UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES



Crafting Valued Old Lives

Quandaries in Danish Home Care

PhD Dissertation 2020 Loa Kristine Teglgaard Christensen

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LOA KRISTINE TEGLGAARD CHRISTENSEN

To my father, Kim Christensen,

who never had the chance to grow old and yet lived through an accelerated process of physical decline, suffering and dependence on other people caring for him, before he passed away in June 2018. For never doubting that I could do whatever I set my mind to do, thank you.



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A Note on Names

All names of interlocutors and institutions are pseudonyms. Throughout the dissertation I refer to my interlocutors by their first names. Regardless of age, authority and social status, this is how Danes address each other, as it is no longer common to use honorifics (*br., fru*) and surnames.

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At the Department of Anthropology at the University of Copenhagen I have profited tremendously from being part of a number of collectives. Among them are the Health and Life Conditions researcher group, full of remarkable medical anthropologists, and the "ageing group" (it never really had an official name), led with warmth and generosity by Nete Schwennesen.

Even though I must admit that I have been anticipating the moment when I could press the "submit button", I have not now reached that point without a sense of ambivalence because that also means I will no longer have my fellow PhD students as colleagues. Among you, I have found

the wisest, most empathetic and generous companions on the at times bumpy and rough PhD journey I could ever have wished for. People talk about harsh and unwelcoming working environments in academia, not least at the bottom of the academic food chain, where everybody is competing for the same few positions. They cannot possibly have been talking about the PhD group in this department, because that description does not fit my experience in any way at all. I thank all of you for sharing this experience with me and for being such a supportive community. In particular, I want to thank Maj Heiselberg, who has been a wonderful, fun and caring friend from day one. I have valued her honesty, pitch-black humor, meticulous readings of considerable parts of my work and always constructive feedback beyond words. Maria Eitzinger, who enrolled in the PhD program at more or less the same time as myself, I want to thank for many wonderful coffee-fueled walk-and-talks along the lakes: let's have more of those! I also extend a special thanks to those of you with whom I have shared an office along the way (as I write this, I am in office number 7!) and who have endured my incurable untidiness: Sidsel Stærmose Busch, Thomas Scott Hughes, Maj Heiselberg (again), Christina Leeson, Iben Louise Karlsen, Lise Røjskjær Pedersen, Mette Marie Vad Karsten, Ayo Marie Degett, and in the final intensive stage, Marie Kofod Svensson, Ida Hartmann Christensen, Anna Ellmer and Caroline Johanne Lillelund.

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