed” (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017) to listen to the phone calls Akhtar would frequently have with his wife during work and was thinking about ways of transnationally collaborating with Akhtar's older son who had been cultivating an interest in software development in Afghanistan.

In a similar way, Tesfay's co-workers in the gardening company in which he worked partly seemed to identify with his current situation through a shared aspiration for family life. Some of them were aware of the fact that he had not seen his family for several years and considered it very challenging to maintain close kinship ties despite protracted physical separation. The owner-manager of the company showed consideration for the ongoing legal process of family reunification for which Tesfay had applied and voiced her concerns that his rights as a forced migrant would be ultimately denied due to bureaucratic formalities. She declared her compassion and solidarity with Tesfay based on a shared wish for justice with regard to “fighting for a right” (Interview Gardening 25.07.2018) in the context of the asylum system.

As another facet of shared aspirations for family life and the realization of personal plans, one local co-worker referred to the shared experience of having children as a main affective basis for exchanging and identifying with Tesfay (cf. Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 121-123). Both Tesfay and this particular co-worker, who formally related to Tesfay from a supervising position, were in their mid-thirties. Against the backdrop of similar age and the relatable experience of fatherhood, the local co-worker said it would be thought-provoking and personally rewarding for him when he was relating his life experiences with those of Tesfay in the course of their conversations at work. His comparative reflections included inequalities concerning the institutional facilitation and dispossession of individual choices and livelihood opportunities in Eritrea and Germany.⁴¹

41 More specifically, before migrating towards Europe, Tesfay had been drafted for military service in Eritrea for an indefinite period of time during which he had been forced by the state to work as concrete worker (cf. UNHCR 2011: 4-18; Van Reisen, Saba and Smits 2019). The insight into this contrasting life experience had sensitized Tesfay's German co-worker for his subjective impression that he had been able to make free choices about his trajectory of occupational and family life.

Human commonality, experiences of exclusion and ascriptions of difference

Concerning domains of commonality which were suggested by the master, the persistent categorization as foreigner which I have outlined earlier as an aspect of familiarity with heterogeneity (see Ch. 5.1) seemed to feature as a shared type of experience which may have contributed to the master's "openness" (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 140) towards Tony as a forced migrant newcomer who would similarly face social exclusion and discrimination based on being racialized as a black asylum seeker (cf. *ibid.*: 145). However, the master concluded his reflections on being categorized as foreigner by explaining that he lastly also perceived a commonality of being human which would go beyond any social boundaries between 'Germans' and 'Turks', locals and newcomers and other insiders and outsiders. He claimed not to focus on social categories of difference and highlighted that it played a larger role for him to keep in mind that all humans would be equal and share one planetary world as well as the capacity to develop specific talents, skills and knowledges which would allow them to make various social contributions that should be recognized equally. In short, the master also invoked a "mutual sense of being human" (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 19) as a domain of commonality which he presented as a fundamental foundation for his encounters and relationships with others, including Tony.

In the garden centre, the three Nigerian forced migrant employees Femi, Gabriel and Tunde were sharing languages as well as various intersecting social categories such as skin colour, gender, country of origin and precarious legal status. They exemplified how experiences of racialization may constitute a domain of commonality among asylum seekers who get into contact through formal paid work, especially when communication is not impeded by language differences (cf. Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 137, 145; Silverstein 2005: 377). This interpretation appears tenable because they were telling me about their experiences and opinions concerning racism and discussed a recent incident of discrimination which had occurred to one of them when he had gotten into a violent conflict with security guards on a suburban train. Summarized in more general terms, many other forced migrant newcomers, employers and co-workers of my research attributed sharing languages and being spatially close primary facilitating roles for establishing social ties and were mainly referring to various combinations of shared personal interests and categorical commonalities of age, gender, ethnicity and position in the workplace hierarchy as intersubjective bases of significant relationships with co-workers (cf. McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook 2001: 419-429). For instance, sports featured as the main thematic commonality from which sociable relationship processes were expected to take off in the eyes of the branch manager and several other employees of

the garden centre. As a relatively impersonal and therefore non-threatening topic, it seemed to serve as a suitable 'icebreaker' which allowed for interactive explorations and cleared the way for further social exchanges (cf. Sias and Cahill 1998: 280, 284-287).

In combination with his “social positioning” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 140) as migrant, the master also expressed a form of “feeling out of place” (ibid.) which seemed to constitute a commonality with Tony when he distinguished himself from the majority population of the wealthy suburb in which he and Tony were living and to which he had moved as an internal migrant from Baden-Wuerttemberg about ten years before my research. This became clear when he remarked that many locals whom he depicted as predominantly bourgeois would resent and discriminate forced migrant newcomers and other people they viewed as different from themselves (cf. Hokema 2018: 69-73, 81-84). More generally, he highlighted his oppositional stance towards what he referred to as the “mainstream” (Fieldnotes Painter 27.03.2018) of society and presented himself as an outsider in the sense that he claimed to endorse values and world views which would deviate from those of most people around him. The master therefore expected to be generally rejected as “crazy” (ibid.) by others, which calls to mind how Tony seemed to perceive him (see Ch. 5.2). During my observations, the master described himself as politically “left-wing” (Fieldnotes Painter 27.03.2018) and explained his belief in several popular conspiracy theories and his condemnation of e.g. ruling elites, racism, greediness, selfishness, unsustainable consumption and warmongering. All in all, I gained the impression that the master did not feel strongly affiliated with many established locals and instead tended to sympathize more with people in relatively powerless and marginalized positions in society, including forced migrant newcomers such as Tony (cf. Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 140). It could be argued that his decision to guide Tony through the apprenticeship implied the wish to offer him a respectful and equal treatment and various forms of support which he assumed to be often denied to people seen as different in Germany, especially in the Munich city region.

Another version of relating to the situations of forced migrant newcomers on the grounds of feeling out of place, strange and like an “outsider” (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017) was reported by the boss of the electronics workshop. He explained that partly because he was suffering from psoriasis, a visible skin disease which can negatively affect the self-image and social being of the person concerned, he would not want to stand in the centre of attention in a large workplace and preferred to work together with a very small number of subordinate co-workers whom he perceived as also somehow displaced under the pressure of socially sanctioned norms and ideals. In addition to his health condition, the boss told that he

could identify with the experience of being a stranger in an unfamiliar work context. During his work-trips to China, he had felt insecure about being accepted in a socio-cultural and linguistic work environment which he had experienced as very different (see Ch. 5.1). Hence, he declared that he wanted to approach Akhtar as a newcomer to his workshop with the same openness, respectfulness and goodwill which he had been lastly granted by his powerful Chinese business partners.

6.3 Functions of mutual support

While their basis consists of various domains of commonality, “mutual support” (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018: 129) with creating “aspects of (...) livelihood and social belonging” (ibid.: 130) which facilitate migrant settlement can be examined as a characteristic functional outcome of sociabilities of emplacement (ibid.: 129-131). Before I will discuss various kinds of support which Tony and the master, as well as several other research participants, exchanged in the context of their relationships mediated through work, I will first outline how granting various forms of employment was mentioned as a form of assistance of forced migrant newcomers.

Employment as a form of support

Resonating with his subjective identification with Tony's current situation and aspirations as a forced migrant newcomer, the master explicitly stated that he wanted to support Tony by giving him the opportunity to do the apprenticeship. Contrasting himself with other employers, he said he would not train Tony with the main intention of keeping him as an employee on the long run (cf. Müller and Schmidt 2016: 9-15, 129-140). In line with similar statements by the chef of the catering company, he let me know that he wanted to “do something good” (Field-notes Painter 27.03.2018) by enabling Tony to make use of the uncertain length of time he would stay in Germany. Thus, the apprenticeship was presented as a form of support in that it allowed Tony to acquire work skills and knowledge which could be applied for his own benefit where ever he might spend his future. Tony himself shared this interpretation and described learning an occupation as an achievement he personally appreciated: “I have always wanted to .. to have a skilled job, you know? Like, I've never learned anything. Before now. [...] I wanted to have something I could call my profession. Which I eventually picked being a painter.” (Interview Tony 02.01.2018)

Also beyond the painting company, giving jobs or apprenticeship places was depicted by several forced migrants, employers and employment brokers as a way of helping new-

comers to productively use the time of waiting during asylum procedures, maintain and develop skills and/or earn an income which facilitated financial remittances and mitigated dependency on the welfare system. In addition, accepting newcomers as apprentices constituted a consequential act of support by employers because this could secure the legal situations of asylum seekers.⁴² While the master remained silent on this point, Tony made clear that he viewed his apprenticeship as one of the few means to the end of attaining a less precarious stay. Habib was likewise aware that “if you like to stay in Germany, you have to do an apprenticeship. That can be another opportunity for you.” (Interview Habib 03.12.2017)⁴³

Resonating with existing research findings on the positive socio-economic and subjective effects of employment for forced migrants (see Ch. 1) which were also reflected by some of my informants, Akhtar's boss highlighted that his workshop would constitute a place of refuge in the sense that it provided an alternative practical focus which temporarily supplanted immediate worries and troubles and allowed for more privacy than Akhtar's asylum camp due to its overall peaceable and secluded atmosphere, especially when the boss was not around: “Actually it's as if [the workshop] is like a small living room for him. Here he can do anything he wants and so on. Can retreat.” (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017)

In this context, the boss emphasized the mutuality of personal support at work when he expressed his appreciation for Akhtar as a human companion in the workshop and not merely as an instrumental source of labour:

Well, I would say [Akhtar] has supported me. Alone mental support I would say. [...] In fact I think that

42 As part of country-wide policy measures introduced in 2016, doing a formal apprenticeship had to be recognized as a legal reason which impeded the deportation of already tolerated persons or asylum seekers whose claims were rejected while they were still apprentices. In these cases, a toleration should be granted for the regular three year period of vocational training on the condition that the enforcement of the envisaged deportation of the apprentice was not already actively pursued by the authorities. After successful completion of an apprenticeship, a residence permit should be issued for additional two years when the tolerated person continued to work as a regular employee in the training company or found employment in the learned occupation elsewhere within six months. Thus, for some rejected asylum seekers who managed to accomplish the considerable effort of learning an occupation in German, a toleration on this basis could result in five years of relatively safe stay and constituted a very rare pathway towards a more durable legal status (Frings 2017: 174-176; see also Schmidt 2020: 80). On the other hand, many of my research participants explained that being admitted to employment which did not imply the transmission of certified qualifications was of no consequence for asylum related decisions and would not effectively mitigate the legal precariousness of newcomers (cf. Scherschel 2017: 142-144, 149-158; Dünnwald 2017: 191-195, 199-201).

43 However, the chef of the catering kitchen and three employment brokering social service providers reported that opportunities to start apprenticeships were sometimes refused by eligible candidates who chose the short-term earnings of doing a low-wage sector job over the longer-term benefits of learning an occupation which yielded a much smaller training salary. The statements of my informants made clear that such choices would be made due to constraining obligations of “reciprocity and social pressure” (Lindley 2009: 1324) in transnational family relationships which urged forced migrant newcomers to send remittances (ibid.: 1315ff.; see also Kastner 2014: 233-282; Monsutti 2008). This border-crossing influence could be interpreted as a negative consequence of social capital (cf. Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993: 1338ff.; Portes 1998: 16f.; Faist 2000: 104-117). It may compromise “individual freedom” (Portes 1998: 17) and the realization of opportunities in places of settlement (Lindley 2009: 1323-1332; Al-Ali, Black and Koser 2001: 590-597).

this is rewarding or something like that, that he approaches things with a different mindset [...] I have supported him as well. But he did the same to me. [...] A small psychological help or something like that. [...] I also provide him with a feeling of security. What are you otherwise? You are somehow lost. [...] And I would say, I mean it would be madness if I were alone here. You would go crazy over time. So from that regard it's great. (Interview Workshop 04.12.2017)

Akhtar would help to ward off potential feelings of loneliness which the boss viewed as jeopardising a fulfilling work experience. Moreover, the quote indicates that the boss recognized Akhtar's approach to life as offering him philosophical and spiritual impulses which he described as instructive and reassuring for dealing with his own situation. Especially during times of stress and crisis at work, Akhtar communicated his standpoints and advices which seemed to be informed by his Muslim faith and biographical experiences of displacement in brief comments and anecdotes. These contributions often helped the boss to calm and restore serenity and confidence despite the pressure he perceived as owner-manager. During my observations this was underlined by occasional sarcastic and frustrated remarks of the boss, such as “without Akhtar I would shoot myself” (Fieldnotes Workshop 24.01.2018).

Practical support beyond work

Besides the specifically work-related aspects I have discussed so far, I could gain insights into the support functions of the relationship which had emerged between Tony and the master. This included the exchange of various resources, such as material things, money and advice, which could be understood as contributing to emplacement. When we recorded the interview in his room, Tony pointed out that “[m]y boss gave me all these things you are seeing here. [...] This TV, this game [video games console], and [...] he gives me clothes. You know? He assist me with money as well, if I don't have money. [...] He gave me [...] [a] basketball. Ya. Bats, and so many things.” (Interview Tony 02.01.2018)

Reflecting his personal view of the world which featured elements of conspiracy theories such as a belief in chemtrails and a fear of fluoride in toothpaste and tap water, the master advised Tony about what he considered to be a healthy and conscious way of life. Hence, Tony had tried for himself to brush his teeth with baking powder and during one of my visits he showed me several plastic canisters of natural spring water the master had given him. While Tony was the main addressee of advice and assistance more generally, I also learned that he was supporting the master as well in less material ways which included listening and giving advice when they would discuss the master's personal problems. For instance, Tony recalled one occasion on which he had invited the master to his place in order to cook, eat and talk together about his marriage problems. Tony explained that he had wanted to help the

master and raise his morale by spending sociable time with him and offering advice which he claimed had actually contributed to the improvement of the master's personal situation.

Another form of support beyond work could be described as concrete acts of protective solidarity with Tony which may have been based on the tendency of the master to identify, among other things, with feeling marginalized and out of place. When he explained how discrimination towards forced migrant newcomers would manifest itself in the municipality in which he and Tony were living, he first mentioned that “you simply notice it” (Fieldnotes Painter 27.03.2018) in the form of “gossip” (ibid.) before he made the more specific example that Tony had been discriminated for his black skin colour by the workers of the local recycling depot when he had been showing interest in some of the second-hand goods they had on offer. When the master had personally confronted the workers after he had come to know about this incident, he had lost his temper and called them “Nazis” (ibid.). In consequence to this ascription, the workers had reported the master to the police and had prohibited him to bring waste to the recycling depot except for Thursdays. While he had apologized afterwards and hoped that no proceedings would be initiated on the basis of the complaint, the master concluded that in the end he would have been in the right and informed me that he could not think of a more appropriate label for the workers than the one he had chosen. In sum, the master had stood up for Tony against racist discrimination he had experienced beyond work. In effect, this had apparently consolidated the master's own positioning and self-representation as a community outsider. This form of support did not involve interactive co-presence between a giver and a receiver of assistance but the conscious decision to act in favour of someone who seemed to be imagined as a relatively powerless victim that needed help with rectifying an experienced injustice.

In addition to the above outlined forms of support between Tony and his master, other research participants mentioned similar kinds of assistance through the granting of services and resources which corresponded to personal situations and needs. The boss of the electronics workshop and members of his family had supported Akhtar by accompanying him to the doctor or staying in touch with him during his infection with the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in April 2020. The chef of the catering kitchen had helped a former forced migrant employee with finding a kindergarten place for her child by making a request to one of the childcare institutions which was among the customers of her enterprise. This can be viewed as another example for the beneficial outcomes of social capital with more powerfully positioned actors at work (see Ch. 2.3 and 5.3). In the context of the transnational family and household obligations of some of her forced migrant employees (cf. Lindley 2009; Faist 2000: 202-206;

Brettell 2015: 153-163), the chef revealed that she had given also financial support, e.g. when Michael had told her that he had sent his entire wage to his mother in Nigeria because she needed a surgery which had to be paid. As this situation had left him with nothing, the chef had helped Michael out with some extra money to buy food for himself.

Many research participants also emphasized the significance of support with the legal and bureaucratic procedures and issues related to seeking asylum (see Ch. 5.1). Besides translating and explaining the German content of official letters which was done by local co-workers in the catering company, the garden centre and several other workplaces, employers had proven supportive when some newcomers had received initially negative decisions of their asylum cases while they had been employed. This meant that they had been ordered to leave the country and that prompt legal actions had been necessary to prevent deportation and enable them to stay for the time being. For instance, only a few days after he had been registered as full-time worker, Akhtar had received the rejection of his asylum application. His boss had then accompanied him to a lawyer who had filed a suit against the decision which had a suspensive effect for the entire timespan of the ensuing legal process (cf. Ronte 2018: 95-118). This crucial intervention had cost around 300€ which had been paid by the boss.

Moreover, employers and colleagues had partly supported their forced migrant co-workers with finding and gaining access to flats, rooms or other accommodations on the regional housing market which generally offered only very few affordable opportunities. This was mainly the case for Malik, Tesfay and other forced migrants who had been granted protection statuses which implied that they were no longer obliged to live in official asylum shelters but supposed to move into accommodations for which they had to conclude tenancy agreements by themselves (cf. Sozialreferat München 2018a: 31-35, 84-87). As Malik had not yet managed to find a new place and was therefore bound to stay in his asylum shelter during his search, he had asked the main manager and the chef of the restaurant in which he worked for help with his “flat- or room-problems” (Interview Malik 21.04.2018). The two leading actors of his workplace had assured him that they would ask for housing opportunities within their personal social circles.

Before Tesfay had finally found a two-person flat share with the help of the same institutional support actor of an occupational association who had also mediated his employment opportunity, one of his local co-workers had assisted him with the search for housing. Another colleague was helping with transporting furniture which people were giving away for free to Tesfay's new place. For this purpose, they could use one of the trucks of the gardening company on the weekend. Tesfay's employer had also been involved in paving the way to renting

a room on his own. She explained that Tesfay was required to find a guarantor for the flat share he had been brokered because he had no savings which could have convinced the landlord of his trustworthiness. Hence, she had decided to assume this responsibility for him as a private person:

I mean with acting as guarantor for the tenancy I did take a risk indeed. Because I cannot terminate it if Tesfay terminates [his employment contract]. [...] And I have also thought about this for a while. But I didn't see any other chance of putting him into a flat. And I said: 'Okay, now I simply take this risk.' I then just decided this for myself. (Interview Gardening 25.07.2018)

The difficulties with finding a room or flat which forced migrants would face were depicted as overriding the employer's wish to avoid the financial risk she perceived for herself. The security she had signed for Tesfay amounted to 5000€. More generally, this case exemplifies how forced migrant newcomers may at times strongly depend on support and sponsorship by locally established social capital contacts who put trust in them and could provide useful information about housing opportunities. At various points during my research it became similarly apparent that already accepted forced migrants were facing the risk of not finding or being excluded from affordable living space, which could result in various situations of homelessness.

Perceptions of need and pitfalls of paternalism

The above presented findings show that relationships mediated through work partly inherited beneficial social capital for forced migrant newcomers. As I have already indicated in my description of Yunis' approach towards fostering reciprocal ties by giving informal work-related help (see Ch. 5.3), forced migrants may deliberately recognize their employers and co-workers as sources of support. In the case of Yunis, this seemed to reflect a generally positive evaluation of extensive and diverse social networks which seemed to be derived from the utility he attributed to social ties: "It's good if you have social contact [...] with the people outside, for example. Doesn't matter where you are. In Germany, in Pakistan. If you have more contact with people, they can help you in your bad time." (Interview Yunis 26.04.2018) Correspondingly, the employer of Yunis sensed that he was knowledgeable and skilful when it came to fostering relationships at work and using his network in order to ensure and request support: "Well, Yunis is of course an exception, you know? He is charming, he looks good, he gets along well with the ladies [among the co-workers and customers], you know? And in any case, he [has] a very thick network here. [...] So he also simply understands it, that he utilizes it, this network." (Interview Company Store 06.04.2018)

Although many forced migrants told that they had been seeking and/or receiving sup-

port from people they had come to know through work, several reported that they had received no assistance and/or perceived no need to ask for help at work. This was especially the case when they were assisted by voluntary or official actors not related to workplaces. For instance, Kingsley was institutionally supported by the youth welfare office and a personal guardian whom he seemed to perceive as a trustworthy and significant contact when it came to housing, the asylum procedure, his apprenticeship as well as personal advice and emotional support. Hence, Kingsley had never approached his co-workers for personal support because “I get help, for instance, from my guardian [...] There are not so many things one has to help me with.” (Interview Kingsley 28.11.2017)

Like many other forced migrants of my research, Habib and Sayed mentioned individual volunteers in the municipalities in which they were accommodated who would assist them with a wide range of problems and constituted the first persons to contact. In the network context of these continuous support relationships, they pointed out that they would not request personal help at their workplaces. This was illustrated by Sayed, who was offered general support by a local volunteer, Mrs. Funke: “So far I didn't get a problem which I could tell my colleagues. So, whenever I got some problem, Mrs. Funke is doing everything. [...] Mrs. Funke has said: 'When you're facing a problem you can call me. I do it myself.’” (Interview Sayed 05.12.2017) In addition to local volunteers, professional social service providers such as instructors, teachers and counsellors employed by welfare organizations were also mentioned as more important sources of support than employers and co-workers. For instance, several of my research participants were assisted by particular contact persons in a transnationally active Catholic support institution which was focusing on occupational training and orientation.

Aside from making no requests, forced migrant newcomers were partly declining offers of support made by people known through work. The branch manager of the garden centre remarked that he had suggested to support with the legal dispute in which one of his forced migrant employees was involved in consequence of a violent conflict he had had with security guards on a suburban train. Yet, the employee in question had refused the offer and the branch manager commented that sometimes newcomers would not want to accept help. While Yunis seemed to highly value and often readily accept the support he was offered first and foremost by the leading actors of his workplace, he also mentioned that he would thankfully decline assistance whenever it was not necessary and he felt that “I can manage myself” (Interview Yunis 26.04.2018).

Some informants also suggested that newcomers may refrain from asking for support

due to a lack of trust as well as normative expectations and relationship concepts. The owner-manager of the gardening company had made the experience that forced migrant employees would not easily approach her or their co-workers for help. She assumed that this was related to individual histories of displacement as well as denial of opportunities in the context of seeking asylum and their harming effects on the readiness to put trust in other human beings:

But you simply recognize it, there is a lot of mistrust as well on the part of the asylum seekers. They have already made a lot of bad experiences with people. And this is why they do not open up right on the first day and say: 'Here I have this problem, and there [another one].' But rather they actually only get doors slammed in their faces everywhere, you know? And that they then do not directly come and say: 'Hey could you help me with this or that?' is also obvious. This only comes when, like, actually only when something is already going wrong. (Interview Gardening 25.07.2018)

These manifestations of “mistrust” (ibid.) which could result in problems seemed to occur despite the fact that several forced migrant employees had told the owner-manager that they generally felt treated with much respect in her gardening company. Lastly, Hakim exemplified that employers and co-workers may not always be perceived as eligible providers of personal support when he answered that he would prefer to ask other people for help: “Yes, there are many people, you can also ask others [...], it's better to ask others. Colleague is colleague, friend is friend.” (Interview Akhtar and Hakim 21.01.2018)

Returning to the relationship mediated by the painting company, it can be concluded that the master assumed the role of a central support actor. Tony highlighted that he and his family were “very welcoming people” (Interview Tony 02.01.2018), which would give the apprentice an overall positive and “comfortable” (ibid.) feeling about working for and with the master. In the face of recurring interpersonal difficulties and conflicts which were also part of the work relationship, Tony seemed to focus more on the employer's welcoming and supportive approach and stated “that makes me like him most time. Because of that I love my job so much.” (Ibid.) However, Tony was also underlining that the various forms of support he was receiving in the context of arriving and settling as an asylum seeker in the Munich city region affected the specific bond of reciprocity he seemed to sense between himself and the master (cf. Allan 1998: 76-78). This came to the fore when Tony was referring to his master after I had asked whether he had ever helped another person known through his work:

I wouldn't say I helped him, because I've never given him anything. But the only thing I always want to do is just to make him feel happy. And ehm, that's not help. [...] So, I can work at any time. When my boss call me now that: 'Tony, we have work now. Start coming.' I tell you, I will stand up from here and go and do the work. Even when he doesn't pay me money. [...] This is the only way I can show my appreciation of what he has done to me. (Ibid.)

This statement stands out as a declaration of loyalty and thankfulness which seems to reflect feelings of indebtedness and moral obligation to balance reciprocity by giving back (Harrell-

Bond 1999: 149; Mauss 1978: 20ff.). Like the obligation to accept gifts from employing actors which was highlighted by Yunis, Tony's obligation to return them was situated in the context of a social relationship which spanned and merged the world of work and other areas of life. It could be argued that Tony gave an example of the ways in which forced migrants may cope “with the experience of the disempowerment through being helped, so characteristic of the process of becoming a refugee” (Harrell-Bond 1999: 137). As his capabilities to reciprocate in order to avoid excessive dependency, subordination and debasement were limited by interpersonal asymmetries of power based on various forms of capital and status, Tony appeared to perceive working together as an eligible arena of exchange and “currency” (Portes 1998: 7) in which the gift of social support beyond work could be indirectly reciprocated (cf. *ibid.*; Harrell-Bond 1999: 136ff.; Phillimore, Humphris and Khan 2018: 219ff.).

In addition to representing his acceptance of the demands of temporal flexibility in the painting company as an opportunity to strike a relational balance, Tony mentioned his general work commitment and pointed out that

I always want to impress my boss. You know? Because he's a nice person. [...] Ya, if I work with my heart and, you know, with the love and feelings, you know? That's the only way I can pay him back. And come out to be a better person. That tomorrow when he sees me, will I go: 'This is the boy I trained.' You know? And that's why I think I have to be very dedicated, very dedicated in what I'm doing. And .. he's really been a big support, for me, you know? (Interview Tony 02.01.2018)

These insights suggest that working forced migrants whose partners in work and employment relationships become sources of social capital in connection with norms of reciprocity may pursue practices of giving back which are based on the exertion of their capacity to labour, i.e., high commitment, reliability, flexibility and acceptance of conditions which other workers in less unequally powerful, insecure and dependent socio-economic and legal positions might not readily tolerate. Such docility induced by feelings of indebtedness strikes a chord with employers and their economic interests and may contribute to the formation of excessively exploitative and “paternalistic relationships” (Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 28) in which employers demand from “workers to accept without complaint dangerous conditions, low wages and a denial of rights and benefits” (*ibid.*) in return to the support they are given.

Exploitative and paternalistic tendencies with roots in reciprocity which simultaneously mediates crucial resources, as well as the interpersonal conflicts and negotiations these imbalances can give rise to, could also be traced in Tony's account of his employment and work relationship. After the main phase of my research, it turned out that Tony seemed to actually assert narrower limits to his work commitment and his willingness to compromise private activities and subjective interests in order to recompense the master with

unconditional dedication to the work and subordination to demands of flexibility. Already in the beginning of 2018, Tony had mentioned that he perceived spontaneous fluctuations of working hours also as a negative aspect of his apprenticeship which he pragmatically accepted as something “you can't run away from” (Interview Tony 02.01.2018). During one of my visits in December 2018, he recollected one recent occasion on which he had not agreed to work for the master on a Saturday because a Nigerian musician he had met by coincidence on a flea market in the city had asked him to play a role in a music video which should be shot on that day. As work on Saturdays and Sundays was generally an exception in the painting company, Tony had attributed his personal expressive project top priority which the master had respected in the end.

Around one year later, in late December 2019, I was told about a recent incident which demonstrated how feelings of indebtedness and expectations of being reciprocated were harnessed by the master in a paternalistic way which destroyed trust and impeded mutual positive affect and sociability. According to Tony, the master had had an outburst over a work-related mistake during which he had threatened to dismiss Tony and confronted him with the claim: “I saved your life” (Fieldnotes Tony 25.12.2019). While Tony did not reveal many details about this incident, his account did make clear that the master had been trying to exert power and control by invoking the history of his gifts of support for Tony as legitimation for his high demands of loyalty, subservience, commitment and flexibility as a worker. Tony had responded to the statement by warning the master that he should never again repeat what he had said. He had felt violated by the master and explained that he had deemed it necessary to show that this humiliation had crossed his acceptance limit, arguably because it had amounted to the overt denial of his agency as a human subject and had fixated him in “an inferior position” (Harrell-Bond 1999: 149) of strong dependency on the grounds of a chronically unmet obligation to give back and practice thankfulness in the wider institutional context of constrained and unequal rights, resources and opportunities as an asylum seeker (cf. *ibid.*: 149f.; Phillimore, Humphris and Khan 2018: 219-221, 224f.). Hence, Tony said that from this point onwards he had been avoiding sociable interaction with the master and preferred to act in a more detached and serious manner in the context of their cooperative apprenticeship relationship which survived this conflict. In his reflections upon the incident, Tony arrived at the conclusion that he could no longer trust the master and that he had in fact never fully trusted him in the past. Nevertheless, Tony claimed that he would not condemn his employer because he rationalized his offensive acts as the result of personal problems, pressure at work and poor competence to cope with anger.

In sum, this temporally extended case (Burawoy 1998: 5f., 14-19) can be conceptually grasped as an illuminating manifestation of the ways in which norms of reciprocity that correspond with instrumental aims such as “purposes of capital accumulation” (Narotzky 2015: 182), rather than alleged altruistic or humanistic ideals, may lie at the heart of social capital relationships between forced migrant newcomers and their employers (cf. Portes 1998: 7; Warren 2007: 139f.). Moral obligations to reciprocate gifts of support may merge with demands of capitalist employment relationships and become pressing and contentious over time. Narotzky (2015) has argued that such a socially practised fusion of various “structures of obligation” (ibid.: 180) represents “the clash or the blurring of boundaries of different value regimes” (ibid.) that are associated with “gift and commodity” (ibid.: 191) exchange and can be theorized as one “ambiguous value regime that enables accumulation in present-day capitalism” (ibid.). As shown by Tony, this ambiguity may give rise to social capital relationships as well as their negative consequences when it confronts initially benefiting forced migrant employees with exploitative, paternalistic and violating claims to give back in terms of work to employers who had agreed on acting as sources of social capital at earlier points during the relationship process (cf. ibid.: 173ff.; Morales 2016: 517ff.; Faist 2000: 106; Mollona 2009: 33-44).

7. Conclusion

Throughout the preceding chapters, I pursued the main argument that social contact and encounters mediated through paid employment cannot be assumed to invariably lead to the formation of personally important relationships which support the settlement of forced migrant newcomers. I comparatively described and interpreted spatial, organizational, relational and practical aspects of various SMEs in the Munich city region in order to shed light on the ways in which these social contexts of work provided opportunity structures for the formation of sociabilities of emplacement. In addition, my ethnographic account aimed at identifying particular social ties which went beyond work and approximating processes of relationship formation that can be conceptualized as continuous interplay between structural contexts and human agency which is bound up with the subjectivities and social lives of individual persons. My discussion therefore also referred to key aspects and dynamics of sociabilities of emplacement, i.e., practices and approaches of sociability, shared domains of commonality and functions of mutual support, which I could recognize among the participants of my research.

My findings show that the SMEs in my sample and the work relationships they im-

plied tended to constitute overall conducive social contexts for the formation of personally important relationships between co-workers. However, several manifestations of employment-related context factors could also be interpreted as constraints of relationship processes. In all four example workplaces, spatial proximity facilitated significant extents of closer contact and encounters, although work in the catering company and the garden centre could involve stronger spatial separation from co-workers which limited interaction during work. In the two self-employed businesses, structures of hierarchy were flat and work relationships rather personal, informal and directly shaped by the authority of the owner-managers. Division of labour included more sharing of tasks in the painting company than in the electronics workshop.

The catering company and the garden centre consisted of comparatively larger and more complexly differentiated sets of organizational positions and relations. These included graded structures of hierarchy and formal authority which nevertheless tended to be situationally flexible, participative and interactive, especially in the catering company in which the division of tasks seemed to be less rigid and extensive than in the garden centre. In the latter, work relationships appeared to be least informal and personal when compared to the other three SMEs. Co-workers in the painting company, the electronics workshop and the catering company spent most of their workdays together, even though Akhtar and the boss rarely shared their breaks. In the garden centre, social contact mainly depended on sharing the same work shifts in the same department and breaks were not always spent with the same group of people due to the work schedule. In the catering company, it was highlighted how sociable practices and approaches may occur more frequently during less stressful times at work.

Regarding the heterogeneity of workforces, forced migrant newcomers were mainly employed in reaction to the current prosperity of businesses and a regional shortage of manual, flexible and low-wage labour power. Tony and Akhtar had almost no contact to additional co-workers besides their employers. The catering company and most of the other SMEs with workforces of up to 25 people mainly featured male employees and in several cases family members of leading actors. People with European and also non-European migration experiences who were frequently depicted as already established locals could be encountered in almost all workplaces of my research. Additional commonalities and differences in terms of e.g. age, hierarchical rank and seniority, educational, occupational and class backgrounds as well as lifestyles and personal and legal statuses seemed to be recognized as significant by my informants.

Related to its comparatively large workforce of around 100 people, the garden centre appeared to be most heterogeneous. In particular, a substantial extent of gender, cultural and

religious diversity was variously underlined during my research and many employees were ascribed migration backgrounds and biographies, including internal migrants from other federal states of Germany. In sum, 12 forced migrant newcomers were employed by the garden centre and three by the catering company. These workers, just like Tony, Akhtar and the other forced migrants in my sample, had either rudimentary, basic or already more extensive German skills as well as educational and occupational backgrounds which were by and large unrelated to their current employment in the Munich city region. The dominant and more or less required language in all workplaces of my research was German, especially when jobs involved interactions with customers. Yet, where this was facilitated by linguistic diversity, other shared languages were partly also used, even in the garden centre, in which a German-only policy had been instituted by the branch manager.

My discussion of subjective perspectives on work relationships and practices of co-operation reflects predominantly respectful, collegial and positively assessed experiences of working together which can be understood as a precondition for the development of closer ties. Yet, resentments, conflicts and negative assessments were likewise highlighted by employers and co-workers as well as forced migrant newcomers and appeared to be the defining characteristics of several work relationships. Expectations, preconceptions and attitudes of employers and co-workers seemed to resonate with the ways in which forced migrant newcomers were received and encountered in the workplaces of my research. Patiently accepting additional efforts of on the job training and accommodating to the asylum procedure, along with various forms of familiarity with heterogeneity, were widely recognizable aspects which I have represented as facilitators of rather open and collegial work relationships. In other words, bureaucratic problems, persistent mistakes and misunderstandings and other issues calling for extensive commitment were partly also leading to angry outbursts, frustrations and work-related disputes with forced migrant newcomers which can be viewed as potentially harmful to the quality and further development of work relationships. Similarly, besides depictions of heterogeneity as unproblematic and routinely accepted normality, I was informed about suspicions, prejudices, envy and xenophobia which were attributed to some established members of workforces. Especially in the case of the small grocery store on a company campus, sentiments of several already established local co-workers were shaped by discourses and feelings of disadvantage, injustice, deservingness and competition which seemed to be precipitated by notions of the welfare state as a bounded and exclusive national community of solidarity.

While the master used his notion of instructive, demanding and disciplining mentoring

to define his apprenticeship relationship with Tony, the boss imagined Akhtar in the role of a versatile 'hacienda worker' whose exceptional flexibility he interpreted through stereotypes about labour migrants. Both the master and the boss revealed clear-cut and at times drastically asserted distinctions of hierarchy and authority which would not contradict largely informal and immediate modes of work interaction. In contrast, work relationships in the catering company were portrayed through the chef's vision of cooperative, reciprocal, equal and caring family ties which should not be compromised by strong acts of direct authority and social distinctions based on hierarchical rank or prestige associated with different tasks. Residues of family-like informality, solidarity and responsibility and a concomitant disapproval of hierarchical thinking characterized work relationships in the garden centre. However, the branch manager also emphasized the significance of universalistic rules and equal treatment based on the shared employee status.

All employers of the four example workplaces expected forced migrant newcomers to be diligent, work as autonomously as possible and ask questions whenever task or language related aspects were unclear. Opposing the organizational ethos she advocated, the chef had pragmatically adapted her expectations to her experiences with numerous forced migrant newcomers in the catering company and wanted them to await instructions under more direct supervision. The branch manager in turn demanded more from newcomers in the garden centre and pursued sanctioned measures to further the development of skills and 'integration' more generally, while established co-workers were officially required to accept and support the newcomers. Especially the statements of the boss suggested that reciprocating forced migrant workers by granting a certain degree of employee participation and autonomy as well as respect, flexibility and high trust may provide reasons to accept the authority and demands of employers and ensure collegiality and fairness.

Many forced migrant newcomers seemed to expect that work relationships involved heterogeneous co-workers with different attitudes which could range from respect, recognition and collegiality to hostility and racism that would nurture injustices and conflicts at work. At the same time, several statements suggested that generalizing social categories, stereotypes and prejudices about migrant as well as non-migrant co-workers may be formed and reproduced by forced migrant newcomers as well. Another relational aspect I could identify with several informants was a preference for discretion. This meant that work relationships were variously thought of as separated from private life and the disclosure of sensitive and personal information, especially individual stories about displacement, life plans and problems resulting from the asylum procedure. Moreover, work relationships were frequently

perceived as opportunities to learn German and viewed as requiring the evocation of favourable impressions through expressions of commitment, diligence and collegiality.

Corresponding to the master's subjective perspective, Tony described his work relationship as an apprenticeship relationship defined by differences of hierarchy and authority. Instead of seeing the master as a friend due to the respect, informality and sociability they frequently shared, Tony emphasized relational complexities, ambiguities, difficulties and conflicts he had experienced at work and beyond. This had given rise to his expectation that the master would be not always nice but sometimes also 'crazy,' and the accumulation of interpersonal knowledge over time was depicted as allowing him to get along in an overall positively assessed work relationship. Similarly highlighting the peculiarities, difficulties and conflicts he experienced in the work relationship with his employer, Akhtar described his boss as an old man and seemed to apply this generalizing social category in order to orient and understand the partly nervous, unsettling and blunt interactions in the workshop. Although Akhtar seemed to recognize a potential for multiple and ambiguous social ties and roles based on the work relationship, he strongly associated the boss with the powerful employer role which he saw as defined by the relentless pursuit of profits and capital accumulation.

As I could not gather significant verbal data with the forced migrant workers of the catering company due to language differences, I presented my insights from interviews with ten forced migrant newcomers who worked in various other SMEs with up to 25 co-workers. While these informants also reported overall good and collegial work relationships, some of them provided valuable accounts of difficulties and conflictual work relationships and strategies of dealing with them. Aside from disrespectful, rude and intimidating working environments, I learned about gossip, accusations of inappropriate performance as well as envy and antagonism with regard to settlement progress and support or young age and work commitment. Two informants had experienced particular work relationships as dominated by exploitative and racist attitudes and actions of established co-workers. In the case of Idris who told me about his work in the triadic constellation of a bin lorry crew, it became apparent how social capital inhering stronger ties between established co-workers could lead to negative consequences in the form of social exclusion and discrimination of newcomers. My informants mainly responded to these difficulties and conflicts by avoiding problematic co-workers and situations whenever possible as well as pragmatically maintaining friendly but impersonal relations. This could include narrowly concentrating on instrumental purposes of employment and personal aims such as completing an apprenticeship, which offered answers to the question why variously unfavourable and degrading conditions should be tolerated. In

addition, supervisors and employers were informed about conflicts and supported forced migrant newcomers from their more powerful positions.

The forced migrant newcomers I interviewed in the garden centre depicted their work relationships as overall friendly, but extents of more personal contact with established locals seemed to be rather low and racism among co-workers was highlighted. Femi exemplified how employers and supervisors may be granted respect and appreciation in return for putting trust in newcomers and their capabilities when he assured me that the branch manager had acted like a father towards him when he had settled a conflict with a co-worker. The branch manager's story about clearing the snow provided insights into the complex tensions between forced migrants' perceptions of discrimination, skills requirements and the division of labour in the context of dominant notions of organizational rationalities as well as social evaluations of different tasks and jobs.

My discussion of the practices of cooperation which may enable and constrain the development of personally important ties included three forms of sharing and coordinating tasks in the context of work relationships. Introducing and training forced migrant newcomers was mainly done by employers or higher ranking supervising actors, while colleagues were frequently also welcoming their new co-workers in considerate and collegial ways. Several forced migrant newcomers preferred to work with co-workers who had introduced them with acts of support, guidance, recognition as well as effortless verbal communication in a shared language. While Kingsley's statements exemplified that practices of introducing and training may induce personal appreciation and positive affect for welcoming co-workers which could be viewed as favouring the creation of sociabilities of emplacement, Emanuel interpreted his intense training phase with an English-speaking colleague as nothing more than efficient and friendly cooperation which merely served his organizational socialization as a new employee. In the garden centre, introducing newcomers was an exclusive responsibility of department managers and Gabriel substantiated the premise that this form of cooperation could enable relationship processes when he reported that he had formed a more personal tie to his supervisor and had spent time with him beyond work. However, this example, as well as statements by Abdullah, suggested that official rules which restricted the cooperative task of instructing newcomers to supervising actors may formally exclude colleagues from forming closer ties through such practices.

Moreover, interactively training and mentoring novices could be understood as the defining practices of apprenticeship relationships, which became especially clear during my research with Tony and his master. Aside from uplifting approval of his work, Tony emphasized

that the constant and often direct supervision of the master partly escalated into harsh complaints and angry scoldings which left him with negative feelings of pressure, disrespect and humiliation. Tony therefore preferred to work on his own and disliked direct supervision in the course of training. The latter seemed to reinforce stress, insecurity and the hierarchical division between master and apprentice and could be expected to dampen positive affect, trust and informal communication which may enable the formation of personally important relationships.

Directly sharing and coordinating tasks was another form of cooperation which offered opportunities for social contact and interaction during work. Especially in the electronics workshop it became apparent that direct coordination of work could involve communicative practices of exchanging information and opinions as well as distributing, explaining, discussing and negotiating particular work tasks. As the boss tried to avoid close and constant supervision and Akhtar preferred to work independently, the two co-workers had practically agreed on a widely autonomous and self-responsible arrangement of working together. However, high autonomy resulted in frequently recurring mistakes on the part of Akhtar who was still a widely untrained newcomer to the technical tasks he was trusted with. Although the boss generally accepted mistakes as part of his cooperation with Akhtar, he partly reacted with irritation, outbursts, scoldings and rude humour which were depicted as overall harmless. Nevertheless, depending on their intensity, frequency and situational context, I gained the impression that these responses could be perceived as offences which may impede the emergence of relationships beyond work.

According to the chef of the catering company, forced migrant employees preferred to directly share tasks with her as a higher ranking co-worker because this would mediate social recognition and status and can be viewed as an opportunity to generate valuable bridging social capital with more powerfully positioned managers or employers. My participant observations in the catering company have shown that sharing the same manual and repetitive tasks, such as peeling hundreds of kohlrabies, facilitated informal interactions which may be viewed as enabling the formation of personally significant relationships. This was not the case when I directly cooperated with Mohammed in the scullery because we were focusing on, and moving around, different tasks which constituted closely interdependent steps of the larger work process. One local employee of the garden centre who explained that work was directly coordinated with forced migrant co-workers within the different department work-teams made clear that these practices of cooperation could be understood as one of the most crucial opportunities for interaction because practically and spatially more distant co-workers were

rather out of reach during work.

Informal help and support constituted the third variety of cooperation I discussed and were expressed through practical support of forced migrant newcomers with certain tasks, difficulties and German language at work. These supportive acts seemed to be partly perceived as benevolent gifts and preferences for working with already established co-workers who had shown their helpfulness were stated. But informal help and support may also be given by forced migrant newcomers who address their co-workers as receiving actors. In particular, Yunis allowed insights into his interactive strategy of forging good and favourable work relationships and impressions of himself with the help of casual favours and doing work for others which he would mainly grant his local, middle-aged and female co-workers, including his employer. The main subjective motivation driving his helpful and caring way of working seemed to be anticipated personal benefits for his settlement process in the Munich city region. Reflecting the conceptualization of reciprocity as a basis of social capital, Yunis considered it advantageous to establish mutual obligations through giving work-related gifts to locally established co-workers whom he perceived as particularly valuable network contacts who can be viewed as potential partners in emplacement sociabilities.

In my discussion of establishing sociabilities of emplacement, I shifted the focus onto how contextual opportunities for forming and fostering social ties were perceived and responded to by my informants in the light of their subjectivities and social lives. I referred to the relationship processes between Tony and the master as the main guiding case. Regarding the practices of sociability at work, I could notice variations in terms of their quantity, quality and significance in the different workplaces. Tony and the master were frequently joking and talking informally about a wider range of general as well as personal topics. While sociability seemed to be comparatively less frequent and significant in the electronics workshop, co-workers of the catering company and the garden centre were interacting informally mainly during less stressful times, breaks and company events. The large workforce of the garden centre implied that this workplace included several established employees, including the branch manager, who frequently engaged in sociability and exchanged more personal information with forced migrant newcomers, whereas others rarely had personal interactions during work and did not know much about the newcomers or other co-workers. In addition to Tony and the master, three forced migrant newcomers working in some of the other ten SMEs in my sample mentioned one or a few special co-workers who were partners in dyadic relationships at work that featured various practical characteristics of sociabilities of emplacement. Some of the other seven interviewees were describing informal social life at work

merely in collective and general terms and did not differentiate individual co-workers along personality, helpfulness and/or likeability. Several statements of Emanuel made particularly clear that the contents of these less personalized interactions may be constrained by stereotypes about socio-cultural difference and dominant social categories ascribed to forced migrants. This seemed to impede the exchange of personal knowledge about each other beyond discursively reproduced social categorizations, labels and role expectations.

Approaches of sociability at work were predominantly pursued by the master rather than Tony, even though the master himself declared his intention to refrain from non-work interactions because these would negatively affect work performance. Correspondingly, several employers of other workplaces mentioned that sociable interactions were mainly suggested and initiated by themselves or other established co-workers. Although Tony appreciated the master's approaches of sociability that resulted in dialogical exchanges which he did not seem to perceive as indiscreet and asymmetrical interrogations, I gained the impression that these invitations conflicted with his preference for staying focused on his work tasks and pressured him to accept the offers of the master and find suitable topics of conversation. Various degrees of openness, trust and reservation as well as notions of hierarchical divisions were associated with the ways in which other forced migrant newcomers in my sample reacted to approaches of sociability at work.

Practices of sociability beyond work in the painting company took place on a rather infrequent basis and consisted of shared activities during free-time which mainly involved cooking, commensality, sports and playing video games, accompanied by informal and personal conversations. Concerning the other SMEs, sociability beyond work which featured forced migrant co-workers appeared to be rare or non-existent, the latter being the case for the electronics workshop and the catering company. Although some established employees of the garden centre were sharing free-time with particular co-workers, I came to know about merely one sociable relationship beyond work between a German supervisor and a forced migrant newcomer. Instead of mentioning particular dyadic relationships, the branch manager highlighted his involvement in sport-related events and group activities with his forced migrant employees. Aside from the four example workplaces, Yunis was the only remaining informant who mentioned sociable practices outside of the workplace, involving his locally established supervisor and her boyfriend.

In connection with the overall infrequent, rare and exceptional occurrence of practices of sociability beyond work, I could identify several constraining aspects of relationship processes which related to the subjectivities and personal networks of my informants rather than

the social contexts of the various SMEs. For established locals as well as forced migrant newcomers, existing and prioritised social relationships which were perceived as requiring various forms and extents of commitment that was compromised by limited time and energy resources constituted personal network contexts that influenced the social being of my informants in profound ways, including their capacity and desire to establish sociabilities of emplacement with co-workers beyond work. Similar to several middle-aged employees of the garden centre, the master explained his personal priority of spending free-time with his family rather than on establishing personal ties with co-workers, regardless of their migration experiences.

Also for many of my forced migrant informants a combination of employment-related time and energy demands, social obligations, personal preferences of time use as well as efforts of settlement seemed to constrain the formation of sociabilities beyond work. In particular, existing social capital relationships could be viewed as competing with and contradicting relationships mediated through employment. As he spent most of his time on his apprenticeship, Kingsley had been accused of disappointing the expectations of commitment of other forced migrants in his personal network. This may have resulted in negative consequences of social capital in the sense of heightened social pressure to show loyalty and solidarity for existing stronger ties instead of focusing on sociabilities mediated through employment that may inhere more beneficial social capital. Lastly, dominant role expectations, social categorizations and notions of a division between public and private spheres could be identified as constraining the formation of sociabilities beyond work, also in relation to the fact that already high extents of mutual exposure and interaction during work partly precluded the desire to share precious free-time with co-workers as well.

Also with regard to approaches of sociability beyond work, my ethnographic data allowed to consider employers and supervisors as main initiating actors. Overall, I did not take note of extensive approaches of sociability beyond work by forced migrant newcomers. Nevertheless, Tony told about his suggestion of visiting a former co-worker which the master had not embraced and mentioned that he had occasionally invited his employer to his place. A few forced migrants working in other than the four exemplary SMEs reported proactive approaches towards co-workers and seemed to desire and expect the formation of significant ties beyond work with the passing of time. Although family life was the alleged priority of the master, he had suggested Tony to share free-time activities which were not always affirmed, e.g. when Tony's personal preferences did not correspond with the master's plan of going to the forest for recreational reasons. The boss of the electronics workshop reported similar rejections which he had pragmatically accepted by not holding them against Akhtar and refrain-

ing from making further suggestions.

Along with the boss, locals in the catering kitchen and the garden centre mentioned different personal interests and orientations of life and sometimes an ascribed lack of openness and tolerance on the part of forced migrant newcomers as impediments to the formation of significant relationships outside of work. Considering these possible perceptions, Yunis had accepted his supervisor's invitation to a large football match despite his personal disinterest in the event. His statements suggested that forced migrant newcomers may feel compelled to fulfil and perpetuate mutual obligations of reciprocity by accepting gifts in the form of actually undesired free-time activities in order to avoid the decline or stagnation of relationships which inhere valued social capital. These empirical insights show how social capital based on the obligations of reciprocity may also have negative consequences for recipients, in addition to the individually beneficial resources expected for other times.

Concerning possible bases of sociabilities of emplacement, I could recognize various domains of commonality which seemed to be shared by already established locals and forced migrant newcomers. Shared aspirations in life were highlighted by Tony as a commonality when he explained that the master would be able and open to 'share ideas' with him in the sense of comprehending and affirming Tony's personal aims and visions for the future. The boss of the electronics workshop and several co-workers of Tesfay expressed affect, support and solidarity which appeared to be crucially based on sharing aspirations of a safe, prosperous and unified family life as well as the experience of being a parent. Tesfay's employer emphasized her empathy and consideration also through a shared wish for justice in the bureaucratic procedure of family reunification.

Sharing experiences of racialization, discrimination and exclusion as migrant or foreigner were invoked as a domain of commonality by the master and seemed to prevail among Femi, Gabriel and Tunde in the garden centre. In addition, the master explicitly distinguished himself as an opposing misfit in the wealthy suburban municipality to which he had moved ten years earlier, as well as society more generally. While he claimed to identify with the situation of Tony and other people in relatively powerless and marginalized social positions, he stressed divisions of class, world-view and morality with most established locals. However, in conclusion he reflected upon an encompassing sense of being human which he depicted as a domain of commonality that would shape his social life more than differentiated social categories and seemed to be premised on mutual respect and recognition. As a commonality through which he could relate to Akhtar's perspective, the boss of the electronics workshop also mentioned feeling strange and out of place in the context of confronting dominant norms

and ideals as a person living with psoriasis as well as his personal experiences of being a stranger in an unfamiliar work context during his work-trips to China. Lastly, rather than delineating domains of commonality based on shared senses and experiences of being human, many other local and forced migrant informants mentioned combinations of shared personal interests and categorical commonalities as actual or expected bases of personally important relationships with co-workers.

In the last subchapter, I traced various forms of support which were exchanged between established locals and forced migrant newcomers and could be conceptualized as the main functional outcome of sociabilities of emplacement. Several informants considered granting employment in itself as a crucial form of assistance because it would facilitate productive use of time during the asylum procedure, skills development and maintenance as well as money income allowing for financial independence and sending remittances. In particular, formal apprenticeships seemed to be widely recognized as an opportunity to secure the legal situation of asylum seekers and tolerated persons. Thus, complementing more instrumental reasons, the master and the chef made explicit that they were hiring forced migrant newcomers also because they wanted to provide them access to the benefits of employment as such. The boss argued that his workshop offered both Akhtar and himself a place of belonging, refuge and practical distraction. He perceived social support as mutually reciprocated, which meant that he did not see Akhtar merely as a receiver of his benevolence and assistance but appreciated him as a human companion in the workshop who would prevent loneliness and provide reassuring impulses during times of stress and crisis.

Several relationships emerging between forced migrant newcomers and established co-workers were characterized by forms of practical support which may imply resources mediated through social capital and contribute to emplacement, e.g. the exchange of material things, money and advice or accompanying newcomers to appointments. While forced migrant newcomers predominantly featured as receivers of supportive resources and services, Tony had also helped the master by spending sociable time with him and offering advice when he had faced personal problems. The master had manifested his protective solidarity with Tony when he had supported him with countering an incident of racialization not related to work by personally confronting some workers of a recycling depot who had discriminated against Tony. Through her network ties as owner-manager, the chef could help one of her former forced migrant employees with finding a kindergarten place for her child, thereby exemplifying the beneficial outcomes of social capital ties with co-workers in powerful positions. Furthermore, several co-workers supported newcomers with the legal and bureaucratic

procedures of seeking asylum as well as finding and gaining access to affordable accommodations on the tight regional housing market. In the case of Tesfay, this included that his employer had decided to act as a guarantor towards his landlord.

In sum, my ethnographic data reflected that many forced migrants were recognizing and experiencing co-workers in multiple ways as sources of beneficial social capital. On the other hand, several informants pointed out that forced migrant newcomers in the Munich city region may not require, request and/or accept support in the context of their relationships mediated through work. From the perspective of Kingsley, Sayed, Habib and others, there was no substantial need to ask co-workers for assistance because it would be already reliably provided by volunteers or official and professional actors who were partly perceived as significant and trusted contacts. The branch manager remembered with some incomprehension that the support with a legal dispute he had offered one forced migrant employee had been declined. Tesfay's employer had recognized high and persistent guardedness and mistrust among the three forced migrant employees in her gardening company. This would be a negative consequence of displacement and keep them from asking others for help. Hakim and some other forced migrants made clear that their normative concepts and expectations about relationships with co-workers did not comprise the exchange of mutual non-work support.

The relationship process involving Tony and the master exemplified how gifts of non-work support can be interpreted through the lens of social capital based on mutual obligations of reciprocity which may generate negative consequences for forced migrant newcomers and the quality of their sociability relations with supportive co-workers. As he had been receiving crucial support from the master, Tony seemed to feel strongly indebted, disempowered and urged to give back in the currency most readily accessible to him, i.e., the docile and committed exertion of his capacity to work, including high acceptance of flexibility and the capriciousness of his employer which less precariously positioned workers may not have tolerated. With the passing of time, I could catch partial glimpses on relational dynamics and decisive incidents and conflicts which suggested that Tony's feelings of indebtedness had limits and were economically exploited by the master. From Tony's perspective, this seemed to lead to an increasingly paternalistic relationship characterized by a lack of trust, diminished positive affect and less informal sociability. I have argued that these negative consequences of social capital between Tony and the master could be interpreted as an expression of the ambiguous merging of obligations to reciprocate gifts of support and demands of capitalist employment relationships which facilitates capital accumulation.

The tentative statement that sociabilities of emplacement beyond the workplace were

relatively rare despite predominantly favourable opportunities and mainly because of constraints related to subjectivities, personal network contexts and established institutions of forced migrant support in the Munich city region (cf. Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2016: 30) could be put up for discussion as the final conclusion of my thesis. In particular, as I could show for several cases and from various angles, social capital may have negative consequences for relationship processes of forced migrant newcomer. On this basis it can be argued that the application of social capital as a conceptual tool for researching migrant settlement may result in more nuanced and less one-sided and misleading accounts of social relationships when ethnographers are not blinded by beneficial resources and instead equally, or even predominantly, investigate the negative outcomes of social capital from the perspective of individual participants in social ties, networks and groups.

Lastly, my account of the dyadic processes between Tony and his master has empirically illuminated that more or less personally meaningful relationships cannot be assumed to be static, unidimensional and unambiguous. Instead, social ties are continuously on the move and in the (un)making. There may be immense processual complexities and shifting emphases which are intertwined with changing, as well as persistently pressing, contexts and subjectivities (see Ch. 2.1). Rather than finding representations of pure sociabilities of emplacement in empirical reality, fluid mixtures of commonality, affect, respect, support and solidarity as well as difference, pragmatic friendliness, instrumental aims, capitalist antagonism and social conflict have to be ethnographically grasped as trajectories of contextualized negotiations and intersubjective dynamics (cf. Anderson 2015: 106-121).

References

Table of directly cited semi-structured interviews

Interview reference with date of recording	Interviewee(s) and (work) organization(s)
Interview Abdullah 13.01.2018	Abdullah, apprentice in an alteration shop.
Interview Akhtar and Hakim 21.01.2018	Akhtar, employee of the electronics workshop (example workplace No. 2); Hakim, apprentice in a painting company.
Interview Company Store 06.04.2018	Owner-manager and supervisor of a grocery store on a company campus.
Interview Emanuel 12.01.2018	Emanuel, employee of a car workshop.
Interview Gardening 25.07.2018	Owner-manager of a gardening company.
Interview Habib 03.12.2017	Habib, former employee of a gardening company.
Interview Idris 18.04.2018	Idris, employee of a waste management company.
Interview Isar 20.01.2018	Isar, apprentice in a nursing home for the elderly.
Interview Jonathan 02.12.2017	Jonathan, employee of a logistics centre of online retailers.
Interview Kingsley 28.11.2017	Kingsley, apprentice in a restaurant kitchen.
Interview Kitchen 04.04.2018	Chef, owner-manager of the catering company (example workplace No. 3).
Interview Malik 21.04.2018	Malik, employee of a restaurant kitchen.
Interview Saliou 06.01.2018	Saliou, employee of a logistics centre of an online retailer.
Interview Sayed 05.12.2017	Sayed, employee in an organic grocery store.
Interview Employment Service Co-ordinator 23.01.2018	Coordinator of an official employment support institution for forced migrants.
Interview Store 04.04.2018	Branch manager of the garden centre (example workplace No. 4).
Interview Tony 02.01.2018	Tony, apprentice in the painting company (example workplace No. 1).
Interview Workshop 04.12.2017	Boss, owner-manager of the electronics workshop (example workplace No 2).
Interview Yunis 26.04.2018	Yunis, employee of a grocery store on a company campus .

Table of directly cited fieldnotes

Fieldnotes reference with date of presence	Research activity and setting
Fieldnotes Painter 27.03.2018	Participant observation in the painting company at various worksites (example workplace No. 1).
Fieldnotes Painter 05.04.2018	Participant observation in the painting company at Tony's asylum shelter (example workplace No. 1).
Fieldnotes Restaurant 21.04.2018	Participant observation in a restaurant kitchen.
Fieldnotes Store 10.04.2018	Participant observation in the garden centre (example workplace No. 4).
Fieldnotes Tony 25.12.2019	Visiting Tony at his asylum shelter.
Fieldnotes Workshop 04.12.2017	Participant observation in the electronics workshop (example workplace No. 2).
Fieldnotes Workshop 24.01.2018	Participant observation in the electronics workshop (example workplace No. 2).

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Appendix

Abstract

Current discourses on the 'integration' of forced migrants who arrived in Germany around 2015 emphasize formal paid work as a decisive aspect while more ethnographic research is needed to deepen the understanding of social interactions and relationships between working forced migrants and their co-workers and employers. This master's thesis explores the settlement of forced migrant newcomers from an anthropological perspective which focuses on the mediation of significant social relationships through employment in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) located in the Munich city region. Framed by the argument that employment cannot be assumed to mechanically constitute a sufficient condition for the formation of supportive social ties, spatial, organizational, relational and practical aspects of work are discussed as context factors which provide varying opportunity structures for the formation of "sociabilities of emplacement" (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018). These processes of relationship formation are conceptualized as continuous interplay between structural contexts and human agency which is bound up with individual subjectivities (Hollstein 2001, 2010). Complementing the mapping of social contexts with which actors engage, the thesis identifies practices and approaches of sociability, shared "domains of commonality" (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018) and functions of mutual support which can be understood as the characteristic aspects of sociabilities of emplacement. Research findings are ethnographically based on 26 semi-structured interviews with forced migrants, employers and social service providers as well as participant observation along with unstructured interviews in six workplaces and several non-work settings. However, the focus of analysis and representation lies on four example workplaces: a painting company, an electronics workshop, a catering company and a garden centre. Showing that the emergence of significant relationships which go beyond the workplace is rare despite the predominance of favourable context factors, the thesis suggests that constraints of relationship formation are associated with subjective orientations and personal network contexts, established institutions of forced migrant support in the Munich city region as well as negative consequences of social capital in the form of disempowering obligations of reciprocity which may result in paternalistic relationships with employers.

Zusammenfassung

Gegenwärtige Diskurse zur 'Integration' von Geflüchteten die um 2015 in Deutschland angekommen sind betonen formelle und bezahlte Arbeit als einen entscheidenden Aspekt, während mehr ethnographische Forschung benötigt wird, um das Verständnis von sozialen Interaktionen und Beziehungen zwischen arbeitenden Geflüchteten und ihren Kolleg*innen und Arbeitgeber*innen zu vertiefen. Die vorliegende Masterarbeit erkundet aus einer anthropologischen Perspektive, wie sich neu angekommene Geflüchtete einleben und betrachtet die Vermittlung von bedeutungsvollen sozialen Beziehungen durch Erwerbstätigkeit in kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen (KMU) in der Stadtregion München. Im Rahmen des Arguments, dass Erwerbstätigkeit nicht mechanistisch als ausreichende Bedingung für die Schaffung von unterstützenden sozialen Beziehungen angenommen werden kann, werden räumliche, organisationale, relationale und handlungsbezogene Aspekte von Arbeit als Kontextfaktoren diskutiert, welche unterschiedliche Möglichkeitsstrukturen für die Schaffung von "sociabilities of emplacement" (Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018) bereitstellen. Diese Prozesse der Schaffung sozialer Beziehungen werden als kontinuierliches Zusammenspiel von strukturellen Kontexten und menschlicher Handlungsmacht, welche mit individuellen Subjektivitäten verwoben ist, konzeptualisiert (Hollstein 2001, 2010). Ergänzend zur Darlegung sozialer Kontexte mit

denen sich Akteur*innen auseinandersetzen macht die Masterarbeit Praktiken und Ansätze von Geselligkeit, geteilte “domains of commonality”(Çağlar and Glick Schiller 2018) und Funktionen gegenseitiger Unterstützung ausfindig, die als charakteristische Aspekte von *socialabilities of emplacement* verstanden werden können. Die ethnographische Basis der Forschungsergebnisse besteht aus 26 halbstrukturierten Interviews mit Geflüchteten, Arbeitgeber*innen und Anbieter*innen von sozialen Dienstleistungen sowie teilnehmender Beobachtung und unstrukturierten Interviews in sechs Arbeitsplätzen und mehreren nicht arbeitsbezogenen Zusammenhängen. Der Fokus der Auswertung und Darstellung liegt jedoch auf vier exemplarischen Arbeitsplätzen: einem Malerbetrieb, einer Werkstatt für Elektrotechnik, einer Cateringfirma und einem Gartencenter. Die Masterarbeit zeigt, dass die Entstehung bedeutsamer Beziehungen, die über den Arbeitsplatz hinausgehen, selten vorkommt, obwohl günstige Kontextfaktoren vorherrschen. Sie legt nahe, dass Beschränkungen der Schaffung von Beziehungen mit subjektiven Orientierungen und persönlichen Netzwerkzusammenhängen, etablierten Institutionen der Unterstützung von Geflüchteten in der Stadtregion München sowie negativen Konsequenzen von sozialem Kapital in der Form von entmachtenden Reziprozitätsverpflichtungen, die zu paternalistischen Beziehungen mit Arbeitgeber*innen führen können, in Verbindung stehen.