Vulnerability and Resilience at the Edge of the Danish Labour Market[*]

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Abstract: Investigating the working life experiences of a group of men posed at the edges of the Danish labour market, this article analyses the attitudes and practices these men embrace to cope with various challenges encountered in their locality. The men whose working life histories are discussed in the article have two things in common: they live at the northern shore of Denmark in an area marked by high levels of unemployment, low levels of education and gradual depopulation. And they have found (temporary) work in connection with the (at the time) two most spectacular symbols of the success of an emergent offshore sector in the region, namely the upgrading and overhauling of the two jack-up rigs "Mærsk Guardian" and "Mærsk Giant" which took place in the town of Hirtshals in 2011 and 2012. Picking out two working life trajectories for closer analysis, the paper discusses how labour market vulnerabilities are perceived and constructed, and how corresponding resilience practices are developed. Theoretically, the paper argues that spatial categories enrich the analysis, and that including geographical distances, local and personal histories and material/physical aspects of "place" in analyses of work mobility, enhances the understanding of how labour market vulnerability and resilience is experienced and met.

Key words: space; place; vulnerability; resilience; volatile labour markets

JEL codes: J61, J62

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on working life vulnerability and resilience among a group of workers quite literally posed at the geographical edges of the Danish labour market, namely the town of Hirtshals, placed in the region of North Denmark and facing the North Sea. Working life realities in Nordic coastal communities — and presumably elsewhere, too — have traditionally been shaped by opportunities and constraints offered by the sea (Gerrard, 2013; Hovgaard, 2015). While employment levels in fishing and fish processing has slumped in many places throughout the Nordic region (Haagensen, 2014), new types of jobs at sea are also emerging, e.g., in offshore wind- and wave-energy projects, as well as oil drilling (NIRAS, 2012; Aure & Munkejord, 2015). Broadly conceived, the maritime sector as a whole makes up a significant element in the industrial development strategy for the region of North Denmark, and with a higher number of workers finding employment within this sector in the region compared to the national average (MARCOD, 2009), the sector contributes substantially to the local economy — for example, the annual turnover at Hirtshals Harbour amounted to 19.3% of the municipal tax base

according to a calculation from 2012 (NIRAS, 2012, p. 15[1]).

In this article, I present empirical evidence from interviews with workers directly and indirectly finding work in the Danish offshore oil sector, and use this evidence to discuss how space, place and mobility are co-constitutive of the work-related vulnerabilities and resilience practices these men experience and engage in.

The discussion of such vulnerabilities and resilience share wider resonances with more general theories on the presumed effects of globalization on working life — theories which point to rising uncertainty and unpredictability in employment (Beck, 1992; Blossfeld et al., 2008; Standing, 2009, 2011). Focusing more specifically on how globalization affects the Danish labor market, Eriksson et al note that although many jobs are closed down every year, a great deal of new jobs are also created each year in Denmark, and Denmark is characterized by a very dynamic labor market; "by international standards, the number of job turnovers is very large" (Eriksson et al., 2006, p. 105). Other empirical studies confirm this: "Denmark is a country characterized by high job mobility. The share of persons with job tenure under one year is about 25 percent." (Grunow & Leth-Sørensen, 2008, p. 176). Such high levels of job mobility make the Danish labour market interesting as a setting for studying work-related vulnerabilities and resilience practices.

The theoretical contribution I aim to make in this paper, is to accentuate how space is implicated in making working life choices through a nuanced and systematic approach to the role of mobility practices as a predominant feature of volatile and precarious labour markets. To do so, I adopt a framework originally developed by Ibert and Schmidt (2012) for a rather different type of labour market, namely the one related to the German musical scene. Although I make alterations to their framework, I see it as useful and inspiring in terms of deepening our understanding of space and place as both enabling and constraining for local workers responding to volatile labour markets.

The article is divided in five sections. First I present the case selection and method. Then I discuss a number of key terms whose theoretical conceptualizations and interrelations are important to clarify in order to understand the wider theoretical implications of my arguments. I then proceed to present the theoretical framework on vulnerability and resilience and how I aim to apply it in my analysis, before proceeding to the analysis. The article ends with a concluding discussion, assessing the further prospects for combining analyses of vulnerability and resilience with a critical discussion of the role of space, place and mobility practices in working life trajectories.

2. Case Selection and Methods

In the spring 2011, and again during summer 2012, the small town of Hirtshals in the region of North Denmark formed the backdrop for two spectacular symbols of an emergent offshore sector in the region (see also Pristed Nielsen, 2016), namely the upgrading and overhauling of the two oilrigs "Mærsk Guardian" and "Mærsk Giant". These two events formed the backbone in identifying potential respondents for my study of working life realities in coastal communities. "Guardian" and "Giant" provided basis for short-term jobs for individuals and companies well beyond the local area, and work on the first rig alone lead to an estimated extra tax revenue for municipal authorities amounting to 11 million DKK (1.6 million Dollars) (Hirtshals Havn, 2012). Sums which are significant in a region otherwise characterized by high unemployment and low education levels compared to the rest of the country, marked by depopulation (Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd, 2010), and often referred to as

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[1] The signifance of this is heightened when taking into consideration that the town of Hirtshals houses approx. 6,000 inhabitants, whereas the largest town in the municipality, namely Hjørring, is home to approx. 28,000 inhabitants.

part of "peripheral Denmark" within national discourse (Winther & Svendsen, 2012; Christensen & Pristed Nielsen, 2013).

The stark connotations of "peripherality" (Danson & de Souza, 2012) in relation to the case — both in spatial (literally at the geographical margins of the Danish labour market) and temporal terms (two rounds of approximately 100 days of frantic work) — provide a somewhat extreme backdrop for investigating labour market experiences. Yet, I find the extreme backdrop useful for highlighting how individual agency may be exerted within a framework which *a priori* seems limited in spatial and temporal terms. In no way suggesting that the two working life stories analyzed below are typical, I rather argue that the extreme circumstances related to the jobs on the two rig upgradings can provide a kind of analytic *claroscuro* effect which brings to the fore aspects of working life decisions that may otherwise go unnoticed.

The research on how the upgrading of the two oil rigs affected the local workers and the community was based on principles stemming from biographical interviewing methods (Bertaux, 1981). Being interested in labour market flexibility and mobility, the interview format aimed at obtaining narratives about working life experiences and choices. Hence, each interview started with the following opening question: "Could you please tell me about your working life — right from your choice of education and first job and until the present?". A total of nine interviews with seven local men and two women were carried out during May and June 2013. All interviewees worked either directly on upgrading the rigs, or in auxiliary functions such as providing food or on-site security. The reason for focusing on people with work experiences related to the two yard stays was that the work was characterized by being short but intense — Guardian was at dock between April 29th and July 24th 2011 and Giant between June 28th and September 21st 2012, workers on the rigs generally working 12-hour shifts with few (if any) days off during the yard stays. Because of this, it was assumed that for any local people working on the rigs, this job must have been only a brief passage in a longer working life involving other experiences. This means that the working life narratives may be seen as relevant for a study of resilience in responding to a volatile local labour market.

3. On the Relationship between Space, Place and Mobility

Wishing to discuss how place, space and mobility practices interrelate in the working lives of men finding employment in and around the North Danish offshore sector, my focus calls for clarification of the terms space, place, place attachment, practice and mobility. Starting with the concept of space, I rely on Shield's notion of space as causative (rather than causal):

> Rather than "a cause" the spatial is causative. Spatialization has a mediating effect because it represents the contingent juxtaposition of social and economic forces, forms of social organization, and constraints of the natural world and so on. But as "a cause", in and of itself, it plays no role for it is not a locus of causal forces. Human agents have causal power (Shields, 1991, p. 57).

In Shields' analysis, this means that space has a channeling effect rather than a causal one, which is also a position which sits well in combination with the analytic framework presented and adopted below. In an effort to overcome understandings of space which privilege structures over agents, I hence consider space "a formation more than a framework, a function more than a principle" (Shields, 1991, p. 63).

Whilst I thus regard space as the condition of the social, place is the location for enacting the social. As Cresswell argues, places are "spaces which people have made meaningful. They are all spaces people are attached

to in one way or another. This is the most straightforward and common definition of place — a meaningful location" (2004, p. 7). For the purposes of this paper, I define place attachment simply as "emotional bonds which people develop with various places" (Lewicka, 2011, p. 219), although recognizing that Lewicka's argument is much more complex than this simple definition indicates.

Further on place, Bærenholdt and Granås argue that "places are not constructed out of nowhere but involve materialities, politics and imaginations, comprising people's engagement with their physical-material environment" (2008, p. 3). This relates to my use of the concept of practices. Practices are commonly conceptualized as "routinized way[s] in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250). This definition, in some readings, means that the individual may be seen as little more than a carrier of practices (Postill & Bräuchler, 2010; Reckwitz, 2002). However, in keeping with my insistence of the relevance of individual agency, I rely on Schatzki's definition of practices, which foregrounds the role of social order: "Practices, as I have described them, are social phenomena [. . .] participating in them entails immersion in an extensive tissue of coexistence that embraces varying sets of people" (2002, p. 87). The implications of a practice approach are that material aspects of the place in question are considered relevant in co-shaping decisions — for example about work mobility. As I shall account for below, some of the material aspects which appear relevant for understanding work mobility in the cases analyzed in this paper are phenomena such as distances, proximity to the sea, unemployment levels, union membership, personal friendships and acquaintances etc.

Concerning conceptions of mobility, Faist (2013) argues that scholars need to reflect more critically on the underlying assumptions about the relationship between spatial and social mobility. As Cresswell demonstrates, mobility is implicated in ideological constructions, causing him to talk of "moral geographies of place and mobility" (2006, p. 26). Overall, we need more nuanced analyses of mobility which include consideration of the social, economic, political and family structures people are embedded in — irrespective of whether they are leading sedentary or migratory lives. What, in fact, counts as "staying" or "leaving" may even be debated, as the analysis below underscores.

Mobility does not take place in a power vacuum. It is highly conditioned by social relations, and it is produced by and productive of social inequalities. As Cresswell puts it, "Mobility is social through and through" (2006, p. 262). Hence, in a subsequent publication, Cresswell develops the notion of 'a politics of mobility'; "By politics I mean social relation that involve the production and distribution of power. By a politics of mobility I mean the ways in which mobilities are both productive of such social relations and produced by them" (Cresswell, 2010, p. 21). I wish to take this general critical stance seriously by engaging in an exploration of how space, place and social relations are implicated in some of the highly concrete mobility practices recounted by men who had found work in connection with two oil rig upgradings in Hirtshals.

4. Vulnerability and Resilience on Volatile Labour Markets

At their root, the terms vulnerability and resilience refer to ways of responding to threats or dangers. As Christmann et al. explain (2012, p. 1), the concepts are in essence based on the idea that it lies in human nature to try to find ways to protect oneself when a danger of some kind is perceived. Traditionally applied in the natural sciences, Christmann et al. argue that the notions of vulnerability and resilience may fruitfully be utilized to discuss other types of dangers than "natural disasters" — for example, as further developed by Ibert and Schmidt

(2012, 2014), threats relating to volatile labour markets. Hence, when applied in the social sciences, the conceptual pair of vulnerability and resilience refer to situations where "endangerment is the result of a wide range of constellations of interacting social, economic, institutional and ecological factors" (Christmann & Ibert, 2012, p. 261).

How dangerous a threat is perceived to be, depends on the individual making the judgment. Ibert and Schmidt therefore define vulnerability as "how actors socially construct threatening situations" (2012, p. 350). This definition highlights that an important aspect of vulnerability is that it is always socially constructed — one person may perceive something as a serious threat which another person sees as harmless. Christmann and Ibert define vulnerability as "a concept which, in the context of social action under conditions of uncertainty, denotes practices of collectively assessing and negotiating situations of endangerment" (2012, p. 267). Furthermore, vulnerability in itself includes the person's reaction capacities; if one's reaction capacities are high, exposure to highly threatening factors may result in low levels of vulnerability, and vice versa, even a seemingly small threat can result in high levels of vulnerability, if the reaction capacities are low or non-existent (Christmann & Ibert, 2012, p. 261).

Whereas vulnerability refers to (the perception of) threatening situations, resilience has to do with reactions to these vulnerabilities. Resilience encompasses ability to encounter and reduce vulnerability and strategies for how to do this. Resilience can therefore be seen not as a state but as a process (Christmann & Ibert, 2012, pp. 261-262), as also underlined by Aysa-Lastra and Cachón; "resilience should be conceived as a process, a reaction, and a form of resistance exercised by the actors within a 'field of possibilities' that are marked by the social structure that tend to construct vulnerable subjects" (2015, p. 10).

As should be clear from the definitions above, vulnerability and resilience are always interrelated; they are "an indivisible pair of terms" (Christmann & Ibert, 2012, p. 269). Hence, even the process of constructing vulnerability, where the individual assesses how threatening a situation is, initiates the process of creating resilience, where the individual takes action to reduce the perceived threat. Strategies for increasing resilience can be identified by looking at what kind of changes the vulnerable individuals have made or intend to make to reduce their vulnerability (Ibert & Schmidt, 2012, p. 350).

The vulnerabilities and strategies for increasing resilience specifically discussed and analyzed in this paper relate to labour market participation among persons posed at what I term "the edges" of the Danish labour market. As explained above, there are several ways — both social and material — in which the local labour market in Hirtshals may be regarded as peripheral; a fact which in some situations seem decisive for the labour market strategies adopted by each individual actor. Although writing from a different national context (Germany) with a different labour market tradition, and about a totally different sector (musical actors), I find several of the points raised by Ibert and Schmidt regarding "How Musical Actors Construct their Labour-Market Vulnerability and Resilience" (Ibert & Schmidt, 2012) relevant also for my case study. This goes for example for a number of their points about frequent changes between freelance, self-employment, salaried employment and serial but also simultaneous multi-jobbing, and the ways in which networking is crucial for finding the next job. As they argue "Dealing with uncertainties and thus the permanent calculations of vulnerability and the aspiration to resilience play a constitutive role for the participants in these segments of the labour market" (Ibert & Schmidt, 2012, p. 350) — a point which resonates well also with my case study.

In light of the conceptual discussion in the preceding section, the point about the fruitfulness of including both social and material elements in the analysis of actors' constructions of their labour market strategies is clearly

brought out. Like Ibert and Schmidt, I argue that spatial categories may fruitfully enter into the analysis: hence, parameters such as distances, local particularities and material/physical aspects of the place in question need to be thought into the constructions of vulnerability and resilience.

Ibert and Schmidt argue that resilience practices are spatially situational, causing them to direct empirical attention to "spatial strategies of resilience" (2014, p. 6). Part of the attraction of working with the concepts of vulnerability and resilience is that they offer insight into how socio-spatial and temporal relations affect actors' practices. By applying the framework of vulnerability and resilience, it becomes possible to bring out how facets of social action necessarily unfold in space and time, and are conditioned by and constitutive of relational engagements with places and persons.

In the analysis of the two working life histories singled out for in-depth analysis below, I follow the structure developed by Ibert and Schmidt (2012) but employ a slightly altered framework. I retain their fourfold division, and the same focus within each strand of the analysis, but due to my accentuated focus on the role of space and its relation to mobility, power and social positioning, I have renamed the analytic categories to underline this point. The following table provides a quick overview:

Table 1   Analytic Framework

Ibert and Schmidt's (2012) framework	Revised framework
(1) Structural constraints within the specific sector	(1) Structural preconditions: time and space
(2) Institutional safeguards	(2) Nation space: institutional safeguards
(3) One's own identity	(3) Body space: one's own identity
(4) Establishing and maintaining a network	(4) Social space: establishing and maintaining a network

As the table illustrates, I have maintained the analytic focus of Ibert and Schmidt's original approach, yet renamed the categories in a way which deliberately foregrounds the role of space in analyzing vulnerabilities and resilience.

5. Robert & Carl: Two Vulnerable Yet Resilient Workers

I will focus my discussion of vulnerability and resilience by picking out two rather different men from my dataset, born in each their decade, with very different formal qualifications and different functions during the upgrading of the oilrigs. As the analysis will bring out, these two men both express deep senses of place attachment, while engaging in rather different mobility practices, in each their ways managing to carve out a position for themselves within both local and global labour markets. Returning to Shield's terminology presented above, Robert and Carl's narratives have been singled out for in-depth analysis, because space is "causative" in different ways for each of them, and in terms of analytic approach they arguably present a "most different" (Seawright & Gerring, 2008) pair for comparison among the biographical narratives.

The first narrative singled out for in-depth analysis is "Robert's"[2]. Robert was born in the mid-60s, and moved around quite a bit between different towns in North Denmark during his childhood and early adulthood. Never finishing his training as a blacksmith, because he could not find an apprenticeship, he was barely able to count his number of previous employers — even despite the fact that he had had several long-lasting employment relations. For example, he had 14 years at a slaughterhouse in a nearby town. But the slaughterhouse closed down as production was outsourced to Eastern Europe. When the slaughterhouse closed, Robert refused to listen to the

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[2] All interviewees have been assigned a pseudonym.

advice of the local job centre to retrain as a careworker. Instead he attended a three-week welding course, which brought him employment for eight straight years in a company rapidly expanding, until it suddenly and unexpectedly (for Robert anyway) went bankrupt as a result of the financial crisis. Looking for new employment, Robert managed to convince the local job centre to sponsor his training as a guard. He found work as an on-site guard during the yard stay of Mærsk Giant.

The second person is "Carl". Born in the mid-70s, Carl was raised in Hirtshals and had strong local attachments. Originally trained within ship construction, Carl had frequently opted for further training and had several formal qualifications on his CV, which he himself partly ascribed to curiosity, but also out of consideration that "I could feel on my body that it wouldn't last if I was going to crawl around in a ship hull for the rest of my life". He put down the great number of changes in his working life to a mixture of curiosity and restlessness. Recently, he had opted for self-employment, starting a company with another apprentice he met during his original training as a ship builder. Being co-owner and manager of his own small business had not exactly reduced his work burden nor his travelling activities. So Carl was fond of Skype, because it meant he could talk with his son no matter whether he was on a platform at sea or in Korea working on a contract.

5.1 Structural Preconditions: Time & Place

In Ibert and Schmidt´s study, the interviewees relate their job situation and labour market positions to specific times and places in terms of where and when to find employment. As they point out: "the acceptance of engagement requires a high degree of individual mobility" (2012, p. 335). The same may be said of the offshore sector (Aure & Munkejord, 2015), where many workers exhibit a pattern which I have elsewhere compared to "bungy-jumping" — venturing out to new more or less distant places to perform a task, only to return to their home town for a brief period before setting off to a new place — yet with persistent and very tightly bound ties to the place of origin (Pristed Nielsen, 2016). In other words, the "bungy-jumping" pattern is consistent with a strong sense of place attachment, as mobility is premised upon an intention to return as soon as the job is done.

Carl was a clear-cut example of a "bungy-jumper"; recounting jobs in Denmark, Norway, the US and Korea within the past year, he said "If I have to stay in the same place for half a year, I go nuts! (laughs) — to put it frankly". Yet, he invariably returned to his starting point in Hirtshals. Although highly mobile in geographic terms, Carl was clearly very specialized in terms of his skills, and a very specific set of structural constraints related to this fact. For example, Carl (and his employees and the company as a whole) were highly dependent on having the right certificates and working permits ready, so that their geographic mobility would not be hampered by lack of documents. Carl explained how "We have 5-6 obligatory courses people [his employees, ed.] have to attend, as a minimum". According to Carl (and other respondents also) courses and certificates had to be of the highest standards, meaning in accordance with Norwegian standards. Carl said: "The most important thing is … well at least 50%, is that your documentation is in order. No matter how great a job you do, if your paper work is not alright, you will not get the next assignment". Likewise, Carl had to make sure that a core group among his employees always held valid working visas for the US, as this was an important place to be able to move to quickly when contracts became available. As Carl's working life experiences clearly demonstrate, there is a highly concrete set of politically signifying aspects to his mobility practices.

In another sense, however, Carl and his business partner had managed to dispense with another type of structural constraint, namely the geographic placement of their business. Simply renting a small office space in Hirtshals, part of their business philosophy was to have only a very small local office and no workshop, renting the necessary workshop space wherever the company happened to find its next job, in this way maintaining

maximum mobility and minimum running costs. This clearly was part of their resilience practice, designed to deal with the fact of Hirtshals' marginality in geographic terms.

For Robert, the picture was rather different in terms of structural constraints. Being highly versatile in terms of the great number of both skilled and unskilled jobs he had held (anything from producing soft drinks, to dog food and trailers), he was geographically rather more stationary, usually finding employment within a ½-hour commute from his home in Hirtshals. While Robert ended up working as a guard at the work site during the rig stay of Mærsk Giant, he also found subsequent employment at a rig stay at Esbjerg Harbour some 340 km's to the southwest. This meant that he had to commute back and forth, working for 4-5 days in a row with 12 hour shifts, and a few days off at home in between for a three month period. In fact, Robert was the only one of the nine interviewees having no experience working abroad. Despite the fact that he was frequently out of work and had to rely on supplementary unemployment benefit, Robert had turned down an offer to work permanently as a guard on board a rig, preferring to stay ashore.

Managing to circumnavigate any pressure for further geographic mobility, a number of other factors in his working life highlighted the structural constraints Robert was subjected to, above all the fact of his early career that he was never able to find an apprenticeship place — a fact which most likely was highly decisive for his future career and income levels. But also events and trends far beyond his immediate social reality impacted on the social and material conditions of Robert´s working life, such as the fact that the slaughterhouse outsourced production to a low-wage country after having provided him with a steady job and income for 14 years, or the fact that the global financial crisis had made one of his employers suddenly and unexpectedly go bankrupt.

5.2 Nation Space: Institutional Safeguards

Robert's story, however, also speaks to the importance of institutional safeguards, which was identified by Ibert and Schmidt as important parameters in assessing sources of resilience. Frequently having undergone further training, often in collaboration with the local job centre, there is no doubt that the so-called "active labour market policies" in Denmark[3] had been highly influential in securing Robert new jobs each time he had faced spells of unemployment. At the two most recent times of being made redundant, Robert had made good use of various institutional safeguards. When he was fired from the slaughterhouse, he was part of a mass-redundancy whereby the employer, in accordance with a local agreement between the employer and Robert's union, had to offer retraining for those made redundant. Robert hence took a three week welding course, which immediately paved the way for a new job. Following a period of high growth, this company went bankrupt. "Then I changed over and trained as a guard. It was an idea I had had for several years, but I had never really had the chance to get started on it. So the union and the job centre helped me get it". Following Ibert and Schmidt's line of reasoning, Robert had to wait for an opening in the institutional framework co-determining his potential course of action.

The institutional safeguards that mattered most to Carl´s working life were closely related to his emphasis on having the right certificates and working permits for himself and his employees. Grunow and Leth-Sørensen emphasize that there generally is "a close link between educational attainment and occupational achievements" (2008, p. 179) on the Danish labour market, and they place great emphasis on standardized certificates as an

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[3] The "active labour market policies" are a part of the so-called "flexicurity model", which consistent of three elements: flexible rules for workforce reduction in companies, security for employees in the form of entitlements to unemployment benefits, and finally what is called "the active labour market policy" aimed at providing training and further competences for unemployed people (LO, 2007, p. 15). See Bredgaard and Madsen (Eds.) (2015) for a further discussion of the Danish flexicurity model. See also Grunow and Leth-Sørensen (2008) and LO (2007) for a more specific debate about the significance of "the active labour market policies" in Denmark.

explanation for the high job mobility across firms — worker qualifications are, so to speak, recognizable to other potential employers. For Carl, however, it was not only a question of recognizability, but also competitiveness. Hence, on top of his original training as a ship builder, he had also finished training as a ship engineer *and* as a certified electrical contractor, because

> I could see that I wanted all those tasks, and then somebody would show up with better papers than mine. And I didn't want to just hang around and wait for my turn, so I wanted those papers, too. Then you are master of your own house, no matter whether it is mechanical or electric, we can do anything.

In this way, Carl had managed to turn the highly institutionalized nature of formal qualification on the Danish labour market to his own advantage. This resonates with points raised by Ibert and Schmidt about how "combinations drawing on different niches" (2012, p. 357) may be a way to develop a distinct profile increasing one´s resilience and prospects for employability.

Like within Ibert and Schmidt's study, the unemployment benefit regulations were highly influential in shaping vulnerabilities and resilience among my interviewees. For Robert in particular, the fact that he was able to collect supplementary unemployment benefit along with his sporadic engagements as a guard was highly conducive to his resilience — but unlike in Ibert and Schmidt's study, in Roberts case there was no "territorial mismatch" (Ibert & Schmidt, 2012, p. 355), as all his engagements as guard were on Danish territory and for the same employer. Blossfeld et al. (2008), in their analysis of *Globalization, Uncertainty and Men's Careers,* argue that various types of welfare states, national education systems and labour market regulations "filter" or modify the effects of globalization. Robert is a clear-cut example of how national welfare state systems and labour market regulations impact on one's job opportunities and "filter" the effects of globalization. He relied on the "filtering" of the Danish labour market regulations, for example by collecting supplementary unemployment benefit during periods with little work, or by counterbalancing overtime after working 12-hour shifts for three months in a row during rig stays in Hirtshals and Esbjerg. Often he did not know in advance where or when the next job would be, and sometimes he was contacted in the evening to be asked if he could work during the night. As he expressed it, "It is not all the time, there is a lot to do, we have to learn to live with it".

5.3 Body Space: One's Own Identity

Robert's attitude of taking things in their stride was quite widespread among the interviewees, even to the point of being articulated as part of a local mentality. I was surprised, however, to note how one's body and bodily fitness also turned up as a subject matter in the interviews. Having already quoted Carl for his reason to add to his original training: "I could feel on my body that it wouldn't last if I was going to crawl around in a ship hull for the rest of my life", other interviewees also related stories of physical and mental fitness, as *everybody* seemed to have accommodated to the 12-hour shifts of the oil rigs when they were ashore — including guards like Robert, for whom "250-300 hours of work per month was not unusual during those months". Such working conditions make themselves felt on one's body, once again underscoring the links between vulnerability, space and time. Working long hours had distinct corporal effects.

Ibert and Schmidt (2012) talk about seeing their interviewees through physicality and identity prisms, to understand their vulnerability and resilience in the labour market. My interviewees also made statements during the interview which can be seen as expression of their physical/material conditions as well as their identities. For example, Robert said about his own possibilities for exhibiting working life flexibility:

> Well, I live on my own now [his kids having grown up and left the home, ed.], so it's not a big problem for me. I just

need someone to look after the dog. […Being alone] makes life a little easier in terms of night- and weekend shifts.

It seems clear from the interview with Robert that his personal situation and his close relationship to his dog (which actually often came with him on the job as a guard) was constitutive of his personal resilience practices. This defining presence of his dog may be related to an aspect of practices as understood by Schatzki; namely that sociality is centred on material and nonhuman objects, but this does not mean that sociality is tied to or mediated by such material and nonhuman objects. "That objects play this role [of sometimes being the centre of sociality] is due to the practices concerned, not something that objects force on humans" (Schatzki, 2002, p. 113). In other words, following Schatzki's logic and his "vindication of the unique richness characteristic of human agency" (2002, p. 116), Robert had *chosen* to let his dog play such a role in his life, deciding that it was co-constitutive of his role and position on the labour market.

Carl's personal situation, despite his place attachment, had not made him opt for a settled life in the community, however. Being divorced and no longer living together with his son, he relied on Skype to stay in contact when travelling the world in pursuit of work. As he put it "It's the way it is… My life has always been like that, and that's how I grew up, my own dad travelled a lot, fishing and so on… I couldn't imagine it differently". Despite his high levels of mobility, Carl's relationship to the town of Hirtshals was something he expressed as a strong element in his identity — a point which could be seen as part of his resilience practice. Hence also my previously introduced metaphor of bungy-jumping — no matter how far Carl ventured, he was clearly and strongly tied down in Hirtshals.

Carl even spoke of a particular local mentality, saying "I have also had a lot to do with people further inland, and they just do not have the mentality that we have up here", connecting this idea to attitudes to displaying temporal flexibility in terms of working hours when this was called for (as when an oil rig was docked for repairs and upgrading):

> All of us here descend from fishermen and farmers, and we know damn well that when there is an opportunity to make money, then we need to pitch in until it stops, and then there is a period where there is perhaps not so much to do. So it is ingrained in people who come from around here […]. We know very well, us from the coastal towns, if there is something, well, then hang in. And then you may relax later.

As Carl's statement demonstrates, the particular place in question seems to be imbued with socially significant ideas and attitudes relating to time spent on work, the timing of work and leisure and in which circumstances it is socially acceptable to acknowledge bodily fatigue. Yet, rather than seeing such flexible work organization as a question of "mentality", it could also be construed as "a rational choice that might be seen as a continuation and development of practices found to be functional" (Aure, 2001, p. 100) — a point Aure raises based on analyses of life course interviews in a small rural Norwegian fishing and farming community. Whether ascribing the pattern to "the mentality that we have up here" or interpreting it as a rational response, vulnerability may in both cases be understood as (partly) stemming from the ways in which place specific norms and practices produce expectations regarding bodily performance with potential "damaging or compromising effects resulting from the interdependencies" (Christmann et al., 2012, p. 23). Hence, while Carl's statement clearly articulates an apparent element of choice and pride, the presumed corporeality of stress and burnout (Parkes, 1998) was only indirectly discussed in his — or any of the other — interviews.

5.4 Social Space: Establishing and Maintaining a Network

Ibert and Schmidt (2012) greatly emphasize the importance of establishing and maintaining a network as part

of a resilience strategy to avoid unemployment and ensure an income among their respondents. Networks were also very clearly important for my interviewees, and interestingly all of the seven male interviewees recounted having at least once in their career found a new job through friends or acquaintances, while none of the two women mentioned such connections. Ibert and Schmidt argue that in functional terms, the efficiency of network contacts (which also implies that one has to be personally present at relevant meeting points) "rely on the spatially compact living situations prevalent in urban spaces" (2012, p. 352). However, this is in no way the case, I would surmise, with my interviewees. Ibert and Schmidt´s interviewees were structurally dependent on proximity to musical scenes in highly urbanized space. By contrast, Hirtshals is not highly urbanized — yet, I would argue that the relatively small space of the town worked to the advantage of establishing and maintaining networks for my interviewees. This was the case in two ways: first of all because a lot of local people simply knew each other and frequented the same local places and social circles[4]. But also in a more unexpected and interesting sense, namely that the national discourse about "peripheral Denmark" seemed to activate a counter-reaction emphasizing the qualities seen as immanent in the locality (for a further analysis of this issue, see Pristed Nielsen, 2016).

While Ibert and Schmidt may very well be right in pointing to the importance of the spatial constellations of one's life so far for forming and maintaining networks, the decisive characteristic of social networks among my respondents, however, seemed to comply with Granovetter's classic distinction between strong and weak ties (1973, 1983). For example, Robert's wish to train as a guard stemmed from his keen interest in German Shepherds, and he had friends through the local dog club who had experience working as guards, and some of his former colleagues from the slaughterhouse had also trained as guards when it closed down. So Robert already had a strong network consisting of weak (Granovetter, 1983) bonding (Putnam, 2000) ties[5] within this line of business and good insight into what the job involved, before turning to it. Even the decision to commute to Esbjerg for a three month period (the furthest he had ever went from home for a job) seemed dependent on a locally based network of weak bonding ties, namely the fact that a former colleague from the trailer construction company had gone there with him. When asked in general who in his network had been conducive to finding new jobs whenever needed, he explained "it has mainly been former colleagues. I don´t have a lot of contact with people from my school time, because we moved around […] until I was a teenager". Space is, as Cresswell argues, imbued with socially significant meanings — and having moved around so much in his childhood, Robert had no persistent ties to childhood friends being strong enough to provide him with information about relevant job openings or paving the way for employment. But, as Granovetter argues (1973), weak ties may prove more efficient in finding new employment when needed.

Carl, on the other hand, had strong and lasting contacts also to people he had known since his teenage years, and his current business partner was someone he met when they both were apprentices on the same shipyard in Hirtshals. Carl started his apprenticeship as ship builder already at the age of 16, his current business partner having an apprenticeship in technical sales. Having maintained contact throughout the years, they decided upon the advent of Mærsk Giant to make the leap and start up business together. But Carl had many other important persons in his network who had been of assistance on previous occasions. For example when he made the decision

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[4] This was brought out during the data collection, as I even experienced being contacted unasked by respondents who had heard that I was looking to talk to people who had worked on the rig upgradings.

[5] I define these ties as "weak and bonding", due to the prevalence of acquaintances (rather than, e.g., family members) (Granovetter, 1983) and presumable homogeneity within the network (Putnam, 2000). Some literature (e.g., Lewicka, 2011) seems to conflate the terms weak and bridging on the one hand, and strong and bonding on the other, but this constitutes a misreading of both Granovetter (1983) and Putnam (2000) in my view.

to retrain as ship engineer:

> I have always wanted to be a ship engineer, but at that point in time I had a family and a house and a car, and everything. […] So I contacted the manager at [former apprenticeship place] and asked him if he would hire me, if I started a business on my own. So he thought about it for a while, and then got back to me "is this really what you want?". And I replied, "well, actually, I have always dreamt of becoming a ship engineer". And then he said, "wouldn´t it be better if you work for us and we offer you the training and pay for your books and your salary?". […] Of course I said "yes, thank you".

In this way, Carl managed to combine the best elements of both his weak and strong bonding ties within the local community. Carl did count his blessings and appreciate the significance of a tight knit but unofficial business community for making things happen locally. However, he had deliberately opted out of membership of a formally organized local business association called "Offshore Base Hirtshals", because, as he figured, he might as well enter into collaboration with business partners outside of Hirtshals, and he did not want to hamper the flexibility of his operations. In Putnam´s terms, he deliberately forsook this possibility of strengthening local bonding ties, through a decision to stay open towards the formation of bridging ties to potential new business partners from outside Hirtshals. While both Robert and Carl derived resilience from their local social networks, Carl´s working life decisions in this regard perhaps display a more deliberate and strategic approach to network maintenance than Robert's approach, although both clearly engaged in social practices whose expressions partly depended on the causative or mediating effect of space (Shields, 1991, p. 57).

6. Conclusions

The two narratives analyzed in depth in this article showcase how workers acting on volatile labour markets may activate different aspects of their identities (whether in terms of formal and informal skills, bodily attributes, social contacts, place attachment, economic/social/political rights and entitlements etc.) which they use in carving out a position for themselves in different temporal and spatial contexts. And in some cases, succeeding in finding such a position demands spatial and/or social relocation, whether temporarily or more permanently. One might stay in place but leave a profession to pursue another one; or reversely move through different locations pursuing the same professional career. Stable, single-profession careers within the same place, however, seemed unobtainable (and in some cases undesirable) for most of the interviewees in my study.

Returning to points by Shields, Cresswell and others discussed above, this means that Shields's point about "the contingent juxtaposition of social and economic forces" (1991, p. 57) and Cresswell's ideas about "moral geographies of place and mobility" (2006, p. 26) take on highly concrete meanings, in terms of involving decisions about (im)mobility depending on which aspects of one's identity each person chooses to activate in particular situations of vulnerability in which resilience is required. Simultaneously, the above analysis of Robert and Carl's working life experiences and choices also empirically destabilizes any easy correspondence between movement and mobility, following Cresswell's distinction, which emphasizes the power and politics involved in the notion of mobility as social relations that "involve the production and distribution of power" (2010, p. 21). Hence, it is perfectly possible to ostensibly remain in the same geographic location while perpetually activating and re-activating very different aspects of one's identity and resources as part of a resilience practice. And conversely, it is equally possible to lead a highly migratory life involving perpetual geographic relocation, whilst relying on the same social position and aspects of one's identity as an alternative way of responding to vulnerability.

In their concluding discussion, Ibert and Schmidt point out how "the musical sector brings together many features of labour markets that could accrue increasing significance in modern knowledge societies" (2012, p. 360). I would argue from both theirs and my own case study that the defining characteristic of both types of labour markets is the perpetual requirement for developing resilience practices. Both case studies also speak towards flexibility in terms of skills adaption and possibilities for retraining and/or geographic mobility to obtain new work opportunities as part of such resilience practices. While clearly vulnerable and exposed to forces on volatile labour markets beyond their control, it is evident how both our very different sets of respondents engage in resilience practices based on activation of personal or identity based resources, but also locally embedded networks dependent on the geographic constellations of their lives so far. And these are "interdependencies that come into view" (Christmann et al., 2012, p. 23) more clearly through engaging in a spatial analysis which systematically includes consideration of various types of space; from more or less abstract structural preconditions of time and space to the levels of nation space, body space and social space.

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