

# **"Hvor kommer du fra?"**

the Challenges and Limitations in the Construction of Danishness

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# Abstract

## English

In this Master's Thesis, I explore the limitations and challenges a non-ethnic Dane can face in constructing the notion of Danishness. The challenges and limitations are all in the forms of different discourses that are prevalent in the Danish society so much so that if a non-ethnic Dane identifies him/herself as Danish, his/her belief and understanding of identity can be limited and challenged by the discourses on what a Dane "ought to" look like. The thesis will rely on Richard Jenkins' "Social Identity" (2014) and theorize it, as well as applying and theorizing his "Being Danish: Paradoxes of Identity in Everyday Life" (2011). For an understanding of discourse, Michel Foucault's definition and description of discourse was chosen. The thesis demonstrates that when it comes to the construction of Danishness, the discourses that are at play are sometimes not obtainable as they are about having a Western white appearance and conforming to the Danish "ways".

## Dansk

I denne kandidatspeciale undersøger jeg de begrænsninger og de udfordringer, som en ikke-etnisk dansker kan stå over for i konstruktionen af forestillingen om danskhed. Udfordringerne og begrænsningerne ligger alle i forskellige former for diskurs, der er fremherskende i det danske samfund, så meget, at hvis en ikke-etnisk dansker identificerer sig som dansk, kan hans / hendes tro og forståelse af identitet begrænses og udfordres af diskurserne om, hvordan en dansker "burde" se ud. Specialet vil stole på Richard Jenkins' "Social Identity" (2014) og teoretisere det, samt anvende og teoretisere hans "Being Danish: Paradoxes of Identity in Everyday Life" (2011). For at forstå diskursen blev Michel Foucaults definition og beskrivelse af diskurs valgt. Specialet demonstrerer, at når det kommer til konstruktionen af danskhed, er de diskurser, der er i spil, sommetider ikke opnåelige, da de handler om at have et vestligt hvidt udseende og tilpasse sig de danske "måder".

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"Lille spejl på væggen der  
du fortæller mig  
vi alle er lige stillet  
Men det passer ikke  
det er kun så længe  
jeg er perfekt  
jeg opnår samme status  
som en majoritetsdanske  
For lige så snart jeg fejler  
peges der på min baggrund  
og så nedgraderes mit status  
fra majoritetsdanske  
til minoritetsdanske  
Jeg bliver betragtet  
dansk i min succes  
men fremmed i min fiasko"

A poem by Özcan Arjulovski  
from his poem collection "Jeg vågner op som fremmed"

# Introduction

Denmark is a tribe – not a country. (Bertel Haarder, Minister of Integration, 2002)<sup>1</sup> Immigration and therefore the notion of national identity have always been amongst the topics discussed in Denmark either by the society, the politicians or the media. Over the last two decades, more far right political parties have taken form and entered the political debate and election in Denmark. Political parties such as Nye Borgerlige<sup>2</sup> and Stram Kurs<sup>3</sup> who present themselves proudly as anti-immigrants, anti-Islam, pro ethnic nationalism, pro national conservatism, and Euroscepticisms. The tone in the political debates have also harshened with regard to the "us" and "them" dichotomy and the immigrants being one of the central problems in Denmark. This is a tendency seen across the Western hemisphere; more and more of the European countries are nominating or electing politicians and parties that belong to the far right, many of which are anti-immigrants and anti-Islam<sup>4</sup> (Yilmaz, 2016:6). Questions of national identity and ethnic nationalism are on the rise. (Down & Joon Han, 2020). Concerns and cries over the freedom of speech and the threat of the collapse of democracy can be heard (Yilmaz, 2016: 2). Many of the problems concerning a host nation are made to be either a direct or indirect cause of immigration. It can be argued that the terminology "immigration" is slowly being an accepted synonym for Muslims or Islamization (Schmidt, 2016: 41). In the latest months of the year 2020, after the French paper Charlie Hebdo republished the cartoons of the Muslim prophet Muhammad, some fatal attacks took place in France and the French President Emmanuel Macron<sup>5</sup>, while condemning these attacks, stated that he will not renounce the caricatures, adding the controversial cartoons were protected under the right to free speech. What is interesting is that in the same country, France, one can be arrested for making anti-Semitic comments. When looking at this stark contrast in treatment, one begs the question of "Why?". Why is it that condescending comments about homosexuals are considered homophobic, condescending comments about women are considered misogynistic, but condescending comments about immigrants and Muslims are protected under freedom of speech? During the height of the COVID19 pandemic, some of the Danish politicians belonging to the far right parties, such as Pernille Vermund accused immigrants of spreading the Corona virus by attending the Eid festivities and funerals, adding that attending peaceful

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<sup>1</sup> Garbi Schmidt (2017) Going beyond methodological presentism: examples from a Copenhagen neighbourhood 1885–2010, *Immigrants & Minorities*, 35:1, 40-58, DOI: [10.1080/02619288.2016.1246968](https://doi.org/10.1080/02619288.2016.1246968)

<sup>2</sup> <https://nyeborgerlige.dk/politik/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://stramkurs.dk/vores-politik/>

<sup>4</sup> [bbc.com/news/world-europe-36130006](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36130006)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/france-muhammad-cartoon-row-what-you-need-to-know/a-55409316>

protests such as #BlackLivesMatter will also cause the virus to spread. Though, a couple of months later, she accused the Danish prime minister Mette Frederiksen of robbing people from the joys and festivities of Christmas celebration, despite the fact that the numbers of people infected with the virus were significantly lower during the Eid festivities than it was during Christmas. Such rhetoric are ever present in Danish politics. The former Minister of Integration, Inger Støjberg stated in a published opposite the editorial page in the Danish newspaper Berlingske Tidende, that "there is a big difference in the ability and will to integrate between a Christian American or Swede or a Muslim Somali or Pakistani." (Schmidt, 2016: 41). PhD and lecturer at University of Southern Denmark, Moritz Schramm, states that by describing part of the Danish society as "us" and part as "them" will only worsen the problem: "We cannot solve the existing problems if we maintain the narrative that only those out there are the problem. There is a need to talk about privileges, the problem of representation and structural racism in Danish society. We need to be able to look inward and begin to spot where we are color blind and do not see when someone is being marginalized. Right now, everyone is talking very hard and brutally about people living in this country. If the political system does not wake up and understand that one has to speak in a different way, then I am not particularly optimistic."<sup>6</sup> Over the past decade, the Danish foreign policy has become stricter; even parties belonging to the far left are in support of such regulations. Over the summer of 2020, the current Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen stated that "Immigrant boys must not make it unsafe to take the S-trains."<sup>7</sup> which caused a lot of controversy, namely because the Prime Minister singled out a group of people that is already discriminated against most, and also because the choice of words used in the statement were deemed as a poor decision. Even when Danish media is not quoting a politician, but only reporting the news, the way immigrants and refugees are written about has changed; the focus is more on their ethnicity, often in relation to negative press such as crime, turf wars, honor killings, suppression of women and child brides<sup>8</sup> and if an incident makes it to the news, the perpetrators ethnicity is almost always mentioned and highlighted, even if usually it has nothing to do with the actual news report (Schouw Broholm, 2018).

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<sup>6</sup> Vi kan ikke løse de eksisterende problemer, hvis vi fastholder fortællingen om, at det kun er dem derude, som er problemet. Der er brug for at tale om privilegier, repræsentationsproblemet og strukturel racisme i det danske samfund. Vi er nødt til at kunne se indad og begynde at få øje på, hvor vi er farveblinde og ikke ser, når nogen bliver marginaliseret. Lige nu taler alle meget hårdt og brutalt om mennesker, der bor i det her land. Hvis det politiske system ikke vågner op og forstå, at man er nødt til at tale på en anden måde, så er jeg ikke specielt optimistisk.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/politik/mette-f-indvandrerdreng-ikke-gore-det-utrygt-tage-s-tog>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/indland/medieundersogelse-muslim-omtales-negativt-og-ensidigt>



## (A Very Personal) Motivation

In order to come up with a problem formulation, I tried to tap into my own personal struggle with the sense of (or lack thereof) belonging I have to Denmark and all that is Danish. I started off by asking myself questions like "why do I feel that I don't belong to Denmark?" or "Why do I feel that I am not part of it?" or "Why I don't feel Danish – whatever that may be." Off the top of my head, I would say it is because I am constantly reminded that I am not a part of Denmark with questions and statements like these: "where are you from? Like originally?" Originally? Am I a fake? I am also reminded through other things that I can only be considered Danish if I do extraordinary; even then I will be a hyphenated Dane: "Afghan-Danish". As a Danish citizen, if I commit a crime, my Danish citizenship will most likely be revoked (depending on the crime) and I will be sent back to Afghanistan. It has happened before. It will happen again. The way I interpret this action is that I am still not fully Danish. When will I be fully Danish? I have lived in Denmark for the correct amount of years, I did take the citizenship test, I did go to an additional interview, I did shake hands with the one politician granting me citizenship. What else do I need to do? I am integrated – whatever integration is. Or do I need to be assimilated? Will assimilation excuse my skin color? My religious background? My ethnicity? No matter how closely I follow the "guidelines" or the "ingredients" to becoming fully Dane, I feel I will never be. Nor will I ever be fully Afghan, so I will forever be in a state of limbo; being two places at once without belonging in any of them. Is it due to discrimination? Is being Danish an exclusive status that hardly any newcomer reaches? Having said these, what I want to study or work with in this paper is the way a hegemonic narrative or definition of Danishness/being Danish may affect the way a non-ethnic Dane views themselves. And how it alters their understanding of themselves and their identity as Dane. When Danishness is communicated and presented by a politician who happens to represent the Danish nation, is not something obtainable, what are the consequences on the notion of identity/understanding of self, amongst non-ethnic Danes. This is also why I have chosen to name this paper "Hvor kommer du fra?" deliberately giving it a Danish title despite the paper being in English, because the question of "where do you come from?" and its context is dependent on Denmark. As someone who has travelled a lot, the only place I have been asked and to this day still am asked this question, is Denmark.

## Clarification of Terms

As there are variations of definitions and viewpoints on what an individual from a certain nationality should be or look like, this short section will provide a clarification on a few terminologies used throughout this paper. In order to refrain from creating any misunderstandings with regard to this matter, and to provide transparency, a list of terminologies together with how this paper defines them is provided below:

- Danishness: this term is quite vague; there is no precise definition for it. However, the way this paper views this term is the things (norms, traditions, objects, food) that belong to the Danish culture. An example of that could be the 'ytringsfrihed' - the freedom of speech, which Danes are quite proud of. Therefore, by Danishness it is referred to unidentified traits that are related to the Danish culture.
- Non-ethnic Danes: this term refers to individuals not born to Danish parents. This could be used instead of immigrants or refugees, though not exclusively as such. The equivalent term in Danish is either indvandrere (immigrant) or flygtninge (refugee).
- Hyphenated Danes: this term refers to individuals who are ethnically of non-Danish descent, but have mixed the two cultures together, ergo the hyphen. An example of that could be to be Afghan-Danish. In the Danish language, there is a different term; efterkommere which translates to descendants. This term is used to describe people born in Denmark, but born into parents who are neither born in Denmark nor Danish citizen.
- Ethnic Danes: this term refers to individuals who are born to Danish parents.

## Problem Definition

What are some of the challenges and limitations in constructions of Danishness? A discourse analysis of Danishness in relation to identity with a point of departure in Soma Mayel and Martin Henriksen's debate in the summer of 2020.

## Research Questions

Prior to starting writing this paper, as I was still in the initial stages of research and corresponding with my supervisor, I began to wonder about certain things. What I did was to

formulate them into questions which I will use a steering wheel in terms of the direction the paper is headed towards. And to use them as a unofficial guideline for how to stay within the "lane".

Seeing as the words we utter matter and contribute to the way a discourse is shaped, to what degree is it acceptable to distinguish between non-ethnic Danes and ethnic Danes in the everyday language?

Seeing as the discourse on non-ethnic Danes and immigrants worsens, what implications does it have on the notion of identity?

Everybody perceives Danishness differently; would it be beneficial to have one singular definition of it? Would it be more 'obtainable'?

## Limitations and Delimitations

### Limitations

In every research, the researcher is held back by certain issues or chooses to hold her/himself back from certain issues. In this paper, I was also limited by certain things; for example when I began the journey of writing my thesis, a global pandemic hit the world and I was limited in my interaction with my supervisor, Doctor Mira Skadegård and the university. The COVID19 pandemic also caused some unrest in my personal life health wise which meant I had to postpone my hand-in deadline by two months. In terms of limitations research wise, the process of collecting data by interviewing the project participants was made difficult, as the Danish government's safety regulations regarding the pandemic, was strict and had to be followed. This meant that I had to meet the project participants outside, or in a big enough room in order to avoid sitting in close proximity. The consequence of this was a very unorthodox interviewing process, which was also later evident in the recordings of the interviews; they were sometimes very difficult to understand as they were inaudible due to the literal distance between me and them. The COVID19 pandemic also prevented me from conducting a focus group interview, which was my initial decision.

## Delimitations

In order to keep this thesis within a specific structure and frame, I delimited myself by setting certain boundaries when it came to choosing how to take on this specific topic. As I will mention in the literature review section, many papers and research have been done in this field revolving around this topic. The way I delimited myself was to not do what most of the papers have done; that is to look at the group that is usually being targeted and talked about: the non-ethnic Danish/immigrant adolescent boys and young men. I took a more general overview towards this issue, because I believe it is an issue that is prevalent in all levels of the society and not only between immigrant boys and young men, although they are the most vulnerable group. Another aspect, in which I delimited myself in, was the fact that I was that I looked mainly in one specific geographical area for project participants. As it will be mentioned later in the Methodological Framework section, I posted an ad on a Facebook page mainly for the residents of Vallensbæk municipality. Vallensbæk is a seaside suburb located in the western part of the Greater Copenhagen area. Statistically speaking, rural areas, countryside and smaller towns tend to have more conservative and sometimes outright racist views towards immigrants, compared to bigger cities.<sup>9</sup> Although I would not categorize Vallensbæk as a "small town", as it is rather close to the Copenhagen area (capital city of Denmark) it is still something to bear in mind.

## Literature Review

The reason why I have decided to present a literature review instead of a state of the art, is because a state of the art is usually associated with the newest or the most current level of development of a given technology or topic. The purpose of a literature review, however, is to not present the newest findings but to create an overview of the knowledge on a particular subject. The topics which I present and discuss in this paper are Danishness and identity; how certain discourses are shaping the notion of identity when it comes to non-ethnic Danes and hyphenated Danes. The recent decades show an increasing number in immigration from the non-western countries to Western countries, in particular Denmark. The reasons for this vary as the ethnic nationalities of the immigrants do; for instance, immigrants from Afghanistan pre- 9/11 era fled due to war, and post 9/11 era due to civil unrest and political instability. In

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<sup>9</sup> [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/225-rurras.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/225-rurras.pdf) accessed on November 23rd, 2020, pages 70-79

the last decade, Syrian refugees have fled Syria because of the ever increasing unrest and war, and new threats such as the ISIS terrorism group. The same applies to the Kurdish population of Iraq and Turkey, leaving their respective countries due to the terrorism that takes place. In the recent decades, the Western states have had to accommodate an increasing number of immigrants and refugees, which has resulted in a more diverse society in terms of ethnicity, religion and culture. This also means that immigrants and refugees have become a central topic of discussion whether it is in the media or in politics. One of the political rhetoric concerning immigrants and refugees is whether they can ever be part of the society. This question further creates two questions; a) whether someone who is not a native to - let us say Denmark - someone who was not born here or someone who has Danish blood (ethnic Danish parents) can feel the same type of devotion and loyalty to Denmark as Danes do? And b) what does it really mean to be part of Denmark, *exempli gratia*, part of the nation? In this thesis, I work with both questions, though I ask the latter question first and get to the former question second. The keywords which I searched for using different searching engines were: Danishness, integration, identity, Denmark, discourse, immigration, sense of belonging, benevolent racism, racism, discrimination, racialization, parallel society, ethnic-Dane, non-Dane, *pære-dansk*, assimilation, and national identity. The search engines which I used were [www.kb.dk](http://www.kb.dk) which stands for *københavns bibliotek* (Copenhagen library) because as a student of Roskilde University I have unlimited access to books, scientific journals, news articles and dissertation papers. Through this website I had also access to various other digital libraries such as SAGE Publications and JSTOR online library. The best feature of the kb.dk website is that you can filter and tailor your search according to your needs; for instance, you can search for finding only done in English or from a specific publisher. The other search engines I used was the Google search engine, with the same keywords I applied in the other search engine. When searched for such keywords (for example, *integration+racism+Denmark*) more than ten thousand results show, dating from 1950-2020. One of the things I noticed when searching for the keywords were that most of the results that the search engine provided were articles or papers done about identity and Danishness with regard to Muslims and/or Islam. The papers were either done from a political, a cultural or a sociological standpoint. Most of them were also focused on education and how the Muslim minority boys are disadvantaged.

(How) can They become like Us? Danish identity politics and the conflicts of 'Muslim relations' (2010)

One of the literature I read was a dissertation paper that was later turned into a book, called "(How) can They become like Us? Danish identity politics and the conflicts of 'Muslim relations'" (2010) by Ulrik Pram Gad, published by University of Copenhagen. The dissertation paper described the Muslim population of Denmark as "They" and the Danes as "Us" - perhaps due to the author's Danish nationality. The dissertation paper begs the question of how the Danish political debates' relate to Muslims - with debate being defined as "negotiations between conflicting ways of performing Danish identity by telling how 'We' differ from Muslims and what to do about that." (Gad, 2010: 21). The theory of the dissertation deals with the ways various policies relating to Muslims add to the radicalization of conflicts between Danes and Muslims. Although the dissertation paper investigates the relation between ethnic-Danes and non-ethnic Danes - the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy - the paper only focuses on the Muslim population and not those who are outside of the religion Islam. This is due to the fact that in the recent years, the Danish politicians and the media (all around the Western world, for that matter) have been focusing a lot on Muslims as a group of people. This goes back to the past two decades' incidents, the earliest incident dating back to the early 2000s with the Twin Tower in New York, USA, being hit by two planes in an act of terrorism. An issue with this dissertation paper is that the whole group which is labeled as "them" are Muslim; this means that the people belonging to this category, their whole identity is boiled down to one single thing: their religion. What this dissertation paper fails to see or acknowledge is the fact that this group of "Muslims" come from various countries with various traditions, languages, customs, norms and ideas. Not to mention the fact that there are two main branches of Islam and within these branches, there are various sub-sects, with each following a particular set of rules - similar, but still very different.

'There is nothing wrong with being a mulatto' Structural discrimination and racialized belonging in Denmark (2018)

This paper which was written by the supervisor of this paper, Dr. Mira Chandhok Skadegård and Iben Jensen in 2018 and published in the Journal of Intercultural Studies, investigates how non-white Danes as well as Danes with mixed racial heritage experience structural discrimination in their everyday lives. This paper describes structural discrimination as a "condition in which discriminatory attitudes are implicit in norms, practices, rules, and (tradition-bound) expectations in regard to behavior. [...] It can be a result of informal

institutions and practices, habits, traditions, contextual and institutional norms, and can have 5 its point of departure in (normative) social, institutional, historical, and/or contextual (social) structures, beliefs and systems." (Jensen & Skadegård, 2018: 4-5). This paper explores how discrimination - whether it is implicit, discursive or underlying - is expressed and resisted in an otherwise neutral interaction. This paper also investigates how the notion of 'Danishness' is discursively equal to 'whiteness'. As the title suggests this paper focuses on the racial side of the 'Danishness' and identity debate, and how certain racially discriminatory or racially definitive and charged terminologies such as "negro" or "mulatto" are normalized and somewhat invisible and therefore part of an everyday conversation and how these forms of naturalization can create a challenge that further complicates the addressing, recognizing and validating discrimination. This paper highlights the dilemmas surrounding the notion of race plays in how non-white Danes as well as mixed Danes navigate and negotiate their entitlement as Danes, and the challenges they face; for instance despite the fact that they considered as insiders in terms of the construction and position within the Danish framework (norms, language, culture, upbringing) they are at the same time discursively positioned as outsiders because of the way they look. In simpler words, they are in a limbo; Danish and not Danish at the same time. The paper concludes by stating that the purpose of the paper was not to investigate whether structural discrimination is a challenge but how it is expressed, navigated and negotiated. I found this paper to be quite inspiring and relevant, as most of the materials I came across were about how non-ethnic Danes view Danishness. This paper inspired me to pursue a different path; to investigate the notion of 'Danishness' from a somewhat "Danish" point of view.

#### "National Identity and Sense of Belonging in a Contemporary Danish Context" (2018)

This Bachelor thesis was written by a group of Roskilde University alumni, Sofie Untersee, Anna Odds Jensen, Jens Toft, Sarah Mariane Qwarnström, and Dea Patricia Larsen in 2018. This Bachelor thesis begs the question of how "hyphenated Danes experience a sense of belonging and the idea of national identity in a Danish contemporary context?" (Jensen et al., 2018: 6) and therefore investigates how the notion of 'Danishness' and national identity is expressed and experienced in people's everyday lives. The authors/researchers of this thesis go about answering their research question by having different participants with mixed cultural and racial heritage (together with Danish citizenship) participate in focus group interviews. Their use of theories and theorists are vastly different from my paper's; "Imagined Communities" by Benedict Anderson, "Nation and Narration" by Homi K. Bhabha, "Social

Identity Theory" by Tajfel and Turner, and "Culturalization of Citizenship" by Tonkens & Duyvendak. However, the overall theme and questions concerning their chosen topic is quite similar. The thesis concludes by stating that the Danish society positions hyphenated Danes into categories which they deem limited and narrow, and that their mixed backgrounds are neither considered nor acknowledged, as one of the project participants stated in the project, she spends one month in Italy and eleven months in Denmark and the majority of her life is also spent in Denmark and because of that she speaks better Danish than Italian, however she is still considered Italian in Denmark (Jensen et al., 2018: 32). The thesis also reached the conclusion that the elements (the Danish language, cultural knowledge, behavior, societal norms) provided in a Danish society that are used as parameters to measure sense of belonging to Denmark, they have actually made the project participants question their own identity and sense of belonging. One of the issues with this thesis was - and it is something they too address in their 'Delimitation' chapter, is that the project participants were mostly (four out of five) from European countries. I believe the more the two cultures are different, the harder it gets to be considered remotely Danish. For instance, for a participant with Danish and German heritage it is far easier to mix the two cultures than it would be for a participant with Danish and Japanese heritage. One of the other issues with this thesis is the fact that the impact of religious difference is not being taken into consideration; even though Denmark is not a very religious nation (like Italy is), I believe the religious differences play a central role in the way an individual's notion of identity and sense of belonging is tested.

"Do They Belong? Host National Boundary Drawing and Immigrants' Identificational Integration" (2017)

This PhD dissertation is written by Kristina Bakkær Simonsen and published by Politica, Department of Political Science at Aarhus University in 2017. The PhD dissertation takes a point of departure in the (then recent) flow of immigration to Western countries, namely Denmark, asking questions such as who of the newcomer immigrants belong to Denmark, and what does it really mean to be part of Denmark? The dissertation differs from the other materials I have included in this chapter; this dissertation investigates the integration of immigrants and refugees as well as other topics such as national identity and the "us" and "them" dichotomy, and that it also brings to attention the role citizenship by naturalization plays. One of the objectives of the dissertation is to provide the readers with "understanding the effects of national boundary drawing by analyzing whether, and if so how, it affects immigrants' sense of national belonging." (Simonsen, 2017: 63). And the other objective of



the dissertation is to "show that although citizenship requirements may not affect immigrants' sense of belonging, politics matters in another way." (Simonsen, 2017: 63). The author and researcher of the dissertation claims that it matters to immigrants how the dichotomy of "us" and "them" is defined; that they are aware of how host society and the host population view them which in turn will have a significant effect on how they perceive discrimination, the notion of being considered as part of the host nation and their overall feelings towards the host nation. The dissertation concludes that although the formal boundaries drawn through citizenship policies are considered as important indicators of inclusion or exclusion of the host nation, her findings suggest otherwise; that the immigrants' sense of belonging is not affected by it. Though, they are mostly affected by the informal and subtle ways in which the host population expresses their views on national membership. That is not to say that the political rhetoric do not affect immigrants; in the dissertation it is stated that the immigrants belonging to the groups that are mostly the target of negative political rhetoric are the ones that are affected the strongest; the immigrants belonging to the "Muslim" category and the immigrants belonging to the lower socio-economic status. I found this paper to be significantly different and inspiring because it takes into account the act and process of citizenship and integration. Though, one of the issues with this paper is that it does not mention a significant part of the whole immigration debate in Denmark; the problems of residence permits. The Danish government has implemented many strict rules and requirements in order to gain permanent resident permit. I believe the researcher should also have explored the relationship between attachment to the host country - Denmark - and the impossibility of obtaining permanent residence permit.

"Between a rock and a hard place: a study of everyday racism, racial discrimination, and racial micro aggressions in contemporary Denmark" (2020)

The article "Between a rock and a hard place: a study of everyday racism, racial discrimination, and racial micro aggressions in contemporary Denmark" was written by Dr. Mira Chandhok Skadegård and Christian Horst in 2020, and published in *Social Identities*, which is a journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture. This article explores the implicit structural discrimination that occurs during the daily activities in the form of communication, interaction and the use of language. Skadegård & Horst state that because such discrimination is so deeply rooted, it does not seem like discrimination but neutral and part of the social norms in Denmark and almost invisible (Skadegård & Horst, 2020: 1). Skadegård & Horst introduce the expression of "knowing the inside/being the outside" and by this they refer to

the racialized minority group or people who share a knowledge on the implicit meanings and implications in order to be able to avoid the consequences of the structural discrimination. This is because as people belonging to the minority group, who are often the target for discrimination, they would therefore be able to distinguish between discrimination compared to their white counterparts belonging to the majority group (Skadegård & Horst, 2020: 2). Skadegård & Horst bring out works done by Peter Hervik who states that the mere presence of racialized individuals in Denmark were enough to cause implicit and explicit discriminatory reactions (Hervik, 2006 in Skadegård & Horst, 2020: 2). Skadegård & Horst put an emphasis on the consequences of the structural discrimination that racialized individuals face from institutions " [...] that when discrimination is expressed from an institution legitimizes and normalizes indirect forms of negative treatment of the 'Others' and makes it a part of everyday normal life of society" (Kamali, 2009 in Skadegård, 2020: 4). The way the article goes about its method of data collection is to interview racialized Danes (which I believe is a different way of saying non-ethnic Dane) about their daily lives and how they experience and navigate through the discrimination they face. The findings of the article point out that they informants do in fact face structural discrimination and when they confront it, it is often met with denial or disbelief as nobody wishes to be associated with being the one discriminating. The article brings up an important, often overlooked, dilemma; because structural discrimination has occurred so much that it has become part of the norm, the racialized individuals are aware of how their protest against discrimination may be perceived as they are also aware that there (usually) is not any ill intent behind the discrimination because it has been so normalized. It all ends with a very uncomfortable situation to be in; both for the parties that discriminated and for the parties that were discriminated against (Skadegård & Horst, 2020: 19). This article is a very informative and insightful article, raising questions and dilemmas that are often overlooked or labeled as "just how things are". Structural discrimination is arguably one of the most difficult places to pinpoint discrimination and to change the way discrimination occurs.

# Methodological Framework

## Theory of Science

The inductive methods of reasons were used and applied to conduct this research. The inductive methods approach is the process of generating theories from the data collected, and in this regard it differs from the deduction methods approach (Lewis-Beck et al, 2004: 487). This means that the data that was collected led to identification of a set of patterns and consistencies that required a set of specific theories to comprehend. "The study of social phenomena requires an understanding of the social worlds that people inhabit, which they have already interpreted by the meanings they produce and reproduce as a necessary part of their everyday activities together " (Lewis-Beck et al, 2004: 509). With this statement in mind, the chosen approach (the inductive method) for this research requires a second level of interpretation and therefore, a qualitative research method is deemed more appropriate, as interpretation of meaning is continuous (Lewis-Beck et al, 2004: 236).

## Ontology and Epistemology

What is ontology? Ontology is the belief about reality and what truth is. This research is applying the philosophy of reality called relativism. The reason why relativist ontology was chosen over realism, is because relativist ontology claims that there are multiple versions of reality and therefore multiple truths. In relativist ontology truth does not exist without meaning and reality is a subjective experience (Lewis-Beck et al, 2004: 952); ergo truth is created by meaning and experience and in order to understand the subject's experience and the context that shape it, one needs to dig deep and interact with them. The chosen ontological and epistemological belief has therefore led this research to be a phenomenological study. Phenomenology is designed to explore lived experiences and as this research revolves around different project participants' personal experiences and their understanding of a specific topic which in this case is Danishness and integration, I deem phenomenology the most appropriate approach. This also means that the best possible way to gain an insight to the project participants' reality, I need to apply a qualitative research method. As mentioned earlier, this research was approached with a relativist ontology and with the chosen epistemology, the research will be conducted from a constructivism research paradigm. This implies that as a researcher, I do not make the assumption that the world is determined in any principled way

by what there may be, but it is rather socially constructed through human interaction and through language (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004: 184). The constructionism research paradigm suggests that social order is understood through categories that appear in social interactions (Bryman, 2001: 18). To put it simply, the world as we know it and the meaning that is emerged through events are constituted in the way human beings interact. Thus, the social world is not part of a pre-existing reality; in a constructionism research paradigm reality or truth is not fixed, it changes and shifts over time. The ontological position of constructionism that I have chosen has therefore shaped the methodology that I have applied in this research, the approach to knowledge, the research strategy, the methods, the empirical study and the analysis.

## A Point of Departure

In the early stages of this research, I was going through different materials that I could make a case study of. The materials that I came across were all revolving around topics like integration and Danishness, and they were in the form of newspaper articles, political campaigns, ads, and political debates. I chose to take a point of departure in a political debate between a member of the Danish political party Radikale Venstre who also works as a paralegal at the Danish Migration Office (Udlændingestyrelsen) and Martin Henriksen who is a Danish politician belonging to the Danish political party Dansk Folkeparti. The premise of the debate is that Soma Mayel who is a dual citizen - one belonging to the country of her birth Afghanistan and one belonging to Denmark, works as a paralegal at the Migration office and Martin Henriksen claims that because of her background, she is not fit for her job as she can be biased due to her heritage and her ethnic background; in fact nobody of mixed heritage should be allowed. Martin Henriksen further claims that Soma Mayel should not be on the committee that decides who is granted Danish citizenship: "When you make important decisions that have an importance to Denmark and for the Danish people, you can't also be a foreign citizen. I can't be sitting [in a committee] in Turkey as a Danish citizen and decide who should have access to Turkey."<sup>10</sup> Martin Henriksen<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> "Når man træffer vigtige afgørelser, der har betydning for Danmark og for det danske folk, kan man ikke også være udenlandsk statsborger. Jeg skal jo heller ikke sidde i Tyrkiet som dansk statsborger og bestemme, hvem der skal have adgang til Tyrkiet."

<sup>11</sup> <https://nyheder.tv2.dk/samfund/2020-07-10-kvinde-med-dobbelt-statsborgerskab-tager-til-genmaele-foeler-sig-krae-nket-af-df> - accessed on September 24th 12:43 pm

Soma Mayel dismisses all the claims and offers a counterpoint that the Migration Office does not look at someone's ethnic background, but they value professionalism. She further states that she is first and foremost a civil servant: "I have worked at the Migration Office since 2015, and I'm content with my objectivity. I'm a paralegal when I'm at work and I abide by the law no matter which administration is serving. But Henriksen offends my personality and my professionalism"<sup>12</sup> Soma Mayel<sup>13</sup>

The reason why I have chosen this specific example as a point of departure in my research, is because this debate, albeit brief and diplomatic, subtly touches upon many topics that are crucial in our time; what it means to be of a foreign descent in Denmark, what subtle racism and prejudice looks like, how someone's ethnicity overshadows all other qualifications, how someone's identity is questioned and how Danishness or being Danish is presented. These keywords are all something that I will address in my empirical study because "the best way to know what people think is to ask them" (a quote by Bower 1973 in Jensen, 2013: 236), and henceforth they will be shaping the way I go about choosing the theoretical framework in order to work toward answering the research question.

## Empirical Study - Qualitative Interviews

This following section will go into detail on how the empirical study was planned, prepared, executed and handled, and I will apply and refer to Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann's book *Doing Interviews* (2018). Kvale and Brinkmann offer a set of steps in order to better plan, conduct and later analyze your qualitative interviews, and most of the points will later be commented on (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2018: 40-41):

- Thematising: Why do we want to interview people? What do we want to gain from it?
- Designing – What do we want to ask them?
- Interviewing – Conducting the interviews
- Transcribing – Transcribing the data from the interviews
- Analyzing – Analyzing the interviews

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<sup>12</sup> "Jeg har arbejdet i Udlændingestyrelsen siden 2015, og jeg hviler i min saglighed. Jeg er jurist, når jeg går på arbejde, og jeg forvalter loven, uanset hvilken regering der sidder. Men Henriksen krænker min personlighed og min faglighed."

<sup>13</sup> from [www.nyheder.tv2.dk](http://www.nyheder.tv2.dk)

- Verifying – How/If the results from our interviews are valid
- Reporting – Finishing the report/project

Thematizing refers to the overall objective of the empirical study, why do I want to interview people, what do I intend to gain from them. My intent was to discover what regular - for the lack of a better word, Danes think and feel about the keywords which I mentioned earlier; integration, Danishness and identity with regard to the two. I also wanted to hear their argumentations and opinion about the Soma Mayel versus Martin Henriksen debate. I interviewed six people in total, three men and three women, two of which were from non-Danish descent. I posted an ad on a private page (though you can become a member) on Facebook called Vallensbæk Portalen. This page is for people who reside in the Vallensbæk municipality and as I had lived there myself a few years ago, I had access to it. The ad I posted was an invitation like post; I explained that I am in the process of writing my Master's thesis and I would like to have a chat with whoever willing to discuss topics such as integration in a Danish context, what it means to be Danish and identity. Immediately I got responses from dozens of people who showed an interest and wanted to participate. Due to the complications caused by the Covid19 and my limited time, I selected six people for my interviews. It should be noted that all the six project participants live in the same geographical area.

The Designing step refers to the topics one wishes to interview the project participants about. As I wished to interview the participants about their understanding of certain social phenomena, I deemed it right to perform qualitative research rather than quantitative knowledge, because: "The interview aims at nuanced accounts of different aspects of the interviewee's life world; it works with words and not with numbers. In qualitative interviews, precision in description and stringency in meaning interpretation correspond to exactness in quantitative measurements." (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2018: 15) Prior to conducting the first interview, I formulated a few open-ended questions involving the keywords that I had gathered from the Soma Mayel versus Martin Henriksen debate. Initially I planned on treating the first interview as a trial run in order to see how the way I had formulated the questions was being reacted to. And whether or not I had missed any other detail or aspect of importance.

The Interviewing step refers to the execution and conduction of the actual interviews. Kvale and Brinkmann suggest starting off the interviews with somewhat easier questions in order to make the participants feel at ease, and slowly delve into the research area. They also advise to introduce a briefing in the beginning of the interview; to briefly state the purpose of the interview, why it is being recorded, and other minor details (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2018: 62). I had designed the interviews to be semi-structured as "The semi-structured life-world interview seeks to obtain descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomenon; it will have a sequence of themes to be covered, as well as some suggested questions." (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2018: 58) because as I mentioned earlier, I am interested in their subjective life experience and their views on a given subject. Therefore, I also left enough time and space for a change of sequence, in case the project participants wanted to share something unrelated or a related anecdote, to allow them to express themselves or elaborate on their own interpretations. When the interviews were over, I always asked the participants whether they wanted to add anything else or if they had any questions, which Kvale and Brinkmann refer to as debriefing (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2018: 63).

The interviews were later transcribed, and prepared for analysis by applying the method of coding and categorization. Kvale and Brinkmann describe the two as such: "Coding involves attaching one or more keywords to a text segment in order to permit later identification of a statement, whereas categorization entails a more systematic conceptualization of a statement, opening the way for quantification" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2018: 121). Prior to the analysis, and after the transcription process was over, the interviews were thoroughly read and looked over in order to get a general overview of the recurring themes and/or codes. In doing so, the process of analyzing also began in terms of focusing on the codes and responses that were reflecting the chosen theories, as well as responses that shed a light on different views. The interviews share similarities but are not identical, and therefore by analyzing the data, I tried to find common grounds. The categorization of the codes helped with providing an overview of the most important things discussed and to get a better understanding of the meanings and also go further with the interpretations of them.

## The Researchers Role

In order to be as transparent as possible, this brief section was added to discuss the researchers role within this paper. The researcher's role is to remain objective and not look at things from a subjective point of view. As everyone is capable of having biases, one needs to be cautious around the research, especially so if it is a research about something that the researcher has an opinion about. When looking at the motivation section, naturally it is clearly stated that this topic is very close to me as I have had to deal with such problematic most of my life. Though I have tried to stay objective and to not let my bias rule the direction of this paper.

## A Sample of the Interview Questions and Notes

In this section, a sample of the interview plan and questions which were asked of the project participants is provided.

Initial stage: pleasantries and introduction

- Welcome and appreciation for participating
- Brief introduction to the project

Initial stage 2.0: the interview begins

- Introduction of the project participant: age, occupation, educational background
- (and anything else they felt like sharing as an introduction to them)

The middle and "heavy" stage:

Integration:

- Would you say there is a clear definition of "integration"?
- How do you think society views integration?
- What is integration according to you?
- What are the "ingredients" to an integrated individual?
- Has integration been successful in Denmark so far?
- If there was a clear definition of integration, would that benefit anyone?
- Is integration assimilation?
- Whose "responsibility" is it for integration to be successful?



- Is it possible to function in a Danish society without being integrated?

#### Danishness

- What is Danishness according to you?
- How do you define "being Danish"?
- Is Danishness obtainable?
- What are "Danish values"?
- Is integration the same as being Danish?
- Does one need to be Danish in order to function in a society?
- Do you ask people "where are you from?" and what lies behind that question?

#### The rhetoric one hears from certain politicians

- Does Denmark have a racism problem?
- Should it/is it (the racism problem) being taken seriously?
- Do you think debates like Soma Mayel vs. Martin Henriksen and certain rhetoric uttered by some politicians, for instance the prime minister saying "indvandrere dreng" has any effect on anyone?

# Theoretical Framework

As mentioned in the introduction of the thesis, this research will focus on the challenges and limitations in the construction of Danishness, with a point of departure in the 2020 political debate between Soma Mayel and Martin Henriksen, and its impact on understanding identity. This section will present several theorists and theories which I have deemed appropriate to apply in my research, and I believe they will serve as a useful framework later for the analysis of my findings. The chosen texts and authors or the division of the theories may seem without any particular coherence to those who are not familiar with them, however the authors of the said texts are all in one way or another complementing, supplementing or acknowledging each other's theory. For instance, Jenkins' social identity theory explores how identification and categorization play a vital role in the way a subject positions themselves within society and how their identity is constructed. The positioning theory will then supplement Jenkins' theory by exploring how the said identities are positioned and navigated within the subject's everyday life, and how individuals are positioned in society. Foucault's theory on discourse will be complemented and made more comprehensible by Philips and Jørgensen's understanding of discourse.

## Social Identity Theory by Richard Jenkins

"Social Identity" (2014) is a book by the English sociology professor Richard Jenkins (1952-), in which he theorizes the concept of identity as a continuous process that is constructed through interaction with other people and bigger social collectives. Jenkins has a social anthropological academic background from University of Sheffield and Cambridge University. As a social anthropologist Jenkins has been involved in many researches within identity, ethnicity, racism and nationalism - to name a few.<sup>14</sup> Through his academic career, he has developed an interest in the science behind mankind's construction of identity. Throughout his book, Jenkins draws upon his own academic and professional experiences within this field and his theories are relying on previous works by Ervin Goffman, Frederick Barth, and George Herbert Mead (Jenkins, 2014: 46). Throughout this subpart, I will present how Jenkins conceptualizes identity and why I have chosen his "social identity" as one of the theories in my research. The main idea in Jenkins' "Social Identity" is that identity is created

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/socstudies/people/emeritus-professors/richard-jenkins>

and/or produced and reproduced through social interactions with others and to what extent the different identities are negotiable. This is why Jenkins is concerned with asking questions like what identity is, how can the concept of identity be defined, or how identity is constructed (Jenkins, 2014). These questions are of relevance to this research as these are topics that were discussed by the project participants in my findings which I will later elaborate on in the analysis section. Jenkins states that in order to fully understand and comprehend who we are, we need to not only know who we are but also who others are and how they see us: "[...] we must decide what we mean by 'identity'. As a very basic starting point, identity is the human capacity – rooted in language – to know 'who's who' (and hence 'what's what'). This involves knowing who we are, knowing who others are, them knowing who we are, us knowing who they think we are and so on." (Jenkins, 2014: 6) Ergo, identity occurs or is constructed in relation and in interaction with others, and without knowing "who's who" or "what's what" we are unable to make social relations and/or interactions. Jenkins investigates the way we identify ourselves and how the understanding of ourselves is maintained when there is a need to share extensive parts of our identity with others (Jenkins, 2014: 9-10). Throughout his work, Jenkins emphasizes that identity is not something that just is, but rather something that is created, which is why in order to grasp the essence of identity, it is of utmost importance to perceive and accept identity as a process (Jenkins, 2014: 28). Jenkins adds that an individual's identity is never definitive but rather continuous and negotiable and ever evolving: "Identifying oneself or others is a matter of meaning, and meaning always involves interaction: agreement and disagreement, convention and innovation, communication and negotiation." (Jenkins 2014: 28). The idea behind identity being a process is partly due to the fact that people reflect on their own as well as others' identity, as negotiation of who one and another is, is an important part of any given society. One of the things the existence of societies is built upon is the notion of identity; people cannot relate to one another and go on to live routine lives without an identification. It would simply not be possible to have a sense of "who is who and what is what" without identification (Jenkins, 2014: 31).

### The Three 'Orders'

According to Jenkins, the world can be understood through three distinct 'orders'; the individual, the interaction and the institutional order:

1. the individual order is the human world as made up of embodied individuals, and what-goes-on-in-their-heads;
2. the interaction order is the human world as constituted in relationships between individuals, in what-goes-on-between-people;
3. The institutional order is the human world of pattern and organization, of established-ways-of-doing-things (Jenkins, 2014: 41-42).

The individual order is about the understanding of the human world, where all individuals are unique, understood in the sense that they possess their own body and thoughts. However, the individual identity fails to make sense on itself outside the human world. This, Jenkins explains, is because the individual and collective identity are to be understood as one order, because they go hand in hand (Jenkins, 2014: 42). The interaction order is about human relationships, where identity being recognized by others is crucial, as individuals cannot identify themselves (Jenkins, 2014: 44). The institutional order is about the world in which the focus is on the individuals as a collective. The institutions are therefore patterns of action that validate the ways of doing things, since it will be recognized by others within the institution as well. The institutional order, being a combination of both the individual as well as the collective, since both are produced, reproduced and involving each other within the institutional order (Jenkins, 2014: 47). The three orders lead to the notion of nominal and virtual identification, as it has been made clear that the recognition of others has implications for the formation of identity.

### The Nominal and the Virtual Identity

Inspired by Goffman, Jenkins draws upon Goffman's theory of virtual and actual identity, where the former type of identity dealing with how one appears to others during interactions, and the latter dealing with the examination of how much the former type of identity holds true - though once again emphasizing that others do not perceive our identity, but rather help creating it (Jenkins, 2014: 102). Taking Goffman's concepts further, Jenkins develops the concepts of nominal and virtual identification. "The nominal, in this context, is the label with which the individual is identified." (Jenkins, 2014: 101). Though Jenkins adds that the labeling is not sufficient for an identity to 'exist'; the virtual identity must also assert itself as they are both part of the same process. The virtual identification, on the other hand, shows itself in the consequences of the identification (Jenkins 2014: 102). The nominal can therefore

be seen as what the individual is identified with, but it is only by the consequences of it that it is considered virtual (Jenkins 2014: 103). The nominal in a group or a category therefore deals with the way a group is identified, while the virtual deals with the way the group behaves or is treated (Jenkins 2014: 112). Thus, the reception of a given identity by others is linked to one's own appearances and actions.

## Categorization

Jenkins argues that a distinction must be made between categories and groups when belonging to a group, because in a collective that identifies and defines itself is a group for itself, and a collective that is identified and defined by others is a category. In agreement with the anthropologist Fredrik Barth, Jenkins states that sending a mere signal about identity is not sufficient, as the signal needs to be accepted by others in order for identity to 'take' (Jenkins, 2014: 46), adding identities therefore need to exist and be negotiated at their boundaries, where the inner (collective identification) and the outer (categorization) meet (Jenkins 2014: 47). "To define the criteria for membership of any set of objects is, at the same time, also to create a boundary, everything beyond which does not belong." (Jenkins, 2014: 105). This means that group identities are a product of the inner collective definitions, where identification applies in relation to equality and diversity. Categorizations are also an identification process, however, in connection with an external collective definition (Jenkins 2014: 108). Jenkins states that when we categorize a collectivity based on apparent similarities that we find and which we believe makes them alike, by default we are also distinguishing ourselves from them; we are creating an 'us' and an 'other': "Defining 'us' involves defining a range of 'them's' also. When we say something about others we are often also saying something about ourselves." (Jenkins, 2014: 104). Jenkins does not distinguish between classification and categorization; both are similar to each other, only used in different aspects. Jenkins further states that categorizing a group or an individual into a category holds a certain power; that despite the fact that a subject may not realize they are a member of a particular category, being identified or classified as such a member may have implications on their lives (depending on the category) (Jenkins, 2014: 109). If we take this example and apply it to groups, a group is consequently real when members of the group recognize themselves as such; the categorization will ever be the reality for any group, looking from the external recognition (Jenkins, 2014: 109). The membership of a group is a relationship between the members, and though there is no personal information shared amongst them, they

are still able to recognize each other as members (Jenkins, 2014: 111). This is because a group can identify itself as it has been identified by others based on others' categorization (Jenkins, 2014: 113). The social categorization too, is of significance in that it creates social identity which then produces social comparisons (Jenkins, 2014: 115). "Individual identity - embedded in the self - does not make sense in isolation from the human world, which consists of others." (Jenkins 2014: 43). Despite the fact that individuals are unique, the self is socially constructed and thus consisting of both inner and outer definitions (Jenkins, 2014: 43). The individual identity, which is something that is built already from childhood, tends to be more resistant to change later in life. With regard to the inner-outer dialectic, Jenkins states: "[...] what people think about us is no less significant than what we think about ourselves. It is not enough simply to assert an identity; that assertion must also be validated, or not, by those with whom we have dealings." (Jenkins, 2014: 44). So, identity must be confirmed by the people who are around us, though Jenkins states that human beings may present themselves or have a particular understanding of themselves, however it cannot always be the same perception or understanding they get in return - something he refers to as "self-image" and "external-image", and unless the said identity is validated, it cannot be "taken on" (Jenkins, 2014: 46) "Not only do we identify ourselves during the internal-external dialectic between self-image and public image, but we identify others and are identified by them in turn." (Jenkins, 2014: 45). In conclusion, the identification and labeling of others have consequences. According to Jenkins, classification is "hierarchical interactionally and socially"; that as identifications seem illogical outside of relationships, be it between an individual or collectives, human beings are aware of their scales of likes and dislikes - to put it simply, human beings will identify one another based on their scales of preferences which will lead to a specific way of treating them: "to identify someone could be enough to decide how to treat her." (Jenkins, 2014: 7).

## Symbolizing Community

Jenkins argues that belonging to a community is a basic need for individuals, because it is one of the most crucial sources of collective identification (Jenkins, 2014: 136). Drawing upon the social anthropologist Anthony Cohen's model of symbolic construction of collective identities, Jenkins applies this model to examine the way human beings create a perception of themselves as well as others as belonging to a particular place. In this context, a community is associated with the notions of equality and diversity which creates a distinct 'us' and 'them' dichotomy (Jenkins, 2014: 137). Jenkins describes a community to be representing

symbolism: "First, symbols generate a sense of shared belonging. A sports team, for example, can excite the allegiance of, thus uniting, all or most of a community's members [...] Second, 'community' is itself a symbolic construct upon which people draw, rhetorically and strategically. Claims to act in the best interests of the 'community' or to represent the 'community' are powerful claims. [...] 'Community' is ideological: it not only says how things are, it says how they should be. It's also 'essentially enshrined in the concept of boundary' (Cohen 1985: 14): it symbolizes exclusion as well as inclusion. [...] Third, community membership means sharing with other community members a similar 'sense of things', participation in a common symbolic domain." (Jenkins, 2014: 138-139). With regard to community, Jenkins brings up the notion of conformity and conformism, suggesting there are two motivating factors behind such behavior with both stemming from the need to belong: "the desire to be correct, and the desire to remain in the good graces of others." with the former having the most impact on "backstage private decision-making," and the latter on the "front-stage public behaviour" (Jenkins, 2014: 152). Jenkins states that non-conforming is also possible when the group membership is "secure in the mainstream." - this means to an individual whose community is rooted in the majority, conformity will not come easy to (Jenkins, 2014:152). And when an individual wishes to join a community, he/she may have to pay a high price, as the individual must submit to the demands of others for his/her identity (Jenkins, 2014: 156).

## Identification

Jenkins introduces the readers to the term "identification" which is a central theme throughout the book: "It is a process – identification – not a 'thing'; it is not something that one can have, or not, it is something that one does." (Jenkins, 2014: 6) and something that happens primarily through social interaction (Jenkins, 2014: 42). Jenkins explains identification as an ongoing process that may not be as trivial as the concept of identity, because when a subject makes wrong identifications about others or themselves, it can have consequences (Jenkins, 2014: 2). According to Jenkins, the external identification as deviance can lead to internal self-identification, and adding that labeling is not always negative as labeling can have and cause positive identities. Though labeling always has implications for an individual's inner self-identification (Jenkins, 2014: 99-102): "Who I have relationships with, and the nature of those relationships – who I identify with – contributes to who I am, and says something to others about me." (Jenkins, 2014: 73). Jenkins does point out however that context plays a

significant role in understanding identity; having required and/or attained a certain identity or identification is dependable on the context that a subject find him/herself in; if I take an example from the findings from this paper, what it means to be Danish in Denmark and what it means being Danish in Dubai are two different things (Jenkins, 2014: 124).

## Ethnicity

In his book "Rethinking Ethnicity" (2008) Jenkins argues that ethnic identity is much like social identity; it is affected by social categorization, and like social identity, it is produced and reproduced through social interaction. Jenkins argues that ethnicity is not necessarily a primary identity but rather found primary socialization, as different researches have suggested that ethnicity can be negotiable: "Individuals may, under appropriate circumstances, change their ethnicity, and sometimes they do. Even the embodied categorizations of 'race' have their flexibilities: 'passing' is not unheard of and, more important, the definitions and significances of 'race' are historically and locally variable."(Jenkins, 2014: 90). Therefore, Jenkins argues that race and ethnicity ought to be regarded as collective identities because one is born into them and therefore they ought to be considered relatively stable identities (Jenkins, 2014: 78).

Jenkins also introduces the readers to the term "classification" which he describes as such: "[...] that classification is rarely neutral [...] At the very least, classification implies evaluation, and often much more. Humans are generally not disinterested classifiers. This is spectacularly so when it comes to classifying our fellow humans (and them us)." (Jenkins, 2014: 7). Jenkins also applies this to institutions; "Institutions are among the more important contexts within which identification becomes consequential. Institutions are established patterns of practice, recognized as such by actors, which have force as 'the way things are done'. Institutionalized identities are distinctive due to their particular combination of the individual and the collective." (Jenkins, 2014: 47). Jenkins states that when institutions or authorities label and/or apply identification, it can have consequences, because the identification they apply is a matter of power relations. And how the external world views us is important: "[...] what people think about us is no less significant than what we think about ourselves. It is not enough simply to assert an identity; that assertion must also be validated, or not, by those with whom we have dealings." (Jenkins, 2014: 44).



## Being Danish

In "Being Danish: Paradoxes of Identity in Everyday Life" (2011) the sociologist and anthropologist Richard Jenkins of the University of Sheffield presents a study that was conducted about the modern Danish identity. The study was done in a Danish provincial town called Skive which is located in the north west of Jutland. In this study Jenkins explores the ways which ethnic identification is produced and reproduced. Jenkins identifies ethnicity as the perceived cultural differences and similarities (Thaler, 2012: 535). During this ethnographic study, Jenkins interacted with the local population of Skive, asking about their everyday lives and engaged with them through conversations. He also interacted with the local school, making him gain insight into the teenage viewpoint on this matter. Despite the fact that the findings collected come from the town of Skive which one informant derives as "the darkest of Jutland, where the crows turn" (Jenkins, 2011: 51), Jenkins tries and is mostly successful at applying the observations he made to the entire nation (Sass, 2012: 700).

## Danish Identity and Danishness

Jenkins draws a picture of Denmark as socially as well as culturally homogenous. Jenkins shares the perception of being Danish as characterized by stability, evident from the way Denmark is being presented to foreigners; that traditionally Danes have been a very homogenous society that has unwritten laws for behavior as well as well-established rules. And that there is an understanding everywhere that everyone is equal. (Jenkins, 2011: 35). The homogeneity of Denmark goes beyond; Jenkins believes that Danes themselves have a homogenous perception of Danishness and Danish identity, because they consider themselves a homogenous people (Jenkins, 2011: 267). The presumption of Danish culture being homogenous suggests that everyone is on the same boat, and that the majority of Danes enjoy the sense of Danishness uniformity (Jenkins, 2011: 88). Being Danish is an everyday ethnicity that an individual lives and experience though usually taken for granted (Jenkins, 2011: 147). Jenkins points out that because most Danes do not consider Denmark to be a multi-ethnic society, the distinction between 'Danes' and 'immigrants' is explicit and clear (Jenkins, 2011: 267). The way Danes meet with the 'others' reinforces the differences between 'us' and 'them' which creates a divide between the two and further reinforces the idea of Danes being identical to themselves and different from immigrants (Jenkins, 2011: 267). The equality and difference manifest inclusion and exclusion, as Danes' group affiliation is characterized by the fact that they are and feel equal (to themselves) which makes them differ from others

(Jenkins, 2011: 105). In Jenkins' "Rethinking Ethnicity" (2008) Jenkins claimed that "on the face of it, there is no nationalism in Denmark" (Jenkins, 2008: 155) and it could be argued that his "Being Danish" (2011) is a response to that statement. Since the very early 2000s, the Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti) which is a far right party has gained popularity and receives more votes than before. One of the things Jenkins ties Danishness to is the nation state, with the state taking a prominent role in the lives of Danes. Jenkins illustrates this with examples such as the registration of the Danish population through a system called CPR (Central Office of Civil Registration), the early enrollment of toddlers in public institutions which is done by a majority of parents, and the fact that religion is "a matter of belonging but not believing" (Thaler, 2012: 534). Jenkins also ties to Danishness or Danish identity is the Danish flag and the value and importance the people of Skive put on it, concluding that the Danish flag has a social role as well as the usual public facets. One of the ways Danes use the Danish flags is during birthdays by either waving the flag in a celebratory manner and/or decorating the birthday cake with flags, or decorating the Christmas trees with garlands made of flags. Danes also use the flag to welcome someone either home or to Denmark, by greeting them with it. The use of the flag in commercials to highlight a sale is also very common (Thaler, 2012: 534). Jenkins observes that Danes are proud of being Danish and the flag is one of the main symbols of Denmark or Danishness (the other being the Royal Family/House). By referring to Billig's "Banal Nationalism" (1995) Jenkins does not consider the extensive love for the flag as banal or nationalist, but rather xenophobic: "the fear of 'their' culture and the visible difference of the 'others', which by many Danes is considered a provocation to their much-beloved egalitarian (imagined or not) society." (Sass, 2012: 701). Although Jenkins claims that the symbols of Danishness are vague, there is still a homogenous understanding of it, and that is because "the most powerful collective symbols are indeed those which are under- rather than over-specified, allowing people to do quite similar things while being quite different, or being quite similar but doing quite different things " (Jenkins, 2011: 112). Jenkins concludes his book by stating that "while many of the features defining 'Danishness' are at best imagined by the greater Danish population, this does not render them imaginary. Being Danish is, as such, an important contribution to understanding how everyday social interactions play into the larger political debates in Danish society." (Sass, 2012: 701).

## Danishness 2.0

A point Jenkins wishes to make an emphasis on is that Danishness is in need of a redefinition and that Danes need to move away from the belief that they are a homogenous group of people who believe that the experience of one common Danishness is rooted in nearly all Danes. The redefinition of Danishness must be accommodating of the cultural and ethnic diversity that prevails in the Danish society (Jenkins, 2011: 268). Therefore, Jenkins argues, Danishness is not and nor ought to be a black and white matter, but very grey; that Denmark – like many other nations and societies – consists of a complex combination of differences and similarities, *id est* multiculturalism which makes it anything but homogenous. And Danes need to acknowledge that. This also means that it is difficult to pinpoint an exact "typical" Danish national culture as the everyday lives of people of Denmark vary (Jenkins, 2011: 220). Jenkins advises to not regard globalization as a threat to Danishness, but rather perceive it as something that will strengthen the notion of Danishness (Jenkins, 2011: 208). Jenkins concludes by stating that whether Denmark or Danes choose to have a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society or not is no longer up to them, as Denmark already is a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nation (Jenkins, 2011: 302). Jenkins observes that the political and public debate regarding immigration and immigrants is often characterized by a hostile tone (Jenkins, 2011: 243). Jenkins explains and justifies this with a historical look back on the mid 1980s when the flow of immigrants was due to international treaty obligations; something that the majority of Danes were unaware of, Jenkins adds. Naturally, the immigrants were not met with open arms. Jenkins also states that Danes felt no obligations towards those immigrants as there were no colonial ties to them. (Jenkins, 2011: 248). Jenkins also criticizes the ways in which it is mostly immigrants that are expected to change and adapt to the Danish norms and values in order for them to become Danes. Jenkins is critical of this because he views the relationship between Danes and immigrants as a mutual process, where both sides learn from each other. Jenkins describes integration as adaptation and claims that in order to create a successful integration, all citizens - regardless if they are native or immigrant – to adapt to new situations (Jenkins 2011: 257). Another aspect that Jenkins is critical of is how the public debate on integration is not on par with reality. Jenkins specially criticizes the rhetoric displayed by the media and politicians, which paints immigrants as a danger and threat to the Danish identity and welfare state (Jenkins, 2011: 303).

## Positioning Theory by Bronwyn Davies and Ron Harré

To further support Jenkins' theory on identity, I have included the Positioning Theory by Davies and Harré. This theory will also illustrate how the hyphenated-Danes and non-Danes are positioned by themselves and others in Denmark. Horace Romano "Rom" Harré (1927-2019) was a New Zealand-British philosopher and psychologist who was the author of many publications in various fields. Bronwyn Davies (1945- ) is a professor of education at James Cook University in Australia. Her focus is on the intersections of social sciences and philosophy. Davies and Harré's Positioning Theory is about how individuals position themselves and are positioned by others in relation to language and discourses and how these positions shape their identity. The following section will take a point of departure in the article "Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves" published in the Journal for the 'Theory of Social Behaviour' in 1990.

The positioning theory is a dynamic theory further developed than the "role" theory (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999: 14). The concept of "position" was first introduced by Holloway (1984) and further developed by Daviess and Harré. Much like Jenkins, Davies and Harré agree that an identity is constructed both by the 'self' and the 'others', in other words it is constructed through social interaction. Davies and Harré also state that in order to know who we are, we need to distinguish ourselves from who we are not; in other words, make sense of 'us' and 'them/others' (Davies & Harré, 1990: 47). Davies and Harré apply the terminology of discursive practices for the ways in which individuals actively produce social as well as psychological realities. They state that "In this context a discourse is to be understood as an institutionalized use of language and language-like sign systems. [...] discourse is a multi-faceted public process through which meanings are progressively and dynamically achieved." (Davies & Harré, 1990: 45-46).

The positioning theory in simpler words is about how an individual is positioned based on his/her profession, race, gender, occupation etc. The idea behind the positioning theory is that the only way to understand and grasp the way a social event is unfolded, the way it is being unfolded, is to understand all the positions that constructed it. For instance, a student doing his/her PhD at Roskilde University could be positioned as both a lecturer (in relation to his/her students) and a student (in relation to his/her own lecturer) depending on the time of the day.

Davies, Harré and van Langenhoven all state that a position is not always fixed; that it is fluid: "An individual emerges through the processes of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which they participate." (Davies & Harré, 1990: 46) and "But positions can and do change." (Harré & van Langenhoven, 1999: 17). By "fixed positions" it is referred to as positions that are natural; for instance an individual born with female genitalia is always positioned as biologically female. Davies and Harré also argue that "Once having taken up a particular position as one's own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of that position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned" (Davies & Harré, 1990: 46). This is quite similar to Jenkins' "categorization"; that individuals act in the way they have been categorized in. This is also something that is important in this research as the positions or categories, in which non-Danes and hyphenated-Danes find themselves in, will have consequences in the way they act or perceive the world/society from.

## Discourse as Theory by Michel Foucault

This section will be dedicated to the concept of discourse and different texts as well as different authors will be meshed together in order to get a better understanding of how Foucault understood discourse as a theory. Michel Foucault (1926-1984) was a French philosopher and psychologist whose main work was on the relation between knowledge and power. The texts being presented is "Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method" (2002) by Marianne W. Jørgensen og Louise J. Philips, "Det Tomme Menneske - introduktion til Michel Foucault" (1992) by Dag Heede, "Ordene og tingene" (1999) and "Talens forfatning" (2001) both by Michel Foucault.

### Spoken Language

Foucault put an emphasis on the importance of language by stating that "[...] words have been given the task and the power to represent thoughts." (Foucault, 1999: 117). This idea shaped his notion of representation; that representation does not bring its meaning from the world and that language must be understood as something that exists prior to any representation. Therefore it is not the world that creates language, but rather it is language that creates the world (Foucault, 1999: 117-118). It is based on this idea that Foucault describes discourse as "[...] the representation remains, it is rolled out in the word signs that manifest it and thereby it becomes a discourse." (Foucault, 1999: 119). Foucault also expressed concern with regard to the dangerous conditions of the spoken language, stating that in every society speech is controlled and selected in accordance with procedures that are tasked with the conjuring of power and dangers (Foucault, 2001: 13). This is however not something I will go into as it is not relevant for this paper. Foucault divides the possibility of discourse analysis into two units; the critical and the genealogical unit (Foucault, 2001: 38) with the former being based on the principle of upheaval and makes the readers to be critical of how discourses are shaped, what interest they have had to fulfill, and what violence and coercion they have committed. The genealogical unit is based on other principles which makes the readers to question how discourses are created; what norms have they had, what conditions for growth or variety have been valid for them (Foucault, 2001: 38). Foucault thus claims that the genealogical unit is about examining the true design of speeches. According to Foucault, discourses in society and individuals are recorded and recognized on the basis of language (Foucault, 1999: 126-127).

## Discourse

In order to understand Foucault's notion of power, one needs to comprehend his understanding of discourse and its relation to power. Foucault understood discourse as such: "We shall call discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation [... Discourse] is made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined. Discourse in this sense is not an ideal, timeless form [...] it is, from beginning to end, historical - a fragment of history [...] posing its own limits, its divisions, its transformations, the specific modes of its temporality." (Foucault 1972: 117 in Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 12). According to Foucault, it is important to note that power and knowledge cannot exist without the other "In our society power exists very closely to knowledge." (Heede, 1992: 44).<sup>15</sup> This is because these notions are codependent; according to Foucault knowledge cannot exist without knowledge constructing power relations. And therefore power relations cannot exist without knowledge (Stormhøj, 2010: 58). In his earlier days, Foucault perceived the notion of power as something negative and suppressive, however his view changed and he perceived it as something rather essential part of the social interaction amongst individuals in a society. Foucault believed that it is not possible for an individual to commit in a society without power relations (Heede, 1992: 37). This means that power is an ontological basic condition of a society: "[...] power relations are deeply rooted in the social nexus and its institutions."<sup>16</sup> (Heede 1992: 44). Therefore, power is rooted in the basic forms of social interactions: "Power is predominantly productive, it is executive, relational, comes from all around (especially from beneath), changing constantly, implies resistance, is strategic and it is specially connected with and supported by the fact that it tells the truth."<sup>17</sup> (Stormhøj, 2010: 57). Hence, power is present in all the levels in a society and its different individuals; this means that power will always be at play in all social relations (Heede, 1992: 39). According to Foucault, power and knowledge are converged in discourses (Stormhøj, 2010: 58). One of the main points about the Foucaultian understanding of discourse is that the subject does not only create discourse, but that discourse also creates the subject. Foucault's argumentation is that knowledge is not only a reflection of reality, but that the truth lies in the discursive construction of different positions that decides what is truth and what is not (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 13). What is recognized as truth, that is knowledge,

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<sup>15</sup> "I vores samfund hænger magten meget tæt sammen med viden."

<sup>16</sup> "... magtrelationerne er dybt rodfæstede i den sociale nexus og dens institutioner."

<sup>17</sup> "Magt er overvejende produktiv, er udøvelse, er relationel, kommer alle vegne fra (især nedefra), forandres konstant, implicerer modstand, er strategisk samt er især forbundet med og støtter sig på frembringelse af sandhed."

will always be in relation to power: "Every utterance, every discursive shaping of a phenomenon, is inevitably an expression of an exercise of power." (Stormhøj, 2010: 58). Discourses are both the goal and the means of power. Discourses are both what is fought for at the same time as it is what manifests the struggle (Stormhøj, 2010: 58). Foucault claims that it is not possible to find out the truth, as it is not possible to speak from a position that lies outside the discourses, as truth effects are constructed within the discourses (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 23). Discourse is also closely linked to the idea of subjectivation, as it is through the discourses that the different subject positions in the different epochs are made available to a subject (Heede, 1992: 82). It can thus be said that discourses create the framework for the way in which "things" are spoken in certain contexts at a given time.

## Power

Going back to Foucault's understanding of power, Foucault sees all individuals as empty shells, which throughout life are filled with norms and concepts that create the individuals as subjects. Individuals thus become a product of power. This is done through subjectivation, which is a central concept in Foucault's understanding of power (Heede, 1992: 14). Subjectivation occurs when these norms and concepts, which make up the subject, are directed at the individual in a "disciplinary factor in a process that locks the individual's position in the power totalitarian [...]"<sup>18</sup> (Heede, 1992: 29). Power thus produces subjects that bind the individual in his own understanding of himself. This can thus be understood as the power installing our understanding of our identity, id est who we are, in the body. At the same time, Foucault claims: "Power presupposes free subjects [...] By this we mean: individual or collective subjects facing a field of possibility, where several modes of behavior, reactions and possibilities for action can be initiated [...] Power and freedom are thus not mutually exclusive [...]"<sup>19</sup> (Foucault in Heede, 1992: 43). Power is only power if the individual in principle can choose to do something other than what power offers him, but is inclined to follow power anyway. Power is thus not coercion, but is instead: "[...] a control of other people's fields of possibility."<sup>20</sup> (Heede, 1992: 43). Foucault describes power as always being: "[...] at least a double-sided magnitude: power will always breed some form of resistance, and where there is power there is counter-power." (Heede 1992: 40). Every action has a reaction.

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<sup>18</sup> "disciplineringsfaktor i en proces der fastlåser den enkeltes placering i magttotaliteten [...]"

<sup>19</sup> "Magt forudsætter frie subjekter [...] Herved forstår vi: individuelle eller kollektive subjekter der står overfor et mulighedsfelt, hvor adskillige adfærdsmåder, reaktioner og handlingsmuligheder kan iværksættes [...] Magt og frihed udelukker således ikke hinanden [...]"

<sup>20</sup> "[...] en styring af andre menneskers mulighedsfelter."



This can be applied to the way an individual is being put in a certain category that they disagree with.

## Subject Position

Foucault was inspired by his teacher Louis Althusser, who presented the concept of subject positions. According to Foucault, there are several subject positions within discourses; positions formed and already given in the discourse. Jørgensen and Phillips take this as their starting point. Subjects can thus be imposed on or deprived of subject positions or positions through subjectivation mechanisms. In addition, imposed identities can be chosen to be recorded or abandoned through self-expression (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 14). And when a subject relinquishes one subject position, he automatically assumes another. Going back to Foucault's description of what discourse is "We shall call discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation" (Foucault 1972: 117 in Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002: 12), and the reason Foucault's notion of power and knowledge were brought up in this section, is because Foucault deals with power in the shape of discourses, and discourses create a type of norm which consist of discursive practices that essentially determine who can and who cannot speak; what can and what cannot be spoken about, and the way in which something can become and some things cannot be said. This idea is of importance for this project as the project participants are creating discourses in which other individuals are being brought in certain positions.

# Analytical Framework

## Introduction to the project participants

For a more enriching read of the analysis, I have decided to include a short introductory chapter on the project participants of this project. The only changes I have made are to the names, which the participants were okay with. I have changed the participants' names to numbers, however for the rest of this paper, when they are referred to as a single entity, they will be referred to as their interview number; interviewee 1, interviewee 2 etc. Though as a whole, they will be referred to as project participants. The only reason for this distinction is because "interviewee" is shorter than "project participant". Another noteworthy point is to be aware of that fact that the interviews were all conducted in Danish, and the English translation may have certain things lost in translation, which is why the original Danish transcriptions are included as footnotes.

### Project participant 1

Interviewee 1 is a woman, she is 37 years old, originally from Eastern Europe, who has lived here since the year 2008. She moved to Denmark because her husband found a job in Denmark and she was allowed to move with him through the laws of family reunification. She has since divorced, and lives with her 8 year old daughter in Vallensbæk. During her time in Denmark, she has gone to "sprogskole" which translates to language school to learn Danish, and she has worked in a variety of places within childcare. She has an educational background as a pediatrician, but because of the foreign diploma regulations, she has had to specialize in a specific field which she has chosen to be a children's psychiatrist. She became a Danish citizen five months ago through naturalization.

### Project participant 2

Interviewee 2 is a 55 year old Danish man, married, who has resided in Vallensbæk since 2004. He works within IT security in Copenhagen, and has an educational background within Politics and Economics, Master's degree.

### Project participant 3

Interviewee 3 is a 37 year old married woman, originally of Eastern Europe descent, who has lived in Denmark for nearly seven years. She was 7 years old when she, together with her parents, moved to Germany from a country in Eastern Europe, and is a German citizen. When

she met her Danish husband in Uganda, they moved to Denmark and as of today she has two children. Her educational background is within Conflict Resolution and International Economy, Master's degree. Today she works within social housing.

#### Project participant 4

Interviewee 4 is a 45 year old married Danish woman, with two children. Her educational background is Graphic Design, which she has worked with for twenty years, but now as a part time job. She also has a degree in Psychotherapy with a specialization in hypnosis, which she works with part time. She is also a volunteer in Headspace, which is an organization for young people between the ages of 12-25 to come and talk about difficulties they are dealing with, such as anxiety or depression, or if they need help education/career wise.

#### Project participant 5

Interviewee 5 is a 50 year old Danish man, still married to his first girlfriend whom he met at the age of 16. His educational background is ten years of primary school (folkeskole) and a secretarial education (kontoruddannelse). He has also served in Danish Defense (Forsvaret) as per his conscription duty. He has two adult children. For the past twenty years, he has worked in the same workplace as a salesman.

#### Project participant 6

Interviewee 6 is a 64 years old Danish man. He is politically active under the Social Democrat's party, and he is also a high ranking politician in the Vallensbæk Municipality. He is married and has resided in Vallensbæk for more than twenty years. He has 40 years of experience from the police force, as police commissioner, police officer and chief of police. He has since retired from the force and ever since 2017, he has been working for a housing company within social housing. One of his jobs is to dissolve the "parallel society" within Mjølnerparken and help with the relocation of residents into other places.

## Analysis of the Findings

In the following section, I will apply the theories that were introduced in the Theoretical Framework chapter to analyze the findings. The following analysis will analyze which discourses come into play when the project participants are asked about integration, Danishness and identity.

### "Danishness" equals "Whiteness"

Throughout the interviews, when the conversation was about integration and whether Danishness is obtainable, some of the project participants commented on the way someone (non-ethnic Danish) looks or what (non-Western) names they are called; that these qualities or lack of it, makes integration or being Danish hard and sometimes impossible. This is an example of what Jenkins referred to as categorization; the participants are focused on what distinguishes the non-ethnic Danes to ethnic-Danes that they categorize them as not-integrated or unable to integrate, let alone considered Danish:

"But you are not a Dane, 'cause you don't look like a Dane."<sup>21</sup>

Interviewee 3, to me, in response to my explanation to "Do you feel Danish?"

"Yes? It's very ethnic, or how are you supposed to say it?"<sup>22</sup>

Interviewee 5, to me, in response to me asking whether he meant my background by asking me "Where are you from?"

"Yes, well I have recently read a really good article by a mother. She is herself white and has two black children. It doesn't say [in the article] whether it is the father that's African or has she adopted, it doesn't say anything about it. But it's about how those two girls experience Danishness and racism, even when they have lived here all their lives. And that it is exactly old men and women in the bus who ask them "So, where are you from little friends?", [the girls' response] "Well, I'm from Albertslund.", "Oh, well but, where are you really from?" and they keep going, right? "Well, I'm still from Albertslund?" I mean I understand

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<sup>21</sup> "Men du er ikke en dansker, for du ligner ikke en dansker."

<sup>22</sup> "Ja? Det er meget etnisk, eller hvad man måske skal kalde det?"

that you can get tired of having to answer such questions every day."<sup>23</sup> -

Interviewee 3

These three examples are an illustration of discourses on how someone's appearance limits one's belonging to Danishness. Jenkins social identity theory states that in order to identify someone, one needs to base this identification on the similarities that they share as well as the differences that distinguish them. Already by looking at someone, the participants categorize them in a certain category and labeling them as non-ethnic Dane. This is what Jenkins referred to as Denmark believing that it is a homogenous society, meaning everyone is alike. When asking how Interviewee 5 could tell two of the boys in his son's soccer team were not Danish, he stated that he could tell not only by their color of the skin but also their names:

"Not only their skin color, but also their names."<sup>24</sup> - Interviewee 5

Even non-ethnic Danes that are considered Danish are still differentiated because of their ethnicity. As one of the other participants say:

"I have colleagues, and former colleagues, that are from Iran. Who fled. They are Christians and communists. So, the father moved to Denmark, and has lived here all his life and has been a police officer and things like that. He is completely Danish, but he can still be considered as an Iranian because he has some features. I have actually never seen him myself. But my colleague there, he works also in the bank and speaks Danish. He is pæredansk [pure/native Danish]. But you can see on him that he is from another place. So that ethnicity, and placement of a certain population group, in that way."<sup>25</sup> - Interviewee 2

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<sup>23</sup> "Ja altså jeg har også for nyligt læst en rigtig god klumme af en mor. Hun er selv hvid og har to sorte børn. Der står ingenting om det er faren, som er afrikansk eller ligesom herinde, eller om hun har adopteret, det står der ikke noget om. Men det handler om hvordan de der piger oplever danskhed, og racisme også selvom de har boet her hele deres liv. Og at det netop er gamle mænd og damer i bussen som spørger 'nåh hvor kommer du fra lille ven?', 'Jamen jeg kommer fra Albertslund'. 'Nåh, jamen altså, hvor kommer du rigtig fra?' og bliver hvad, ikke? 'Altså jeg kommer stadig fra Albertslund?' Altså så det kan jeg da godt forstå at man kan blive træt af at skulle svare på hver eneste dag."

<sup>24</sup> "Ikke kun deres hudfarve, deres navn."

<sup>25</sup> "Jeg har jo kollegaer, og tidligere kollegaer, som kommer fra Iran af. Som er flygtede. De er kristne og kommunister. Så faren flyttede til Danmark og har boet her hele livet og været politimand og sådan noget. Han er jo fuldstændig dansk, men han kan jo stadig lide at blive betragtet som iraner fordi han har jo noget udseende. Jeg har faktisk aldrig set ham. Men min kollega der, han arbejder også i bankvæsenet og er dansktalende. Er pæredansk. Men du kan godt se på ham at han kommer fra et andet sted. Så den der etnicitet, og placeringen af nogle bestemte befolkningsgrupper, på den måde."

Despite the fact that the two colleagues interviewee 2 is speaking of, are both in his regard integrated and Danish, there are still certain characteristics that are holding them back from being considered Danish - even if it is only appearance-wise. Following his comment from above, interviewee 5 states that names make a difference; that having a Western name could make things easier:

"There is a guy who is a candidate for the Racial Left's Party here in Vallensbæk. His name is Jens Abdelkader Dahmani. I don't know if you know Jens. One day by my apartment, I asked him if he was born as "Jens". I have a hard time believing it. I think he has done it [changed names] because of practical reasons."<sup>26</sup> - Interviewee 5

For the sake of clarification, the politician being mentioned here, was in fact born as "Jens". Nonetheless, it highlights the fact that Interviewee 5 believes having a Danish name is practical and makes things easier:

"Yes, and I will say this "Should it be necessary?" [To change names into something Danish] No! It should not! But! If it makes things easier in the world, so why not do it? If it specially makes certain people to stop seeing you as a 'foreigner'."<sup>27</sup> However, he immediately states he would never do it himself: "And I'm just thinking, if it had been me and I was in a place and was named [his name] and people found it to be strange and difficult, then I could maintain and become upset, "Well, that's what my name is, you just have to learn to deal with it!"."<sup>28</sup> - Interviewee 5

Another participant states:

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<sup>26</sup> "Der er en gut der stiller op for Radikale Venstre her i Vallensbæk. Han hedder Jens Abdelkader Dahmani. Jeg ved ikke om du kender Jens. En dag ved min lejlighed, der spurgte jeg ham om han var blevet født Jens. Det har jeg lidt svært at tro på. Jeg tror han har gjort det her af praktiske hensyn. "

<sup>27</sup> "Ja, og jeg vil sige "burde det være nødvendig?" Ej! Det burde det ikke! Men! Hvis det gøre verden nemmere, hvorfor så ikke gøre det? Hvis det gør at især nogle mennesker at de kan holde op med at se dig som 'fremmed'."

<sup>28</sup> "Og jeg tænker bare, hvis det var mig og jeg stod i et sted og hed [hans navn], og folk, de synes at det var mærkeligt og det var svært, så kunne jeg fastholde til at blive gas på i hovedet "jamen det nu engang det jeg hedder, det må I lære at finde jer i det!"."

"But look at me, I have a picture on my resume, I don't look like someone who isn't Danish. My last name is [something Danish]. Like my husband's. My first name is [something Western]. I mean there is nothing [non-Danish like]. But if you look at my resume and then there are many things that aren't Danish. And I wrote eighty [job] applications or more than eighty applications, and have been to zero job interviews"<sup>29</sup>  
- Interviewee 3

All the examples regarding names show an interesting dilemma; that despite having a Danish name and last name, or even 'looking' Danish, you can still be categorized as someone who is not, either because of the way you look or because of certain other things that make you seem not Danish. Jenkins mentioned that by categorizing an individual or a group to a certain category, holds a certain power, and may have implications for the individual or group being categorized. In other words, even the details that do not include the obvious (such as name or appearance) may have implications; as Interviewee 3 mentioned, despite having Danish first and last name and years of experience, she was not offered any job interviews because on her resume she had stated where she had studied and worked.

### Danish Superiority Complex

The project participants all at some point expressed the Danish superiority complex - either explicitly or implicitly. Jenkins stated that Danes take pride in their achievement and it is evident from the finding that a discourse on "Danish ways being better" exists. Continuing from the previous section, Interviewee 3 provides yet another example:

"I have actually a friend, or one of my husband's old friends. He is the right example on how difficult it can be. But he is from the Faroe Islands. He has a Master's degree from London School of Economics in Business. [...] but when he comes to Denmark, it will mean "Oh wow, someone has a well-recognized education from a really good and recognized institution." He couldn't find a job, damn it, at all! Because the thing with LSE, you couldn't - it didn't say anything. So he simply took a Master's degree from CBS [Copenhagen Business School].

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<sup>29</sup> "Men så se på mig, jeg har et billede på mit cv, jeg ligner ikke nogen der ikke er dansker. Mit efternavn er [dansk efternavn]. Ligesom min mand. Mit fornavn er [vestlige navn]. Altså der er ikke noget. Men så kigger man på mit cv og så er der rigtig mange ting der ikke er dansk. Og jeg har skrevet firs ansøgninger eller mere end firs ansøgninger, og har været til nul jobsamtaler."

And all of a sudden he got really good job offers. Because it was, yeah, it was like "in Denmark we know best" and "we educate the best in Denmark", but I can't really see CBS on the list of 100 best institutions in the world when it's for graduate degrees."<sup>30</sup> - Interviewee 3

This sentiment was shared by another project participant, which she linked back to her own experience when she started working. Linking this back to Davies & Harré Positioning theory; because there is a discourse on 'migrant workers' or 'foreign degrees' the project participant is positioned in such a discourse:

"Yes, there have been many [problems]. I have been very close to hanging up my gloves. Like my friend. Because you are looked down at many times, and you get so tired and provoked by it. Also the first time I had to go to the doctor, right? And even though I'm also a doctor, then it's still not the same. And when you enter the work field. Then the foreign doctors, they are like [inaudible], poorly educated, or stupid, or I don't know, there are many things."<sup>31</sup> She continues: "Yes, I have actually had a bad experience, when I was sent to an employment conversation, and one of the first questions was "But now you can share, why is it that your healthcare system is worse than ours? What is it that works poorly for you than here in Denmark? What is it that you all haven't studied?" or "Is it true that you studied medicine in Russian?".<sup>32</sup> - Interviewee 1

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<sup>30</sup> "Jeg har faktisk en ven, eller en af min mands gamle venner. Han er det rette eksempel på hvor svært det kan være. Men han er fra Færøerne. Han har en master fra London School of Economics, i Business. [...] men når han så kommer til Danmark, så vil det betyder 'Hold da op, der er nogen der har en rigtig god anerkendt uddannelse fra en rigtig god anerkendt institution'. Han kunne fandme ikke finde et arbejde, overhovedet! Fordi det der med LSI, det kunne man ikke, det sagde ingenting. Så han tog simpelthen en master på CBS. Og så pludselig fik han rigtig gode arbejdstilbud. Men det var fordi, ja, der var sådan en slags 'i Danmark ved vi det bedst' og 'i Danmark uddanner vi de bedste', men jeg kan ikke rigtig se CBS inden på de første 100 institutioner i verden når det gælder videregående uddannelser."

<sup>31</sup> "Ja, der var mange [problemer]. Jeg var også mange gange tæt på at kaste håndklædet i ringen. Ligesom min veninde. Fordi man bliver sat ned rigtig mange gange, og man bliver så træt og så provokeret af det. Også når man første gang skulle til lægen, ikke? Også selvom jeg også selv er læge, så er det alligevel ikke det samme. Også når man kommer ud på arbejdsmarkedet. Så de udenlandske læger det er sådan [inaudible], dårligt uddannede, eller dumme, eller jeg ved det ikke, der er mange ting."

<sup>32</sup> "Ja, jeg har faktisk haft en dårlig oplevelse hvor, da jeg blev sendt til ansættelsessamtale, og hvor en af de første spørgsmål var: men nu kan du få dele, hvorfor er jeres sundhedsvæsen dårligere end vores, hvad er det som fungerer værre hos jer end i Danmark? Hvad er det I ikke har læst? Eller, kan det være rigtigt at du har studeret medicin på russisk?"



The discourse of foreign education or foreign work experience being inferior is prevalent in Denmark; that having anything less than that is not as good. Another project participant told of a similar story, but from a different aspect:

"I do experience that - [that people with names that are not Danish have a difficulty finding jobs] And it's not about their background, it's more about their housing. There are some of the young ones in Mjølnerparken, it's not about their names, but about their place of residence. So when they have to apply for jobs, or apply for a place for education, they tell them that they live just outside of Nørrebro. And that they don't live in Mjølnerparken. It gives them a bit of a challenge."<sup>33</sup> - Interviewee 6

### Systematic Limitations

Even when non-ethnic Danes have an education from Denmark it is still difficult for them to find a job because they are categorized as people who are from the "ghetto" or the politically correct term "parallel societies". The description of a parallel society according to the Danish government is society that is mentally isolated and follows its own norms and rules, without the wish to be part of the Danish society. Jenkins stated that institutions are amongst those whose way of identification becomes consequential. This means when the government issues a description of what a parallel society is, and when a specific area is then labeled as a parallel society - like Mjølnerparken - the residents inhabiting that area are automatically also labeled as individuals who do not have an interest to partake in the Danish society. This is a point that Interviewee 3 makes in her interview:

"We work a lot with this. Or we try to work with it. My personal opinion on this on two levels. Because of course you are creating parallel societies by having regular residential areas that you define as ghettos. So you are actually creating these parallel societies yourself by saying that these people that live here are socially disadvantaged. But even in these residential areas, you have a many, many variety of ethnicities. But when you look at the municipality, most of the

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<sup>33</sup> "Der oplever jeg at - Og det handler jo ikke noget om deres baggrund, det handler mere om deres bolig. Der er nogle af de unge derude i Mjølnerparken, det er ikke deres navn der gælder, men det er deres bopæl. Så når de skal søge arbejde, søge ind på et studie, så fortæller de at de bor på ydre Nørrebro. Og ikke at de bor i Mjølnerparken. Det giver dem altså lidt udfordringer."

municipalities allocate 30% of the public housing, but also in the disadvantaged ghetto areas, so you are also part of creating it. 'Cause then you are also allocating many Turks, or allocating many Moroccans or I don't know, Syrians? Because it is cheaper to live [there] and the rent is low."<sup>34</sup> - Interviewee 3

There is a dilemma highlighted here; that the issue with regard to the parallel societies starts and is created within the system. Some of the project participants held the government or the official institutions accountable for why - for instance, integration has failed:

"And then they wanted to go to university or out and get a job, right? And they just had difficulty getting a job, these Ali and Achmed and Muhammed, Murad. The employers weren't good with employing them. And then at the same time they witness how "Big Abde" and "Little Abde", they go around with big cars, private drivers and all that. Then it was obvious to join the gang environment instead. It was, really. And how to say it, the Danish society that has failed, by not providing enough trust to actually recognizing that there are worthy ones amongst our immigrants."<sup>35</sup> - Interviewee 6

This quote presents two problems; one is the discourse on immigrant boys being most vulnerable. It is a widely known fact that immigrant or non-ethnic Danish men/young men are often overlooked or put into specific boxes when it comes to being part of the Danish society. The other problem presented here is the consequence of being categorized and classified as something which you are not, or are, but wish to break free. Like Jenkins' categorization, Davies & Harre stated that individuals will see the world through the positions in which individuals are positioned in. The previous quote highlights exactly that; that if a non-ethnic Dane is being looked over in the job market due to his ethnicity or the fact that he lives in an

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<sup>34</sup> "Vi arbejder jo rigtig meget med det. Eller vi prøver at arbejde med det. Mit personlige syn på det er lidt to fold. Fordi selvfølgelig skaber du parallelsamfund ved at have almindelige boligområder som du definerer som ghettoområder. Så skaber du jo faktisk selv det der parallelsamfund ved at du siger at de her mennesker der bor det her sted, de er socialt udsatte. Men selv i de her boligområder har du en meget, meget varieret etnisk mix. Men når du kigger på kommunen, de fleste kommuner anviser selv 30% af boligerne i det almene, også i de her udsatte ghettoområder, så er du jo også med til at skabe det. For så anviser du jo rigtig mange tyrkere, eller anviser rigtig mange marokkanere eller hvad ved jeg Syriske? Fordi der er billigt at bo og huslejen er lav."

<sup>35</sup> "Og så vil de gerne enten på universitetet eller ud og arbejde, ikke? Og de havde bare svært ved at få arbejde nogle af de der, Ali og Achmed og Muhammed, Murad. Arbejdsgiverne var ikke gode til at ansætte dem. Og så kunne de jo samtidig se hvordan at 'Store Abde' og 'Lille Abde', de rendte rundt med store biler, privatchauffører og alt sådan noget. Så var det jo nærliggende at lade sig tilknyttet bandemiljøet i stedet for. Det, det var det. Og der har vi, hvad kan man sige, det danske samfund svigtet, ved ikke at have tillid nok til at der rent faktisk var en, nogle guldruber hos nogle af vores indvandrere."

area labeled as parallel society, that individual will begin to see the world through that position.

## Language and Label

Another project participant talks about the consequences of being labeled as an "immigrant boy" (indvandrerdreng) may lead to unforgivable events because - as Davies & Harré stated in the Positioning theory, individuals are positioned by others in relation to language and discourse, and how these positions shape their identity. The following quote is an example of that:

"Well, it's obvious. Suddenly, you are being alienated and being told "you are not good enough" or "you are not really one of us" and I don't have an easy solution for this. They form groups, "they", those immigrant boys. Yeah, it's damned, there is nobody that wants them, and if they cannot be part of things, well yes so they end up being together. And obviously, if they are marginalized like that, well then we also risk them becoming extremists. It will be a lot easier to go and influence them to be some sort of jihadist, I mean it's that, it's like the classic psychology this. If you take a group and scold one, and then scold one more, and treat these two differently, then these who are left, they will be strengthened in the fact that they are different. And these two will obviously have to stand together against all of those."<sup>36</sup> - Interviewee 5

This is also what Jenkins referred to as classification; that classification is not neutral and individuals are aware of their scale of preferences; this means that when identifying someone, we also know how we will treat them. Being different or not belonging is a theme that is prevalent in nearly all the interviews; one of the project participants who works with such topics professionally, states:

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<sup>36</sup> "Jamen det er jo klart. Der bliver man pludselig fremmedgjort og bliver gjort "du ikke god nok" eller "du ikke rigtig en af os" og det har jeg ikke en nem løsning på. De grupperer sig, "de der" de der indvandredreng. Ja det er fanden, der er jo ingen der vil have dem med, og hvis ikke de må være med andre steder, ja så ender de jo med at være sammen. Og det er jo klart, hvis de bliver marginaliseret på den måde, jamen så risikerer vi jo også at de bliver ekstremister. Det bliver jo meget nemmere og gå ind og påvirke dem til en eller anden jihadisme hvis du har, altså det er jo sådan en, det er jo næsten klassisk psykologi det her. Hvis du tager en gruppe og skælder én ud, og skælder en mere ud, og behandler de to anderledes, så dem her der er tilbage, de bliver bestyrket i at de her to de er anderledes. Og de her to de skal i hvert fald stå sammen mod alle dem der."

"We are really good at dividing us into groups, and [we] like having a group which we belong to, and that's why it is a big problem when we lack a group to belong to. It is a very big problem. Psychologically, it is a very big problem when we do not belong anywhere, and it is also the reason why I think there are many young immigrants who despite being born in Denmark, then they have two different cultures. Two worlds, they have to fit into and belong to. It's those we talk to in Headspace that have these major challenges, "when can I be Danish and when can I be Turkish?".<sup>37</sup>

As Jenkins states in his social identity theory, an individual's identity is constructed and reconstructed through social interactions with others. This quote demonstrates the dilemmas one faces with multiple cultures and being surrounded in a place that is vastly different than what one experiences within one's home. The implications of being categorized as something you are not, also goes the other way around. Some of the participants expressed that sometimes they wish to say something to non-ethnic Danes, but fear they might be considered racist, so they keep quiet:

"Well, there are many who dare not say anything. 'Cause then you are a racist and then you are not racist. Or, then you are demanding because you shouldn't think you can come here and change things. So, it's always this misunderstanding taken into account in communication. You can't say anything 'cause you are either this or that. Yes, it's difficult, I think maybe it's the reason why many do not interfere. When there is something being debated. Because I would hate to be labeled as a racist, but I think that sometimes it is okay to say no. To say "these things, this, I don't actually want it over here."<sup>38</sup> - Interviewee

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<sup>37</sup>"Vi er rigtig gode til at dele os op i grupper, og kan godt lide at have en gruppe hvor vi hører til, og derfor er det et stort problem når vi ikke har en gruppe at høre til. Det er et meget stort problem. Psykologisk er det et rigtig stort problem ikke at høre til nogle steder, og det er også derfor at jeg tror at der er mange unge indvandrere som der også selvom at de er født i Danmark, så har de to forskellige kulturer. To verdener, de skal passe ind i og høre til. Det er jo dem vi snakker med i Headspace som har store udfordringer, "hvornår kan jeg være dansk og hvornår er jeg tyrkisk"."

<sup>38</sup> "Altså der er mange der ikke tør at sige noget. For så er man racistiske og så er man ikke racistiske. Eller så er I krævende fordi I ikke skal tro at I kan komme her og lave om på noget. Så der er hele tiden den der, misforståede hensyntagende i kommunikationen. Man må ikke sige noget for så er man bare det ene eller det andet. Ja det er svært, jeg tror det måske er derfor at der er mange som ikke vil blande sig. Når der er noget i debatten. Fordi jeg vil nødtigt få skudt i skoene at jeg er racistisk, men jeg synes også ind imellem at det er okay at sige fra. At sige 'det her, det, vil vi faktisk ikke have hertil.'"

Another participant shared the same sentiment:

"Yes, well I try all the time to choose my words. And I come with a lot of excuses because, because I myself have a terrible time with people who are racists. I can't have it at all. [...] But I really can't have it, and therefore, yes I am, I am so afraid that I say something and it will be, it would be considered racist. [...] But I am afraid of, I would really not be misunderstood."<sup>39</sup> - Interviewee 5

These two quotes demonstrate that there is a discourse in the Danish context about non-ethnic Danes experiencing racism on such a level that even the utterance of innocent things in terms of expressing one's opinion can be considered racist or something that comes from prejudice.

### "Us" and "Them"

The aforementioned discourse from the previous section leads to other discourses, for instance, distancing oneself from the rest. Although this is told through many different experiences, all the participants are aware of this matter; creating an "us" and "them" dichotomy so to speak. And this is something that non-ethnic Danes feel as well as ethnic Danes:

"It all depends on what I think is one of the failures of integration. And therefore "we" and "they" end up being not just "we" and "they" but "us" and "the others" or "the foreigners". There is nothing wrong with us being "we" and "they" but there is something wrong with us being "we" and "those ones" or how to say it. So it is okay that we are different, but because we have not been integrated, we are also alienated differently. We become alienated from each other, that those with other backgrounds have a hard time understanding us, and we have an incredibly hard time understanding them. They have, again I think of course, with a different background have in my world a great obligation to become part of Danish society than that Danish society must change, for again, as we must

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<sup>39</sup> "Ja, altså jeg prøver jo hele tiden at vende mine ord. Og jeg kommer med en masse undskyldninger fordi, fordi jeg selv har det så voldsomt svært med folk der er racistiske. Jeg kan slet ikke have det. [...] Men jeg kan virkelig ikke have det, og derfor ja så er jeg, jeg er så bange for at hvis jeg siger noget så vil det blive, hvis det skulle blive opfattet racistisk. [...] Men jeg er bange for, jeg vil meget nødtigt misforstås."

not be able to include all their attitudes but we must be able to include all "them" if you understand what I mean."<sup>40</sup> - Interviewee 5

Jenkins' social identity theory also emphasized that by identifying yourself through others, simultaneously you are also pointing to the traits that are similar and different from you. Jenkins stated in his "Being Danish" that Danes have a clear sense of belonging (to a group) which leads to the clear distinction of an "us" and "them". For instance, interviewee 1 chooses a school based on this discourse, though for reasons related to inclusion:

"Yes, and my child goes to a school where her/his classroom consists of 50% immigrants. And I will say this was a deliberate move. Because I do not want my child to be looked down upon, or be considered as the only foreigner in the classroom."<sup>41</sup> - Interviewee 1

Perhaps this is based on the project participants' former experience on being left out from a group where the only difference between her and the others were her nationality:

"For example, I was excluded from the mommy-group and it was quite uncomfortable. [...] And I will say that they have not had the patience to wait for me to answer. But I am also very shy and reluctant, because I do not speak perfect Danish. So quietly and slowly, they sat and talked as if I did not exist there at all, in the mummy-group, so after three times I stopped going there. Because it made no sense and it was quite uncomfortable to be there. [...] Yes, one is also looked down [on] as such. So that's why I think when they say it's our own responsibility. But they give us no opportunity, for one is rejected. Completely cut off, no opportunity to join or train your Danish. Because then

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<sup>40</sup> "Det hele hænger jo på det jeg mener er en fejl af integration. Og derfor så ender "vi" og "de" i at være ikke bare "vi" og "de" men "os" og "de andre" eller "de fremmede". Der er jo ikke noget galt i at vi er "vi" og "de" men der er noget galt i at vi er "vi" og "de der" eller hvordan man skal sige det. Så det er OK at vi er forskellige, men fordi vi ikke har fået integreret så bliver vi også fremmedgjort forskelligt. Vi bliver fremmedgjort for hinanden, at dem med anden baggrund har svært ved at forstå os, og vi har utrolig svært ved at forstå dem. De har, igen synes jeg selvfølgelig, med en anden baggrund har i min verden en stor forpligtelse til at blive en del af det danske samfund end at det danske samfund skal ændre sig, for igen, som vi skal ikke kunne inkludere alle deres holdninger men vi skal kunne inkludere alle "dem", hvis du forstår hvad jeg mener."

<sup>41</sup> "Ja og mit barn går også i en skole hvor der er i hans/hendes klasse er 50% udlændinge. Og det vil jeg sige var helt bevidst. Fordi jeg vil ikke have at mit barn bliver set ned på, bliver betragtet som den eneste udlænding i klassen."

you are completely stupid when you do not speak Danish very well."<sup>42</sup> - Interviewee 1

Jenkins stated a community creates a symbolic belonging and that belonging to a community is a basic human need. But the dangerous side of the said community can be exclusion as a membership to the community can draw certain boundaries. The discourse of Danes and Denmark being a very closed off people and society was prevalent in the different interviews. It was something that was expressed by ethnic-Danes as well as non-ethnic Danes:

"But I think even when I think back to the beginning, I think it was wildly difficult. First of all, to meet some Dane who was not from my husband's friends. My first friend, my very first friend that I made on my own in Denmark, she is actually from Germany. We met over at Reshopper because I bought something from her. And that was how she recognized my accent. So it was not easy. And my other friends, they were from language school. They were not Danes either. So some time passed. The second thing I think is really difficult when moving to Denmark is finding a job. Because many times I have experienced, and still experience, that Denmark is a very closed society, so if you do not come from CBS or RUC or KU [Danish universities], then people can not really understand what it is that you can."<sup>43</sup> - Interviewee 3

"On the other hand, I also think that we are essentially very closed. We are not, not everyone just lets people in. We can talk a little superficially about the weather, with those we meet. But we do not talk much, so we don't invite people home just like that. Well there are some who do, but not so many. It's probably

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<sup>42</sup> "Til eksempel blev jeg udelukket fra mødre gruppen, og det var ret ubehageligt. [...] Og jeg vil sige at de har ikke haft den tålmodighed til at vente på at jeg svarer. Men jeg er også meget genert og tilbageholdende, for jeg taler ikke perfekt dansk. Så stille og rolig, så sad de og snakkede som om at jeg slet ikke eksisterede der, i mødre gruppen, så efter tre gange holdt jeg op med at komme. Fordi det gav ingen mening og det var ret ubehageligt at være med. [...] Ja, man bliver også set ned [på] som sådan. Så derfor synes jeg, når de siger at det er vores eget ansvar. Men de giver os ingen mulighed, for man bliver afvist. Fuldstændig afskåret, ingen mulighed for at være med eller få trænet dansk. For så er man helt dum når man ikke taler så godt dansk."

<sup>43</sup> "Men jeg synes selv når jeg tænker tilbage på begyndelsen, at jeg synes at det var vildt svært. For det første, at møde nogen dansker som ikke var min mands venner. Min første veninde, min første egen veninde i Danmark, hun er faktisk fra Tyskland. Vi mødtes over Reshopper fordi jeg købte noget af hende. Og det var sådan at hun genkendte min accent. Så det var ikke lige nemt. Og mine andre venner, de var fra sprogskolen. De var heller ikke danskere. Så der gik lidt tid. Det andet jeg synes er virkelig svært når man flytter til Danmark er det med at finde et job. Fordi mange gange har jeg oplevet, og stadig oplever, at Danmark er et meget lukket samfund, så hvis ikke du kommer fra CBS eller RUC eller KU, så kan folk ikke rigtig indånde hvad det er du kan."

not that typical, I think, on that level. So it's hard to get in, I think. It's probably a bit typical Danish, the thing about having to know people long before you are allowed to enter the circle of friends, and you have like a slightly closer circle of friends of people you know well and then there are not so many others."<sup>44</sup> - Interviewee 4

"But we are basically, I think, not very accommodating to others. I think it's a human thing. I do not necessarily think it's a nice trait, but we like people who look like ourselves best. And it's purely sociological, I guess."<sup>45</sup> - Interviewee 6

In order to make a connection with someone, it is necessary to share some similarities which is supported by Jenkins' social identity theory. Jenkins also describes this as homogeneity of the way Danishness is perceived by Danes, and the belief that Denmark is not a multi-ethnic society.

"And I have actually just talked to one woman up there in Kokkedal in Egedalsvænget who has interviewed someone who is Somali. She has been in Denmark for 20 years, when she moved here, she did not wear a scarf. She did not wear a headscarf. She ended up in Egedalsvænget. She was married at the time, she had some children, etc. And she was trying to settle into the community that was there. But the Danes who were up there, they did not really look at her. They did not want to talk to her at all because she was very foreign and they had their own problems. And she did not get far because getting anywhere from Egedalsvænget is really a lot. The only contact to Danish society was the job center and seeing those places. And they were not very sweet or motivating towards her either. She speaks perfect Danish. After a few years, she has started wearing a headscarf. Why? "You distance yourself by putting on the headscarf, and choose something else from the rest of society, of Danish society

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<sup>44</sup> "Til gengæld tror jeg også at vi grundlæggende er meget lukkede. Vi er ikke, det er ikke alle som lige lukker folk ind. Vi kan godt snakke lidt overfladisk om vejret, med dem vi møder. Men vi snakker ikke særlig, altså vi inviterer ikke folk hjem lige som det første. Altså det er der nogle der gør, men ikke så mange. Det er nok ikke så typisk tror jeg, på det plan. Så det er svært at komme ind, tror jeg. Det er nok lidt typisk dansk, det der med at man skal kende folk længe før end man ligesom får lov til at komme ind i vennekredsen, og man har ligesom en lidt tættere vennekreds af folk man kender godt og så er der ikke så mange andre."

<sup>45</sup> "Men vi er som udgangspunkt, tror jeg, ikke særligt imødekommende over for andre. Jeg tror at det er en menneskelig ting. Jeg synes ikke nødvendigvis at det er en fin egenskab, men vi kan bedst lide folk der ligner os selv. Og det er rent sociologisk, antager jeg."



and being Danish." She did it because then she was at least accepted into the largest community there was, which is Hispotarians. And there she has found girlfriends. There she has then found other like-minded people. Because what she needed was to belong."<sup>46</sup> - Interviewee 3

This quote highlights two discourses present on the "Muslim" women and the "integrated" women. The discourse on Muslim women (appearance wise) is that they wear headscarves and wear modest clothes - this is far from the reality as Muslim women come in all forms of appearances; some wear head scarves, some do not. Some cover their face too, some not. The other discourse present here is the discourse on what an integrated woman is like; the quote suggests that one cannot be part of or belong to the Danish society as Danishness has no room for headscarves in spite of the fact that that woman speaks perfect Danish and has lived in Denmark for two decades. The anecdote also brings Jenkins' conformity into play; that in order for an individual to be part of a community, they need to conform to the criteria and demands of the said community; when the woman from the anecdote was unsuccessful into finding and achieving a sense of belonging in one community, she conformed to another one.

### Western versus Non-Western (Muslims)

The dichotomy of "us" and "them" transcends Danishness and non-Danishness, and evolves into something "Western" and "not Western" or rather "Muslim". Some of the project participants used "Muslims" as an example to discuss the bias in the way integration is perceived or talked about in society and politics:

"No, look, that's it. And I actually think that is also very unfair in many ways. Because my children speak German and Danish, they are bilingual and it is super cool that they are, because it helps their brain and shit well and the whole Royal family they also speak at least two languages if not three. How wonderful

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<sup>46</sup> "Og jeg har faktisk snakket med lige præcis en kvinde oppe i Kokkedal i Egedalsvænget, der har interviewet en som er somalier. Hun har været i Danmark i 20 år, da hun flyttede hertil, havde hun ikke noget tørklæde på. Hun gik ikke med tørklæde. Hun endte i Egedalsvænget. Hun var gave på det tidspunkt, hun havde nogle børn osv. Og hun prøvede at finde sig til rette i det samfund der var der. Men de danskere der fandtes deroppe, de kiggede ikke rigtigt på hende. De vil slet ikke snakke med hende fordi hun var jo meget fremmed og havde deres egne problemer. Og hun kom ikke langt ud fordi fra Egedalsvænget er det rigtigt meget at komme andre steder hen. Den eneste kontakt til det danske samfund var jobcenteret og så de der steder. Og de var jo heller ikke særlig søde eller motiverende overfor hende. Hun taler perfekt dansk. Efter nogle år er hun begyndt at gå med tørklæde. Hvorfor? "Du distancerer dig ved at tage tørklædet på, og vælger anden mere fra resten af samfundet, af det danske samfund og det at være dansker." Hun gjorde det, fordi så blev hun i det mindste accepteret i den største samfund der var der, som er hispotarier. Og der har hun så fundet veninder. Der har hun så fundet andre ligesindede. Fordi det hun havde brug for var at høre til."

it is for those children to develop their cultural heritage and everything. But if your second language is Arabic? Uf! Why? Why should it be? Your child cannot integrate because he or she speaks Arabic again. No, I think that's really weird. It is a pity and difficult and yes... [...] Because we have come to focus on it, not us, but Danish society. But I also believe German society. The majority of Western society has come to focus on Muslims. And not even Muslims, just all those who speak Arabic. Like bad people who can not integrate. And it's problematic in so many ways. Because if you are constantly told that you can not integrate because you look the way you do, then you start to believe it yourself? And then there is the rhetoric the [Nye] Borgerlige comes out with, it helps to create the parallel societies that they talk about all the time."<sup>47</sup>- Interviewee 3

The discourse on immigrants and refugees being a synonym for "Muslims" creates a problematic and biased view on the immigration talks and politics, because when the media or the politicians discuss the immigration policies or issues, one is to believe it is Muslims they are referring to:

"And that is also why it is being misunderstood with the laws and rules we make because I think some of them are made to avoid Islamic immigration so to speak. Or an Islamic regime in some way. Of some things and some trends in society. And then it gets misunderstood in relation to some other peoples. [...] Hand on heart, then I think most rules are made to avoid Islam. So it's also a problem you can say and that's what we were talking about, to exclude someone who might in fact be fine."<sup>48</sup> - Interviewee 4

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<sup>47</sup> "Nej, se det er jo nemlig det. Og det synes jeg faktisk også er meget unfair på mange måder. Fordi mine børn taler tysk og dansk, så er de tosprogede og det er super sejt at de er det, fordi det hjælper deres hjerne og skide godt og hele kongefamilien de taler også mindst to sprog hvis ikke tre. Hvor er det bare dejligt for de der børn, at de udvikler deres kulturelle arv og alt muligt. Men hvis dit andet sprog er arabisk? Uf! Hvorfor? Hvorfor skal det være det? Dit barn kan ikke integrere sig fordi det taler arabisk igen. Ej det synes jeg er rigtig mærkeligt. Det er synd og svært og ja... [...] For vi er kommet til at fokusere på det, ikke vi, men det danske samfund. Men jeg tror også det tyske samfund. Størstedelen af det vestlige samfund er kommet til at fokusere på muslimer. Og ikke engang muslimer, bare alle dem der taler arabisk. Som dårlige mennesker som ikke kan integrere sig. Og det er problematisk på så mange måder. For hvis du hele tiden får sagt at du ikke kan integrere dig fordi du ser ud som du gør, så begynder du jo selv at tro på det? Og så er den retorik de [Nye] Borgerlige kommer ud med, den er jo med til at skabe de parallelsamfund som de snakker om hele tiden."

<sup>48</sup> "Og det er også derfor det bliver misforstået med de love og regler vi laver, fordi jeg tror at nogle af dem bliver lavet for at undgå en islamisk indvandring så at sige. Eller et Islamisk styre på en eller anden måde. Af nogle ting og nogle tendenser i samfundet. Og så bliver det misforstået i forhold til nogle andre folkeslag."

In "Being Danish" Jenkins observes that there is a sense of threat from immigrants being a danger to the Danish culture and identity. This quote is a representation of that; that the hostile public debate creates a discourse on how to adjust laws and regulations so "Muslims" can be limited. According to the project participant, Islam can also limit one's Danishness:

"But I also think that there are some challenges to the Muslim faith that go in and affect that freedom of speech, and I also think that sometimes when people feel pressured in the stomach by something that is unknown and something that is different, and where we in a way move a step back, developmentally. Because it is. Moving backwards in free speech, moving backward in women's rights. For that is it, if you really go down in the Muslim faith. Well then, it is for our society to go backwards in time, like 400 years back. So there is a 'clash' and a problem if the two cultures are to live side by side, then something must happen in the understanding."<sup>49</sup> - Interviewee 4

By this statement, Interviewee 4 links the Muslim faith to the discourse of Islam being suppressing of women and that it is against freedom of speech. This is a discourse that is always prevalent in the public debates, especially when it is about how different immigrants/Muslims are to Danes and how different their respective values are. She adds:

"One of the girls from my son's class, she is Pakistani, and her mother for example, she has always worn long sleeves and they live a different way. It's not something I'm personally challenged or hampered by [the way she dresses]. Yes, that is, she should wear long sleeves. Or that she should wear long skirts that she must not show anything of herself. But in relation to whether you want to invite her to the beach on a Thursday night for a glass of cider and a bath at 8 pm, because it is damn hot, so you do not want to do that. So in that way, there are

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Hånden på hjertet, så tror jeg at de fleste regler er lavet for at undgå Islam. Så det er også et problem kan man sige og det er jo det vi snakkede om, med at udelukke nogen som måske i virkeligheden vil være fin."

<sup>49</sup> "Ja, men det er rigtigt. Men jeg synes også at der er nogle udfordringer ved den muslimske tro som går ind og påvirker den der ytringsfrihed, og jeg tror også at nogle gange når folk bliver presset på maven, af noget som er ukendt og noget som er anderledes, og hvor vi på en måde går tilbage i udviklingen. For det er det. Tilbage i ytringsfrihederne tilbage til kvinderettighederne. For det er det, hvis du virkelig går ned i den muslimske tro. Jamen så er det for vores samfund at gå tilbage i tiden, sådan 400 år tilbage. Så der er et 'clash' og et problem hvis de to kulturer skal leve side om side, så skal der ske noget i forståelsen."

some things that will be different. Or when she, in my world, lets herself be ruled by some religious thing, in relation to me and women's rights or our own right to wear what we feel like wearing. Then I feel like you're back in uh... I mean I can't understand it. I mean, I know it's up to her, and in that way it is not something that means anything to me. I can also easily talk to her, I think she is sweet and kind and nice. But it's just farfetched to build a friendship, that's just far."<sup>50</sup> - Interviewee 4

The interviewee categorizes the mother from the class as an 'other' due to her visible attire which is a part of her religion. But what is interesting is that despite the fact that the two have interacted and the interviewee believes her to be a 'nice and sweet' woman, she cannot be friends with her as she believes the woman's modest attire is a sign of suppression and backward mentality. The interviewee boils down her identity to the way the woman dresses and positions her in the discourse that is present in the public debate; Muslim women are suppressed because they wear headscarves or modest clothing.

### Ingredients to Integration

The project participants expressed that integration is a "two way street" - meaning that the Danish people as well as the Danish society need to be open and accepting of others in order for people to begin to integrate. The project participants also stated that one of the ways in which a non-ethnic Dane can be integrated in the Danish society is by learning the Danish language. Jenkins stated that educational institutions play a vital role in the creation of Danishness (Jenkins, 2011: 163). This was emphasized in the different interviews with regard to integration:

"Integration is that you essentially live by the same concepts of value as us who were born and raised here, right? Then I would think that someone is well

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<sup>50</sup> "En af pigerne fra min søns klasse, hun er pakistaner, og hendes mor f.eks. hun har jo altid langærmet på, og de lever på en anden måde. Det er jo ikke noget som jeg personligt bliver udfordret på eller hæmmet af [måden hun tager tøj på]. Ja, altså at hun skal have lange ærmer på. Eller at hun skal have lange nederdele på, at hun ikke må vise noget af sig selv. Men i forhold til om man vil invitere hende med på stranden en torsdag aften til et glas cider og et bad klokken 20, for det er pissevarmt, altså det vil man jo ikke gøre. Så på den måde, så er der jo nogle ting som bliver anderledes. Eller når hun, i min verden, lader sig styre af nogle religiøse ting, i forhold til ved for mit vedkommende, kvindelige rettigheder eller vores egen ret til at have det på vi har lyst til at have på. Så føler jeg at man er tilbage i øh... altså jeg kan ikke forstå det. Altså jeg kan godt tænke at det må hun selv om, og på den måde er det ikke noget som betyder noget for mig. Jeg kan også sagtens fint snakke med hende, jeg synes hun er sød og venlig og rar. Men det er bare langt at få et venskab, der er bare langt."

integrated, that is, such and such; takes an education, finds a job, behaves properly."<sup>51</sup> - Interviewee 6

"I also think that one can integrate in that way and participate in some things. For example, in school where there are Danes, and maybe also some voluntary work. For example, that with unpaid internship, it was also hard, but in fact, that was where I learned languages as I actually speak, for the first three months it was just, even though I have been to language school for two and a half years, then I sat to conference and could not understand a single word because they spoke in each other's mouths."<sup>52</sup> - Interviewee 1

"And then all these foreigners come. And then there are the good foreigners and the bad foreigners. And the good ones are all those who integrate in such a way that contribute to society and then there is the fact that you pay taxes and you may be married to a Dane. Completely married to a Dane. Speak the language, preferably as well as possible. And then you need to be as white as possible. Because then you also fit into society."<sup>53</sup> - Interviewee 3

"Yes, if you understand it in such a way that you could function linguistically and culturally, socially. Then I think that it is a prerequisite that you know the same language. You understand those, which can often be really difficult, underlying meanings as you say something but it is really something else that lies in the way you understand the language. [...] So in that way, I think that integration is really about being able to acquire these things that are needed to function in a society."<sup>54</sup> - Interviewee 2

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<sup>51</sup> "Integration er jo at man i alt væsentlighed lever efter de samme værdibegreber som os der er født og opvokset her, ikke? Så vil jeg mene at man er velintegreret, det vil sige sådan og sådan; tager sig en uddannelse, finder sig et arbejde, opfører sig ordentligt."

<sup>52</sup> "Jeg tænker også at man kan integrere sig på den måde og deltage i nogle midler. Til eksempelvis i skole hvor der danske er, og måske også noget frivillig arbejde. For eksempel det med ulønnet praktik, det var også hårdt, men det faktisk, det var der jeg lærte sprog som jeg faktisk taler, for de første tre måneder det var bare, selvom jeg har været til sprogskole i to og et halvt år, så sad jeg til konference og kunne ikke forstå et eneste ord fordi de talte i munden på hinanden."

<sup>53</sup> "And then come all those foreigners. And then there are the good foreigners and the bad foreigners. And the good ones are all those who integrate in this way, contribute to society and then there is the fact that you pay taxes and you may be married to a Dane. Completely married to a Dane. Speaks the language, preferably as well as possible. And then you need to be as white as possible. Because then you also fit into society."

<sup>54</sup> "Ja hvis man forstår det sådan at man kunne fungere sprogligt og kulturelt, socialt. Så tænker jeg, at det er en forudsætning at man kan det samme sprog. Man forstår de der, som oftest kan være rigtig svært, underliggende

"But damn it, they [non-Danes] have to be able to talk [hits the table]. And I'm not saying it should be perfect Danish, well damn it, Amalie can damn well be here too and she can not speak Danish either, right? But we need to be able to have a conversation like you and I are having. If we can have a conversation, then it's okay. It's such an important part of being integrated, in my world. It is to be able to have a conversation in the language that is the national language."<sup>55</sup>

- Interviewee 5

"Well, I know that when they speak Danish, when they go to the Danish primary and lower secondary school, when they are open to our values, I mean some of the Danish values which are fundamental values in the society and they vote in our parliamentary elections. When taking a stand on things, when respecting our laws and our rights."<sup>56</sup> - Interviewee 4

All of the project participants have an opinion on what integration is and how one can be integrated, though as mentioned earlier, they all have the language aspect in common: that one needs to know Danish in order to be part of the society. Other aspects that can speed up the integration process is to actively take part in the Danish society; whether it is in the form of working, volunteering or voting. An interesting thought that emerges through these quotes is the inexplicit notion of conformity; "being married to a Dane", "taking a stand on things", "being as white as possible" and "functioning culturally". All these examples suggest that in order for a non-Danish individual to be integrated, they need to conform to their Danish idea of what is 'right'; that is being white, marrying or being with a Dane, share their cultural values as well as share their opinion on things.

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betydninger som man siger noget men det er virkelig noget andet som ligger i den måde man forstår sproget på. [...] Så på den måde så tror jeg at integration virkelig handler om at kunne tilegne sig de her ting, der skal til for at fungere i et samfund."

<sup>55</sup> "Men de skal fandeme skulle tale [slår i bordet] og jeg siger ikke at det skal være lydefrit dansk, det er jamen for fanden Amalie må sgu også godt være her og hun kan heller ikke tale dansk, vel? Men vi skal kunne føre en samtale som du og jeg gør. Hvis vi kan føre en samtale, så er det i orden. Det er sådan en vigtig del af at være integreret, i min verden. Det er at kunne føre en samtale på det sprog der er det nationale sprog."

<sup>56</sup> "Jamen det ved jeg når de taler dansk, når de går i den danske folkeskole, når de er åbne overfor vores værdier, altså nogle af de danske værdier som er grundværdier i samfundet og de stemmer til vores folketingsvalg. Når man tager stilling til tingene, når man respekterer vores lov og vores ret."

## Benevolent 'Othering'

By benevolent 'othering', it is referred to expressions or actions done without the intention of distancing oneself from the 'other', either implicitly or explicitly.

"Yes, so there are many unwritten rules. You do not know them, so how can you get to know them? Often they tend to drink coffee. And then sometimes if you say no thanks to licorice, then they smile or laugh a little strange. [...] like "Well yes, you are a foreigner, so of course." But I find that you get used to it."<sup>57</sup> - Interviewee 1

In this quote, licorice has gained an important role - the acceptance of it equals belonging to the same group. And by rejecting it, Interviewee 1 has become an 'other' - foreign. Though it cannot be known for sure what is meant by "Well yes, you are a foreigner, so of course." It is implied that the person offering the licorice is suddenly aware of the fact that Interviewee 1 is not Danish, but an 'other'.

"Yes [I have asked people where they come from] I'm just curious about people and if they have a different culture or a different background then I think it's mega exciting and then I would like to hear about it. So it's purely selfish, I think it's hard to ask."<sup>58</sup> - Interviewee 4

"But my interest, so I'm sorry if anyone perceives it as racism. I'm just stating that "you do not look like me and my wife" and I have no problem with that. I'm just curious. "So where does that gene come from?"<sup>59</sup> - Interviewee 5

" [...] a girl who looked like one from China, or one from Thailand, so I also came to ask the question: "But where do you come from?" And then it turned out

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<sup>57</sup> "Ja, altså der er mange uskrevne regler. Man har jo ikke kendskab til dem, så hvordan skal man kunne få kendskab til det? Ofte de plejer at drikke kaffe. Og så nogle gange hvis man siger nej tak til lakrids, så smiler de eller griner lidt mærkeligt. [...] "Nåh ja du er udlænding, så selvfølgelig." Men jeg synes at man værner sig til det."

<sup>58</sup> "Ja [har spurgt folk hvor de kommer fra] jeg er bare nysgerrig på mennesker, og hvis de har en anden kultur eller en anden baggrund så synes jeg at det er mega spændende, og så vil jeg gerne høre om det. Så det er rent egoistisk, jeg synes det er svært at spørge."

<sup>59</sup> "Men min interesse, altså jeg er ked af hvis nogen opfatter det som racisme. Jeg konstaterer jo bare at "du ligner ikke mig og min kone" og det har jeg jo i øvrigt ikke nogen problem med. Jeg er bare nysgerrig. "Hvor kommer dét gen så fra?"

that she was adopted. Yes, she has just explained that she was adopted and that she has always lived in Denmark and that she has Danish parents. But she was quite offended."<sup>60</sup> - Interviewee 1

Almost all of the project participants have asked people the question "Where do you come from?" and their reasoning behind it is that it stems from curiosity; either because of the different names, appearance or accent. Though they state that they do not perceive it as something offensive or necessarily bad, however when asking people this question, they are distancing themselves from them by confirming that that person is different from them - he/she is an 'other'. This is again where the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy comes to play. This is also a discourse on what 'us' looks like; in this case what a Dane looks like. And if an individual does not look, sound or names like 'us' then it must be a 'them'.

"No, you can not always be politically correct. You can not do that. Sometimes you have to call a shovel a shovel, as it's called, right? And say things straight out how that is experienced, right? And it may well be that you offend someone. Among other things. as one has done. But that's why things have to be said anyway. They just need to be said in a proper and sober way. They have to. And it also applies that [the Prime Minister] Mette Frederiksen has managed. There are just some who do not like it."<sup>61</sup> - Interviewee 6

This quote refers to the Danish Prime Minister saying that immigrant boys make the S-train unsafe and uncomfortable, which caused a debate in the public with one side applauding her choice of words and the other side criticizing her. Although it is not Interviewee 6 who has uttered those words, though by agreeing that sometimes you cannot nor should be politically correct, he is distancing the "immigrant boys" from the Danish society. He is assigning them a categorization and a category in which makes them an 'other' and not belonging to the 'same' groups as the rest, in spite of the fact that he does not have an ill intent.

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<sup>60</sup> "[...] en pige som lignede en fra Kina, eller en fra Thailand, så kom jeg også til at stille det spørgsmål: "Men hvor kommer du fra?" Og så viste det sig at hun blev adopteret. Ja, hun har ligesom forklaret at hun blev adopteret, og at hun altid har boet i Danmark og at hun har danske forældre. Men hun blev ret fornærmet."

<sup>61</sup> "Nej, altså, man kan ikke altid være politisk korrekt. Det kan man ikke. Nogle gange så må man kalde en skovl for en skovl, som det hedder, ikke? Og sige tingene lige ud, hvordan at det opleves, ikke? Og det kan så godt være at man støder nogen. Bl.a. som man har gjort. Men derfor skal tingene jo siges alligevel. De skal bare siges på en ordentlig og sober måde. Det skal de. Og det gælder også at Mette Frederiksen har formået. Der er bare nogle der ikke kan lide det."



## Discussion

What are some of the challenges and limitations in constructions of Danishness? A discourse analysis of Danishness in relation to identity with a point of departure in Soma Mayel and Martin Henriksen's debate in the summer of 2020.

An interesting aspect that was shone light on in the findings were the various takes on Danishness and what it means to be Danish. Jenkins' theory on Danishness or being Danish in his "Being Danish" stated that most Danes have a unanimous understanding of Danishness, though in the findings this was not the case. The project participants all had different takes - if any - on what Danishness was, and some were not completely certain on what it actually was. Though they were all in agreement that the Danish language is an integral part of integration. The fact that they did not provide a concrete understanding of what integration is, suggests that the Danish society lacks a concrete definition or description of integration. This is paradoxical as almost everyone in the state of Denmark has an opinion on this matter, yet there is no unanimous definition of it. The same note is applied to the concept of Danishness; like integration, this concept too was viewed differently. This raises a lot of questions and concerns; for how can a society demand from its non-native individuals to be integrated if there are no clear guidelines? One could argue that the government has specific criteria for the integration process, however with the administrations changing and different parties overtaking the Ministry of Integration, the integration policies are bound to change. Does this mean integration is also changing?

When it came to Danishness, despite the lack of mutual understanding of the concept, the idea behind what a Dane should be like was less problematic than the integration topic. A Dane was always described or pictured as someone white (see Western). This means that integration does not equal Danishness, as being Danish boils down to one point: appearance. This begs the question of whether integration is pointless if one cannot obtain Danishness after all? Taking into account the project participants' narratives, integration in its essence is about learning the Danish language, respecting the Danish laws and values and being a productive member of the Danish society. The issue here is that in order to be a productive member of society, one needs to be accepted into the said society. And if an individual is categorized into a certain category and has a fixed position that cannot be changed, the inclusion or sense of belonging will be difficult to achieve.

An interesting discovery was the emphasis and focus on looks (Western/whiteness) in relation to Danishness. When the project participants brought up the fact that one looks different - that is different to what Danes look like - makes for the logical assumption that there is a standard way of looking Danish. The emphasis on whiteness is concerning thought not completely surprising as descendants from earlier immigrants are referred to as second, third or fourth generation. But the same distinction is not made when it involves "white" Westerners; no "third generation Swede" or "second generation German". What does this distinction say about Danishness? That it all boils down to the way one looks? That Danishness is about race?

During the interviews, when a project participant would relate or refer to "problematic foreigners" or the discussion on integration, the conversation would always find a way to fall upon Muslims and Islam. Whether the reason for that had anything to do with my role as a researcher who was born in Afghanistan, I cannot be sure of. But it could point to the fact that perhaps the whole discussion on integration and Danishness is really about the xenophobic and Islam-phobia rhetoric that has been going on in Denmark for over two decades. For instance, Interviewee 4 repeatedly stated that Denmark and ethnic-Danish women have worked tirelessly for gender equality and freedom, and to have a Muslim woman in Islamic garment, is a step backwards. This is a very stereotypical way of viewing Muslim women and freedom in the Western world. The discourse on Muslim women is that they are suppressed because they cover their hair and body, and leaving no room for the millions of others who identify as a Muslim though not wear the Muslim attire - to generalize an entire gender belonging of the same religion is a slippery slope. The issue with utterance as Foucault mentioned is exactly this; one may not mean to generalize, but words have power and when one uses such words to describe an entire gender belonging to the same religion, one exercises that power, rather irresponsibly.

Some of the project participants stated that one does not need to become Danish in order to function in a Danish society. This suggests that Danishness in terms of identity is possible but not when it is in terms of appearance. On the one hand, a non-Dane can identify himself as a Dane, based on the social interactions he has that creates this identity. On the other hand, the discourses on how a Dane should look like will limit as well as challenge his own understanding of Danishness. The problem that arises here is the unclear definition of Danishness; is it looks or how you feel? A third addition to this is the official definition of Danishness which is the government's; one is Danish when one has Danish citizenship.

Though there is a flaw in this description of Danishness as many individuals who have lived in Denmark for years and are integrated and some also feel Danish, do not have citizenship. Is Danishness then in reality a piece of paper or document? Or is it (and should it) be more about what an individual identifies with?

Though if the answer to the previous question is "yes" then another problem will arise; as Jenkins states for an identity to "take" it needs to be validated by others as identity is constructed through social interaction with others, If others categorize or position you in a category that you do not identify with - because of the discourses that exist, then the construction of Danishness cannot be possible. Or, if integration or Danishness cannot be defined outside of the government's citizenship test, why is there a need to develop an "us" and "them" dichotomy?

It can be argued that despite the fact that Danishness is unclear in its definition and description, the limitations and challenges one faces with regard to the construction of it, are not unclear. In fact, one of the limitations and challenges is this very fact; the uncertainty of it. For logically, how can one be something if there is no description of what that 'something' is supposed to be like. The project participant had a different take on whether Danishness is obtainable or not. Interviewee 5 stated that one of the (rhetorical) questions is whether one can be called Mustafa, have dark hair and still be Danish. He defends this by adding that it is something that needs to have an open dialogue, but that it is possible. Though he later adds "Because you can say we are classic old Danish and new Danish"<sup>62</sup>. I cannot help but to interpret the distinction of "classic" and "new" as something "original" and "copy"; that even when a project participant states that Danishness can be obtainable by a dark haired young man named Mustafa, there is still this inequality on their level of Danishness.

Another project participant draws the line on the construction of Danishness in voting: "No, because it can not be when it is a political decision that you can not get the right to vote, because you have been here for x number of years or something."<sup>63</sup> What is interesting is that there is no mention of the ethnic-Danes who do not vote in the parliamentary and presidential elections. Should the ethnic-Danes that do not participate in the various elections lose their

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<sup>62</sup> "For man kan sige vi er klassiske gamle danske og nye danske" - Interviewee 6

<sup>63</sup> "Nej for det kan det jo ikke være når det er en politisk beslutning at man ikke kan få stemmeret, fordi man har været her i et x-antal år eller et eller andet," - Interviewee 4

sense of Danishness? Are they held to the same standards? The right to vote is a luxury many non-Danes do not have because the right to vote is granted once someone becomes a Danish citizen, which with the ever changing regulations and the strict rules is becoming more difficult to obtain.

The issue with being held up to the same standards goes beyond the notion of Danishness; when Interviewee 5 asked where my husband is from and I answered that he and I both come from the same country and that this was an obvious choice for me, he replied "But that doesn't increase integration."<sup>64</sup> This statement highlights many discourses that exist on integration; suggesting that one needs to assimilate in order to be integrated which is a paradoxical statement as the two terminologies - integration and assimilation - are two different things. This statement also brings out the discourse on non-ethnic Danes not being accommodating of the Danish ways of living - whatever that may be. So, when individuals who are not ethnid-Danes positioned as an 'other', it is as though their agency is being taken away from them and they are limited in their ways of action.

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<sup>64</sup> "Men det øger jo ikke integrationen. " Interviewee 5

## Conclusion

The limitations and challenges of the construction of Danishness.

Based on the finding of this paper, it can be concluded that no definite definition exists on Danishness or integration, which causes problems as people have strong opinions on both subject matter but none of the ordinary citizens of the Danish society know what any of the terminologies entail. However, this does not mean that the limitations and challenges in relation to construction of Danishness are unclear as well. In fact, it can be said that the first way in which one is limited and challenged in is the very fact that there is no clear guideline on what Danishness is and what Danishness entails. This is also because of the discourses that are prevalent in the Danish society with regard to non-Danes; one of them being that in order to obtain Danishness, one needs to "look the parts", that is to sound Danish (know the language), to be an active member of the Danish society and to preferably be named something Western/Danish. The politician who was mentioned a few times by the project participants during the interviews, Jens Abdelkader Dahmani, is a solid example of the previous statement. However, despite having a Danish name and speaking the Danish language - despite the fact that he was born in Denmark, despite the fact that he is being and involving himself in the Danish society through volunteering and being a politician, he is still asked about his ethnicity and how come he is called Jens - because surely when you do not look very Danish, you cannot be named anything Danish either. Thus, this begs the question of what Danishness really is about; and the one thing that can logically come out of this discussion is race - Danishness is to be white - not Eastern European white, but the Western hemisphere type of white. Because when you are white, people can be forgiving of other things, such as broken Danish, or Danish with an accent.

## Reflection

Looking back at this project, if the opportunity of re-doing certain things was granted, I would change the way I had conducted my empirical research. In hindsight, I would change it to a focus group interview, as the way I have done it now - one on one semi-structured interviews - feels a bit empty, in the sense that my role as the researchers when conducting these interviews is not to challenge the project participants' views, but to ask them the questions I had. The only thing I could do with the role I had taken as a researcher was to ask the project participants to elaborate certain things, or to ask them further about something. Whereas in a focus group, I would have had the opportunity to bring people with different backgrounds (age, socio- and economic, ethnic, gender) to discuss the chosen topic, to challenge them, to provoke them. Pranee Liamputtong states that in a focus group interview, participants are "encouraged to talk to each other instead of answering the moderators' questions" (Liamputtong, 2011: 3), which is what happened with the selected methodology. However, as mentioned in the Limitation/Delimitation section, due to the COVID19 pandemic, and the government regulations, it was not possible to conduct a focus group interview. I had also interviewed Ms. Soma Mayel where I asked her the same questions from the interview guidelines, but I have not used nor applied her interview in this paper, as I decided that it would be "too close to home" since the paper takes a point of departure in her debate. Mayel's interview was also very statistics based as she is a paralegal and works at the Immigration Office which makes her very knowledgeable in this field. Therefore the answers she provided were fact based. If I were to make a study based on facts and statistics with regard to integration and immigration, I would use her interview as well. Nevertheless, Mayel provided me with interesting and valuable facts regarding this topic, which I appreciate.

The sampling of this paper is very small, but I still believe this paper can be used as an insight to how (some) Danes view and think about the discussions revolving integration, Danishness and the formation of identity. I think this paper can be applied and referred to as a point of departure, when researching topics involving Denmark as a society. If I were to continue this paper, I would base the research question for the next paper on the basis of this paper's conclusion; that if (the white) race is really the epitome of Danishness, why do (non-white) people still strive to obtain it?

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