The Mass Media’s Construction of

Gender, Race, Sexuality
and Nationality

An Analysis of the Danish News Media’s Communication about Visible Minorities from 1971-2004

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Rikke Andreassen
1. Introduction

Which images of visible minorities have the Danish news media constructed and what have those images about ‘the other’ revealed about ‘us’? This is the premise of this dissertation. Through analyses of several hundred television news clips and several hundred newspaper articles, I analyze how the Danish mass media have represented visible minorities in Denmark from 1970 to 2004. The purpose of these analyses has been twofold: Firstly, I want to throw light on the actual representations in order to see how visible minorities have been represented in Danish news media. Secondly, I want to analyze which functions these representations might have had. This dissertation therefore has several goals which have been interconnected but analytically divided: It has been central to illustrate these representations over time, i.e. from the 1970s until today, because scholars have not given much consideration to Danish newspaper and visual communication about visible minorities within a longer time frame. Similarly, it has been important to examine the representations critically and compare them to their historical and societal contexts in order to nuance, and potentially deconstruct, them. Finally, I have taken the analyses a step further, going beyond the discussion about whether the representations have been true or false in order to reflect upon what functions the communicated images of visible minorities might have had for the ethnically Danish television viewers and newspapers readers. I especially want to examine how the communication might have influenced viewers’ and readers’ constructions of Danish nationality and their understandings of gender, gender relations and sexuality.

Media matter

Mass media’s communication about visible minorities has played an important role in developing the ethnically Danish population’s understanding of visible minorities.1 The majority of ethnic Danes has not had any personal contact or interaction with visible minorities. Surveys have shown that less than 20 percent of the ethnically Danish population has talked to a member of a visible minority as often as once a week during the 1990s, and it seems likely that the number has

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been equally low during the rest of the period under scrutiny, 1970 to 2004. The mass media have therefore constituted a main source of information about visible minorities for the majority of the ethnically Danish population. The mass media’s importance and influence on TV viewers and newspaper readers has been documented in several studies. It is therefore not my aim to document the media’s influence. Rather I focus on the content of the news communication, on what has been communicated.

Television viewers and newspaper readers meet a text individually. The interpretation they make of the media message they receive depends on their personal resources and their situational contexts. It is therefore possible that some people have interpreted the news messages differently than the images I bring to attention. I point at general trends, I do not claim that all TV viewers or all newspaper readers, consciously or unconsciously, have understood the news media in the way I describe here.

Theoretical reflections

Impressions and understandings of categories like nationality, race, gender, and sexuality are not constructed in a vacuum. They intersect with each other, influence and construct each other, just as they intersect with other categories and with various understandings of the societal contexts around us. This dissertation examines how mass media’s communication about visible minorities has contributed to constructions of sexuality, gender, race, and nationality. The dissertation specifically throws light on how whiteness – represented by ethnic Danes – has been constructed. Whiteness and the construction of the white race have not been analyzed or described in any detail in Denmark, and the area demands serious academic attention. It is important to analyze the construction of the race that functions as the norm in Danish society and in mass media’s communication—this dissertation contributes to such an analysis.

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2 Øystein Gaasholt & Lise Togeby, I syv sind. Danskernes holdninger til flygtninge og indvandrere (Aarhus: Politica, 1996), 64, Peter Hervik, Mediernes muslimer. En antropoligisk undersøgelse af mediernes dækning af religioner i Danmark, (Copenhagen: Nørnet for Etisk Ligestilling, 2002), 8. Despite that this survey is a decade old, it is still one of the most in-depth surveys in this field which is why I use it. I have not been able to find indications that the situation is much different today than in the mid-1990s when the survey was carried out.


1. Introduction

I have worked with a theoretical, multi-spectral approach in this dissertation. Practically, this means that I have drawn upon several theories and methodical frameworks and have been inspired by theorists in the fields of post-colonial studies, queer theory, feminist theories, studies of nationalism, and linguistic and narrative theories. I have taken, used, and sometimes transformed their works in order to create my own theoretical and methodological framework.

A central theoretical foundation for the dissertation is social constructivism. Written words and exposed pictures participate in the creation of reality. Michel Foucault has been central for my work, and I especially draw upon his ideas about how knowledge and power are produced via a society’s discursive practices.\(^5\) Foucault’s ideas have been further developed by several discourse analysts whose theories I use, most importantly Norman Fairclough’s so-called critical discourse analysis, Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau’s discourse theory inspired by Antonio Gramsci, and Teun van Dijk’s so-called socio-cognitive discourse analysis. Fairclough examines media discourses and the interaction between a media text and its social practices and discursive practice. He argues that “discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or ‘constitute’ them.”\(^6\) Mouffe and Laclau focus on how different discourses compete in order to establish hegemony. In their analysis, meanings are not fixed, and there are always antagonisms between different discourses trying to ascribe meaning to a sign or a discourse. Often discourses appear as fixed, even though they are always changeable, and a hegemonic discourse will often appear as natural.\(^7\) Van Dijk has worked with Dutch mass media’s constructions of racism, and his work is therefore linked to mine. One of his main points has been that utterances are not only reflections of reality; they also help to construct reality. Prejudices do not just derive from personal attitudes and personal opinions, but to a greater extent they originate in the ways in which members of a group, e.g. visible minorities, are portrayed.\(^8\)

Queer theory’s basis is also social constructivism. In this dissertation I especially draw upon queer theorist Judith Butler’s ideas about how gender and sexuality are performative acts and how individuals construct the categories of gender and sexuality through these performances.\(^9\) I

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apply Butler’s ideas about performativity to mass media and argue that mass media can function as a performance. The media perform gender, sexuality, race, and the other categories on display via their repeated stylisation of the bodies they portray. I also draw upon Butler for my analyses of visual portrayals of the racial other. Butler has argued that “the field of the visible is [a] racially contested terrain.”

I view the news representations of visible minorities as such a field and analyze the extent to which visual representations have been influenced by different racialized discourses.

I also draw upon Joan Scott’s analyses of gender as a relation of power. I broaden Scott’s arguments in order to argue that the news media’s constructions of gender have not only played a part in the power constructions between men and women but also between the white majority population and the minority population of color.

Post-colonial feminism has been one of my strongest sources of inspiration in this dissertation. Feminist scholars of color have pointed to the lack of ethnic and racial diversity in Western feminists’ understandings and representations of gender. This lack has resulted in a tendency to universalize the category of ‘woman’ and describe this ‘woman’ through characteristics closely associated to the lives of white, middle-class, Western, heterosexual women. There is a similar danger of universalizing when speaking about race and ethnicity. One must be careful when describing others in racial and ethnic terms, and racial and ethnic diversities should be included so as not to homogenize people. The label ‘ethnic’ is problematic because it has functioned (and continues to function) as a generalized term to group all non-ethnic Danes into a group of ‘others’.

Lexically, the term ‘ethnic’ refers to what is “characteristic of a people, especially a group sharing a common and distinctive culture, religion, language, or the like...[Ethnic is often used about a person who is] a member of an ethnic group, especially of a group that is a minority within a larger society.” ‘Ethnic’ therefore refers to specific ethnic groups, e.g. ethnic Pakistanis, and not to all

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visible minorities, regardless of origin, in Denmark. Therefore it might be more precise to refer to people according to their national origin; I have therefore chosen to refer to people according to their national ethnicity, e.g. ethnically Danish.

The term ‘race’ is also not free of complications. On the one hand, some scholars have argued against using the concept ‘race’ in general and particularly against labeling visual bodily differences in terms of race; since bodies are so closely connected to everyday life, such labeling might lead people to (falsely) think that race and racial differences are permanent rather than constructs. On the other hand it can be argued that visual bodily differences, e.g. skin and hair color, not only influence people’s everyday lives but also are connected to different historical and cultural power structures; these differences should be called by names connected to privileges and the lack thereof. I use the term ‘race’ and talk about ‘racial body signs’ and ‘visible appearance’, including ‘visible difference’, because I believe that on a practical and daily level, discrimination within Danish society is based on visibility. I also use the term ‘race’ because it is linguistically connected to the concept of ‘racism’, and I do believe that if the term ‘race’ was used more commonly in Danish language, then the ‘racist’ effects of behaviors and statements might appear more clearly.

I aim to describe gender, race and ethnicity in their many diversities, and when using the categories ‘gender’, ‘race’, etc. as analytical tools to keep their diversity in mind.

Post-colonial feminism has drawn upon post-colonial theory. I do as well, drawing upon, among others, Franz Fanon, Edward Said, and Homi Bhabha. All three have worked with colonizers’ representations of the ‘other’ in ways that are relevant for my analyses. Inspired by Fanon, Bhabha in particular has worked with colonial stereotypes. His claim that a stereotype must be repeated continuously in order to keep a close connection between the signifier and the signified has been beneficial for my analyses of news media representations.

I have found the combination of post-colonial feminism, feminism, and nationalism useful for this dissertation. Theories of nationalism have most often been presented as gender neutral, but by combining theories of nationalism with feminist ideas of women as the reproducer of

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17 Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question", in *Screen* vol. 24/6, Dec. 1983 (London: Oxford University Press), 18-36.
the nation and with post-colonial feminist ideas of miscegenation, the Danish news media’s representations of relations between visible minority and ethnic Danes serve as a window onto a much broader understanding of the constructions of gender and nationality.

For analyses of the Aarhus rape case I draw upon analyses of the Northern American and German media’s descriptions of rape. These analyses have pointed to how the media have constructed rape perpetrators of color as hyper-sexual, and for a further understanding of this racialized sexuality, I draw upon Fanon, Robert Young and Ann McClintock.

Several post-colonial feminist scholars have engaged in the issue of veiling. I order to show how veiling must be viewed as a multifaceted practice, I include Meyda Yeğenoğlu’s fascinating analysis of the veil. Yeğenoğlu has combined Fanon’s ideas that the veil is the colonized woman’s means of resistance with Foucault’s ideas of power’s connection to visibility and knowledge in order to argue that the veil can function as a tool to resist being an object for the masculine sexual gaze. She has further claimed that veiled women can be interpreted as an inverse of the model prisoners in Bentham’s panopticon. I further include Danish scholar Dorthe Staunæs’ work. She has similarly documented how veiling can be a means of resistance as well as a tool of integration into Danish society. Other post-colonial feminists have criticized veiling as a means of patriarchal power. I include voices from a group of feminists of Iranian origin who are organised around the journal Medusa published by the Centre for Women and Socialism as well as arguments from the French-Iranian feminist Chahdorrt Djavann, who has argued against veiling because she finds that it implies a sexualization of girls and women.

22 Dorthe Staunæs, Kon, etnicitet og skoleliv, (Gylling: Samfundsliteratur, 2004), 174. original text: "Her er det ikke afklædning, men netop påklædning der giver frihed. Qua sit tørklæde er hun fri for 8. klasse-drengenes daglige bemåling, hvorimod de piger, der ikke bærer tørklæde og særligt piger, der positioneres som etnisk danske, netop er i fare for den afklædning." 
23 The Centre of Women and Socialism was established in 1998 by activists who had fled Iran and “were engaged in women’s issues and defending women’s rights.” The journal Medusa has functioned “to give voice to the radical trend in the women’s liberation movement with a special focus on political Islam and the plight of women in the Middle East.
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Finally, I draw upon literary and linguistic analyses and methods in my deconstruction of TV news clips and newspaper articles. Because the basis for my analyses is social constructivism, language is central in the creation of representations. I focus on the use of language and look into which rhetorical strategies newscasters, politicians, and interviewees have used. I draw upon narration models, especially the so-called Berettermodel and the so-called actant model, which enable me to illustrate dramaturgic functions in news programs. I look at journalistic tools, at interview strategies, and at which narrative elements have been used to create ‘good’ television. For visual analyses of the TV news I draw upon, among others, Roland Barthes’ ideas of how visual images can be interpreted semiotically.24 I also look at target groups, and especially consider whose voices the news represents – who has been given room to actively participate in representing themselves, and who has been represented by others. I have carried out my analyses with a special focus on how gender and race have played into linguistic and narrative strategies.

I have found this multi-spectral approach very fruitful because it has enabled me to take my material far and to see aspects of it I might not otherwise have seen. I introduce the theory and theorists successively as I use them in the dissertation.

Sources

The empirical sources for the dissertation’s analyses are newspaper articles from the national newspapers Jyllands-Posten, Berlingske Tidende, Politiken, Ekstra Bladet, and Information and national television news clips from 1971 to 2004. All newspapers are national newspapers but politically and stylistically they are quiet different. Jyllands-Posten (established 1871) is the largest national newspaper, despite a title that indicates that it originally was established as a regional newspaper covering Jutland [Jylland]. It represents values of right-wing liberals. Beside the main newspaper it has two daily regional sections, JP København [Copenhagen] and JP Aarhus, which both focus on local news. By including these latter two, I incorporate regional papers as well as national papers in my analysis. Politiken (established 1884) has the second largest circulation in Denmark and represents social liberal political values. The conservative Berlingske Tidende (established 1749) is the third largest national newspaper in Denmark. Ekstra Bladet (established 1904) is the country’s largest tabloid newspaper and also leans to the right. Information (established


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1943) has a smaller circulation compared to the other newspapers and represents leftwing views. Stylistically, Information has the highest lix number and is characterized by long serious articles written in an academic language. Berlingske Tidende is similarly known for its seriousness and carries long, serious, and well-written articles. Politiken and Jyllands-Posten are characterized by a lighter, yet well-written, style. Both are considered serious newspapers, but Jyllands-Posten’s regional sections are characterized by a tabloid style. Ekstra Bladet represents the typical tabloid newspaper style with simple language, many pictures, short articles, and a focus on dramatic and sensational stories. These newspapers represent the whole political spectrum as well as different reporting and writing styles. It is therefore possible to gain an understanding of the newspaper landscape in general as well as the various political attitudes represented in the written media. An analysis of these diverse newspapers therefore provides a good understanding of the written news media’s communication as it has been received by the Danish population.

I have focused my analyses of the newspaper communication on the coverage of an infamous rape case from 2000, called simply the Aarhus rape case. Nine young, visible minority men raped a 14-year-old ethnically Danish girl in a low income suburban area in the city of Aarhus. The rape and the following court cases were widely covered by the news media, and the five newspapers together produced 283 articles and letters to the editor related to the rape case; they have all been included in the analyses. The Aarhus rape case is a representative example of how the Danish mass media have covered rape cases where the perpetrators are visible minorities. Besides these articles, I have included a number of other articles from the five papers where I have found it relevant for my analyses.

For the television news, I have randomly sampled several hundred news clips from the period of 1971 to 2004. DR was established as a state owned public radio in 1925, and in 1951 it expanded with a TV channel. DR has therefore throughout its existence been a public service channel financed via license fees that owners of a radio or TV set have been required to pay. During the period under scrutiny, the 1970s to early 2000s, all households in Denmark have been able to receive DR television. During the mid-1960s, ca. 60 percent of Danish households had one or more TV-sets, this number increased to 84 percent in 1975. In 1990 the number had reached 96 percent, since the late 1990s, the number has been 96-98 percent. DR’s productions have been restricted by public service rules that have prevented commercialization and have tried to ensure national

25 Lix is a readability index based on average length of periods and percentage of long words.
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programming as well as high quality production. TV2, on the other hand, was established as a partly commercial TV channel in 1988. Like DR, TV2 is state-owned, and households in Denmark have been able to receive TV2 without having to pay fees beyond the standard license fee. Both DR and TV2 have been responsible for producing their own news programs. In order to get a random selection of news clips I decided to take clips from about every third year from DR and TV2. I wanted the years to be different so I chose 1989, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001 and 2003 for TV2 and 1971, 1973, 1977, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1990, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2002 and 2003 for DR. TV2 broadcast for the first time in the fall of 1988, and 1989 was therefore the first full year from which I could obtain news material. After 1989, I took material from every third year, and I included 2003 because it represented the most current year at the time of my archival work.

TV2 stored all their news clips on Umatic or VHS videotapes. DR, on the other hand, had news clips from 1971 to 1983 on reel film, news clip from 1984 to 1989 on Umatic videotapes, and clips from 1990 onwards on VHS videotapes. One problem with the reel film material was that some had disappeared. When footage from one clip had been used in another clip, the footage had physically been cut off the reel clued onto the second clip. Since there were no records of where the footage had gone, it was impossible to locate it. Some of the sound was also missing from the reel film, as the programs had often broadcast the voices live, which meant that producers had not recorded them. The irregular use of sample years from the 1970s to the early 1980s was caused by the fact that the number of news clip from this period was limited and several of them lacked footage or sound. I therefore chose a sample selection of available ‘full’ clips, regardless of year. Some clips from 1979 and 1981 were available on Umatic videotapes, which secured ‘full clips’, and I therefore included those years. I included both 1984 and 1985 because the number of news clips about visible minorities from theses years was very large compared to the previous years. I included the written summery descriptions of the news clips from the 1970s and 1980s in order to compensate for the limited number of ‘full’ news clips. Finally, I have included clips from other years than the sampled years and from in-depth news programs following the primetime news. I found these clips ‘accidentally’ during my search in the news archives and included them because I found them especially interesting.

I aimed at including 10-15 primetime news clips from each year. However, this was not possible for all years because during the 1970s there were not so many news clips. The broadcasting time for the primetime news program has changed over the years, but as a rule I only
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included news clips from these programs because they represent the news program that most viewers have seen. Altogether I have included ca. 285 news clips.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to reproduce the visual television news material in this dissertation because of Danish copyright rules. I regret this because I would have liked to supply the written analyses with pictures of the footage I am analyzing.

I began with 1971 because DR’s news index system began that year. Because the news prior to 1971 was not categorized, it would have been very time consuming to locate news about visible minorities in this period. The late 1960s to early 1970s serves as a useful beginning because it was then that foreign workers began arriving in Denmark and larger groups of visible minorities joined Danish society. The foreign workers represented the first larger group of immigrants who were portrayed on television news, at a time when the majority of households in Denmark had a TV.

The amount of news clips in a news program has expanded enormously since the 1970s: The 30-minute-long-news programs I have analyzed from the 1970s typically consisted of 5-7 news clips, whereas the 30-minute-long-news programs from the late 1990s and early 2000s typically consisted of 25-30 news clips. This development has resulted in the incorporation of more clips from more recent programming than from those at the beginning of my study. From 1971 to 1989, DR had indexed news clips manually in a card system according the index system used at libraries in Denmark, the so-called DanBib system. From 1990, DR has digitally indexed its news clips, which has greatly facilitated searches. TV2 has digitally indexed all of its news material.

Quantitatively, the news stories about visible minorities have been limited as a proportion of stories in newspapers from the 1970s to 2000s, even including the rape case. A small survey from the period of the rape case shows that the newspapers on three to four randomly sampled days had the following distribution of news about visible minorities and other news: Politiken had 250 articles and letters to the editor, of which thirteen were about visible minorities; for Information the relationship between the total number of articles and letters to the editor and those about visible minorities 86:8; for Jyllands-Posten 326:18; for Ekstra bladet 94:18; and for Berlingske Tidende 230:6. Expressed in percentages 2.5 percent of Politiken's articles covered visible minorities. In Information the figure is 9.2 percent, for Jyllands-Posten 5.5 percent, in Ekstra bladet 19.1 percent, and in Berlingske Tidende 2.6 percent.27

27 The number of articles was counted on randomly chosen days. The days were for Politiken Nov. 16-19, 2000; Information Nov. 18-21 (four days were included because only one newspaper was printed for the weekend Nov. 18-19,
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For the TV news the quantitative amount of news about visible minorities was a little lower, as illustrated by the table below. It has not been possible to gain information about the total numbers of news clips before the news registration became digitalized, hence the lack of information about DR news before 1990.

Amount of news clips about visible minorities compared to total number of news clips.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Clips about Visible minorities</th>
<th>All clips</th>
<th>Clips about visible minorities in percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>TV2</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1,933</td>
<td>1.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>8,123</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>TV2</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>3,985</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>12,291</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>TV2</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>3,722</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>15,759</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>TV2</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>3,879</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>16,682</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>TV2</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>3,921</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>297</td>
<td>20,559</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003&lt;sup&gt;28&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>TV2</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2,139</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003&lt;sup&gt;29&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>DR</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>14849</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All years</td>
<td>DR and TV2</td>
<td>1,722</td>
<td>107,842</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The amount of clips at TV2 and DR are not directly compatible. DR has registered, and filed together, all news clips which have been broadcasted either in the one-three daily news programs *TV-Avisen*, in the in-depth news programs *19-direkte*, in the news program *Deadline*, which has been broadcasted at DR’s other channel DR2, or in sports news programs; whereas TV2 has ‘only’ registered news clips broadcasted in the one-three daily news programs *Nyhederne*. This explains why DR has registered a much larger amount of clips than TV2. This most likely also

<sup>28</sup> For year 2003 it has only been the period Jan. 01 to July 14, 2003 which has been included for TV2 news, as I finished my archival work at TV2 in July 2003.

<sup>29</sup> For year 2003 it has only been the period Jan. 01 to August 20, 2003 which has been included, as I finished my archival work at DR in August 2003.

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explains why DR has a lower percentage of news clips about visible minorities than TV2. Regardless of these differences in registrations, news about visible minorities has constituted only a small part of news programming.

All media quotations included in this dissertation have been translated from Danish to English. I have aimed at translating the quotations in a way that would make the English version appear as closely to the Danish as possible. This has meant that I have kept the language as it was, including potential grammatical mistakes, and explaining Danish words where it has not been possible to translate them. At times, quotations’ tenses break the flow of the rest of the text. I have preferred this grammatical awkwardness to less incorrect translations. I have not included pauses, haws, etc. in the quotations because I find that they negatively interrupt the reading. All quotations come with their original Danish version in a footnote.

Television history

Because television news constitutes a central source for this dissertation, some background information about Danish television is necessary. Until 1988, DR was the only national TV channel in Denmark, which meant that DR possessed a monopoly on the visual news information. The establishment of TV2 in 1988 broke this monopoly. Television was first transmitted in Denmark in 1951; in 1954 there were daily programs led by DR, and in 1960 all households were able to receive TV signals. Like in most Western European countries, television in Denmark was established as a public service, and DR was given a monopoly on transmitting TV. During the 1960s, TV became a dominant visual media – as illustrated by the decline of cinema tickets by 50 percent from 1960 to 1970 while the number of TV licenses sold increased from 388,000 to 1,300,000. Originally DR’s television news was placed under the control of newspapers, hence its name *TV- Avisen*, which literally translates as ‘TV newspaper’. DR produced *TV-Avisen* for the first time in 1961, and from 1964, DR became independently responsible for the news; the same year, DR established its headquarters for television programs, *TV-Byen*, outside Copenhagen.

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30 The concept of public service has been defined in several ways. Media expert Preben Wilhjem has defined public service as: “TV which can be received by all, which has diversity in its programs, which contributes to the preconditions of democratic processes, which broadcasts several national productions, which strengthen national culture, language and identity, and which serves minorities.” (My translation of Preben Wilhjem’s lecture at SAMS seminar, University of Odense, 1997).

1. Introduction

In 1988 the government established TV2 as a compromise between various political, cultural, and financial considerations debated in the previous years. One of the main reasons for introducing a new national TV channel was the growing fear of foreign media influences, and commentators saw foreign commercial television as a particular threat.\(^\text{32}\) Another central reason was an increasing political demand from the right-wing and liberal parties for alternative source of news. Denmark’s right-wing-liberal government in power since 1982 was a driving force in the establishment of TV2. News production was central to TV2 from the beginning because news was the only kind of programming TV2 was required to produce themselves. The rest of the programs were bought from various production companies. Unlike DR, which has always been financed by licenses \(\text{[licensmidlerne]}\), TV2’s expenses were only covered partly by license money. The network financed the rest with income from commercials. TV2 was, and is, required to follow some public service rules, and the use of commercials has therefore always been restricted. For example, commercials have only been allowed between programs and not during programs.

**Immigrants and visible minorities**

Several terms have been used in this dissertation to categorize certain groups of people. I refer to people born outside Denmark who, for one reason or another, end up residing in Denmark for a longer period of time as ‘immigrants’. My use of this term corresponds to the United Nation’s definition of an international migrant as a person who has entered a country with the intention of staying more than 12 month.\(^\text{33}\) I use the terms ‘asylum seekers’ and ‘refugees’ when referring to people who have applied for or received asylum in Denmark. The terms ‘foreign workers’ and ‘labor immigrants’ categorizes immigrants who have come to Denmark in order to work specific jobs demanded by Danish employers. I refer to the whole, and diverse, group of people born outside Denmark but residing in Denmark as ‘immigrants’. The category ‘visible minorities’ applies to immigrants who do not come from Northern and Western Europe, as well as their children and grandchildren. In this category I include immigrants who do not physically resemble the idealized western, racial image. When I quote from the news clips or newspapers, I cite the terms used in the sources I quote; these do not always correspond to my terms and labels.


I find the term ‘visible minorities’ useful for several reasons. It underscores the racial aspects of differences between the ethnically white Danish majority population and the minority population of color. The term ‘visible minorities’ has not been commonly used in Denmark, and it has therefore not been connoted with specific political attitudes yet. Journalists, politicians, and experts who have been active participators in the news stories about immigrants and visible minorities have used a variety of labels: ‘political refugees’, ‘economic immigrants’, ‘comfort refugees’, ‘ethnic’, ‘foreigners’, ‘voluntary immigrants’, ‘non-voluntary immigrants’, ‘bilingual’ etc. Several of these terms have been political and aimed at signalling a certain anti-immigrant or pro-immigrant attitude. Because I would like to distance myself from these already established political positions, I find the use of an uncommon term, ‘visible minorities’, a useful tool.

**Denmark**

I use the term ‘Denmark’ to describe the country after it gained its constitution in 1849, and the term ‘Kingdom of Denmark’ when referring to the territories of the Danish crown before 1849. Several territories – including Holstein, Norway, the Indian colony Trankebar and the West Indian colonies St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John, etc. – belonged at certain times to the Kingdom of Denmark, but I make a distinction between these and the nation-state Denmark, hence the term ‘Kingdom of Denmark’. Throughout this dissertation I define ‘Western Europe’ as the pre-2004-EU countries (Ireland, Great Britain, Portugal, Spain, France, Luxemburg, Belgium, Holland,
1. Introduction

Germany, Denmark, Austria, Sweden, Finland, Italy and Greece), Iceland, Norway, Lichtenstein, Switzerland, and Andorra.

As far back in time as we have written sources about Danish society, we have information about foreigners migrating to Danish areas.\(^{34}\) The Danish lands, unlike England and France for instance, were not conquered and occupied by larger foreign immigrant groups.\(^{35}\) On the contrary, the absolute majority of foreigners who came to the Kingdom of Denmark before the middle of the nineteenth-century were invited on behalf of the crown because these individuals or smaller groups possessed skills in demand.

Denmark has historically been an emigrant country and not an immigrant country. From 1864 to 1914, ca. 285,000 Danes emigrated, 255,000 of these went to the USA. This constituted a much larger number of people than the number of immigrants who had settled permanently in Denmark during the previous centuries. From the Second World War until the mid-1990s, migrants moved chiefly between Denmark and other Western countries. The numbers of immigrants and emigrants were more or less the same, less than 50,000 persons annually.

Unlike other European countries, Denmark has not experienced extensive immigration from former colonies. Since the 1960s England, France, and Holland have seen the arrival of thousands of immigrants from their former empires. Even though Denmark has received immigrants from Greenland and the Faroe Islands, the number of immigrants has been small compared to the number of post-colonial immigrants elsewhere. Statistically the number of immigrants from Greenland and the Faroe Islands has been ca. 4500 annually from 1970 to the late 1990s, decreasing to ca. 4000 in the last five years. The number of emigrants from Denmark to Greenland and Faroe Islands has remained constant.\(^{36}\) Immigration and emigration have included all people moving between Denmark and Greenland/Faroe Islands, including the large number of ethnic Danes who moved to Greenland or the Faroe Islands in order to work for a period of time before returning to Denmark. It has not been possible to distinguish from the statistics who of these were ethnic Danes and who were Greenlanders and Faroe Islanders. Unlike Faroe Islanders, Greenlanders have been and are a visible minority in Denmark, but because of Greenland’s colony status, all Greenlanders have Danish citizenship. There has thus been no statistical distinction between Greenlanders and


Danes. This explains why no one knows how many Greenlanders actually have lived and currently live in Denmark. The guesses have varied: Articles from Qanoroog, a magazine published by the community organization The Greenlanders’ House [Det grønlandske hus] has argued that there were ca. 8000 Greenlanders in Denmark (1996) whereas Political Scientist Professor Lise Togeby in a recent report on Greenlanders in Denmark has believed the number to be ca. 7000.37

Statistics

The inconsistency of statistics has often been a problem when writing this dissertation. Statistics have often served a political purpose, and statistical information regarding immigrants often has been gathered with a political interest towards providing ‘high’ or ‘low’ figures. In some statistics immigrants have been defined as those without citizenship to the country they reside in. Thus when an immigrant has obtained citizenship of the country she/he resides in, she/he will no longer figure in the immigrant statistics. Other statistics have continued to count immigrants and their descendents as ‘foreigners’ regardless of their citizenship status.38 The National Danish Statistics [Danmarks statistik] have divided the immigrant population in Denmark into two categories: immigrant and descendents. Immigrants have been defined as “persons born in foreign countries where both parents (or one of them in case there is no information about the other) are foreign citizens or born in a foreign country…. [The category] immigrants does also include refugees, while asylum seekers, i.e. persons whose applications for residence permit are not yet determined, are not included.” Descendants have been defined as “persons born in Denmark by parents of whom none are Danish citizens born in Denmark.”39 Using the categories immigrants and visible minorities the way I do, it is obvious that the number of visible minorities has been greater than the number of immigrants.

The inconsistency of statistical information and debates about whom to include and exclude has taken place all over Europe. The attitudes towards people of different origin appear in

37 Einar Lund-Jensen, ”Grønlændere i Danmark”, in Qanoroog, No. 69, Sep. 1996, 16, and Lise Togeby, Grønlændere i Danmark – en overset minoritet, (Aarhus, 2000), 26. In comparison it can be mentioned that there are ca. 50,000 Greenlanders living in Greenland.
38 Coleman et al. for instance defines foreigners as both people without Danish citizenship and descendents of immigrants, whereas Hans Korno Rasmussen generally defines foreigners as those without citizenship of the country they live in.
the explicit naming of immigrants and descendants of immigrants. When immigrant workers came
to Western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, they were named ‘guest workers’ in most countries;
during the 1980s this gradually gave way to ‘foreign worker’ (in Denmark fremmedarbejder and in
West Germany Fremdarbeiter). In Denmark and West Germany, immigrants have always been
labeled ‘foreigner’ [fremmed, Ausleinder], just as children of immigrants have been called first,
second, third, etc. generation immigrants. Differently in Britain, only the first generation of
immigrants have been called ‘immigrants’, and their children have been named first, second, etc.
generation British. In France the name ‘immigrants’ and ‘population of immigrant origin’ has been
used [immigrés and population d’origine immigrée].\(^{40}\) The inconsistency of the statistics and the
ambiguity of who has been defined as ‘foreign’ have mirrored the debate about whom to consider
an outsider or an insider.

**Numbers of Immigrants today**

The number of immigrants has more than doubled during the last two decades, and
there has been a shift in the countries of origin.\(^{41}\) Until the mid-1990s, the majority of immigrants to
Denmark were from so-called more developed countries, according to the UN’s 1994-definition the
USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and all European countries except Turkey, Cyprus, and
parts of the former Soviet Union. During the 1990s, though, the number of immigrants from so-
called less developed countries increased, and from mid-1990s it surpassed the number of
immigrants from more developed countries.\(^{42}\) It is interesting that the number of immigrants from
the more developed countries has been so high, because, as the following analyses will show, the
media coverage of immigration to Denmark has primarily focused on immigrants from less
developed countries, giving the impression that they have made up the absolute majority of
immigrants in Denmark. Today (2002 statistics) there are 321,794 immigrants in Denmark; of these

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International Affairs, 1994), 105 f.

\(^{41}\) In 1999, the National Danish Statistics [Danmarks Statistik] published a decade census focusing on immigrants in
Denmark. This publication is still one of the most updated detailed collections of data regarding immigrants in Denmark
Stiftsbogtrykkerie, Danmarks Statistik, 1999).

\(^{42}\) In 1980, the number of immigrants from more developed countries was 99,795 compared to the number of
immigrants from less developed countries which was 34,910; in 1990 the number had risen to 101,515 immigrants from
more developed countries and 79,594 immigrants from less developed countries. Five years later, in 1995, the numbers
of immigrants from the two groups are almost equal with 112,763 immigrants from more developed countries and
112,272 immigrants from less developed countries, and from the second half of the 1990s, the number of immigrants
from less developed countries has surpassed the number of immigrants from more developed countries. *Statistik
155,001 are from more developed countries and 166,793 from less developed countries. There are 93,537 descendants of immigrants in Denmark: 23,516 with parents from more developed countries and 70,021 with parents from less developed countries. In total there are 415,331 immigrants and descendants in Denmark, of which 236,814 are from less developed countries, i.e. visible minorities.\textsuperscript{43} The total population of Denmark is 5,368,354 people (2002), making the immigrants and descendants ca. 7.7 percent of the population, while visible minorities constitute ca. 4.4 percent of the population.\textsuperscript{44}

**Numbers of Immigrants in a European perspective**

As in Denmark, immigrants in Europe more generally do not only come from less developed countries, even though debates have tended to focus on these immigrants. Statistics from the European Union, Eurostat, show that there are ca. 376 million people residing in the EU (2000); one out of twenty holds a citizenship that differs from their country of residence. Out of these 1.6 percent holds a citizenship to another EU country, leaving only 3.4 percent with a non-EU citizenship. The composition of population varies from country to country. In Luxemburg only 64 percent of the population are nationals (2000), and more than 30 percent represent other EU nationals (2000), most of them employed by EU institutions. In countries like Finland, Greece, Spain, and Portugal, the citizens constitute 98 percent of the population (2000). Germany and Austria have a relatively high share of non-EU nationals; they account for 7 percent and 8 percent respectively. Germany also has the highest share of other EU-nationals living in their country: of EU nationals who live in the EU but not in their national country, 30 percent reside in Germany, 20 percent live in France, and 15 percent make their homes in the UK. 1.2 million Italians live outside Italy but elsewhere in the EU with the absolute majority residing in Germany; similarly, 0.9 million

\textsuperscript{43} Statistisk årbog 2002, Danmarks Statistik, (Aarhus: Aarhus Stiftsbogtrykkerie, 2002), 60 and Statistisk tiårsoversigt 1999. Tema om indvandrere, Danmarks Statistik, (Aarhus: Aarhus Stiftsbogtrykkerie, 1999), 5. There might be visible minorities, i.e. people of colour, among the immigrants from more developed countries, and the equalisation of immigrants and descendants from less developed countries with visible minorities is, of course, a generalisation.

\textsuperscript{44} It is important to note that Denmark historically has been an emigrant country and not an immigrant country. From 1864 to 1914, 285,000 Danes emigrated, 255,000 of these went to the USA. This number is much larger than the number of people immigrating to Denmark in the same period. After the Second World War till the mid-1990s, emigration between Denmark and other western countries has constituted the largest numbers of immigration to and emigration from Denmark; the number of immigrants and emigrants has been more or less similar, constituting a little less than 50,000 persons annually.
Portuguese live in EU outside Portugal, most of these residing in France.\textsuperscript{45} In addition, there is an unknown number of illegal immigrants in Europe.\textsuperscript{46}

Even though there has been much debate across Europe about refugees, they have never constituted a majority of non-European citizens in Europe. Out of the ca. 20 million ‘foreigners’ in Europe only about 1 million are political refugees. The number of people who have obtained refugee status has remained relatively stable throughout the last two decades with the exception of the early 1990s, when refugees from Ex-Yugoslavia raised the number dramatically.\textsuperscript{47} In 2000, the total number of asylum applications in the EU was ca. 360,000, compared to the total number of refugees with asylum in the EU 1,063,200. The number of asylum applications in 2000 was similar to the number in 1999, but 60 percent higher than the number of applicants submitted in 1996, which represented the lowest number in the decade. However, compared to the early 1990s, when applications exceeded half a million for a couple of years, the number in 2000 seems rather low.\textsuperscript{48}

**Citizenship**

Most countries in Europe measure immigrants in relation to citizenship. Citizenship is essentially a legal category, but different countries' historical, political, and social status have influenced citizenship and the laws governing it. Since the nineteenth-century, the concept of citizenship has been closely connected to and often intertwined with the concept of nationality. European concepts of citizenship therefore have intertwined with constructions of nationality and national identity.\textsuperscript{49} Europeans have not always defined immigrants as foreigners, nor foreigners as immigrants; such definitions have depended on, among other things, citizenship laws.


\textsuperscript{46} David Coleman & Eskil Wadensjö, Immigration to Denmark: International and national perspectives, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, The Rockwool Foundation Research Unit, 1999), 41.

\textsuperscript{47} Hans Korne Rasmussen, No Entry: immigration policy in Europe, (Copenhagen: Handelshøjskolen Forlag, 1997), 36. Others argue that there are only 500,000-600,000 refugees in Europe, see for instance Soren Brix Christensen: "Flygtningepolitik på skrump" Politiken, Jan. 16, 2002, also published at Læger uden grænser / Medecins sans frontieres website (http://www.msf.dk/view.asp?NewsID=204, found Nov. 06, 2003). These numbers are complicated because statistical information is so influenced by various political agendas.


Scholars have traditionally distinguished among the different forms of citizenship in Europe by comparing Germany’s *jus sanguinis* to France’s *jus soli*. *Jus soli* is also called ‘citizenship of the soil’ or ‘territorial citizenship’ and refers to citizenship obtained because one has been born on a certain national soil, i.e. you get the citizenship of the country you are born in. *Jus sanguinis*, citizenship of blood, refers to status granted on the basis of parental status, i.e. you get the citizenship that your parents have. Practically, this has meant that immigrants’ children born in France automatically have received French citizenship, while children born of immigrants or with immigrant grandparents in Germany have remained foreigners without German citizenship. The German *jus sanguinis* has also implied that people of German origin born outside Germany could obtain German citizenship. Both Germany and France changed their citizenship laws in 1992: Germany limited the right for ethnic Germans outside Germany to obtain citizenship to people born before 1993, and gave options to people who had lived in Germany for more than 15 years to apply for citizenship, with some restrictions. France limited the right to automatically obtain French citizenship if born within the country; people born in France of non-citizen parents after 1993 have had to apply for their citizenship.

The number of people who applied for and acquired German citizenship increased dramatically after the change of law in 1992. On average 153,000 people obtained German citizenship between 1985 and 1989. This increased to 382,000 annually between 1990 and 1994 and continued to increase to 983,000 from 1995 to 1999. In 1999, when the latest information is available, 1,433,000 people acquired German citizenship. This number was, however, quite low compared to the number of non-nationals and potential citizenship claimers residing in Germany; only ca. 20 out of every 1000 non-nationals in Germany have obtained citizenship in the last few years.\(^51\)

French historian Patrick Weil has shown that this traditional distinction between Germany’s *jus sanguinis* and France’s *jus soli* is a historical construction. France did not introduce *jus soli* until just before the end of the nineteenth-century (1889), when the government changed the previous *jus sanguinis* to *jus soli* to draft people into military service. During the Weimar period, Germany had a combination of *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*. The Nazis changed this by limiting the options for naturalization for people outside Germany, i.e. restricting *jus sanguinis*, as well as

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excluding Jews, Eastern Europeans, and criminals from citizenship, i.e. limiting *jus soli*. After World War II, *jus soli* was problematic to implement in a divided Germany because *jus soli* obviously requires a clearly defined national territory.\(^{52}\)

Denmark has a combination of *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*. People born in Denmark by parents holding Danish citizenship automatically obtain Danish citizenship. People born outside Denmark by a mother holding Danish citizenship or by a woman married to a male Danish citizenship holder can obtain Danish citizenship. People of non-Danish origin who have lived in Denmark for nine years, refugees who have lived in Denmark for eight years, and people who have been married to a Danish citizenship holder for three years, and who have been in Denmark for six years, can obtain citizenship (2004 rules). People from the other Nordic countries can obtain Danish citizenship after having lived two years in Denmark.\(^{53}\)

**Content**

The dissertation is formed according to the dominant stereotypes found in the analyses of the news media representations. Journalists, newscasters, politicians, interviewees, etc. have described visible minorities in several ways from the 1970s to the 2000s, but certain images have tended to dominate the communication. These images have sprung from characteristics used to describe visible minorities, characteristics that were repeated so much that they have constructed a stereotypical image of visible minorities. The choice of reportage themes associated with visible minorities have further fuelled these stereotypes. News about visible minorities has most often been contained within less than a dozen well-known stories, producing a series of dominant stereotypes: ‘The arriving immigrant’, ‘the criminal immigrant’, ‘the oppressed immigrant woman’, ‘the veiled woman’, ‘the sexually aggressive Muslim male’, and ‘the unintegrated immigrant’. Each chapter in the dissertation is focused around one of these stereotypes.

Some aspects of media representation have changed during the three decades that my analyses cover, 1971 to 2004, and other aspects have remained rather stable. I describe how the different media representations have developed, and I compare them to political and societal

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developments that might have caused or influenced the changes. But just as interesting as locating differences and developments has been the discovery that some representations have remained surprisingly stable and unchanged during the period analyzed. I found this stability especially in representations involving gender and sexuality. I elaborate on these stabilities and reflect upon their influences on the overall images of visible minorities and ethnic Danes.

In chapter two “People arriving in Denmark”, I look at how the news media have presented newcomers to Denmark. The news media has often described the arrival as “a flood” and given the impression that large numbers of people have been entering Denmark. In this chapter I draw parallels to actual numbers of immigrants as well as to previous immigration to Denmark. I also elaborate on the legal framework that has governed immigration to Denmark and I look closer at Danish citizenship, including its historical development. In this chapter, as in others, I analyze narrative and linguistic strategies. Here I look at the different narrative strategies in presenting arriving immigrants as large anonymous groups or as individual persons, and I connect these different strategies to the Danish population’s ambiguous attitudes towards immigrants. I also elaborate on different European ideas of integration, ranging from assimilation to multiculturalism.

Chapter three “The criminal immigrant” focuses on news representations of the visible minority male as criminal. In this chapter, I introduce the central television narrative models, Berettermodel and actant model, which have been central for televised dramaturgic narration. The stereotype of the criminal immigrant was born in the early 1990s, and I connect him to the development of TV2, which broke DR’s news monopoly, as well as to DR’s old public service rules. Unlike ‘old’ DR, TV2 emphasized sensational stories and dramatic footage that opened the way for a new type of news, including news about criminal immigrants. News stories have implied that criminal immigrant make up a higher proportion of criminals than they actually do. I deconstruct the crime statistics and add nuance to the claimed overrepresentation. I connect the increased news focus on crime to the passing of laws aiming at preventing violence [Voldspakken I and II]. I also connect it to a change in government in the early 1990s, when a Social Democratic-led government took over after a decade of right-wing government, as well as to the establishment of the populist nationalist Danish People’s Party [Dansk Folkeparty] in 1995. The image of the criminal immigrant has been interlinked with images of culture as static, and I explain how this cultural view is closely connected to what commentators have labeled cultural racism.

In the chapter “The oppressed immigrant woman” I look at how visible minority women have been represented as oppressed across my period. Reportage has described them as
oppressed by forced marriages, domestic violence, honor killings, and by Islam in general. News stories linked violence with Islamic culture, but statistics from Danish shelters for battered women show that ethnically Danish men have been responsible for much of the violence. The news media have often made direct comparisons between visible minority women and ethnically Danish women that have cast ethnically Danish women in the role of liberated women living in a progressive emancipated culture. In this chapter I argue that the stereotype of the oppressed immigrant woman has played a central role in maintaining the myth that there has been (and is) gender equality in Denmark.

I elaborate on the news media’s characterizations of female visible minorities in chapter five “Veiling and dressing.” I describe how veils and veiling have been an integrated part of the news media’s representation of visible minority women. The news media has drawn an image of veiling as a one-sided symbol of female oppression. The news media have provided very limited room for different readings of veiling, just as they have limited readings of the exposure of naked female flesh as something than liberating. In this chapter, I include various different voices, including a number of feminist voices, both in favor of and against veiling in order to illustrate that veiling has been (and is) a complex practice. I argue that the news media’s one-sided focus on veiling as oppressing and on nakedness as liberating has played a role in the national construction of Denmark as a country with sexual liberation.

Chapter six “The sexually aggressive Muslim male” deals with the portrayal of Muslim males as sexually aggressive and as potential threats to ethnically Danish women. Besides a number of TV news clips, I use the media coverage of the infamous Aarhus rape to illustrate how the news media has constructed the Muslim male as a hyper-sexual threat, an image with a long colonial history. I also show how the media coverage of rape can be seen as an expression of a discourse that privileges a white, male perspective. Similar to the news media’s portrayals of ‘the oppressed immigrant woman’, the ‘sexually aggressive Muslim male’ contrasts with the ethnically Danish male, who then appears as non-aggressive, respectful of women, and an ideal partner. I compare this positive image of the ethnically Danish male to rape statistics and rape patterns to undermine the image.

The final chapter “The non-integrated immigrant” considers the representation of visible minorities as unintegrated into Danish society. Images of male visible minorities as criminal and sexually aggressive and of female visible minorities as oppressed and veiled have intertwined with images of visible minorities as being very different from ethnic Danes. This chapter explores
how the news media have constructed images of visible minorities as living parallel lives to the average ethnic Danes, lives unintegrated into Danish society. The media has presented the lack of integration as a national financial burden, as well as a local burden for schools or areas that have become inhabited by large numbers of visible minorities instead of ethnic Danes. The content of integration remains undefined, serving as a floating signifier. There is general agreement on integration as a goal but no one has actually specified what this entails. This lack of definition makes the goal unreachable. I also consider the interconnections between integration and racism. In the 1980s and early 1990s, DR focused on several cases of discrimination against visible minorities in matters of employment or racist utterances. DR functioned as the watchdog in these news stories, taking an active stand against racism. I show how DR took this role upon themselves in cases of direct racism but has not been able to take a similar position in later cases that reveal structural racism. On the contrary, it seems like DR has, maybe unknowingly, helped fertilize a mental landscape in a way that promotes structural racism against visible minorities. In Denmark, there has been a consensus that the tone used by politicians, journalists, and laypeople describing visible minorities has become increasingly harsh during the last decade. Drawing on examples from 1971 onwards, I explain in this chapter how this consensus is problematic because it cannot be proven according to my empirical material.

Finally, I conclude the dissertation in chapter eight, “Conclusion.” Here I connect the different stereotypical images of visible minorities and reflect upon the overall impressions they might have given to ethnically Danish TV viewers and newspaper readers over the years. I also reflect upon how these images might have influenced the construction of Danish nationality and conceptions of whiteness. Central aspects of these conclusive reflections involve descriptions of how nationality has intersected with understandings of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race, and how these intersections have been instrumental for the construction of Danish nationality, a process in which the news media has been centrally involved.
2. People arriving in Denmark

Introduction

This chapter focuses on how the media have presented people arriving in Denmark. The Danish news media’s coverage of refugees’ and immigrants’ arrivals in Denmark often gave the impression of floods of people swarming over the country's borders. This impression was highlighted by the news’ connection between descriptions of arrivals and political discussions about tightening immigration laws in order to limit the number of arrivals. It was also underscored by television news series about reporting on asylum seekers in Denmark being lodged in alternative spaces like gyms, tents, prisons, ships, etc. because their numbers exceeded the capacity to house them. Journalists and news producers often narrated news around drama and conflict, and the news about arrivals was often connected to dramatic conflicts between different groups of refugees as well as between recently arrived refugees and local Danes who refused to accept immigrants in their areas.

Stories about refugees dominated the news about immigrants' arrival. This most likely gave viewers the impression that the majority of visible minorities in Denmark were refugees. The television news’ descriptions of these arriving refugees were generally negative and presented in terms that described the immigrants as burdens. For example, several politicians argued during interviews broadcast in the television news that immigrants cause financial problems.

In this chapter, I compare the television news’ coverage with actual numbers of immigrants and with the legislation regulating immigration to Denmark. I use this analysis to show that foreign people did not uncontrollably swarm the country during the period analyzed, i.e. the early 1970s to the early 2000s. Instead their entry was governed by rather strict immigration laws. I also illustrate that refugees did not constitute the largest group of immigrants; instead family unifications, i.e. bringing a family member (spouse, parent, or child) to the country, were the main reason behind immigration to Denmark during the period analyzed. I argue that stories about family unifications did not really make it to the news partly because news producers did not consider them as newsworthy, i.e. dramatic or sensational, as stories about refugees. Drama also drove the narrative in news stories about the smuggling of immigrants. I illustrate how these stories were narrated as crime stories that positioned police officers in the role of heroes. I show how these crime stories also had a racial component, in that the police heroes were white and the smuggling villains were of color.
In my analyses of the news’ representation of people arriving in Denmark, I look to ideas of assimilation and multiculturalism and illustrate how news descriptions of immigrants often were embedded in ideas of assimilation as a means of integration. I also briefly compare the Danish situation with integrations of visible minorities in Britain, France, and Germany.

The language used to describe people arriving in Denmark changed throughout the period analyzed. I look at developments in the language used to describe immigrants and throw light on how politicians used linguistic strategies in order to utter negative statements about immigrants. I also analyze how laypeople’s self-labeling as non-racists functioned as a strategy that enabled them to utter explicitly prejudiced statements.

The news media generally described refugees as anonymous groups of people, but there were a few exceptional clips that focused on individual immigrants. These clips were narrated differently, in a way that enabled Danish viewers to identify with the individual immigrants and sympathize with them. I compare the two kinds of news stories – the anonymous group portrayal and the individualized personal story – and argue that they might be central in explaining the Danish population’s ambiguous attitudes towards immigrants. Surveys have shown that Danes simultaneously have expressed negative views of asylum seekers and visible minorities while at the same time showing tolerance in helping these people. Since the mass media have been the Danes’ main source of information regarding immigrants and visible minorities, the two attitudes reflected in the news media – the negative about floods of anonymous refugees burdening the country and the positive about individuals in need of help – might have influenced viewers and contributed to their ambiguous attitudes.

The Danish news media distinguished between being Danish and holding Danish citizenship from the early 1970s to early 2000s. Consequently, the news media generally treated visible minorities with Danish citizenship as foreigners rather than as Danish. I try to explain this distinction by looking at the history behind Danish citizenship laws, and I argue that the wording of Danish citizenship, *Indfødsretten*, implied that holding Danish citizenship did not equate with being Danish.

People arriving in Denmark have been labeled in various ways, e.g. “political refugees”, “economic immigrants”, “foreign workers”, etc. by journalists, television-hosts, and interviewed experts and politicians. The use of these labels, and the insistence on their difference, has often been political, trying to favor one group on behalf of others. I aim at distinguishing myself

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from these political connotations, and I therefore call all people arriving in Denmark by the common term ‘immigrants’. Within this large group of immigrants, I use the term ‘asylum seeker’ to refer to people applying for asylum in Denmark and the term ‘refugee’ to refer to people fleeing wars, conflicts, or other kinds of disasters – the two terms, refugee and asylum seeker, do of course at times overlap. The term ‘foreign worker’ is used with reference to labor immigrants in Western Europe, primarily during the 1960s and 1970s.

**Floods of immigrants**

Since the mid-1980s, Danish television news has characterized the arrival of immigrants to Denmark as a ‘flood’ [strom]. The Danish word *strom* connotes the English words flood, stream, and current (both electric and water current), but the Danish connotations of *strom* is more connected to an uncontrolled flood than a controlled flow as in a stream. *Strom* often connotes danger, and using *strom* to describe the arrivals has indicated the anxieties which have been connected to the arrival of immigrants.\(^{55}\) A series of news clips from 1984, which repeatedly described the arrival of refugees as an uncontrolled flood, added to the connotations of immigrants constituting a danger by characterizing the arrival as “explosive.”\(^{56}\) This metaphorical reference underscored that the ‘flood’ was unstable and out of control and potentially damaging.

The Danish news media did not describe refugees who arrived before the mid-1980s in this manner – most likely because these were the so-called quota refugees. These refugees, who arrived via the UN High Commission for Refugees, included, for instance, 1400 Hungarians who, together with another 200,000 Hungarians, had fled the country due to the political situation in 1956. The arrival of the Hungarians led to the creation of the Danish Refugee Council [Dansk Flygtningehjælp], which became responsible for the integration of refugees in Denmark. The Danes received the refugees warmly: An empty train with room for 1000 people was sent to Austria,

\(^{55}\) See for instance TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19890815, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19890816, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19890816, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19890831, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19920907, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19920918, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19921112, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19840709, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19840710, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19841001, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19841010, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19841022, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19841116, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19841118, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19841225, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19990802, and DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19990829.

\(^{56}\) See for instance DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19841010, original text “strommningen [er] eksplosiv.”
where thousands of Hungarians initially had fled, in order to bring the refugees to Denmark. When the train returned to Denmark, civilians waited at the train station to offer the refugees coffee and Danish pastry.\textsuperscript{57} The national radio and television (DR) show Entertainment for Millions [Underholdning for millioner] also showed sympathy for the refugees in 1957. The show collected 5.5 million Danish Kroner to donate to the Hungarians. The show was the first national television program that captured the whole nation's attention, television being a new medium from 1951.\textsuperscript{58}

Most of the refugees arriving in Denmark in the decades following World War II came from Eastern Europe. In 1968, 200 refugees from Czechoslovakia arrived due to the political situation in Czechoslovakia during the spring of 1968; in 1969 another 300 Czechs arrived. The Danish Refugee Council, who for a number of years had been calculating and budgeting on receiving ca. 80-100 refugees annually, had problems dealing with that many Czechs. But the situation became even more chaotic when ca. 3000 Polish Jews arrived to Denmark during 1969-1970 because of pogroms in Poland that forced thousands of Polish Jews to flee.\textsuperscript{59}

During the 1970s, Denmark began receiving refugees from outside Europe. Through the UN, Denmark received 158 Ugandan-Asians – all representing families where at least one member was disabled – after all people of Asian origin were expelled from Uganda in 1972.\textsuperscript{60} From 1973 to 1974, 800 Chilean refugees arrived in Denmark, fleeing from the new regime after the military coup that brutally deposed Salvador Allende's socialist government in 1973. 103 Vietnamese refugees, so-called ‘boat people’, arrived in Denmark in 1975 as a result of the communist victory over South Vietnam; throughout the 1970s and 1980s around 3000 Vietnamese refugees in total arrived in Denmark.\textsuperscript{61} The arrival of these refugees was well-organized and controlled; Denmark basically picked the content of its quota and transported them to Denmark. When the quota was full, no more refugees were accepted.\textsuperscript{62}

The arrival of refugees from outside Europe marked a shift in the racial and ethnic composition of the refugee pool. Previously, the refugees had mainly come from Europe and visually appeared rather similar to the ethnic Danes. With these new groups of refugees, immigrants became visually distinguishable; immigrants became visible minorities. Another important shift

\textsuperscript{57} Bent Østergaard, Indvandrernes danmarkshistorie. (Copenhagen: Gad, 1983), 222 f.
\textsuperscript{58} Ib Bondebjerg, Elektroniske fiktioner. Tv som fortællende medie. (Valby: Borgen/Medier, 1995), 42.
\textsuperscript{59} Bent Østergaard, Indvandrernes danmarkshistorie. (Copenhagen: Gad, 1983), 224 ff.
\textsuperscript{60} Bent Østergaard, Indvandrernes danmarkshistorie. (Copenhagen: Gad, 1983), 227 f.
\textsuperscript{61} Denmark did not receive refugees from Laos and Cambodia.
\textsuperscript{62} See for instance TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19890816, TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19890902, TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19890906 for portrayals of Vietnamese quota refugees and illustrations of when quotas were full no more refugees could arrive.
also took place at the beginning of the 1980s: A large number of so-called spontaneous refugees began arriving at the Danish borders. These were people outside the UN quota system who had found their way to Denmark on their own in order to apply for asylum. The majority of these were refugees from the war between Iraq and Iran, but Lebanese, Palestinian, and Tamil refugees also arrived. These spontaneous refugees not only differed in racial appearance; many of them also differed in religious terms from the practices of the Christian majority. This had also been the case with the Vietnamese.

**Foreign workers**

During the late 1960s and 1970s, foreign workers arrived in Denmark. I was able to access television news as far back as 1971, and from that year onwards there were news clips about guest workers – or foreign workers, as their label changed during the 1970s and early 1980 – even though the numbers of these news stories were limited. One news clip from 1971 examined foreign workers’ bad living conditions. The clip showed footage from a one-bedroom apartment where a family of four was living; the place was poor, with mattresses on the floor and newspaper cuttings on the walls. The news clip gave the impression of very poor living conditions, as the assistant commissioner of police, O. Stevns, argued in the report: “it cannot be right that we are getting a housing proletariat...[and therefore] we must demand that if one [i.e. the partner of a foreign worker] takes residence at a spouse’s place...then the place must be acceptable according to Danish living standards.”63 One explanation for the lesser number of news clips about foreign workers and visible minorities in Denmark from this early period was that there were far fewer news clips in news programs in the 1970s and early 1980s than later on.

Denmark experienced, like the rest of Western Europe, an economic boom from the late 1950s. The unemployment rate, which had been rather high after the Second World War, continued to drop until the country achieved full employment by the beginning of 1960s. Salaries and prices rose steadily and consumerism boomed, which led to a deficit in the national balance of payments. The discussion about foreign labor, which began during the early 1960s, was connected to fears that Denmark lacked the labor force to export industries that were needed to outweigh imports. The use of foreign labor was debated for years before any guest workers, as they first were

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63 DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19711123, original text: ”Ingen kan være tjent med, at vi får et boligproletariat...man bør skære kravet på den måde, at man skal tage ophold hos en ægtefælle...som har en, efter danske forhold, acceptabel bolig.” A news clip from 1973 also comments on foreign workers’ bad living conditions, see DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19731021.
called, came to Denmark; this issue was so contentious that some agitated for the use of drawing from the pool of housewives rather than foreign labor, and labor unions argued against foreign labor because they feared it would depress salaries. Like several other Western European countries, Denmark began importing foreign labor during the 1960s primarily from Turkey and former Yugoslavia but also from Pakistan. From 1965-1967, the numbers of Turkish and Yugoslavian foreign workers were less than 500 a year, but this increased to 5000-7000 per year by the end of the decade. The number of Pakistanis who obtained residence permits was about 2000 in 1971 but had increased to about 3000 in 1975.

Foreign workers’ immigration to Denmark was regulated by the 1952 Alien Act, which allowed non-Danish citizens to arrive in Denmark and find a job before applying for a working permit. This changed from mid-1960s, when non-Danish citizens were only allowed to enter the country if they had money enough to provide for themselves and for a potential return ticket. In 1970, the legislation was changed, and the Danish Parliament passed the first law aimed at regulating foreign workers. Working permits had been previously issued in Denmark, and anyone could arrive and look for work; now the permits had to be obtained before arrival. Workers were to apply for a permit at Danish embassies and consulates, and in order to receive a permit they had to have a job offer from a Danish employer in hand as well as a document from the same employer stating that it had been impossible to find qualified Danish labor for the job position. The permits themselves were also shortened to six months without options for extending them. In November 1970, a freeze on all first-time working permit applications was introduced that lasted throughout the winter of 1970/71. In 1973, because of the oil crisis, the Parliament passed a formal freeze on further foreign workers and immigration to Denmark, except for citizens from the Nordic countries or members of the European Economic Community (EEC, later EU). At the time of the

66 1965 is the first year when statistics about Turkish and Yugoslavian immigrants are available, and 1971 is the first year with available statistic for Pakistani immigrants. See David Coleman & Eskil Wadensjö, Immigration to Denmark: International and national perspectives, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, The Rockwool Foundation Research Unit, 1999), 151.
67 One exception to this was Nordic citizens who from 1954 were allowed to settle and work freely within the three countries.
68 The term EU substituted the term EEC when the European Economic Community officially transferred to the European Union with the implementation of the Maastricht treaty, signed in 1992 and implemented in 1993. I use the terms EEC when talking about earlier stages of the European community and the term EU when talking about the European Community from 1993 onwards.
immigration freeze, there were ca. 15,000 guest workers in the country, the majority from Turkey and Yugoslavia.  

Several Western European countries imported foreign labor during the 1960s and 1970s, and the majority of these received labor from Turkey. Turkey engaged in labor recruitment agreements with West Germany in 1961, with Austria, Belgium, and Holland in 1964, with France in 1965, and with Sweden in 1967. Besides signing labor agreements with Turkey, France also signed labor recruitment agreements with Morocco and Tunisia. By the early 2000s, the largest group of non-EU citizens within the EU were Turks, constituting ca. 2.6 million people mainly residing in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, and Denmark. The second largest group of non-EU citizens residing within the EU were immigrants from the former Yugoslavia, who represented ca. 1.7 million people and lived mostly in Austria, Germany, and Sweden. At ca. 1 million people, Moroccans constituted the third largest group of people without EU citizenship.

Looking specifically at individual countries, the largest group of non-German citizens in Germany were Turks, and 75 percent of the Turks in the EU were living in Germany. Germany's second-largest group were citizens of the Yugoslav successor states; these 1.2 million people made up 65 percent of the total population in the EU from the former Yugoslavia. The third largest group in Germany were the Italians. In the early 2000s, the largest numbers of immigrants without EU citizenship in France were Moroccans, followed by Turks, who were followed by citizens of the former Yugoslavia, but these immigrant groups in France did not correspond to the largest groups of visible minorities, as they did in Germany. In France, Algerians represented the largest group of visible minorities, although many of these Algerians held dual citizenship. In Britain, immigration has been dominated by people from former British colonies. Indians constituted the largest group of visible minorities in Britain, followed by Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis; but the largest group of people without EU citizenship residing in Britain in the early 2000s were Americans.

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70 *European social statistics. Migration*, Eurostat, European Commission, (Luxemburg: European Community, 2002), 17. This statistic is based on citizenship, and refers to the number of Turks in EU with Turkish citizenship. This does not include people of Turkish origin who hold other citizenship than Turkish citizenship.

The 1983 Alien Act

Immigration laws regulating arrivals in Denmark changed several times during the period analyzed. One of the most important changes was the passing of a new Alien Act in 1983. This new act went further than the Geneva Convention, granting residence permits to both Convention and de facto refugees, making family reunification a legal right, and granting free access to asylum procedure. In other words, all non-Danish citizens could enter Denmark and remain in the country while their application for asylum was being processed.\(^{72}\) The Danish Refugee Appeals Board [Flygtningenævnet] was established as part of the new act to handle complaints regarding asylum decisions made by the Danish Immigrant Service [Direktoratet for Udlændinge].\(^{73}\) The Alien Act was passed under the center-right government [Venstre, Konservative, Centrum Demokraterne and Kristelig Folkeparti] that held power from 1982 to 1988. All members of the Parliament, including the opposition, voted in favor of the Act except the 12 members representing the extreme right-wing Progressive Party [Fremskridtspartiet].\(^{74}\) The Alien Act of 1983 received international attention for its liberal stance, which gave Denmark a reputation for providing a very humanitarian approach to refugees.\(^{75}\)

It was in the television news’ coverage of the 1983 Alien Act that television newscasters, journalists, and politicians began introducing the metaphor of ‘flooding refugees’ that came to characterize television coverage of immigration issues for the remainder of 1980s and the

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\(^{72}\) The Geneva Convention, which was formed by the 1951-established United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), defines a refugee as a person who “…owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (quoted after David Coleman & Eskil Wadensjö, *Immigration to Denmark: International and national perspectives*, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, The Rockwool Foundation Research Unit, 1999), 162). This definition was established with an association of refugees to political refugees from Eastern Europe. This concept of de facto refugees was developed during the 1960s. According to the Alien Act of 1983, a de facto refugee is defined as a refugee “…who is not included under the terms of the [Geneva] Convention relating to the status of refugees, …but who due to circumstances similar to those laid down in the Convention or due to other weighty reasons ought not to be required to return to his or her country of origin.” (Quoted after David Coleman & Eskil Wadensjö, *Immigration to Denmark: International and national perspectives*, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, The Rockwool Foundation Research Unit, 1999), 162). A 1998-amendment to the Danish Alien Act of 1983 re-defined a de facto refugee to a person “…who is not included under the terms of the Convention relating to the status of refugees of 28 July 1951, but who due to circumstances similar to those laid down in the Convention or due to other weighty reasons that involve a well-founded fear of persecution or similar violations, ought not to be required to return to his or her country of origin.” (Quoted after David Coleman & Eskil Wadensjö, *Immigration to Denmark: International and national perspectives*, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, The Rockwool Foundation Research Unit, 1999), 162. See also Michael Marrus, *The Unwanted: European refugees in the twentieth century*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 11.

\(^{73}\) For more on the Alien Act of 1983 see Lone Christensen et al., *Udlændergeret*, (Jurist og økonomiforbundet, 1995).

\(^{74}\) Birgitte Gormsen, *Flygtninge/indvandrer-debatten i 30 år. En diskursanalytisk tilgang til de politiske orienteringer*, (Unpublished M.Sc. thesis, Department for Political Science, University of Aarhus, 1999), 68.

\(^{75}\) Lone Christensen et al., *Udlændergeret*, (Jurist- og økonomiforbundet, 1995), 237.
beginning of the next decade. Several news clips from the mid-1980s portrayed rightwing politicians who argued that the Alien Act was too liberal and that it caused refugees to seek asylum specifically in Denmark. DR news for instance quoted the then-Minister of justice from the Conservative Party [Konservativt Folkeparti], Erik Ninn-Hansen, as saying that “the new [1983] Alien Act increases the flood of refugees…There is a connection between the current flood and the new Alien Act from the summer of 1983, and the asylum seekers are influenced by the rumor of the liberal Alien Act”\(^{76}\) Similarly, another news clip was introduced by a voice-over which argued:

“Today the government presented new statistics on numbers of refugees who arrive in Denmark and based on those, politicians from the government demand a curb on the legislation.”\(^{77}\) Interviewed politicians, for instance Liberal [Venstre] Bjørn Elmquist, argued that it was the population – without specifying any further to whom he referred – who wanted to curb the arrival of new refugees. I was not able to determine whether this negative attitude towards immigration was fuelled by the fact that the arriving refugees increasingly had begun to represent different races and ethnicities than the white Europeans because no one mentioned race or ethnicity in their broadcasted utterances. But it can be established that there was a temporal connection between the arrival of racially different, spontaneous asylum seekers and an increased political critique of the refugees.

It was typical for politicians to present their arguments on behalf of the population instead on their own behalf. It might have been common practice for politicians to claim to speak on behalf of the population, but it has been striking how often Danish politicians, and other interviewees, used this claim when they spoke about visible minorities. Often it was easier to utter negative or harsh statements when the statements were presented as if they were not one’s own.\(^{78}\) It was for instance easier for Elmquist to argue that “there are limits to how many refugees the population will accept…I need to take note of that there are very wide circles of people in

\(^{76}\) DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19841010, original text: “den nye fremmedlov [har] skylden for at flygtningestrommen stiger…der er sammenhæng mellem tilstromningen nu og den nye udlændingelov fra sommeren 1983, og at asylansøgerne påvirkes af rygget om en liberal fremmedlovgivning.” See also DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19840709 and DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19841022 for politicians’ discussions regarding tightening of the Alien Act.

\(^{77}\) DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19841022, original text: “Regeringen fremlagde i dag nye tal for flyttninge, der kommer til Danmark, og politikere fra regeringen kræver, på baggrund af dem, bremskloader i lovgivningen.”

Denmark...who are worried about the burden [of refugees],”\textsuperscript{79} than to have argued that he personally found that there were too many refugees in Denmark. This de-personalization of utterances made it hard to criticize Elmquist, because criticizing him would appear as a criticism of the whole population that he claimed to represent. Elmquist’s utterance can be seen as a constructive practice in which racism might become the effect of his utterance, but where the utterance itself might not be racist. Bourdieu has argued that there is no such thing as public opinion. Rather, he has said, public opinion has been a part of the process that has legitimized power relations.\textsuperscript{80} Heinz Eulau has similarly argued that “party leaders produce the public opinion after which they compete to woo the electorate, but the people’s voices are nothing but an echo of the political elites’ utterances.”\textsuperscript{81} It can therefore be questioned who were behind the public opinion that apparently demanded limits the number of refugees allowed into Denmark.

Oystein Gaascholt and Lise Togeby have argued in their large survey on Danes’ attitudes towards visible minorities that the public’s opinion, expressed for example in opinion polls, has reflected the way that the media have described immigrants and visible minorities. They have further concluded that media reports and stories to a large extent have been based on politicians’ utterances; in other words, politicians have actively participated in constructing attitudes towards visible minorities which then have been reflected back to the politicians as public opinions.\textsuperscript{82} Most likely this has been a two-way process in which politicians’ media statements influenced media audiences, i.e. the population, who then expressed views based on the media information back to the politicians via polls, vox pops, etc.

The liberal approach of the 1983-Alien Act did not last long, and the Act was modified in 1985 with the introduction of the so-called ‘manifestly unfounded procedure’. This amendment allowed the Danish Immigrant Service [Udlandingestyrelsen] to speedily view applications and to deny asylum, as well as close off the option for appealing a refusal of asylum, if the grounds for applying for asylum were ‘manifestly unfounded’, e.g. if an asylum seeker came from a country considered safe. Another amendment was introduced in 1985 that enabled Danish

\textsuperscript{79} DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19841022, original text: “der er grænser for, hvor mange flygtninge befolkningen vil acceptere...må jeg...tage til efterretning, at der i meget brede kredse i Danmark...findes en bekymring over den belastning, som er visse steder på arbejdsmarkedet og i det sociale system i øvrigt.”


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authorities to deny entry to people without a valid passport and valid visa if the person was arriving from a country considered safe. It also became possible to issue fines to airlines transporting passengers without proper documents. The news media mainly reported about this amendment in terms of conflicts between, on the one hand, airline companies that refused to pay the fines, and, on the other hand, the Danish state.\(^{83}\)

These classic conflict narrations dominated the news communication regarding the amendment’s consequences for refugees. From 1992 it was possible to fingerprint asylum seekers who had been denied asylum. In 1994, an amendment made it easier to expel asylum seekers from Denmark once their asylum had been denied. Previously, denied asylum seekers were allowed to stay in Denmark while their application for residence permit on humanitarian grounds or their complaint about the denial of asylum had been processed; after 1994 this was no longer possible.\(^{84}\)

During discussions in 1983-1984 about the arrival of immigrants, several politicians began characterizing certain refugees as _bekvemmelighedsflygtninge_, which translates to ‘convenience or comfort refugees’. The negative concept referred to immigrants who pretended to be political refugees but in reality wanted a better standard of living. Gaasholt and Togeby have argued that the introduction and use of such negative concepts participated in widening the limits for legitimate public statements. Using the concept _bekvemmelighedsflygtninge_ implied that there were refugees who were not worthy of help because they were bogus refugees. This attitude was expressed in a TV2 news clip that described the Liberal party’s [Venstre] wish to tighten immigration policies even further than the 1985-amendment. The viewers saw a still photograph of Liberal politician Birthe Rønn Hornbech, at that time head of the Liberal’s internal refugee committee [flygtningeudvalg], while the television-host explained how the Liberals have argued that “The Danes’ aversion [towards immigrants] is caused by the group of refugees which must be characterized as _bekvemmelighedsflygtninge_ because of whom the real refugees are let down.”\(^{85}\) Gaasholt & Togeby’s have pointed to polls from the mid-1990s that showed that 65 percent of Danes believed – and clearly expressed this belief – that many immigrants came to Denmark in order to abuse the social welfare system; in other words, that many immigrants were

\(^{83}\) See for instance TV2 (Staion), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19890808.

\(^{84}\) This section is based on Soren Pedersen, ”Migration to and from Denmark during the period 1960-97”, in *Immigration to Denmark. International and National Perspectives* (David Coleman & Eskil Wadensjö, Aarhus: The Rockwool Foundation Research Unit, Aarhus University Press, 1999, pp. 148-191) and Hans Korno Rasmussen, *No Entry: Immigration Policy in Europe*. (Copenhagen: Handelshøjskoleforslag, 1997), 154 ff.

\(^{85}\) TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19890815, original text: ”Danskernes uvilje skyldes, at en del asylsøgere må betragtes som bekvemmelighedsflygtninge, hvorefter de egentlige flygtninge lades i stikken.” See also TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19890831 for news with Liberal politicians demanded that immigration laws became tightened.”
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_bekvemmelighedsflygtninge_. Gaasholt & Togeby have argued that since the majority of Danes did not know immigrants personally, they must have based their knowledge on the media’s descriptions of immigrants.\(^{86}\) Since the mid-1980s the news media have repeatedly provided space for politicians who have labeled immigrants as _bekvemmelighedsflygtning_ and thereby argued that there has been a large number of ‘fake’ refugees in Denmark. For instance, the then-leader of the extremist anti-immigrant organization The Danish Organization [Den danske forening], Ole Hasselbalch, was given room in the television news to argue that “95 percent of the asylum seekers who arrive in Western Europe today are not refugees according to UN conventions. They are people who flee in order to improve their life conditions.”\(^{87}\)

Scholars have argued that the language used publicly in the media to describe immigrants changed during the 1980s, when it became more negative.\(^{88}\) An examination of how the Danish news media described the arrival of immigrants seems to confirm this claim. The appearance of “flood” and “convenience/comfort refugees” as common terms in the vocabulary describing refugees was an illustration of how the language describing immigrants changed, becoming more negatively toned from the mid-1980s. Despite the fact that the number of arrived immigrants varied from year to year, the majority of news descriptions implied that large and uncontrolled numbers of people continuously arrived in Denmark throughout the 1980s and 1990s – even after the 1985 amendments to Alien Act that more stringently regulated immigration.

The characterization of immigration as a ‘flood’ implied that international refugees were very eager to come to and live in Denmark. The then-prime Minister Poul Schlüter from the Conservative party [Konservativt Folkeparti] described Denmark as “a magnet for refugees”,\(^{89}\) a statement that encouraged the image of floods of refugees wanting to enter Denmark. Similar impressions derived from interviews with refugees in Denmark who expressed how happy they were to be in Denmark and how they wanted their family members to join them. One interview with a woman from Bosnia who had received asylum for herself, her husband and daughter exemplified this portrayal. A voice-over told viewers that the family “is doing so very well in Husum [a Danish


\(^{87}\) DR (Station), primetime news program _TV-Avisen_, date: 19900723, original text: “95% af de asylsøgere der kommer til Vesteuropa her i år er ikke flygtninge i FN konventionens forstand. Det er altså folk, der flygter for at komme til bedre levevilkår.”


\(^{89}\) DR (Station), primetime news program _TV-Avisen_, date: 19900802, orginal text: ”Danmark…[er en] magnet for flygtninge.”
People arriving in Denmark

provincial town] that they could not dream of returning to their relatives in Bosnia."\(^90\) The Bosnian woman explained that instead of returning to Bosnia, “I dream about getting them [the relatives] up here.”\(^91\) When asked “up here to visit or up here to live?”\(^92\) She answered with a smile: “up here to live.”\(^93\) These images of refugees who have happily stayed in Denmark and want to remain here created an image of Denmark as a wonderful place to be; the images thereby contributed to a positive national self-construction.

The 1980s’ and 1990s’ television news coverage of immigration treated the arrival of immigrants as if it was a new phenomenon, but it was not. As far back in time as there have been written sources about Danish society, there has been references about foreigners migrating to Danish areas.\(^94\) Several news clips described the refugees’ situation as incommensurate with earlier arrivals: “The current immigration is without historical comparison.”\(^95\) But this is not historically accurate. The arrivals of immigrants during the 1980s and 1990s were not the largest that Denmark had ever seen, nor were they without comparison.

Denmark’s largest influx of refugees came from Germany, namely the ca. 260,000 civilians who arrived during the end of World War II when 300,000 German soldiers were already stationed in Denmark. Registration of refugees in May 1945 showed 238,000 German refugees and 23,200 non-German refugees; among the latter were 8-10,000 from the Soviet Union and 4500 from the Balkans. In June 1946, there were still 197,000 German refugees in Denmark. Most of the refugees, who arrived before the end of the war in the early spring of 1945, came by order from Hitler. He had decided to place some of the many refugees from East Prussia, Danzig, and Pommern in the protectorate of Denmark.\(^96\) First the refugees were billeted at schools, hotels, etc., but from July 1946 the majority were housed in special camps called ‘barracks cities’ in order to accommodate them and keep them isolated from the Danish population. The then-Minister for social and employment relations, Liberal [Venstre] Søren Peter Larsen, explained to a journalist

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\(^90\) TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19951202, original text: "de har det så godt i Husum, at de ikke drømmer om at vende hjem til deres slægtninge i Bosnien.” The viewers were not informed whether the family was Muslim, Serbs, Croats, etc., only that they were from Bosnia.

\(^91\) TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19951202, original text: "Jeg drømmer om, at de kunne komme herover.”

\(^92\) TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19951202, original text: "på besøg eller herop og bo?”

\(^93\) TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19951202, original text: "herop og bo.” See also for instance DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Årvisen, date: 19990030 for descriptions of how happy refugees are to stay in Denmark, and how they want to remain in Denmark.


\(^95\) DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Årvisen, date: 19990829, original text: “Den nuværende indvandring er uden historisk sidestykke.”

\(^96\) Bent Jensen, De fremmede i dansk avisdebat (Viborg: Spektrum, 2000), 314 f.
from the newspaper *Socialdemokraten* that the Liberal government’s policy was to keep the Germans isolated so they would not be absorbed into the Danish population. “By keeping the German refugees in camps, it will be easier to get rid of them,” Larsen argued.⁹⁷ There was a generally negative attitude towards the German refugees, who, despite the fact that most were civilian women and children, represented the power that had occupied the country the previous five years, that had lost the war, and that was unwanted on Danish territory. The Danish population generally treated the German refugees harshly; several of them were denied access to doctors, and several doctors refused to treat them. In all, 13,492 of the refugees died during their stay in Denmark, 7000 of whom were under five years old. Indeed, more Germans died in Denmark in the year following the war than Danes had died during the occupation.⁹⁸ The refugees stayed neither because of their own wishes nor because of the Danish authorities’ wishes, but simply because post-war Germany was not ready to take them back. In late 1946 the British occupied zone in Germany began accepting some of the German refugees; in the spring of 1947 the American and French zones also agreed to take them back, and finally the Russian zone accepted them as well. The last German refugees left Denmark in the spring of 1949.⁹⁹ The news media’s claim that arrivals of refugees during the 1980s and 1990s was without comparison could be explained with reference to the fact that, unlike the refugees of the 1980s and 1990s, previous refugees were of European origin. In other words, it was the racial composition of the refugees that made immigration during the 1980s and 1990s incomparable. It could also simply be explained by a lack of historical awareness among journalists and television producers.

**Lack of space for hosting refugees**

The news media’s representation of floods of immigrants arriving in Denmark was stressed by several news stories that reported on a lack of lodging options for recently arrived immigrants. These stories typically argued that the number of arrivals in Denmark was so large that the Red Cross, which was responsible for the lodging of asylum seekers while their applications were processed, was out of lodging space and needed to find alternative spaces. The lack of

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accommodation had already become an issue with the arrival of Middle Eastern refugees in the 1980s, as television news reported about refugees lodging at old forts, institutions for the mentally disabled, hotels, and recently rented buildings. Because of their focus on alternative lodging spaces these stories commonly considered these from various angles. One clip, for instance, showed various rooms and carpenters fixing up a ward at the institution for the disabled, Svaneparken, which was to host refugees. It also broadcast an interview with a representative [tillicspreesentant] for the employees at Svaneparken who argued that “principally it is wrong that Iranian refugees, and refugees in general, are offered such miserable lodging.”

This statement represented the general message of these news clips, which all, directly or indirectly, seemed to illustrate that alternative lodgings were quite bad.

Denmark experienced a general growth in the numbers of asylum seekers from the mid-1980s. With the exception of the refugees from Poland and Hungary, the number of refugees had been low until the 1970s, most years counting fewer than one hundred people. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the number rose primarily due to Vietnamese refugees, peaking with the 897 Vietnamese who received asylum in 1979. In 1984 the number of asylum seekers rose again, culminating in 8698 spontaneous refugees in 1985 and 9299 in 1986. After this, the number declined again and remained stable around 3000-4000 refugees annually until the early 1990s. Because these numbers were much higher than the UN quota refugees of around 500 annually, and because the arrival of spontaneous refugees was unorganized and uneven during the years, it led to a lack of proper lodging facilities.

Similar situations involving a lack of space occurred with the arrival of refugees from the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. This group of refugees represented the largest group of arrivals during the period covered; ca. 9000 asylum seekers from the former Yugoslavia arrived annually in Denmark during 1992 and 1993. First they were granted temporary residence permits.

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100 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19841116.
101 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19841118.
102 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19841225.
103 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19841001 and DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19841207.
104 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19841001, original text: “principielt er det forkert at man kan sige til iranske flygtninge, eller flygtninge i det hele taget, at når de kommer her til DK, så skal de tilbydes så elendige boligforhold.”
105 There is discrepancy between numbers of asylum seekers from source to source; these numbers are based on information from Danish Refugee Council [Dansk Flygtningehjælp], “Anerkendte flygtninge 1956-1995”, Dansk Flygtningehjælp, provided by Ole Hjulmand, Dansk Flygtningehjælp and “Numbers of Asylum Seekers in Denmark 1980-1990”, Dansk Flygtningehjælp, provided by Ole Hjulmand, Dansk Flygtningehjælp, and “Spontane asylansøgere, alle nationaliteter 1986-1995”, Dansk Flygtningehjælp, provided by Ole Hjulmand, Dansk Flygtningehjælp. These numbers do not always correspond with Danmarks Statistik.
The permit, which was the first of its kind to provide refugees with temporary asylum, lasted two years. In 1994, when several thousand permits ran out, the majority of refugees were accepted as de facto refugees and gained permanent residence permits. This led to a peak in the number of granted asylum seekers in 1995, when altogether 20,402 asylum were granted. Of these, 16,185 were granted to people from Bosnia-Herzegovina. This relatively liberal approach to refugees, compared to the previous tightening of the 1983-Act, can be explained by the fact that the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia were in Europe, which mentally might have caused a greater sympathy for the refugees. It might also have played a role that the Liberal-Conservative government had lost power to the left-wing parties in 1993, after which a coalition of left-wing and center parties [Socialdemokratiet, Radikale Venstre, Centrum Demokraterne and Kristeligt Folkeparti] formed a government.

In the early 1990s, news reports about the arrivals of large numbers of refugees from the former Yugoslavia led again to a focus on the lack of lodging facilities and alternative lodging. These news reports were very similar to the ones that had described refugees from the Middle East a decade earlier. There were for instance clips about refugees being housed in prisons: “because of the large flood [of refugees]…it has been necessary to overcrowd the institution [Sandholmlejren, which hosted recently arrived asylum seekers]. A number of refugees therefore have to live in prison until there is room in Sandholmlejren.” Less dramatic, but still illustrating the lack of space, were news clips about refugees from the former Yugoslavia lodging in gyms and tents. Their “chaotic” situations caused “the Red Cross to scream for help [because] the whole refugee arrival system is about to break down.” The number of refugees increased during 1992, and two large ships docked in Copenhagen were therefore turned into refugee centers, each hosting 1000 refugees. These news reports describing the lack of space and chaotic lodging situations seldom portrayed the refugees at the alternative lodging places. Instead they portrayed various ethnic

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107 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19920319, original text: "På grund af den store tilstrømning…har vi været nødt til at overbelægge institutionen her [Sandholmlejren]. Et svingende antal flygtninge kommer på den måde i fængsel, indtil der er plads i Sandholmlejren.”

108 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19920918, original text: "kaotisk"; "Røde Kors råber nu på hjælp. Hele flygtningemodtagelsesystemet er ved at bryde sammen.”

109 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 1992112.
2. People arriving in Denmark

Danes, who expressed their views about the situations, for example reporters interviewed Red Cross employees about how they were handling the lack of space.  

The cramped lodging facilities made it into the news particularly when violent or dramatic internal conflicts connected to the lodging situations occurred. One news clip from 1985 lined up the conflict in its introduction: “The Danish Red Cross is, as we know, having problems with lack of space because of the large number of refugees. Now there are further problems because it is necessary to lodge groups of refugees together whom the Red Cross knows have a hard time reconciling with each other. Today these problems caused a violent fight at the refugee center at Jyderup [a provincial town]… One person is seriously injured from being stabbed with a knife through the lung.” A voice-over explained the reason behind the fight: “The center here in Jyderup is overcrowded. Three weeks ago 350 asylum seekers, primarily from Iran, lived here, but because of lack of space ca. 100 stateless Palestinians and Lebanese were placed here by the Red Cross. The Red Cross people knew that it could cause problems because of their religious disputes.” The clip did not reveal which of the three nationalities were disputing against each other or what kind of religious conflicts they were having. The conflict had most likely been very serious, but most likely it had only been a small group of people who had been fighting. However, because the clip did not limit the fight to a few people nor provide details about the background of the conflict, the viewers most likely gained an impression of asylum seekers being violent, religious fanatics who stab people with different religious beliefs.

Another news clip presented a similar image of violent asylum seekers when it described how “all Lebanese refugees were removed from Livø [a small island] last night… This happened after seven of them took police officers, interpreters, and Red Cross people as hostages.

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110 See for instance TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19921112, TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19920918, DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19841116, DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19841118, and DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19841225.

111 See for instance DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19930831 or DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19931007.

112 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19850921, original text: "Danske Røde Kors slås som bekendt med pladsproblemer pga. de mange flygtninge. Der opstår nu ekstra problemer, fordi det er nødvendigt at indkvartere grupper af flygtninge sammen; grupper som dansk Røde Kors ellers godt ved har svært ved at forliges. I dag udløste disse problemer et voldsomt slag smål ved flygtningecenteret ved Jyderup… En blev alvorligt såret af knivstik gennem lunger." 

113 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19850921, original text: "Centret her i Jyderup er overfyldt. Indtil for tre uger siden boede her 350 asylasongsæger, fortrinsvis iranske familier. Men pga. pladsnød måtte Røde Kors anbringe omkring 100 statsløse palæstinensere og libanesere under samme tag. Røde Kors folkene vidste, at det kunne give problemer pga. deres religiøse stridigheder."
and threatened to blow up both the hostages and themselves."\(^{114}\) The viewers saw footages of the inside of a destroyed house, where the floor was covered in broken items. A voice-over told audiences that “What happened last night was that some of the Lebanese refugees first destroyed the furniture where they live after which they took a group of Red Cross people and police officers as hostages.”\(^{115}\) A social worker from the Red Cross, Marianne Knudsen, explained that “there have been five people who have been desperate this night…five who have overreacted this night…but the 170 [remaining refugees] have reacted healthy and very reasonably.”\(^{116}\) The news clip thereby gave room for differentiating between the refugees, but this was challenged by the introduction which said that “all Lebanese are removed” and by another voice-over later in the news clip. This voice explained that first “seven Lebanese were arrested…[and] later that night the remaining…Lebanese, including two small children…were removed…No one dared run the risk of letting them stay.”\(^{117}\) Like the news clip previously analyzed, this clip turned a serious incident into a sensational news story that lumped all Lebanese refugees together, and presented all, including small children, as a danger.\(^{118}\)

The nature of the news media has been to describe unusual events; the more dramatic the events, the better a news story they have made. This is why catastrophes often have constituted ‘good’ news stories. The viewers did not hear about all the situations where lodging of asylum seekers ran smoothly because these were not ‘good’ news stories. The sensational incidences of violence and conflict therefore ended up being among the only representations of refugees’ lodging.

**Towns refusing refugees and integration ideas**

The arrival of spontaneous asylum seekers in the mid-1980s gave rise to news reports about how local Danish citizens refused to accept asylum seekers within their areas. A typical example was a news report from provincial Fjerritslev. As the television host informed viewers:

\(^{114}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19850327, original text: "Alle libanesiske flygtninge er i nat blevet fjerne fra Livø...Det skete eftter, at syv af dem tog politifolk, tolke og Røde Kors folk som gidsler, og truede med at sprænge både dem og sig selv i luften."

\(^{115}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19850327, original text: "Det der skete i nat var, at nogle af de libanesiske flygtninge først smadrede inventaret i de huse, de bor i, og at de derefter tog en flok Røde Kors folk, tolke og politibetjente som gidsler."

\(^{116}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19850327, original text: "Der er fem mennesker, der har været desperate i nat...fem der har overrageret i nat. Men de [resterende] 170 har reageret sundt og meget fornuftigt.”

\(^{117}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19850327, original text: "blev syv libanesere arresterer...senere på natten blev de øvrige...libanesere, og blandt dem to små børn,...og så arresteret. Ingen turde løbe risikoen ved at lade dem blive tilbage.”

\(^{118}\) See also Teun A. van Dijk, *Communicating Racism. Ethnic Prejudice in Thought and Talk*, (Newbury Park, London, New Delhi: Sage, 1987), 90, for how individual visible minorities’s acts have been turned into generalized statements.
“the residents say that they cannot handle receiving any more refugees…and have therefore decided to prevent the refugees from entering when they arrive.”

One of the residents, fisherman Christian Rosengren Petersen, argued that Fjerritslev had already received enough refugees and “therefore the fishing community stand together and say that we will not accept it [the arrival of refugees], and maybe we are using harsh words but those are not directed against the refugees…We are angry at the way this [the distribution of refugees] is administrated. We are angry at the people…who do not discuss [the distribution] with us.”

The news portrayed this conflict as one between a small rural community and the national urban Directorate of Immigration [Direktoratet for udlændinge], with the refugees caught in the middle. On one level this was also what the conflict was about, but on another level racism might also have been at play. The residents did not manage to prevent the refugees from being lodged in their town, and a few months later another news clip reported about violence and threats between the local residents and the refugees: “The residents blame the Directorate of Immigration for the wave of threats and fights between the residents and the refugees. In the spring, 80 new people arrived and the locals did a lot to integrate them into the society. But despite protests another 300 refugees are now sent to Fjerritslev and that is so many that one problem follows on the heels of another…Recently a fight razed the town’s disco, and now the publican has forbidden refugees from entering”

The report placed the blame for the conflicts solely on the Directorate, not on the individual Danes or individual refugees, despite the fact that the latter were the ones involved in the threats and fights. The news characterized the local residents positively but presented the refugees as burdensome: “The locals have done a great deal of work for the refugees but…now the burden has simply become too heavy…400 foreigners are simply too many and there are no longer resources to prevent the cultural clashes.”

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119 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Årisen, date: 19850908, original text: “Beboerne siger, at de ikke kan klare at få flere flygtninge…og har besluttet, at flygtningene bliver stoppet, når de ankommer.”

120 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Årisen, date: 19850908, original text: “…der går vi sammen inden for Fiskeriforeningen og snakker om, at det vil vi ikke gå med til, og der bliver måske brugt hårde ord, men ikke imod flygtningene…Vi er gale over den måde, det bliver administreret på. Vi er gale på de mennesker, der kommer [og fordeler flygtninge] uden at tage os med på råd.”

121 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Årisen, date: 19851014, original text: “anklager beboerne Direktoratet for udlændinge for at være skyld i en bolge af trasler og slagsmål mellem fastboende og flygtninge…I foråret kom 80 nye til området, og de lokale gjorde meget dengang for at få de nye ind i samfundet. Men trods protester er der nu sendt andre 300 flygtninge til Fjerritslev, og det er så mange, at problemerne nu tårner sig op…For nyligt raserede et slagsmål byens diskote, og nu har kromanden sagt definitivt nej til at lukke flygtninge ind.”

122 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Årisen, date: 19851014, original text: “De lokale har gjort et stort stykke arbejde for flygtningene men…byrden er simpelthen blevet for stor…400 fremmede er simpelthen for mange, der er ikke længere ressourcer til at undgå kultursammenstødene.”
This statement implied that cultural clashes were inevitable and that clashes would happen unless those responsible directed resources to prevent them. A representative from the local residents, EDP systems manager Helge Hübschmann, described the sorts of resources needed to prevent such threats and violent episodes. “The Red Cross could create a kind of rotation system where maximum ten or 15 [refugees] at the time [could go out, e.g. to the disco] accompanied with a Red Cross employee, and when the confrontations occur then the Red Cross employee can step in and say to the Lebanese: ‘Now something is happening that you don’t really understand friends’; thus a kind of practical teaching in how to go out in Denmark.”

This comment similarly implied that confrontations and conflicts inevitably would occur, but it also implied that, in order to stop the conflicts, it was the refugees, not the ethnic Danes, who needed to learn proper behavior. The refugees needed to learn “how to go out in Denmark,” which implied that the Danish way of going out was the correct way that needed to be adopted. Hübschmann’s utterance positioned the refugees as if they were children: They did not understand what was happening around them, they needed to be chaperoned when they went out, and they needed to be taught how to behave.

The journalist did not challenge Helge Hübschmann’s assumptions. Instead his statement was treated as natural, which indicated that the journalist understood and supported it. Norman Fairclough has argued that “in common sense ideologies become naturalized,” and this case illustrates his claim. The journalist treated the ideology of assimilation as natural, and this naturalness suggests that the idea of assimilation had hegemonic status in public Danish discourses at the time of the interview.

Typically, news coverage in the 1980s and 1990s explained immigrant-related conflicts by focusing primarily on the immigrants’ behavior. In one example from 1990, the news reported on a group of ethnic Danes who had harassed their local asylum seekers and attacked one of them with knives. Despite the fact that it was the asylum seekers who had been molested -- one of them so badly that he was hospitalized – the news clip broadcast interviews with people who blamed the asylum seekers. The deputy leader of the Danish Refugee Council, Per Draaby Andersen, said: “It is obvious that this [conflict] began with some kind of provocations. And there

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123 DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19851014, original text: “Røde Kors lavede en eller anden form for turnusordning, således at man sagde maximalt ti eller 15 ad gangen og en Røde Kors-medarbejder med, og når så konfrontationerne opstår, så kan Røde Kors medarbejderen gå ind og forklare libaneserne: Nu sker der altså noget, I ikke rigtigt fatter, venner. Altså en form for praktisk undervisning i hvordan det er at være i byen i Danmark.”

are many of the refugees who have a temper they are unable to control, and then it goes wrong.”

The interviewer then asked him: “Have the Danish Refugee Council tried to tell them that they should try and control their temper and not be provoked so easily?” To which Per Draaby Andersen answered: “We have talked to them about it, but it is in their mentality, and mentality is not so easy to change.”

Both the interviewing journalist and Per Draaby Andersen played on the classic ‘blaming the victim’ argument, i.e. making the discriminated responsible for the discrimination and thereby taking away ethnic Danes’ responsibility for the violence and the conflicts. Closely linked to this strategy, others relied on the idea that minorities should assimilate to the behavior of the majority. In other words, if the visible minorities had been like the ethnic Danes, then there would not have been any conflicts.

Unlike Denmark, Britain has directed attention towards both immigrants and white English people in situations with immigration related conflicts. Immigration has been publicly debated since the arrival of West Indians in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1965, Britain passed the first Race Relations Act, which limited racial discrimination in public places, and in 1976 Parliament prohibited direct and indirect discrimination in all aspects of public life was passed and established the Commission of Racial Equality. The discussion regarding the bills and the debate about immigrants in Britain focused as much on anti-racism and multiculturalism as it did on the immigrants themselves; in other words, the behavior of the white British citizens was questioned as much as the behavior of the new immigrants. One reason behind this dual focus in Britain has been the strong public voice of the Commission of Racial Equality, which has continuously directed attention towards discrimination against immigrants of color.

Quite differently, France has mainly directed its approaches for integration at its immigrant population. France received 900,000 Algerians after the Algerian war for independence.

125 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19900731, original text: ”Det er jo givet, at det er startet med nogle provokationer på et eller andet plan. Og der er mange af flygtningene, de har jo et temperament, de ikke kan styre, og så går det galt.”

126 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19900731, original text: ”Men har I fra Dansk Flygtningehjælp prøvet at fortælle dem, at de måske skal prove at styre deres temperament, og lade være med at lade sig provokere så let?”

127 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19900731, original text: ”Vi har talt med dem om det, men det er deres mentalitet, og den kan du ikke bare lige lave om på.”


129 Sarah Collinson, Europe and international migration, (London: Pinter Publishers for Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1994), 90 ff. This multicultural approach has also been employed in Holland and Sweden.

ended in 1962. This corresponded to 1 percent of the labor force, but unemployment increased only 0.2 percent because the economic growth of the time absorbed most of the immigrants into the workforce.\textsuperscript{131} Besides the Algerians, France imported labor immigrants, who during the early 1970s constituted more than 10 percent of the workforce.\textsuperscript{132} Scholars have argued that France lost control over its immigrant situation during the 1960s and 1970s because the great demand for labor allowed people to simply slip into the country and work illegally.\textsuperscript{133} It has been estimated that as much as 80 percent of immigrants during the late 1960s worked illegally.\textsuperscript{134} France began introducing integration plans during the mid-1970s; previously the labor immigrants were viewed as short time visitors. However, the strongest strategy for integration was expressed in the idea that immigrants would integrate when confronted with France institutions. The French state primarily involved itself in its effort to provide the immigrants with housing. The residences built for the immigrants were not intended to be the long-term residences they ended up being; neither were they intended to function as a means to physically segregate immigrants, which they also ended up being. Until the socialist government gained power in France in 1981, the official policy regarding immigrants can be described as an ‘assimilate or return’-policy, a policy that provided means for both assimilation and forced return. With the socialist government, several changes took place: Immigrants came to be viewed as the state’s direct responsibility, several ‘integration associations’ were formed, and France broadened its approach and opened itself up to options for multiculturalism. There was a generally positive belief in integration as a means of peaceful co-existence, and the previous official demand for assimilation became less dominant. Simultaneously, anti-immigrant voices and demands for the assimilation of immigrants within France found expression in the rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen’s extreme rightwing party Front National. \textit{Front National}, which emerged on the political scene in 1984, has played an important role in the debate about immigration and integration, as several organisations defined themselves in response to \textit{Front National} during the 1980s and 1990s.\textsuperscript{135}

\textsuperscript{131} Hans Kornø Rasmussen, \textit{No Entry: Immigration Policy in Europe}, (Copenhagen: Handelshøjskolens Forlag, 1997), 89.
West Germany’s post-World War II *Wirtschaftswunder* approach to immigrants was quite similar to the French. Here employers, not the state, were responsible for providing housing for the labor immigrants and, similar to the situation in France, the housing situation led to a physical segregation of the immigrant population. During the war Germans became accustomed to labor immigrants, e.g. 600,000 Italians had been forced to work in Germany after the Italian withdrawal from the Axis in 1943. Unlike several other aspects of the Nazi past which were critiqued after the war, forced labor was not publicly debated or critiqued in post-World War II West Germany (GFR). After the construction of the Berlin wall in 1961 ended the supply of labors from East Germany (GDR), the importation of labor immigrants intensified, and, like France, the foreign labors quickly came to constitute more than 10 percent of the workforce during the 1960s and 1970s. In the late 1960s, the labor immigrants increasingly began bringing their families to Germany, which led to the first public debates regarding the potential integration of the immigrants into the German society. In 1973, the so-called ‘Action Program for the Employment of Immigrant Labor’ was implemented. The act aimed to integrate the immigrants temporarily before they were to return to their countries of origin, and therefore this integration focused on improving the housing and educational situations for the immigrants. In 1983, another act aimed at making the immigrants return to their countries of origin, the so-called ‘Act to Promote the Preparedness of Foreign Workers to Return’ was passed. At the same time, though, public concerns rose throughout the 1980s about the integration of second and third generation immigrants into German society. Integration in Germany has always been the responsibility of the different Länder, resulting in a variety of state policies, but it has generally been the case that integration policies have been geared towards immigrants and not towards the white, German population.

For decades, German racism was not debated as a part of integration. Immigrants were viewed as the root of inter-racial problems, and their integration was therefore seen as central to solving these problems. This changed during the first half of the 1990s, when a series of violent

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racial attacks on refugees and immigrants in the former GDR cities of Rostock and Mölln forced public attention at white Germans’ attitudes towards the immigrant population.\textsuperscript{139}

Of European countries, Germany has received the most labor immigrants and refugees; in the year 2000 Germany had 7,344,000 people without German citizenship residing within its borders. 1,859,000 of these were other EU nationals, and 5,485,000 were non-EU nationals. These immigrants constituted ca. 9.8 percent of Germany’s population, and if the EU nationals were subtracted, the non-EU immigrants constituted only ca. 6.64 percent of the population.\textsuperscript{140}

In Denmark, integration policies have been directed at the immigrants. The understanding of integration seems to have been closely linked to assimilation since the establishment of the Danish Refugee Council in 1956. However, assimilation proved easier with Eastern European refugees than with refugees from outside Europe. In 1973, the then-director of the Danish Refugee Council’s integration committee, Børge Thøner, commented on the complications regarding integrating, i.e. assimilating, of non-European refugees. He wrote in his diary about recently-arrived Asian-Ugandan refugees: “We are in this situation for the first time confronted with the task of integrating a category of refugees who culturally are very different from the Danish way of living.”\textsuperscript{141} Despite these complications, ideas of assimilation dominated the strategy for integration, and the Danish mass media continuously articulated discourses of assimilation from the 1970s to the 2000s.

The understanding of integration as assimilation might be explained partly by the rather limited number of immigrants that Denmark received before the 1980s. Unlike several other European countries, Denmark did not receive large groups of people from its former colonies because most of the colonies had been sold off before the post-World War II wave of decolonization.\textsuperscript{142} Denmark had colonies on the Eastern coast of India, mainly small trading stations. The most known was Tranquebar, which was Danish from 1620 to 1845, when it was sold to the British. In the Caribbean Sea, Denmark had colonized the island St. Thomas in 1666, turning

\textsuperscript{139} Karen Schöwälder, “Migration, refugees and ethnic plurality as issues of public and political debates in (West) Germany”, in Citizenship, Nationality and Migration in Europe. eds. David Cesarani & Mary Fulbrook, (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), 159-179, 159 ff.


\textsuperscript{142} For the arrival of people from Greenland and the Faroe Islands see chapter 1, “Introduction”.

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the harbor into a central international trading destination. The neighboring island St. Jan (now St. John) was taken by the Danes in 1717-1718 and used for sugar, tobacco, and cotton cultivation carried out by African slave labors. Denmark bought the island St. Croix from France in 1733, and, using slave labor from Africa, developed it into one of the richest sugar producing islands in the area. All three islands were sold to the USA in 1917, since which time they have been known as the US Virgin Islands. Many of the slaves in the Danish West Indies were from the Danish possessions on the African Gold Coast (now Ghana). Denmark founded its first trading stations there in 1658. In the beginning the trades primarily focused on gold, but, with the involvement in the West Indies in the beginning of the eighteenth-century, slave trading became dominant. 85,000 slaves were exported via Danish ships to the Danish West Indies from 1660 to 1802, when Danish slave trading became illegal.\textsuperscript{143} Denmark therefore has a colonial past, but since the colonies were sold off before the decolonization following the World War II, the immigration pattern in Denmark has been different from other European countries that kept their colonies until decolonization.

During the mid-1980s, the news media broadcast examples of violent attacks and explicit negative attitudes towards visible minorities from various places in Denmark. One of the most infamous cases was in Kalundborg. In this provincial town of 19,000 people (1985), 60 refugees primarily from Iran were lodged in a downtown hotel during the summer of 1985. The asylum seekers, who had ended up at the hotel because of the general lack of lodging space for asylum seekers, were supplied with the lowest welfare payment \textit{[bistandshjælp]}, and they were given bicycles to transport themselves around. Local residents in Kalundborg criticized this, and several ethnically Danish, young men attacked the refugees and the hotel.

The news media reported the violent attacks and broadcast interviews with various local residents who expressed negative views of hosting asylum seekers. A middle-aged, nicely dressed couple was interviewed in front of the hotel. They said: “They [the refugees] should be moved to the heath and live there...far away from here. They do not fit in here...We have a son and he does not have a place to live...he does not even have an old bicycle...It is wrong that they are in the country. I will argue that Denmark is for Danes.”\textsuperscript{144} The couple played upon the argument that

\textsuperscript{143} The literature on the Danish colonial past is rather limited. Historian Johannes Brondsted edited in the 1960s a series with eight volumes about the Danish colonies \textit{Vore gamle tropekolonier}, (Copenhagen: Fremad, 1966-67), vol. 1-8. Today these are still among the best historical literature about the colonial past. For the colonies in India, see vol. 5-7, for the West Indies see vol. 1-4, for the Gold Coast see vol. 8, and for the slave trade and slaves’ situation see vol. 8, 138 ff. and vol. 2, 135 ff.

\textsuperscript{144} DR (Station), primetime news program \textit{TV-Avisen}, date: 19850728, original text: "De skulle ud på heden og bo...langt væk. Ikke lige her. Det passer slet ikke...Vi har en son, der ikke har et sted at bo...Han har ikke engang en gammel cykel...Det er forkert, at de overhovedet er i landet. Jeg siger altså, danskerne for Danmark.”
‘they’ get more than ‘us’, arguing that their son neither has a bicycle nor a place to live, because this statement underscored that he was not given the same specific things by the state as the refugees were. Another local young man similarly expressed a dislike for the newly arrived people: “We cannot have so many people living here, all these Iranians. And it is interesting why they have come to Kalundborg. I think it is merciless of them to come here…They say they are poor asylum seekers. But what are they really? They are fucking wealthy all of them.”

The young man participated in the classical discourse of ‘blaming the victim’ but was challenged by the news journalist, who asked how he knew that the refugees were wealthy. He answered: “You can see it in their dress, in the way they walk and in their behavior, fancy clothing and everything.”

The interviewer argued: “They receive the lowest welfare payment”, which the young man then challenged: “That is what they say but they are loaded with money.”

The man accused the refugees of having chosen to come to Kalundborg, but, according to Danish immigration regulations at the time, refugees could not decide where to be lodged. Instead they were placed by the Directorate of Immigration, who was responsible for distributing the refugees. An elderly local woman also played upon the argument that ‘they’ get more than ‘us’ when saying: “They are repeatedly…given new bicycles, and one can think it is a little unfair…I do not really have anything against them. I just think it is unfair that they are given more than we Danes are.”

Finally, a middle-aged, local man commented: “Danes are not racists. Not as long as their daughters do not come home with a Negro.”

The interviewer, who was more nuanced in his racial and national descriptions of the asylum seekers, asked: “Are there many who come home with an Iranian?”

To which the man answered: “Yes, and that will show in nine months.”

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145 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19950728, original text: "Vi kan jo ikke have så mange mennesker boende her, alle de iranere. Det er sjovt nok, at de kommer lige til Kalundborg. Jeg synes, det er nådesløst af dem…De siger, det er stakkels asylansøgere, men hvad er det mand? De er kræftædemic velhavende hele bundet."

146 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19950728, original text: "Det kan man se på deres påklædning, på den måde de går og opfører sig på; fint tøj og det hele."

147 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19950728, original text: "De får laveste bistandshjælp."

148 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19950728, original text: "Det siger de, men de har jo masser af penge."

149 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19950728, original text: "de gang på gang…får nye cykler…så kan man godt synes, at det er lidt uretfærdigt…Jeg har ikke noget imod dem for så vidt. Jeg synes bare, det er uretfærdigt, at de skal have mere end vi danskere."

150 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19950728, original text: "Danskerne er ikke racister. Det er de ikke, så lang tid deres datter ikke kommer hjem med en neger."

151 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19950728, original text: "Er der mange, der kommer hjem med en iraner?"

152 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19950728, original text: "Ja, og det får vi at se om ni måneder."
These interviews represented different segments of the population: Young, middle-aged, elderly, women and men were interviewed, and several social classes were represented: The young man was poorly dressed, spoke grammatically incorrect, used words wrongly, and was apparently badly informed, all indicators of limited education and working-class belonging, whereas the nicely dressed couple and elderly woman seemed to represent the middle-class in their language and clothing. This diverse segment indicated that it was not simply a few people who were negative towards the refugees but several segments of the population, and most viewers would likely have been able to identify themselves with one of the interviewees.

The news media also broadcast counter-voices to these negative attitudes towards the Kalundborg based refugees. Then-leader of the Danish Refugee Council, Poul Hougaard, argued that the situation in Kalundborg was caused by “social problems” brought on by “the current financial tightening.” In other words, he blamed the then center-right Venstre, Kristeligt Folkeparti, Centrum Demokraterne and Konservativt Folkeparti government’s reduction in welfare benefits for the negative attitudes towards refugees. This traditional left-wing argument, according to which economic relations determine people’s behavior, seemed however unable to explain why the middle-class also uttered negative attitudes towards the refugees. The argument took away personal responsibility from the people who had behaved negatively towards visible minorities. Another counter-voice was expressed by the then-Minister of foreign affairs Uffe Ellemann-Jensen, representing the Liberals Venstre, who also served as Prime Minister at the height of the Kalundborg conflict. He said: “I find what has happened [in Kalundborg] terrible because it mirrors an attitude among many people towards foreigners, towards refugees, which is really terrible and totally unacceptable…We cannot in decency behave this way, and I therefore assume that this will make many people think a second time…These problems can only be solved if the individual Dane takes a position on these problems and behave conscientiously…What we have experienced is isolated hooliganism.” Ellemann-Jensen blamed the people behind the attacks on the refugees, but he also viewed the situation as “isolated hooliganism”, which took away responsibility from

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153 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19850728, original text: "sociale problemer."
154 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19850728, original text: "den økonomiske stramning som er i gang."
155 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19850728, original text: "det er forfærdeligt, det der er sket, fordi det afspejler jo en holdning hos en række mennesker til fremmede, til flygtninge, som er ganske forfærdelig og uacceptable...Det kan vi ganske enkelt ikke være bekendt, og derfor går jeg ud fra, at det her, det får mange mennesker til at tænke sig grundigt om...de problemer de kan kun løses ved, at den enkelte dansker tager stilling til de problemer og opfører sig ansvarsbevidst...Det, vi oplever her, er isoleret bolleoptøjer.” Ellemann-Jensen’s role as "functioning Prime minister" fungerende statsminister might have been caused by the Prime Minister Poul Schlüter, representing the Conservatives, being away maybe on summer holiday. Ellemann-Jensen only very seldom appeared in that role. He was first and foremost the Minister of Foreign Affairs.
‘ordinary’ people such as the interviewed couple, the elderly woman, the middle-aged man and the young man in Kalundborg as well as from his own government and their negative labeling of refugees as ‘comfort refugees’. By pointing to individual people’s bad behavior, Ellemann-Jensen ignored the potentially rising xenophobia among the population, including within the government.  

One exception to this negative view of receiving asylum seekers comes from a portrayal of the provincial tourist town Blokhus, which is near Fjerritslev. “The people in Blokhus take the invasion [of refugees] calmly. They explain: We are used to 30,000 tourists during the summer.” A local resident, whom the news had filmed in his grocery shop, said: “Really, they are like the rest of us, they are just a little darker.” The DR news program did not differentiate between the arrival of refugees and tourists, and the positive welcoming was explained by Blokhus’ exceptional status as a tourist center. Quantitatively this clip took up very little room compared to the several negative descriptions of local residents’ reactions to asylum seekers. Although the locals in Blokhus seemed positive about the arrival of refugees, the news journalist described the arrival in negative linguistic terms by labeling it “an invasion.” Invasion refers to a forced entrance into a foreign space, and viewers would most likely have associated ”invasion” negatively, for instance with an army’s invasion of another country.

** Politicians not wanting immigrants **

Politicians too tried to prevent refugees from being lodged in the areas they represented. It was customary for the Danish Immigration Authorities to place arriving asylum seekers at asylum centers spread all over the country in order to distribute financial expenses between the municipalities and to prevent large concentrations of asylum seekers in one area. The latter should be understood in connection with the idea that integration was closely linked with ideas of assimilation. As early as 1989, the then-mayor in provincial Aabenraa, representing the Liberals [Venstre], Jens Terp Nielsen “encouraged refugees and immigrants to stay away from the

156 The violent attacks on asylum were unfortunately not limited to the 1980s. For media coverage of ethnic Danes’ violently attacks on places hosting asylum seekers in the 1990s see for instance DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Årernen*, date: 19930405 and DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Årernen*, date: 19930826.  
157 DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Årernen*, date: 19841207, original text: ”Folk i Blokhus tager invasionen med ro. Vi er vant til 30.000 turister om sommeren, siger de.”  
158 DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Årernen*, date: 19841207, original text: ”De ligner sådan set os andre, de er lidt mere mørkere.”
People arriving in Denmark

The reason was, according to the news, that “the town had to find space for 340 refugees...and so far there have not been problems between the 340 refugees and the municipality’s other residents but those can occur, Jens Terp Nielsen fears, and therefore he encourages the refugees to stay away for their own sake.” The mayor was indirectly threatening the refugees to stay out of his town, or there would be trouble. He was not saying that the Danes, who had elected him, had to behave in a certain way, i.e. being tolerant, in order to prevent future problems; he simply placed the responsibility for future problems on the refugees’ shoulders. The mayor “underscores that he is not racist, but that the many refugees is a great burden on the town.”

The same language and argument about not being racist while uttering prejudiced statements were used by a group of residents in the provincial town Ommestrup who protested against the lodging of refugees in their town. One of the residents argued: “Nobody will make us say that we are racists here. But we can easily become racists if we are covered with so many people [refugees] this way.”

This linguistic strategy of labeling oneself non-racist is significant because it has functioned as a means to get away with racist utterances in the news media. This strategy played upon traditional biological racism and implied that racism was an internal state. The ethnic Danes who argued that they were not racists based this claim on the fact that they did not believe that they, just because they were white, were better than other races. But racism can be viewed in a more nuanced manner than equating it with traditional biological racism. Van Dijk has argued that prejudice is not a representation of personal feelings or beliefs but the social representation of members of a certain group. It was therefore irrelevant whether the mayor or the residents personally felt that they were racists or non-racists; what was relevant was what they actually said and did.

From the 1980s to the 2000s the media commonly characterized immigrants as burdens, especially in clips that reported on politicians and local residents who refused to accept

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159 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19890831, original text: ”Borgmesteren i Åbenrå opfordrer flygtninge og indvandrere til at holde sig væk fra byen.”
160 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19890831, original text: ”Åbenrå har måtte skaffe plads til 340 flygtninge...og der har hidtil ikke været gudnigning mellem de 340 flygtninge og kommunens øvrige beboere, men det kan der komme, frygter Jens Terp Nielsen, derfor skal flygtningene blive væk for deres egen skyld.”
161 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19890831, original text: “understreger, at han ikke er racist, men at de mange flygtninge er for stor en byrde for kommunen.”
162 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990619, original text: ”Der er ingen, der får os til at sige, at vi er racister herude. Men vi kan nemt blive racister, hvis vi på den måde overtrækkes med så mange mennesker.”
immigrants because they considered them financial burdens. The refugees were defined as “problems” and as a “burden”, rather than as potential resources. These definitions most likely contributed to the viewers' perceptions of refugees and visible minorities as negative contributions to Danish society.

**Personalized portrayals of refugees**

Separate from the negative descriptions of refugees, DR and TV2 carried a series of news clips which portrayed individual refugees’ arrival in Denmark. These clips often took the form of family portraits. These portraits were very similar over the years even though the refugees they portrayed came from different countries and had fled for different reasons. A typical representative for these personal family stories was a TV2 news clip about the Sabanovic family from the former Yugoslavia. TV2 introduced the clip with footage of refugees at the Polish city Swinoujscie, where ferries depart for Denmark and Sweden. A voice-over described how the refugees had traveled for two or three days by buses – while the viewers saw a close-up of a tired young child – to reach the harbor city in Poland. The voice-over continued: “Among the refugees there is the Muslim family Sabanovic: Father, mother and children from Pletva in Montenegro, where Serbian militia have persecuted and terrorized Muslims. That is why the family has fled.”

There was a close-up picture of a man and a graphic text that revealed that his name was Camil Sabanovic. He explained why he had fled: “To give my children a better future. With the current situation it is not possible to live there. The paramilitary groups came at night with guns and automatic weapons. They wrote slogans on the school like ‘Run before it is too late’. How can we send our children to school then?” The television interviewer asked a woman who stood next to the man: “What have you

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164 See for instance TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19890831, where major Axel Jørgensen, representing the Social Democrats, commented on Jens Terp Nielsen’s utterances: “let’s find out how to solve this problem…we could try to distribute the burdens differently.” Original text: "Iad os nu finde ud af at få fordelt det her problem lidt anderledes…man vel kunne prøve på…om man kunne fordele byrderne lidt anderledes;” and see DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020503 (two news clips during that program) where Frederiksborg and Copenhagen counties [antler] refused to accept more refugees and where the municipality Skævinge similarly refused hosting more refugees; or DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19930807 where mayor Social Democrat Thorkild Simonsen in Aarhus united with a group of residents from Aarhus in arguing against more visible minorities (refugees, immigrants, and their descents).

165 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19920917, original text: ”Blandt flygtningene er den muslimske familie Sabanovic: far, mor og børn fra Pletva i Montenegro. Her har serbiske militærer i lang tid forfulgt og terroriseret musulmerne. Derfor er familien flygtet.”

166 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19920917, original text: ”For at give mine børn en bedre fremtid. Som situationen er, kan man ikke leve der…De paramilitære grupper kommer om natten med pistoler og automatvåben. De skrev slagord på skolen ‘Flygt før det er for sent’. Hvordan kan vi så sende vores børn i skole?”
left back home.”167 The camera zoomed in on her while she said “We have left our house which we
locked. I have the keys here.”168 She held up the keys and broke down crying. The clip was
emotionally moving, and viewers would most likely have felt sympathy for the family and
understood the woman’s pain. Viewers could identify with this family who, by owning a house and
caring about their children, represented a lifestyle similar to that of the majority of viewers.

In narrative terms, it functioned well to personalize a conflict like the war(s) in the
former Yugoslavia. Conflicts and tragedies were complicated to comprehend if they were only
presented as numbers and figures. It was not emotionally touching to hear – as told by TV2 the
same year – that “the number of people who arrive in Denmark to apply for asylum increased from
the previous quarter’s 1525 to 4762 in the third quarter.”169 But it was touching to witness the pain
of a crying woman holding on to the keys to the home she had left behind. News stories need to be
personalized in order to stir sympathy and understanding.170

These personalized stories were narrated like classical melodramas. They were
constructed via the berettermodel, and had the actant model’s gallery of characters with heroes,
villains, etc. Like melodramas, they focused on a family, and, typical for the melodrama format,
danger and chaos arose because the family left its safe setting, the home. In this melodramatic,
family-oriented news narration, women and children played a dominant role, often as innocent
victims of war and conflict. This narration positioned the Danish state, and thereby Danish
television viewers, in the role of the ‘hero’ who saved the women and children from the conflict.

During the 1980s, the news media broadcast similar family portraits about refugees
from Vietnam. These broadcasts included a story about family members being united in Denmark
after being apart for years. Witnessing the joy of being united again after such a long departure was
most likely also emotionally moving for the viewers and made the refugees appear as individuals
rather than as an anonymous group.171

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167 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19920917, original text: ”Hvad har I førldt derhjemme?”
168 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19920917, original text: ”Vi førld vores hus, som vi
låste. Jeg har någlerne her.”
169 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19921112, original text: ”antallet af personer, der kommer
til Danmark for at søge asyl steg fra 1525 i forrige kvartal til 4762 i tredje kvartal.”
170 Similarly, Deborah E. Lipstadt argues that statistics and numbers do not have psychological impact in her
explanations of the discrepancy between the lack of knowledge about the Holocaust among the American population
during World War II and printed articles in American newspapers telling that Jews were being exterminated. Lipstadt
argues that Americans received the information as statistics and numbers which therefore had no psychological impact.
See Deborah E- Lipstadt, Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933-1945 (London:
171 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19890816. See also TV2 (Station), primetime news
program Nyhederne, date: 19890902, TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19890906, TV2
The news clips portraying these families’ arrivals in Denmark were quite similar in content, but their form changed over the years. The early refugee portraits often consisted of still pictures mixed with footage from one or two location shoots, whereas the later portraits had no still pictures but rather shots from different locations and reports on life in some of these locations. The news portrayals of refugees from the former Yugoslavia, for instance, included shots from Yugoslavia, from the trips to Europe, and also several from inside and outside the refugees’ new residence. By contrast, the portrayals of Vietnamese refugees contained only footage from their new residence in Denmark and sometimes one shot from a refugee camp in Southeast Asia. This change of form was possible because of technological developments. The implementation of ENG (Electronic News Gathering) equipment, for example, made it possible to broadcast live on location. During the 1980s, ENG equipment replaced the previous practice of shooting news on film reels in Denmark. Another important development was increasing international exchange of footage. During the 1980s and 1990s, with the development of satellite relays, it became possible to exchange large amounts of footage with ease.\textsuperscript{172} TV2 in particularly benefited from the opportunity to buy footage from international agencies. In the early days of TV2 (founded in 1988), the news typically had very little footage because TV2 had to rely on their own limited archive, and many news clips simply consisted of a voice-over and still photography.

There were also news clips about individual asylum seekers that similarly tried to emotionally involve viewers in the story. One such story portrayed Olga Jaruova, whom Danish authorities denied asylum. The same authorities had then sent her to prison in order to prevent her from disappearing before she was sent back to her native Kazakhstan. Her husband was hospitalized, diagnosed with a psychosis, and their 4-year-old son, who visited her daily, was placed at a Danish Red Cross center for unaccompanied refugee children. She explained to viewers, with her son on her lap: “I don’t want to leave this country, and I don’t want to return to Kazakhstan because it might be dangerous for me, for my son and for my husband who gets ill very easily.”\textsuperscript{173} It seemed unreasonable and inhuman to jail this woman, who seemed both sympathetic and fragile holding her little son. A lawyer, Claus Bo Jacobsen, supported her case when he argued: “This is an exceptional case…We are not dealing with comfort refugees [\textit{bekvemmelighedsflygtninge}] but with

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{173}] TV2 (Station), primetime news program \textit{Nyhederne}, date: 19980309, original text: “Jeg vil ikke forlade det her land, og jeg vil ikke til Kasakhstan, for det kan være farligt for mig, min søn og min mand, som meget let bliver syg.”
\end{enumerate}
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people...who are prosecuted by the authorities.”

By arguing that this was an exceptional case he indirectly acknowledged that there were other immigrants who were *bekvemmelighedsflygtninge* and who did not deserve asylum in Denmark. The viewers would most likely have felt sympathy for her, considered her an exception, and have found that she should have received asylum instead of being sent home.

There were similar cases where the television news portrayed individuals who were denied asylum, such as the teenage boy Tamil Kiri Balasubramaniam from Sri Lanka. Like the woman from Kazakhstan, he had been denied asylum, but unlike her he had disappeared from the Danish authorities and was living underground to prevent a forced return to Sri Lanka. The news clips first showed Kiri in a close-up picture, so his face filled up the whole screen, while a voice-over told viewers that “Kiri is a refugee, he is on the run from the Danish police. He is only 17...Kiri was 14 years old when he fled to Denmark all by himself. A boy in grade six on the run from a bloody war.”

At the mentioning of “bloody war” the picture changed, showing dramatic footage of soldiers attacking small huts and shooting indiscriminately inside and outside the huts; the sound track was loud, with shouts, shots, and screams. Then the picture changed back to Kiri, sitting on a quiet Danish beach. The juxtaposition presented two completely different worlds and most likely would have led viewers to find it unreasonable that Kiri should return to Sri Lanka’s civil war. Kiri appeared as a nice young boy; he was well-spoken and obviously well-liked by the family of his ethnically Danish girlfriend. The mother was filmed in her living room where a photograph on the wall showed Kiri and the family’s daughter, Louise, embracing. The mother explained: “I will be miserable if he is force to leave the country. Both because of what will happen to him, and because I am thinking about how Louise will handle it if he is send home. We would very much like him as our son-in-law.”

In these stories that show individual people were harmed because of the strict immigration system, the news functioned in its idealized, self-proclaimed role as watchdog. Here
the news media represented the ‘little people’ against the establishment, the common people against the powerful authority. In the news media’s idealized self-understanding, their role was (and is) to be critical of society and point out situations where the system has failed. This role has often been labeled as ‘the fourth estate, the first three being the legislative, the judicial, and the executive authorities. Unfortunately the news media seldom linked these stories about individual people to their other news stories about the arrivals of ‘floods’ of refugees or about politicians’ and laypeople’s utterances about not wanting refugees in their areas. The stories about individual refugees therefore seemed like exceptions and not general representations of people who were denied asylum. These individualized and personalized stories most likely led viewers to accept such exceptions – supporting asylum for people like Kiri and Olga Jaruova – while they at the same time might have supported a general tightening of immigration laws.

This apparent contradiction is similar to Gaasholt and Togeby’s findings about the Danish population’s ambivalent attitudes towards visible minorities. They argue that “most people in Denmark have very mixed attitudes towards refugees and immigrants. Only very few people are totally negative or unconditionally positive. For the majority several motives and moral principles – that only partly correspond to each other – are at play simultaneously.” In other words, the population was negative towards immigration while at the same time being sympathetic towards immigrants. Gaasholt and Togeby argue that the population’s attitudes towards immigrants and their descendents were heavily influenced by the media, particularly by which stories the media broadcast and printed about visible minorities. It might be possible to conclude even further that the news media’s generalized stories about immigrants, where immigrants were constructed as groups instead of as individuals, have contributed to cultivating negative attitudes towards immigrants and demands about tightening the immigration laws. By contrast, personalized stories, where viewers were able to identify with the immigrants as individual human beings, have cultivated positive attitudes towards immigrants.

One portrayal of an individual refugee which warrants special attention was the coverage of Tamil Citra Rajendram, whose case was among the most heavily reported in the news material covered. Like Kiri, Citra was denied asylum and forced to return to Sri Lanka in 1996, after having lived with her uncle and aunt in Denmark for a few years. She was supposedly eighteen

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years of age and attended a Danish public school. Her case became famous because her classmates actively participated in convincing the Danish authorities to reverse their denial of asylum. The case was widely covered in the media, which narrated it as a struggle between, on the one hand, the teenagers and Citra – as a victim of inhuman immigration laws – against, on the other hand, the Danish authorities represented by the then-Social Democrat Minister of the Interior, Birthe Weiss. In other words, this was a case of David against Goliath. In the end, Citra was picked up by the police at night and escorted to Sri Lanka – a common practice for returning refugees denied asylum – without the opportunity to talk to family, friends, or lawyers. Representatives from most of the Danish press followed Citra to Sri Lanka. But after this dramatic exit, her story took a turn. It was disclosed that she was possibly older than eighteen, that she possibly did not have brothers who were involved in the Tamil opposition The Tamil Tigers as she had told everyone in Denmark, that she possibly had spent time in France before her arrival in Denmark, and that her whole case was possibly a scheme by Tamils in Denmark to get asylum for more Tamils. Citra therefore went from having her school’s and the general population’s sympathy – expressed in one hundred thousand Danish Kroner donated to her case – to being a symbol of visible minorities trying to cheat the Danish system.

The news media constructed Citra as a victim with whom everybody sympathized. One news clip expressed this sympathy in a voice-over: “With great drama, the eighteen-year-old Tamil woman Citra was expelled from Denmark. Her school and classmates are fighting to get her back; a fight to which volunteers have already given more than a hundred thousand [Danish] Kroner.” The viewers saw ethnically Danish students sitting around a telephone and heard that they were calling the secretary of the Minister of the Interior, who refused to let them talk to the Minister. It seemed that Citra's situation had annulled all ordinary school activities, which indicated the students’ dedication and underscored the importance of Citra’s case. The voice-over informed the viewers that the money collected would pay for teachers and parents to travel to Sri Lanka to try and bring Citra back to Denmark. The viewers learned that the school’s principal personally “will travel [to Sri Lanka] to make sure that Citra is not being mistreated or molested,” suggesting that Citra was at serious risk of harm.

Citra’s story received such wide media attention because it involved several elements in a ‘good’ news story – Drama, a fight between ‘the little people’ and ‘the authorities’ – as well as various options for identification. A small local newspaper had first broken the story, and

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180 DR (Station), primetime news program 7V-Avisen, date: 19961112, original text: "tage ud og se efter, at Citra ikke bliver mishandlet, og at Citra ikke kommer til at lide overlast."
the national media then picked it up. Depending on age and profession most newspaper readers and television viewers could have identified with the students, their parents, or the teachers. When Citra’s story took a turn after her deportation, the media portrayed the students and teachers as people who – together with the whole population – had been misled. As the principal stated: “What is being brought forward now surprises us as much as everybody else. Honestly, we don’t know what to think.”\textsuperscript{181} Citra, who had been the media’s favorite victim, was not really blamed for the change of events. Instead the news media presented her as the victim of new oppressors, no longer the Danish system but instead “a Tamil network” that the news media characterized as unscrupulous and willing to put Citra's life in danger killed if would improve their case. The television station DR had information about this network from a person “who fears for his own life and therefore will not say his name nor be filmed.”\textsuperscript{182} This secrecy increased the dramatic narration of the story. The news media had portrayed Citra as an individual, while they portrayed this “Tamil network” as an anonymous group and thereby erased any understanding or sympathy for them.

**Human smuggling**

The news media often described the arrival of refugees in connection with organized crime in the form of human smuggling. The news programs typically narrated these news stories as crime stories, often with the Danish police in the role of heroes. A TV2 news clip from 1989 illustrates this narrative structure. The news clip was directly connected to the preceding news clip about thieves organized in a gang of visible minorities: The television host finished the previous news clip with the words “The police in Gladsakse [suburb to Copenhagen] are currently instituting a search for a 23-year-old Yugoslavian from the gang.” Immediately after this comment, the hosts continued: “The police in Holstebro [provincial town in Jutland] are also busy with a case about people smuggling, where false papers and large amounts of money play an important role.” The host thereby presented two stories, one about a group of thieves and one about illegal immigration, as if they were related, even though the only similarities were the involvement of the police and visible minorities. Journalists narrated the news clip about smuggling with the police as the main characters and representatives of the ‘good guys’ and the visible minorities as the criminal ‘bad guys’. The voice-over explained: “It all began on July the 30\textsuperscript{th} when a Tamil went to the police to

\textsuperscript{181} DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19961125, original text: ”Hvad der nu er kommet frem, det underer os lige så meget som alle andre, og ærligt talt så ved vi ikke, hvad vi skal tro.”

\textsuperscript{182} DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19961117, original text: ”af frygt for sit liv ønsker han ikke at få sit navn frem eller at blive filmet.”
apply for asylum. He is 30 years old and has been given the name ‘the uncle’. The man has a nephew in Holstebro. The police were suspicious that his papers were not as they were supposed to be. Ten days later the nephew and a Danish girlfriend traveled to Copenhagen to confirm the identity. During the questioning the girl admits that they have supplied ‘the uncle’ with fake papers and then things start moving fast. The couple’s apartment in Holstebro is searched and here the police discover several false papers and stamps. Three more Tamils are arrested…Shortly thereafter an anonymous letter arrives at the police officers’. In the envelope there is a picture of a Tamil. The letter describes him as the King in a people smuggling network.”

The footage accompanying this description showed white, male police officers at work: They sit at desks reading papers, look through microscopes, engage in conversations, etc. The footage gives an impression of very busy people dedicated to their work. The narration also involved fictional elements: “It all began on July 30th” brings to mind the introduction of a fairy tale or an adventure, and the wording “then things started moving fast” indicates drama and excitement. The anonymous letter further adds to the dramatic aspects of the story. The person described as “the King of a people-smuggling network” was simply called “the King” in the rest of the clip; a title associated with fairy tales as well as with fictive gangster dramas. The news clip did not at any point mention or explain why the people smuggled from Sri Lanka needed to escape, i.e. they did not mention the civil war in Sri Lanka, nor why the strict immigration laws in Denmark forced them to rely on smugglers. Without this background information, the story appears as a simple crime story and not as a story about refugees in a desperate situation, and the viewers would therefore most likely have given their sympathy to the police who were working so hard on cracking ‘criminal networks’.

The news media reported these kinds of sensational police heroics throughout the entire period analyzed, and offered an interpretation of immigration as closely connected with crime. Another example was a news clip from 1992 that was introduced by the words: “One of Europe’s biggest people smugglers is now behind bars in Denmark. Yesterday the Iranian born

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184 See for instance TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19921028, DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Åvisen, date: 19900503, DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Åvisen, date: 19930219, DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Åvisen, date: 19960815, and DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Åvisen, date: 19990722 for similar crime story narrations.
Amir Heidari was handed over by German police, and today he was jailed in Aabenraa [Southern Denmark]...Heidari says that he has helped more than 20,000 people get into Scandinavia illegally.\textsuperscript{185} The news clip was accompanied by footage of police officers at work and an interview with a chief constable, Michael Mørup Hansen, who explained how the police had solved the case. Similarly to the previously mentioned Tamil smuggling case, this clip was an example of how a complex situation, one that involved globalization, political and personal rationales behind immigration, immigration laws, and smugglers preying on immigrants, was reduced to a simple narrative of ‘good’ white police officers against ‘bad’ criminal visible minorities. The police filmed and interviewed in these news clips were all white and male. At the time of the footage shooting, there were visible minorities as well as females in the Danish police force, even though they constituted a small minority, but this minority did not make it into any of the news media’s footage in my empirical material.\textsuperscript{186} The footage therefore contributed to an implied racial aspect to the crime narration, namely that the good guys were white and the bad guys of color. This racial aspect contributed to broadening the gap between ‘them’ and ‘us’.

**Family Unifications**

Most arrivals in Denmark involved family unifications, but these have not taken up as much space in the news as the arrivals of refugees. The increasing number of refugees was the dominant theme in the news about arrivals, especially during the 1980s and early 1990s. The limited news coverage of family unifications that took place was similar to the coverage about refugees, i.e. descriptions of floods of immigrants and discussions dominated by politicians and laypeople who argued that the laws regulating family unifications needed to be tightened. One illustrative news clip was introduced by a television host who announced that “Social Democrat mayors and Liberal Members of Parliament unite in their demand that family unification for refugees and immigrants must be stopped. The Social Democrat municipalities are about to drown

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\textsuperscript{185} TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19920207, original text: ”En af Europas største menneskesmuglere sidder nu bag tremmer i Danmark. I går blev den iranskiudøde Amir Heidari udleveret af det tyske politi, og i dag blev han fængslet i Åbenrå...Heidari siger selv, at han har hjulpet mere end 20.000 mennesker ilegalt ind i Norden.”

\textsuperscript{186} There have been no official statistics informing about the percentage of women and visible minorities in the Danish police force, but figures from the police’s annual reports have informed that there were six percent women in police force in 1996 which slowly increased to reaching nine percent in 2004. The first female police officers began at the police school in 1971 but it has not been possible to access information regarding the number of women before 1996. In Denmark it has been (and is) illegal to register employers regarding to their ethnicity and therefore there have been no specific information regarding the amount of visible minorities in the Danish police force. This information is based on my e-mail correspondence with Ellen Eriksen, Head of Section [kontorfuldmægtig], Personnel Department, National Commission of the Danish Police.
in foreigners.”

While the viewers saw footage of veiled, visible minority women, the voice-over continued: “In the capital there are so many foreign cultures that immigrants and their descendants in a few decades will constitute the majority…Now…politicians…want to limit citizens with another cultural background by limiting their right to family unifications.”

This discussion was rooted in the large numbers of arrivals via family unifications. From the formal halt on immigration in 1973, when there were 15,000 guest workers in Denmark mainly from Turkey, Yugoslavia, and Pakistan, until the early 2000s, the number of people of Turkish, Yugoslavian, and Pakistani origin increased. From 1974 to 2002 the number of people with Turkish citizenship residing in Denmark increased from 8,138 to 30,362. In 2002, the number of Turkish descendants, i.e. children of Turkish immigrants, was 21,797, which brought the total number of people of Turkish origin residing in Denmark to a total of 52,159. Similarly, the number of people with citizenships from the former Yugoslavia increased from 6,779 to 13,986; the number of Yugoslavian descendants was 5334, bringing the total number of people of Yugoslavian origin to 19,320. The number of Pakistani citizens residing in Denmark increased from 3,733 to 10,487, and in 2002 there were 8136 Pakistani descendants, bringing the total number of people of Pakistani origin to 18,623. These increases resulted when foreign workers gradually received permanent working and residence permits, followed by large numbers of family unifications. Family unification included the bringing of an existing family member (parents, spouse, and children) to Denmark, as well as the creation of new families (bringing a new spouse to Denmark). Of all the successful applications made by immigrants for family unification, a little less than half (44 percent) were for new families.

Immigration became a heavily debated topic from 1997, when the then-Social Democrat-led government named their Minister of the Interior. They appointed the former mayor of Aarhus, Social Democrat Thorkild Simonsen, who often had spoken directly and aggressively about problems with immigrants in his city. This was interpreted as a manifestation of the Social

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187 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19991220, original text: “Socialdemokratiske borgmestre og borgerlige folketingspolitiske kræver nu samstemmende et stop for indvandrenes og flygtninges familiesammenføringer. De socialdemokratiske storkommuner er ved at drukne i fremmede.”

188 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19991220, original text: “I hovedstadsområdet er der så mange fremmede kulturter, at indvandrere og deres efterkommere i løbet af nogle årter vil udgøre flertallet…Nu vil…politiske…begrænse væksten af borgere med anden kulturel baggrund ved at stoppe deres ret til familiesammenføring.”

Democrat Party’s attempt to conduct a strict immigrant policy. In 1998, Simonsen introduced a new immigration and integration law into the Parliament. The law demanded, among other things, that a person in Denmark who wished to unite with a spouse should have lived in Denmark for at least six years, and a spouse residing in Denmark needed be able to financially support his/her incoming spouse as well as to provide adequate housing for the two of them. Asylum seekers were to receive a so-called introduction payment, which was lower than the basic social welfare payment [kontanthjælp]. This introduction payment was later declared against international law and therefore suspended.190 In 2002, the ruling Conservative [Konservative] and Liberal [Venstre] government, with the supporting votes in Parliament from the Danish People’s Party [Dansk Folkeparti], further tightened immigration laws when they passed a law stating that family unification was only possible for people over 24 years of age. The law also established that in order for a couple to be united in Denmark, they had to prove that their connection to Denmark was stronger than their connection to any other country [tilknytningskrav]. They also declared that one had to have stayed in Denmark for seven years in order to obtain permanent residence; previously, it was five years. In 2003, the regulation governing a couple’s connection to Denmark was changed, mainly because a large number of ethnic Danes with foreign partners were caught in the rule. From 2003 a person who had lived in Denmark for more than 28 years could unify with a spouse in Denmark, if their connection [tilknytningskrav] to Denmark was greater than to any other country. Family unifications between close relatives, i.e. cousins, became illegal with the 2003 rule.191 Since 1988, Danish National Statistics [Danmarks statistik] have examined how many people gained residence permits in Denmark based on family unification, and, with the exception from 1995 with the large number of refugees from the former Yugoslavia, the number of immigrants entering Denmark because of family unification constituted the largest group of people gaining residence permits.192 In other words, the number of immigrants coming Denmark via family unification was larger than the number of immigrants coming as refugees.

These statistics indicate a discrepancy between the news media’s images of immigration and the actual situation. The media’s focus on ‘the flood of refugees’ and on discussions around tightening immigration rules to prevent refugees from entering has given the

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192 Based on on Søren Pedersen, ”Migration to and from Denmark during the period 1960-97”, in *Immigration to Denmark: International and National Perspectives*, David Coleman & Eskil Wadensjö, (Aarhus: The Rockwool Foundation Research Unit, Aarhus University Press, 1999), 148-191), 46 ff.
impression that refugees have constituted the majority of people arriving in Denmark. One reason behind the focus on refugees, at the expense of arrivals via family unifications, was that refugees present more dramatic stories: They were on the run, they were badly lodged, they were under attacks from locals Danes, etc. All these aspects could compose more interesting news stories than a spouse moving to marry his/her partner and settle in their home in Denmark. The news was, as its name indicates, characterized by describing 'new' things, and the media could more easily present arrivals of refugees as new events – especially if they were presented as exceptional – than they could with family unifications. But over the years the focus on refugees has given media audiences a false impression of the composition of visible minorities in Denmark.

**Citizenship**

The broadcasts of political debates over limiting family unifications can be seen as an illustration of the difference between holding Danish citizenship and being Danish. Family unification was limited to people holding Danish citizenship or permanent residence since the late 1990s, but, as one news clip argued: “generally any immigrant with Danish citizenship…can get her/his spouse, children, and, in some cases, parents to Denmark.”\(^{193}\) This comment stated that visible minorities continued to remain immigrants despite the fact that they were Danish citizens according to law.

This distinction between being Danish and holding Danish citizenship was connected to the history of the Danish *Indfødsretten*, which was introduced in 1776. *Indfødsretten* literally translates as ‘the native’s right’ or ‘the right of the internally born’; it does not translate as citizenship. Even though it has often been used as a synonym for Danish citizenship [*statsborgerskab*], the two concepts have not been identical.\(^{194}\)

The reason behind the establishment of *Indfødsretten* was the growing sentiment of Danish nationalism, partly directed against the high number of German immigrants who occupied positions in the Danish royal administration and in Danish educational institutions in the eighteenth-century. The Kings and the court needed officials who were loyal to the crown, a loyalty that was secured by the fact that officials did not have close connections to the Danish population. Germans

\(^{193}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19991220, original text: “som hovedregel kan enhver…indvandrer med dansk statsborgerskab…hente sin ægtefælle, sine born og i nogle tilfælde sine forældre til Danmark.”

\(^{194}\) Despite this, the only way to translate the Danish ‘erhvervelse af indfødsret’ seems to be by using the term ‘naturalization’; just as it seems like the best way to translate the Danish ‘at få dansk indfødsret’ is by the terms ‘becoming naturalized in Denmark’ or ‘obtain Danish citizenship’.
occupied a large majority of the administration and governing positions in the Danish Kingdom, both because they were loyal to the crown on whose promotion their careers depended and because they were generally better educated than the Danes. Germans also dominated large sections of Danish cultural and educational elites. The Germans’ dominance was generally not questioned nor viewed negatively before the rise of Danish nationalism in the latter half of the eighteenth-century.

The fall of the German Johann Friedrich Struensee was central to the passing of *Indfødsretten*. Struensee came to the Kingdom of Denmark in 1769 as King Christian VII’s (1766-1808) personal doctor. Christian VII, generally agreed to be schizophrenic, was unable to rule, and Struensee quickly became his closest associate and trusted friend. Struensee managed to change Danish legislative processes. The previous practice where leaders of different councils *[kollegiecheferne]* personally presented their areas of concern to the King was abolished, and Struensee was appointed *maître des requêtes*, which meant that all written approaches to the King went through Struensee. This change enabled Struensee to pass several laws via Cabinet orders *[kabinetordre]* that he wrote and the ill King signed. Struensee therefore basically ruled the Kingdom from 1770-1772, when he passed such progressive, Enlightenment-inspired reforms as freedom of the press, freedom of expression, prohibition of torture, etc. He gained approval and respect from European Enlightenment thinkers, including Voltaire, for these reforms, but he did not have support from the Danish middle-classes, the nobles, nor the common Danish people.

Struensee, like previous officials in the administration, spoke and wrote German, and German functioned, as it had for years, as the official language of the royal administration. Struensee and Christian VII’s wife, Queen Caroline Mathilde, quite openly had an affair and a child together, which most of the Danish population viewed negatively.\(^{195}\)

Early in the century a sentiment of Danish nationalism found expression in the educated middle-classes and intellectuals like the writer Ludvig Holberg. Over the course of the century this sentiment gained public support as it came to include a critique of the German dominance of the administration. On January 17, 1772, Struensee was arrested on orders from the Queen Mother Juliane Marie. He was publicly executed in April 1772. The group that came to power after Struensee, the Høegh-Guldberg government, was organized around the Queen Mother and the secretary of the cabinet Ove Høegh-Guldberg. They designed and passed *Indfødsretten*, which stated “that all positions in our [the King’s] states, court, church, military, and civil services, of great or of little responsibility, cannot and must not be given to other people than to the country’s

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natively born children." In other words, Indfødsretten served to limit the number of Germans in the administration and to secure Danish control of the state apparatus. Along with the passing of Indfødsretten, the language of legislation and administration was changed from German to Danish. Indfødsretten defined native Danes as people possessing the “quality...of being born in our [the King’s] states.”

This definition of belonging was based on the principle of jus soli, also called citizenship of the soil, which meant that only people born in the territory of the Danish Kingdom could receive Indfødsretten. The law about Indfødsretten was passed January 15, 1776 and promulgated with festivities on King Christian VII's birthday January 29, 1776. Internationally, Indfødsretten was exceptional. There were examples of other European laws granting limited groups of people the rights to certain positions, but Indfødsretten was the first to grant all official positions to a group of people solely based on where they were born. The growing Danish sense of nationality, which culminated in Indfødsretten in 1776, illustrated a break from a traditional, historical understanding of nationality being born with the French revolution of 1789. Historian Ole Feldbæk has argued that the development of a Danish national identity during the eighteenth-century is rather unique because it has not been possible to point to international parallels or any European sources of inspiration.

Traditionally, Indfødsretten was viewed as a reaction against Struensee, whose regime, traditionally viewed, marked a break in Danish history. However, newer research argues that Indfødsretten might also have expressed the culmination of an already existing understanding of nationality. The argument for continuity has pointed to the fact that the foundations for Indfødsretten were already established before Struensee gained power: The native country was already defined according to the principals of jus soli; national identity had already been connected to the Danish language; and the large number of foreigners in the administration had already been

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196 Indfødsretten 1776, original text: “at alle Embeder I Vore Stater. Hof, Geistlige, Militære og Civile, af stor eller lille Betroenhed, ej kunne eller skulle gives til andre end indfødte Landets Born.” A scanned copy of the original Indfødsretts law can be seen at: http://www.dr.dk/undervisning/indvandring/docs/1776.htm
critiqued. Struensee and his fall therefore might have sped up the process rather than marked a break from it.\textsuperscript{200}

In 1849, Denmark received its constitution [{\it Grundloven}], and Indfødsretten was written into it. In the process, indfødsretten was revised to incorporate aspects of jus sanguinis. Jus sanguinis, citizenship of blood, refers to citizenship and status obtained based on parental status. In 1849, Indfødsretten was no longer mainly concerned with the question of who gained access to state positions but rather with who were desired as Danish citizens. Indfødselsretten in the constitution emphasized that it was only people with Danish parents who could obtain Indfødsretten. A reform in 1898 made the status of Indfødsretten dependent on the male head of household. Children born in Denmark from Danish fathers – if born out of wedlock they needed Danish mothers as well – automatically obtained Indfødsretten. Children automatically received their fathers’ citizenship, and wives automatically obtained that of their husbands. This was a clear jus sanguinis principle; there was still, though, an aspect of the jus soli principle, as children of parents without Indfødsretten but at least nineteen years of residence in Denmark obtained Indfødsretten.

The linguistic phrasing of Indfødsretten was important. It stated that Indfødsretten was “an quality [egenskab]” received by being born within the Kingdom. People who obtained naturalization did not obtain that quality, i.e. they obtained the same rights as the Danish internally born citizens but they did not become Danish. This might explain the distinction between being Danish – implying possessing the “quality” to be born in Denmark by Danish parents – and holding Danish citizenship.

Non-Danish citizens can apply for Danish citizenship if they have lived in Denmark for at least seven years or, for refugees who have been granted asylum, for six years after having received their residence permits (2005). Citizens from other Nordic countries need only to have lived in Denmark for two years before applying, and people who have been married to a Danish citizen for at least three years only need to have lived in Denmark for four years. The number of naturalizations was about 3,000-4,000 annually during the 1980s. In the early 1990s the number increased to about 5000 annually, and has remained at that level throughout the decade. The number of people actually applying for Danish citizenship was much lower than it potentially could have been. Only about six percent of people who were entitled to apply for citizenship chose to do so; this number was higher for citizens of Iran and Iraq, of which about 16 percent of potential candidates have applied for citizenship. On average 42 out of 1000 non-Danes gained citizenship

during the last few years (2003); of course not all non-Danes were eligible to receive Danish citizenship, but these numbers nonetheless illustrate that only a small percentage of potential applicants have actually applied for citizenship.\footnote{European social statistics. Migration, Eurostat, European Commission, (Luxemburg: European Community, 2002), 15 f., and David Coleman & Eskil Wadensjö, Immigration to Denmark: International and national perspectives, (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, The Rockwool Foundation Research Unit, 1999), 158.} The low number of applicants might be explained by the Danish prohibition of dual citizenship, which has forced people to give up their old citizenship in order to receive Danish citizenship.

**People arriving in Denmark have remained foreigners**

The distinction between ‘being Danish’ and possessing Danish citizenship can be seen as an example of a Danish national understanding that views the Danish population as monolithic and racially homogeneous. Regardless of the arrival of various immigrants, the understanding of ‘being Danish’ has remained limited to ethnic Danes born in Denmark. One can argue that regardless of how immigration laws and citizenship laws have changed over time, the attitudes found in the analyses of news communication, especially from the 1980s onwards, have connected ‘being Danish’ with (white) people who have both a *jus soli* and a *jus sanguinis* Danishness.

It was common for the news communication from the early 1970s to the early 2000s to view immigrants as foreigners who were different from the ethnic Danes, but the attitudes towards these foreigners have changed. The UN quota refugees, who arrived during the 1970s, were generally described with sympathy by the news media, whereas the racially different spontaneous refugees from the Middle East were portrayed more negatively – often described as floods and as financial burdens.

Besides this change, the news communication about arrivals in Denmark has changed very little. The same stories and themes were repeated with different refugees as actors. The focus was on the refugees’ lodging situations, including descriptions of various alternative lodging spaces. Much attention was given to dramatic aspects of the lodging; internal violent conflicts and local Danes’ aversions against refugees especially dominated the news. It was common for the news communication to describe refugees as large groups which have made it complicated for viewers to identify with them or feel sympathy for them. There were a few exceptions from these generalized descriptions in the form of personalized portraits of individual refugees; these different portrayals might have contributed to the development of Danes’ apparently contradictory attitudes towards
immigrants, in which Danes on one hand argue for more restrictive immigration laws while simultaneously expressing sympathy with refugees.
3. The criminal immigrant

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the representation of crime and visible minorities in the Danish news print and news broadcasts at the very end of the twentieth-century. In the last decade, from the early 1990s to the early 2000s, the news media has focused intensely on crimes committed by young men of Arabic origin. In the process, the news media have constructed a stereotype of young, visible minority males as criminal, a stereotype that is out of proportion to their actual participation in crime.

Unlike several of the other stereotypes analyzed in this dissertation, which have remained rather stable from the 1970s to the 2000s, there has been a clear development in the news stories about criminal visible minorities. Strikingly, there were no news stories about criminal visible minorities in the empirical material before the early 1990s; TV2 carried its first crime story with visible minorities as main characters in 1992, and DR had its first story in 1993. It is of course possible that there were news stories about criminal visible minorities before the 1990s which have not been included in the sampled material, but it seems certain that the number of these stories was limited. Otherwise they would most likely have shown up in the selected material as well. But once the stories were introduced, many were broadcast between the early 1990s and the 2000s. The focus of these stories changed over the course of the period. During the early 1990s they focused mainly on criminal asylum seekers, while from the mid-1990s they increasingly covered stories about violence.

The stereotype of the criminal, visible minority male, consolidated during the 1990s and 2000s, consisted of a few repeated characteristics: The criminal operates in gangs, is more criminal than ethnic Danes, and lives in ghettos. Some criminal visible minorities, and the areas they have lived in, were often described as out of reach; neither social workers nor police authorities were able to reform these criminals. This contributed to creating an image of visible minority criminals as different from ethnically Danish criminals, who could be reached and reformed. This unreachability led to arguments, especially articulated by right-wing politicians, about expelling the criminals. I try to question the labeling of ‘gangs’ in order to create a more nuanced image, and I try to compare visible minorities’ criminal overrepresentation to realities by deconstructing the statistical materials that show this overrepresentation. I also look back in history and show how immigration to Denmark since the seventeenth-century has been characterized by
strategies aiming at preventing criminal and other burdensome immigrants from settling in the country.

The stereotype of the criminal visible minority male has been closely connected to the idea of culture as static, and I explain how this idea can be seen as an expression of cultural racism. Scholars have argued that cultural racism to a large extent has substituted the previous biological racism in contemporary Europe. However, it is complicated to distinguish clearly between the two because they are interconnected. I explain the two kinds of racism and show how the concept of cultural racism can be useful to illustrate how populist, right-wing parties in Europe have been drawing upon racism in their ideologies. I show how, in their narrative compositions, the television news has often ended up – unintentionally – presenting news stories with stereotypes similar to the political right-wing’s culturally racist views of immigrants and nationality. Central for cultural racism is the belief that culture determines behavior, and many news clips implied that violence is inherent in visible minorities’ culture(s). During the mid-1990s, the media began to focus on violence; I connect this emphasis to the passing of two sets of laws, ‘the violence packets’ [voldspakkerne], which aimed at limiting young men’s violence. I discuss the interplay between politicians’ and the media’s focus on violence and argue that politicians and the media interacted in a kind of reciprocal communication. I also connect cultural racism to internalized racism and show how some visible minorities assumed the prejudiced cultural stereotypes.

Sociologist Mustafa Hussain has concluded, in his analysis of the Danish news media’s representation of visible minorities, that news about crime and violence has constituted the largest amount of news about visible minorities. Hussain has argued that crime stories were both among the stories that quantitatively appeared most often and those that qualitatively attracted the most attention amidst other news stories. Hussain analyzed a limited time period of news stories, three months in 1996, which might explain why he found such an emphasis on crime and violence. I did not find a similar emphasis on crime in my material. Because there were no crime

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204 Mustafa Hussain, Ferruh Yilmaz & Tim O’Connor, Medierne, Minoriteterne og Majoriteten – en undersøgelse af nyhedsmedier af den folkelige diskurs i Danmark, (Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling, 1997), 50. Hussain has analysed public service TV and Radio news from September 9, 1996 to December 9, 1996. The focus on crime that he has found could be explained by the radio news focussing a lot on crime than the TV, but this seems unlikely since the public service radio in Denmark is a part of DR and therefore it is likely that the DR TV news are similar to the DR radio news.
stories before the 1990s, these stories did not dominate the overall news coverage. However, there was a relatively large amount of crime stories during the mid-1990s, which explains Hussain’s findings. Since I have analyzed 30 years of media representation, I am able to illustrate the developments within these representations and illustrate that Hussain’s conclusions do not represent the broader trends of Danish media coverage.

I connect the developments and changes in the news to contextual changes in Danish politics, media, and society. The change to a left-wing government in 1993, which followed more than a decade of right-wing governments, might have played a role in the news media’s sudden focus on criminal visible minorities. Similarly, the establishment of the nationalist right-wing party the Danish People’s Party [Dansk folkeparti] in 1995 might have played a part in the media’s increased focus on the negative stereotype of the criminal visible minority.205 The establishment of TV2 in 1988 broke DR’s monopoly on news communication. This caused competition between the two channels which led to several changes in form as well as content. These changes might account for the increased focus on crime from the early 1990s.

To illustrate the importance of television narration for the communicated images, I elaborate on narrative models and show how news programs have been narrated according to specific narrative codes, especially to the so-called Berettermodel and the so-called actant model. During the period in question these news story models often simplified reality with a gallery of characters clearly defined as ‘good’ and ‘bad’. I also look at how the news objectified visible minorities by describing them in object positions and how the news has not treated visible minorities in the same way as their white counterparts on the occasions when the news gave them subject status as experts.

**The visible minority male is a criminal male**

A typical focus for the new ‘criminal’ type of newscast, which began appearing in the early 1990s, was young visible minority males’ involvement in what newscasters and journalists labeled gangs or groups [bander]. These stories typically described situational acts of the criminals, e.g. how they gather in city centers, how they have commit crimes and violence, etc. A TV2 news clip from 1992 and a DR news clip from 1993 illustrate the format. A voice-over introduced the

205 The Danish People’s Party has during its ten year existence moved from the far right towards the center in politics, and has during the 2005 election labeled itself a center party [midterparti]. Regarding financial and social politics the party can be placed as a center party whereas its immigration policies can be characterized as far right-wing or extreme nationalistic.
TV2 clip: “They gather in groups, they take to the city centers in the larger cities, especially Copenhagen. Their crimes consist of violence, vandalism, theft, robbery, and possession of weapons. It is young immigrant boys, some of them as young as ten years old. And while the crime rate among Danes is declining, then the same is not the case for young immigrants.”

A voice-over similarly introduced the DR clip by saying: “Crimes – more and more real youth gangs are formed in cities with socially tainted areas and it is especially young immigrants who dominate.” Neither of the clips provided any statistics supporting their claims, but the TV2 clip did refer to a recently published report that had argued that the crime rate among immigrants was increasing.

Newscasters and journalists referred to ‘gangs’ when explaining crimes committed by young visible minority males but it was unclear what they meant by ‘gangs’. The label ‘gang’ [bande] connotes in Danish both juvenile criminals and organized crimes. The latter is exemplified in Danish bikers’ criminal organizations, e.g. Hell’s Angles and Bull Shit, whose members carry out criminal activities for the benefit of the gang as well as for the benefit of individual members. It is questionable that the crimes of the visible minorities portrayed in the television media were similarly organized, and none of the news clips from the early 1990s to the early 2000s discussed or elaborated on their use of ‘gangs’. An interviewed, young, visible minority male, Hussein Farshchi, who, according to a voice-over, had been convicted for “a fight between gangs,” explained the reasons behind his crime as “…being in the wrong environment, being at the wrong place, being bored.” Such reasons did not necessarily equate with organized gang crime. In 1995 TV2 covered a shooting incident involving two men of Pakistani origin, and similarly labeled it a “gang confrontation.” The host's introduction was accompanied by a graphic text in the corner of the screen that read, in bold letters, “Gang Confrontation.” During the news clip the viewers heard that “the police are working on a theory that the motive behind the crime

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206 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19921005, original text: “De samles i grupper, de søger ind til centrum i de større byer, især i København. Det er unge indvandrerdrenge, nogle gange helt ned til ti år gamle. Og mens kriminaliteten blandt unge danskere er faldende, så gælder det ikke for unge indvandrere.”

207 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19930628, original text: “Kriminalitet. Der bliver flere og flere deciderede ungdomsbander i byer med socialt belastede områder, og det er især unge indvandrere, der dominerer.”

208 A reference to The Danish Encyclopaedia on “gang crime” [“bandekriminalitet”] points to looking up “organized crime” [“organiseret kriminalitet”] and “juvenile crime” [“ungdomskriminalitet”], Den store danske encyklopedi, vol. 2, ed. Jørgen Lund et al. (Haslev: Danmarks nationalleksikon, Gyldendal), 308.

209 TV2 (Station), additional in-dept news program to the primetime news program Nyhederne called Søndagsmagasinet, date: 19951029, original text: “slagsmål mellem bander.”

210 TV2 (Station), additional in-dept news program to the primetime news program Nyhederne called Søndagsmagasinet, date: 19951029, original text: “Man kommer i det forkerte miljø, forkerte sted, og man keder sig.”

211 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19951125, original text: “Bandeoprør.”
might be a gang confrontation.” In other words, it was not certain that the crime was gang-related; nevertheless the gang connection was clearly established by the graphic.\textsuperscript{212}

Several news clips from the mid-1990s onwards compared crime rates between visible minorities and ethnic Danes, and they all stated that visible minorities were more criminal than ethnic Danes. As one DR television host argued in the introduction to a news clip about criminal visible minorities: “Still a higher number of young people with ethnic background become criminal.”\textsuperscript{213} This statement was followed by footage of three men of color walking outside at night; a voice-over said: “Youths with immigrant background are accounting for more and more crimes.”\textsuperscript{214} After this a police officer, Arne Stevns, explained: “It is a problem because while the crime rate is generally decreasing among young people, the rate is increasing among second generation immigrants.”\textsuperscript{215} This rather short passage mentioned three times that young visible minorities were responsible for an increasing number of crimes in Denmark.

It is correct that visible minorities have been over-represented in crime statistics since 1994, when the police began recording crime offenders according to national origin, but these statistics require a nuanced analysis.\textsuperscript{216} Out of all penalties given in 2002 (latest available statistics), 10.6 percent were given to immigrants and 1.9 percent to descendants of immigrants; this means that 12.5 percent of penalties for crimes were given to visible minorities. This is a higher percentage than the immigrants’ and their descendants’ percentage of the whole population, less than 8 percent. Looking at these crime rates compared to the whole population, divided by immigrant status, the picture is more uneven. Three percent of the ethnically Danish population had been convicted of a crime, whereas 4.1 percent of all immigrants, 7.6 percentage of all descendants, and 4.4 percentage of the total population of non-Danish origin had a criminal record; this made immigrants, descendants, and the non-Danish population overly represented by 38 percent, 157 percent, and 48 percent respectively. These numbers from 2002 were similar to numbers from comparable surveys

\textsuperscript{212} See also TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20030602, TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19990726, DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990628, DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990823, and DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990825 for news clips which describe crimes committed by visible minorities as gang related.

\textsuperscript{213} DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19961230, original text: “Stadig flere unge med etnisk baggrund bliver kriminelle.”

\textsuperscript{214} DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19961230, original text: “Unge med indvandrerbaggrund tegner sig for stadig mere og mere kriminalitet.”

\textsuperscript{215} Head of the Danish Police Data Registration [Kriminalregistret], Oluf Nikolajsen, has told me (in a telephone conversation March 2005) that the Danish police began registration perpetrators of serious crimes according to national origin Nov. 1, 1994.
from 1995 and 1998; there has been little change in visible minorities’ overrepresentation during the last decade. The overrepresentation was dramatically high and – because of its dramatic effect – often appeared in the news. But looking more closely at the statistics suggests several explanations.

It is well-known that crime rates have vary according to age, education, and class relations. Most crimes are committed by younger people; children and elderly people do not generally commit crimes. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the visible minority population was much younger than the ethnically Danish population: The group of 15-49 years of age constituted 67.8 percent of all immigrants, while the same group constituted 45.7 percent for ethnic Danes (2003). The number of people over 50 years was much smaller for immigrants than for ethnic Danes. Immigrants’ descendants constituted a very young group; 87.7 percent of all descendants were under 25-years-old. For non-Western immigrants the number was as high as 94 percent.217 This means that the amount of visible minorities in the ‘crime risk pool’ was proportionally larger than the number of ethnic Danes in the same pool.

Crime is to a large extent a class phenomenon. People from the lower classes tend to commit more crimes than those from the upper class, and class affiliations depend on employment and education. Visible minorities’ unemployment rate was higher than the ethnic Danes’ rate, 11.7 percent and 4 percent respectively (2003). In addition, visible minorities’ participation rate in the workforce – which included employed people and people seeking employment – was much lower than ethnic Danes’ rate: Visible minorities’ participation rate was 52.3 percent, while ethnic Danes’ rate was 78.6 percent. Employment is closely connected to education; surveys have shown that visible minorities with higher education have had a stronger connection to the workforce than visible minorities with little or no education.218 Visible minorities’ high unemployment rate can be partially explained by their lower level of education than the average ethnic Dane: Only 35 percent of non-Western immigrant between 25 and 64 years of age have had a qualifying education [erhvervskompetencegivende uddannelse] from their country of origin, and only 10 percent have completed a qualifying education in Denmark. Thirty-nine percent of non-Western immigrants’ descendants received a qualifying education, but this number is still low when compared to the 66 percent of ethnic Danes with a qualifying education. One reason why the number was low was that twice as many visible minorities as ethnic Danes dropped out secondary educational institutions

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[ungdomsuddannelserne], and, of those who made it to a higher educational institution, 60 percent dropped out, compared to 32 percent among ethnic Danes. These employment and educational figures have positioned a proportionally larger amount of visible minorities in the lower classes.219

Corrected according to differences in demography (age), education, and socio-economic background, i.e. employment and connection to the workforce, distinctions in the crime statistics between the ethnically Danish population and the visible minority population no longer appear strikingly different.

Visible minorities’ overrepresentation regarding crimes corrected for demographic and social differences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corrections</th>
<th>Overrepresentation in percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not corrected</td>
<td>+ 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected for age differences</td>
<td>+ 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected for age and educational differences</td>
<td>+ 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected for age, education, and income differences</td>
<td>+ 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected for age, education, income and socio-economic differences²²⁰</td>
<td>+ 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Danish Statistics (Danmarks Statistik) and the Danish Ministry of Justice.²²¹

The Crime Prevention Council [Kriminal præventive råd] has further explained visible minorities’ overrepresentation in crime statistics by the exclusion that visible minorities have experienced in Denmark. In a report about crime prevention for visible minorities, the council quotes a young, visible minority man who explains: “Since we were very young we have always been treated badly: In the school by the teachers, in the city center by the police. If we are three people together, people stare at us and there is fear in their eyes. There is a difference….They says you need to be a member to get into the discos. But the Danes do not need to be members. We could like to get in there and get in contact with the girls….How do you think it is to have been hanging out with your friends and been looking forward to go out and then have to walk from place to place Saturday after Saturday without being able to get in? Then one needs to get it out. Then one beats up some random person. They say we are violent but we become violent because we cannot

²²⁰ Socio-economic relations refer to attachment and placement at the labour marked.
get in.” In other words, the Crime Prevention Council has argued that when visible minorities have felt excluded they have reacted negatively; their crimes can be interpreted as a reaction against a society that has discriminated against them. But these different factors explaining the overrepresentation have seldom been reported in the news media. The media have mainly repeated the overrepresentation instead of explaining it, and thereby the media have functioned as a confirmer of already established beliefs instead of an instrument to provide new and varied explanations of society.

The news media have described visible minorities’ increasing crime in general terms that gave the impression of a crime rate increasing all over the country. By contrast, descriptions of visible minorities’ declining crimes were described as closely connected to specific areas and therefore not part of a larger trend. Visible minorities’ overrepresentation in crime also was mentioned, and thereby confirmed, in news stories that did not relate directly to visible minorities’ criminal activities. A TV2 news clip about crimes committed by young ethnic Danes in provincial Randers, for instance, underscored visible minorities’ crimes even though it seemed irrelevant for the content of the news story. The clip was introduced by the statement: “Young immigrants commit extraordinarily many crimes…but in Randers the crimes are committed by young Danes.” The use of ‘but’ in the statement indicated that the situation in Randers was an exception.

Unlike typical news stories, stories about criminal visible minorities did not always result from a specific, ‘new’ event. Traditionally, a central criterion for presenting a story in a news program was that the story was new, e.g. an event that had just happened. But this was not always the case with these crime stories. Several of them did not derive from recent events but rather generalized statements about crime and visible minorities. An example of this was a TV2 news clip from October 1995, which was introduced by a voice-over: “All summer groups of Arabic men

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224 See for instance TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20011219.

225 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19980127, original text: “Unges indvandrere begår ekstra mange forbydelser,...men i Randers består banderne altså af unge danskere.”
have patrolled Gellerup-parken [a residential area with high percentage visible minorities]. The goal is to stop the young immigrants before they commit crimes.226 There was nothing new in this story because the men had been patrolling for months before the story made it to the news. The premise of the story seemed to be that immigrants would engage in criminal activity if something or someone did not prevent them. In other words, news narrators seemed to expect visible minority males to be criminal. This premise was the impetus for the story, and it functioned to confirm a pre-existing beliefs that visible minorities were potential criminals.

The media tended to treat visible minorities as a homogeneous group, a tendency mirrored in the news programs’ visual material. DR and TV2 followed very similar practices in their coverage of visible minorities, but their geographical focuses were a little different. TV2 tended to focus on situations taking place in the city of Odense (the third largest city in Denmark), where their TV2 headquarters is located, whereas DR tended to focus more on situations in Copenhagen, the site of its headquarters. TV2 tended to use footage from the Odense central railway station [Odense Banegård Center] to illustrate news stories involving visible minorities and crime. The images present people doing activities related to the areas where they were filmed; this meant that the majority of people were waiting to catch a train or were simply hanging out in the station. The central station in Odense has, since its construction in 1995, been used by many young people, especially young men of Arabic origin, as a hangout. The footage thus gave an impression of a great division between ethnic Danes, who seemed busy because of their determined walking towards a goal outside the picture frame, and the young men of Arabic origin, who were doing nothing but hanging out and appearing lazy. The footage from the central station has often been used to illustrate various stories about criminal visible minorities, including several stories that had nothing to do with the specific groups of people hanging out at the central station. The people at the station thereby became representatives for all visible minorities and for the differences between them and ethnic Danes.

Television narration

Television programs have traditionally been divided into fictional and factual; news has belonged to the latter category, but news programs draw upon codes of fiction in their narrative form. One central fictional element in the news has been the actant model. The Russian folktales expert and

226 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19951003, original text: “Hele sommeren har grupper af arabiske mænd patruljeret rundt i Gellerupparken. Målet er at stoppe de unge indvandrere, inden de begår noget kriminelt.”
structuralist Vladimir Propp has shown how the majority of folktales are constructed according to a formula he has called ‘harmony – conflict – re-establishing of harmony’ or ‘home – out – home’. Propp has further argued that folktales are often narrated around a specific set of characters, e.g. hero, villain, antagonist, assistant, etc. The structuralist language and literature expert Algirdas Julien Greimas has taken Propp’s theories and created a formula for the characters in a narration, the actant model. Figuratively the actant model looks like the following illustration:

The model might best be explained by an example, e.g. the classic story of Robin Hood. Robin Hood is the subject of the story. It is typical that the story’s protagonist also is the actant model’s subject. Robin Hood’s object (goal) is to fight social injustice. His antagonists are the Sheriff of Nottingham and King Richard’s brother John, who both personify greed and an illegitimate regime. Robin Hood’s assistants are Little John and his merry men living in Sherwood Forest. The giver is the law and morality, personified in the absent King Richard, and the receivers, who all benefit when Robin Hood reaches the goal, are the suffering people. The three axes in the actant model illustrate how the narration in the story is driven forward. The project axis equalizes the subject’s way to her/his goal, i.e. Robin Hood’s various fights for social justice, all the struggles

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227 John Fiske, *Television Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1991), 293. Literature expert Tzvetan Todorov has likewise argued that the basis of narration can be expressed in the formula ‘stability – instability – re-establishing of (potentially new) stability.’

228 A. J. Greimas: *Structural Semantics*, (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 205 ff. and Ingolf Gabold & Stig Franck, *TV-SUM*, Personalekursus (Staff seminar), (Copenhagen: DR, 1984), ide 1.1. The actant model comes in different version, and the names of ‘roles’ differ. The “Giver” can also be called “Sender,” “Assistant” can be called “Helper,” and “Antagonists” can be called “Opponent.”
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he has to endure before he finally gets the goal in the end of the story. The conflict axis describes the relation between the protagonist’s assistant(s) and antagonist(s), i.e. all the conflicts and problems caused by the disagreement between the Sheriff and Robin Hood’s men. These conflicts, exemplified in the meetings and fights between the Sheriff and Robin Hood’s men, are important for maintaining the action and excitement in the narration. The communication axis illustrates the relation between the ones who benefit from the protagonist reaching her/his goal and the ones giving an object which helps reaching the goal, i.e. the relation between the law and morality, personified in King Richard, and the people.229

The news stories were simplifications of the complex realities they represented. Many-sided situations portrayed in the news therefore often appeared very simple, and conflicts often were described in binary oppositions such as good versus evil. The simplicity and the binary oppositions made the acting persons in the news story appear as characters in the structured narration of the actant model. A news story about criminal visible minority youths exemplifies this narration. A group of criminal visible minority youths in prison were being provided with a mentor (an adult ethnic Dane) who was to help them stay out of crime when they were released from prison. In the news clip, the story was told through a portrayal of the imprisoned, young, visible minority male Kim. Kim was the subject of the story; his goal (object) was to become law-abiding. He explained “the prison is like a school, eh? It is here you get to know people; it is here you get contacts. It is here you can develop your criminal career.”230 This explanation set up the other prisoners as antagonists in the narration. They were trying to prevent him from reaching his goal. Kim had a mentor, Jakob, who assisted Kim in reaching his goal. Jakob was teaching Kim meditation and martial arts, which functioned as tools Kim used to stay out of crime. As the voice-over explained: “Now it is…breathing and now it is martial art. They are two tools in the mentor’s toolbox which have changed Kim’s life.”231 Jakob gave Kim tools to reach his goal. If Kim stayed out of crime both he and society would benefit (receive).

Once personalized in this manner, this story about crime prevention thereby became more comprehensible for viewers. It was transformed into Kim’s story, which was described in words and concepts that were easy to understand. Kim had a goal that viewers could support, and

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229 Inspiration to use Robin Hood as an illustration of the actant model is from Kirsten Drother et al., Medier og kultur. En grundbog i medieanalyse og medieteor, (Valby: Bogen / Medier, 1996), 236.
230 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20030629, original text: “Fængsel er ligesom en skole, ikke? Det er her du lærer folk at kende; det er her, du får kontakter. Det er her, du ligesom kan udvikle din criminalitet.”
231 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20030629, original text: “Nu hædder det…ændræt, og nu hæder det kampsport. Det er de to værkøjer, som er i den mentors værktojeskasse, som har ændret på Kims liv.”
the actors (actants) in his story appeared as binary oppositions: Jakob was good, and the other prisoners were bad. This news story was an example of how individual persons and single events became representative of the greater and more complex reality. When abstract explanations (e.g. the psychological aspect of using martial arts as crime prevention) and complex situations (e.g. youth crime and visible minorities’ overrepresentation in criminality) were left out and stories were simplified to individual people’s stories (e.g. Kim wants to be law-abiding), then they became recognizable stories.\(^{232}\)

Another central fictional element used in the news was the so-called \textit{Berettermodel}. Inspired by analyses of cinematic narration and by Propp’s structural descriptions of narration, the Swedish film teacher Ola Olson developed the so-called \textit{Berettermodel}, which is Swedish for narrating model. The \textit{Berettermodel} is based on a linear narration that has served as an ideal for composition at least since the Greek philosopher Aristotle described ‘good’ drama in the fourth-century B.C. Aristotle argued that a drama should consist of three phases: A beginning where the conflict was introduced, a center where the conflict developed, and finally an ending where the conflict was solved.\(^{233}\) Olson taught versions of his model for cinematic narration in the late 1970s, and his theories and models were widely embraced in Scandinavia. Among others, the then-director of staff at DR, Kjeld Veirup, who initiated seminars on cinematic narration for the employees at DR, also took up these ideas. The seminars were developed at DR mainly by drama teacher Ingolf Gabold, who created the famous so-called TV-SUM material (TV-SUM is an abbreviation for \textit{TV som udtryksmiddel} which translates as ‘television as expressive instrument’).\(^{234}\) Since the mid-1980s journalists at DR have received narrative training based on the TV-SUM material, which adopted the \textit{Berettermodel} and the actant model as fundamental tools for television narration. Educational institutions in Denmark offering journalist degrees as well as institutions offering cinematic, television, literary, writing, and other related degrees all teach the \textit{Berettermodel} and the actant model as a central narrative tools.

The \textit{Berettermodel} can be expressed figuratively by the following illustration:

Narration according to the Berettermodel begins with an opening phrase where the story takes off. The opening phrase is followed by a presentation, where characters and conflicts are introduced. In the elaboration, the characters and the reason for the conflict are described in more detail. Then comes a point-of-no-return, the point where the plot changes or something is disclosed that makes the story so exciting that the viewer feels he/she has to know the rest of the story. This is followed by a self-explanatory conflict escalation until the conflict finally reaches its climax. Hereafter the narration finishes with a fade-out, in which the story finds rest in a (re)establishment of order and stability.  

The Berettermodel narration can be illustrated by an analysis of a news clip from 1999 about criminal gangs of visible minorities. This clip was introduced by an opening phrase embodied in the host’s introduction to the news clip: “We begin in Odense where there this evening has been new gang disputes.” This statement defined both the location and the central theme and conflict for the clip. Then the viewers were presented with the actors in the event via the voice-over that explained that the dispute was “between ten to fifteen second-generation immigrants who raided a flat and stabbed two Danes.” The conflict was further elaborated by interviews with a local police officer who explained that the police currently were working intensively on the case. Visually, the viewers saw pictures of a flat with blood on the floor, and a voice-over explained how the

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235 Ingolf Gabold & Stig Franck, TV-SUM, Personalekursus (Staff seminar), (Copenhagen: DR, 1984), form 0.0 and Peter Harms Larsen, Faktion – som udtryksmiddel, (Copenhagen: Amanda, 1995), 100 ff.

236 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Åvisen, date: 19990824, original text: “Vi begynder i Odense, hvor der her til aften har været nye bandeuroligheder.”

237 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Åvisen, date: 19990824, original text: “[Bandeurolighederne er] mellem 10-15 andengenerationsindvandrere, der stormede en lejlighed og stak to danskere ned.”
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“atmosphere is tense after the knife stabbing.” This elaboration ended with the police officer explaining how the two Danes were stabbed; his explanation culminated with a point of no return where he said: “One of them is stabbed seriously. He is currently at the operation table. We do not know his current state but there has been a serious loss of blood.” This point of no return put the victim's survival in question, which meant that the police did not yet know if they were dealing with a homicide or only an assault. Neither did the viewers, but they might find out if they stayed tuned and followed the rest of the news clip. The conflict escalation further elaborated on the conflict by interviewing several people (semi)involved in the conflict: A police officer Ole Højer Pedersen, a social worker who worked in Odense Leif Knudsen, and a member of Parliament for the Conservative Party [Konservativt Folkeparti] Bendt Bendsen. The conflict was heightened by cutting between the men’s different views on what was needed to prevent conflicts like the knife stabbing; some of them argued in favor of more police, others in favor of more social programs. They also gave examples of “the second-generation immigrants”’ criminal behavior. One of them said: “a young girl...is hit in her head and kicked so she received internal bleedings.” By juxtaposing their different views, including dramatic stories, the drama was increased, and the escalation culminated in a climax when the politician, Bendt Bendsen, stated that “There is a group of 20-40 people [visible minorities] who are outside pedagogical reach. We have to forcefully remove them from their homes if they are minors [below 15 years old], and we have to put them in jail if they are [older].” This climax was both a potential solution to the conflict, i.e. remove/arrest them, as well as the most drastic and dramatic suggestion delivered to the conflict. It would have been much more dramatic to remove and arrest the troublemakers than to have given the police or the social services more resources, and the climax was therefore literally the final height in the men’s proposals. After this statement and indirect demand to arrest the troublesome visible minorities from Odense, the clip turned to its fade-out, which consisted of a brief review of previous arguments and a journalist thanking the interviewed people for participating.

There have been two primary forms of narration in Western fiction – linear narration and circular narration – and the news has played upon both of them. The narration of the majority of

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238 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990824, original text: “Stemningen er spændt efter knivstikkeri.”

239 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990824, original text: “Den ene er snittet ret alvorligt. Han er på operationsbordet, og vi ved ikke hans tilstand i øjeblikket, men der har været stort blodtab.”

240 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990824, original text: “en ung pige...bliver nikket en skalle og bliver sparet ned, så hun får indre blodninger.”

241 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990824, original text: “Der er en gruppe på 20-40 stykker, der ikke kan nås pædagogisk. Dem er man nødt til at tvangsfjerne, hvis det er mindreårige, og man er nødt til at sætte dem i arresten, hvis de er [ældre].”
news clips in the surveyed Danish television news material was constructed according to the
Berettermodel and the actant model formulas. There is a progressive, causal, and linear narration in
the Berettermodel, and this linear format characterized the narration in the individual news clips.
But the overall narration in news programs has not been linear but circular. It seem as if the news
programs had a beginning with the host welcoming the viewers and introducing some of the
following key news, a middle with the news clips, and an ending with a weather report and the host
saying goodbye. But the individual news clips have had no connection to each other; neither have
they been causally dependent on each other. The news program did not tell one story but several.
The individual news clips had a beginning and an ending, but there were no clearly defined
beginnings or endings of the stories they represented. They began before the news program was
made, and they would continue after it finished. The overall form of the news programs therefore
represented the other narrative form, circular narration. Also called the wave model, this form
consists of a series of causally unrelated stories played out in the same time frame. There is no clear
conflict escalation in this narration but rather a series of smaller waves which each has their own
Berettermodel narration. This circular wave narration is well known from soap operas.242

The circular narration was explicitly seen in the frequent references that news
programs made to previous and future programs. There were several examples of this in the crime
news, where individual clips continuously referred to each other, and where one crime often
provided material for several other news clips. For instance, the homicide of the doorman Racheed
Lawal – who was killed by youths of Lebanese origin while working at a night club – provided
content for several news clips which internally referred to each other. Lawal was killed the night
between the 24 and 25 November 1996, and the homicide made it to all the news on 25 November.
The following day had more news stories portraying Lawal’s murderers, and on 28 November there
were news stories about the rise in homicides committed by young visible minorities; even years
later, in 2003, there were direct references to Lawal's murder.243

The references and the circular dramaturgy made the news appear as one long
narration, with several parallel stories that never ended. The viewers were encouraged to follow the
stories in the unlimited number of future news programs. The conflicts in the stories seemed to
never really end because reality continued outside the programs. The conflicts might have rested for

243 TV2 (Station), primetime news Nyhedene, date: 20030526, DR (Station), primetime news TV-Avisen, date:
19961125, DR (Station), primetime news TV-Avisen, date: 19961125, DR (Station), primetime news TV-Avisen, date:
19961128.
Youth beyond reach

Several news clips from the early 1990s to the early 2000s characterized young criminal visible minorities as beyond the reach of state agencies. These descriptions contributed to an image of criminal visible minorities as very different from criminals of Danish origin, who could be reached by educators, youth programs, etc. Sometimes it was specified who or which state agency was unable to reach the criminal visible minorities, as in one TV2 report that argued that “the traditional crime prevention and youth support organizations are not enough to prevent the [visible minorities’] crimes”244 or another that claimed “the police is in the area [Vollsmose] but that is not enough, several of the young people are complicated to reach.”245 Other times it was simply stated that the visible minorities were out of reach. The head of social services in Aarhus, (Denmark's second largest city) Leif Jespersen, stated on behalf of all employees in the city’s social services: “We are unable to solve it [visible minorities being criminal].”246 Similarly, the head of Immigration Services in Odense, Poul Hvid, said about “the hard core of criminals who are basically abandoned [by social services]” that “even if we had three people for every one of them [the criminal visible minorities], and we targeted them specifically, I don’t think it would make any difference or make them change.”247

The metaphor of ‘out of reach’ used here connotes ‘out of control’, implying a potential danger. The news media descriptions of the young criminals constructed an image of groups of people who were beyond reason, living their lives beyond the law and the social system.

244 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19921005, original text: “Det traditionelle ungdoms- og kriminalpræventive arbejde rækker ikke, hvis man skal kriminaliteten til livs.”
245 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010519, original text: Politiet er i området [Vollsmose], men det er ikke nok. En del unge er svære at nå.”
246 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19951003, original text: “Vi kan ikke lose det [synlige minoriteters kriminalitet]; similarly DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960904, where the TV host claimed: “there is apparently a small group who commit serious crimes and whom it is not possible to reach” (original text: “der er tilsyneladende en lille gruppe, som begår noget meget kriminelt, og som man ikke når at få fat på”).
247 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19961116, original text: “den hårde kerne af unge kriminelle.” ”Jeg tror ikke på, at selvom vi så satte tre mennesker på dem hver, så ville det så være det, der fik dem til at flytte sig.”
3. The criminal immigrant

This image might have contributed to a climate of fear, in which the ethnically Danish population feared the criminal, visible minority males. A climate of fear can exist despite the fact that the threat might not actually exist. Part of the Danish population might have feared young visible minority males despite the fact that it seemed unlikely that large amounts of young visible minorities should have been completely unreachable. The image of unreachability illustrated how a stereotype can function and underscored why it is important not only to analyze whether a stereotype is true or false but also its possible functions. These statements about unreachability illustrated how the established Danish system functioned as a norm; when resources within the established Danish social systems could not reach the criminal visible minorities, it was presented as if nobody could.

Interviewed experts and politicians from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s have repeated the mantra that the families of criminal visible minorities must be involved in solving the problem of their youths’ crime. As expressed by a municipality politician in Aarhus: “Their families must be involved. It is here that the largest roots of the problems are.” Similarly, police officer Niels Jørgen Barslund argued that “It is the families we need to get a hold of.” This demand to involve the criminals’ families was not articulated in news about ethnic Danes’ crimes. The call for family involvement played upon both the idea that family connections were stronger among visible minority families than among ethnically Danish families and the idea that crime had bred within visible minority families. A TV2 news clip clearly expressed the latter idea: “When a youth commits a crime his younger brothers will follow him.” Such statements implied that this breeding of crime was subject to irreversible principles of causation. This rationale was also behind several Danish politicians’ suggestions about removing young children from their families if their older siblings were criminal. Municipality alderwoman Ruth Larsen, representing the Social Democrats in Odense, suggested in the late 1990s as a solution to the crimes in the Odense area Vollsmose “to forcefully remove younger brothers of criminal second-generation immigrants in order to prevent them from following in the footsteps of their brothers.” She argued: “My goal is

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249 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19921005, original text: “Deres familier må inddrages i langt højere grad. Det er nemlig der, de største problemer ligger, siger en kommunalpolitiker.”
250 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20011219, original text: “det er familierne, man skal ud og have fat i.” See also DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960904 and TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19951003 for news clips which emphasised the involvement of the criminal visible minorities’ families.
251 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010419, original text: “Når en ung laver kriminalitet, følger de yngre brødre med.”
252 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990825, original text: “at de mindre brødre til de kriminelle andengenerationsindvandrere tvangsfjernes, så de ikke følger i deres brødres fødspor.”
that those children get a chance to have a normal life in their childhood and youth. And apparently they are not getting that when they grow up in families where there are no norms and no upbringing.” She thereby put the blame for the crime on the criminals’ families, whom she characterized as incapable of raising law-abiding children. The Danish People’s Party [Dansk Folkeparti] has taken this view to the extreme and since 1999 argued that entire immigrant families with criminal family members should be expelled from Denmark.  

This view of punishing a whole family for a child’s misbehavior has found its way into recent government politics. The Liberal-Conservative government re-elected in 2005 has, as a part of its platform, announced that families with criminal children or children who refuse to attend school will have their child benefits withdrawn. The Liberal-Conservative government was supported by the Danish People’s Party, and this might be an example of the Danish People’s Party promoting their political agenda. This focus on families as the source of criminality is an expression of a generalized view of visible minority families; it has implied that the families were similar, and that they have functioned as organic, homogeneous units rather than as groups of individuals.

**Political changes which might have influenced the news media’s focus**

The news media’s increased focus on criminal visible minorities from the early 1990s was accompanied by a parliamentary change in Denmark. Denmark has a long tradition of having numerous parties represented in the Parliament, and the ruling government has often consisted of a coalition of two to four different parties. Elections must be held every fourth year, but they have often been held more frequently. From 1982 to 1993, right-wing parties were in power with the Conservatives [Konservativt Folkeparti] and the Liberals [Venstre] holding government, often shared with the more center-liberal parties like the Social Liberals [Radikale Venstre], the Christian Democrats [Kristeligt Folkeparti, now Krstendemokraterne], and the Center Democrats [Centrum Demokraterne]. In 1993, left-wing parties won a majority, and a decade of left-wing governments began. These consisted of the Social Democrats [Social Demokratiet] and the Social Liberals

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253 DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19990825, original text: “jeg vil opnå det, at de børn de får en mulighed for at få et normalt børnliv og et normalt ungdomsliv. Og det får de åbentbort ikke, hvis de vokser op i nogle familier, hvor der ikke er nogle normer, ikke er nogen opdragelse.”


255 Rasmus Lindboe, "Togf udskyde løfter til bornefamilier," *Information*, (Copenhagen, Feb. 18, 2005): 4 f. The potential withdrawal of child benefits will hits all families, not just visible minority families, but the policy has seemed geared towards visible minority families. The child benefit has currently been given to all parents, regardless of their income.
3. The criminal immigrant

[Radikale Venstre], at times with assistance from the Christian Democrats [Kristeligt Folkeparti, now Kristendemokraterne] and the Center Democrats [Centrum Demokraterne]. These left-wing parties held power from 1993 to 2001.

The increase in news stories focusing on criminal visible minorities seemed to follow the government swing from right to left. Such a shift might seem counter-intuitive but can partly be explained by pointing to the fact that it is often the parties in opposition that critique the status quo the most; it is safe to criticize when not in a position to be held directly responsible for it. Under the Conservative-Liberal government, the Minister of Justice had been responsible for immigrants and integration, but in 1993 this responsibility was taken over by the Social Democrat Birte Weiss, the new Minister of the Interior. The Conservative Party, now in opposition, adopted a harsh tone towards immigrants and visible minorities and began arguing that the Social Democrat-led government was out of touch with the population’s attitudes and feelings towards visible minorities. The extreme right-wing and xenophobic Progressive Party [Fremskridtspartiet] had previously used this argument against the Liberal-Conservative government.²⁵⁶ The news media’s increased focus on criminal visible minorities might have been caused by the fact that the right-wing parties lost power and therefore began to critique Danish society more aggressively, demanding in particular stricter immigration regulations and harsher penalties for criminals.

Another explanation might be the establishment of the extreme nationalist Danish People’s Party [Dansk Folkeparti] in 1995. The Danish People’s Party was established by people from the Progressive Party who, because of power struggles, established their own party. Like the Progressive Party, the Danish People’s Party from the beginning has been very negative towards visible minorities, but, unlike the Progressive Party, they have managed to draw considerable media attention to their anti-immigration agenda. In the 2001 election the Danish People's Party increased their percentage of the popular vote from 7.4 percent in 1998 to 12 percent, making them the third largest party in Parliament. At the 2005 election, the Danish People’s Party further cemented its public support by gaining 13.3 percent of the votes. The party leader, Pia Kjærsgaard, received the second largest amount of personal votes at 38,347 votes, only outnumbered by the Liberal [Venstre] Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen's 61,792 personal votes.²⁵⁷ As a result of its strong showing, the People’s Party has functioned as the support party for the Liberal-Conservative

government since the 2001 election. Altogether, the Conservatives, the Liberals, and the People’s Party have possessed the majority of Parliament votes, which has enabled them to pass various laws tightening crime penalties as well as new immigration laws.

The media shaped its political agenda primarily according to two factors: Sensational news events or individual personalities expressing their political positions. The latter included spin doctors, lobbyists, politicians, and other people who managed to use the media to get their message out. Gaasholt and Togebiy have argued that Søren Karup – who was one of the key ideological creators of The Danish People’s Party’s political programs and who was voted into Parliament in 2001 – used a large number of letters to the editor and articles to various newspapers to dominate the media political agenda during the 1990s. They have further argued that despite the Danish People’s Party’s lack of governmental power, the Members of Parliament have managed to influence the political agenda regarding questions of immigration and visible minorities.\(^{258}\) Philippe Burin has used the notion “magnetic pull” to describe fascism’s influential dimensions,\(^{259}\) and the Danish People’s Party’s influence can also be described in this way. Members of the Danish People’s Party have been very active in asking questions to the government, thereby dedicating Parliamentary time to issues dear to the Danish People’s Party like criminal visible minorities. They have also been very active in placing news in the media and have, for instance, repeatedly sent out press releases on Sundays and early Monday mornings when there is traditionally limited news material because nothing has happened during the weekend. Similarly, they have been very active during the summer, when the rest of Parliament goes on holiday. These clever media strategies have contributed to the “magnetic pull” that has forced the rest of Parliament and the population to deal with the topics put forward by the Danish People’s Party.

**Expel the unwanted**

During the early 1990s, right-wing politicians introduced the idea of expelling criminal immigrants. TV2 reported that “groups of asylum seekers who participate in organized shoplifting are an increasing problem at more and more Danish Red Cross Centers.”\(^{260}\) Several people were interviewed regarding the shoplifting, among them mayor Hans-Peter Geil in


\(^{260}\) TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19920928, original text: “Grupper af asylsøgere, der deltager i organiserede butikstyverier, er et stigende problem på stadig flere Dansk Røde Kors Centre.”
provincial Gram, which hosted a Red Cross Center. Geil, representing the Liberals [Venstre], “want[ed] the criminal asylum seekers expelled.” DR also broadcast interviews with politicians on the matter. Conservative Member of Parliament Henning Grove, for example, argued that “We should crack down on them [the criminal asylum seekers] and then I think to a large extent that they should be sent back.” The then-Minister for the Interior, Birte Weiss, who represented the Social Democratic-led government, argued less harshly that “When it is proved that they [the asylum seekers] are guilty [of crime], then we should take out their files and as quickly as lightning decide whether they can receive asylum or whether they belong to the group that can be returned home…and then they should be expelled immediately.” These different strategies of arguing depended on whether one belonged to a political party in government or in opposition. The Minister could not argue in favor of expelling criminal asylum seekers without further notice because that would have implied violations of international conventions. Grove, on the other hand, could be more harsh because he was not in a position where he could convert his words into actions. His statements therefore functioned more to market conservative standpoints and rhetoric to future voters than to make actual changes.

Historically, criminal immigrants have never been welcome in Denmark. The Roma, who were called tatere, notoriously suffered under suspicion for criminal activities, and demands ordering all tatere out of the Kingdom of Denmark were repeated by various Kings and governments from the sixteenth to the twentieth-century. As early as 1536, on the first occasion that Danish written sources mentioned Roma, King Christian III (1534-1559) expressed a dislike for them when demanding “that all tatere who are or can be found within the Kingdom are demanded to leave the Kingdom within the next three months.” Apparently, this did not happen, and Christian III repeated his order in a letter in 1554. This letter contained the first written descriptive characterization of tatere in Denmark: “…these foreign people who bring nothing but harm, who

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261 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19920928, original text: ”I Gram i Sønderjylland vil borgmesteren have de kriminelle asylsøgere udvist.”
262 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19930524, original text: “skal man slå hårdt ned på dem, og jeg mener i stor udstrækning, at de skal sendes tilbage.”
263 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19930524, original text: “når det er vist, at de er skyldige [i kriminalitet], at man så pillar deres asylsager frem... og tager lynhurtigt stilling til, om de kan få asyl, eller om de hører til den gruppe, der kan sendes hjem. Hvis de hører til den gruppe, der kan sendes hjem, så skal de advarer med det samme.”
3. The criminal immigrant

wander around the Kingdom to steal and cheat common people.”\(^{266}\) In 1589, King Christian IV (1588-1648) similarly prohibited *tatere* from staying in the country.\(^{267}\) It was estimated that 10 percent of the population in certain areas of Sealand [East Denmark] were wandering people during the seventeenth-century; the majority of these were of Danish origin, but many of them were foreigners. Actors, magicians, and other traveling entertainers were prohibited from entering the Kingdom from 1738 if they intended to perform publicly or privately.\(^{268}\) During the 1730s, *tatere* were transported via ships to northern German areas in an effort to export the problems. A century later, *tatere* figured again in police reports and in newspapers, and a law, similar to its predecessors, was passed in 1875. It stated that “foreign *tatere*, musicians, presenters of animals, as well as others performers of feats of strength and conjuring tricks and similar persons are, if they intend to earn a living by wandering, not allowed to reside in this country.”\(^{269}\) The authorities worked hard to remove all Roma from the country. During V. M. Mensen's tenure as the chief of police from 1911-1933, he made sure that all were expelled and none re-entered Denmark. From his reign until 1954 there was only one Roma in Denmark, and she was married to an ethnic Dane.\(^{270}\)

Financially poor Jews from Eastern Europe have similarly been unwanted and at times expelled. In 1818, a decree was passed that aimed at limiting the number of poor Jews, demanding that those who wanted to reside in Denmark needed to obtain a permit from the Danish chancellery. Jews without such a permit could be fined 50-1000 *Risdaler* [old Danish currency]. If a foreign Jew was caught begging or engaged in illegal trading, he/she would be punished according to the law and then expelled. The immigrating Jews were accused of performing criminal acts and being a financial burden for the Danish Kingdom, similar to the critique of the Roma. The law also demanded that the Jewish community was responsible for reporting new Jews’ arrivals to the Danish authorities. Danish historian Bent Blúdnikov has argued that the negative response towards immigrating Jews and the special laws aimed at foreign Jews should be understood in connection to

\(^{266}\) Original text: "...sligt vldemndiske folk som icke anndet endt skalckhed haffue mett at fare, at drage omkringh vdi Righet at stiele och debrage emfaldige folck mett styell och vdi anndre mååde." Quoted after Bent Østergaard, *Indvandrernes danmarkshistorie*, (Copenhagen: Gad, 1983), 96 f.

\(^{267}\) *Danske Lov* 3-20-3. See Inger Dübeck, "Fremmeddretts utvikling i Danmark ca. 1700-1912,” in Bent Blúdnikov, *Fremmede i Danmark. 400 års fremmedpolitik*, (Ringkøbing: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1987), 37 f. This dislike for Roma were later expressed in King Christian V’s (reign years 1670-1699) so-called Danish Law from 1683 [*Danske Lov*].


\(^{269}\) Bent Østergaard: *Indvandrernes danmarkshistorie*, (Copenhagen: Gad, 1983), 101 original text: "udenlandske tatere, musikanter, forevisere af dyr og andet, uøvere af kraft- og behandlings kunster og lignende personer er, for så vidt de vil søge erhverv ved omvandring, ikke tilladt at tage ophold her i landet.”

the historical context. Jews from Eastern Europe represented the main unorganized, wandering and immigrating people entering Denmark in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century. Blüdnikov has interpreted the laws directed against Jewish immigration as expressions of fear of financial and legal burdens rather than expressions of anti-Semitism.271

When contemporary Danish politicians have argued that criminal immigrants should be expelled from Denmark, they have in a way only continued a long tradition of actively trying to prevent potentially burdensome immigrants from staying in the country.

Reformative stays back home in the Middle East

Besides permanent expulsions as a solution to crime, the 1990s television news also broadcast voices agitating for sending young, criminal visible minorities back to their cultures of origin for shorter periods of time in order to re-educate them. The basis of the re-educational stays played upon the belief that many visible minority youths were out of reach for anyone in Denmark. “[Danish] authorities…have failed…So send them [criminal visible minority youths] on a social stay in an Arabic country where they know their culture, their language, their limits.”272 So argued a representative from an anti-discrimination organization in Aarhus, Souhail Ibrahim, a man of color. Interviews in the same news clip showed that he was backed by employees in the social services in Aarhus.273 Another news clip broadcast an interview with a former criminal, the visible minority youth Youssef Eid, whose father had sent him on a re-educational stay with his uncle in Lebanon. A voice-over explained that in Lebanon “the family could straighten up what the Danish authorities had had to give up.”274 Youssef Eid elaborated: “In Denmark you get some advice, and then you think about it for five minutes…but the following day you meet your friends again and then you want to be like them and you don’t think about the advice any longer… You need to get away from everything, from your friends, from this city.”275

272 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960902, original text: “[De danske myndigheder]…har spillet fallit…de [kriminelle synlige minoriteter] bliver sendt til socialt ophold i et arabisk land, hvor at de kender deres kultur, deres sprog, deres grænser.”
273 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960902, interviewed Leif Jepsen, divisional manager in Aarhus municipality supports Souhail Ibrahim’s ideas in an interview.
274 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960904, original text: “Der kunne familien rette op på det, som danske myndigheder havde måtte give op over for.”
275 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960904, original text: “Her i Danmark der får man et råd, så tænker man over det i fem minutter…så næste dag så møder man de venner igen, og så vil man gøre ligesom dem, og så tænker man ikke over det [rådet]…[Man skal] altså lidt væk fra det hele, væk fra de venner…væk fra den her by.”
This argument emphasized the importance of changing one's social context in order to become law-abiding. It was more important for Youssef Eid to get away from his friends in Denmark than to be in an Arabic culture. However, this interpretation was rather neglected in the news clip. Instead the clip primarily focused on the young visible minorities’ lack of respect for the Danish legal system as an explanation for their continued criminal activities. A voice-over introduced this theme: “There is a lot of talk about respect among young immigrants and if there is something they do not have respect for it is the Danish legal system.” The voice-over hereby stated – as if it were a fact – that all young immigrants lacked respect for the Danish legal system. After this generalized claim there was an interview with a young man of Palestinian origin, Mahmoud Safar, who functioned as a confirmer of the statement. “Several of us have been to court… and all they do is to give you a fine. So one does not have respect for them.” The focus on lack of respect for the Danish system seemed to be initiated by the presumption that the youths had respect for the – opposite – Arabic system, which was used to explain why they should be sent on re-educational trips to an Arabic country. Excluding Youssef Eid’s social explanation led the clip to underscore a dichotomy both between visible minorities and ethnic Danes as well as between Arabic and Danish social systems. Despite the clip’s downplaying of Youssef Eid’s explanation, it was possible that some viewers noticed it and therefore did not only receive the clip’s primarily one-sided version of reality.

The statement about lack of respect became central for the news clip because it ended up functioning as a confirmation of an already existing belief, namely that visible minority youths were out of reach and very different from ethnic Danes. DR broadcast the interview with Mahmoud Safar, the young man of Palestinian origin talking about lack of respect for the Danish legal system, again the following day in a new news clip that also included an interview with the then-Minister of Social affairs, Social Democrat Karen Jespersen. This news clip turned Mahmoud Safar’s statement into a representation of how far removed young visible minorities were from Danish society, and it thereby participated in creating a gap between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Karen Jespersen argued against sending criminal visible minorities on re-educational trips to their countries of origin because “we must be careful not to maintain them in the culture they come from. The goal is exactly that they

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276 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960904, original text: “Der er mange af os, vi har været oppe i retssalen… to og tre gange… så nøjes de bare med at give dig en bøde. Så man har overhovedet ingen respekt for dem.”
should be Danish and be part of the Danish society.”277 Karen Jespersen repeated this statement on TV2 few days later where she said: “I don’t think it is a good idea [to send criminal visible minorities to their countries of origin] because they need to learn to behave as Danes. They need to live in Denmark and the problem is that the distance between them and us is too far. And I am afraid that the distance is going to be even wider if they are sent on re-educational trips to foreign countries.”278 Jespersen indirectly argued that in order to become law-abiding citizens, the visible minorities needed to become “Danish”; She thereby constructed Danishness as synonymous with law-abidingness. In other words, Danishness represented a non-criminal nationality.

Cultural racism and Danish nationalism

Culture was presented as a central parameter for determining as well as preventing criminality in news discussions about sending young criminals on re-educational trips. Agitators, both for and against, based their arguments on an understanding of culture as static. For Minister Jespersen, it visible minorities’ lack of assimilation into Danish culture was a more important factor for crime than the economic or social factors that former criminal Youssef Eid used as explanations for his own crimes. By arguing “they need to learn to behave as Danes,” commentators suggested that ethnic Danes did not commit crimes. Jespersen indicated that crime was inherited or cultivated within culture, hence her argument that “we must be careful not to maintain them in the culture they come from.” This implied that “the culture they come from” was essential and unchangeable and that it determined its people's attitudes towards certain behaviors such as crime.

This understanding and usage of culture was closely linked to what has been labeled ‘new racism’ or ‘cultural racism’.279 This racism has not necessarily been different in kind from more traditional, so-called biological, racism, but it has taken another form. Biological racism dominated much of Western European thinking during the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, with its devaluation of members of one race based on a belief in a racial hierarchy. During this time,

277 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960905, original text: “vi skal passe på, at vi ikke fastholder dem i den kultur, de er kommet fra. Meningen er jo lige præcist, at de skal være danske og være en del af det danske samfund.”
278 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19960915. See also Mustafa Hussain, Ferruh Yilmaz & Tim O’Connor, Medierne, Minoriteterne og Majoriteten – en undersøgelse af nyhedsmedier af den folkelige diskurs i Danmark, (Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etisk Ligestilling, 1997), 71 for analysis of Jeperson’s statement in TV2.
race was considered a central factor for determining behavior and historical development. History was viewed as a progression, with the white European at the top of the hierarchy and all other races placed in clear hierarchical order beneath him. This racial hierarchy became the yardstick for determining and valuing each race’s place in the hierarchy and thereby in the development of civilization. The Second World War with its anti-Semitic atrocities was followed by strong rejections of explicitly biological racism in Western Europe, and today few people base their racist arguments on biological racial differences. Instead prejudiced statements based on stereotypical understandings of culture have become a central foundation for contemporary racism. Cultural and biological racisms overlap, but where the focus previously tended to be on biological characteristics embedded in beliefs of biological determinism, the focus has increasingly changed to cultural characteristics and cultural determination.

In the sampled news material, the concept of race was seldom used; instead interviewed laypeople and politicians described culture as a determining factor. Indeed, the concept of race only appeared three times among the several hundred television news clips and newspaper articles surveyed. When it was used it was typically in order to argue that there was no (biological) racism at play in a certain situation. In a news clip about soccer referees who “do not want to be referees at high risk matches, i.e. matches with immigrant teams,” Jan Hoffmann, who was the Head of Aarhus Soccer Referee Organization [Aarhus Fodbolddommerklub] argued that refusing to referee these matches was not an expression of racism “because it has nothing to do with skin color, it has to do with cultural background.” Indirectly, Jann Hoffmann was saying that it was not racist to discriminate against a group of people because of their culture because racism was strictly defined as discriminating based on skin color, i.e. biological race. He explained that because of their cultural background “they [visible minorities] have a different temper and have a different way of acting.” Hoffmann’s statements were closely connected to the belief that culture determines behavior; this belief made it logical to generalize about all visible minorities’ behaviors. If they represented the same culture they had to behave similarly. Similarly, a representative for the League

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282 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010619, original text: “ønsker ikke at domme de såkaldt high risk kampe, det vil sige kampe med indvandrerhold.”
283 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010619, original text: “det har ikke noget med hdifarve at gøre, det har noget med kulturbaggrund at gøre.”
284 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010619, original text: “de har jo et lidt andet temperament og har en andet måde at reagere på.”
of Ball Players in Jutland [Jysk Bold Union], Per Secher, argued that “Their [visible minorities] temper flairs up a little more violent than it does among us Danes.”\footnote{TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010619, original text: “Temperamentet det flammer lidt mere voldsomt, end det gør blandt vi danskerne.”} He thereby created a clear division between ‘them’ and ‘us’, implying that ‘our’ behavior was considered more proper in that ‘our’ behavior did not lead to conflicts with the referees. Therefore ‘our’ behavior received a privileged place in his hierarchy of cultural values.

Politically, cultural racism has found its expression in Europe's nationalistic, populist right-wing parties. Jean-Marie Le Pen and his party Front National have been central figures in French politics since his municipal election in 1983. He centered Front National’s political program on cultural racism. Le Pen also expressed racist views that can be categorized as biological racism, as when he stated “I do believe in the inequality of races.”\footnote{Le Pen uttered this on August 31, 1996, see for instance Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopaedia: http://www.answers.com/topic/jean-marie-le-pen.} Political actors such as Le Pen, then, can illustrate the inter-linkages between biological and cultural racisms. From the mid-1980s, several populist, right-wing parties (Lega Nord in Italy, Die Freiheits Partei in Austria, and Lijst Pim Fortuyn in Holland) have similarly embraced ideas of cultural racisms without explicitly naming their own politics as racist. In Denmark, the Danish People’s Party has strongly articulated politics based on similar ideologies.\footnote{See for instance Kim Su Rasmussen, “Hvad er dansk racisme?” (forthcoming, 2005), 5.} As mentioned, the Danish People’s Party broke out of the populist, right-wing, xenophobic Progressive Party [Fremskridtspartiet], whose two key demands were no (or low) taxes and the expulsion of immigrants. The Danish People’s Party distanced itself from the Progressive Party by dropping the ‘no taxes’ policies and creating an acceptable, or comme il faut, image, which, combined with clever public relations strategies, has enabled the Danish People’s Party to influence the political agenda in the Danish Parliament as well as in the news media.

The ideology of the Danish People’s Party has not mentioned different races but rather focused on different cultures and on Danish national identity. The construction of Danish nationality has been central for cultural racism in Denmark. Like visible minorities’ cultures, Danish nationality and Danish culture has been constructed as static. Søren Krarup, key ideologist for the Danish People’s Party, characterized Danish nationality as an essential and organic unit: “They [Danes] were [are] Danish in that sense that there was [is] something indissoluble in their nature.”\footnote{Søren Krarup, Harald Nielsen og hans tid (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1960), 102.} In other words, being Danish is an internal characteristic that can neither be learned nor
adopted. Rather, it is something that one simply has or does not have. For the Danish People’s Party, Danish nationality is manifested essentially in the Danish language, history, and soil, and this Danishness has been inherited by the ethnically Danish population. Non-ethnically Danish people cannot possess Danishness. On the contrary, they have been viewed as a threat to Danishness. In order to protect Danish culture and Danish nationality, immigration must be stopped.\textsuperscript{289}

Benedict Anderson separated nationalism and racism in his classic work on nationalism \textit{Imagined Communities} (1983), by arguing that nationalism thought in terms of historical destinies while racism dreamt of eternal contaminations.\textsuperscript{290} But this separation is problematic because racial exclusion – argued via cultural racism’s devaluing of other cultures – has been important for the construction of the populist right’s nationalism.\textsuperscript{291} For the Danish People’s Party, as well as for the other European, populist, right-wing parties, nationalism and (cultural) racism have been interlinked in ideology and political practices.

During the period under consideration, the news media’s construction of Danish nationalism was closely connected to cultural racism. It is important to underscore that the Danish news media have not belonged, and do not belong, to the nationalist, populist right; neither have they functioned as a mouthpiece for the right. Nevertheless, the news media’s narrative structures shaping news coverage shared several characteristics with the populist right’s ideology. The media presented cultures as static and explained people’s behaviors as the natural result of their culture (cf. the news clip about soccer referees above) – this has reflected a cultural understanding very similar to that of the populist right and different from most academic understandings of culture as dynamic and continuously changing. The news communication’s use of the actant model often participated in positioning ethnic Danes and visible minorities in binary oppositions. In the news clips about the soccer referees refusing to referee at matches with visible minority teams, the visible minorities (with their violent temper) were positioned as the antagonists. The referees were the subjects whose goal (object) it was to be able to referee in peace, and their assistant(s) in the narration were representatives for different soccer-related organizations who spoke the referees’ case. This meant that on the conflict axis there was a clear division between visible minorities and the ethnic Danes. The \textit{communication axis} showed a similar division because, in order for the \textit{subjects} to reach their

\textsuperscript{289} Kristian Thulesen Dahl, Søren Espersen, and Anders Skjødt eds., \textit{Danmarks fremtid – dit land, dit valg...}, (Herning: Dansk Folkepartis Folketingsgruppe, 2001). The message of the book seems to be “Don’t let Denmark be ran over [by immigrants]!” as expressed on p. 194, original text: “Lad ikke Danmark blive lobet over ende.”


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object, visible minority soccer teams were to be excluded; such exclusion could be given by the (white) sports organizations.

One key element in ‘good’ television narration was the creation of options for identification; viewers should be able to relate personally to what they see. This identification was considered so central that for decades it was taught as one of the five most central criteria for news coverage at the national Danish School of Journalism. Because the majority of the viewers of Danish news programs were ethnically Danish, the absolute majority of news stories were narrated in a way that invited a white, ethnically Danish identification. The combination of the identity criterion with the simplifying of complex realities expressed in the actant model narration very often caused the Danish national news to position visible minorities as oppositional and antagonistic in relation to the white subjects. In this way news coverage, however unintentionally, drew on culturally racist characteristics.

**From monopoly television to competitive television**

The establishment of TV2 in 1988 led to competition between DR and TV2, influencing their news programs. When TV2 first went on air, their news program was shown at the same time as DR’s. But this strategy proved to be a failure because TV2 received few viewers. TV2 thereafter changed the timing of their news programming, and the two stations have not had simultaneous news since then. DR and TV2 sought to attract and keep as many viewers as possible, and both tried to keep their viewers engaged by providing material with which they could identify. It is not surprising, then, that after the establishment of TV2 news programs increasingly employed narrations that offered identification options for the broadest possible audiences.

Unlike the written media, television and radio consist of streams of texts, and news programs form a part of this stream, what Raymond Williams has labeled stream flow. According to Williams, there are three kinds of television flow: The channel’s own flow; the flow of all television channels, called super flow; and the viewer flow, or the stream of what the individual viewer sees. The viewer has always been able to change the viewer flow simply by changing the channel, and it

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has therefore been each channel’s goal to keep the viewer on their specific channel. As an important means in reaching this goal, news programs have been central to a channel’s own flow. For DR and TV2, news programs have been popular, and they traditionally have had a high number of viewers. See the table below for the number of viewers to primetime news programs.

**Number of viewers to primetime television news programs 1971-2004.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>DR TVAvisen (primetime) Viewers in 1000 (Rtg)</th>
<th>DR TVAvisen (primetime) Viewers in percentage (Rtg)</th>
<th>TV2 Nyhederne (primetime) Viewers in 1000 (Rtg)</th>
<th>TV2 Nyhederne (primetime) Viewers in percentage (Rtg)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>2100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>1973</td>
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<td>1975</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<td>1981</td>
<td>2211</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>1985</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>2127</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The early evening news, the primetime news, has functioned as a ‘viewer magnet’ that attracts viewers to the rest of the evening’s programs. Thus news programs seldom started on time but rather advertised for the night’s programming at the scheduled news hour. 296

The competition for keeping viewers on the channel influenced the presentation and succession of news clips. Previously, when DR had monopoly, the news program organized their stories according to importance. In the so-called pyramid composition, news considered most important was broadcast first. After 1988, though, news stories expected to attract viewers were advertised in the beginning of the program but placed late, forcing viewers to remain on the channel to see those clips. 297

Until 1988 DR was characterized by the so-called objectivity ideology. Governed by a sense of public service in their news broadcasting, their reporting has been interpreted as objective and neutral. This ideology saturated DR television from 1964 to the late 1980’s to such an extent that scholars retrospectively have labeled the period ‘classic public service television’. 298 According to DR’s public service rules from 1964, the television news is required “to bring correct, objective, sober, and many-sided news….All interpretations [of a case or situation] which are of general interest must be expressed and they must be balanced….Correctness must be given higher priority than up-to-date-ness…Tendentious footage editing is not allowed and the use of visual material should be very neutral….The news is not allowed to use anonymous sources. They should not take a stand in controversies, and it must be taken into consideration that DR has an official character and is a common monopoly, which most likely has strong and immediate influences on its viewers.” 299 The public service obligations also provided that: “News coverage of private issues

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information has been available for all the years, hence the lack of information for some years. Similarly, in DR’s archive there were not surveys for all the years, hence the irregularity in the years chosen. I have chosen to include 1989, 1990, and 1991 in order to illustrate developments in viewer patterns with the establishment of TV2’s Nyhederne. The numbers listed are all in the so-called ratings (Rtg). Numbers of TV viewers have traditionally been measured in ratings and shares: Rating indicates the number of viewer who saw a program out of all the potential viewers, whereas share indicates how many of the viewers who were watching at the measured time saw a specific program. The number of shares has traditionally been higher than the number of ratings. Typically a Danish prime time news program with ca. 20 percent ratings has for instance often had a ca. 60 percent share. The number of viewers listed in the table might not necessarily have seen the entire news program. But in order to figure in the table they have seen a rather long part of it; for the years 1992-2004, they have seen at least 10 minutes of the program.

296 Kirsten Drotner et al., Medier & Kultur. En grundbog i medieanalyse og medieteorji, (Valby: Borgen, 1996), 331 f.
297 Stig Hjarvald, Nyhedsmediernes rolle i det politiske demokrati, Report made for the Prime Minister's Department’s media committee [Statsministeriets medieudvalg], Copenhagen: Prime Minister's Department, (1995), 64.
should not take place. The news must not appear as sensational or colorful, and especially demonstrations are only to be referred to. Reports and comments must be separated. Language and use of words must be responsible and official. Information and opinions must be represented in a way which enables the viewer to come to his/her own conclusions. All situations or footage which can be interpreted as commercial should be prevented.”

In 1977, new public service rules opened the way for more flexibility, but the real break with the strict public service ideology did not take place before 1988.

The public service rules might partly explain why DR carried so few news stories about criminal visible minorities before the early 1990s. It would not have been possible, according to these rules, to broadcast the one-sided, sensational stories before the break with the public service rules. In 1993, DR carried a crime story that could not have been broadcast a few years earlier and that thus illustrates the break with the previous rules. The story was introduced by an advertising teaser in the beginning of the news program, but the clip itself was place later in the program. The story was narrated in a way that seemingly emphasized sensation and drama: It was introduced by a voice-over: “Crime. Gangs become more and more common, and it is especially young immigrants who dominate… In tonight’s news report we are in one of the famous areas.”

This introduction placed the clip in the previously forbidden “sensational and colorful” category, rather than the “sober and neutral” category. The clip had no distinction between “report and comment,” as previously required by the public service rules; instead the clip interwove interviews and reports from the location and comments from police authorities and experts. The story did not deliver “many-sided news.” Rather, all of the interviewed expressed just one view, that the young visible minority males were criminal. The criminals themselves were not interviewed, so the clip did not include “all interpretations of a case.”

The development of Danish television news post-1988 shared qualities that Pierre Bourdieu, in his *Sur la télévision* (1996), criticized in French television. Bourdieu argues that the commercialization of television leads journalists to produce television news with the aim of

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billedklip, og billedstoffet skal i det hele taget være meget neutralt….Der må ikke bruges anonyme kilder. Der må ikke tages stilling i kontroversielle spørgsmål. Der må tages højde for, at DR har officielt præg og er et alment monopol med formodet stærk og ojeblikkelig virkning.”

300 Ib Bondebjerg, *Elektroniske fiktioner. Tv som fortællende medie*, (Valby: Borgen, 1993), 53, original text: ”private stofområder er bandlyst…nyhederne må ikke fremtræde som sensationsprægede eller farvede rapporter (specielt må demonstrationer kun ’refereres’)…referat og kommentar skal være adskilt; ordvalg og sprogbrug skal være ansvarligt; oplysninger og meninger skal serveres sådan, at seeren kan danne sig sin egen mening;…alle situationer eller billeder, der kan udlægges som reklame, skal undgås.”

301 DR (Station), primetime news program, *TV-Avisen*, date: 19930628, original text: ”Kriminalitet, der bliver flere og flere decideret ungdomsbander…og det er især unge indvandrere, der dominerer. I aftenens *TV-A Rapport* har vi været i et af de berørte kvarterer.”
attracting the highest number of viewers. This aim has increasingly led to colorful and sensational news stories that, according to Bourdieu, ultimately might undermine French democracy.\(^{302}\)

**Visual representation and areas beyond law**

The break from traditional public service rules in the 1990s can also be seen in news descriptions of certain areas that newscasters, journalists and interviewees characterized as beyond law and order. The residential tower block area Lundtoftegade in Copenhagen, for instance, has been characterized as a place where police do not show up when called and where the residents explicitly debate whether it the police or gangs of visible minority youths control the area.\(^{303}\)

Another Copenhagen area, Nørrebro, similarly was characterized several times as out of the police’s control, as in the well-covered riots of November 1999. During this unrest, 100-200 youths – characterized by the news media as “second generation immigrants and radical left-wing activists [autonome]”\(^{304}\) – rioted in the streets by blocking traffic with large bonfires and by attacking shops, cars, and people as well. An interviewed shop owner whose shop was damaged complained “the police said I could enter the [riot] area at my own risk but that they would not enter themselves…We haven’t seen a single officer in the streets.”\(^{305}\) The police themselves explained this by arguing: “We do not have personnel to match such a violent situation.”\(^{306}\)

The television news about the November 1999-riot was accompanied by footage filmed during the actual riot. Roland Barthes has – based on Ferdinand de Saussure’s concept of signs – shown how visual images can be interpreted semiotically. Barthes argues that a visual image has two meanings, a denotative and a connotative. The denotative meaning refers to the lexical meaning of the image, i.e. what the image actually pictured, while the connotative meaning refers to the associations that the image produces.\(^{307}\) The denotative meaning of the riot footage consisted of bonfires, people running and yelling, people throwing stones through shop windows, people throwing Molotov cocktails, etc. These images connoted not only civil unrest but most likely

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303. DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen,* date: 19930628.

304. DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen,* date: 19991108, original text: “andengenerationsindvandrere og autonome.”

305. DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen,* date: 19991108, original text: “De [politi] sagde til mig, at jeg kunne gå derned på eget ansvar, men de rykkede ikke ind…vi har ikke set en betjent på gaden.”

306. DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen,* date: 19991108, original text: “vi har ikke beredskab til at afpasse sådan en voldelig situation.”

reminded the viewers of scenes from a civil war or a society in anarchy. Camera people had filmed the footage during the night, and the darkness of the Nordic November night further increased the dramatic impression by making it difficult to see, by providing gloomy atmospheres and the potential for people to hide in shadows, and through its figurative associations with dark and evil forces. Several of the filmed people wore masks, which have broader associations that simply hiding and camouflage. People with masks preparing big bonfires might also have brought to mind the Ku Klux Klan, which generally has been seen in Denmark as the personification of evil and stupidity. Most of the filmed people wore track pants, which generally have been associated with clothing worn by the working-classes, especially working-class visible minorities. Associations made from visual images might often have seemed contradictory, as in the simultaneous associations of rioters with the Ku Klux Klan and visible minorities. But this contradiction was acceptable because it took place on the connotative level, not the denotative level.

The television stations increasingly prioritized dramatic visual footage material, like that of the November riot, since the break of DR’s monopoly on television news in 1988. Before the establishment of TV2, DR’s news criteria explicitly gave low priority to visual material. As the previous program director at DR, Hans Jørgen Jensen, explained in the early 1970s: “From the beginning of TV-Avisen, employees and management have considered informing about the political process – nationally as well as internationally – as their main task, as well as informing about changes of the financial conditions...We were able to provide this information without letting ourselves be tyrannized by the demand for live images. From the beginning it was a pre-condition that the journalistic coverage and the relevance must be prioritized on behalf of the demand for visual footage.”308 By contrast, TV2 deliberately prioritized visual footage in their news coverage from the beginning, as the first news director for TV2, Ulla Terkelsen, argued: “There are some kinds of events which are better suited for making television news than others. We [TV2] chose to go for eventful histories full of visual images instead of all that accountant television with lots of numbers and heavy topics from municipalities and counties which are not possible to explain on television anyway...DR has in the monopoly years felt a great obligation to take care of political-financial matters. We do not feel that way and for us those areas have to be really important to be

308 Quoted from Finn Rasmussen, Masse Medier: Nyhedsformidling og meningsdannelse, (Copenhagen: Columbus, 1996), 37, original text: ”Fra TV-Avisens start har afdelingens medarbejdere og ledelse set det som en hovedopgave at orientere om den politiske proces – såvel nationalt som internationalt – og om de økonomiske vilkårs omkærlighed.... Denne orientering har vi søgt gennemført uden at lade os tyrannisere af kravet om levende billede. Det har fra starten været en forudsætning, at det journalistisk dækkende og relevante måtte gå forud for kravet om billeddækning (1973).”
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included.” TV2 quickly attracted large numbers of viewers to their news programs; already in the early 1990s more viewers tuned in to TV2’s Nyhederne than to DR’s TV-Avisen. Since the early 1990s, ca. 1 million people have watched TV2’s news daily, and a slightly smaller number have watched DR’s news programs. DR changed their previous low priority of visual material to a high priority after TV2’s success with viewers.

Until the early 1990s DR footage functioned mainly as illustrations for the spoken word, but after 1990 footage increasingly began to have the same function as it had for TV2, namely to carry its own stories and increase the dramatic value of a news story. The news clip about the soccer referees, for instance, was introduced by footage of a referee changing from his civilian clothing to his referee clothing. The viewers saw him take out red and yellow cards before he ran onto the soccer field. This footage told a story about a referee preparing for a match, but it also functioned as an illustration of a forthcoming struggle. Soccer was and is the national sport in Denmark; and soccer language has often been used metaphorically, as in the use of the expression ‘getting the red card’ to describe people who have been denied something. So the footage in itself contained a story about a man preparing for a struggle, and neither he nor the viewers knew the outcome. In Danish, the word for match, struggle, and fight is the same [kamp]. After the referee had changed clothes he said: “Then we take the match” or “then we take the struggle,” depending on the translation, underscoring the ambiguous, two-sided story. After the end of the news monopoly, the use of visual material was no longer been neutral, as demanded by the old public service rules. Instead it played a role in intensifying the drama in order to keep the viewers involved in the program.

Besides Nørrebro, the news media have often characterized two other areas as beyond law and order, namely Gellerup in Aarhus (the second largest city in Denmark) and Vollsmose in Odense (the third largest city in Denmark). Both areas are low income areas consisting of high rise concrete tower blocks outside the city centers. The news media often labeled these areas ‘concrete suburbia’ [betroforstad], and this label served to describe residential tower block areas associated

309 Quoted from Finn Rasmussen, Masse Medier: Nyhedsformidling og meningsdannelse, (Copenhagen: Columbus, 1996), 37, original text: ”Der er nogle begivenheder, som egner sig bedre til at blive registreret som TV-nyheder end andre. Vi valgte at satse på billedrige oplevelseshistorier frem for det der revisor-fjernsyn med en masse tal og tunge emner fra kommuner og amter, som slet ikke er til at forklare i fjernsynet aligevel...DR har i årene som monopol følt en stor forpligtelse til at tage sig grundigt af det politisk-okonomiske stof. Den har vi ikke, og nyheder fra de områder skal være virkelig vigtige for at komme med hos os.”


311 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010619, original text: ”så tager vi kampen.”
with low incomes, a high concentration of immigrant residents, and residents with various social problems.

Among the areas commonly connotated with this label were Vollsmose in Odense, Gellerup in Aarhus, Lundtoftegade, Ishøj, and Brøndbystrand in Copenhagen. These areas have a common history. Their architecture and urban planning derived from interwar Functionalism, which combined the need for residential space with desires for financial responsibility and rational infrastructure. Function came well before form in the design of these housing units. Aesthetically functionalist buildings often were characterized by large tower blocks of identical houses. Denmark’s economic boom in the 1950s led to an expansion of its cities and an increased demand for housing, and such suburban tower block residences were considered the ideal solution. They not only provided residence for the expanding population; by locating the concrete suburbs outside the cities in areas surrounded by nature, planners allowed for an idealized way of living. City planners imagined that modern middle-class families would settle in these concrete suburbia areas. They did not intend for the areas to become the low income areas into which they developed. But the cost of constructing the tower blocks exceeded expectations, which resulted in higher rent; this combined with the increasing unemployment caused by the oil crisis in the early 1970s prevented the average middle-class families from settling in the areas. As a result, the many empty flats were increasingly inhabited by low income families receiving housing benefits from the municipalities, many of whom were immigrants.\textsuperscript{312}

From the early 1990s the news media reported about clashes between police and visible minorities in these concrete suburban areas, especially in Gellerup and Vollsmose. A typical example of this was a TV2 news clip from 2003 that reported that police who were called because of a traffic accident in Gellerup were “bombarded with stones” by visible minority youths.\textsuperscript{313} After the pelting, “the police had to withdraw from the area…which then in reality was placed outside the law.”\textsuperscript{314} News reports from Vollsmose were similar to the ones from Gellerup; one news clip went as far as to compare Vollsmose with “the intifada at the West Bank.”\textsuperscript{315} This clip broadcast footage from the West Bank showing young Palestinians throwing Molotov cocktails and stones at Israeli military, while a DR journalist was interviewing the leader of a public school in Vollsmose, Olav R.

\textsuperscript{312} Tue Halgreen, \textit{Mellem kedsomhed og spænding. Turisters oplevelser af betonforstæder}, (Unpublished MA thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen, 2003), 26 f.
\textsuperscript{313} TV2 (Station), primetime news program \textit{Nyhederne}, date: 20030602, original text: “bombarderet med sten”
\textsuperscript{314} TV2 (Station), primetime news program \textit{Nyhederne}, date: 20030602, original text: “politiet måtte trekke sig fra området…Området var altså reelt uden for lovens rækkevidde.”
\textsuperscript{315} DR (Station), primetime news program \textit{TV-Avisen}, date: 19990826, original text: “intifadæn på Vestbreden.”
Nielsen, who, according to the journalist, “knows what he is talking about because he has traveled in the Middle East and worked in Vollsmose.” 316 The school leader said: “I picture the intifada…[because] in the criminal milieu here [in Vollsmose] there are many weapons, and a situation can have fatal consequences.” 317 The channel could not have shown such footage under the old public service rules that declared that “tendentious footage editing is not allowed and the use of visual material should be very neutral.” Cutting between footage of the war in the West Bank and the tower blocks on Vollsmose cannot be characterized as neutral but must be considered deliberately tendentious; the editing sought to illustrate parallels between the two areas and connote images of Vollsmose as caught in a state of civil war.

These news stories questioning the police’s power indirectly questioned the stability of Danish society. The police represent one of the utmost authorities in Denmark, and when their ability to maintain law and order in certain areas was placed in doubt, these areas appeared to be in a state of emergency. The areas which the news media described as outside law and order were all areas characterized by high percentages of visible minorities among their residents. The news descriptions therefore carried an image of visible minority residents as a causal factor in a district's destabilization. The characterization of these areas as outside the law distinguished them from other lawful areas; thus the negative characterizations of areas like Lundtoftegade, Gellerup, and Vollsmose participated in creating a dichotomy between lawless area with visible minorities and law-abiding areas with ethnic Danes, between destabilized ‘colored areas’ and stabilized ‘white areas’.

**The media and politicians focus on violence**

Many of the news clips about visible minorities committing crimes focused on violent crimes. The news broadcast stories about visible minorities involved in shootings, stabbings, bombings, etc., all stories about violent and dramatic incidents. During the early 1990s, the majority of news clips about crime focused on crimes of possession such as stealing, but from the mid-1990s, the focus increasingly turned towards violence. From the mid-1990s, the Danish Parliament also put violence on the political agenda. In 1994, the Social Democratic-led government passed the so-called ‘violence packet’ [voldspakken], a set of laws aimed at limiting youth violence in the

316 DR (Station), primetime news program TV'Avisen, date: 19990826, original text: “ved hvad han taler om, for han har rejst i Mellemosten og arbejdet i Vollsmose.”
317 DR (Station), primetime news program TV'Avisen, date: 19990826, original text: “har jeg sådan et billede af intifadaen…[for] i det kriminelle miljø herude er der mange våben, og det kan få fatale konsekvenser.”
public sphere and especially targeted at visible minority youths.\textsuperscript{318} One of its key provisions introduced higher penalties for repeat offenders of violent crimes. The law thereby countered the trends in the past century of Danish lawmakers, which generally has reduced sentences. In 1997, Parliament further tightened the laws by passing the ‘violence packet II’; this packet increased the penalties for very brutal violence [\textit{vold af grov karakter}]. Both packets focused on making the legal system faster. The law demanded that a case involving violence should be brought to court within thirty days from the time the case was reported. The case should pass through the court system within thirty-seven days, and a convicted offender should not wait more than thirty days between his/her conviction and the beginning of his/her punishment.\textsuperscript{319} The two sets of laws were passed under left-wing governments, but they passed with general support from the right-wing opposition. Fighting youth crime with higher penalties has traditionally been right-wing politics in Denmark. The debates about violence accompanying the passing of the two sets of laws might explain the increased news media coverage of crimes of violence.

However, it could also be argued that the news media’s focus on violence led politicians to pass the two sets of laws. Political scientist Søren Laursen makes this contention in his analysis of newspapers’ coverage of violence in the six months prior to the passing of ‘the violence packet II’. He found that since there was no increase in actual cases of violence, the political focus on violence can only be explained by the media’s intensive focus on during this period. Laursen uses this illustration to conclude that the media set an agenda that politicians followed. To support this claim he points to, for instance, how several politicians drew directly on the media’s presentation of violence in the Parliamentary debates and in interviews.\textsuperscript{320}

The complications in determining whether politicians influenced the news media or whether the news media influenced politicians might result from an interest in deciding the matter in favor of one or the other argument. However, a third viewpoint could suggest that there was a continuing interplay between the two bodies, that the news media’s focus led to debates in Parliament that again were reported by the media, etc. When Laursen argued that politicians in interviews referred to media descriptions of violence, he could have included the continuation of the story in which the interview found its way back into the news media. In other words, the politician’s

\textsuperscript{318} The Violence packet did not include domestic violence.

\textsuperscript{319} See the Danish Ministry of Justice’s web site: http://www.jm.dk/wimpdoc.asp?page=document&objno=56892

Violent behavior and cultural racism

It was common for news stories about criminal visible minorities in the 1990s and early 2000s that they did not describe visible minorities’ actions as individual acts but rather as acts representative for all visible minorities. This was not the case for news stories about criminal ethnic Danes in the same period. One news story covered what it labeled “a clash between second generation immigrants and a few people related to the biker community.” The story described the two groups quite differently: The group of second generation immigrants was described in a way that their characterizations potentially could be enlarged to all second generation immigrants. Typically for crime news stories involving ethnically Danish bikers, the news described them as a few individual people. The news media did not present the bikers as representatives for all ethnically Danish people; instead they have described their criminal acts as individual and exceptional acts. Another news clip that discussed whether visible minorities should have separate wards in prisons argued that the prison system “takes consideration of other groups, bikers have for instance special wards.” The clip seemed to imply that visible minorities, regardless of their crime, constituted a homogeneous group. By contrast, the media did not view bikers, responsible for much of the crime committed by ethnic Danes, as representative for ethnic Danes but rather as a separate group.

The generalizations that construct criminal visible minorities as a homogeneous group opened the way for cultural racism and for explaining violent crime as a product of visible minorities’ culture. Chef of police Knud Jensen pursued a culturally racist line of thinking in one news clip when he used cultural determination to explain the rise in homicides during the mid-1990s. “I think that it [the rise in homicides] might be explained by cultural background. Here at home, we still have some respect for human lives. I believe that the further we get away from our own latitudes, the easier it is to draw a knife, and the less a human life is valued.”

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321 TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19990824, original text: ”opgør i gang mellem andengenerationindsyndvandrere og nogle personer med relation til rockermiljøet.”
322 TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 20011021, original text: ”man har jo taget hensyn til andre grupper i danske fængsler blandt andet rockerne, som har fået specielle afdelinger.”
323 DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19961128, original text: “Jeg tror måske, at det kan forklares lidt i den kulturelle baggrund. Herhjemme har vi stadig rimelig respekt for menneskeliv. Jeg tror, at jo længere vi kommer væk fra vores breddegrader, jo nemmere er det at tække knife, og jo mindre værdsetter man andre folks liv.” See also Mustafa Hussain, Ferruh Yilmaz & Tim O’Connor, *Medierne, Minoriteterne og Majoriteten – en
mid-1990s, the so-called biker war [rockerkrig] led to many violent attacks and homicides between the two rival biker gangs, *Hell’s Angels* and *Banditos*. This caused the Danish government to pass a special law in October 1996, the so-called Biker Law [Rockerloven], which aimed at preventing biker-related violence. \(^{324}\) But Knud Jensen did not connect the homicides committed by ethnically Danish bikers to a particular Danish culture or value system, most likely because neither he nor the interviewing journalist saw the bikers as representatives of all ethnically Danish people. Knud Jensen’s expressed understanding of culture as static and as a determining factor for behavior carried more weight when applied to visible minorities than to ethnic Danes. Similarly, another police officer, Jørgen Moos, argued in an interview about youth gangs of visible minorities that “the violence one is exposed to today has become more violent…they [young visible minorities] think it is natural to carry a knife regardless of whether it is legal or not. It is also natural for some of them to carry baseball bats with them when they go out.”\(^{325}\) His use of the term “natural” indicated that there was something inherent to young visible minorities, something in their nature, that directed them to carry weapons. In the culturally racist paradigm the two concepts, ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, functioned almost synonymously. Jørgen Moos’ argument about violence being in the nature of visible minorities and Knud Jensen’s argument about violence being in visible minorities’ culture were very similar. Both arguments assumed that visible minorities carried a germ of violence within them that they could not escape and that this germ derived from their internal natures rather than the Danish society around them.

According to the paradigm of cultural racism, culture determines behavior; consequently all members of one culture should behave similarly. TV2 drew this conclusion in a news report about clashes between police and visible minorities. The host introduced the clip with the line, “New confrontations between young immigrants and police – this time in Høje Taastrup [outside Copenhagen].”\(^{326}\) This wording implied that the confrontation was not new in kind, only in location, as the voice-over explained. “The situation in Høje Taastrup is hardly distinguishable from situations from the concrete cities in Odense, Aarhus, and Copenhagen where young immigrants

\(^{324}\) Law #907, Oct. 15, 1996 called ”Law against gatherings in certain buildings“ (”Lov om forbud mod ophold i bestemte ejendomme“).

\(^{325}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19930628, original text: “den vold som man bliver udsat for [er] mere brutal…Man [unge synlige minoriteter] synes, det er naturligt at gå med kniv, uanset om det er lovligt eller ikke-lovligt. Det er også naturligt for nogle af dem at tage baseballkoller med sig, når de skal ud.”

\(^{326}\) TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19980115, original text: “Ny konfrontation mellem unge indvandrere og politi – denne gang i Høje Taastrup.”
fight against the police with almost savage rage.”

This generalization implied that all young immigrants in the areas labeled as concrete cities behaved the same. The same kind of generalization was at play when a police officer, Aksel Norsgaard, argued that a central part of crime prevention consisted of the police “going out in the street and pick[ing] up the young people and especially those of foreign origin because we might as well acknowledge that there is a problem with them.”

In other words, the police should target visible minorities specifically because they expected them to be connected with crime.

This generalized expectation based on culturally racist presumptions seemed to function to justify the police’s potentially discriminatory practices. It was considered discriminatory to treat people differently according to their visual appearance, as the police officer intended to do. But such discriminatory practices made sense if one believed that culture determined behavior to such an extent that visible minorities, in contrast to ethnic Danes, were almost doomed to commit crimes. There might also be another angle to this. Lars Holmberg, who has analyzed the Danish police’s work methods, has argued that the police search for crime where they expect to find it: “Most police believe it is their job to look for all people who appear as different. It is obvious that people with a different skin or hair color spontaneously attract attention via their appearance, but it is important to notice that according to the police themselves it is first and foremost their pre-existing knowledge which determines [whom they target]. To the extent that the police go after people who look like immigrants it is apparently because their experiences tell them that immigrants often are criminal – but not because they are immigrants...But it is the police’s experiences that many in this group are criminal. For the police there is no qualitative difference between keeping an eye on a ‘typical Brian’ [the name Brian has been associated with crime in Denmark] and a typical immigrant.”

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327 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19980115, original text: “Situationen i Høj Tåstrup ligner til forveksling situationer i betonbyerne i Odense, Århus og København, hvor unge indvandrere slår til mod politi i nærmest hadefuldt raseri.”

328 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19930628, original text: “Man [politiet] tager ud på gader og stræder, samler de unge op, navnlig dem med udenlandsk baggrund, for man kan lige så godt erkende, at det er et problem med dem.”

minorities’ experiences of being targeted by the police might have been correct, this targeting does not derive from an essential racism or discrimination among police officers; the police simply work according to their professional experience. Holmberg’s argument illustrates how the police have not viewed themselves as racists while they simultaneously treat one group of people differently from another group based on visual appearance. The police’s inability to acknowledge potentially discriminatory behavior can be interpreted as an expression of the institutionalization of racism within the police force.

Internalized racism – when individuals exposed to racism begin to view themselves and others with similar racial and ethnical backgrounds through the racist frames that have oppressed them – is a central component in racism. Some news clips included interviews with visible minorities who were encouraging other visible minorities to stop their criminal activities because, as young commercial science student Obeida Mansour argued, “If some immigrants make trouble then it hurts all of us…because people think we all are part of it.” Obeida Mansour did not ask ethnically Danish people to become less racist or nuanced in their views of visible minorities; instead he directed his appeal towards visible minorities whose actions made some ethnic Danes racists. Fanon has argued that as a result of internalized racism, colonized people of color have viewed themselves as ‘other’ and experienced themselves as the colonizing white people have seen them. In order for the colonized to fit into the colonizer-dominated society, they need to adopt the colonizer’s norms, those same norms that de-valued the colonized in the first place. Similarly, some visible minorities in Denmark seemed to have needed to adopt the majority’s white norms in order to fit in. In the process they also adopted the norms, values, and racism that circulated within the dominant, ethnically Danish, white cultures. Mansour internalized the view that visible minorities are a homogenous group associated with criminality. His view resembled those of Member of Parliament Bendt Bendtsen, who at the time of the interview was the leader of the Conservative Parliamentary group in opposition to the left-wing government. He argued in a news clip that “the good foreigners who are good citizens and go to work everyday, they are exposed to racism because of [the behavior of] a small hardcore group” of criminal visible minorities. In other words, Bendtsen argued that racism was caused by criminal visible

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330 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Visen, date: 19990825, original text: “Hvis der er nogle indvandrere, der laver ballade, så går det faktisk ud over os alle sammen…Så tror de [etniske danskere], at vi er med i det.”


332 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Visen, date: 19990824, original text: “de mange gode udlændinge, der er gode samfundsborgere, passer deres arbejde hver dag, de er jo udsat for racisme nu på baggrund af en lille hård kerne.”
minors’ negative behavior and therefore it was indirectly the visible minorities’ own fault that they suffered discrimination.

**Objectifying criminal visible minorities**

The news media's objectifications of criminals made it easier to generalize from individual criminal visible minorities to all visible minorities. This can be seen particularly in journalists’ labeling of minorities not be personal names or other individual indicators but rather simply as “second generation immigrants,” “immigrants,” “Arabs,” etc. Coverage of the murder to Racheed Lawal in 1996 illustrates this tendency. The news reported: “The boxer Racheed Lawal was murdered this weekend while at work as a doorman.” Lawal was thereby defined as an individual; the news clip not only gave his name but also his occupation and explained that he was a sportsperson. Later the report also informed audiences that he was “a young family man.” By contrast, the clip’s information about the murderers was sparse: “Five young, second generation immigrants were behind the killing.” The news journalists positioned Lawal as a subject in this news clip, and viewers were able to identify with him because they possessed information about him that constructed him as an ordinary person like themselves. However, the news journalists positioned the murderers as objects; viewers did not know anything about them except that they were not ethnic Danes. The news provided no specific, individualized characteristics, leaving viewers with the impression that they theoretically could have been any second generation immigrant. This created a clear division between ‘us’ and ‘them’, which implied that Lawal could have been any one of ‘us’ (the (white) viewers) and the murderers could have been any one of ‘them’ (the visible minorities). It was typical for the crime news that, since the beginning of the crime coverage in the early 1990s, reports constructed the criminal visible minorities as objects by labeling them solely by their immigrant or ethnic status. A violent attack on a doorman in 2003 displayed almost identical identity positions as the coverage of Lawal’s case. One 2003 news clip attributed the doorman with individual characteristics. By describing him as “a 24-year-old

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333 DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19961125, original text: “bokseren Racheed Lawal i weekenden blev dræbt på sit job som dørmund.”
334 DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19990824, original text: “en ung familiefar.”
335 DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19990824, original text: “Fem unge andengenerationsindvandrere stod bag drabet.”
doorman...whose home was in the North West of Copenhagen,”337 the clip constructed him as a subject. The clip further individualized the doorman by revealing his ethnicity – “of Syrian origin” – which was more specific than the description of the violators simply as “second generation immigrant.”338

Lawal was an immigrant from Sierra Leone, who came to Denmark at the age of seven, but, unlike the 2003-doorman story, the 1996 news coverage did not mention Lawal’s immigrant status. This might indicate that from 1996 to 2003 more room opened up for visible minorities to occupy subject positions in the Danish mass media, as long as they were victims and not violators. The doorman in 2003 could retain his subjectivity despite his ‘other’ ethnic and racial position. In 1996, this might not have been the case for Lawal; therefore, the news may have had to neglect his racial background in order maintain his subject position and make him identifiable for the viewers.

The media image of visible minority men as criminal was closely related to the men’s religious background, as journalists, newscasters, and interviewees often used culture, ethnicity, and religion interchangeably. They generally associated Islam with visible minorities in Denmark and used the term “Muslim” synonymously with ethnic and national characteristics. For example, the newspaper Ekstra Bladet made a direct link between the murder of Racheed Lawal and Islam by arguing that “The sad death of Lawal is yet another consequence of the fact that the city of Aarhus took too long before they took the problems with Muslim immigration seriously. The Muslims are our guests. We receive them. But also expect them to behave well. If they do not, they should not be sent to a therapist. Then they should be send home to Muhammed-country.”339 In the sampled news material there was not any differentiation between different categories of Muslims, such as orthodox Muslims, secular Muslims, Shia Muslims, Sunni Muslims, etc.; instead journalists and interviewees simply described Muslims as one homogeneous group.340

337 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20030526,original text: “24-årig dørmænd…sit hjem i det københavnske nordvest kvartier.”
338 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20030526,original text: ”af syrisk oprindelse”; “andengenerationsindvandrere.”
Violence without reason

It was characteristic for the news stories about violent crimes – as in the stories about the two doormen – that the news media described the violence in detail and presented them as meaningless. For instance, one news clip described the 2003 doorman episode as “extremely rough and completely insane.”341 According to the clip the “doorman [was] beat to pulp…after an attack with carving fork, knives, and clubs.”342 This description accompanied footage of blood on the street in front of the doorman’s house, connoting that a pulped version of the doorman had been lying on that specific spot in the street. The sense of meaninglessness derived from lack of any explanation for the violence; the news coverage mainly focused on the acts of violence rather than any reasons behind it. Another news clip, for instance, described a stabbing in a supermarket: “In the middle of the peaceful Fotex store [a semi-luxury shopping chain] in Herning [a provincial town] the balloon went up – and before anyone was able to intervene – a 42-year-old man from Somalia had stabbed a knife into his female companion.”343 The viewers saw footage of blood on the store’s floor, and heard a police officer explain that the woman had died from the stabbing, but they did not hear any explanation for the stabbing. Later the news program corrected itself and explained that the man was not from Somalia but from Iraq, but still it delivered no explanations. This incomplete reporting most likely would not have happened during the old public service rules, under which “correctness must be given higher priority than up-to-date-ness…and where] the news must not appear as sensational or colorful.” This news story was an illustration of a story being broadcast because of its sensational character, which was given a higher priority than its correctness.

Some news stories offered viewers explanations of the violence that were so unreasonable that they have functioned similarly to stories with no explanations at all. One news clip, for example, explained how an “immigrant” killed two people and injured nine others because “he was drunk and happy.”344 This explanation most likely did not help viewers understand why the

341 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20030526, original text: “Utrolig groft og fuldstændig meningsløst.”
342 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20030526, original text: “dørmænd [er] gennembræt..efter angreb med steggaffel, knife og køller.”
343 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19980602, original text: “Midt i det fredelige Fotex varehus i Herning gik det løs. Inden nogen kunne nå at gribe ind, inden [sic] en 42-årig mand fra Somalia havde stukket kniven i sin kvindelige ledsager.”
344 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19951226, original text: “han bare var fuld og glad.”
man had committed the crime. Similarly, a description of “a shooting drama at Nørrebro”\textsuperscript{345} reported on some apparently random shootings in the area that had injured several people and been “the occasion of large police efforts.”\textsuperscript{346} Apparently “a spiteful atmosphere”\textsuperscript{347} caused the violence, but the clip did not elaborate on how or why this atmosphere led to the disturbance. The lack of explicit explanations within the reports would have led viewers seeking such an explanation to make their own assumptions based on the details provided. For viewers seeking a logical explanation for the development from a spiteful atmosphere to a shooting, the emphasis on the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the perpetrators might have encouraged viewers to conclude that violence and crime were embedded in visible minorities’ cultures. It is possible, then, that the lack of explanations in the news might have encouraged viewers to think within this paradigm.

**Some have been more expert than others**

Like most news clips, the clips about criminal visible minorities drew upon experts. But unlike most of the other news clips analyzed in this dissertation, the clips about crime tended to use quite a large number of visible minority experts; however, the news did not always give these the same authority as they gave to the white experts. In one program, a television host had a visible minority expert and an ethnically Danish expert in the studio for an interview about visible minorities’ violence against doormen. Both experts were males in their early 30s, but despite their similarities and despite the fact that the news program had invited them both explicitly as experts, the host treated their statements differently. The visible minority expert, Ali Celik, explained how visible minorities were suffering discrimination by being denied entrance to certain nightclubs. For decades, one of the most common recreational activities for young people in Denmark has been attending private nightclubs for drinking and dancing during the weekends. Most of these clubs, open from 10 pm to 5 am, have doormen who, according to the owner’s guidelines, decide whom to let in. The host asked Ali Celik: “But, do you claim that the young immigrants are being discriminated against?”\textsuperscript{348} By using the verb “claim,” the host suggested that there possibly was no discrimination. The host could have asked: ‘So, the young immigrants are being discriminated against?’, which would have signaled that he accepted the truth of the expert’s statement. After the

\textsuperscript{345} DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19950615, original text: “skuddrama på Nørrebro.”
\textsuperscript{346} DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19950615, original text: “har givet anledning til en større politiindsats.”
\textsuperscript{347} DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19950615, original text: hadsk stemming.”
\textsuperscript{348} DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19961125, original text: “Jamen, pástår du, at de unge indvandrere diskrimineres?”
3. The criminal immigrant

expert replied that “Yes, they are discriminated against,” the host posed a follow-up question to the ethnically Danish expert: “Kim Hansen, if it is true [what Ali Celik says] then we are talking about discrimination; can you understand then that they [visible minorities] get very angry?” Kim Hansen answered: “I could understand it if that was the case, but I don’t believe that it is.” By asking “if it is true” the host again indicated that it might not have been true. Because the host had already questioned the truth value of Ali Celik’s statement, Kim Hansen’s denial of discrimination easily gained truth value, particularly when the host did not question Hansen's statement. The host called Kim Hansen by his name when asking him questions, which suggested a sense of familiarity and closeness between the host and Kim Hansen; this closeness did not exist between the host and Ali Celik, who was not called by his personal name. Hosts function as familiar faces in the stream of new and unfamiliar news. It is the host who guides viewers through the news program, and viewers often feel a closeness and familiarity with the host whom they see every night. It was therefore likely that some viewers adopted the host’s closeness with Kim Hansen and his distance from Ali Celik.

In other interview settings the truth value of visible minority experts’ statements might also have been undermined because they were not always experts on the situation that journalists called upon them to address. In the television news there were examples of visible minority experts who seemed to have been included simply because of their ethnic and racial status and not because of their actual knowledge of a field. A news program gave Ikrak Iqbal, introduced as an “employee for Islamic Relief Agency,” the role of expert in commenting on a gang dispute between gangs members of Pakistani origin. But the expert, Ikrak Iqbal, did not know the gangs in question, and therefore he was only able to comment generally and superficially on the situation by adding “There is a tendency that more and more gangs with members who have ethnically background

349 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19961125, original text: “Ja, de diskrimineres.”
350 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19961125, original text: “Hvis det er rigtigt, Kim Hansen, så er der jo tale om diskrimination. Kan du så ikke forstå, at de bliver meget vrede?”
351 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19961125, original text: “Jo, det kan jeg godt, hvis det var det, der gik ud på, men det tror jeg ikke er korrekt.”
352 Mustafa Hussain, Ferruh Yilmaz & Tim O’Connor, Medierne, Minoriteterne og Majoriteten – en undersøgelse af nyhedsmedier af den folkelige diskurs i Danmark, (Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling, 1997), 73, for analysis of this news clips. Hussain has further argued that the TV host also differentiated between Ali Celik and Kim Hansen by addressing Ali Celik via the formal third person De while using the informal du to Kim Hansen. I have not, however, found this difference in my analysis of the news clip; the two pronouns De and du sound very similar and this might explain why Hussain and I have heard them differently. The pronoun De is rather old-fashioned and is hardly used any longer in spoken Danish. See also DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960821 for the use of both visible minority and ethnically Danish experts in the same news clip.
appear…. [To prevent gangs] one must offer the youths alternatives to their gang activities.”

Ikram Iqbal functioned as the token visible minority expert, and by including him the television station appeared to have a diverse representation. In a similar vein, the absolute majority of visible minority experts were experts in fields specifically related to visible minorities, such as crime prevention for visible minorities. There were very few, if any, visible minority experts in fields that could be characterized as neutral. This one-sidedness has contributed to constructing visible minorities as a homogeneous group. If the news media had portrayed visible minorities broadly as experts on, for example, nuclear power or marine biology, then the ethnically Danish viewers might have seen fewer stereotypical images of visible minorities.

The stereotype has taken on nationalist populist features

The increased news focus on visible minorities’ crimes, beginning in the 1990s, contributed to a construction of the young visible minority male as different from the young ethnically Danish male. The news media described criminal visible minority males as members of gangs, as irredeemable, and as inhabitants of lawless areas. These characteristics contrasted with those of the ethnically Danish male, whom authorities could reach and who lived in law-abiding areas. The news media thereby positioned the young, ethnically Danish males, including the criminals, as people who potentially could be reformed and thereby become law-abiding. This contrasts markedly with their positioning of the young, criminal, visible minority males as people doomed to lives of crime.

This image of the young, visible minority male as criminal partly derived from the break with the public service rules after the establishment of TV2. This opened the way for broadcasting sensational and dramatic news stories, as illustrated by the sensational narration of post-1988 crime stories at both TV2 and DR. The competition between the two news channels led to an increased focus on viewer identification in order to keep viewers glued to their channel. Since the majority of viewers were ethnic Danes, the news producers and journalists narrated and constructed viewer identifications to their advantage. Journalists have the stories according to the narrative strategies of the actant model, which not only simplified realities but also divided the people portrayed into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ people – ‘assistants’ and ‘antagonists’. This might have

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353 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19951125, original text: “Der er i hvert fald en tendens til…at der kommer flere og flere bender, hvor der er en stor del af medlemmerne, der har en etnisk baggrund…Man…kunne tilbyde nogle af disse unge alternativer til bandevirksomhed.”

contributed to creating a climate of fear in which the ethnically Danish television viewers feared visible minority males because of their potential for committing criminal acts.

These structural narrative strategies made the news appear rather similar to the populist right’s portrayal of Danish society. Both divided society into ‘good’, law-abiding white people vs. ‘bad’, criminal people of color, and both explained the difference according to a stereotypically static view of culture – central components of cultural racism. The Danish news media have never been connected to or affiliated with populist right politicians, and neither DR nor TV2 were linked to specific political parties. This similarity between the news media’s representation of Danish nationalism and Danishness, as expressed in the news portrayals of the criminal visible minority male, and the Danish People’s Party’s understanding of Danish nationalism seems therefore quite unintentional.
4. The oppressed immigrant woman

By analyzing mass media’s portrayals of visible minority women, I will illustrate how the media has contributed to the construction and the maintenance of the stereotype of female visible minorities as oppressed. Quantitatively, the amount of news clips about visible minority women and gender relations is significant, 17 percent of all the analyzed news clips about visible minorities. Most of these appeared at the end of the analyzed period, during the second half of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s. TV2 carried more stories about women and gender relations during the analyzed period than DR did; TV2 had 18 percent of their news clips about visible minorities being about women and gender relations, whereas DR had 16 percent.

The news media’s communication about visible minority women and about gender relations and visible minorities focused on domestic violence and marriage practices. The news media presented visible minority women as victims instead of survivors, victims of violence, victims of immigration laws, victims of their culture, and victims of Islam. The media portrayed them as one homogenous group with a patriarchal and static culture. Often the media made comparisons between visible minorities and ethnic Danes, presenting them in binary opposition to each other, and made ethnic Danes appear as a group with a progressive, non-patriarchal culture. Journalists and interviewees described violence as a characteristic embedded in Islamic culture that found its expressions in domestic violence, unfortunate marriage practices, and honor killings. I compare the media’s communication with statistics from shelters for battered women to illustrate that domestic violence has been an integrated feature in Danish society as well, not simply a feature of Islamic cultures as news broadcasts have suggested.

The media’s participation in constructing the stereotype of the female visible minority as oppressed took place on several levels. The stereotype manifested itself via news stations’ decisions regarding which stories they classified as ‘good’ news stories, via interviewers’ questions, via footage, via editing, via narration, etc. I will throw light on all these aspects in order to show how they functioned both as means of keeping the television viewer in front of the screen, as well as a means to present female visible minorities as oppressed.

My analysis of the news media’s communication about female visible minorities goes against most academic findings in the field of mass media and visible minorities. Most scholars have argued that a change in the communication about visible minorities took place during the 1980s, but I have not found any such change regarding to the stereotype of the oppressed visible
minority woman. I believe that this discrepancy between my work and previous works in the field is caused by my inclusion of gender and sexuality in the analysis. Other scholars have focused on visible minorities as a group and have thus tended to focus on male visible minorities. Changes in coverage of male visible minorities and visible minorities as a group did occur, as I have illustrated in the chapters on arrivals, the criminal immigrant, and the non-integrated immigrant. But the lack of change in the messages regarding visible minority women has contributed to maintaining the stereotype and, indeed, made it more powerful. This stereotype has not been neutral; it has had serious consequences. At the end of the chapter, I briefly discuss how this powerful stereotype has played an active role in maintaining the myth about gender equality in Denmark.

**Domestic violence**

Many among the large amount of news clips about visible minority women as victims of domestic violence described women not only victims of violence but also as victims of immigration rules and regulations. In the random selection of news clips, the first news clip telling the story of a visible minority woman as a victim of domestic violence as well as victim of Danish immigration rules came from 1980. This clip reported on a young Turkish woman who had been ordered to leave Denmark because her husband had divorced her and she possessed neither Danish citizenship nor a residence permit. The host introduced the story by informing viewers that “a twenty-year-old Turkish woman, Fatma Topal, who claims that she was abused by her husband, is now being sent back to Turkey because she refuses to live with the husband.” The woman was interviewed via a translator, she never looked directly into the camera, and she answered the questions with monosyllabic words. These factors made her appear as shy and scared.

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356 Technically, it is not possible to determine whether it was the TV-host or a voice-over who introduced this news clip. The clip was from the period where news was produced on reel film, which was a period where the TV-host or others spoke live before, during, and after the news clips. These speaks were not recorded but simply sent out live after which they ‘disappeared’. The archive at DR, however, has a card representing each news clip. On these cards were printed text about the news clips, and these texts were most likely identical or very similar to the TV-host’s introductions of the news clips. It is from this card that I have cited the introductory comment to the news clip. The original text says: “En 20-årig tyrkisk kvinde Fatma Topal, som hævder, at hun er blevet mishandlet af sin mand, bliver nu sendt tilbage til Tyrkiet, fordi hun ikke længere vil bo hos manden.” DR, card #26.649, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19800916.
This news clip illustrated the narrative model called the executioner-victim-observer-axis. This dramaturgic axis is typical for consequence journalism and for circular narration. The woman was the victim; the Danish state, who wanted to deport her, was the executor, and the interviewer, the translator, and the television viewers were the observers. The simple narration and journalism of consequence ensured that the viewers did not lose interest during the news clip. News programs have functioned to attract viewers to the channel for the remainder of the evening, and there producers have generally feared that viewers would be lost if the news stories were too complicated or if viewers could not relate to the news. By using the executioner-victim-observer-axis, the viewers were placed as observers of a simple narration that they easily could understand, and, it is commonly believed, when viewers can relate to what they see, their interest in the program rises and they are more likely to stay tuned.

The news clip further informed the viewers that Fatma had had only two years of education and had no means of surviving on her own in Turkey because there was no one to take care of her there. The viewers were left with the impression that she was a double victim, firstly of domestic violence and secondly of immigration laws that made her life even more miserable. The narrative construction of the executioner-victim-observer-axis made the content of the news story easier to understand by presenting it as simpler than it might have been in reality. The news clip did not explain the immigration rules, nor did it discuss issues of domestic violence; it simply presented the story in the most basic of narrative forms.

Several more recent versions of the same story were broadcast in the news during the 1990s and 2000s. One of these stories introduced viewers to the subject’s case in this way: “This Turkish woman lives underground on the run from the Danish authorities. She is expelled because she left her violent husband and family-in-law.” This was almost a repetition of Fatma Topal’s story from 1980. The woman in the second story was even given the name “Fatma” by TV2. The name “Fatma” was written in quotation marks – indicating that it was not her real name – in the corner of the television screen, and she was further given anonymity by being filmed in shadow rather than frontally. This anonymity worked dramaturgically. “Fatma’s” disguise made the story

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359 TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 20000225, original text: ”den tyrkiske kvinder her lever under jorden på flugt fra de danske myndigheder. Hun er udvist, fordi hun forlod sin voldelige ægtemand og svigerforældre.”
more dramatic and scary because it underscored that she was in hiding and on the run. This seemed much more dramatic than if the viewers had been informed by a voice-over or by “Fatma” herself that she was on the run. TV2 stated explicitly that “Fatma’s” story was not unusual, via a voice-over: “The story is unfortunately not exceptional…During these last days, TV2 has shown how battered women are being expelled from Denmark.”\(^{360}\) “Fatma” elaborated upon the violence committed against her. She explained: ”There were three men who hit me. Two of them held me down while the third hit me. They hit me with a belt and pulled my hair. I did not attend school for a week. I could not leave the house.”\(^{361}\) The only other statements “Fatma” made were: ”I would rather die; I do not want to return to Turkey,” and “What is happening? It is reprehensible that it is the women who pay. Nothing happens to the men. It is always the women who pay.”\(^{362}\)

TV2 only gave “Fatma” a very limited voice – the voice of a victim. The news program allowed her to elaborate upon her situation as a battered woman, but it did not give her the opportunity to say anything else. Instead, a white anthropologist informed the viewers about the situation of battered women. Although in a very different position than the battered woman, this expert was nevertheless deemed competent to comprehend the women’s situation and to interpret it for the viewers. In the news clip about “Fatma”, the then-Member of Parliament representing the Center Democrats [Centrumdemokraterne], Per Duetoft, functioned as an expert on how immigration laws influenced women like “Fatma.” The news did not allow “Fatma” to serve as an expert on her own situation.

The television news, including news about battered, visible minority women, predominantly used white, middle-aged, middle-class men as experts.\(^{363}\) Throughout the period analyzed, there was an overrepresentation of men in the news media. Professor Birgitte Tuftæ has analyzed women’s representation in the Danish mass media and concluded that men have been over-represented as news hosts, journalists, and interviewed experts. Quantitatively she has measured the difference between men’s and women’s representation on a representative day in 2003 for TV2’s and DR’s primetime news programs. Both TV2 and DR had more male than female

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\(^{360}\) TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20020225, original text: “Beretningen er desværre ikke enestyrende…TV2 har de seneste dage vist, hvordan voldsramte kvinder bliver udvist af Danmark.”

\(^{361}\) TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20020225, original text: “De var tre mand om at slå mig. To af dem holdt mig, mens den tredje slog mig. De slog mig med et bælte og hev mig i håret. Jeg var ikke i skole i en hel uge. Jeg kunne ikke gå ud af huset.”

\(^{362}\) TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20020225, original text: ”Jeg vil hellere dø. Jeg vil ikke tilbage til Tyrkiet”; ”Og hvad sker der så? Det er forkasteligt, at det går ud over kvinderne. Der sker aldrig noget med mændene. Det går altdt ud over kvinderne.”

\(^{363}\) See for instance DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020211 for news about white, middle-class men being experts on battered woman of color.
speakers: TV2 interviewed 20 male experts and three female experts, while DR interviewed 18 male experts and two female experts. Tufte has therefore concluded that “to watch news programs in 2003 is like walking through a family party from a long distance past. Here all the male heads of the houses are walking around in their Sunday’s best.”364 This has further resulted, according to Tufte, in “a lack of successful female role models” in the media.365 The only part of the news programs which had almost as many women as men was the vox pops. Vox pop is an abbreviation for the Latin vox populi, meaning the voice of the people. Vox pop in television news is a sequence in which several ordinary people, typically on the street, are interviewed about a case. Vox pop has typically been used with ‘light’ news, for example news about cultural or entertainment issues; the interviewed people’s statements do not bring new information about the case but simply function as a means of identification for the viewers.366

Journalist Erik Valeur has analyzed the visual gender representation in Danish newspapers and television news on an ordinary day in 2003. Like Tufte, he concluded that men have dominated the picture. When looking at the visual side of newspapers, i.e. photographs in the newspapers, he found that Informaiton published 30 photographs portraying thirty-eight men and one actress. The latter appeared in a picture the size of a passport size photo. In its news section, Politiken showed eighteen men and two women, while Ekstrabladet displayed forty-four men and eight women. Among the women was a naked pin-up girl. In the average television news day, Valeur found that, in its first ten minutes, DR’s TV-Avisen showed thirty-three clips with men, all of whom wore ties. Then the first woman, DR’s only female foreign correspondent Mette Fugl, appeared for thirteen seconds. Altogether the news program showed four clips that included women; those clips lasted a total of two minutes. For TV2 the situation was similar; out of fifty-one news clips, three included women. The first women, excluding the hostess did not appear until sixteen minutes into the program, and the three clips lasted sixteen seconds altogether.367

In the 1970s and 1980s, Tuft looked in detail at the gender composition of the news media. In the 1970s, she was a member of the women’s group Mosekonerne, which was critical of the media’s portrayal of women, and in 1986 she presented at a debate-seminar about women in the media arranged by DR. In 1986, she concluded: “Despite the rising number of women in the


workforce and their increased participation in politics, the news is about men’s public sphere presented by men.”\textsuperscript{368} In 2003, she compared women’s representation in the 1980s to women’s representation in the 2000s and concluded: “Unfortunately, it does not seem like any real progress was made.”\textsuperscript{369}

The number of female television hostesses increased throughout the analyzed period. Vibeke Pedersen has analyzed gender representations among hosts/hostesses in news programs from 1995 to 2002 for both TV2 and DR. In 1995, 25 percent of DR’s and 41 percent of TV2’s hosts/hostesses were female; in 2003 the numbers had risen to 37 and 43 percent respectively. Pedersen has pointed out that the role of the female news hostess was often associated with stereotypical images of women; the female hostesses were often younger than their male colleagues, and unlike their male colleagues they seldom ended up with their own news program where they could figure as a strong and independent ‘personality’. Pedersen has argued that the increase in female news hostesses was connected to a general feminization of television news that involved more focus on ‘soft’ news, e.g. families, housing, fashion, health, etc. This feminization took place at a time when the host’s role also changed from an authoritative speaker to a more friendly, familiar communicator. Women attained an increased visibility in the news media, but in areas where the women were ascribed little authority and little individuality.\textsuperscript{370}

The dearth of female expertise and female voices was typical for the news’ portrayals of female visible minorities and made the female visible minorities appear as objects instead of subjects, as victims rather than survivors of violence. The appearance as victims was also underscored by the television channels’ graphic labeling practices. The women often were explicitly named as “victims,” as in one typical label accompanying an interview that described the woman as an “Anonymous Victim of Violence.”\textsuperscript{371}

The lack of female visible minorities’ voices can be seen as an indicator of the main target audiences for the television news. The news was constructed in a way that news producers believed would create identification options for their viewers. By allowing white, middle-class,

\textsuperscript{368} Birgitte Tuft, "Kvinder i medier", Kvinden & Samfundet. Køn, kultur og politik, # 3, (June 2004), 12-16, citation p. 15, original text: ”det er mændenes offentlighed, som præsenteres af mænd, til trods for at kvinder i stigende grad befinder sig på arbejdsmarkedet og i stigende grad deltager i politiske og faglige sammenhænge.”

\textsuperscript{369} Birgitte Tuft, "Kvinder i medier", Kvinden & Samfundet. Køn, kultur og politik, # 3, (June 2004), 12-16, citation p. 15, original text: ”Desværre ser det ikke ud til, at der er sket de store fremskridt.”

\textsuperscript{370} Vibeke Pedersen, ”Feminisering af TV – Markedets ligestilling?”, Kvinden & Samfundet. Køn, kultur og politik, # 3, (June 2004), 10-12.

\textsuperscript{371} TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010430, original text: ”Anonymt voldsoffer.” See also TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010910 where a woman was labeled "Heidi, Rape Victim (original text: "Heidi, Voldtægtsoffer").
4. The oppressed immigrant woman

ethnic Danes do the majority of the speaking, the target audience – the white, middle-class ethnically Danish population – could watch people with whom they could identify. The national Danish television news about visible minorities has not been news made for the portrayed people of color; instead it was news made by the white middle-class (male) majority population for the white, middle-class, majority population.  

Crisis centers

In the late 1990s and the early 2000s, there were several news clips about battered, visible minority women in crisis centers.  As of 2004, Denmark had thirty-six state-funded crisis centers located throughout the country. Most of these are former, so-called ‘women’s houses’ [kvindehuse] established during the 1970s as spaces to host female communities connected to the women’s movement. The first ‘woman’s house’ was established in Copenhagen in 1971 when a group of women occupied [besatte] three buildings and turned them into co-operatives and meeting places for feminist activists. During the 1970s, several ‘women’s houses’ were established throughout the country; however, as the activities of the women’s movement increasingly declined during the 1980s, several of the ‘women’s houses’ were converted into crisis centers. Today there is one ‘women’s house’ left, in Copenhagen.

The news clips explicitly stated that the number of visible minorities at crisis centers was increasing. Indeed, the news of the early 2000s also repeatedly claimed that the percentage of visible minorities at crisis centers was higher than their percentage of the overall population. A 2001 news clip from TV2 illustrates this. The news clip began with an introductory voice-over: “The woman here is among those immigrant women who have been in a violent marriage.” Viewers saw a woman from behind, who said: “He always hit my head.” The voice-over continued: “Many immigrant women have been subjected to the same experience. The country’s crisis centers are witnessing this with an increasing number of immigrant women seeking refuge at

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372 See also Mustafa Hussain, Ferruh Yilmaz & Tim O’Connor, Medierne, Minoriteterne og Majoriteten – en undersøgelse af nyhedsmedier og den folkelige diskurs i Danmark (Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling, 1997), 91, for analysis of how the news has communicated only with the white part of the population.
373 The term crisis centre refers in Danish specifically to shelters for women who are victims and survivors of domestic violence.
375 See for instance DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960307.
376 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010430, original text: “Kvinden her er blandt de indvandrerkvinder, der har været i et voldeligt ægteskab.”
377 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010430, original text: “Han slog altid mit hoved.”
the centers.”378 The then-director of the National Organization of Shelters for Battered Women and their Children, Jytte Mejnhol, said: “It is seldom that we know the language that the woman speaks, and that is a problem because we are not able to provide her enough help. We can provide her care and security but we cannot help her to move on in her life, which is what she needs.”379 The voice-over continued, while viewers watched a crisis center from the outside: “The immigrant women are overly represented at the country’s thirty-six crisis centers. For even though immigrants and their descendants only constitute 7 percent of the Danish population, the latest statistics show that 35 percent of women at crisis centers are immigrants.”380 In this brief passage from the news clip it was mentioned no fewer than four times that visible minority women were overly represented as victims of violence.

Later the same news clip delivered its own explanation for this situation. An expert, Hanne Lilholt Behrens, whom the news presented as the deputy director at the Communication Center for Social Work, argued that “In Denmark, refugee families or immigrant families very quickly get to belong to the group which is relatively poor because they might be unemployed or over-represented at the job market, or outside the job market, and they generally lived under harder conditions.”381 This argument involved complex explanations of domestic violence via its inclusion of economic and social factors as reasons behind domestic violence. But this argument was not taken seriously in the news clip, instead it was immediately followed by the voice-over that claimed: “But forced marriages or arranged marriages are carrying the main responsibility. They are the reasons why…the women are on the run.”382 The rest of the news clip focused on marriage practices and on the so-called “Muslim view of women”; economic and social factors were not discussed further. This so-called “Muslim view of women” was introduced in an interview. The voice-over’s introductory question – “Do they [visible minorities] feel that the Muslim view of

378 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010430, original text: ”Mange indvandrerkinder har været ude for samme oplevelser. Det mærker landets krisecentre, som et stigende antal indvandrerkinder søger hen til.”

379 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010430, original text: ”Vi kan sjældent det sprog kvinden taler, og det er et problem, for vi kan ikke hjælpe hende godt nok. Vi kan give hende omsorg og tryghed, men vi kan ikke hjælpe hende videre i livet, det hun har brug for.”

380 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010430, original text: ”Indvandrerkinderne er kraftigt overrepræsenterede på landets 36 krisecentre. For mens indvandreerne og deres efterkommere udgør 7% af den danske befolkning, så viser de seneste tal at 35% af kvinderne på krisecentrene er indvandrere.”

381 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010430, original text: ”Flygtningefamilier, eller indvandrerfamilier, i Danmark, de kommer meget hurtigt til at høre til den gruppe, hvor man har, hvad skal man sige, relativ fattigdom, fordi man er arbejdsløs, eller overrepræsenteret på arbejdsmarkedet, eller er udenfor arbejdsmarkedet, og man har i det hele taget dårligere livsvilkår.”

382 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Dags Dato, date: 20010430, original text: ”Men tvangsægteskaber eller arrangerede ægteskaber bærer hovedansvaret, de er årsag til at…kvinderne flygter.” See also TV2 (Station), primetime news program Dags Dato, date: 20030511, which argued "the crisis centres are being filled with immigrants girls on the run from forced marriages;" original text: "krisecentrene fyldes med indvandrerpiger på flugt fra tvangsægteskaber.”
women is oppressing?" – managed to establish the impression that all immigrant women at crisis centers were Muslims, and that there was one singular, Islamic view of women. This was a simplification, but, by asking about “the Muslim view of women,” the voice-over closed off the opportunity to introduce different and varied views. The news clip managed to simplify issues of domestic violence by reducing complex questions of gender relations, economics, and social relations to a question of a religious – the Islamic – view of gender and marriage practices. The news clip moved from an argument about immigrant women as victims of violence to those same immigrants as victims of marriage practices, and those marriage practices were said to be caused by a specifically “Muslim view of women.” In other words, domestic violence became a question of religion. If the viewers had not drawn this conclusion between domestic violence and religion themselves, the host made it explicit in an interview with a guest in the studio at the end of the news clip; the host’s first question was “How do we help the battered Muslim women?”

In a news clip from 2002, DR similarly drew an image of visible minority women as victims of violence. The host introduced the clip with the claim that “Almost half the women who live at crisis centers have another ethnicity than Danish. They are fleeing from threats and violent men – fleeing from both the men they have married as well as from their fathers and brothers.”

Then the viewers saw a woman of color who said: “It began with mental violence. He threatened me and said I was not worth anything and did not have value.” The voice-over elaborated on the battered woman’s situation: “Like thousands of other ethnic women in Denmark, Josephine has lived with violence and with the fear for the next time she would be beaten.” The voice-over continued: “Almost half of the 2000 women who annually move into crisis centers are of foreign origin…Many of them are Turks or Pakistanis and many have come to Denmark because of arranged marriages. Others, like Josephine, have come to be with a Danish husband.”

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383 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010430, original text: ”Føler de at det muslimske syn på kvinder er undertrykkende?”

384 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010430, original text: ”Hvordan hjælper vi bedst de voldsramte muslimske kvinder?”

385 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20021101, original text: ”Næsten halvdelen af de kvinder, der bor på de danske krisecentre, har en anden etnisk baggrund end dansk. De flytter fra trusler og voldelige mænd; både dem de er gift med eller deres fædre og brødrene.”

386 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20021101, original text: ”Det begyndte med psykisk vold. Han truede mig og sagde, at jeg var værdiløs og ikke betød noget.”

387 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20021101, original text: ”Som tusinder af andre etniske kvinder i Danmark har Josefine levet med vold og med skrækken for, hvornår hun næste gang ville være udsat for tæv.”

388 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20021101, original text: ”Knap halvdelen af de ca. 2000 kvinder, der årligt flytter på krisecentre i Danmark er udenlandske kvinder…Mange af kvinderne er tættere eller pakistanere, og mange er kommet til landet via arrangeret ægteskaber. Andre, som Josefine, er familiesammenført til en dansk mand.”
in one sentence, opened up the option that there were other women at the crisis centers than Muslim women from forced or arranged marriages. But it was a small opening, as DR numbered the women from Pakistan or Turkey, i.e. Muslim countries, as “many,” whereas only “others” had come to be with Danish husbands. And the visual footage that illustrated the DR news clip did not leave much of an opportunity for various interpretations of the battered women’s ethnic or religious backgrounds. The news clip showed footage of women wearing Muslim headscarves and veils. So despite the fact that the news clip verbally opened itself up for broader understandings of the complex situations of the women at crisis centers, the clip did not give this understanding much room to expand.

Who are at the crisis centers

If one compares the media images of women at Danish crisis centers – an overrepresentation of Muslim women on the run from violence and arranged or forced marriages – with statistics provided from the same crisis centers, there is a clear discrepancy. In 2002, the latest year of available statistics, 30 percent of the women admitted to crisis centers were not Danish citizens; thus the absolute majority, 70 percent, of women at crisis centers were ethnic Danes. So despite the fact that the visible minorities constituted a larger proportion of the women at crisis centers than they did of the general female population, the majority of women at the centers were ethnic Danes. The women at crisis centers who did not hold Danish citizenship were mainly from the Nordic countries, the EU, and the Middle East; they were thus most likely not all Muslims or from Muslims countries. The women who held other citizenships than Danish were categorized as “family united” (i.e. women who had come to Denmark in order to be united with a spouse) (52 percent), “refugees” (15 percent), “immigrants” (15 percent), “asylum seekers” (4 percent), and a rather large group was categorized as “unknown” (15 percent). According to the statistics, 67 percent of the people committing the violence against the women held Danish citizenship, (in 2000 the percentage was 66 and in 2001 it was 64). In other words, the majority of people committing the violence that forced the women to take refuge at the crisis centers were Danish citizens, not visible minorities as the media had indicated. Conclusively, it therefore can be argued that in most cases of domestic violence the reasons behind the violence could not be linked to visible minorities’ cultures, Islam, or marriage patterns.

389 The National Organization of Shelters for Battered Women and Children (LOKK), Statistics 2002 (Formidlingscentret for Socialt Arbejde, 2003), 12 and 15. The report can be downloaded via www.lokk.dk.
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According to a survey from the Danish Center for Research on Social Vulnerability [Videns- og formidlingscenter for Socialt Udsatte], 2008 women and 2019 children stayed at a crisis center in 2003. The survey considered the number of women subjected to domestic violence to have been much higher than the number of women at crisis centers. The crisis centers received 9195 enquiries in 2003, of which 5128 were about availability, indicating that the crisis centers lacked space for hosting women surviving domestic violence. Another survey from the National Institute of Public Health (2004) has found that 0.3 percent of women in Denmark reported violence to the police and/or a hospital in 2003, but that the number of ordinary, white, ethnically Danish women who, in an anonymous survey, said they had experienced violence within the same year was 4 percent. This means that 64,000 women in Denmark experienced violence in 2003. There were no indicators that 2003 was an exceptional year in this regard, and the figure was most likely representative for an average year. Two-thirds of the 64,000 women reported that their victimizer was their partner; thus ca. 2.5 percent of women (41,000 women) in Denmark annually experience domestic violence. Another survey has similarly shown the extent of domestic violence by asking teenagers about their experiences of violence: 9 percent of 15-16-year-old girls have experienced violence against their mother within their home, while the number of 15-16-years-old boys was 6 percent.

According to statistics from the National Organization of Shelters for Battered Women and Children (2002), one-third of the female visible minorities at the crisis centers had been subjected to violence from their ethnically Danish husbands. These women were typically from Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, Africa, and Greenland, and they had come to Denmark because of their marriage with an ethnically Danish, Christian man. A recent report produced by the

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393 According to statistics, 84.3 percent of the Danish population were members of the Danish Christian church (Folkekirken) in 2002 (latest statistic). In 2000, the percentage was 84.7. During the previous decades, there was a decrease in the number of members of the Danish Christian church, e.g. during the mid-1980s the number of members was 91.6 percent (1984), but one can still conclude that the majority of ethnically Danish men are members of the Danish Christian church, and that the absolute majority of them are raised in a Christian culture. See the Danish national statistics (Danmarks Statistik): http://www.dst.dk/dk5search.aspx?keyword=folkekirkemedlemmer&searchid=413#www
National Organization of Shelters for Battered Women and Children stated that “It is not the women’s foreign background which is the problem in these unfortunate cases, neither that they have met the man through ads, Internet, or on holidays. The problem is the man’s totally unacceptable behavior and attitude towards his spouse and children brought into the marriage – a behavior he has often repeatedly exercised in his several relationships.”

The report also stated that “Many of the women are victims of an unacceptable repeating pattern from the husband….the crisis centers have over a number of years successively received several [battered] wives from the same husband.”

The failure of the television news to explain these patterns has had consequences. Had the news informed the viewers about the fact that that most of the women at crisis centers were subjected to violence from ethnically Danish men or that one-third of the women of non-Danish origin came to Denmark to marry ethnically Danish men drove them to seek refuge at crisis centers, then the news would also have had to deal with the complex realities of domestic violence, with the fact that domestic violence cannot be explained simply by referencing non-ethnically Danish cultures or marriage patterns. Then the news might have had to acknowledge domestic violence as a broader societal problem in Danish society. This would have complicated efforts to create divisions between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and to argue that ‘they’ represented culture that led to violence.

To explain domestic violence as a result of culture is an example of a traditional belief in cultural determinism. In such a worldview, people represent a certain cultural system, which determines their actions, understandings, and options. But there are two central problems with such an explanation. Firstly, it implies that people themselves do not have much individual agency, and secondly, it tends to look upon culture as static. Despite these problems, throughout the period analyzed the news media presented visible minorities’ culture as the factor that determined their behavior. The news media generally described this culture as essentially patriarchal and misogynist as well as singular, stagnant, and unchangeable. The news media also saw visible minorities’ culture as fundamentally different from Danish culture, which the news media similarly presented.

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394 Cited from the National Organization of Shelters for Battered Women and Children’s (LOKK) press release regarding the report, Nov. 21, 2003, which can be found at http://www.lokk.dk, original text: "Det er ikke kvindernes udenlandske baggrund, der er problemet i disse ulykkelige sager og heller ikke, at de har mødt manden gennem kontaktannoncer, internettet eller ferieophold. Problemet er mandens helt uacceptabel adfærd og holdning overfor sin ægtefælle og medbragte barn – en adfærd, han oven i købet i en lang række af tilfældene har praktiseret gang på gang i sine mange parforhold."

395 Cited from the National Organization of Shelters for Battered Women and Children’s (LOKK) press release regarding the report, Nov. 21, 2003, which can be found at www.lokk.dk, original text: "mange af kvinderne er tilsyneladende også ofre for et uacceptabelt gentagelsesmonster fra mandens side...krisecenterne har haft flere hustruer fra den sammen mand gennem årene."

as one homogenous culture. These continuing descriptions participated in maintaining and legitimizing the distinction between ‘our’ Danish culture and ‘their’ visible minority culture.

**Ethnic women**

In this regard, the news media’s use of the category “ethnic” is worth a closer look. Logically, it makes little sense to label people “ethnic,” unless the subject complement is followed by an indicator of which ethnicity “ethnic” refers to, e.g. ethnic Dane, ethnic Pakistani, etc. But the television news, both DR and TV2, often referred to or labeled people “ethnic” without any further elaboration. The repeated use of the concept “ethnic” indicated that viewers understood the concept, i.e. that there was a common frame of reference, shared between the producers and consumers of the news, that enabled viewers to understand the concept. The news could not have flown smoothly if viewers had to stop and reflect upon the meaning of the concepts expressed in the reportage. If the viewers had to consider what ethnicity a news clip referred to, their viewing flow would have been broken, they would have been distracted, and may not have been able to follow the story; such a situation would threaten a channel shift. Generally news producers have communicated the news in a language and with frames of references that the majority of the viewers understand. These shared frames of reference implied that “ethnic” automatically was associated with ‘another ethnicity than Danish’. When a voice-over said, “Like thousands of other ethnic women in Denmark, Josephine has lived with violence...”, viewers did not stop to think ‘ethnic what?’,”

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397 See for instance DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-avisen*, date: 19850110, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-avisen*, date: 19960909, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-avisen*, date: 19990829, and TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19911025 for news clips which main aim have seemed to be to juxtapose Danish culture with visible minorities’ culture. See also the following news clips for examples of how the news have portrayed visible minorities as being fundamentally different from ethnic Danes and as constituting the binary opposition to ethnic Danes in clips where that juxtaposing did not seem as the main aim of the clip: TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19890816, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19980906, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19921005, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19951029, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19980127, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19981001, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19981108, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 20010419, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 20010619, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 20011021, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 20030115, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-avisen*, date: 19711123, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-avisen*, date: 19731021, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-avisen*, date: 19801123, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-avisen*, date: 19791120, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-avisen*, date: 19841121, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-avisen*, date: 19850327, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-avisen*, date: 19850723, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-avisen*, date: 19930110, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-avisen*, date: 19990825, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-avisen*, date: 19991108 and DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-avisen*, date: 20021114.
ethnicity?’, ‘what ethnic women?’ Instead they simply used the common frames of reference that automatically led them to think ‘women who are not ethnic Danes’.

But the equation of “ethnic” identical with ‘not ethnically Danish’ was not neutral. It implied a clear division between ‘them’ and ‘us’. ‘They’ were “ethnic,” whereas ‘we’ represented the norm; and this norm was so normal and average that ‘we’ did not even have an ethnicity in the media. ‘We’ were not labeled “ethnic;” instead ‘we’ were represented as ‘Danes’, and everybody who was not Danish was represented as “ethnic.” In other words, everybody who has not been like ‘us’ was categorized as a different ‘other’, and those ‘others’ were pooled together in a group labeled “ethnic.” The concept “ethnic” was also closely associated with the category of ‘exotic’, which similarly contributed to widening the gap between ‘them’ and ‘us’. When ‘they’ were ‘exotic’, ‘we’ have again been constituted as the norm – not as an ‘exotic’ norm, but as a ‘normal’ and ‘civilized’ norm.

Passive victims

The news media presented the visible minority women at the crisis centers not merely as victims, but as passive victims. Despite the fact that they have performed the active act of leaving their husbands or families, news programs portrayed them as passive, particularly as individuals passively spending their time at the crisis centers. This impression of passivity might derive from the fact that the news clips did not really give the women a voice. The news media generally talked about the women and not with them.

Many news clips about visible minority women followed the narration pattern of the Berettermodel and the actant model. These stories were typically introduced by the host’s opening phase that set of the narration. Then a voice-over provided a presentation of the characters and conflicts, often including a visible minority woman telling some of her story and delivering the point of no return in the process. She served as the victim character in the narration. She was the subject of the story, according to the actant model narration, but whether she gained her desired object depended more on external factors and active external figures than on her own actions. The news narration allowed her to relate details about the violence she experienced but did not give her a voice to talk about anything else. The conflict escalation was provided by various experts, who tended to be white, middle-class, middle-aged, and often male, who explained the woman’s situation. Viewers often heard the visible minority woman again at the story’s climax, when she delivered a harsh or especially violent detail from her experiences, and the expert(s) and/or voice-
over delivered the final fade-out to finish the clip. This narrative format contributed to the construction of visible minority women as passive victims simply because the only voice offered to them was the voice of a passive victim.

One exception from this representation of battered women as passive victims of violence was a TV2 portrayal of a woman, Dilja, who was portrayed as a survivor of violence. She appeared both in a regular news clip as well as in the in-depth news program Station 2 which deals with crime stories. These reports gave Dilja, like the other battered women the program portrayed, the opportunity to tell details about the violence she had experienced in the hands of her ex-partner, a male of Arabic origin. But Station 2 also allowed her to speak about her life after the violence; the program almost gave her the voice of an expert because she was allowed to elaborate upon some of the reasons behind the violence, rather than simply describing it. She said for instance: “I do not know if they [males of Arabic origin] are raised to hit their girlfriends. But there is definitely nothing in their upbringing which says that it is not alright.”

Unlike the majority of the battered women that the television news portrayed, Dilja was not anonymous. The news clips and Station 2 told viewers her real name, and she was filmed both in facial close-ups and in her own surroundings, which made her appear as an individual. The viewers saw her working in her chicken yard, with her cat, and walking around the farm where she lived. The viewers were told that she had had to move to Iceland in order to escape her violent ex-partner, and footage of her in Iceland showed her occupied with her new life. This gave the impression of a woman who had put the violence behind her and had moved on – a very different impression from the ones viewers got from the women portrayed at the crisis centers. One other difference between Dilja and the other battered women portrayed was that she was white. The news thereby participated in a racial construction in which visible minority women were constructed as passive victims of violence and white, ethnically Danish women were constructed as survivors of violence. In both racial constructions, the visible minority males were constructed as the aggressors and Islam appeared as a patriarchal culture that violated women.

398 TV2 (Station), Station 2, primetime crime news program, date: 20010910, original text: “Jeg ved ikke, om de bliver rigtigt opdraget til at slå på deres kærester. Men der er i hvert fald ikke noget i deres opdragelse, der siger, at det ikke er i orden.”
399 See chapter five “The sexually aggressive Muslim male” for further analyses of the media’s representation of the Muslim male as a sexual violator.
Forced and arranged marriages

As shown above, several of the news clips about battered women directly connected domestic violence with the marriage practices of forced or arranged marriages. Strictly speaking, arranged marriages are marriages arranged between the bride’s and the groom’s families, in which the bride and groom give their consent to the marriage; forced marriages are similarly arranged by the families, but the bride and/or groom are forced to marry against their wishes. Arranged and forced marriages were often viewed in opposition to so-called love marriages, in which spouses independently choose each other out of love. The division between forced/arranged and love marriages is artificial, because many marriages where the couple chooses to marry out of love are arranged by their families, and many marriages arranged by the couple themselves cannot be defined as love marriages, e.g. the so-called mail-order marriages between ethnically Danish men and women from Eastern Europe or Asia.

A TV2 news clip from 1999 offers an illustrative example of the media’s representation of marriage patterns. A voice-over introduced the clip: “Immigrant girls forced into marriages. That is the typical content of phone calls here at the immigrant organization’s hotline.” This introduction was followed by an interview with the immigrant organization’s director, who explained the problems that forced these women to seek out crisis centers or live in hiding. The news clip informed the viewers that “every third marriage between an immigrant youth in Denmark and a foreigner is established under force, and it has great consequences if the youths say no to the marriage against their parents’ will.” This statement was followed by an interview with an anonymous woman of Turkish origin, who explained how her family had told her that “regardless of whether it will cost me my life, then I have to accept it [the marriage].”

The same news clip also informed viewers that “90 percent of the young immigrants who are forced into marriages are girls.” By using the word “girls” instead of ‘women’, the news clip gave the impression that the female visible minorities being married were very young and dependent. According to the legal marriage provision at the time of the news clip, a person had to

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400 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19991221, original text: “Indvandrerpiger tvunget ud i et ægteskab mod deres vilje. Det er den typiske oprindning her på indvandrerorganisationens kriselinje.”

401 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19991221, original text: “hvert tredje ægteskab mellem en ung indvandrer i Danmark og en udlænding er indgået under tvang. Og det har store konsekvenser, hvis de unge siger nej til deres forældre.”

402 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19991221, original text: ”om det skal koste mit liv eller ej, så skal jeg bare acceptere det [ægteskabet].”

403 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19991221, original text: ”90% af de unge indvandrere, der tvinges til ægteskab, er piger.”
be eighteen years of age to marry in Denmark, so the women in question were rather old to be characterized as “girls.”

TV2 showed a long news clip in a news program called *Dags Dato* about a woman who was living in hiding from her family because she refused to participate in a forced marriage. At the beginning of the clip, the viewers were told that “For two years, she has been on the run from her violent father and a forced marriage. She has changed her name and her address is unknown. But here in *Dags Dato* she discloses her whole story. We have met her in a secret place and out of fear of the father we will not unveil her new name but instead call her by her childhood name Fatma.” Similar to the other female visible minorities in the other news clips, this news clip only gave Fatma a limited voice. It gave her space to speak about her experiences as a victim of violence and to tell about the physical and mental violence to which she had been subjected. She explained how her father “…would drag one [her] around the floor by pulling her hair. How he would slap one’s [her] face or punch one [her] with his fist.” This limited voice contributed to positioning her as an object instead of a subject.

The news clips presented the story dramatically by focusing on elements that increased the dramatic and thrilling narration. It elaborated in detail upon the violence Fatma had experienced and informed the viewers that her father had sold her as a bride to a Turkish man whom she had never met. The voice-over presented the fact that she was living in hiding under a new identity as a mysterious element that increased the excitement of the story. News programs, as well as channels, compete with each other to get the largest amount of viewers. One strategy is to break exclusive or important stories. It was therefore a strategic move when TV2 explicitly stated that Fatma had disclosed her story to TV2; this indicated that TV2 had managed to convince Fatma, despite her situation, to tell her story to them.

Early in the news clip, Fatma introduced a cliff hanger to the viewers by explaining her father’s reaction to her attempted suicide. She said: “He tells me that I must not do it again. It must not be repeated and if it is repeated, if I as much as think about a repetition, then I could not

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404 TV2 (Station), news program *Dags Dato*, date: 20030511, original text: ”I to år har hun været på flugt fra sin voldelige far og et tvangssætteskab. Hun har nu skiftet navn, og har hemmelig adresse. Men her i *Dags Dato* står hun frem med hele sin historie. Vi har mødt hende på et hemmeligt sted, og af frykt for faren røber vi ikke hendes nye navn, men kalder hende ved hendes barndomsnavn Fatma.” Note the repeated use of the name “Fatma” in the news when a female visible minority has needed to be named.

405 TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 20030511, original text: ”...slæbe en rundt på gulvet ved at rykke i håret. Så kunne han finde på at give en lussing eller en knytnæve.”
4. The oppressed immigrant woman

dream of what he would do. I would not even be able to imagine what he would do.\footnote{TV2 (Station), news program \textit{Dags Dato}, date: 20030511, original text: "Han fortæller mig, at det skal jeg ikke gøre igen, det skal ikke gentage sig, og hvis det gørde, eller hvis jeg bare tænke på det, så vidste jeg ikke, hvad kan kunne finde på at gøre. Det kunne jeg ikke engang drømme om. Det kunne jeg ikke engang tænke mig frem til, hvad han kunne finde på at gøre."} This statement left the viewers with an urge to know what it was Fatma’s father would do and was capable of doing. It made the viewers think ‘what could happen?’ The cliff hanger thereby left viewers with a strong urge to get the answer, an urge that kept them tuned to the program. The urge was not answered immediately; instead it was left hanging throughout the news clip. The clip cut from Fatma’s statement to an interview with one of Fatma’s former colleagues. This was followed by a voice-over that elaborated on Fatma’s situation while the viewers were presented with footage of Fatma walking along a coastline. Only very late did the clip satisfy the urge when a voice-over said that “Fatma is fearing her father’s revenge, she fears for her life.” Fatma continued: “I think he will punish me first and then…” She paused and looked away from the camera as if what she was about to say was too overwhelming for her, as if she was about to break down and start crying. Fatma’s pause functioned again as a cliffhanger, which had the specific dramatic effect of increasing the viewers’ curiosity and almost made them burst with their need to know. Finally the interviewer asked Fatma directly “Do you fear for your life?”, and Fatma answered: “Yes and for the lives of people I know, my partner’s life.” Finally, at the very end of the news clip, the news clip released viewers from their curiosity.

This dramaturgic narration, in which viewers’ curiosity is stoked by cliffhangers that repeatedly stimulate them until they reach the climax, is a well-known dramatic narration form. The stimulation is not given all at once; it is given in small portions in a repeated interplay between stimulation and withdrawal. Fatma’s clip gave a cliffhanger hinting at what Fatma’s father would do and then changed to other aspects of the story and thereby created a narration that built up the viewers’ interest and arousal to a point where viewers desperately wanted an answer. The function of this sort of narration is to keep the viewers glued to the television screen until they – finally – reach the climax of the story and get their answer, in this case that that Fatma’s father would kill her and her partner.

The Danish mass media used the two terms ‘forced marriages’ and ‘arranged marriages’ interchangeably, a problematic strategy because it simplified realities and implied that there is an aspect of force in arranged marriages. Since force connotes negativity, arranged marriages were presented as inferior to love marriages in the media’s hierarchy of values. The news
also gave the impression that the majority of visible minorities practiced arranged or forced marriages. By making the two terms interchangeable, the news left viewers with the impression that marriage patterns among visible minorities were influenced by force and that the ‘Danish’ love marriage, i.e. ‘our’ kind of marriage, had a higher value than ‘their’ kind of marriage.

It was (and is) complicated to determine how widespread the practice of forced marriages has been. There are no proper statistics, and scholars have disagreed when trying to determine a number for Denmark. A 2004 recent report from the Social Research Institute [Socialforskningsinstituttet], conducted by Garbi Schmidt and Vibeke Jakobsen, has thrown some light on visible minorities’ spousal practices in Denmark. They based their conclusions on 628 questionnaires – answered by visible minorities between seventeen and twenty-seven years of age of Lebanese, Yugoslavian, Pakistani, Turkish, and Somali origin – and 62 qualitative interviews with visible minority youths, visible minority parents, and so-called resource people, i.e. people working professionally with visible minority issues. The report argues that young visible minorities’ lives in Denmark in the early 2000s were very similar to those of young ethnic Danes’, also in regard to relationship and marriages.407

The authors have defined forced marriages as “a marriage where the family or relatives arrange a marriage for a family member without the member’s knowledge or in direct opposition to the member’s wishes.”408 They found in their survey that 14 percent of the participants of Pakistani origin had not been involved in choosing their spouses, compared to 4 percent of participants of Lebanese origin and 2 percent of Turkish origin; all the participants of Somali and Yugoslavian origin had been involved in the choice of their spouses. The report has therefore concluded that the risk of being forced to marry was greater among youths of Pakistani, Turkish, and Lebanese origin than it was for youth of Yugoslavian or Somali origin; the low risk for Somalis is interesting because they have constituted a rather marginalized group in Danish society and have had a strong community, two factors that, according to the report, could have contributed to a risk of forced marriages.409 They further found that more than 80 percent of the participants of Somali, Yugoslavian, Lebanese, and Turkish origin who were married or engaged had found their

408 Garbi Schmidt & Vibeke Jakobsen, Pardannelse blandt etniske minoriteter i Danmark, (Copenhagen: Socialforsknings Instituttet, 2004), 7, original text: “Tvangsægteskabet er et ægteskab, hvor enten familie eller slægt arrangerer et ægteskab for et familiemedlem, uden at denne ved noget derom, eller i direkte modstrid med dennes ønsker.”
409 Garbi Schmidt & Vibeke Jakobsen, Pardannelse blandt etniske minoriteter i Danmark, (Copenhagen: Socialforsknings Instituttet, 2004), 139.
spouse themselves; for participants of Pakistani origin the number was over 50 percent.\footnote{Garbi Schmidt & Vibeke Jakobsen, *Pardannelse blandt etniske minoriteter i Danmark*, (Copenhagen: Socialforsknings Instituttet, 2004), 125.} The report has conclusively pointed to a higher representation of arranged marriages among people of Pakistani origin, when compared to the remaining group of participants.

The authors of the report pointed out “that there is a sliding scale between the arranged and the forced marriage” and that one needed to look at the individual marriage itself to determine whether it could be characterized as forced.\footnote{Garbi Schmidt & Vibeke Jakobsen, *Pardannelse blandt etniske minoriteter i Danmark*, (Copenhagen: Socialforsknings Instituttet, 2004), 7, original text: “Der er således en glidende overgang mellem det arrangerede ægteskab og tvangsægteskabet.”} The authors illustrated this sliding scale with a comment from one of the interviewed participants, a woman of Turkish origin: “I don’t think they [her parents] would acknowledge me if I married a Danish man. If it happened that way I think my parents would disown me. And the family down there [in Turkey] would also come to know of it… I don’t think they would react positively. I cannot understand why it has to be that way. It is my life and if I want to live that way, then why not? I will never have those prejudices towards my own children. They will be allowed to live more freely. If they say that they have found the only one, then it does not matter where he is from. Then they will have my permission to marry him or her.”\footnote{Garbi Schmidt & Vibeke Jakobsen, *Pardannelse blandt etniske minoriteter i Danmark*, (Copenhagen: Socialforsknings Instituttet, 2004), 135, original text: Jeg tror ikke, de [forældrene] ville kendes ved mig, hvis jeg giftede mig med en dansk mand. Hvis det skete på den måde, så ville mine forældre slå hånden af mig. Og familien demede [i Tyrkiet] ville også få det at vide… Jeg tror ikke, de ville tage det positivt. Jeg kan heller ikke se, hvorfor man gør det på den måde. Det er jo mit liv, og hvis jeg vil leve på den måde, hvorfor ikke? Jeg vil aldrig have de fordømme over for mine børn. De skal kunne leve mere frit. Hvis de siger, de har fundet den eneste, så, lige meget hvor han er fra, så har de min tilladelse til at gifte sig med ham eller hende.”} The woman experienced her choice of partner as restricted; thus even though her future marriage might not be characterized strictly as a forced marriage, it would most likely not be a completely free marriage either.

The report gave an image of marriage practices as complex customs that cannot be interpreted monolithically. For instance, another comment challenged the opposition of (negative) forced marriages to (positive) love-based relations. A woman of Turkish origin explained: “Forced marriage is when one is told now you are going to marry and one does not know who the person is. Like my aunt. They were born and then it was arranged that they were going to marry, and they didn’t know each other… My uncle is married to his own cousin. He was 26 years old when they said that he was going to get married, and he did not want to get married. ‘We have found a girl and
she is very nice. So go there [to Turkey] during the summer holidays and then you will marry.’
Then he went there and that was the first time he saw her. Then they fell in love, luckily.”

Overall, the report found that 80 percent of the young visible minorities had chosen their spouses themselves; 10 percent reported that their parents had been involved in the process of choosing their partner, and only 4 percent had not been involved in choosing their partners. These figures seem to be quite different from the media’s representation of visible minorities marriages as primarily forced or arranged by their families.

Another attempt to gather statistical information about forced marriages was done by the Social Liberal [Radikale Venstre] politician Manu Sareen in his book on forced marriages in Denmark, Når kærlighed bliver til tvang (2003). Despite his reservations “that it is extremely difficult to measure the extent of forced marriages in Denmark,” he has delivered some numbers by drawing upon statistics from the state-funded Ethnic Consultant Team [Etnisk Konsulent Team], which has collected data from their clients in Copenhagen. Ethnic Consultant Team was established in 1999 as a resource center to assist various social organizations in situations involving visible minorities. People who sought assistance from Copenhagen municipalities or from various organizations in Copenhagen in order to prevent or escape a forced marriage were referred to them. The Team recorded six cases of forced marriages in their first year (1999-2000), twenty cases in each of the second and third years, and fifty-two cases in their fourth year. The increase in the final year was most likely caused by the increased awareness of the Ethnic Consultant Team, which led to an increase in references. The Team registered a high representation of women of Pakistani origin, which Sareen has interpreted as an expression that these women were well-integrated into


414 Garbi Schmidt & Vibeka Jakobsen, Pardannelse blandt etniske minoriteter i Danmark, (Copenhagen: Socialforsknings Institutet, 2004), 119. This rather low percentage of parental involvement and low figure of forced marriages was aggressively challenged by Lone Nørgaard & Britta Mogensen who have criticised the methods behind the report and argued that the number of arranged and forced marriages most likely is much higher, see Lone Nørgaard & Britta Mogensen, ”Tvangsægteskaber – en katastroferetport”, Politiken (Copenhagen, Aug. 11, 2004).


Danish society and therefore used the assistance offered them and refused to follow their families’ wishes blindly.\textsuperscript{417}

There were 74,241 visible minorities in Copenhagen in 2001, 12.6 percent of the total population. Compared to this number, the number of recorded cases of forced marriages seems rather low, even considering that the Ethnic Consultant Team was most likely not in contact with all women and men having problems with a forced marriage.\textsuperscript{418} As with cases of domestic violence, the actual number of people fighting a forced marriage, or suffering within one, is most likely higher than the number of cases reported. Despite this hypothetical difference between reported cases and actual cases, the statistics have underscored the conclusion that the majority of young visible minorities in Denmark have not been involved in forced marriages. There is no doubt that women and men confronting a forced marriage face serious problems and conflicts. But the seriousness of this problem sparked generalized media stories that did not differentiate between different communities but rather presented forced marriages as a habit among a much larger percentage of visible minorities than surveys suggest.

Schmidt and Jakobsen have also looked at whom visible minorities marry. 80 percent of the participants married a person from the same national origin, 9 percent married an ethnic Dane, and 8 percent married a person of European (but non-Danish) or Northern American origin.\textsuperscript{419} This might seems a rather high rate of endogamy, but compared to ethnic Danes’ rate of endogamy the visible minorities’ rate is not high. Surveys of ethnic Danes’ marriage patterns from the same year show that 84 percent of ethnic Danes married other ethnic Danes.\textsuperscript{420}

**Marriage patterns connected to questions of multiculturalism**

In the 1980s and early 1990s the news media’s representation of visible minority women and marriages centered on the individual woman, who appeared as a sympathetic victim, but during the late 1990s this representation increasingly became connected to debates regarding immigration and multiculturalism. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, several news clips reported on


\textsuperscript{418} *Fakta om flygtninge, indvandrere og deres efterkommere i Danmark*, (Copenhagen: Dansk Flygtningehjælp & Mellemfølgeligt Samvirke, 2001), 12. The number represented people defined as immigrants, refugees, and their descendants. This was the latest year from where statistics were available.

\textsuperscript{419} Garbi Schmidt & Vibke Jakobsen, *Pardannelse blandt etniske minoriteter i Danmark*, (Copenhagen: Socialforsknings Instituttet, 2004), 130.

laws that aimed to prevent the use of forced marriages to facilitate immigration into Denmark. One 1999 news clip opened with a focus on such a law: “Denmark must not be a multicultural society, the government states. A new bill will prevent forced marriages.” This introduction made a direct connection between forced marriages and multiculturalism and implied that forced marriages were the reason why Denmark increasingly was becoming more ethnically diverse. If Schmidt and Jakobsen’s conclusions were right, this connection between forced marriages and multiculturalism must be considered illogical in retrospect. The precondition for the news clip’s introduction was that most visible minorities homogenously practiced the same marriage pattern, i.e. forced marriages, and that this pattern was the reason behind visible minorities’ immigration to Denmark. But, as shown, the number of forced marriages has most likely been small, and thus most family unifications have not been unifications based on forced marriages. It might also be important to point out that 16 percent of ethnic Danes marry exogenously, bringing their spouses to Denmark, and that statistically more Danish citizens have brought spouses to the country than visible minorities have. In 2000, 2,332 spouses were unified with “refugees and immigrants,” whereas 4,067 spouses joined “Danish or Nordic citizens.”

The news clip was an illustrative example of the public debate in the late 1990s and early 2000s about whether current demographic development in Denmark should be allowed to continue, with the risk that it would change the country from a state of ethnic homogeneity to a multicultural society. The then-governing Social Democratic Party repeatedly announced during the second half of the 1990s that “Denmark is not [a] multiethnic [society] and should not be [a] multiethnic [society].” Then-Prime Minister, Social Democrat Poul Nyrup Rasmussen also touched upon ‘immigrant issues’ in several of his New Year’s speeches during that period. Traditionally, on 1 January the Prime Minister of Denmark gives a speech to the nation that puts forward the government’s political ideas, concerns, and goals. In 1997/98 as well as in 1999/2000, Nyrup Rasmussen talked specifically about forced marriages and argued that they should not be allowed in Denmark. In 1999/2000 he said: “There are many foreigners who contribute greatly to the Danish society. But there are also others who clearly express that they do not want to be a part of society; that they do not care about our values or societal foundations. It is not acceptable that a

421 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19991221, original text: “Danmark skal ikke være et multietnisk samfund, fastslår regeringen. Et nyt forslag skal hindre tvangsægteskaber.”
423 Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, said in Vejgårdshallen, Ålborg, Oct. 1997, original text: “Danmark er ikke multietnisk og skal ikke være det.” Here cited after the Minority Party [Minoritetspartiet], a political left-wing party planning on running at the next election in 2005 in Denmark, see http://www.cegebe.dk/minoritetspartiet.htm
well-educated Turkish girl is forced to marry a man from a distant Turkish village. To us it is a human right, as important as any other human right, that the woman as well as the man freely can choose her/his partner.”

The question of marriage practices had here moved into the center of political focus and political rhetoric.

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Danish Parliament passed a series of laws regarding marriage practices, officially to prevent forced marriages but most likely also to prevent immigration. In order to prevent forced marriages, in 2000 the then-governing Social Democrats and Social Liberals [Radikale Venstre] changed the family unification laws so that people less than twenty-five years of age no longer had a right to family unification. People between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four were required to have their application for family unification viewed individually by the Danish Immigration Service [Udlandingsstyrelsen], who had to find that the marriage was not a forced marriage in order to approve the family unifications. In 2002, the then-ruling Conservative [Konservative] and Liberal [Venstre] government further tightened this law by removing eighteen to twenty-four-year-olds from eligibility for family unification. In support of the measure, the government argued that the older people had had a higher chance to resist a forced marriage, making explicit that the law aimed primarily at preventing forced marriages. The 2002 law also provided that couples had to prove that their connection to Denmark was stronger than their connection to any other country [tilknytningskravet] in order be allowed to unite in Denmark. Because a significant number of ethnic Danes suffered under the latter regulation, the government modified it a year later; as of 2003, a person who had lived in Denmark for more than 28 years could unify with a spouse in Denmark. The 2003 modifications also made family unification between close relatives, i.e. cousins, illegal.

Despite the fact that the news media portrayed visible minorities from several different nationalities, they generally ascribed to them all a singular homogeneous culture, and the news continuously described forced marriages as an integral part of that culture. For instance, one host reinforced the stereotype that certain cultures breed forced marriages when he reported that

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“Some…argue that it is in their culture that the parents can force the youths to marry a certain person.”

The host distanced himself from his statements, a linguistic strategy enabling a person to express negative views. He did not say that he personally believed that it was visible minorities’ culture which caused problems; instead he said that others argued this. Through such distancing, it becomes possible to express more negative views than one might otherwise have been able to. But the important thing for this analysis was that such statements were uttered and that the statements were not neutral. As Foucault described it, knowledge and power are produced via a society’s discursive practices. Not only do statements reflect reality; they also contribute to constructing reality. Prejudices do not only derive from personal attitudes and personal opinions but to a greater extent from portrayals of members of a group, here visible minorities. The way visible minorities were presented by the television-hosts and journalists were therefore more important than whose opinions the hosts and journalists might have referred to when they have presented the visible minorities.

**Inter-family marriages and child marriages**

The news media also presented two other marriage practices as integral parts of visible minorities’ culture(s) during the 1990s and early 2000s, namely marriages between close family members and child marriages. Public Danish discussion generally condemned both practices.

During the early 1990s, the Danish Parliament passed a law prohibiting marriages involving anyone under eighteen years of age. Previously, underage marriage had only been illegal for Danish citizens. In practice, then, the new law aimed specifically at minorities without Danish citizenship residing in Denmark. A news clip from 1992 discussed the law and argued that “The planned ban on child marriage might provoke some of the most religious and old-fashioned minded immigrants.” Simultaneously, the clip showed footage of visible minority children aged ca. four to seven years, indicating that the practiced child marriages were taking place between very young children. In reality, the majority of so-called child marriages involved teenagers. An interviewed

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426 TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19991221, original text: “Nogle…vil jo sige, at det ligger i vores [synlige minoriteters] kultur, at forældrene kan tvinge de unge til at gifte sig med en bestemt person.”


429 TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19920408, original text: "Det planlagte forbud mod børneægteskaber kan måske provokere nogle af de mest religiøse og gammeldagsindstillede indvandrere."
visible minority said: “It is an OK rule which I personally support, and I think most immigrants will support it too.” To which the interviewer replied: “But why?” This reply implied that the interviewer expected the visible minority to express a different view, as if it were more likely that the visible minorities would be against the law than in favor of it. The interviewer undermined the truth value of the visible minority’s statement by treating it as an unusual answer. That treatment combined with the voice-over which argued that the new law might “provoke some of the most religious and old-fashioned minded immigrants” most likely left the viewers with the impression that a large number of visible minorities were against the ban on child marriages.

A news clip argued that there were a higher number of disabled children among visible minorities than among ethnically Danish children, and the news clip explained this higher number by referring to visible minorities’ marriage practices. The clip argued: “For some groups it [having disabled children] is also because they are used to marry close relatives. That results in high frequency of children with handicaps.” The news clip portrayed a family of Pakistani origin who had a mentally and physically disabled child: “Afshan [the disabled child] suffers from a rare metabolic disorder, but her mother believes that the handicap is mainly caused by lack of oxygen during a long and complicated birth.” This statement undermined Afshan’s mother’s explanation behind her daughter’s disability. The voice-over instead argued that Afshan suffered from a metabolic disorder because her parents were close relatives. The news clip presented this argument as a fact, while it diminished the validity of the mother’s explanation through the use of the word “but.” The voice-over thereby seemed to emphasize and give truth value to the notion that marriage practices cause disabilities, despite the fact that the interviewed mother provided other possible reasons behind the disability. The clip further discredited the mother’s explanation by arguing that she “believed” the disability was caused by birth complications; this indicated that her statement was a belief and not a truth. The mother told about her complicated birth; she critiqued the (Danish) doctors who had assisted her at the birth and indirectly blamed them for her child’s disability. The mother’s explanation was followed by the voice-over which argued: “No one can be sure if it is genetic defects, early fetus damage, or damage at birth [that caused Afshan’s disability], but it is

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430 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19920408, original text: ”Det er en udmærket regel, som jeg personligt går ind for, og jeg tror også, at de fleste af indvandrerne de vil går ind for den.”

431 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19920408, original text: ”Hvorfor?”

432 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Visen, date: 19960528, original text: ”Der er nok også for nogle gruppers vedkommende det, at man er vant til at gifte sig med nære slægtninge. Det betyder, at der kommer en overhyppighed af born med handicap.”

433 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Visen, date: 19960528, original text: ”Afshan lider af en sjælden stofskiftesygdom, men hendes mor er overbevist om, at handicappet mest skyldes iltmangel under en lang og vanskelig fødsel.”
interesting that immigrant families, like Afshan’s, statistically are at greater risk of getting mentally handicapped children than other parents in Copenhagen... The immigrants’ children only constitute 12.3 percent of all 0-13 years old Copenhageners but they constitute all of 22.3 percent of Copenhagen’s mentally retarded children.\textsuperscript{434}

There have been few surveys on disabilities that included ethnic/racial perspectives in Denmark, but one recent survey published in the medical journal Ugeskrift for Læger has pointed to an overrepresentation of mental disabilities among “people with immigrant background” in Copenhagen.\textsuperscript{435} However, this overrepresentation was lower than the one that DR presented. The medical survey argued that 14 percent of children in Copenhagen had immigrant background and that 16 percent of children connected to the public Center for Handicapped [Center for Handicapped] were of immigrant background; this gave people of immigrant background an overrepresentation of 18.5 percent (2003). The survey concluded: “There is a surplus of MR [Mentally Retarded] in children from ethnic minorities in the County of Copenhagen. The causes are not known, nor are etiological factors for MR for a great part of the children. Consanguinity is likely to be a risk factor for MR, especially if it is already present in the family.”\textsuperscript{436} According to the medical experts, consanguinity, i.e. being related by blood, was likely to be a risk, but the reasons behind mental disabilities were not certain. This uncertainty was not presented by the news; instead the news presented it as a well-established fact that consanguinity caused disabilities among visible minority children in Denmark.

The news clip visually illustrated its supposed statistical difference between visible minority and ethnically Danish children in a graph. By showing the difference via two senses, sound and vision, the clip underscored the difference. Despite the voice-over’s claim that it was not possible to know what had caused Afshan’s disability, the voice-over managed to create the conclusive impression that it was marriage practices by placing the mother’s argument in opposition to the news’ own voice-over and to the statistical information. Statistics often carry authority with them, and most likely the television viewers gave more credence to statistical information than to an

\textsuperscript{434} DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960528, original text: “Ingen kan med sikkerhed sige, om der er tale om en genetisk fejl eller om en tidlig fosters- eller fødselskade. Men det er tankevækkende, at indvandrerfamilier, som Afshans, statistisk set bærer en større risiko for at få et mentalt retarderet barn end andre københavnsvæskne forældre... Indvandrernes børn udgør kun 12.3\% af alle 0-13-årige københavnere, mens de udgør hele 22.3\% af kommunens mentalt retarderede børn.”


\textsuperscript{436} Anne Lisbeth Hoffmann, Peter Bækgaard, Bente Beck & Karen Brondum-Nielsen, “Årsager til mental retardering hos børn med indvandrerbaggrund”, Ugeskrift for Læger, #165, (2003), 42-46. The cited is from the English summary at the end of the article. Some of the differences between the 1996-news clip and this 2003-article were caused by developments in time, e.g. there were a higher number of visible minority children in Copenhagen in 2003 than in 1996.
individual, visible minority woman’s explanation. Family unification between close relatives, i.e. cousins, uncles-nieces, etc., became illegal with the 2003 rule.\footnote{Henrik Kaufholz & Claus Blok Thomsen: ”Danmark som arkitekt som ’Fort Europa’”, Politiken, (Copenhagen, Oct. 24, 2003), 6.}

### Honor killing

DR carried a story that resembled TV2’s news clip about Fatma.\footnote{I.e. the analysed news clip about the ‘third’ Fatma (TV2 (Station), news program Dags Dato, date: 20030511).} The DR news clip told a story about a young Turkish woman named Gulhan who was living in hiding from her family because she had rejected their wishes for her marriage. Like Fatma, she had an attempted suicide behind her and lived in hiding because she feared that her father would kill her. The news clip was introduced by the host, who said: “Now you will meet a woman who has made a brave choice. For several years she has been living in hiding because she fears her own father and his revenge. She refuses to participate in a forced marriage with a cousin from Turkey. Now she has chosen to break the isolation and come forward in this television program with her shocking story to illustrate that it is not only in Sweden that girls from medieval societies fight their own lonesome battle – a battle to survive force, violence, and honor killing.”\footnote{DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020127, original text: ”Nu skal De møde en kvinde, som har truffet et modigt valg. I flere år har hun levet under jorden i frygt for sin egen far og hans hævn, fordi hun ikke vil tvangsgiftes med en fætter fra Tyrkiet. Nu har hun valgt at bryde sin isolering og stå frem her i magasinet med sin rystende historie for at vise, at det ikke kun er i Sverige, at piger fra middelalderlige samfund kæmper deres egen ensomme kamp. En kamp for at overleve tvang, vold og æresdrab.”} The reference to Sweden referred to a Swedish-Kurdish woman, Fadime Sahindal, who was murdered by her father in January 2002 because she had refused to participate in a family arranged marriage and chosen to live with her ethnically Swedish partner instead. Both the Swedish and Danish mass media widely covered her case.\footnote{Stig Larsson & Cecilia Englund eds., Debatten om hedersmord: feminism eller racism, (Stockholm: Svartvitts förlag, 2004).} This news introduction generalized about Turkish and Kurdish cultures and presented them as if they were identical and as if all Turks and Kurds behaved homogenously.

By characterizing this society as “medieval”, the introduction created a distance between ‘the medieval society’ and ‘our society’. The implication of ‘their’ society being medieval was that ‘our’ society had continuously developed and become modern, whereas ‘their society’ had frozen in its development around the Middle-ages and had remained there since.\footnote{Other DR news clips have similarly characterised visible minorities’ cultures as belonging to previous times. See for instance DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20030717 which argued: “The ethnic minorities in Denmark live in a kind of mini societies where [the practiced] norms and rules were outdated long time ago”, (original text: ”De etniske minoriteter i Danmark de lever i nogle minisamfund, hvor normer og regler de er forældet for længe siden”).} ‘Their’ culture
was, in other words, presented as static, as opposed to ‘our’ dynamic. Post-colonial scholars have noted this distinction between stagnation and progression as a typical characteristic in Western descriptions of the colonial ‘other’. Made up of unchangeable essences, the ‘other’s’ culture often has been described as static.442

DR’s portrayal of the visible minority woman Gulhan continued with a voice-over: “Gulhan is one of the many hundreds of immigrant girls who have broken with their fathers’ and the families’ traditions and force.”443 The footage showed a younger woman walking along a road towards the camera, while a female voice explains her story: “It has been an extremely hard battle and very lonesome. I took a big decision back then when I said no to marrying my cousin. Because I said no, I had to risk never seeing my family again. I had to risk being killed.”444 At the end of this statement the woman appeared in a close up shot. Viewers looked directly into her face while she said that she had risked homicide.

Visually, close-up pictures of a person’s face create a sense of intimacy. Viewers often feel closer to the person speaking if they have seen the person’s face and facial expressions than if they have seen a person from a distance. When the footage of Gulhan cut from total shots – pictures of a person in full figure – of her walking to close-up shots of her face it had the dramaturgic effect of suddenly bringing her closer to the viewers. This closeness created an intimacy between her and the viewers, and in that intimate space she told the viewers that she had risked being killed. Her face, and intimate story, filled up the screen and she thus became part of the viewers’ intimate domestic space. Television often is watched at home in an intimate space, and in stories like this the editing and narrating seem to create an intimate connection between the protagonist’s personal space and the viewers’ personal domestic space. But Gulhan did not create this intimate space herself. The television program created it through their strategic editing of the news clip, and it was done consciously to create an atmosphere of intimacy that would make the viewers feel as part of the story, or at least as very close observers of Gulhan’s story. This editing most likely increased their interest in the program, which contributed to keeping them in front of the screen.

442 See for instance Edward Said, Orientalism. Western Concepts of the Orient, (London: Penguin, 1995) and Ronald Inden, Imaging India (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994) for examples of how the West’s communication of the ‘other’ was carried out in essences.
443 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020127, original text: "Gulhan er en af de mange hundrede indvandræringer, der har brudt med faderens og familiens traditioner og tvang."
444 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020127, original text: "Det har været en utrolig hard kamp og meget ensomt. En stor beslutning tog jeg i sin tid, da jeg sagde nej til at blive gift med min fætter. For jeg sagde nej, jeg kunne risikere aldrig nogen sinde mere at se min familie. Jeg kunne risikere, at blive slået ihjel."
The news clip argued that Gulhan’s family practiced a double moral standard. The family wanted her to marry, and they expected her do so because ‘good daughters’ both marry and do as their fathers wish. But at the same time the clip also informed viewers that Gulhan’s father had been practicing bigamy, and for several years had been living with a wife and family in Turkey as well as a different wife and family in Denmark. It therefore seemed even more grotesque that her father would force her to follow norms and traditions that he did not follow himself. It also created an impression of him as an unreasonable patriarch who wanted to direct other people’s lives while he did as he pleased. 

The clip did not present his behavior as the act of an individual person but as an act representing a certain culture. Analytically, the central issue here is not whether Gulhan’s father was a misogynist patriarch. He might very well have been. Instead the key is how the news clip presented his acts as the embodiment of a culture that included visible minorities in Sweden as well as in Denmark, Kurds as well as Turks. The clip repeatedly said that Gulhan represented “immigrant girls” which also contributed to presenting her family situation and her family’s cultural background as representative for all visible minorities. The news presented Gulhan’s and her father’s culture as barbaric. She said: “According to the culture I am from, it is almost natural that girls are being killed.” In other words, the clip presented homicide as an integrated part of that culture, a culture associated with visible minorities in Denmark. The clip finished with Gulhan explaining how she feared her father would talk her brother into killing her. She said: “I am afraid they will pressure him so he can save the family’s honor, i.e. he will save it via that way, i.e. via killing me.” This statement was followed by an ‘outro’ – the opposite of an ‘intro’ that finishes a communication sequence that concluded that Gulhan’s situation was not uncommon: “Every year there are more than 400 immigrant girls who seek help.”

The news clip presented Gulhan as a modern woman who had taken a stand against her medieval family. She was wearing make-up and contemporary, fashionable Western clothes, and her long hair hung loosely down her back. Her visual appearance indicated her status as a modern woman, as did her statements. Her appearance indicated that she had chosen ‘the Western progressive side’, ‘the Danish side’, ‘our side’, rather than the ‘other medieval side’, ‘the Turkish

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445 DR (Station), primetime news program TVÅvisen, date: 20020127, original text: “Den kultur jeg kommer fra, der er det nærmest naturligt, at piger bliver slået ihjel.”

446 DR (Station), primetime news program TVÅvisen, date: 20020127, original text: “…er jeg bange for, at de skal lægge pres på ham [Gulhans bror], og at han så skal rense familiens ære, dvs. at han skal redde den på den måde, dvs. at slå mig ihjel.”

447 DR (Station), primetime news program TVÅvisen, date: 20020127, original text: "Hvert år er der over 400 indvandrerpiger, som siger hjælp."
immigrant side’, ‘their side’. She had chosen ‘our’ values as opposed to ‘their’ values, and she had thereby confirmed that ‘our’ values were placed higher on the imaginary hierarchy than ‘their’ values were. It most likely seemed logical and understandable to the viewers why Gulhan and the other “more than 400 immigrant girls” had chosen ‘our’ values over values characterized as “medieval.” The latter allowed men to live lives with double standards while women were being killed.

It is important to distinguish between Gulhan’s personal story and all other visible minorities’ stories. There is no doubt that Gulhan has faced a serious situation and that she was violated by her family, and there are many other women in similar situations. But despite the serious and horrifying aspects of her story, it does not seem fully justified to make general conclusions about a whole culture or a whole people, or about all immigrants in Denmark, based on an individual story.

One of the reasons why the so-called honor killing was widely covered in the television news was the fact that honor killing has meant ‘a good news story’. Honor killings, at least in the way the news media have presented them, involve drama, violence, and romance, the latter often in the form of forbidden love. They also have had a clear division between the ‘good’ and ‘evil’ characters demanded by the actant model. In other words, the elements that made honor killings ‘good’ news stories were similar to the elements constructing classical narration as seen in soap operas or classic Hollywood dramas.

Another DR news clip reported about “a 22-year-old Iranian man from the city of Odense who was accused of having threatened his sister’s life because she refused to marry a man the family had found her.” A voice-over informed viewers that “It is unusual that the police receive reports regarding these cases. But this does not mean that the cases are few or that they only flourish in certain immigrant circles.” An expert, Annette Winter, elaborated on honor killing: “It [honor killing] is taking place both in the well-functioning and not so well-functioning families, and it is not a question of education either, rather it is a question of to what extent they are connected to their country’s or their previous country’s culture.” Also here it was explicitly stated that honor killings took place among all visible minorities, not just “in certain immigrant circles,” and that

448 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020206, original text: “En 22-årig iransk mand fra Odense er sigtet for at have truet sin 18-årige søster på livet. Hun vil ikke gifte sig med den mand familien har fundet til hende.”
449 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020206, original text: “Det [æresdrab] er både i de velfungerende og i de knap så velfungerende [familier], og det er heller ikke et spørgsmål om uddannelse, for det er mere et spørgsmål om, i hvil høj grad man knytter sig til sit lands eller sit tidligere lands kultur.”
honor killing were caused by culture. The expert indirectly stated that, regardless of other factors, if visible minorities were connected to their culture, then they would practice, or risk practicing, honor killing.

The news media gave culture priority over nationality in representations of honor killings. A DR news clip from 2002 began with the introduction: “Young women break with their families to prevent participating in forced marriages,” after which a young woman of Somali origin, made anonymous by distorting her voice and filming her shadow instead of her face, told viewers about her family: “They will not have anything to do with me” because she had found a partner, and “the father wants, on his own, to find a Somali husband to the daughter.” While the viewers saw footage of the Somali woman’s shadow, a voice-over explained that “Nobody knows how many [women] break with their families in order to choose a husband themselves. In January, the Swedish-Kurd Fadime was killed by her father because she had chosen a Swedish partner, and this Thursday an Iranian man in Odense was jailed for kidnapping and hitting his sister. She [the sister] had run away from home to prevent a forced marriage." The news clip hereby managed to group visible minorities of Somali, Kurdish, and Iranian origins living in Denmark and in Sweden into the same category and to present them as if they were the same. Their commonality lay in the fact that they all forced their daughters into marriages and they tried to kill their daughters if they refused to participate. The news media defined these common characteristics as cultural and presented the culture – which the news media sometimes presented as interchangeable with Islam – as a force that determined their behavior; the news clip presented this force as stronger than other forces of nationality, context, individuality, etc.

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450 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020211, original text: “Unge kvinder der bryder med familien for at undgå tvangsætteskab.”
451 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020211, original text: “De vil ikke have noget med mig at gøre.”
452 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020211, original text: “Faderen vil selv finde en somalisk mand til datteren.”
453 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020211, original text: “Ingen ved, hvor mange der vælger familien fra for selv at få lov til at vælge en mand. I januar blev den svenske kurder Fadime dræbt af sin far, fordi hun selv valgte sin svenske kæreste, og i torsdags blev en iransk mand i Odense fængslet, for at have bortført og slået sin søster. Hun var stukket af hjemmefra, for at undgå et tvangsætteskab.”
454 TV2 has similarly portrayed visible minority women as one homogeneous group subjected to forced marriages and honour killing. A news clip from 1996 for instance connected a brother’s threat against his 17 years old sister in Hørsholm, a suburban area outside Copenhagen, to the homicide of a Pakistani woman in Frederiksberg, a Copenhagen city area. The viewers were not told what national origin the brother and his sister had, and apparently that was not important because the involved characters were portrayed as similar; they were defined by their common immigrant status and by their acts of honour killings. The same news clip talked about “immigrant women” at crisis centres and said among others that “The media have lately covered large amounts of violence in immigrant circles.” (TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19960714, original text: “Medierne har omtalt meget vold i indvandrerkredse på det seneste”). This statement implied that all immigrants were similar, and that there was
Visible minorities = Muslims

Since the mid-1990s, journalists and interviewees have increasingly identified visible minorities as Muslims, using the terms “Muslims” and “immigrants” interchangeably. One can see this in the news clips analyzed above, in which journalists and interviewees presented arranged and forced marriages as well as honor killings as integral parts of Islamic practices. Similarly, another news clip described a visible minority woman’s break with a forced marriage as a “break… with the Muslim framework.” During the 1970s and 1980s, Islam was mentioned very few times in the news material, but from the mid-1990s it received much more frequent mention. It was characteristic for the whole period from the 1970s to the early 2000s that journalists or interviewed politicians, experts, or laypeople did not distinguish between different kinds of Muslims. The news media simply labeled visible minorities as “Muslims” without elaborating upon the differences between orthodox Muslims, secular Muslims, Shia Muslims, Sunni Muslims, etc. By using the term “Muslim” interchangeably with “immigrant” and “ethnic,” the news left limited room for visible minorities who were atheists or belonged to other religions; instead the news media have created an image of immigrants as a homogenous group of Muslims.

The impression of homogeneity was intertwined with the journalistic technique of using individual persons to represent a large and diverse group of people. One news clip, whose main aim seemed to be to describe the fundamental differences between visible minorities and ethnic Danes, introduced the distinction by stating, in the television host’s introductory comment, that “Danes and Muslim immigrants live in the same society, but there is a gulf between them. Danes are horrified by the killing of immigrant women who have hurt the family’s honor, and many immigrants are at least as horrified by Danish norms.” The news clip was constructed around a portrayal of two elderly visible minorities, Aisha and Suleman, who were described as “a typical...
immigrant couple.” Early in the clip, a voice-over said: “It is seldom that the Muslim attitude to life intrudes on us in an extreme form. In July, a young immigrant woman was murdered by her own people. She did not want the husband her family had chosen for her. That was why they killed her. To us this is completely incomprehensible. But for first generation immigrants like Aisha and Suleman, it is completely clear logic.”

This statement created a clear division between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and described this as a fundamental gap: What was “clear logic” for them was “completely incomprehensible” for us. The visible minority couple, Aisha and Suleman, made several comments that could be considered fundamentalist or extreme, for instance: “If my daughter does something shameful, the whole family will be hurt by the shame. People will start talking behind our backs and gossip about us and our daughter. Therefore God has demanded that she must be murdered.” The interviewer asked: “What if your daughter was seeing a Danish man without marrying him?” To which the woman, Aisha, answered: “I would not accept it. I would correct her and tell her that she is on the wrong track and forbid her to leave the house. If she defies me, she deserves to die.” The news clip presented these attitudes towards marriage and honor killing as if they were common for all visible minorities. A voice-over even stated this commonality explicitly: “Regardless of whether they are Pakistanis, Turks, Iranians, or Arabs this [the attitudes of Aisha and Sulaman] is the attitude they have…if one asks immigrant parents…how would you deal with your daughter if she did not follow your rules. Then the absolute majority…would answer that way [i.e. say they would kill her].” The clip presented Aisha and Suleman as representatives of “the typical immigrants,” and their religious fundamentalism thereby became a characteristic ascribed to the average visible minorities.

No one knows how many Muslims there are in Denmark. There have been no statistical registrations of religious affiliations, others than for members of the state Christian

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458 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960909, original text: ”det typiske indvandrerpår.”
459 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960909, original text: ”Det er sjældent, men det sker, at de muslimskes livsholdninger trænger sig ind på os i ekstrem form. I juli blev en ung indvandrerkvinde myrdet af sine egne. Hun ville ikke have den mand hendes familie havde valgt til hende. Derfor drebte de hende. For os er det fuldstændig ufatteligt. Men for førstegenerationsindvandrere som Aisha og Suleman er det fuldstændig klar logik.”
460 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960909, original text: ”Hvis min datter gør noget skamfuldt, rammes vi alle i familien af skammen. Folk begynder at bagtale og sladre om os og vores datter. Derfor har Gud betalet, at hun skal slås ihjel.”
461 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960909, original text: ”Hvad hvis din datter bliver kæreste med en dansker uden at gifte sig?”
462 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960909, original text: ”Jeg går ikke med til det. Jeg vil irettesætte hende og fortælle hende, at hun er på afveje, og forbyde hende at gå ud. Hvis hun trods mig, fortjener hun døden.”
463 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960909, original text: ”Uanset om de er pakistanere, tyrkere, iranere eller arabere. Der er det den holdning... hvis man går ud og spørge indvandrerforeldre...hvordan vil I forholde jer til, at jeres datter ikke forholder sig til jeres regler, så vil de allerfleste...svare på samme måde.”
church. The first estimates regarding the number of Muslims were conducted during the late 1980s; islamologist Jørgen Bæk Simonsen, based on statistics about immigrants’ and descendants’ national backgrounds, concluded that the numbers of Muslims in Denmark were 57,079.\footnote{Jørgen Bæk Simonsen, Islam i Danmark (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitets forlag, 1990.)} Simonsen repeated his surveys in 1994, 1999, and 2001 and found the number of Muslims in Denmark to be 86,436, 149,063, and 170,000 respectively.\footnote{Jørgen Bæk Simonsen, Politikens Islamleksikon (Copenhagen: Politiken, 1994), Jørgen Bæk Simonsen, ”Fra homogenitet til pluralisme. Religionsfrihed og islam i Danmark”, in Visioner for religionsfrihed, demokrati og etisk ligestilling eds. Simonsen Bæk, Christoffersen & Abdullah. (Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling, 1999), Jørgen Bæk Simonsen, ”Constitutional Rights and Religious Freedom I Practice. The Case of Islam in Denmark” in Religious Freedom and the Neutrality of the State, eds. Shadid & Koningsveld, (Leuven: Peeters, 2002). Here after Brian Jakobsen, ”Muslimer i Danmark – en kritisk vurdering af antalsopgørelser”, Information om indvandrere. Tidsskrift for migration og kulturanalyse, (Odense: Syddansk Universitet, 2005, forthcoming), 3.} During the 1990s and early 2000s, several other estimates were made. World Christian Encyclopedia estimated the numbers for 1990, 1995 and 2000 to be 55,000, 62,000 and 66,551 respectively, while bishop Niels Henrik Arendt estimated in his book Gud er stor – om islam og kristendom (1994), most recently released in its fifth edition, that there were 170,000 Muslims in Denmark. Geographer Jørgen Clausen estimated the number to be even higher, ca. 300,000 as of 2003.\footnote{Henrik Arendt, Gud er stor, (Frederiksberg: Anis, 1994), Jørgen Clausen (ed.), Grenser for indvandring? (Vejle: Rafael, 2003). Here after Brian Jakobsen, ”Muslimer i Danmark – en kritisk vurdering af antalsopgørelser”, Information om indvandrere. Tidsskrift for migration og kulturanalyse, (Odense: Syddansk Universitet, 2005, forthcoming), 4 f.} Simonsen’s estimates are problematic because they presumed that all immigrants and descendents from predominantly Islamic countries were themselves Muslim. Arendt’s estimates are problematic because he has not explained how he determined his figures, and Clausen has referred to Arendt as source for his statistics. Brian Jacobsen, a sociologist of religion, has recently tried to nuance the numbers by combining the numbers of immigrants and descendents from Islamic countries with surveys about the number of followers of various religions in these countries. As one might expect, he found the number of Muslims in Denmark to be lower than the previous estimates: Jacobsen has found that the number of immigrants and descendents from ‘Islamic countries’ was 265,814 (2005), 4.9 percent of the total population, of which 189,832 were believed to be Muslims, 3.5 percent of the Danish population.\footnote{Brian Jakobsen, “Muslimer i Danmark – en kritisk vurdering af antalsopgørelser”, Information om indvandrere. Tidsskrift for migration og kulturanalyse, (Odense: Syddansk Universitet, 2005, forthcoming), 5, 8.}

His numbers are also problematic because they presumed that the immigrating and descending population has kept the same religious patterns as the population in the country of origin. However, they might be the most correct available.

The central point here is that the number of actual Muslims in Denmark seems to have been (and continues to be) much lower than the number of immigrants and descendents. Thus
equating “Muslims” with “immigrants.” is an unjustified generalization. Jakobsen’s statistical information from 2005 was not available to me, but statistics from 2004 show that there were 442,036 immigrants and descendents in Denmark, of which 313,976 came from non-Western countries.\(^{468}\) Compared to Jacobsen’s estimate that 3.5 percent of the Danish population is Muslim, the statistics from 2004 showed that 8.2 percent of the population were immigrants and descendents, of which 5.8 percent came from Non-Western countries. As a point of comparison, 84.3 percent of the Danish population were members of the Danish Christian Church [Folkekirken] in 2002.\(^{469}\)

In the news material from the 1970s to the 2000s, Islam was the only religion mentioned in connection with visible minorities. The news has not mentioned, for example, Hinduism or Buddhism in its coverage of Tamil or Vietnamese visible minorities, despite the fact that the majority of immigrants of Tamil or Vietnamese origin belonged to those two religions. The news coverage therefore left the impression that all visible minorities in Denmark were Muslims – not only Muslims but fundamentalist Muslims, as exemplified by the portrayal of people like Aisha and Suleman.

Anthropologist Peter Hervik conducted a series of focus group interviews centered on the reception of mass media’s communication about Muslims. He used examples of Danish media’s representations of Muslims from 2001 to spark discussions in the groups, but the discussions ranged beyond the specific examples. It would have been ideal if he or others had conducted focus groups interviews on media receptions throughout my analyzed period of time, but, since this is not the case, I draw upon his interviews to give an impression of contemporary reception. Even though this reception is not representative for my whole period, it can function as an interesting comment on media reception at the end of my period. Hedvik has focused on the media’s representation of Muslims, but his conclusions are transferable to my focus on media’s representation of visible minorities because the category ‘Muslims’, despite its religious basis, has functioned synonymously with the categories ‘immigrants’ and ‘ethnic’ in the news media. The majority of interviewed people in his groups were visible minorities living in Denmark.

The visible minorities interviewed in Hervik’s survey found that the media negatively generalized about Muslims. As Hervik concluded, “The participants found that the media in its


\(^{469}\) Danish National Statistics (Danmarks Statistik), see http://www.dst.dk/dk5search.aspx?keyword=folkekirkemedlemmer&searchid=413#www
coverage of the Minhaj movement [an extreme Muslim organization] presented all Muslims as fundamentalists as well as supporters of death penalty and as against homosexuality.”470 Several of the participants of Iranian origin explained how they had left Iran because of their atheism and opposition to the religious government, only to find that they were looked upon as religious fundamentalists in Denmark. Sourush a forty-three-year-old man of Iranian origin, explained: “In Iran, I was prosecuted because I was a non-believer. Here I am prosecuted because I am called a Muslim, because my last name is Demir or Taramian.”471 The visible minority interviewees found that ethnic Danes believed that they were Muslims and met them as if they were Muslims because of their outer appearance, which the media had equated with Islam. One woman, twenty-five-year-old Faris, explained the paradox about being viewed as a Muslim without being one: “People see me and think ‘oh, there is a Muslim girl’. But honestly, I have never learnt to pray. I am not even able to say a single prayer.” The media’s equation of visible minorities and Islam has had practical consequences for how visible minorities are encountered in their daily interactions in Denmark.

The exception that has proved the rule

The analyzed news clips and newspaper articles presented a few exceptions to the dominant stereotypical representation of visible minority women. These were success stories, stories about visible minority women who lived what the new media defined as successful lives. I was able to locate three such success stories in the material.472 One newspaper article portrayed a ‘successful’, female visible minority, Azam Javadi of Iranian origin, who lived a life described as fundamentally different from what her traditions prescribed. The article characterized her life as a “break” from her traditions, as she herself said. “My mother just had to execute all the decision that the head of the family [her father] took. Now I have…[a son] and a husband. We are a little family and it is totally different. My husband…takes care of cooking and does laundry. Sometimes we laugh at it. Compared to our traditional upbringing this [our current life] is the opposite world.”473


471 Peter Hervik, *Mediernes muslimer. En antropologisk undersøgelse af mediernes dækning af religioner i Danmark* (Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling, 2002), 271, original text: "I Iran blev jeg forfulgt, fordi jeg var vantrø. Og her bliver jeg forfulgt, fordi jeg bliver kaldt Muslim, fordi jeg hedder Demir eller Taramian til efternavn."

472 The third will be analyzed in the following chapter, “Veiling and dressing”; the first two follow here.

Unlike the other visible minority women whom the news media described as representative for all female visible minorities, the article portrayed this woman as an individual representing only herself. The journalist drew an image of her as an exception – the token visible minority – whose story was interesting precisely because she was so exceptional. By including such a story, the news media maintained the image of the majority of female visible minorities as traditional and oppressed.

The participants in Hervik’s survey complained that the Danish news media did not differentiate between different generations of visible minorities living in Denmark. As twenty-five-year-old Nadia of Pakistani origin argued, “one is kept in the roles that your parents were kept in.”\footnote{Peter Hervik, *Mediernes muslimer: En antropologisk undersøgelse af mediernes dækning af religioner i Danmark* (Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling, 2002), 319, original text: “man bliver fastholdt i de roller, som ens forældre blev fastholdt i.”} When the news media generalized across generations and presented visible minorities as a homogenous group, the nuances and dynamics between the generations disappeared. When the television news presented fundamentalists like the older couple Aisha and Suleman as the norm, women, like the ‘successful’ Azam Javadi, appeared as the exception. But perhaps these two different portrayals were also expressions of generational differences and not simply of the norm versus the exception?

The second success story was a 1991 television news clip portraying Hilda Pirzad Larsen, a woman of Iranian origin whose story resembled Azam Javadi’s. The clip portrayed her life as very different from the lives of the majority of visible minority women in Denmark. The clip explicitly stated the positive aspects and differences in her life in beginning of the news clip. Visually, the clip began with footage of an ethnically Danish man who carried a child in his arms. As he left a single-family house with a garden, a woman of color walked next to him. A host explained that this woman “is married to a Dane and lives a normal Danish life.”\footnote{TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19911025, original text: ”er dansk gift og lever et normalt dansk liv.”} The dichotomy between ‘us’ and ‘them’ seemed clear: By stating that ‘we’, the ethnic Danes, lived normal lives, the host also indicated that ‘they’, the non-ethnic Danes, lived abnormal lives. The footage functioned as an illustration of a normal Danish life: It was middle-class, as indicated by the house, and it involved a division of labor in which the father participated in the child-raising. The viewers were also informed in the beginning that Hilda Pirzad Larsen worked as a translator. Most likely viewers got the impression that Hilda Pirzad Larsen’s life was a binary opposition to other visible
minority women’s lives since this was indicated by the host’s introduction. Most likely this impression led them to conclude that visible minority fathers did not take care of the children and that visible minority families did not live in single-family houses with gardens. This conclusion was not simply the result of the comparison with the portrayed Iranian woman’s life; it was also a conclusion that had been fostered by the repeated stereotypes about visible minorities presented by the news media. Since the 1970s, and intensively during the 1990s and early 2000s, the news media repeatedly portrayed female visible minorities as oppressed by patriarchy, as housewives and thus responsible for child caring, and as residents of lower class and rented accommodation. These stereotypes were already well-known by the viewers when they saw the news clip about Hilda Pirzad Larsen, and this was one of the reasons why the stereotypes were so powerful and functioned so well. The viewers did not need any further documentation or conviction to oppose these stereotypes to the ‘normal Danish life’. Via the media, the stereotypes became so embedded in audiences’ minds that they most likely were the first images that they thought of when they heard news related to visible minorities.

The so-called ‘normal Danish life’ contained the image of equal gender roles. This image played a central role in the construction of Danishness in the news media. The representation of visible minorities as living under patriarchy helped to construct and maintain the image of Denmark as a country where the majority of women have gained equality with men. But this is an idealized simplification because ethnically Danish women have not achieved equality with ethnically Danish men regarding issues of childrearing and other practices belonging to the so-called private sphere. In 2002, mothers took ten times as much parental leave as fathers did, despite a legal framework that allowed the two to share the time allowed. Of course women have to recuperate after a birth, and several choose to breastfeed, but this alone cannot explain why half the Danish fathers did not take paternal leave at all, or why those who did only took an average of eighteen days.476 Around 40 percent of men living with a female partner in Denmark did 25 percent or less of the housework, and only 7 percent of the men performed the majority of the housework. In Europe in the early 2000s, on average women have been responsible for 80 percent of the housework, even in families where women worked outside the home.477 These statistics illustrate

that the gender equality between ethnically Danish men and women portrayed in the media has not reflected reality.

**The same stereotype for three decades**

Scholars in the field of Danish media and visible minorities have argued that a change in the media’s communication about, and attitudes towards, visible minorities took place during the 1980s, but this was not the case in the news media’s portrayal of visible minority women. Unlike the representations of people arriving to Denmark or the criminal immigrant, I have not been able to locate a significant shift in the coverage of female visible minorities during the 1980s, nor at any other time between the 1970s and 2004.

There was a change in the dramatic intensity, though. During the 1970s and 1980s, stories about visible minority women and domestic violence focused mainly on informing *that* the women had been subjected to violence, while stories about domestic violence from the 1990s and beyond also included explicit and detailed descriptions of *how* the women were subjected to violence. The dramatic level also seems to have increased through the ‘new phenomena’ of honor killings and forced marriages, which the news media introduced in the 1990s and which took up a significant portion of the coverage of visible minority women in the second half of the 1990s and first half of 2000s. But the stereotype of ‘the oppressed Muslim woman’ remained the same throughout the period, and the stereotype was characterized with unconditional sympathy for the oppressed woman as a victim. The stability in portrayals of women and gender relations point to the conclusion that not all aspects of the media’s representation about visible minorities changed during the period analyzed. One reason why scholars have focused on changes instead of on continuities could be that they have not paid attention to gender in their analyses and therefore they have not been able to see this particular continuity.

The lack of change played a role in maintaining the stereotypical image of female visible minorities as oppressed and thereby in maintaining the myth about gender equality among ethnic Danes. The impression that visible minority women were victims of a patriarchal culture and that ethnically Danish women were more liberated also appear in a survey of ethnic Danes’ attitude towards visible minorities. Trine, an ethnically Danish woman interviewed for the survey argue that

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“It can be complicated with Muslim men, and even talking to them [can be complicated] because they do not consider women as someone who really has a right to talk to them.”

Trine explained that she had received her information about Muslim men “from the TV of course. I don’t know anyone privately.”

This was an illustration of how the media managed to convey an image of visible minorities as representatives of a patriarchal culture. Despite the fact that Trine did not know any Muslims who could confirm or discredit her knowledge, she presented her information from the media as facts. Leo, an ethnically Danish man, explained how “…we [ethnic Danes] feel that we are very liberated, the women are rather liberated at least in Denmark.”

He thereby expressed the general attitude that ethnically Danish women were liberated. Despite the fact that Leo was a white, middle-class man, he felt confident arguing that ethnically Danish women, unlike visible minority women, were liberated.

The Construction of Gender Equality

The media’s portrayal of female visible minorities – as a homogenous group of victimized women oppressed by their men – has played a role in the construction of gender, sexuality, and race. Judith Butler has illustrated how gender and sexuality are performative acts and how the categories of gender and sexuality are constructed through performances.

The news media can similarly be said to function as performance. They perform gender, sexuality, race, and the other categories through the repeated stylization of the bodies they portray, and the interplay of these categories constituted the stereotypes of female visible minorities.

The media described Danish culture as one that embraced gender equality and women’s liberation. This was presented in opposition to visible minorities’ culture, which they described as oppressive for women. It was typical that the few success stories about female visible minorities were about women who embraced and exercised a way of living that the media

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481 Mustafa Hussain, Ferruh Yilmaz & Tim O’Connor, Medierne, Minoriteterne og Majoriteten – en undersøgelse af nyhedsmedier og den folkelige diskurs i Danmark, (Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling, 1997), 207, original text: ”…altså vi føler os vældig frigjorte, kvinderne føler sig forholdsvis noget frigjorte i hvert fald i Danmark.”

482 Butler has argued that “Gender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being,” see Judith Butler, Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity, (New York & London: Routledge, 1999), 43 f.
characterized as ‘the Danish way’. Except in the few success stories, the news media presented female visible minorities as people who all live the same way and suffer under the same oppression from their culture, traditions, and men (husbands, brothers, and fathers). This generalized and one-sided portrayal of female visible minorities played a central role in maintaining the myth about gender equality among ethnic Danes. When the news media described visible minority women as oppressed victims of patriarchy, they simultaneously and indirectly described ethnically Danish women as liberated within structures of gender equality. This news communication contributed to the hegemonic discourse of gender equality as an integrated part of Danish society and actively participated in maintaining this hegemony.⁴⁸³

The spokesperson on equality issues from the current governing Liberal Party [Venstre], Troels Lund Poulsen, has argued that debates about gender equality in Denmark should stop focusing on ethnically Danish women and their rights and instead focus on visible minority women. He built his argument on the claim that it is old-fashioned to discuss gender equality in Denmark because “the Danish women’s movement has had an enormous victory.”⁴⁸⁴ Poulsen has said: “I do not think the biggest problem should be whether there should be equal pay or not in the future [gender] debate. It [equal pay] is of course an item which must be discussed,”⁴⁸⁵ but it is more important to focus on “forced marriages, female circumcision, and [visible minority] families’ refusal to let daughters get an education.”⁴⁸⁶ Poulsen used the proclaimed gender inequality among visible minority women as a mirror for the situation of ethnically Danish women. He used this opposition to argue that ethnically Danish women already had equality and that their potential lack of equality as exemplified in unequal payment was incompatible with the gender discrimination that female visible minorities’ experienced. Several of Poulsen’s statements were problematic: Statistically, a large number of young, female, visible minorities have received educations, and the number of female visible minorities who have received a higher education has been greater than the number of male visible minorities who have received a higher education.⁴⁸⁷ The Umbrella Organization for Ethnic Minorities [POEM] revealed another problem with Poulsen’s statement in a press release: “it is...important to keep an eye on proportion – and female circumcision has shown

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⁴⁸³ See also Christina Leonora Skov (ed), De Røde Sko. (Aarhus: Tiderne Skifter, 2002).
⁴⁸⁵ Steenbeck, “Oppor om ligestilling”, Politiken (Copenhagen, Jan. 04, 2004), original text: ”Jeg mener ikke, at det største problem er, om der skal være ligelon eller ej i fremtidens debat. Det er selvfølgelig et punkt, der skal diskuteres.”
4. The oppressed immigrant woman

itself to be a non-existing problem in Denmark, among other reasons because of information campaigns and internal religious clarification within Islamic communities. Finally, Poulsen’s claim that equal pay should not really be up for discussion is problematic as well. Equal pay for equal work was passed as a law in Denmark in 1976, and the legitimacy of that law has not been seriously questioned or debated since that time. What still deserves discussion is the fact that women still earn 20-25 percent less than men do for performing the same job, despite this legal framework. Poulsen’s argument could only function, and evoke positive responses among the Danish population, because it represented a familiar discourse. His argument was based on the myth of gender equality in Denmark, the same myth that the news media played upon throughout the period analyzed and indeed actively participated in constructing via their coverage of visible minority women.

Joan Scott has argued that gender is a relation of power, defining it as “a constitutive element of social relationship based on perceived differences between the sexes, and...[as] a primary way of signifying power.” I would expand her argument and suggest that the way the news media performed, and thereby constructed, gender played a part in constructions of power not only between men and women but also between the white majority population and the minority population of color. Scott has argued that “gender is a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated.” In the mass media’s coverage, gender intersected, among other things, the construction of race, in particular through binary oppositions of the oppressed, female visible minority and the liberated, female ethnic Dane. Power was articulated and constituted on different levels within the field of gender. It was ascribed and constituted via the significant amount of news that privileged ‘Danish culture’ and the ‘Danish way of living’ over ‘visible minorities’ culture’ and ‘visible minorities’ way of living’. But power was also inscribed more ingeniously by maintaining the hegemonic discourse that there has been gender equality among the ethnically

488 Press release from Umbrella Organisation for Ethnic Minorities (Paraplyorganisation for etniske mindretal (POEM), Jan. 06, 2004, original text: ”det er...vigtigt at holde sig proportionerne for øje – og omskæring har vist sig at være et praktisk talt ikke-eksisterende problem i Danmark bl.a. takket være oplysningseffekter og intern religiøs afklaring i islamiske kredse.” Female circumcision has not been debated very much in Denmark compared to the rest of Europe, e.g. France, because it has rarely been practiced in Denmark. See also Carsten Fenger-Gron, Kamal Qureshi & Toger Seidenfaden, Når du strammer garnet – et opgør med mobning af mindretal og ansvarslos asylpolitik, (Gylding: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2004), 22, which has argued that there was no documented female circumcisions in Denmark.

489 See also Jette Hansen, ”Indvandrerkvinden som undskyldning”, Information (Copenhagen, Jan. 10-11, 2004): 9, for a feminist comment on Poulsen’s utterances.


Danish population. This discourse has played a part in maintaining the current gender structures that have not (and do not) form an equal gender system, but which, as an integrated part of them, have constituted the hegemony that has allowed only very limited room for questioning current structures.

The news media’s focus on gender inequality among visible minorities has contributed to making the structural gender discrimination in Denmark invisible, which illustrates of how power, gender, and race intersect. This invisibility has partly been caused by positioning ethnic Danes as binary oppositions to visible minorities; when visible minorities were portrayed as oppressed, the ethnic Danes automatically appeared as liberated. The invisibility has been strengthened further by the exclusion of discrimination within Danish society. During the period analyzed, the news media communication was not a one-way process in which the media solely influenced audiences. The news also mirrored values and attitudes from the society it portrayed. The myth about gender equality has been embedded in Danish society, and it is thus not surprising that it has saturated the television news and newspapers. But because news communication is a two-way process, the news media also played an active role in maintaining the myth by continuously putting it into discourse.
5. Veiling and dressing

Introduction

Muslim veiling has been an integral part of the news media’s portrayal of female visible minorities since the 1970s. Between the early 1970s and the early 2000s, the absolute majority of footage accompanying news clips about female visible minorities showed women wearing veils or headscarves. Visually, the veiled woman therefore dominated the images of visible minority women. But the actual practice of veiling was not discussed or portrayed before the early 1990s. During the 1970s and 1980s, the media portrayed visible minority women wearing veils but did not discuss or even verbally mention this head coverage. This changed during the 1990s, when several news clips and newspaper articles began questioning and discussing the practice of veiling.

The news media debated veiling particularly with regard to employment. I analyze a series of news clips from the late 1990s that focused on Danish employers’ refusal to hire women wearing veils. These clips drew on an image of visible minority women as irrational because they insisted on veiling despite how this limited their employment options. I connect these clips to a larger context in order to show how women’s employment was closely connected to understandings of female liberation, and how the female unemployment caused by veiling was therefore also interpreted as a gender oppressive situation.

The Danish news media predominantly articulated veiling as a symbol of female oppression. I draw upon the history of the Danish women’s movement to show how freedom of clothing has been an integrated part of the understanding of women’s liberation. The combination of newscasters, journalists, and interviewees defining the veil as oppressive and the news media portraying visible minority women as veiled has made for a powerful stereotype of visible minority women as oppressed. The news communication only had limited openings for alternative readings of female visible minorities. I offer examples of alternative readings of the veil and use them to illustrate how alternative, non-stereotypical readings potentially could have undermined the stereotypical image of female visible minorities. The issue of veiling sparked feminist debates about whether veiling should be viewed as oppressing or liberating; I look at several arguments in this debate and show how only very few of them were given voice in the Danish media. In sum, I illustrate that an understanding of veiling as oppressing became hegemonic in the Danish media discourse.
I connect the hegemonic discourse of the veil as a tool to oppress women to the Danish interpretation of gender liberty as intertwined with sexual liberation. Seemingly integrated in the understanding of veiling as oppressive developed the understanding of exposing skin as liberating. I give an example of this opposition by analyzing the news media’s coverage of the beauty contest Miss Denmark 1999, which was won by a woman of Turkish origin whom news journalists portrayed as the perfectly integrated immigrant. I also show how the one-sided interpretation of the veil might have prevented a nuanced interpretation of the large public display of naked females that has taken place in Denmark since the 1970s. I further show how ideas of sexual liberation have been embedded in the understanding of Danish nationality and how this understanding might have influenced the representation of female visible minorities.

The veil has prevented employment

During August 1999, DR broadcast a series of news clips that discussed the wearing of head veils in the workplace. This series was representative for the large number of news clips about veils at the end of the period analyzed, the late 1990s and early 2000s. The background for the series was a discussion sparked by several chain grocery stores that publicly announced that they would not hire women wearing head veils. These chains were FDB (now COOP), which owned Super Brugsen, Kvickly, Irma, and Fakta, and Dansk Supermarked, which owned Netto, Fotex, and Bilka. DR news interviewed the director of distribution [forhandlingsdirektør] for FDB, Hans Havsgaer, in August 1999. He argued that veiling among employees was prohibited because “it [the veil] repels our customers.”493 He further elaborated: “we know that some of our customers react negatively if employees signal that they belong to certain groups. This is why we emphasize that our employees wear uniforms that strictly signal FDB and not anything else.”494 This public statement led the then-Minister of Employment Ole Hygum, representing the governing Social Democrat Party, into action. The following day he stated that the grocery chains’ rules of not hiring women wearing veils were against the Equality Law [Ligestillingsloven], which stated that the prohibiting of religious hear coverings was illegal.495 A DR news program interviewed the minister for a broadcast two days after the first news clip about women wearing veils at workplaces. Here he

493 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990806, original text: “det [hovedtørlæde] frastøder vores kunder.”
494 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990806, original text: ”vi ved, at nogle af vores kunder de reagerer negativt, hvis medarbejdere signalerer tilhørsforhold til bestemte grupper. Og derfor er det, at vi lægger vægt på, det er den uniformering vi har, den signalerer rent FDB og ikke andet.”
495 See http://www.danske-nyheder.dk/arkiv/1999.08.09.html
similarly said: “As matters now stand I am in no doubt that it is illegal to exclude employees who say they carry a veil as a part of their religion.” The minister’s underscoring of the illegality of the chains’ practices was followed up by several representatives for the chains who said that they would look into the matter. The public discussion in Denmark regarding wearing veils at workplaces was further fuelled by a sentence passed by the High Court convicting the department store Magasin of discriminatory practice. Magasin had refused to give an internship to a woman because she wanted to wear a head veil. This sentence was followed by much public discussion that, among other things, in December 2000 made FBD give up the requirement that employees do not wear head veils.

The interviewed FDB director of distribution legitimized the negative attitude towards veiling when he argued that the veil “repels our customers” and when he continued to explain that this repulsion “plays a part in the decision [to prohibit veils].” He further argued: “I do not personally like the word repel and I find it [a] wrong [word to use], but it is central that we in our stores have some uniform demands....and those demands are connected to our employees...having a certain appearance.” Despite his claim that he personally did not like the word “repel” and found it a wrong word to use, he still used it. Indeed, it was precisely by distancing himself from the term by emphasizing that he was referring to other people’s – the customers’ – opinions that he got away with saying that women wearing veils repel others. This illustrates how stated utterances were more important than what the person who stated them personally might have thought. Images, stereotypes, and prejudices are more often created via the spoken word than unexpressed personal beliefs. The majority of television-viewers could most likely understand that a store needed to take its customers into consideration, and since the viewers were told that customers were repelled, it might have seemed logical to have prohibited the veil. The viewers were not presented with any

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496 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990808, original text: “På foreliggende grundlag er jeg ikke i tvivl om, at det ikke er lovligt, når man fravælger medarbejdere, når de gör opmerksom på, at de bærer, som en del af deres religion, et tørklæde.”
497 See DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990808.
499 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990806, original text: “det [tørklædet] frastøder vores kunder. Det er også en del af vurderingen [bag tørklædeforbudet].”
500 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990806, original text: “Ikke for at bruge det ord [frastøde], det synes jeg også er forkert, men det er væsentligt, at vi har i vores butikker nogle uniformskrav...som hænger sammen med, at vores medarbejdere...skal have en bestemt fremtræden.”
documentation that could prove that customers felt repelled by veils; the repulsion was simply stated as a fact.\footnote{Neither have I been able to find surveys which could document such repulsion. Veiling as repulsion was further underscored by the TV-host who interviewed the FDB director of distribution and another guest in the studio at the end of the news clip. Here the host repeatedly used the term “repel” even though the two guests tried to get away from that term. The TV-host asked the FDB director of distribution “What proof do you have that the customers are repelled [by veils]?” (“Hvad er det, I har, af dokumentation for, at kunderne bliver frastød?”). To which he replied “I feel bad about the word repelled (frastød)…” (“Jeg har det skidt med ordet frastøder”),\footnote{The translation from Danish to English is complicated here. The TV-host changed the word frastød to støde fra. Støde fra must be considered an incorrect use of language here because it refers to the physical act of pushing away, but the way the TV-host used it it functioned as a synonymous with frastød. The TV-host thereby managed to keep using the term “repel” in connection with veiling while linguistically pretending to change the term. The host thereby legitimized the association of veiling with repel.} the other guest nodded her head in agreement that the word “repel” was not the right word to use. The TV-host then interrupted and said “will be repelled then (støde fra)?”\footnote{The translation from Danish to English is complicated here. The TV-host changed the word frastød to støde fra. Støde fra must be considered an incorrect use of language here because it refers to the physical act of pushing away, but the way the TV-host used it it functioned as a synonymous with frastød. The TV-host thereby managed to keep using the term “repel” in connection with veiling while linguistically pretending to change the term. The host thereby legitimized the association of veiling with repel.} The translation from Danish to English is complicated here. The TV-host changed the word frastød to støde fra. Støde fra must be considered an incorrect use of language here because it refers to the physical act of pushing away, but the way the TV-host used it it functioned as a synonymous with frastød. The TV-host thereby managed to keep using the term “repel” in connection with veiling while linguistically pretending to change the term. The host thereby legitimized the association of veiling with repel.} 

The news media portrayed visible minority women as veiled throughout the period in question, i.e. from the early 1970s to the early 2000s, but it was not before the end of the period, the late 1990s and early 2000s, that veiling itself became a debated topic. Visually, the most dominant representation of female visible minorities, independently of the individual news clip’s content, was veiled women. The news showed women wearing several different kinds of veils: Burkas, nikabs (also called niqaabs), hijabs, chadors, and dupattas.
5. Veiling and dressing

But despite the variety in veils, all illustrated visually, newscasters, journalists, and interviewees only verbally spoke about “the veil” and “the Muslim veil”, as if there was only one kind of veil. By continuously using the label “the veil”, the news actively ignored the varieties among veils and thereby the varieties among visible minorities. The news also ignored the fact that dupattas have been worn by Hindu women as well as Muslim women. Several people participating in Hervik’s survey argued that they have not been able to recognize the media’s visual portrayals of visible minority women; according to their daily experiences, large amounts of visible minority women have not been veiled.\(^\text{502}\)

Two news clips in the same DR prime time news program introduced the ‘veil debate’ in August 1999. The first news clip, analyzed above, looked at grocery chains prohibiting “the Muslim veil”,\(^\text{503}\) whereas the second news clip talked about how “the veil stands in the way of getting a job.”\(^\text{504}\) According to the latter, this was a problem because “the group of Muslim women, who, up till now, have been home on welfare now have to begin working, according to a new law. But employment does not grow on every bush...because workplaces reject veils.”\(^\text{505}\)

Part of the news clip implied a criticism of the women because they refused to take off their veils in order to get employment. A news clip in the ‘veil debate’, for example, stated that “for Muslim women the right to wear a veil is of vital importance and often more important than getting a job.”\(^\text{506}\) Wearing a veil was presented in connection to religious blindness in an interview with a young woman who had been rejected work because of her hijab veil. The interviewer asked her interviewee: “Why can’t you just take it [the veil] off?”\(^\text{507}\) The woman answered: “Er...first of all the Koran says so.”\(^\text{508}\) The interviewer then asked: “Would you rather keep your veil on and be

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\(^{503}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19990806.

\(^{504}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19990806, original text: "tørkædet lægger hindringer i vejen for jobs.”

\(^{505}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19990806, original text: "Den gruppe af muslimske kvinder, der hidtil har gået hjemme på bistandshjælp skal nu i arbejde i følge en ny lov. Men jobbene hænger ikke på træerne....fordi virksomhederne afviser tørkæderne.”

\(^{506}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19990808, original text: "For muslimske kvinder er retten til at gå med tørkæde alt afgørende, og ofte mere vigtigt end det at få et arbejde.”

\(^{507}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19990808, original text: "Hvorfor kan du ikke bare tage det [tørlæde] af?”

\(^{508}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19990808, original text: "Omm, for det første står det i vores Koran.”
without work if that is the case?" 509 The woman replied: “Yes, because my religion means a lot more than employment.” 510 The veiled woman appeared as religious beyond logic. She was refusing employment, i.e. the road to female liberty, and instead wearing clothes that someone (the Koran) had dictated to her. This made her appear as incapable of thinking independently, as one living a life based on the religious opiate.

These representations of Muslim women in the ‘veil debate’ implied that all Muslims were veiled, and that they were wearing the same kind of veil, i.e. “the Muslim veil.” The explanations in the news clips functioned almost tautologically. They argued that Muslim women wear veils, and as a result they are on welfare because veiled women cannot find employment because they wear veils. These media images implied that most female visible minorities were unemployed which presented an impression of their being among the lower social classes.

The stereotype about visible minority women being unemployed was also played out in visual footage. DR tended to use footage from Nørrebrogade or Blågårdsgade in Copenhagen, and this footage tended to show visible minorities doing activities connected to these areas. Both Nørrebrogade and Blågårdsgade are shopping streets; as a result the filmed people here were typically engaged at vegetables shops and halal butcher shops. Because these images were used to illustrate all kinds of news stories regarding visible minorities, they left the impression that the main occupation for female visible minorities was shopping, i.e. that the women did not have other jobs or interests than buying food, which most likely has been interpreted by the viewers as having no other occupations than taking care of their families and being good housewives.

The TV-hosts, voice-overs, and interviewers actively participated in the discourse that described veils as problematic. In an interview with a representative for a large cleaning service chain, ISS, who let their employers wear veils, one DR journalist asked: “What do the customers say? Do they not get offended when someone with a veil comes to clean?” This question implied that the journalist expected people to be offended by the veil. By expressing this expectation, the journalist manifested and legitimized the negative attitude towards women wearing veils.

509 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990808, original text: "Du vil altså hellere beholde dit tørklæde på, og så undvære dit arbejde, hvis det er det, det drejer sig om!"
510 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990808, original text: "Ja, fordi min religion betyder meget mere end et arbejde."
The veil is not just a veil

The debates about veiling were not simply about veils, and the media’s ‘veil debate’ has by no means been the first discussion of veils in a Western discourse. On the contrary, over the previous four centuries, numerous authors have produced masses of Western descriptions and representations of the veil and veiled women. The debates and descriptions about veils have constituted a field where race and gender have intersected in an other-ing process.

In the news media during the late 1990s and early 2000s, the veil became the most signifying symbol of visible minority women, who thereby were indirectly characterized as faithful Muslims and women who had difficulties finding employment. Between the early 1970s and early 2000s, working as a housewife increasingly became a rather rare occupation in Denmark. During the 1960s and 1970s, women’s participation in the employment force increased dramatically. In 1965, 34 percent of women aged 15 to 66 years were employed outside the home; in 1975 the number had increased to 55 percent, in 1985 65 percent, and in 1995 72 percent. The number has remained ca. 73-74 percent in the last decade. In comparison in the last decade the total percentage of people, women and men aged 15-66 years, engaged in employment was ca. 78-79 percent. Employed, and thereby financially independent, women have been interpreted as a symbol of women’s liberation among Western, white, middle-class women, since the publication of Betty Friedan’s The Feminine Mystique in 1963. The construction of the veiled visible minority women as unemployed was therefore not only an image that has placed them among the lower social classes; it was also an image that implied their oppression as women. Veiling was seen as a double oppressor: It caused unemployment which led to a life as a housewife, and it symbolized a lack of freedom in the choice of clothing. Despite the fact that both of these oppressions were generalizations, they nevertheless became integrated into Danish public discourses. The general opinion in Denmark has been that housewives per se have been oppressed because they are seen as financially dependent on their husbands, and as lacking social and intellectual stimulation, and as leading a life of limited satisfaction through cooking, cleaning, child-rearing, etc.

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513 Danish national statistics (Danmarks Statistik), see http://www.statistikbanken.dk. The statistical numbers on employment rates are based on the so-called frequency of employment (Erhvervsfrekvens) which includes people who are actively working or actively seeking employment, i.e. the employment rate includes people in between jobs.

In Denmark, freedom of dressing has been viewed as a sign of women’s liberation since the famous *Strøg action* in Copenhagen in 1970 when a group of feminists threw out bras and other female artifacts in trash cans labeled “Keep Denmark clean.” A 1997 survey published by The Danish Council of Ethics [*Etisk Råd*] on ethnic Danes’ attitudes towards visible minorities, based on qualitative interviews with 45 people, showed that ethnic Danes viewed ethnically Danish women as much more liberated than visible minority women. The interviewees pointed out that Danish liberation was manifested in ethnically Danish women’s free choice of clothing, and clothing itself was seen as an indication of the state of liberation. One interviewed woman argued: “I do believe that it [visible minorities’ situation] is caused by a male dominance. They do not have the choice [of clothing]. We can wear a short skirt, we can wear a long skirt, we can wear pants, we can choose to wear shorts; we have a choice. Honestly, I do not think that all of them do.”515 So showing footage of women wearing *nikabs* not only connoted unfamiliar clothing, it also connoted images of women who do not have the freedom to choose their own clothing and thus oppressed women.

Consequently, it can argued that in the mass media’s communication the veil has become a powerful symbol under which gender, religion, class, culture, and ethnicity was been organized and constructed.

Feminist scholars have debated veiling for a number of years. Despite the disagreements and diversity within this debate, the Danish new media primarily gave room in their coverage to feminists arguing against the veil. In 2001, there was a large, so-called ‘feminist immigration debate’ in Denmark.516 This debate was sparked by an article by journalist and writer Helle Merete Brix who accused the Danish women’s movement of letting visible minority women down. She wrote in the lead to her article: “It is embarrassing that the Danish women’s movement remains completely silent about the fact that several female citizens in the country are living under oppressing patriarchal norms from seventh-century Arabia.”517


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In the debate, which included well-known Danish feminists, the accusations drawn from these commentators often implied negative attitudes towards Islam and veils. Writer Hanne Vibeke Holst for instance argued about the veil: “To me the veil is a profoundly revolting way of limiting girls’ and women’s free actions, bodily as well as mentally.” The politician Mai-Britt Iversen, representing the Social Democrats in Aalborg city council, agreed with Holst when she (Iversen) told her readers about her experiences with the veil: “I met two totally veiled girls who had problems playing. It was a frightening sight not only because of the clothing but because of the oppression behind [the veil].” These articles were published, as part of a series discussing the ‘feminist immigration debate’ in the national newspaper *Politiken*, a center-left-wing national paper. The national rightwing newspaper *Jyllandsposten* contributed to the debate by publishing a long article interviewing ethnically Danish feminists about their lack of assistance towards visible minority women and about Islam as a misogynist religion. A rhetorical question introduced the article: “Who fights for the veiled woman passing by on the street with her eyes on the ground and the prospect of forced marriage, and for whom the debate about career options seems utopian?” According to the article, veiling, forced marriage, and the lack of a career were all caused by “a different view of women.” One of the interviewed was Ulla Dahlerup, introduced as “Ulla Dahlerup, nation-wide known redstocking [rødstrømpe] activist all the way back to the 1970s, [who] has almost given up trying to help immigrant women in contemporary Denmark.”

The name redstocking has commonly been used as a label for feminists since the 1970s in Denmark. The name was taken by the Danish women’s movement in the early 1970s; they were inspired by the New York feminist group who in 1969 published the Redstockings’ Manifesto in which they called out for women to fight patriarchy with phrases like ”Women are an oppressed class” and ”Male supremacy is the oldest, most basic form of domination. All other forms of exploitation and oppression (racism, capitalism, imperialism, etc.) are extensions of male

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518 Hanne Vibeke Holst, ”Det nødvendige oprør”, *Politiken*, (Copenhagen, June 02, 2001): section 3, 6, original text: “...sloret for mig at se en dybt oprørende måde at hemme pigebarnets og kvindens frie udfoldelse på, såvel kropsligt som mentalt.”

519 Mai-Britt Iversen, ”Gu’ er det vores ansvar”, *Politiken*, (Copenhagen, June 02, 2001): section 3, 6, original text: ”Der mødte mig to totalt indhyllede småpiger, der med besvær legede. Et uhyggeligt syn ikke udelukkende på grund af tojet, men på grund af den undertrykkelse, der ligger bag.”

520 Pernille Ammitzbøll, ”Sover du, soster”, *Jyllands-Posten*, (Aarhus, June 24, 2001): section *Indblik*, 1-2, original text: ”Hvem kører for den tilslørede kvinde, der går forbi på gaden med blikket i jorden og udsigten til at blive tvangsgift og for hvem debatten om karrieremuligheder virker utopisk?”


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supremacy”523 The name Redstockings was inspired by the old and degrading label for intellectual women in the sixteenth and seventeenth-century ‘Bluестockings’, which in the late 1960s was supplied with the color of leftwing politics and revolution, red.524

Dahlerup explained in the Jyllandsposten-article: “Back in 1992, I contacted a Pakistani women’s group in Nørrebro and it had a dreadful come-down. Later I tried to make connections in other situations but the women do not want help. They view redstockings with horror and see us as satanic women. The cultural gap is simply too wide.”525 Earlier in that same year, Dahlerup had written the book Denmark your country – your choice [Denmark dit land – dit valg], which was published by the nationalist, right-wing party the Danish People’s Party [Dansk Folkeparti]. The book can be characterized as one long argument against Muslims and against making Denmark a multicultural society. Dahlerup’s co-operation with the Danish People’s Party was not mentioned in the Jyllandsposten article, nor had the journalist, white and about Dahlerup’s age, Pernille Ammitzbøll, reflected upon the fact that Dahlerup’s hostility against visible minorities, in particular Muslims, might not have made her the most nuanced person to ask about these issues. Dahlerup’s connection to the Danish People’s Party further tightened in September 2003; the party announced that Dahlerup was their second front-runner for the European Parliament election (held June 13, 2004).526

The debate included a few letters to the editors from ethnically Danish feminists who argued that they had helped or collaborated with visible minority women. But these counter-voices were not given much room in the newspapers. Letters to the editor that tried to add nuance to the debate and critiqued Ammitzbøll’s article, for instance, were not published; instead the newspapers provided space for presenting the veil as a symbol of female oppression.527

The interpretation of the veil as female-oppressive might have influenced understandings of multiculturalism. A 1999-news clip about forced marriages, analyzed in the

523 The manifest is available via http://kbs.mahost.org/gp/dotfredepostings.html.
526 Dahlerup received 43.746 personal votes which was not enough to get her a seat. The Danish People’s Party got one seat which went to the other front-runner Mogens Camre who with 53.714 personal votes re-gained his seat in the European Parliament.
527 See for instance the Feminist Forum [Feministisk Forum] website where a letter to the editor, regarding the debate, which was sent to Jyllandsposten but not published, is available: http://www.feministiskforum.dk/tekster/Modbilleder.html.
previous chapter, connected the negative practices of forced marriage to multiculturalism.\(^{528}\) In the beginning of the clip viewers saw footage of a woman dressed in a *nikab* in a shopping mall while a voice-over explained: “Every year 8-9000 family united foreigners come to Denmark. This contributes to such a great concentration in many neighborhoods that the Danes become a minority.”\(^{529}\) During this monologue the footage cut from the woman in the *nikab* to pictures of four black men, one of whom was spitting on the street, followed by a cut to footage of visible minority women wearing headscarves at a vegetable shop. The footage seemed to come from the middle of the day because the sun was shining; in December the sun sets around 4 pm in Denmark. This footage gave an impression of visible minorities being very different from ethnic Danes by portraying them visually differently; the *nikab* gave impressions of dressing styles very different from the average Danish outfit. Regardless of the multiple reasons behind the wearing of a *nikab*, viewers most likely associated the piece of clothing with female oppression and the lack of freedom to choose one's clothing. The footage of women wearing Muslim headscarves shopping for vegetables similarly connoted a lack of liberation, but this lack was further combined with images of female oppression by the daytime shopping, indicating that the women were housewives and not employed. The footage of the men spitting on the street connoted bad and unhygienic behavior. The direct connection expressed in the news clip between visible minorities’ forced marriages and multiculturalism was most likely interpreted by television-viewers as an argument against multiculturalism. Most likely the majority of viewers would not prefer to be part of a society where people are being forced to marry against their wishes and where multiculturalism equals badly behaved men and oppressed women.

**The veil is a complex practice**

Several studies have pointed to women’s veiling as complex practices that can not simply be seen as oppressing. Franz Fanon, for example described how Algerian women used veiling as a means of resistance against the French soldiers during the Algerian war of independence (1954-1962). Consequently he characterized the Frenchmen’s battle in Algeria as a struggle aimed at “unveiling Algeria.”\(^{530}\) He argued that “it was the colonist’s frenzy to unveil the

\(^{528}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19991221.
\(^{529}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19991221, original text: "Hvert år kommer der 8-9000 familiesammenførte udlændinge til Danmark. Det bidrager til så stor en koncentration i mange boligområder, at danskerne kommer i mindrelat.”
\(^{530}\) Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 63.
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Algerian woman, it was his gamble on winning the battle of the veil”, because unveiling would imply “bring[ing] this [Algerian] woman within his reach, to make her a possible object of possession.” For the Algerian population, and especially the women, veiling became not only a means to, but also a symbol of, resisting the French colonial power. Fanon has interpreted veiling as the Algerian woman’s refusal to been seen; a refusal to be an object for the male, French, colonial gaze. Veiling has similarly been used as a tool against Western imperial discourses and dominance outside Algeria.

Meyda Yeşenoglu argues that the use of veiling as a tool to resist being an object for the masculine sexual gaze can be viewed in connection with Foucault’s theories. According to Foucault, power in modern times is connected to knowledge, and power is established and displayed through society’s discursive practices. Central for modern knowledge is observing, categorizing, and ordering. Power is connected to a knowledgeable discourse by its constitution of subjects and objects. Some people are positioned as subjects who gather knowledge, describe, and categorize information about others, who are positioned as objects. Discourses of knowledge function in such a way that some people are positioned as the holders of ‘the truth’. These ‘truth-holders’ actively contribute to constructing the hegemonic discourse, whereas other people remain marginalized from the position of uttering and possessing ‘the truth’. Veiled women were marginalized both as women and as ‘racial other’ in most discourses in Denmark. The majority of news media’s discourses constructed them as objects. They served as objects of more privileged subjects who were placed in ‘expert positions’ that enabled them to utter ‘the truth’ about these veiled women. Veiled women became objects for studying, and information about them was gathered by people in subject positions. In this process the veiled women became fixed in their constructed identity of ‘veiled’, which, as the television news showed, has implied being unemployed, blindly and religiously Muslim, and oppressed. But, as Foucault has said, there are always cracks in a discourse, and power always implies the option of resistance. According to Yeşenoglu, wearing a veil can function as a refusal to become an object. Covering oneself in a

531 Frantz Fanon, A Dying Colonialism (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 46 f.
532 Frantz Fanon, A Dying Colonialism (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 44.
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*nikab* or *burka* can be interpreted as a defense against the masculine gaze. By veiling, a woman can actively refuse to become an object available for the subject’s gaze; by veiling she can refuse to participate in the existing power relation. She might not be able to escape the power relation between men and women or the power relation between the white majority population and the colored minority population. But she is resisting and taking the construction of her identity into her own hands rather than letting other, more privileged people construct it for her. Veiling thereby becomes a means of resistance and a means of negotiating identity.536

The *nikab-* or *burka-*veiled woman can be interpreted as an inverse of the model prisoners in Bentham’s panopticon. She can see, but others cannot see her and cannot see what she sees. According to Foucault, visibility is a function of power.537 By veiling, the woman becomes invisible to the gaze that makes her an object, and she does not participate in the process that can make her object because the subject never knows when or whether she notices his gaze. This lack of knowledge for the subject prevents him from fully constituting his own subjectivity because his self-identity as subject depends partly on the construction of her as an object.538

Dorthe Staunæs has documented another trend of resistance through veiling in her survey of seventh grade students in Danish public schools. She argues that wearing a veil can function as a strategic tool preventing male fellow students from physically pawing female students: “It is not taking off clothes but rather putting on clothes that gives freedom. Because of her veil she is liberated from the daily pawing by the boys in grade eight – unlike the girls who are not veiled and especially the girls who are positioned as ethnically Danish who are in danger of losing freedom.”539 Veiling might therefore not only be an instrument of oppression, as the news media has argued; but this interpretation of dressing as a field where female objectivity is being negotiated has not appeared in the mass media’s discourse. In the media’s discourse there has been little room for negotiating because experts, journalists, and television producers concurrently have uttered and produced ‘the truth’ that veiling is a one-sided symbol of oppression.

539 Dorthe Staunæs, *Kom, etnicitet og skoleliv*, (Gylding: Samfunds litteratur, 2004), 174, original text: “Her er det ikke afkledning, men netop påklædning der giver frihed. Qua sit tørlæde er hun fri for 8. klasse-drengenes daglige befamling, hvorimod de piger, der ikke bærer tørlæde og særligt piger, der positioneres som etnisk danske, netop er i farezone for at miste frihed.”
Several of Hervik’s interviewed women who labeled themselves as Muslims contended that they embraced Islam and veiling because it gave them freedom. One woman, 25-year-old Sarah of Pakistani origin, argued: “Many girls do not see Islam as oppressing. They actually view Islam as liberating, as a liberator from the culture. You can see many girls who begin to wear the veil and be affiliated with Islamic organizations because they receive their rights that way. The right to marry who they want. The right to work. Many of the things that their culture takes away from them. This [rights] they receive via Islam, so many choose to become more Muslim because they feel they receive more freedom.”\textsuperscript{540} Sarah pointed specifically to how the media’s representation of the veil reveals misunderstanding. “The veil can function as a liberating element from the culture. The problem with the media’s representations is that they blame Islam for having a negative and oppressive view of women instead of blaming patriarchal men’s lust for power.”\textsuperscript{541}

Dorthe Staunæs has illustrated that veiling is a multifaceted process that cannot simply be understood as an oppressive phenomenon. She suggests that some young, visible minority women in Denmark have used veiling as a symbol of identification and as a means to participate in ethnically Danish communities. She provides an example of a young woman of Turkish origin, 13-year-old Selma, who could participate in activities with her ethnically Danish female friends precisely because of her veil. By wearing a veil she signaled and positioned herself as a chaste woman, which allowed her to associate with ‘less chaste’ people with whom she could not have associated had she not initially positioned herself as different from them. Staunæs has argued: “When Selma…wears a veil, it is because it enables her to participate in things she could not participate in otherwise. When she wears a veil she puts upon herself the sign of being a decent and chaste woman… [by which] she gains a larger freedom to act. Selma is not trying to distance herself or exclude herself by wearing a veil. On the contrary, the veil is her access to a [ethnically Danish] community.”\textsuperscript{542} Veiling thereby becomes a means of liberty and a tool that enables the young


\textsuperscript{541} Peter Hervik, \textit{Mediernes muslimer. En antropologisk undersøgelse af mediernes dækning af religioner i Danmark} (Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling, 2002), 228, original text: ”Tørklædet kan således fungere som en frigørelse fra elementer i kulturen. Problemet i mediernes fremstilling er, at islam som sådan får skyliden for et negativt og undertrykkende kvindesyn i stedet for patriarkalske, magtbegerrige mænd.”

\textsuperscript{542} Steen Bruun Jensen, ”Køn og etnicitet er, hvad man gør det til”, \textit{Asterisk} # 9 (Feb. 2003): 25 f., citation 25, original text: ”når Selma går med tørklæde...er det fordi hun kan være med til nogle ting, som hun ikke kunne være med til
woman to expand her own options. Selma’s use of the veil can be interpreted as a crack in the hegemonic discourse expressed and constituted by the news media. Staunæs has argued that “Selma’s story challenges the hegemonic connection between veil and lack of freedom and between veil and non-Danishness. It [her story] disturbs the stereotypical repertoire of interpretations which says that ‘girls only wear veils because Daddy and Allah say so’.”

Interestingly, the participants in Hervik’s survey tended to be divided in their views of the media’s portrayal of veiling. Their opinions depended on whether they personally knew any visible minority women. The participants who themselves identified as visible minorities or who personally knew visible minorities criticized the media for generalizing when presenting all visible minority women as veiled, whereas the participants without personal knowledge of visible minorities did not interpret the media’s representation of women as stereotypical. Instead they viewed it as ‘true’ and argued against veiling, which they, similarly to the media’s representation, considered a misogynist and forced practice.

This potential use of veiling as a means to liberty, as argued by Yeğenoğlu, Staunæs, and the female Muslim participants in Hervik’s survey, has been challenged by a group of feminists of Iranian origin organized around the journal Medusa, published by the Centre for Women and Socialism. Soraya Shahabi argues in an article entitled “There’s no such thing as Voluntary Hijab” that “speaking of choice in dress is an offensive joke...[when] honor killings are daily threats to women’s lives [in Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Somalia].” She further explains: “Few adult hijab-wearing women have not experienced the fear and terror of Islamic environments hanging over their lives. They are not citizens with freedom of choice but human beings fearful of jack knives, deprived of social rights, subjugated, and alienated by the atmosphere of terror existing in patriarchal environments. Under such conditions, speaking of ‘volition’ or ‘free

545 The Centre of Women and Socialism was established in 1998 by activists who had fled Iran and “were engaged in women’s issues and defending women’s rights.” The journal Medusa has functioned “to give voice to the radical trend in the women’s liberation movement with a special focus on political Islam and the plight of women in the Middle East. See Azar Majedi, “Our immense Task”, Medusa, Special English Edition, (Dec. 2002), 1.
546 Soraya Shahabi, “There’s no such thing as Voluntary Hijab!” Medusa, (Dec. 2002), 15-17, citation p. 15.
choice’ in dress is a travesty of these concepts.” She contends that women who claim to wear veils voluntarily have “deceived themselves” in order to survive with dignity in a strict and limiting setting.

Sohaila Sharifi similarly argues against veiling and the “sexual apartheid” of which veiling has been an integral part. “Girls in Islamic communities are brought up in a way that they would clearly know their place in the family and in society. They must be taught from the very young age that they are inferior…The most effective and visual way of doing this is by forcing young girls to wear the Islamic Hijab (veil) which is not only conveying the required message, but also hinders physical movements and naturally calms the young girl down.” For Sharifi the veil has been a central means for “political Islam” to keep women down: “The veil is a way of life, a special kind of behavior, an expression of what society expects from a woman and her sexuality. In short, veiling a woman determines her psychological, social and physical developments.” Sharifi therefore advocates ending “the inhuman, degrading and unhealthy traditions of the veiling and sexual apartheid.”

Muslim headscarves have been debated all over Europe, especially in France, where the Parliament in February 2004 passed a law prohibiting religious symbols, including Muslim veils, in public schools. French-Iranian feminist Chahdortt Djavann argued in favor of this prohibition because she found that veiling degrades women: “To veil 12-year-old girls has nothing to do with culture. It is barbarian. And if we don’t watch out the fundamentalists will lead us back to a new mediaeval period. The fundamentalists force women to veil simply because they are women – like the Nazis forced Jews to wear a star…I have experienced how the headscarves were introduced via the Islamic revolution in Iran. In the beginning we had to wear it in the school to reject Western values – exactly the same rhetoric that fundamentalists are using today in Western Europe – but suddenly the demand to wear headscarves was enforced by men with Kalashnikovs.”

Like Shahabi, Djavann argued that there has been no such thing as voluntary

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547 Soraya Shahabi, “There’s no such thing as Voluntary Hijab!”, Medusa, (Dec. 2002), 15.
548 Soraya Shahabi, "There’s no such thing as Voluntary Hijab!", Medusa, (Dec. 2002), 15.
552 Taken from an interview with Chahdortt Djavann published in Aske Munk, “Hovedtørklaede er barbari”, Politiken, (Copenhagen, Nov. 13, 2004): section 3, 5, original text: “At give piger på 12 år hovedtørklaede på har intet med kultur at gøre. Det er barbari. Og hvis vi ikke passer på, vil fundamentalisterne føre os tilbage til en ny middelalder. Fundamentalisterne tvinger kvinderne til at bære hovedtørklaede, blot fordi de er kvinder – ligesom nazisterne tvang
5. Veiling and dressing

veiling; she explained the voluntariness as a result of propaganda: "The Islamic fundamentalists have succeed in convincing the youth in suburbia that they are victims of Western decadence. The young Muslim girls are just an echo of a massive propaganda apparatus which has gained a firm grip on the socially marginalized in the European suburban areas during the previous decade…It is a clever strategy to talk about an individual choice because then it becomes a question of taste and we are not able to discuss it. But racism and anti-Semitism is also an individual choice and we have nothing against prohibiting that."^{553}

These discussions show that veiling must be viewed as a series of complex practices and interpreted with multifaceted readings. One difference between the feminists of Iranian origin criticizing the veil and the Muslim women in Denmark defending the veil is that the women of Iranian origin experienced life under Sharia (Islamic law) where veiling was forced, whereas the women growing up in Europe have not experienced a national enforcement regarding veiling practices. Instead they have experienced discriminatory practices and critique of their religion that might have contributed to a counter-reaction manifested in veiling.

Flesh equals liberty

One of the most fascinating success stories in the news communication about female visible minorities was the portrayal of a young woman of Turkish origin who in 1999 won a Danish national beauty contest and thereby earned the title Miss Denmark. A news clip about Miss Denmark 1999 presented her story as a dream come true. The clip began with a voice-over – “The fairy tale began last night in Copenhagen” – and viewers saw footage from the previous night’s beauty contest. The viewers saw judges announcing the winner of the contest, and the camera zoomed in to give television audiences a close-up of a happy and emotionally moved young woman in a swimsuit. Then the voice-over continued the story by saying, “Seido came from Turkey to Denmark when she was one month old. Now 18 years older and ready to represent Denmark at an

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^{553} Taken from interview with Chahdortt Djavann published in Aske Munk, “Hovedtørklæde er barbari”, Politiken, (Copenhagen, Nov. 13, 2004): section 3, 5, original text: "Det er lykkedes de islamiske fundamentalister at overbevisde unge i forstæderne om, at de er ofre for den vestlige dekadence. De unge muslimske piger er blot et ekko af et massivt propagandaapparat, der i løbet af de seneste ti år har fået et fast greb om de socialt dårligt stillede i de europeiske forstæder…Det er en snedig strategi, for er der tale om et individuelt valg, står det ikke til at diskutere. Så er der jo tale om en smagssag. Men racisme og antisemitisme er jo også et individuelt valg, og det har vi jo intet imod at forbyde.”
international beauty contest. The day today has been spent negotiating, signing contracts, and attending the first photo session – a life far from the Turkish village where it all began for Miss Denmark.”

The news clip continued with an interview questioning Seido’s national belonging. Despite the fact that Seido had won the national Danish beauty contest and had been in Denmark for the vast majority of her life, the interviewer’s first question was: “Who will you represent when you participate in the Miss World contest?” This question indicated that Seido still could be more Turkish than Danish and therefore potentially could be representing Turkey during Miss World. Seido replied that she represented Denmark: “I represent Denmark because I am Danish.” But the news clip put Seido’s nationality and Danishness under question, and negotiation and did not allow her to freely to construct her own national identity. By asking Seido what country she represented, the interviewer implied that she – as the interviewer who represented the national television station and thereby the ethnically Danish population – did not fully accept Seido as the official Danish representative. Despite Seido's Danish citizenship, which was a requirement for participating in the Miss Denmark contest, despite her having spent her whole life in Denmark, and despite her being chosen as the most beautiful woman in Denmark, it was acceptable within the media discourse to ask if she was fully qualified to represent Denmark.

Seido was presented as a success because she was a winner and because she had embraced a way of life that was associated with ‘the Danish way’. Even though she was not fully accepted as ‘Danish’, she was seen as having embraced ‘the Danish way of life’. Visually, the news also constituted her as an exception and as a success precisely because she appeared as different from other female visible minorities seen on TV. She was shown in a swimsuit, i.e. shown wearing very little clothes, which was completely different from the usual portrayals of female visible minorities wearing veils. Seido thereby visually appeared as a manifestation of ‘the Danish way of living’ and as a symbol of the Danish liberty expressed as the freedom to expose flesh. She might not be a ‘real’ Dane, but she appeared as the ideal of a liberated Danish woman.

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554 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19991119, original text: "Eventyret startede i nat i København. En måned gammel kom Seido fra Tyrkiet til Danmark. I dag 18 år gammel og parat til at repræsentere Danmark i en international skønhedskonkurrence. Dagen i dag er gået med forhandling, kontraktunderskrivelse og den første fotosession. Et liv langt fra den tyrkiske landsby, hvor livet startede for Miss Danmark.”

555 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19991119, original text: "Hvem repræsenterer du nu, når du skal ud til Miss World?"

556 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19991119, original text: "Jeg repræsenterer Danmark. Jeg er jo dansk.”
In Denmark, the late twentieth-century's dominant discourse on gender equality was closely related to the discourse of sexual liberty. Similarly, gender equality often appeared in direct connection with women’s rights over their bodies between the 1970s and the 2000s. These rights were generally interpreted and presented as the right to be topless on beaches and in advertisements, to participate in the pornography industry, and to engage in similar activities involving the public display of naked flesh.\(^{557}\) In the ‘feminist immigration debate’ described in chapter 4, “The oppressed immigrant woman”, the news media presented gender equality and sexual liberty as intertwined and as oppositions to the situations of visible minority women. Karen Hallberg from the NGO Danish Women’s Society [Dansk Kvindersamfund] argued in an interview published in connection to the debate: “We would like so much to help and support these women [visible minority women]. We have often attempted to get in contact. We have given a prize to an immigrant woman, and we have council services for immigrant women in Copenhagen. But it does not work and it seems like some of the families are a little scared of us. Like they think that we are someone who eats men. They seem to be on guard when meeting independent women. Especially the sexual liberation is frightening for them. Our gender liberation stands in many aspects in sharp contrast to the Islamic view of life.”\(^{558}\)

Illustrations to some of the newspaper articles in this debate also played upon this understanding of naked women as an expression of gender equality. *Politiken* for instance had a collage with a woman dressed in a black *hijab* covering her whole body positioned next to a naked white woman shown from behind – placing her bare buttocks in the center of the collage and in the golden section of the page so the readers’ eyes would easily find them.\(^{559}\) The juxtaposing of a naked white woman and a *hijab*-covered woman of color combined with texts about how oppressed veiled women were and how liberated ethnically Danish women most likely led readers to equate nakedness with female liberty. The *hijab*-covered woman in the collage looked elderly, angry, and overweight, whereas the naked buttocks appeared to belong to a young and slim woman. The

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\(^{557}\) See also Peter Hervik, *Medierne muslimer. En antropologisk undersøgelse af mediernes dækning af religioner i Danmark* (Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling, 2002), 210 ff.


\(^{559}\) *Politiken*, (Copenhagen, June 2, 2001): section 3, 6. See also Peter Hervik, *Medierne muslimer. En antropologisk undersøgelse af mediernes dækning af religioner i Danmark* (Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling, 2002), 210 ff for analysis of some of these images.
collage therefore also carried sexual connotations which positioned the white woman as sexually attractive and the visible minority woman as sexually non-attractive.

Visually, Seido appeared as a symbol of the Danish liberty expressed as the freedom to take off one’s clothes. She appeared as the ideally integrated immigrant and as a success – because she was seen to be celebrating the Danish discourse of liberty. She was the symbol of a ‘real’ integrated visible minority because ‘real’ integration included possessing sexual freedom, which she expressed by taking off her clothes. She was, like the other successful visible minority women, portrayed as the exception, the token visible minority who proved the rule.

Just as there has been limited space for reading veiling as a diverse and complex practice, the media have provided limited room in the media to read women’s exposure of naked skin differently than as a sign of sexual liberation. But wearing little clothing is not simply a one-sided symbol of liberation and freedom; it is a much more complex act where women with sparse clothing can be seen as, among other things, participants in their own constructions as sexual objects. This interpretation of dressing as a field in which female sexuality and objectivity was negotiated rarely appeared in the news media’s discourse. In the mass media there were occasionally rare counter-voices trying to argue that the exposure of naked flesh and the public sexualizing of women have not solely been liberating. But these voices were shot down by the endless number of experts, journalists, newscasters, and television producers who concurrently claimed that exposing female flesh has been a sign of liberation and veiling a symbol of oppression. Hereby, the experts, journalists, and media producers participated in maintaining the hegemonic ‘truth’ that sexual liberty prevails in Denmark and that taking of one’s clothes is a symbol of this liberty. If the media had given more room for alternative discourses, by, for instance, including that veiling potentially could be seen as a means of resistance against sexual objectification, then the media would also have had to question the dominating discourse that ethnically Danish women are sexually liberated. This has not happened because the hegemonic discourse has dominated the news media to such an extent that it seems to have suppressed alternative discourses from the news. Outside the news media there has been some room, even though this has been limited, to argue that women in Denmark have not only been sexually liberated but also that the exposure of female flesh has contributed to constructing women as sexual objects.\footnote{560 See for instance Sarah H. Cawood, Katrina Schelin & Louise Witt-Hansen, “Nu med glimt i øjet – Kvindeligt Selskab vs. Arla Foods” in Femkamp – Bang om nordisk feminism, eds. Gunilla Edemo & Ulrika Westerlund (Viborg: PP forlag, 2004) for how alternative feminist voices have been articulated and shot down in the mass media when trying to argue that the female exposure and public sexualizing of women has not only been liberating.} But within the prime time news
programs, the discourse claiming that gender equality has prevailed in Denmark and that the freedom to expose naked flesh illustrates from this equality has had an extremely strong hold.

The discourse of beauty can be seen as a field, and a signifier, where gender, race, and sexuality are negotiated and constructed. The news coverage of Seido and the newspaper collage signaled what kind of female appearance was preferred and valued by the media discourse. A 1996 news clip about plastic surgery similarly showed how ideals about gender equality and sexual liberty have been linked to ideals of beauty. The news clip began with the television host introducing the clip: “The Western ideals of beauty are influencing the immigrants. Now more and more foreigners get plastic operations in order to look like the rest of us.” The voice-over continued by repeating the statement: “Still more people are placing themselves under the knife for a plastic operation, and several of them are foreigners who would like a more Western appearance.”

The viewers heard that “almost one third of the patients [receiving plastic surgery] are immigrants and foreigners.” After this statement the news clip cut to an interview with the owner of a plastic surgery clinic, Helle Söderhamn, who argued: “They [immigrants and foreigners] want to keep their shapes in order to keep the men. It is my impression that this is the reason behind their plastic surgeries. It is not for their own sake or in order to be seen by others or to be seen by their female friends. Unlike the Danish women [who get plastic surgery] for the sake of their surroundings and for their own sake. I do not always feel that it [plastic surgery] is something they [immigrants and foreigners] want as much as it is something they are a little pressured to do by their men.”

The news clip contained no interviews with visible minorities who could have explained why they underwent plastic surgery. Instead it was the clinic owner who mused on behalf of all the visible minorities who had received plastic surgery, and the TV news presented her argument as if it were a certain fact.

This news clip created a distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ where ‘we’, the Western white women, represented the beauty ideals that other races tried to copy, placing ‘us’ higher than ‘them’ in the beauty hierarchy. The news clip continuously showed detailed footage from a breast

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561 DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19961022, original text: “De vestlige skønhedsidéer smitter af på indvandrerne. Flere og flere udlændinge får plastiske operationer, for at komme til at ligne os andre.”
562 DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19961022, original text: “Stadig flere mennesker lægger sig under kniven til en skønhedsoperation. Og mange af dem er udlændinge, der gerne vil have et mere vestligt udseende.”
563 DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19961022, original text: “en tredjedel af klinikkens patienter her indvandrere og udlændinge.”
564 DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19961022, original text: “De vil jo holde på formerne, for at holde på mændene. Det er mit indtryk, mere end det er for deres egen skyld, og for at blive set af andre og af deres veninder. Hvor, for danske kvinder, så er det for omgivelsernes skyld og for deres egen skyld. Jeg føler ikke altid, at det er noget, de har så meget lyst til, men noget de er en lille smule presset til af deres mænd.”
operation in which a black breast was cut open. This clip explicitly connected race and beauty through its repeated statements about “foreigners”, i.e. non-white people, who received plastic surgery in order to achieve a more white, and thereby more beautiful, appearance. This clip also explicitly connected the construction of gender and gender roles to race. The clip informed viewers that ethnically Danish women received plastic surgery for their own sake, i.e. in order to please themselves, unlike “foreigners and immigrants” who underwent plastic surgery because their male partners wanted them to. In the clip, the body, including treatments of the body, became a field upon which female independency and gender roles played out. The message of the clip seemed to be that independent, ethnically Danish women could do with their bodies what they wanted and that they did so for their own sake. By contrast, women of color acted under the directives of their men, and thus their bodies were out of their own control.\textsuperscript{565} The story seemed to place white Danish women in a position of double privilege, firstly because they represented the most beautiful race and secondly because they had independent control over their bodies. The surgery they exposed their bodies to thereby became a sign of their gender liberation.

‘Us’ vs. ‘them’

In the news media’s representations of visible minority women their oppression was symbolized by their lack of freely exposed nakedness and by their veiling, which verbally and visually was constructed as a one-sided symbol of oppression. The rather rigid opposition between putting on clothes, veiling, as female-oppressive and taking off clothes, nakedness, as liberating involved a hierarchal division between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Similar to the conclusions of the previous chapter on the oppressed immigrant woman, where I argue that the images of female visible minorities as oppressed involved images of ethnically Danish women as liberated and living lives influenced by gender equality, images of visible minority women as veiled led to images of ethnically Danish women as liberated and sexually emancipated.

The veil has been a visual component in the news media’s construction of female visible minorities since the 1970s, but with the debates about veiling from the 1990s the stereotype of visible minority women gained a new facet. During the 1970s and 1980s, the portrayed female visible minorities, i.e. the stereotype of the oppressed Muslim women, were characterized with unconditional sympathy and paternalism. But during the late 1990s and early 2000s, this sympathy

\textsuperscript{565} See also Mustafa Hussain, Ferruh Yilmaz & Tim O’Connor, \textit{Medierne, Minoriteterne og Majoriteten – en undersøgelse af myhedsmedier og den folkelige diskurs i Danmark}, (Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling, 1997), 87 ff. for an analysis of the DR 19961022 plastic operation news clip.
was sometimes combined with criticism because the women refused to take off their veils. The overall characterization of the women was still narrated with sympathy and paternalism, but news journalists occasionally became irritated or unable to understand the women they portrayed. These women insisted on carrying a veil, which, in the eyes of the interviewing journalists doomed them to oppression and unemployment.

This one-sided image of the veil has prevented openings for alternative readings of both the veil and nakedness. It therefore seems like the news media’s representation of the veil and thereby female visible minorities as oppressed indirectly has participated in maintaining the discourse that ethnically Danish women have been liberated and that exposing female nakedness has been a sign of this liberation. The communication about visible minority women as oppressed has therefore not only maintained and reproduced the opposition of visible minority women to ethnically Danish women – ‘us’ vs. ‘them’; it has also participated in constructing the public sexual display of women in Denmark, which since the early 1970s has constituted part of the hegemonic understanding of female liberation.
6. The sexually aggressive Muslim male

Introduction

The news media portrayals of visible minority males provide fascinating illustrations of how race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender intersect. During the period under consideration the news media often portrayed young, visible minority males as sexually aggressive and as potential sexual threats. Several descriptions of young visible minority males’ sexuality related to media coverage of specific rape cases; others consisted of news stories that do not focus on sexual violence but nonetheless construct male visible minorities as sexually aggressive. In this chapter, I throw light on how news print and news broadcasts delivered stereotypical descriptions of the young visible minority male as sexually aggressive, and I illustrate how these constructed him as hyper-sexual and as a threat between the 1970s and early 2000s. By analyzing the coverage of specific rape cases with visible minorities as perpetrators, I show how the media inscribed sexual danger and threats on the colored body and enlarged the characteristics of the individual rapists until they became representative for all visible minorities. The coverage of rape cases functions as a window onto a broader understanding of how the media have constructed and contested categories of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and nationality and onto how portrayals of male visible minorities as sexually aggressive have played important roles in the construction of Danish national subjects.

I argue that a masculine news discourse influenced Danish rape coverage in the late twentieth-century by showing how the media focused on the perpetrators and their contexts instead of on the raped woman and her survival. By looking at the media’s use of terms and ethnic markers, it becomes clear that the news media positioned white, ethnically Danish men as the norm, while positioning women and visible minorities as the ‘others’.

Overall, I examine the construction of Danish men via the media’s descriptions of visible minority men. The white, ethnically Danish male appeared as a non-rapist with respect for women, and the media thereby constructed him as the ideal partner for ethnically Danish women. Unlike the visible minority male, the ethnically Danish male was not presented as a sexual threat. By drawing upon rape statistics and rape patterns in Denmark, I show how the ethnically Danish male, contrary to the media’s image, had a large share in the responsibilities of rape in Denmark during the period analyzed, i.e. the 1970s to the 2000s.
The image of the colored man as sexually threatening has a long colonial history. I touch upon this history and show how Western discourses have often characterized the colored man as hyper-sexual. The news media drew upon this discourse throughout the analyzed period, but the image intensified at the end of the period, i.e. during the late 1990s and early 2000s, as exemplified in extensive news coverage of rape cases with visible minorities as perpetrators. This chapter therefore mainly focuses on the end of the analyzed period.

The media’s critique of visible minority men’s rape of ethnically Danish women included descriptions that left very limited room for a positive appraisal of sexual relations between ethnically Danish women and visible minority men. This negative view of inter-racial relations should be viewed in connection with understandings of the Danish nation. Ethnically Danish women have functioned as the symbolic reproducers of the nation and as the symbolic borders between the nation and ‘others’. Visible minorities’ sexual assault on ethnically Danish women was therefore not simply a question of harming an individual female body but rather an of 'foreigners' 'invading' and thereby harming the entire nation.

Besides various television news clips from DR as well as TV2, in this chapter I draw upon a large number of newspaper articles covering the so-called Aarhus rape case from 2000. In this infamous case nine young men raped a 14-year old girl in Bispebjerg, a low income area in the second largest Danish city of Aarhus. The nine rapists were all of Palestinian origin, while the girl was white and of Danish origin. The rapists were tried twice, in the city court as well as in the high court, and were convicted on both occasions. Considered the most debated and media-covered rape case in Denmark, there were a correspondingly large number of newspaper articles covering it.\(^{566}\) As a result, the Aarhus rape case can serve as a representative example of how the Danish news media covered rape cases with visible minorities as perpetrators.

For this analysis I made use of the newspapers *Jyllands-Posten, Berlingske Tidende, Politiken, Ekstra Bladet*, and *Information*. As described in chapter 1 "Introduction", these newspapers represent a range of political perspectives, from conservative to socialist, as well as different writing styles, from academic to tabloid papers. The newspapers therefore represent a field of diversity within the written media and give a solid picture of written news communication in Denmark. For the analysis I have included articles and letters to the editor from the period of February to December 2000 that directly comment on or closely relate to the rape case. Quantitatively, *Information* had 19 relevant pieces. *Ekstra Bladet* had 69, *Politiken* 43, *Jyllands-

\(^{566}\) See for instance Pernille Ammitzbøll, “T og drengene,” *Jyllands-Posten* (Aarhus), (Nov. 19, 2000): 1 who described the rape case as “Denmark’s most covered rape case,” original text: “Danmarks mest omtalte voldtægtssag.”
6. The sexually aggressive Muslim male

Posten 134, and Berlingske Tidende 18 – altogether 283 articles and letters to the editor related to the rape case; they have all been included in this analysis.

Rape as a class issue

In several articles about the Aarhus rape case journalists or interviewees describe how rapists often belong to the lowest social classes. A typical example is an article in Information in which the journalist argued, without providing any statistics, that “the absolute majority of people convicted of rape in Denmark are very socially marginalized.”\textsuperscript{567} The journalist went on to conclude that “harder penalty to young people with socially marginalized backgrounds will be directly counter productive….The rape case from Aarhus is only one of many signals that the wealthy but socially and culturally strongly divided Denmark has a flagrant need to integrate and empower its exposed and expelled citizens.”\textsuperscript{568} Similarly, a commentator argued in Politiken that rapes like the Aarhus rape were committed by “youth from broken homes where norms and values are gone. Many of them or their parents are born or raised in refugee camps where there were no norms, no values, no justice. We are dealing with people who have been hurt through generations.”\textsuperscript{569} This explanation of rape as a phenomenon caused by social marginalization or by upbringings in families at risk took the responsibility away from the rapists. The reason behind their rape was not to be found in their personal attitudes towards women but rather in their social upbringings, for which they had no responsibility. Such coverage with a focus on the perpetrators was common for the news media’s descriptions of rape cases throughout the period analyzed, i.e. the 1970s to the early 2000s, regardless of the perpetrators’ racial profiles. The emphasis can be seen as an expression of a male news discourse that has taken the responsibility for a rape away from the male perpetrators.

Rape as a class issue was prevalent primarily in the two left-wing newspapers, Information and Politiken. If people from the lowest social classes primarily committed rape, then

\textsuperscript{567} Jsn, ”En ulekker sag”, Information (Copenhagen) (Nov. 18-19, 2000): 1 (the editorial), original text: “…det klare flertal af voldtægtsdomte er stærkt socialt belastede.”

\textsuperscript{568} Jsn, ”En ulekker sag”, Information (Copenhagen) (Nov. 18-19, 2000): 1 (the editorial), original text: “…hårdere straffe til belastede unge er direkte kontraproduktive…så tjener fredagens domme formentlig kun til at øge de i forvejen traumatiserede unge mænds hat til det danske samfund. Voldtægtssagen fra Aarhus er kun én af mange signaler om, at det velstående, men socialt og kulturelt stærkt delte Danmark har et skrigende behov for at integrere og myndiggøre sine udsatte og udstødte medborgere.” See also Guido Lolli, ”Profil af en gruppevoldtægt”, Eksra Bladet, (Copenhagen), (Nov. 13, 2000): 13, in which the journalist argued: ”The perpetrators are often socially marginalized or previously convicted.” (original text: ”Gemingsmændene er ofte socialt belastede eller tidligere straffede.”)

\textsuperscript{569} Torben Bennet & Rikke Engelund, ”Mønster der forsvandt”, Politiken (Copenhagen), (Nov. 19, 2000): 4. section, 3, original text: “…unge der kommer fra hjem, hvor alt er faldet fra hinanden, hvor normer og værdier er væk. Mange af dem eller deres foreldre er født eller opvokset i en flygtningelejr, hvor der ingen normer var, ingen værdier, ingen retfærdighed. Vi taler om mennesker, som er skadet gennem flere generationer.”
rape consequently could be fought financially by creating or expanding a welfare state that could have provided better conditions for people belonging to these lower social classes. When media like the academic newspapers *Information* and *Politiken* claimed that rape was committed by socially marginalized people, they also indirectly argued that their own readers, the vast majority of whom were not socially marginalized, had not raped, and that rape has been an issue that did not directly concern them and their communities. In this portrayal, rape becomes a field where class, sexuality, and race intersect. The focus on class might also have served as a strategy for individual journalists or interviewed experts to avoid speaking about race and ethnicity. However, this substitution did not characterize the general strategy of the two leftwing newspapers; other journalists and interviewees had written or spoken so extensively about race and ethnicity that class did not appear as the primary explanation for the rape in the two newspapers’ overall coverage.

**Masculine discourse on rape**

The articles primarily focused on the rapists: Out of the 283 articles and letters to the editor related to the rape case, 57 articles described the rapists’ context and their background, and 30 of these had the men’s situation as their main focus. In comparison only one article focused on the girl and her survival. This focus presented the rapists in a positive light, as underscored by the sympathetic commentary on the perpetrators’ situation, particularly in the cases of several journalists who described the perpetrators’ backgrounds and social situations with sympathy, e.g. “They have been very influenced by being in custody for the case and several of them have a hard time sleeping…They have been very worried about the future.”

In a similar vein, another argued that it was complicated for the convicted men to return to prison after their second sentence from the high court. The rapists were tried for a second time in November 2000 because both the defense lawyer and the prosecutor had appealed the case to the high court. The high court sentenced the men to a higher penalty than judges in the city court had in May 2000, and thereafter the men had to return to prison after living in freedom since May 2000. A journalist reported in *Jyllands-Posten*: “They are not feeling well now. They are scared about what will happen next. They have to serve

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another three months and they are scared about what will happen. Several of them were treated very badly during their custody."

Only on rare occasions did articles inform readers about the psychological and physical consequences of a gang rape followed by heavy media coverage on a teenage girl, and those came mainly in the form of letters to the editors. One of those letters to the editors, for instance, argued that “The young Danish girl has become mentally disabled, maybe forever.”

Despite this comment focused on the girl, the rest of the letter focused on the men’s context and their social background. Similarly, in a short fashion, another letter to the editor printed in Ekstra Bladet stated that “a 14-year-old girl is ruined forever” while the letter harshly critiqued Danish immigration policies. With these comments readers expressed a traditional view of rape, one that positioned the raped girl/woman as a victim and viewed an experience of sexual assault as having eternal consequences. New research has shown that this has not always been the case. Women have experienced rape differently and many of them have not been traumatized for life.

News media messages are not unidirectional. The media does not simply exercise influence over their audiences but rather communicate in a two-way process. News programs mirrored values and attitudes from the society they portray as much as they presented values and attitudes to their audiences. The Danish news media indirectly referred its society’s attitudes by describing them and also directly referred them by giving voice to people outside the media. Letters to the editors represented the latter, even though the media of course edited and sometimes censored

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571 (No author), “Venner til de dømte forstår ikke dommen”, Jyllands-Posten, JP Aarhus, (Aarhus), (Nov. 18, 2000): 5, original text: “De har det ikke godt nu. De er bange for, hvad der skal ske nu. De skal ind og afsone tre måneder mere, og der er bange for, hvad der kan ske. Flere af dem blev behandlet meget dårligt under varetægtsfængslingen.” See also Niels Westberg, “Dom på svage beviser”, Ekstra Bladet, (Copenhagen), (Nov. 18, 2000): 7 which wrote: “Right now all convicted men are involved in positive developments with the social services. They have served the sentences from the city court and pedagogically it is very unfortunate to force the boys out of their educational courses. That can ruin a lot.” Original text: “Alle dømte er lige nu inde i gode forløb i det sociale system. Straffene fra byretten er jo afsonet, og det er pedagogisk meget uheldigt, at drengene nu skal hives ud af deres behandlingsforløb. Det kan ødelægge meget;” or Martin Hein, “Voldtægtsmænd i fængsel igen”, Berlingske Tidende (Copenhagen), (Nov. 18, 2000): 2, who quotes one of the convicted men’s lawyers for the following statement about the men’s reaction to the sentence: “They are very very sad. They are both extremely unhappy and also a little aggressive. They cannot understand that they have to serve time in jail again when they during the last five months have proven that they can behave well.” Original text: “De er meget, meget kede af det. Dels er de dybt ulykkelige, og dels er de lidt aggressive. De kan ikke forstå, at de skal i fængsel igen, når de i de sidste fem måneder har vist, at de kan opføre sig ordentligt.”

572 Palle Mortensen, “Der er kun tabere”, Jyllands-Posten, JP Aarhus, (Aarhus), (Nov. 21, 2000): 8, original text: “Den unge danske pige er blevet psykisk invalideret, måske for altid.” See also C. Holmensted, “De milde domme hån mod pige”, Ekstra Bladet (Copenhagen), (May 30, 2000): 20, who argued that the raped woman “is left with the humiliation, mortification, pain, and deep wounds in spirit and body after being exposed to a gang rape.” (Original text: “så linger ikke tilbage med dyrgørelsen, fornøderelsen, smarten og dybe sår på sjæl og krop efter at have været udsat for massevoldtagt.”)

573 Pia Cjærsgaard, “Forbrydelse betaler sig”, Ekstra Bladet (Copenhagen), (May 29, 2000): 30, original text: “Så er en 14-årig pige ødelagt for livet.”

574 Jeanette Deleuran, Man voldtager da piger!, (Copenhagen: Høst & Son, 2004), 49.
these letters. Surveys have shown that letters to the editors often were harsher in language and more negative towards visible minorities than articles and that these letters played an important role in establishing the basic assumptions of public debate about visible minorities.  

Several of the letters to the editors that mentioned the raped girl and the consequences of rape for her included her situation in arguments against visible minorities and against multiculturalism; the inclusion of the girl thereby became a tool in an anti-immigrant agenda. This was for instance the case in a letter to the editor written by the leader of the Danish People’s Party [Dansk Folkeparti], Pia Kjærsgård. She used the trauma experienced by the raped girl to argue that “the greatest official lie in Denmark is the belief that peaceful coexistence [between Arabic and Danish cultures] is possible.”

The attention and sympathy that the news media gave the rapists can be interpreted as an example of the media’s masculine discourse. When the media coverage of the Aarhus rape case predominantly focused on the rapists and their personal backgrounds, the coverage of the rape case became a question of the rapists’ social contexts and a question of why they committed rape, instead of examining how the girl was surviving. The focus on the individual rapists and their personal backgrounds as explanatory frameworks left out larger political and societal explanations of why rape took place in Danish society. This discourse might have resulted from the fact that men dominated Danish newspaper staffs and leadership positions. A recent newspaper survey has shown that 55 of the total 72 chief editors were men (2003); i.e. 76 percent of the leader positions in Danish newspapers were held by men. Women were quite poorly represented in the field of newspaper journalism with only 30 percent of the staff positions; this was a little less than the 39 percent they constituted in the entire field of journalism.

Analyses of North American media’s descriptions of rape have shown a similar pattern. Sujata Moorti has shown in her analysis of the so-called Central Park Rape – where a group of African-American and Puerto Rican teenagers were convicted of gang-raping a white female jogger in 1989 – how the media coverage of the case focused on the rapists’ socio-cultural background instead of on the woman. She has argued that the news media turned the coverage into a debate about inter-city youth and their problems, and “isolated anomie as the primary cause for


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violence." The rape itself thereby became a platform from which politicians, experts, and journalists discussed youth crime and inner-city culture. The news coverage was spurred by the brutality of the Central Park rape, just as the Danish media coverage was spurred by the dramatic aspects of the Aarhus rape – a gang rape against a minor – but the Northern American media paid very little attention to the issue of sexual violence and focused instead on the teenage rapists, just as the Danish media focused on the teenage rapists and their contexts. \(^579\)

**Rape coverage as a platform for discussing the social system**

Similar to the Central Park rape case, the Aarhus rape case functioned as a platform for public debates on various issues. One of these was a discussion about Aarhus municipality’s social system, which some accused of having let the rapists down for a number of years before the rape. Local politician, Maria Louise Ebdrup of the Conservative party – which was in opposition to the Social Democrats, who had held power in Aarhus for decades – argued: “These youth are simply let down. Some of these youths have been known by the social services for ten years and yet no effective help has been delivered.” \(^580\) Other unnamed politicians, similarly representing the rightwing opposition, took their critique of the social system in the news media so far as to blame the system for the rape: “The case from Bispehaven where six young immigrants are convicted of raping a 14-year old Danish girl is a result of the social service department’s bad work.” \(^581\) This portrayal of the rapists as men let down by the social system most likely gave the reader an impression of a group of potentially sympathetic boys whose circumstances had ruined their lives. The politicians’ emphasis on the social system’s failures took away the men’s personal responsibility for the rape. Instead the fault lay with the system, which could not be associated with individuals and thus appeared almost anonymous. The media brought no descriptions of the social system’s failure in relation to the raped girl and therefore did not take any responsibility away from

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578 Sujata Moorti, *The Color of Rape. Gender and Race in Television’s Public Sphere*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 83. In 2002, DNA analysis linked one man, Mathias Reyes, a convicted murderer and rapist, to the Central Park rape. Reyes confessed the rape whereby the five convicted teenagers, who had served time because of the rape, were cleared of the crime.


her. The readers were thus most likely left with the impression that she might have been partly responsible for the rape, among other reasons because she voluntarily had placed herself alone with a group of visible minority boys. Using rape as a platform for discussing the social system also illustrates that the Danish news discourse was masculine. Moorti has argued that “the male-centered worldview...is foregrounded by the news.” Thus reports about rape have tended to focus on institutional processes connected to rape, e.g. the trials, the social system, etc., and viewed rape as individual cases where circumstances have gone wrong, rather than as larger gender related social problems.582

**The raped girl has no voice**

The news media extremely limited the raped girl's voice. In only one article, a piece in the rightwing *Jyllands-Posten* that focused on her and her situation, did the media give her room and voice to speak.583 The article was published after the second trial, i.e. at the very end of the coverage, after more than 50 articles had focused on the rapists. Besides this article, written by a female journalist, there were a few others that attempted to describe the rape from the girl’s point of view. One article entitled “14-year old gave up during the rape” presented the rape as a narrative with the girl as the protagonist.584 But it was not her voice expressed in the article. Instead the article described the rape itself. And it did so in a way that at times seemed pornographic in its thorough portrayal of what the men did to the girl, including detailed descriptions of when and how they had performed each sexual act. This was not a female-friendly version of the rape but more a sensational narration of the rape. The article was placed right next to an article, written by the same male journalist, that presented the rape from the men’s points of view. Here he argued that it was not a rape but rather an act of voluntary sex. In this latter article the journalist included quotations from the men, allowing their voices, however limited and biased, to be heard.585

One might argue that the imbalance in the focus on the men and their context as opposed to the girl and her context resulted from the fact that she gave her court testimony behind

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582 See also Sujata Moorti, *The Color of Rape. Gender and Race in Television’s Public Sphere*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 75.


585 Peter Bresemann, ”Hun lukkede os til sex”, *Ekstra Bladet* (Copenhagen), (Nov. 14, 2000): 6. *Jyllands-Posten* similarly tried to report the rape from the woman’s perspective in the article Henrik Grønvald & Chr. Friis Hansen, “Sidste tur i Bispehaven endte med voldtægt”, *Jyllands-Posten, JP Aarhus*. (Aarhus), (Nov. 14, 2000): 4. However, this article described the woman as an object and not as a subject which made the rape seem very removed from her. It was more a report from the woman’s statements in court than it was a narration of the story from her perspective.
closed doors. There was much debate between defense lawyers, prosecution lawyers, and judges about whether the second trial in the high court should be public (the first trial was held behind closed doors). In the end it was decided that all of the trial, except for the girl’s testimony, should be open to the public, giving the media full access to the trial. One of the reasons for the mass of media coverage of this case was because the press was present at the second trial and reported from it daily. But the girl’s non-public testimony cannot alone explain the lack of focus on the girl. Even though the press did not hear her live, her statements were read out loud in front of the press during the second trial, and her lawyer referred publicly to her statements several times during both cases. Journalists thus had several opportunities to include her side of the story and her situation. This did not happen. The best explanation might therefore be that this rape coverage was an illustration of the male narration in Danish newspapers and that the men’s contexts and backgrounds were continually and collectively viewed as better stories – i.e. would sell more newspapers – than the girl and her survival.

The news media sometimes gave raped women a bit more voice in the television coverage of rape than in print. TV2 carried several clips in which raped women were given a voice to elaborate upon the rape they had experienced. However, it was characteristic for these accounts that the news programs gave the raped women voices predominantly as victims. Among other reasons, television news coverage gave women more voice because the news clips were modeled according to the classic narration of the actant model. Similar to the narration described in the previous analysis of the media’s stereotypical communication about visible minority women, the raped women in the news clips often functioned as the actant model’s subject in the narration. But, as in the narration of the visible minority women as victims of violence, news journalists did not narrate the raped women as strong and independent characters. Whether they have achieved their goal depended on external factors and figures, not on the raped women’s own actions. The raped women in the television coverage therefore remained objects within the narration, despite the fact that they occupied subject position. In other words, the news media have portrayed raped women as objects in both the newspaper and the television narration.

**Fabricating a rape pattern**

The Aarhus rape case led to a wider discussion about rape with articles that focused on rape as a theme, but very few of these articles tried to connect the Aarhus rape to general
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national rape patterns. This lack of connection made the Aarhus rape appear as an individual case without broader connections to sexuality or gender structures in Denmark.

Instead the Aarhus rape case was repeatedly connected to other gang rapes committed by visible minorities against white women. The Aarhus case was compared to a recent rape case in Sweden where a group of visible minority men gang had raped a white Swedish 14-year-old girl; one article even explicitly stressed the similarity in its title: “Similar cases in Sweden.” The Aarhus case was also compared to patterns of gang rape in Britain: *Jyllands-Posten* told the readers that gang rape was common in Britain, and that 80 percent of gang rapes were committed by youth of color who were immigrants or children of immigrants. In Denmark, the public discussion about immigration has often drawn parallels between Denmark and countries like Britain, USA, and Canada, which have had a longer history of receiving large numbers of immigrants. Politicians, experts, and laypeople have repeatedly pointed out that these countries, unlike Denmark, have been defined as multicultural, and that they have been decades ahead in immigration experiences. But a description like *Jyllands-Postens*’s – which connected gang rape and characterized it as “common” with multiculturalism – might have functioned as a warning to the Danish readers: This is what happens if/when Denmark becomes a multicultural society. The media drew this conclusion, as in another article that argued: “Gang rape has been seen in other countries which have received immigrants for a number of years. Holland, Germany, and lately also Sweden have experienced the same problems….The gang rape in Bispehavnen turned out to be the first in a series where the pattern has been the same. Several Danish girls have become victims of gang rapes committed by groups of youths with immigrant background.”

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Several journalists and interviewed experts also often compared rapes committed by visible minorities to other rape cases in Denmark committed by visible minorities.\textsuperscript{590} \textit{Ekstra Bladet} described how the Aarhus rape case was only one out of eight recent gang rapes in Denmark committed by visible minorities.\textsuperscript{591} An ambivalent article in \textit{Politiken} was introduced by a lead saying: “During the last year, the Danish public has been outraged over cases where young men with immigrant background have raped Danish women. It looks like a cultural clash and an attack on Danish values and on Danish women. It looks like a pattern.”\textsuperscript{592} After this introduction, the article described five rape cases in detail, commenting on their similarities, visible minorities as victimizers and ethnically Danish younger women as victims. But after having established this pattern and illustrated similarities between these rape cases, the article took a turn and argued that there was no pattern between the rapes and that the apparent similarities were coincidences. This part included an interview with criminologist Beth Grothe Nielsen, who argued that Denmark also had experienced gang rapes committed by white ethnically Danish men. However, the criminologist did not provide specific examples of this, and her argument therefore seemed weaker in the face of the claim that visible minorities were committing gang rape, a claim supported by specific examples. The criminologist also argued that visible minorities should not be viewed as representing one singular category, but this message did not carry weight in the article. The article quoted her: “The only thing in common [in these rape cases] is that the offender is not white and that the girls have been Danish” – and that was exactly the pattern that the media were establishing. Even though Beth Grothe Nielsen described – if the reader ever got to her argument in the second half of the long article – how the rape offenders had different cultures, ethnic origins, and ages, the


main impression the article delivered was that gang rapes in Denmark showed a clear pattern of visible minorities raping ethnically Danish women.\textsuperscript{593}

During the national election for Parliament in Denmark in 2001, the Liberal party \textit{[Venstre]} manifested the trend of associating the characteristics of individual visible minority rapists with all visible minorities. The Liberals published a poster with a photograph of the convicted rapists in the Aarhus case. On top of the convicted rapists appeared the words “Time for a change” \textit{[Tid til forandring]}. The meaning of the poster seemed clear: Immigrant Muslim men rape, and they will continue to rape ethnically Danish girls and women until something changes. What needed to change was Denmark’s immigration and integration politics. Such changes formed the cornerstone in the Liberals’ election campaign, manifested in their demands for tighter immigration laws and increasing penalties for rape and violence, two forms of crimes that rightwing politicians especially accused young visible minority males of committing.

Running an election campaign by attacking visible minorities is not possible in all European countries. In 1976, the British leaders of the three major political parties, Labour, the Conservatives, and the Liberal Democrats, signed a declaration saying that they would not play the so-called race card in elections; i.e. they would not use issues of race, ethnicity, religion, etc. as topics in election campaigns in order to get votes. The different party leaders have repeatedly signed this declaration at each election since.

In Denmark, the Liberals came to power after the 2001 election, when they formed a government with the Conservatives supported by the People’s Party. Among the new government’s initiatives was increased sentences for rape. The city court sentenced the rapists in the Aarhus rape to six to nine months in prison, of which three to six were suspended sentences. According to the penal code at the time, ‘ordinary’ rape could be punished with a maximum of six years of imprisonment and “especially dangerous” rape with a maximum of ten years imprisonment. Judges have very seldomly given such hard penalties in rape cases in Denmark, and the sentences given the Aarhus rapists corresponded to common rape sentences in Denmark.\textsuperscript{594} Because the convicted Aarhus rapists had been in custody since the rape, they had already served their sentenced time. They were therefore released from prison after their conviction. The high court increased the sentences to nine to twelve months imprisonment, and they had to return to prison. In June 2002,

\textsuperscript{593} Torben Benner & Rikke Egelund, ”Mønstret der forsvandt”, \textit{Politiken}, (Copenhagen), (Nov. 19, 2000): 4. sektion, 3, original text: ”Det eneste fælles [for voldtægtsagerne] er, at gerningsmanden ikke er hvid, og at pigerne har været danske.”

\textsuperscript{594} Jeanette Deleuran, \textit{Man voldtager da piger!}, (Copenhagen: Høst & Son, 2004), 179 ff.
the penal code for rape was increased so ‘ordinary’ rape could give ten years of imprisonment and “especially dangerous” rape up to twelve years.

When the media and politicians connected rapes committed by visible minorities, e.g. the Aarhus rape, to other apparently similar visible minority rapes, they contributed to constructing an image of visible minority males as potential violators and rapists – an image which also implied that there was no similar pattern of white Danish men being rapists. In an interview, two white ethnically Danish women from Bispehaven stated: “Sex between a Danish girl and several foreign boys in a row is not uncommon. Trust me: It happens often.”

The article was entitled “Gang rape happens often” and served as an example of how the characteristics of the rapists were expanded to cover all male visible minorities in the area. In Politiken gang rape also became a general characteristic of visible minorities. An interviewed expert on criminal visible minority issues, sociology professor Dominique Bouchet, argued in an article that “the immigrant boys are very closely connected to each other within the group, and for better and for worse they share between brothers [friends] – it being half a liter coke, a new scooter, or sexual experiences.”

Again, individual minorities’ crimes of rape expanded to represent the whole community of visible minorities, now with a professor’s authority.

The various experts’ comments on the characteristics of visible minorities – which have actively participated in the construction of the stereotype of visible minority males as rapists – have functioned as a regime of truth. Keeping in mind the connection Foucault described between knowledge and power, it seems apparent how these experts’ utterances played an important role in the subjectification processes of visible minority males. Experts have studied young visible minority males – it has even been possible to be an expert on young criminal visible minorities – and experts have gathered knowledge and information about the visible minorities and thereby constructed them as a category of objects.

Fanon has explained how claimed knowledge of ‘the

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595 Niels Westberg, “Flok-sex sker ofte”, Ekstra Bladet, (Copenhagen), (Nov. 18, 2000): 5, original text: “Sex mellem en dansk pige og flere udenlandske drenge på stribe er ikke spor uødeliggert. Tro mig: Det sker ofte.” See also (No author), “Venner til de domte forstår ikke dommen”, Jyllands-Posten, JP Aarhus, (Aarhus), (Nov. 18, 2000): 5, in which a friend of the convicted is quoted for saying: “[If the Aarhus case is rape] Then there are many rapes in Bispehaven. You should know how many other Danish girls who go there and do the same.” Original text: [Hvis denne sag er voldtægt] Så foregår der mange voldtægter i Bispehaven. I skulle bare vide, hvor mange andre danske piger, der kommer derude og gør det sammen.”


other’ indicates that an objectification of the other has taken place: “Phrases such as ‘I know them’, ‘that’s the way they are’, show this maximum objectification successfully achieved.”

Stereotyping of ‘the other’ functions ambiguously. It both constructs ‘the other’ as foreign and different while simultaneously constructing ‘the other’ as known and visible. On one hand, visible minority males became different from the white experts and the white media audience, while, on the other hand, the media simultaneously and continuously described them as well-known. The possessed knowledge about the visible minorities enabled the Danish society to have some control and power over visible minorities – even if this was not in the form of direct control over their acts but rather control over them as categorized objects.

The television news also established connections between visible minority males and the act of rape. Television news programs since the early 1990s have been introduced by a host who lines up the most interesting stories of the evening’s program. A 2001 news clip about rape was included in this opening of the news program: The TV-host said “A new rape case” while footage of a fence against which the rape was committed was shown. The introduction was followed by several other news clips until the actual news clip about the rape finally appeared near the end of the program. A voice-over introduced the news clip: “Last night, yet another woman reported a rape.” The linguistic usage of “a new rape” and “yet another woman” indicated that several women had been raped, i.e. that this specific case was not unusual but part of a common pattern. In the beginning of the news clip, a police inspector spoke with an interviewer: “The perpetrators are foreigners [visible minorities], according to the offended [woman]. They spoke Danish with an accent, but she also noticed that they apparently spoke some kind of Arabic language to each other.”

The news clip showed footage from a previous news clip reporting about another rape committed by three visible minority men. This previous rape was committed against a female drug addict who was under the influence of stimulants during the rape. The rape took place in the middle of the night in a drug store. The ‘new’ rape took place in the evening outside on an open field, and

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600 Frantz Fanon, Toward the African Revolution, (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 34 f. Bhabha has also drawn on this Fanon text in his description of stereotypes.
602 See also Mary Louise Pratt, Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation, (New York: Routledge, 1992) for how the imperial and colonial gaze was characterized by a wish to categorize, observe, and order information about “the other”.
603 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010906, original text: ”Nykoldtægtssag.”
604 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010906, original text: ”I afles anmeldte endnu en kvinde en voldtægt.”
605 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010906, original text: ”Genergsandene er ifølge anmelderen udlængende. De talte dansk med accent, men hun bemærker også, at de tilsyneladende talte et arabisk sprog sammen.”

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the woman attacked was not under influence of stimulants. The two cases did not seem parallel or similar except that they both were cases of sexual assault against women. But they were not connected because of their shared misogynist perspectives. Instead they were associated as similar because the perpetrators were visible minorities.

The narration of rape in the media was not only male but also white. The news media did not simply construct the rapists as men who had committed rape but as non-ethnic Danes who had committed rape. This construction can be seen in the linguistic references to the rapists, whom the news media always labeled with their ethnic origin, religion, or immigrant status. The news media never just called them men, boys, or rapists. Rather they always labeled them “Arabic”, “Palestinian”, “foreigners”, “second generation immigrants”, “Muslims” or similar subject complements that constructed them as different from the white norm. The norm would simply have been to describe them as “men” or “boys”, terms the viewers/readers automatically would have associated with white, ethnically Danish males. The media have drawn upon the common frame of reference between the viewers and themselves in the use of words and terms. Groups of people that functioned as the norm have not historically needed subject complementary descriptions in order to make readers and viewers understand to what group of people the media referred. White, ethnically Danish men have constituted the norm to such an extent that not only their ethnicity but often also their gender has not required mention. When the media labeled a person “a 30-year old” or “a scaffold builder”, readers or viewers knew that the person in question was white and male. Women constituted less of a norm, and therefore they were named by their gender. White, ethnically Danish girls/women were simply referred to as “girls/women.” It was, for instance, clear that Station 2 referred to ethnically Danish, white girls when they used of the label “young girls.” The term “Danish girls/women” also indicated that the media referred to white, ethnically Danish women. The term did not referred to the large number of visible minority women with Danish citizenship, even though they legally also were defined as “Danish women”; instead the news media referred to these women as “Arabic women”, “Muslim women”, “immigrants women”, etc.

Labels ascribed to visible minorities were often used interchangeably.606 Characteristics such as “Arabic”, “Muslim”, “immigrant”, etc. have different etymological meanings and, strictly speaking, they do not refer to the same thing, but in the common frame of reference used by the TV-stations and their viewers as well as by the newspapers and their readers, they all referred to visible minorities of Middle Eastern origin. Therefore it did not create problems

606 See for instance TV2 (Station), primetime crime news program Station 2, date: 20010910 which used “Arabs”, “Muslims”, “immigrants”, “foreigners”, and “second generation immigrants” interchangeably.
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for the readers of newspapers when they simultaneously read that the rapists in the Aarhus rape case were “second generation immigrants,”607 i.e. born in Denmark by immigrant parents, and that “They are from Lebanon and some of them have spent their first years in refugee camps.”608 Both descriptions signaled the same thing. Both were commonly used and well-known descriptions for a constituted group of people whom the media have described as a homogenous group. The fact that it was possible to use these terms and descriptions interchangeably illustrates the lack of nuance in the media’s communication about visible minorities.

The white discourse was also apparent in the media’s characterization of visible minority rapists as representatives for all visible minority men. The media argued in connection with the Aarhus rape case that the “Danish 14-year old girl…[who] was subjected to a gang rape by a large group of Palestinian boys…has changed her view of foreigners.”609 The rape was hereby interpreted as an act committed by representatives of foreigners, i.e. visible minorities, and not by individuals, leading the girl to change her views of visible minorities in general and not just of the nine individuals who raped her. This use of national, ethnic, and religious labeling of visible minorities made them appear as objects and as representative for all members of their national, ethnic, or religious group. Mustafà Hussain has argued in his analysis of mass media’s communication about criminal visible minorities that the media have often included labels of minorities’ national origin, ethnicity, or immigrant status (as first, second, or third generation immigrants) in situations where there has been no clear connection between the crime and the criminals’ backgrounds. When labeling people solely by origin instead of, for instance, profession or title, they become constructed in object positions instead of in potential subject positions.610 The news media’s labeling of visible minority perpetrators in rape cases via their origin, religion, and immigrant status, has created a clear division between ‘them’ and ethnically Danish newspaper readers and television viewers, and positioned the rapists in opposition to the ethnically Danish audience.


609 Peter Bresemann, ”14-årig gav op under voldtægten”, Ekstra Bladet, (Copenhagen), (Nov. 14, 2000): 6, original text: ”dansk 14-årig pige blev udsat for massevoldtægt af en stor gruppe unge, palæstinensiske drenge i et skur i Bispeshaven…Efter massevoldtægten har pigen ændret holdning til udlændinge.”

Homi Bhabha has argued that a stereotype continuously must be repeated in order to keep a close connection between the signifier and the signified,\footnote{Homi Bhabha, ”The Other Question”, in Screen vol. 24/6, Dec. 1983 (London: Oxford University Press), 18-36, 18 f.} i.e. in order to associate male visible minorities with rapists, this connection must be repeated. The media have not drawn similar connections between rapes committed by white, ethnically Danish men. In the coverage of an infamous rape, the so-called scaffold builder case [stilladsarbejdersagen], where eleven ethnically Danish men raped a woman in a backyard at a Christmas party in 2002, the news media did not, for instance, explain the rape by references to Danish culture, neither did they characterize the rapists as representative for ethnically Danish men.

This was a central difference between the media’s representation of rape committed by visible minorities and rapes committed by white ethnically Danish men. Both representations focused on the men’s individual contexts and background. In the process the broader societal and gender explanations have disappeared. But where a rape committed by white ethnically Danish men has not been connected to any other rapes, the rape committed by visible minority men has been connected to other rapes committed by other visible minorities, establishing the impression of a pattern.

Meetings between visible minority males and ethnically Danish females have been characterized by rape

The news media have portrayed meetings between visible minority males and ethnically Danish females as characterized by rape, violence, and force. TV2 broadcast, for instance, a news clip with the theme of rape committed by visible minority males against ethnically Danish girls and women. The news clip argued, via a voice-over, that “far from all rapes within immigrant communities are reported because the Danish girls fear the Muslim boys’ revenge.”\footnote{TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010910, original text: ”langt fra alle voldtægter i indvandremiljøet anmeldes. Danske piger frygter hævn fra de muslimske drenges.”} The clip quoted an expert on teenage relations, Mette Severin, for saying “I have met several hundred girls who have been abused [by visible minority males] in various ways.”\footnote{TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010910, original text: ”Jamen, det er flere hundrede, flere hundrede piger jeg har mødt på forskellige grader [af misbrug], ikke”} This statement was followed by an anonymous girl who said: “He raped me. His buddy held me and then he completed what he wanted.”\footnote{TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010910, original text: ”Han voldtog mig. Hans kammerat holdt mig, og så gjorde han hvad han skulle.”} The expert continued: “I have met girls who years later tell me that...
they have been raped, or who have broken down and told me they have been raped by these kinds of boys. But at the time of the rape and also later they have not reported it because they feared reprisals.\footnote{TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010910, original text: Jeg har oplevet piger simpelt hen flere år efter fortæller mig, eller er brudt sammen og fortalt mig, at de har altså været voldtaget af de her drenge. Men på daværende tidspunkt, og også på nuværende tidspunkt, ikke har turde at anmelde det af frygt for repressalier.} The voice-over further explained how the expert “via her work has met several young girls who have experienced rape and violence in relationships with second generation immigrant boys.”\footnote{TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010910, original text: Igennem sit arbejde har hun mødt mange andre unge piger, der har oplevet vold og voldtægt i deres mode med andengenerationsindvandrerdrenge.”} The news clip finished with another quote from the expert: “Young Muslim men’s and boys’ attitudes towards Danish girls… are frightening and these attitudes become more and more common.”\footnote{TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010910, original text: ”Muslimske unge mænds, drenge, holdninger til danske piger dem synes jeg er skræmmende, for dem synes jeg er breder sig vidt.”} The interviewed expert, the coordinator of a program for girls at a public school in an ethnically diverse area, made it clear that the story she told happened often. She used the phrase “these kinds of boys”, which both distanced her from the boys and also spoke down to them. “These kinds of boys” seemed to refer to young visible minority males, who thereby all became characterized as potential rapists. The expert gave the impression that most ethnically Danish girls she had met during her work shared the same experience. She thereby reduced relationships between ethnically Danish girls/women and visible minority boys/men as mainly characterized by rape.

Later that same evening, TV2 sent its weekly crime news program **Station 2**. This evening the theme of the program was visible minority males’ rape of ethnically Danish females; the program further developed the evening’s former news clip. The program showed much of the same footage and interviewed several of the same people, but **Station 2** allowed the interviewees to elaborate more upon their viewpoints and experiences. This meant that the viewers heard more details about the violence and the rapes committed against ethnically Danish females by visible minority males, and more from the experts about how and why these visible minority males raped ethnically Danish females.

**Station 2**’s opening phrase was representative for the message of the evening’s program: a TV-host said “Young girls who are dating immigrant boys – a story about rape, threats, and a warped view of humans.”\footnote{TV2 (Station), primetime crime news program Station 2, date: 20010910, original text: ”Unge piger kærester med indvandrerdrenge – en historie om voldtægt, trusler og et forkvaklet menneskesyn.”} In Danish the word for ‘one’ and ‘a’ is the same [en]. The opening phrase therefore indicated that there was only one kind of story when young girls dated immigrant boys, and that was the story of rape, threats, and a warped view of humans. **Station 2**
failed to consider options for alternative, and positive, relationships between visible minority males and ethnically Danish females. The program’s opening phrase talked about the kind of rape named ‘date rape’ [kontakt-voldtægt], i.e. rapes where perpetrator and assaulted know each other. This kind of rape has been the most common form of rape in Denmark. It is a different form of rape when the woman (or man) has been sexually assaulted by a perpetrator(s) she/he did not know. After the opening phrase about date rape, the program moved directly to descriptions of three recent gang rapes where the attacked women did not know their violators. The descriptions of the three rapes ended with an interview with a police officer who issued descriptions of several men who were wanted for the rapes. For the first rape the wanted men were characterized as “foreigners”, for the next as “Arabs”, and for the third as “southerner.” The latter term is an old-fashioned expression originally used to describe immigrants from Turkey and Yugoslavia, but since the 1980s the term has been used more generally in a somewhat prejudiced way to describe visible minorities. Station 2 did not differentiate between sexual assaults committed by partners and ex-partners and by unknown perpetrators, and the common reference between the rapes described in the program seemed to be that the perpetrators were all visible minority males. Station 2’s communication about visible minorities seemed rather rigid here, because it indicated that, regardless of what kind of relation a visible minority male had to an ethnically Danish female, it would result in rape.

Station 2 interviewed ethnically Danish females about their sexual assault experiences. They had all had similar experiences of being subjected to rape and violence from their former visible minority male partners. A TV-host introduced the girls’/women’s stories by saying “Station 2 has talked to girls and young men from the Odense area Vollsmose [a low income area with a large percentage of visible minorities in Odense, the third largest in Denmark], but this story could have been from any other large city in Denmark. Several girls we have spoken to do not want to participate in the program because they fear for the consequences and the two girls who now will speak out have demanded to be anonymous.” The TV-host thereby made it clear that ethnically Danish girls all over the country were subjected to violence from visible minority males. One girl, whose shadow was filmed instead of her face in order to make her anonymous, said: “His buddy

619 TV2 (Station), primetime crime news program Station 2, date: 20010910, original text: “udlænninge”, ”araber”, ”sydlending.”
620 TV2 (Station), primetime crime news program Station 2, date: 20010910, original text: “Station 2 har talt med piger og unge mænd fra Odense-bydelen Vollsmose, men historien kunne ligeså godt have været fra en hvilken som helst anden større by i Danmark. Mange piger, vi har talt med, ønsker ikke at medvirke af frygt for følgerne, og de to, der nu bryder tavsheden, har krævet at være anonyme.”
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held me and then he did what he wanted to do.”

The other girl who participated in Station 2 was similarly shown via her filmed shadow, she said: “He kept holding me against the ground and then he complete what he wanted. Then he got dressed and left.”

The voice-over also supplied this story with more information: “Marlene was 15 years when she was raped.” These two girls were primarily allowed voices as victims, but they were also given some room to elaborate about their ex-partners. In this elaboration, neither of the girls spoke about her ex-partner as an individual or about him alone instead they used the term “they”, whereby they referred to the whole group of young visible minority males. They spoke about themselves in the neutral term “one” [man] which has been a common linguistic strategy of distancing oneself from the described experiences. It is understandable that the two girls wanted to distance themselves from the experience of rape, but this distance also had the consequence of making the two girls appear as representatives for all female teenagers who were or had been dating visible minority men. The combination of speaking about the ex-partners as “they” and about themselves as “one” made their stories appear as if they were average, common tales of the meeting between young visible minority males and young ethnically Danish females.

According to the media, the negative relationship between visible minority males and ethnically Danish females had to do with visible minorities’ lack of respect for women. However, news journalists did not simply report this misogynist attitude but also actively participated in constructing it. In a TV2-interview with an older, visible minority man, the journalist asked: “So they [younger visible minority males] view the Danish girls as hookers?”

The term hooker [luder] has been used as a derogatory and degrading name for women; despite the fact that the term refers to prostitutes, it also has been used as a vulgar slang in a way that does not imply that the woman receives money for her potential sexual relations with men. The interviewer’s question was a so-called close-ended question to which the interviewed could only answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’. By using

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621 TV2 (Station), primetime crime news program Station 2, date: 20010910, original text: “Hans kammerat holdt mig, og så gjorde han, hvad han skulle.”

622 TV2 (Station), primetime crime news program Station 2, date: 20010910, original text: “Heidi var endnu jomfru, da hun blev holdt, 13 år gammel.”

623 TV2 (Station), primetime crime news program Station 2, date: 20010910, original text: “Han blev ved med at holde fast i mig mod jorden, og så fuldførte han det, han skulle. Så tog han tøj på og gik.”

624 TV2 (Station), primetime crime news program Station 2, date: 20010910, original text: “Malene var 15 år, da hun blev holdt.”

625 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20000319, original text: “Så de [synlige minoritetdsdrenge] ser egentlig på danske piger som ludere?”
close-ended questions, the interviewer, placed the answers in the mouth of the interviewee. The interviewee could only confirm or disconfirm the question. This is a common method for controlling interviews and their outcome. The interviewer could instead have used an open-ended question, for instance “How do visible minority boys view Danish girls/women?” Using an open-ended question would have enabled the interviewee to use his own words and terms and thereby better have argued what he personally thought. The TV-journalist used the close-ended question to get the answer he wanted. In this case the interviewer wanted the interviewed to say that visible minority males view Danish women as hookers, otherwise he would most likely not have conducted an interview via close-ended questions. The difference between open-ended and close-ended questions must be considered common knowledge for journalists, and it is therefore possible to conclude that the journalist was conscious about what he was doing and conscious about how he controlled the outcome of the interview.

Similarly, Station 2 broadcast a statement from a middle-aged, visible minority man who said: “Danish girls – worth 25 or 50 cent.”\(^{626}\) This statement was immediately followed by footage of the rapists from the Aarhus rape case. The connection seemed to be that visible minority men viewed ethnically Danish women as sexually cheap and therefore they thought it was OK to have sexual intercourse with them, i.e. rape them. The middle-aged visible minority man was only seen this one time during the program, and the viewers were not given any information about him. Still Station 2 presented him as a representative spokesperson for all visible minority males.

The negative sexual image of visible minority men was mirrored by the news media’s positive sexual construction of ethnically Danish men. This positive sexual image was underscored by a letter to the editor in Ekstra Bladet published next to letters about the Aarhus rape. The writer argued that none-Danish men lacked respect for women and lacked understanding for Danish gender roles. The letter was titled “Danish men are the best in bed” and argued that “Danish men are the world’s best lovers and family men.” The letter further added that “Danish men have the advantage [over foreign men] that their penises are bigger.”\(^{627}\) So not only have ethnically Danish men had respect for women and treated them as equals, they have also been attributed with large penises, apparently larger than all foreign men’s. Penis length was not just a question of anatomy; penises and their vitality have been important components in constructions of masculinity – the

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\(^{626}\) TV2 (Station), primetime crime news program Station 2, date: 20010910, original text: “Danske piger – 25 øre eller 50 øre værd.”

\(^{627}\) “Varme piger”, “Danske mænd er de bedste i senget,” Ekstra Bladet, (Copenhagen), (Feb. 27, 2000): 9, original text: “danske mænd er verdens bedste elskere og familiefædere”; “Danske mænd har også den fordel, at deres penis er længere.”
longer the penis, the greater the man seems to have been the logic. It was therefore a very positive description of the ethnically Danish men to argue that they had large penises. It was also a description that ensured that even though they had respect for women and were “the world’s best…family men”, they were still vital masculine lovers. The reference to large penis sizes ensured their masculinity, which traditionally could have been threatened by the attention they paid to their role as fathers and husbands. The traditional white fear of the colored sexual ‘other’ has been bound up in masculine fears of being inferior lovers and inferior performers of masculinity. Debates and myths about penis sizes have been connected to that fear. The claim that ethnically Danish men have larger penises than foreigners has therefore also functioned as a calming assurance in the face of ethnically Danish men’s fears about their own sexual inferiority.

The media have left very limited room for different kinds of meetings between young visible minority men and young ethnically Danish females. An article written in connection to the Aarhus rape, for instance, argued that visible minority men were sexually unattractive to Danish women: “If I was a young Arabic boy raised in patriarchy…I would have to witness again and again that no Danish girl would have anything to do with me…[and] that every single living girl I came into contact with in my daily life would reject me.”\(^{628}\) Apparently, according to this article, there was not a single ethnically Danish girl/woman who found visible minority men sexually attractive or wanted to be sexually involved with them, and therefore sexual contact between these two groups could only take place as rape.

The television news also gave the same impression visually in footage illustrating a news clip about visible minority men’s attitudes to sexual and physical assault of their ethnically Danish female partners. Here a large, dark brown, hairy, strong looking hand grasped a small, hairless, white hand. The brown hand held the white hand tight from above, and even though the white hand moved a little as if it tried to get away, the brown held it down. In the end the white hand laid still with the brown hand placed on top of it. The brown hand held it as if the two hands were holding hands, but it was clear that the white one was not participating in the handholding but simply was being held, and kept in place, by the brown hand.\(^{629}\)

This footage of handholding was a racialized construction of sexual and violent assault, and an illustration of how gender, race, and sexuality intersected. It was also an illustration

\(^{628}\) Lone Norgaard, “Hvad stiller vi op med voldtægt?”, *Jyllands-Posten* (Copenhagen), (Nov. 13, 2000), 11, original text: “Hvis jeg var en ung arabisk patriarkalsk opdraget dreng …og gang på gang måtte konstatere, at ingen dansk pige ville have med mig at gøre...[og] at samtlige de piger i kød og blod, jeg kommer i berøring med i min hverdag, afviser mig.”

\(^{629}\) TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 20011001.
of how the media’s discourse has gained hegemony in constructing visible minority males as sexually aggressive. There were no indications of who was behind the hands other than their skin color. The brown hand was marked as male by its large size and because several hairs grew on the back of the hand, two things that usually indicate male hands; but the gender of the hand could not be known for certain. But since the viewers knew that the news clip was about visible minority males’ assault on ethnically Danish females, the viewers would most likely have read the brown hand as male and the white hand as female. Race seemed to have been determined in the footage, and because the viewers had been exposed to the stereotypical portrayal of male visible minorities as sexually aggressive, an image that had intensified during the late 1990s and early 2000s, race could function as one of the motors for the narration. The footage played along the lines of the hegemonic discourse whereby race became a driving factor in the assault portrayed in the footage. The narrative conclusion was tautological: The brown hand was hurting the white hand and was taking possession of the white hand simply because it was brown; the viewer understood this conclusion because of the connotations associated with the brown hand, i.e. the connotation of sexual violence as inscribed on the male, visible minority body.\footnote{See also Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question", in Screen vol. 24/6, Dec. 1983 (London: Oxford University Press), 18-36, 31 f. for how the visible recognition of ‘the other’ is an integrated part of stereotyping the other. Stereotyping of the racial other involves perception of skin and skin color as associated with identity; an identity which is constructed via the stereotype.}

**Rape caused by the Arabic Islamic view of gender**

In the media’s description of rapes committed by young, visible minority males, journalists and experts have often pointed to the men’s Arabic background, using its supposed patriarchal and misogynist views of women to explain rape. The leftwing media briefly used class as an explanation, as mentioned, but an Arabic background figured as the predominant explanation in both leftwing and rightwing papers as well as in the television news. *Politiken* represented the general late twentieth-century Danish newspapers’ coverage when it, in a comparison between gang rapes committed by visible minorities in Sweden and the Aarhus rape case, wrote: “the gang rapes are culturally determined and something is wrong with the immigrant boys’ views of women.”\footnote{Heidi Avellan, “Sverige vil bremse porno”, *Politiken*, (Copenhagen), (Feb. 26, 2000): 5, original text: “gruppevoldtætgerne er kulturelt betinget…det er indvandrerdrengenes kvindesyn, der er noget galt med.” See also "Lov og moral” (editorial), *Jyllands-Posten*, (Aarhus), (Nov. 18, 2000): 8, where the editor argued that the rapists from the Aarhus rape case have "a messed up view of women." (Original text: ”[Voldtægtsmændene har] et forkvaklet kvindesyn”, or Niels Westberg, “I dag er de flove”, *Ekstra Bladet* (Copenhagen), (Nov. 12, 2000): 15.} Another *Politiken* article similarly argued that “First generation Danes’ cultural background
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prevents respect for women and prevents an understanding of the fact that when a woman says no she means no.”632 The same article rhetorically asked “How in the hell will young boys of Arabic origin ever gain the essential respect for girls and women when the convicted could be set free [after the conviction in the city court].”633 This statement not only critiqued the city court’s sentence, it also critiqued the lack of respect for women among boys of Arabic origin. By asking how they will “ever” gain respect for women the article indicated that they were miles away at the time. Again, this lack of respect became a characteristic of all boys of Arabic origin, not just of the convicted rapists.

*Jyllands-Posten* puzzled over whether gang rapes committed by visible minorities were “caused by all the porn…[received] by satellite and cable TV? Or has the sexual education in schools become too poor? Or is it [gang rape] connected to cultural clashes?” The article answered its own question indirectly by stating, immediately after asking these questions, that “a remarkably high number of the rapists are of foreign – more specifically Middle Eastern – origin”,634 i.e. suggesting that gang rapes were caused by cultural clashes between a ‘foreign Middle Eastern’ and a ‘familiar Danish’ culture.

The newspapers labeled the Aarhus rape a “clash of cultures”, with one article arguing that “the view of women in other cultures is a fact which one cannot escape…the Islamic view of women…[belongs to] pre-modern cultures. Several of the boys who have participated in rape have a background in these cultures.”635 This article thereby argued that some of the rapists from the Aarhus rape, as well as their families and communities, not only represented a non-progressive culture but a culture that had progressed so little that it was not even modern yet; i.e. it placed the visible minorities in a pre-modern way of thinking and living. This idea was closely connected to previous European colonial and racial thinking. According to dominant theories in the nineteenth-century, human history, culture, and the development of races were viewed as a progression with the white European placed on top of the hierarchy as the highest stage of culture and civilization.

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632 Lone Nørgaard, “Et nej er altid et nej”, *Politiken*, (Copenhagen), (June 1, 2000): 5, original text: “nye danskere, hvis kulturbaggrund hindrer en respekt for kvinder og en forståelse af, at når en kvinde har sagt nej, mener hun nej.”

633 Lone Nørgaard, “Et nej er altid et nej”, *Politiken*, (Copenhagen), (June 1, 2000): 5, original text: “Hvordan pokker skal unge drenge af arabisk oprindelse nogen sinde opnå den fornødne respekt for piger og kvinder, når de domte kunne gå ud i friheden [after dommen].”


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He, and the European culture, then became the yardstick for determining other races’ and cultures’ place in a hierarchy where non-European cultures and races were interpreted as earlier stages in the human evolution.636

According to the news media representations, there was a fundamental difference between so-called Danish gender roles and so-called Middle Eastern gender roles. Politiken, for instance, argued that “one of the most touchy themes regarding integration of new Danes [i.e. visible minorities] is the meeting between Danish and Middle Eastern gender roles.”637 This indicated that Danish and Middle Eastern gender roles were fundamentally different. Since the rest of the article described the Middle Eastern understanding of women as sexist and one that viewed women as objects, it underscored the claim that Danish gender roles could not be sexist or objectify women: In other words, Danish gender roles were based on equality, and women were viewed as subjects. This view was supported by the NGO Danish Society of Women [Dansk Kvindesamfund] who, in a press release responding to the first sentence in the Aarhus rape case, rhetorically asked: “The Danish Society of Women asks how young boys of Arabic origin will ever learn the essential respect for girls and women when the convicted teenagers could leave towards freedom accompanied by applause and whistles from families, friends, and girlfriends in the court room.”638

This press release suggested that all young boys of Arabic origin lacked respect for women to the same extent as the convicted rapists. As previously mentioned, the use of the term “ever” indicated that the current state of respect for women was far removed from the desired state. Since the press release did not specifically refer to the convicted rapists’ lack of respect, the general conclusion seemed to be that all boys and men of Arabic origin were sexist.

Hyper sexual males

In the early 2000s-rape coverage the news media described visible minority rapists as hyper-sexual and attributed to them a dangerously high libido. In the coverage of the Aarhus rape,

the rape itself was characterized as, among others things, a “rape party.” According to *Ekstra Bladet* the “party” began for the visible minorities when one of them announced: “there is a hooker in the site-hut.” The rape took place in a site-hut that was a part of a municipality youth project. After this announcement “a group of Palestinian boys immediately got up, left their girlfriends [and the apartment where they had been hanging out] and ran down the stairs towards the site-hut to participate in the rape.” One of the rapists later said: “I had had intercourse with my girlfriend shortly before [the rape].” The image of the convicted men drawn from this description was a group of men with a high libido – so high that they ran when they heard about an option for having sex. One of them ran with the other boys to have more sex even though he had just shortly before finished a sexual act with his girlfriend. The article presented them as men controlled by their sexual libido, which made them leave what ever they were doing (hanging out, seeing their girlfriends, etc.) and with no considerations run towards the possibility of satisfying it. Another of the convicted argued: “When one of my friends could pick her [the raped girl] up, then why shouldn’t my brother do the same. Our cousin had also been with the girl.” These quotations contributed to further constructing the men as sexual maniacs with a high libido, which made them share women and forget sexual morals as well as the potential consequences of their actions. This image was not only expressed by the tabloid *Ekstra Bladet*, the leftwing intellectual newspaper *Information* also characterized the rapists as “youth in this country who are afflicted by lack of norms and by weakened sexual morals…of a group of very young people who have no control over morals or sexuality.” The interesting aspect here was not whether the nine rapists in the Aarhus

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639 Peter Bresemann, “En luder i skuret”, *Ekstra Bladet*, (Copenhagen), (Nov. 15, 2000): 18, original text: "Der er en luder i skuret." Site-huts are small wood houses often used by workers at construction sites.

640 Peter Bresemann, “En luder i skuret”, *Ekstra Bladet*, (Copenhagen), (Nov. 15, 2000): 18, original text: "En flok palæstinensiske drenge rejste sig straks, forlod deres kæreste og løb ned ad trapperne og hen til skuret for at deltage i voldtægtsfester.

641 Peter Bresemann, “En luder i skuret”, *Ekstra Bladet*, (Copenhagen), (Nov. 15, 2000): 18, original text: "Jeg havde haft samleje med min kæreste kort forinden." This girlfriend is not mentioned any further by the newspaper.

642 Peter Bresemann, “En luder i skuret”, *Ekstra Bladet*, (Copenhagen), (Nov. 15, 2000): 18, original text: "Når en af kammeraterne kunne score hende, hvorfor skulle min bror så ikke også. Vores fætter havde også været sammen med pige." See also Jesper Bernstorf Jensen, "Vidne: drenge afhalte forklaringen", *Politiken* (Copenhagen), (Nov. 15, 2000): 2 and Jesper Bernstorf Jensen, "Historien om en voldtagt", *Politiken* (Copenhagen), (Nov. 19, 2000): section 4, 1-3 for similar descriptions of how the boys ran towards the site-hut when they heard there was a hooker [loose woman] there.

643 Jsn, “En ulekker sag”, *Information* (Copenhagen) (Nov. 18-19, 2000): 1 (the editorial), original text: "nogle unge i dette land er ramt af normløshed og svækket kønsmoral… en gruppe purunge mennesker, der ikke har styr på moral og seksualitet." Notice that Danish the word 'køn' can mean both ‘sex’ and ‘gender’. Unlike the English language, there is no linguistic division in Danish between the biological 'sex' and the cultural ‘gender’. The word ‘kønsmoral’ therefore covers both a sexual moral and a gender-oriented moral. See also Torben Benner & Rikke Eggelund, “Mønsterer der forsvandt”, *Politiken* (Copenhagen), (Nov. 19, 2000): section 4, 3, who argued: “The only thing for boys between 15 and 80 years is to pick up women. But these [visible minority] boys don’t know anything about feelings, foreplay, etc.”
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rape case were sexual maniacs and without sexual morals, but rather the fact that these characteristics were enlarged to cover all male visible minorities. The Dutch cultural theorist Jan Nederveen Pieterse has described how simplifications and generalizations serve as central characters in stereotypical representation. These generalizations imply a denial of individuality of the people labeled by stereotypes. The Danish mass media’s construction of young Muslim males as sexually aggressive denied these men individuality. The media gave very limited leeway for seeing visible minority men as individuals; the media limited the possibility of viewing them as individuals who potentially could have been different from each other and who potentially could not have been sexually aggressive.

An interesting twist in the news media’s sexual construction of the young visible minority men involved a story about one of the Aarhus rapists who had not able to complete intercourse during the rape. *Jyllands-Posten* reported: “The 14-year-old girl has explained that one of the offenders tried but was unable to complete the intercourse. ‘This means that he could not get it up, a Danish girl explains to her laughing female friends from the immigrant community’. ‘Then we are prevented from him raping others’ was the immediate response.” Here the visible minority male was again constructed with a high libido that would lead him to commit another rape if he could. But he was also constructed with a fragile masculinity. He was impotent – probably one of the most harmful characteristics in constructions of masculinity. Historian Anette Warring has argued that Western European critiques of men have often been expressed as a critique of the men’s masculinity, whereas critiques of women have targeted the women’s chastity by critiquing their moral conduct. The male performance of heterosexual intercourse has been closely connected to men’s sexual power, which to a large extent has defined men’s masculinity in our society. The image of the rapist drawn from this article was as a man of color attributed with an uncontrolled

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Original text: "Det eneste livet handler om for drenge mellem 15 og 80 år er at score damer. Sådan er det. Men de her drenge aner intet om følelser, forspil og så videre."


646 Erik Thomle & Henrik Gronvald, "Voldtætgssag blev til familieudflugt", *Jyllands-Posten, JP Aarhus*, (Aarhus), (May 27, 2000): 5, original text: "Den 14-årige pige har forklaret, at en af gerningsmændene forsøgte, men ikke gennemførte samlejet. ‘Det betyder, at han ikke kunne få den op og stå, mand’, forklarede en dansk pige sine grinende veninder fra indvandrermiljøet. ‘Så slipper vi da for, at han voldtager andre’, lød den øjeblikkelige reaktion.’ This befriending between ethnically Danish females and visible minority females was not elaborated further upon in connection to the coverage of the rape case.

libido but lacking the power and sexual ability that could define him as a ‘real’ man – the article presented him as such a pathetic figure that girls were laughing at him.\textsuperscript{648}

The image of male visible minorities as hyper-sexual was intensified by media reports about how the police, after the Aarhus rape, had warned ethnically Danish girls and women about the potential danger of rape by visible minority men. Young women were at risk warned the police. Similarly, an article informed readers that the Crime Prevention Council [\textit{Kriminal præventive råd}] was in the process of publishing a pamphlet teaching girls/women how to prevent rape.\textsuperscript{649} This lessons played on the notion that visible minority males’ libidos were out of control. Women should be taught not to awaken this uncontrollable libido. The media did not question this idea but reported it as a fact. This can be seen as an illustration of how the (masculine) news discourse on rape has been influenced by gendered beliefs constructing women as responsible for rape.

The belief that women are responsible for rape was apparent in several media representations of rape cases, especially in cases with ethnically Danish men as violators. Throughout the period analyzed, i.e. the early 1970s to the early 2000s, there was a general consensus accusing women of leading their violators on, i.e. making them responsible for the rape.\textsuperscript{650} According to Danish rape laws, which date back to 1866, a raped woman is not the accuser in a court rape case; she is a witness for the Public Prosecutor. This means that she is under oath and must speak only the truth, whereas the rapist as the accused is not under oath. It is the prosecutor’s job to prove that the accused committed an \textit{intentional} rape. Because of this law only about 50 percent of reported rape cases were taken to court during the period analyzed; in the rest of the cases there was not enough evidence to prove the intent. NGOs working with rape have therefore advocated that the law be expanded to include ‘negligent rape’.\textsuperscript{651} The misogynist view behind the current law has further encouraged defense lawyers to point to the woman’s chastity in order to prove the accused men’s lack of intent – and the news media have continuously reported on raped women’s lack of chastity. The then female District Attorney [\textit{statsadvokat}] Birgitte Vestberg has reported from discussions between judges and lawyers regarding the sentencing in an

\textsuperscript{648} See also (no author), "Domspremisser i voldtægtssagen", \textit{Jyllands-Posten. JP Aarhus}, (Aarhus), (June 3, 2000): 10 which also stated the impotence: "...accused tried to complete intercourse...but had to give up because he could not get an erection." Original text: "...tilfælde...forsøgte at gennemføre samleje..., men måtte opgive, da han ikke kunne få rejstning."

\textsuperscript{649} Anne Marie Dohm, "Politiet: Piger skal advares", \textit{Jyllands-Posten}, (Aarhus), (Nov. 15, 2000): 2. There are for unknown reasons two versions of this newspaper from Nov. 15\textsuperscript{th}, 2000, the article was printed in both of them, both on page 2 but in the second newspaper it was titled "Piger skal advares om voldtægt." See also Grethe Preisler, "Paranoia i det frit", \textit{Information}. (Copenhagen), (Nov. 18-19, 2000): 15.


6. The sexually aggressive Muslim male

(in)famous case from 1981. One defense lawyer argued: “When a woman is alone in a public place where there are only men present, she must be prepared that a rape can happen.” Vestberg, the only woman among her nine male colleagues, asked: “I would like to know if this extenuating aspect, argued by the defense, is representative for all situations where a woman finds herself alone with a group of men in a public place?” Advocators of ‘negligent rape’ often use Vestberg’s story as a humorous illustration of attitude towards women’s responsibility in rape cases. But the news media’s coverage of recent rape cases also display this attitude towards women’s responsibility. In the ‘scaffold builder rape case’ the defense lawyers and the media focused on the raped woman’s (lack of) chastity. The city court found the perpetrators not guilty because, as the defense argued, they could not have known that the woman did not want to have sex with them. She had voluntarily entered a party where there were only men present. A friend of the woman said in her testimony that the woman had talked about wanting to be sexually more experimental, and the defense lawyers took this to mean that the woman wanted sex with the men.

Interestingly, this consensus view of women’s responsibility changed during the last five years of the period examined when considering cases with visible minority perpetrators. Race seemed to surpass gender as the dominating explanatory factor in rape cases where the perpetrators were men of color. During the 2000s, the news media presented the cultural and racial backgrounds of perpetrators of color as explanations for rapes; in cases with white perpetrators they focused on the woman’s responsibility. This change indicates power and privilege in Denmark. White masculinity was apparently the most privileged category, but white femininity was privileged over colored masculinity in cases where race, gender, and sexuality intersected.

The newspapers underscored the image of hyper-sexuality by bringing comments from ‘ordinary people’ to support it. A 19-year-old, female high school student [gymnasieelev] who lived in the area of Bispehaven, where the Aarhus rape took place, was quoted: “It is not nice to be a 19-year-old Danish girl with blond hair here in Bispehaven. The bilingual [visible minorities] boys and young men yell ‘hey babe’ when I pass them. They make it abundantly clear what they

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654 Jeanette Deleuran, *Man voldtager da piger!*, (Copenhagen: Høst & Søn, 2004), 163. The men were later convicted and sentenced 18 to 24 months prison by the high court [Landsretten].

want.” The quotation appeared in the article as well as in a graphic eye-catcher printed in the margin of the article with large bold letters. Even if readers did not read the whole article they most likely would have caught the graphically highlighted message. The same article also reported about other people who felt scared or insecure about living in Bispehaven. It quoted one man: “Several things that happen here are never reported.” The article further informed readers that “his daughter is planning on doing something about her anxiety – she will move to Aabyhøj [a ‘nice’ middle-class suburban area in Aarhus].” This most likely left the readers with the impression of an area where threats of rape and violence from visible minorities manifested themselves everyday and where these threats made residents continuously anxious. Apparently, only by physically leaving the area could one escape the danger.

International research has documented the construction of male visible minorities as hyper-sexual. Sujata Moorti has analyzed the coverage of rape with African-American perpetrators in the North American media. She argues that the media have constructed black masculinity negatively, that “black masculinity is demonized…[and] racial difference becomes the primary explanatory framework for the crime.” Moorti draws on the history of American slavery and the tradition of lynching black men on suspicion of raping white women, the latter a sign that black male sexuality and miscegenation were viewed as dangers to white society. She argues that the historic fear of black sexuality and the impression of black sexuality as aggressive, savage and out of control have also influenced the representation of rape in the more recent past. She provides illustrative examples of how black rapists have been characterized as “abnormal, aggressive,

656 Stig Matthesen & Carsten Ingemann, “Ventetid i Bispehaven”, Jyllands-Posten, JP Aarhus, (Aarhus), (Nov. 12, 2000): 14-15, original text: “Det er ikke rart at være dansk pige, lyshåret og 19 år her i Bispehaven. De tospregede drenge og unge står og råber ’hey babe’, når jeg går forbi. De lægger ikke skul på, hvad de er ude på.” See also Christel Elgaard, ”Voldtagt som medieshow”, Jyllands-Posten, JP Aarhus, (Aarhus), (Nov. 21, 2000) 8, who argued: “Young men of other ethnic background [than Danish] and a Danish teenage girls a random day in Bispehaven. An explosive cocktail?” (Origina text: “Unge fure med anden etnisk baggrund og en dansk teenagepige en tilfeldig dag i Bispehaven. En brandflarkig cocktail?”) whereby visible minority males similarly were presented as potential rapists. See also Niels V. Thomsen, “De mest kriminelle” (letter to the editor), Jyllands-Posten, JP Aarhus, (Aarhus), (Nov. 22, 2000): 8, who argued that “The case about the gang rape of a 14-year old girl…is not an individual incidence. It is only the top of the iceberg…Foreigners are 3 1/3 times as criminal as Danes and when it comes to rape, they are eight times as criminal as Danes….Regardless of how much one point to the immigrants’ social background, then it cannot be concealed that they are more criminal than Danes.” Original text: “Sagen om massevoldtægten af en 14-årig pige…er ikke et enkeltstående tilfælde. Det er kun toppen af isbjerget…udløsende er 3 1/3 gang så kriminelle som danskerne, og når det gælder voldtægt, er de otte gange mere kriminelle end danskerne….Ligegeyldigt hvor meget der henvises til indvandrer, sociale baggrund, kan det ikke skjules, at de er mere kriminelle end danskerne.”


animal-like...belong[ing] in a cage” by the media, and shows how the African-American teenagers tried in the Central Park rape case were presented as “alien and incomprehensible...abnormal, brute monsters.” German sociologist Theresa Wobbe has argued that the sexual construction of Turkish immigrants in Germany has been similar to that of African-Americans. As Moorti does, she analyzes the New York Central Park rape case and compares it to German rape cases. She describes how Turkish men, like African-American men, have been constructed as sexually dangerous and as threats to German white women, concluding that “The social problem of rape was transformed into a racial problem.” Frantz Fanon has similarly described how the black man and the black body have been hyper-sexualized and presented as both a threat and a fascination. Fanon has illustrated how Western myths arguing that black men lust for white flesh has played into the white fear of the black man. He argues that black people and blackness have been constructed by the gaze of white people and by the historical and mythical assumptions that the white gaze has embodied. In the 1990s and 2000s, the Danish mass media’s descriptions of visible minorities can be interpreted as a white gaze; the media have looked at the visible minorities with a gaze embodied with fear and myths about hyper-sexuality. Just as Fanon described how a black person cannot return the gaze of a white person, Danish visible minorities have not been able to equally return the gaze of white media because they have not held dominant media-producing positions.

Judith Butler has argued, in her analysis of the beating and trial of American Rodney King, that King was perceived by police and later by the jury – who acquitted the police from their charges – as a potential violent threat because he was a black man. They perceived King’s body as the embodiment of violence and brutality and as a potential danger to white people, including the white police officers. Butler argues that “the field of the visible is [a] racially contested terrain.” King and his behavior could potentially have been read in various ways, but because “racism pervades white perception” he was read as an embodiment of violence and thereby as a

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663 Frantz Fanon: *Black Skin, White Masks*, 1967 (original in French 1952), 63 ff.
threat by the majority of the white television-audience and the majority of the white jury. A majority of television viewers and jurors of color also read King in this way, according to Butler, because they too were saturated by white hegemonic discourses. The readings and understandings of male visible minorities in Denmark were similarly contested fields. They could have been read in various ways and indeed were read in various ways depending on who did the reading and in what context. But despite the potential for multiple readings – briefly illustrated by the leftwing newspapers touched when they underscored class as part of the explanatory framework for the rape – the overall image of visible minority males drawn from the Danish news media was that they constituted threats and potential dangers; in the media readings they primarily embodied potential sexual violence. Just as violence was ascribed to King’s black body, so did the Danish news media ascribe sexual danger to the young visible minority male’s body.

The image of visible minority men as potential sexual threats has intensified during the 2000s, but traces of this representation appeared earlier as well. A news clip from 1985 reported from a public meeting in the town of Kalundborg, whose refugee center hosted refugees from the Middle East. The center experienced a series of racist attacks from the locally ethnically Danish community during the mid-1980s, and in the news clip several locals expressed their views about the conflicts between the refugees and the locals. One woman with long blond hair said: “Someone has had some negative experiences [with the refugees]…and I keep wondering: How can we teach these refugees about our norms and attitudes?” During her comment, viewers saw footage of young men of Middle Eastern origin, supposedly some of the refugees in question. Even though it was not stated explicitly, the crosscutting between the woman and the group of men looking at the woman made it likely that she was talking about problems related to sexual harassment between ethnically Danish women and the visible minority male refugees. The woman’s comment suggested that she and other women had experienced sexual harassment from the refugees because they did not know “our norms” – this implied that ethnically Danish men, who knew “our norms”, did not sexually harass.

Traits of reading visible minorities as sexual threats were especially clear in news that described visible minority men in situations that had no connection with sexual assaults, but where

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667 See also bell hooks, Black Looks: race and representation, (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1992), 117 for arguments about how “mass media was a system of knowledge and power reproducing and maintaining white supremacy.”
668 DR (Station) primetime news program, TV-Avisen, date: 19850731, original text: “Der er nogle, der har haft nogle uheldige oplevelser..., og jeg kan ikke lade være med at tænke på, hvad man kan gøre for at lære de her flygtninge lidt om, hvordan vores normer og holdninger er.”
sexual assault, nonetheless, was included in the story. One illustration of this came from a DR news clip from 1996. A group of young, visible minority males murdered a doorman at a night club in the city of Aarhus, and some of the suspected perpetrators were from the city of Odense. The news clip thus broadcast interviews with police officers and experts on visible minority issues in Odense. One expert explained how the municipality in Odense had used many resources to get young visible minorities to abandon a life of crime. In the middle of this explanation, the TV-journalist asked the expert: “Is your daughter allowed to be in the city of Odense during Saturday night?” To which he answered: “She lives there.” The interviewer continued: “But are you not nervous about her?” The TV-interviewer drew a direct parallel between a homicide of a doorman and the potential sexual harassment of a young, ethnically Danish woman. The connection was only possible because the potential sexual danger was seen as inscribed on visible minority males’ bodies. The interviewer could only present questions like these because he and television viewers shared the same frame of references and thereby shared the same kinds of readings of visible minorities. It made sense within this white frame of reference to connect a crime of homicide with sexual threats and dangers because the perpetrators of both crimes were expected to be young visible minority males. Even though there was no logical connection between the two crimes, they became connected by the stereotype of visible minority males as violent and sexually aggressive. Bhabha has suggested that scholars should not view stereotypes in regard to whether their portrayed image is true or false, positive or negative; instead stereotypes should be view in connection to the role they play in subjectification processes. It is therefore not only important to analyze to what extent the content of a stereotype corresponds to realities but also, and even more so, to analyze what role the stereotype has for the subjectification of the person labeled by the stereotype. In the media’s communication about visible minority males, the stereotype about their sexual aggression dominated the communication about them and influenced their subjectification; i.e. sexual aggression became an integrated character of visible minority males.

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669 DR (Station) primetime news program, TV-Avisen, date: 19961126, original text: ”Får din datter lov til at gå inde i Odense lørdag aften?”

670 DR (Station) primetime news program, TV-Avisen, date: 19961126, original text: ”Hun bor derinde.”

671 DR (Station) primetime news program, TV-Avisen, date: 19961126, original text: ”Men du er ikke nervøs?” See also Mustafa Hussain, Ferruh Yilmaz & Tim O’Connor, Medierne, Minoriteterne og Majoriteten – en undersøgelse af nyhedsmedier af den folkelige diskurs i Danmark, (Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling, 1997) 74 f. for comments on this particular news clip.

672 See also DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990824 where a gang related drug dispute involving visible minorities (illogically) became related to sexual assaults committed by other visible minorities.

One possible explanation for the media's recent emphasis on sexual aggression might be that attributing non-western people with great and uncontrolled libidinal energy has been an integrated part of Western discourses on sexuality since the colonialism of the nineteenth-century. But this sexual characteristic has seemingly intensified in the news media towards the end of the period analyzed, i.e. during the 2000s. During the 2000s, there was a large number of news clips about rape committed by visible minority men against ethnically Danish girls/women. This was not a news theme in the beginning of the period, i.e. during the 1970s and 1980s. The characterization of visible minority men as hyper-sexual, and thereby as threats, seems to have occupied an increasingly more prominent component in the media’s representation of young visible minority men from the 1970s to the 2000s. By the end of the period, this component became an almost fixed part of the characterization of male visible minorities – so fixed that it could appear on the Liberals’ election poster.

**Visible minority males are not bright, just horny**

An important component in the construction of visible minority males as hyper-sexual and controlled by their libido was the news media's portrayal as not very bright. The newspapers and television news described them as controlled by instincts, not by rationality, and as not having reflected upon their actions. Traditionally, rationality has been understood as an indicator of what separated animals from humans, so lacking rationality and being controlled by instincts have very strong connotations. The European colonial view of non-white people in the eighteen- and nineteenth-centuries was similarly influenced by the belief that non-white, non-European, colonial subjects lacked rationality and were guided by instincts; this placed them on a lower level in the racial hierarchy and was used as an explanatory justification for the European exercise of power over their colonies. One article described the rapists in the Aarhus rape case as being on the level of first-graders, constructing them as unintelligent if not plain stupid. *Jyllands-Posten* wrote that the rapists were unable to distinguish between porn and reality: “The demonstrative sexualizing of our society plays a part in creating situations like the rape in Bispehaven…some children without

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norms and without culture get more influenced by porn and violent movies...They interpret the scenes as everyday life and do not see them as beyond normal limits." Here the article described the rapists, and people similar to them, i.e. people without norms, as not bright enough to distinguish between film and reality. This is a capacity that children traditionally are said to acquire around the age of seven. The article also made a distinction between the rapists, and people like them, and people who knew “normal limits”; this indirectly positioned the rapists, and people like them, as abnormal. Several articles made a division between boys/men who were normal and boys/men, who were abnormal, i.e. boys/men like the rapists. This might not have been harmful if the characterization had been limited to the nine rapists, but it became problematic because the rape case prepared the ground for a general characterization of visible minorities as hyper-sexual, unintelligent, controlled by their libido, and abnormal.

**Ethically Danish men do not rape – or do they?**

The news media’s messages portrayed gender equality as an integrated part of Danish gender roles. One article described Danish society as “a society which, formally, through the national church, and historically is based on Christian values; but where there nevertheless are

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677 Lone Dybdal & Henrik Grønvald, "Porno påvirker børn”, *Jyllands-Posten, JP Aarhus*, (Aarhus), (Feb. 26, 2000): 1, original text: "Den åbenbare seksualisering af vores samfund er med til at fostre situationer som voldtnagtsagen fra Bispehaven…enkelte kulturløse og normløse børn er mere påvirkelige over for de porno- og voldfilm…De opfatter scenerne som hverdag og ser intet grænseoverskridende i det.” It is interesting that the rapists here were characterized as being without culture, when several other articles described their culture as a cause for the rape. See also Lone Dybdal, "Børns vilkår: Porno kan påvirke børn”, *Jyllands-Posten, JP Aarhus*, (Aarhus), (Feb. 26, 2000) 5, which similarly describe the rapists as being without culture.


679 Also older visible minority men have, according to the newspapers, difficulties understanding sexual norms. The newspaper reported about plans for starting “a class which, with the help of Danish teachers, will teach Arabic fathers sexual understanding so they can teach their sons to interact with Danish girls.” Christian Friis Hansen & Henrik Grønvald, “Voldtægtsdomte holder lav profil”, *Jyllands-Posten, JP Aarhus*, (Aarhus), (May 31, 2000) 7, original text: “…planlægger i øjeblikket et kursus, som med danske lærerkæfter skal lære arabiske fædre seksualforståelse, så de kan lære deres sønner at omgås danske piger.” The understanding of sexuality was apparently so removed from the Arabic community that Danish teachers had to assist. It is interesting that these Danish teachers had to teach the fathers instead of the young males. This could imply that the youth visible minorities were viewed as so fundamentally different in their way of thinking that only their fathers could manage to reach them. It could also imply that the Arabic community is so patriarchal that important information, including how to behave, must come from or through the fathers. See also “Kursus om frisind,” *Berlingske Tidende*, (Copenhagen), (May 27, 2000): 2, which reported also about the class promoting sexual understanding. It wrote: “Immigrants and refugees must learn that Danish women are not whores just because they smile and say hello. The young men must learn to understand what Danish liberty means…Therefore…a class [is being planned] which, with the help of Danish teachers, will teach fathers sexual understand and instruct them in how to teach their sons to interact with Danish girls without assault.” Original text: “Indvandrere og flygtninge skal lære, at danske kvinder ikke er lude, blot fordi de smiler og hilser pænt. De unge mænd skal lære at forstå, hvad dansk frisind er…Derfor planlægger[s]…et kursusforløb, der med danske lærerkæfter skal lære fædre seksualforståelse og orientere dem om, hvordan de kan lære deres sønner at omgås danske piger, uden at det kommer til overgreb.”
breakaways from Christian dogmas like the right to abortion, easy access to divorce, public and legal acceptance of homosexuality, [and] an attitude towards sex which gives equal rights to women and men regarding what one can do. 680 Similarly, a letter to the editor published in Jyllands-Posten argued that “fundamental Danish values like animal welfare, view of women, and no death penalty can never never ever be subject for discussion.” 681 These areas were, according to the letter, so fundamental for Danish society that their existence could not even be debated. It was not specified what “view of women” referred to, but maybe this lack of specifications derived from the writer’s belief that these values were so fundamental that other readers already knew that the writer meant.

This letter to the editor can be seen as an example of a strategic way of arguing. By leaving out the premises, i.e. not specifying what “view of women” actually referred to, the writer assumed that all people knew and accepted the premises. An argument is considered more effective if the reader (or opponent in a discussion) accepts the non-stated premises without questioning them and instead continues the reading (or discussion). It is often in the struggle for premises that ideological hegemony is at play. In this case, two ideological views received hegemonic status: Firstly, that Denmark had gender and sexual equality and secondly, that Denmark’s fundamental values were animal welfare, a respectful view of women, and no death penalty. 682 Bhabha has argued that “The stereotype can also be seen as that particular ‘fixated’ form of the...[other] subject which facilitates...[power] relations, and sets up a discursive form of racial and cultural opposition in terms of which...power is exercised.” 683 The fixation of the visible minorities as misogynists played a role in the media’s construction of white ethnic Danes as culturally different from visible minorities. These differences played a role in power relations between ethnic Danes and visible minorities; they positioned ethnic Danes higher on the cultural hierarchy than visible minorities, and they enabled ethnic Danes to appear as exponents of the ‘right’ views and attitudes, i.e. exponents for the hegemonic discourse which, as an integrated part of its hegemony, carries a high truth value with it.

680 Leopold Galicki, ”Islam kan støde”, Information, (Copenhagen), (Nov. 15, 2000): 9, original text: “...et samfund som formelt, gennem folkekirkens, og historisk, bygger på et kristent grundlag, men hvor der alligevel er sådanne brud på de kristelige dogmer som fri abort, forholdvis nem adgang til skilsmissen, folkelig og retslig accept af homoseksualitet, en holdning til sex, som ligesitter kvinden og manden med hensyn til, hvad man må.”

681 Rasmus Terp Thomsen, ”Svær integration” (letter to the editor), Jyllands-Posten, JP Aarhus, (Aarhus), (Nov. 22, 2000): 8, original text: “grundlæggende danske værdier såsom dyrevelfærd, kvindersyn og ingen dødsstraf aldrig, aldrig nogen sinde kan blive gjort til genstand for diskussion.”


The discourse expressing gender equality as an integrated part of Danish culture seems to have been so hegemonic that it was possible to argue that visible minorities brought disrespect for women to Denmark. One article argued that Danish society has a responsibility to inform newcomers about Danish gender roles. The article’s two male journalists explained how this responsibility was new because “previously there was no need to explain these issues because the Danish society has been very homogenous and the gender roles appeared obvious.” In other words, before visible minorities arrived in Denmark and made the society heterogeneous, everybody knew and respected Danish gender roles and knew that Danish women should be neither exposed to misogyny nor raped. If this was true, then Denmark should not have witnessed any rapes prior to visible minorities’ arrival – which unfortunately, according to statistics, was not the case.

Statistics of reported rapes in Denmark show that the number of reported rapes increased from 1960 to the mid-1980s, after which the number was stable until the early 1990s, when it began to fall. In 1999 and the beginning of 2000s, the number increased again till it reached the level from the early 1980s, with a little less than 500 reported rapes annually. This means that the number of reported rapes in the year 2000, where the Aarhus rape figured, was as low (or high) as it was in the early 1980s, i.e. as low (or high) as it was before large numbers of immigrants of Middle Eastern origin arrived in Denmark.

If the media’s myth about ethnic Denmark as a society with no rapes was correct, another consequence should have been that the majority of rapes committed in Denmark were committed by men representing visible minorities. Even though statistics on rape have varied and it is complicated to get a totally clear picture, it is clear that this has also not been the case. According to police statistics, ca. one-fourth of reported rapes in Denmark were committed by people without Danish citizenship, of which half were from other European countries, i.e. not visible minorities. According to the Center for Rape Victims [Center for Voldtægtsøfre], ca. 37 percent of perpetrators


were categorized coming “from a less developed country”, i.e. being a visible minority. In other words, white ethnic Danes have committed the majority of reported rapes in Denmark. It is correct that visible minority males have been overly represented in the statistics by having constituted ca. 30 percent of perpetrators (if combining statistics from the police and the Center for Rape Victims) and only ca. 5 percent of the overall population. This is a serious issue with various explanations depending on the individual rapist; these include social marginalization and misogynist views of women and also the tendency for ethnically Danish girls/women to report rapes committed by visible minority men more than rapes committed by ethnically Danish men. There are no excuses for rape, and the ethnic background of the rapist can neither explain nor excuse a rape. But even though visible minorities were overly represented, their statistical overrepresentation did not correspond to the media’s portrayal of visible minorities as perpetrators of the absolute majority of rapes in Denmark. In the media, visible minorities’ overrepresentation has been turned into news stories that created a dichotomy between ‘us’ and ‘them’ – where ‘they’ rape and ‘we’ do not rape. This did not benefit the prevention of rape; instead it gave a distorted image of realities in Danish society.

Two circumstances further throw doubt on the image of visible minorities as rapists. The majority of rapes have never been reported, and the majority of rapes committed in Denmark have been rapes where the perpetrator and the rape survivor have known each other. According to the Center for Rape Victims, only one-third of the women they have met had not known their victimizer prior to the rapes. Scholars have disagreed about the actual number of rapes, but guesses have varied from 3,500 to 10,000 rapes annually. This suggests that 80 to 95 percent of rapes have not been reported, which of course creates uncertainty in rape statistics. It is reasonable to assume that rapes reported to the police or to the Centers for Rape Victims especially have been the ones where victim and victimizer did not know each other; whereas rapes committed by friends, family members, colleagues or others whom the raped women would have to interact with in the future have been less likely to be reported. The percentage of girls/women who did not know their victimizer has therefore much likely been lower than the recorded 33 percent. If one keeps in mind that the majority of ethnic Danes have not known any visible minorities personally,

687 Katrine Sidenius & Karin Sten Madsen eds., Rapport fra Center for Voldtægtsofre, (Skive: Center for Voldtægtsofre, Rigshospitalet, 2003), 12.
688 Katrine Sidenius & Karin Sten Madsen eds., Rapport fra Center for Voldtægtsofre, (Skive: Center for Voldtægtsofre, Rigshospitalet, 2003), 11.
then it seems very likely that the majority of these unrecorded date rapes have had ethnically Danish men as perpetrators – and that these men have not found their way into the statistics. One might therefore conclude that the ethnically Danish man that an ethnically Danish woman turns down at a party potentially is more dangerous for her than the group of young male visible minority strangers she meets in the street at night. It is therefore problematic that the media have constructed images of visible minorities as potential rapists and ethnically Danish men as non-rapists with respect for women because these images have not corresponded to realities – and these images have not benefited anyone but white, ethnically Danish men.

The stereotypical description of visible minority men as a rapist has masked its implied hierarchy between white ethnically Danish men and visible minority men. When the media repeatedly uttered that visible minority males were sexually aggressive, this image tended to become normalized and routinized to an extent where the media receivers might no longer have questioned it.690

Miscegenation – women as preservers of the race and nation

The critique of visible minority males’ sexual abuse of ethnically Danish girls/women is connected to women’s role as representatives of the Danish nation and of Danish ethnicity. A letter to the editor published in Jyllands-Posten compared visible minorities’ uncontrolled and aggressive sexuality to the European Nazi past: “The non-Danish rapists behave like supermen who determine other people’s lives and destinies with great brutality and cruelty. This is about…dregs completely parallel to the Nazis….These terrible rapes which, when worse comes to worse, reminds one of military attacks on a civil population in wartimes.”691 This letter not only constructed visible minorities’ libido as an uncontrollable force but also as an aggressive enemy. The comparison to Nazi Germany drew on a symbol of evil, the national enemy that occupied the Danish nation during World War II, as well as more recent war crimes covered in the media such as the mass rapes in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Viewed in this light, visible minorities were presented as a national threat to the civilian, ethnically Danish population.

691 Niels Kristian Højerslev, ”Trist voldtægtsstatistik”, Jyllands-Posten, JP Aarhus, (Aarhus), (Nov. 20, 2000): 10, original text: ”De ikke-danske voldtægtsforbrydere fører sig frem som overmennesker, der bestemmer over andres liv og skæbne med stor brutalitet og grusomhed. Der er tale om…en bærne helt parallel med den naziistiske….de ulykkelige voldtægter, som i de værste tilfælde giver mindelser om militære overgreb på en civilbefolkning i krigstid.”
Women have reproduced, and continue to reproduce, nations on various levels: biologically, culturally, and symbolically. Women have not only literally given birth to future generations of the nation; they have also been seen as the symbolic border guards, embodiments of the nation’s collectivity, and as the nation’s cultural reproducers. As Nira Yuval-Davis has argued: “Women often play important symbolic roles in nationalist and radicalised narratives, carrying in their bodies the collective love and honour of the nation...[I]n general women are the symbols of the nation while men are its agents.” As Ruth Harris further elaborates, “Women have been located, not only as ‘biological reproducers’ but also as ‘reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups’, as ‘transmitters of its culture’ as well as ideological discourses used in the constitution, reproduction and transformation of ethnic/national categories....Women are often the signifiers of communities not only ideologically and discursively but also with their bodies...as a powerful instrument of social closure...All forms of closure presuppose ways of defining belonging and ‘otherness’....[Women] represent the boundary between ‘us’ and the ‘Other’.” Because women have been perceived as the embodiment of a nation’s honor and have functioned as the boundary defining who belonged to the nation and who did not, rape has been used as a strategic tool in times of war or conflict. The examples are legion: German soldiers raped East European women during World War II; Allied soldiers, especially Russian soldiers, raped German women in the same war; Serbs raped Muslim women in the recent Ex-Yugoslavia war(s); etc. Rape has also been described as a tool for appropriating the most important possession of the defeated, i.e. their women. Raping the enemy also ensured that the biological reproduction of the nation could no longer be a ‘pure’ reproduction. On a symbolic level, rape has functioned as a metaphor illustrating the condition of a country in war, for example when France was described as a raped woman in World War I propaganda. This connection of rape and nationality illustrates how gender, sexuality, and nationality have been, and are, closely connected; they should therefore not be viewed as separate categories, as traditional scholarship on nations and nationalities previously have done.

6. The sexually aggressive Muslim male

Efforts to harm another nation by raping that nation’s women has illustrated how women’s bodies have been the reproducers of the nation on various levels. Ethnically Danish women have been the border guards between the (ethnically Danish) nation and ‘others’; when ethnically Danish women were/are raped by ‘outsiders’, this border was/is crossed and the whole nation is/was hurt.697 Similarly to when Nazi German soldiers forcefully took possession of Danish territory during World War II, in media representations visible minority males have forcefully taken possession over ethnically Danish women; both possessions have been viewed as physically and symbolically harmful for the Danish nation.

These understandings of rape and women can be seen as an expression of a patriarchal discourse in which women are viewed as objects that can be possessed. It has often been expressed in a cliché used to criticize immigrants that ‘they take our women’. This statement, often repeated by white, ethnically Danish men, implies an understanding of women as the property of the nation’s men.

The television program Station 2 illustrated this understanding when the white, ethnically Danish expert, Mette Severin, labeled ethnically Danish girls as “our own girls” and visible minority boys as “those kinds of boys.”698 This linguistic distinction underscored the notion that ethnically Danish girls belonged to and represented the Danish nation, to which the expert also belonged. The use of “our own girls” also implied that any attack on these girls was an attack on all of us, i.e. on the Danish nation. The news media have imagined and presented the Danish nation as a large group of homogenous ethnic Danes, but this is an imaginary construction because neither the group of people holding Danish citizenship nor those more generally participating in Danish society have been ethnically or culturally homogenous.699

An interesting version of the view that women belong to the nation and to the nation’s men was expressed in a news clip about a municipality center for elderly people. Here ethnically Danish elderly people tried, via the center’s user’s council, to pass a rule prohibiting visible, minority elderly people from entering the center. The argument behind this discriminatory rule was


698 TV2 (Station), primetime crime news program Station 2, date: 20010910, original text: ”vores egne piger”; “de her drenge.”

that ‘they’ take ‘our’ staff. An elderly, ethnically Danish man, the head of the users’ council, argued: “We have had some [visible minorities] here and then our staff had to sit with them…and then the staff did not have time to take care of the Danes.” This argument played upon the ethnic Danes’ claimed right to choose staff financed by the municipality. The absolute majority of staff at these centers was made up of women performing so-called traditionally female caring work. It is interesting that demands for their attention and their services have been similar to demands on ethnically Danish women’s sexuality. It can be argued that ethnically Danish men have claimed a right over all areas of traditionally female, caring services – from sex to care of elderly people, a right that has superseded the rights and wishes of visible minority men and ethnically Danish women’s potentially contrary wishes.

White and male discourse has privileged white males

The late twentieth-century Danish news media’s discourses on rape and on young visible minority males were predominantly masculine and white. The news media stereotypically portrayed young visible minority males as sexually aggressive with an uncontrolled libido which have made them appear as potential threats to women. The media’s coverage of rapes committed by visible minorities against ethnically Danish women expanded the characterization of the rapists to cover all visible minority males. The news media's portrayals of these men as stupid, as lacking knowledge and understanding of so-called Danish gender roles, and as misogynist intensified the threat of sexual assault from visible minorities. Every time these stereotypical claims was stated they gained legitimacy. Media communication was not (and is not) neutral – it created (and continues to create) reality. New Zealander media theorist and journalist Allan Bell has argued that “media discourse is important both for what is reveals about society and because it also contributes to the character of society.” In other words, media discourses have not been neutral reports from society but have played an active role in the forming and creation of society: News discourses have constructed reality. Similarly, British Professor of Language in Social Life Norman Fairclough has argued: “Discourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or ‘constitute’ them.” Since the media’s communication has been carried out in ‘us’ vs. ‘them’

700 TV2 (Station), primetime news program, Nyhederne, date: 19951227, original text: “Vi har haft nogle [synlige minoriteter] her, og så skal vores personale sidde ved dem, og gøre både det ene og det andet, og så har de ikke tid til at tage sig af de danske.”
narrations, the binary opposition to visible minority males, i.e. ethnically Danish males, appeared as non-rapists and as having respect for women. But rape statistics show that this portrayal of white ethnically Danish men did not hold water. Pieterse has argued that “Images of others do not circulate because of their truthfulness but because they reflect the concerns of the images-producers and consumers.” It seems clear that the ones who have benefited from the national self-construction implied in the media’s portrayal of male visible minorities primarily have been white, ethnically Danish males – the same as the ones who primarily have been in charge of the media production.

Women did not benefit from the stereotypical portrayal of visible minority males as sexually aggressive. The media communication generally positioned women as objects. They were either objects for visible minority males’ rape or objects for the (at times possessive) attention and love of heterosexual, ethnically white, Danish men. Women’s object status also influenced their lack of voice in rape narratives, in which where they had a very limited voice. The media focused on the rapists and their contexts, and rape coverage thereby became a question of the rapists and their environment instead of a question of how the woman was surviving. The women portrayed by the media in connection with the descriptions of visible minority males were predominantly constructed as victims. The media left very little room for alternative relations between ethnically Danish women and visible minority men other than relations of force and rape. Similarly, the media left very limited room for women wishing to be involved in sexual relations different from heterosexual relations with white, ethnically Danish men. Women were treated as objects representing the ethnically Danish nation, the purity of which they were responsible for preserving. Rapes of ethnically Danish women were therefore not solely interpreted as violations of individual women but as attacks on the whole nation.

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7. The unintegrated immigrant

Introduction

Integration, and especially lack of integration, was a dominant theme in the news coverage from the 1970s to the early 2000s. News print and broadcasts have throughout this period portrayed visible minorities as living in a parallel world that differed from that of the average ethnic Danes and from official Danish society. As illustrated in the previous chapters, the news media portrayed visible minorities as a homogenous group and characterized them as criminal, oppressive towards women, sexually aggressive, and desperately wanting to live in Denmark. The news media intertwined these characteristics with the images of visible minorities as living different lives unintegrated into Danish society. On top of these stories, the news media broadcast many news clips that focused on this so-called parallel existence and how it worked against the integration of visible minorities’ They also presented clips that focused on visible minorities’ lack of integration as a result of unemployment, of isolation in so-called ghettos, and of the concentration of their children in certain public schools.

In this chapter, I look at how news programs broadcast news about visible minority students causing problems in the public school system. According to the news, these problems came from the fact that the ethnically Danish students have not learned enough or that the schools, because of a large number of visible minority students, have not been Danish enough. I intend to give a more detailed understanding of the school situation in Denmark and to show how the television news images can be nuanced. To do so, I compare these news images of schools to changes in the number of visible minority students as a proportion of the national pool of students, and I compare them to the development of private schools and their student composition. I also compare the images to developments in certain urban schools where the composition of students divided the schools into what politicians, journalists, and laypeople labeled ‘black’ and ‘white’ institutions. Schools have been central for questions of integration because they function as a means of integration as well as a measure of how successful the integration has been; this double function might explain the significant number of news clips examining schools and visible minorities.

None of the news material analyzed from the 1970s to the 2000s defined or explained the concept of integration. I provide different understandings of ‘integration’ and show how it might be the lack of a clear concept that led the news to broadcast seemingly contradictory news clips on the theme of visible minorities and schools. The lack of integration was a topic for debate in the
news media from the 1980s, and this debate was governed by a consensus that integration was an important goal. But since the news media did not define the content of this ‘integration’, politicians and other interviewees in the news media articulated various understandings of the improvements needed to reach this goal. The concept of ‘integration’ acted as a floating signifier with no specific meaning ascribed to it. I therefore consider what influence this lack of fixed meaning might have had for the understanding of the debates regarding integration. I also look at some visible minorities’ reactions towards this debate and to how this public discussion positioned them in Danish society.

Politicians, journalists and interviewees claimed that visible minorities live outside Danish society in a so-called parallel existence, and this claim allowed heavy criticism of visible minorities. Commentators often tied this criticism to descriptions of visible minorities living in ghettos, areas with a high concentration of visible minorities among its population. The news journalists and interviewees characterized life in these ghettos as a non-Danish way of living that breeds Islamic fundamentalism, crime, and rape. Historically, immigrants’ settlement in so-called ghettos took place prior to the more recent phase of immigration from the 1960s onwards; I draw lines back to these previous groups of immigrants to show how they settled and lived in ghettos. Related to the news media’s impression of the ghettos, a series of news clips examined grass-roots and political initiatives to promote integration. During the 1980s, news journalists described these initiatives positively, but during the late 1990s and early 2000s their tone reversed as the news focused primarily on initiatives directed at preventing the formation of ghettos.

The news media began connecting integration to employment in the late 1990s. I show how this emphasis on employment was connected to a large change in the politicians’ discourses on the welfare state, and I connect these discourses on the welfare state to the discourse relating to visible minorities, including their employment.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, DR focused on several cases where visible minorities had been discriminated against in relation to the labor market. In these cases, DR often functioned as the watchdog, i.e. critiquing society and presenting stories from the visible minority’s point of view. I connect these stories to legal developments in 1995 that prohibited racial discrimination in hiring and argue that it was easier for DR to play the role of watchdog in cases of direct racial discrimination before 1995 than in the post-1996 cases involving structural discrimination in the labor market.
The television news often connected discrimination in the labor market to employers’ and laypeople’s racist attitudes towards visible minorities. I therefore further analyze racial statements in the news media during the period to show that the news confronted directly expressed racist statements from the 1970s to the mid-1990s but found it more difficult to pursue its watchdog function by confronting indirect and structural racism from the mid-1990s and early 2000s. I draw lines to the Danish legal framework that prohibited racist statements, and I give examples of how this framework was used (or not) from the 1970s. The news programs’ dealings with racism were complex and at times contradictory. The news simultaneously criticized explicit racism in Danish society while at the same time contributing to images of visible minorities as different from ethnic Danes, creating an ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ environment. I explain how this contradiction illustrates the complexity of the news media.

In Denmark there has been general agreement that the tone used by politicians, journalists, and laypeople in describing visible minorities has become increasingly harsh during the last decade. Drawing on the examples discussed in this chapter, I question consensus because my material does not support such a conclusion. Rather than simply rejecting the argument, though, I conclude my chapter with a discussion of the roots of this consensus.

Schools

From the 1970s, the news media reported about the negative consequences of having high percentages of visible minority among the students in Danish schools. In Denmark, the majority of children attend the public school system, *Folkeskolen*, which includes one year of kindergarten followed by nine or ten years of school, of which the first nine years are mandatory. In the late 1970s the populations of the municipality Ishøj, outside Copenhagen, consisted of ca. 10 percent visible minorities. As a result, some of the public schools had ca. 30 percent visible minorities among their student bodies. The television news presented this as a problem because “Ishøj cannot afford to give the children a responsible education.”  

According to the interviewed Per Madsen, then-mayor in Ishøj representing the Social Democrat Party, in order to provide this education the schools should have twice as many teachers, so that classes with visible minority students could have two teachers instead of one. Per Madsen further argued that “we are afraid that they [visible minority students] only get half a language to survive on. In other words, that they do

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704 DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19790911, original text: “Ishøj [har] ikke selv råd til at give børnene en forsvarlig skolegang.”
not receive the fundamental language development in Danish… and that will most likely result in them being the last ones to be offered a job and the first ones to be social casualties.” 705 Per Madsen also feared for the ethnically Danish students in 1979, and it was that fear that had motivated his public outcry for more resources to his municipality. He argued that the situation of the ethnically Danish students “is exactly what makes us speak in bold letters now because we feel it is totally wrong that the municipality’s Danish children are being denied parts of the educational options they are supposed to have and that is in reality what is happening now.” 706 Per Madsen’s concerns represented the standard concerns articulated in the news programs during the 1970s, namely that visible minority students would end up as social casualties and that ethnically Danish students would not receive a proper education.

The school was often described as a key to integration, as, for instance, when the Union of Teachers [Danmarks Lærerforeningen] declared that “In the public school all groups of the Danish society meet… The public school therefore has a fundamental role in the process of integration.” 707 The basis for this idea – or ideal – was twofold. Firstly, education was declared a process through which students become socialized as national citizens. Secondly, commentators argued that schools managed to position students equally; despite differences in class, gender, racial, and social backgrounds that the students had when they entered the school, they would – ideally – leave the school with equal opportunities. 708 Scholars have documented how schools have both teaching and disciplinary functions, and the idea of integration is intricately connected to both of those functions. 709 Through the teaching – which can be defined as a communication of hegemonic versions of ‘valuable knowledge’ – and through disciplinary practices schools form students into future citizens integrated into society. Danish politicians and educators since the 1970s

705 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19790911, original text: “Vi er bange for, at vi vil opnå det, at de kun får et halvt sprog at leve livet på. Med andre ord de får ikke den grundlæggende sprogdannelse på dansk… det vil sandsynligvis betyde, at de står sidst i rækken, når der gives arbejdstilbud, og de står først i rækken mellem de sociale tabere.”

706 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19790911, original text: “Det [de etnisk danske børns situation] er jo netop det, der har fået os til at tale med virkelig store bogstaver nu, fordi vi føler, at det må være fuldstændig forkert, at en kommunes danske børn i virkeligheden frages en del af det undervisningsstilbud, der er i timen i undervisningsstiden til dem (sic), og det er jo reelt det der sker.”

707 “Fællesskabets skole i et multietnisfisk samfund,” Danish Union of Teachers [Danmarks Lærerforeningen], 1, original text: “Integrationen af de nye danske borgere er en opgave for alle. I folkeskolen mødes alle grupper i det danske samfund… Folkeskolen har derfor en helt central rolle i integrationsprocessen.”


709 Dorthe Staunes, Kon, etnicitet og skoleliv, (Gylling: Samfundslitteratur, 2004), 287. See also Paul Connolly, Racism, Gender Identities and Young Children. Social Relations in a Multi-Ethnic Inner-City Primary School, (London: Routledge), 1998.
articulated the ideal of the school as an integrative institution particularly with regard to immigrants and their descendants and to students from working-class families; often visible minority students have represented both immigrant and working-class background.\textsuperscript{710}

The Primary Education Act [\textit{Folkeskoleloven}] stated that “the school must make the students familiar with Danish culture and contributes to their knowledge about other cultures.”\textsuperscript{711} The Act hereby presented Danish culture as monolithic and gave it priority over other cultures, e.g. visible minority students’ cultures of origin. In the schools, the students had to familiarize themselves with Danish culture, while they only needed to have knowledge of other non-specified cultures. The disciplining of students at schools therefore seemed to be linked to their societal integration as subjects in a (Danish) mono-cultural national setting. Dørthe Staunæs has documented how schools that have emphasized the Danish mono-cultural approach have viewed visible minority students and their cultural backgrounds as a hindrance for practicing the Danish norm and thereby as a hindrance for other (ethnically Danish) students’ learning. The diversities of a multi-cultural student body has not been viewed as positive or as adding resources to the school, but rather as a circumstance that requires extra resources to provide the necessary education.\textsuperscript{712}

A similar attitude towards visible minority students characterized the television news. News stories about schools from the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s focused on the general concern for the well-being and education of ethnically Danish students, as opposed that of visible minority students. DR and TV2 broadcast a series of news stories about ethnically Danish parents who refused to send their children to the local public school or who removed their children from it because of the large number of visible minorities in the student body. These stories brought several interviews with various parents who, over the years, gave quite similar explanations for their rejection of the local public school. Lars Stjernholm, who was interviewed in the garden of his single-family house accompanied by his wife and their ca. 6-year-old child, offered a common

\textsuperscript{710} The Ministry of Education has for instance expressed this view in their publication \textit{Heldigvis er vores folkeskole for alle} (Ministry of Education, 1999), available via the Ministry’s website, see http://pub.uvm.dk/1999/heldigvis. \textit{Making a good school better – a report on the Danish Folkeskole and the challenges facing it}, (The Danish Union of Teachers, May 2004, available via The Danish Union of Teachers’ website, see http://www.dlf.org/sitemod/upload/Root/Makeagoodschoolbetter.doc), 33 ff. and Kirsten Just Jeppesen, \textit{Skolen – en nøgle til integration}, (Socialforskningsinstituttet), 1992.

\textsuperscript{711} Primary Education Act [\textit{Folkeskoleloven}] §1, part 3, after Dørthe Staunæs, \textit{Køn, etnicitet og skoleliv}, (Gylling: Samfundslitteratur, 2004), 303, original text: “Folkeskolen skal gøre eleverne fortrolige med dansk kultur og bidrage til deres forståelse af andre kulturer.”

\textsuperscript{712} Dørthe Staunæs, \textit{Køn, etnicitet og skoleliv}, (Gylling: Samfundslitteratur, 2004), 305 ff. Staunæs has only looked at few schools and her conclusions cannot be enlarged to all Danish school. Her insights to how disciplining procedures function in the school system are nonetheless interesting and most likely representative for several of the Danish schools.
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explanation: “We don’t think it is responsible to send our children there [to the local school]…We are risking that she becomes the only Danish child in a class of 20.”\(^{713}\) Another mother, Gitte Lunndorf, who was interviewed next to a sandbox where she had been playing with her very blond daughter, explained: “We want our child to attend a Danish school, and we don’t consider [the local public school] *Nordgaardsskolen* a Danish school any longer.”\(^{714}\) During the 1990s, when DR broadcast this interview, ca. 95 percent of the students at the public school *Nordgaardsskolen* in Gellerup outside Aarhus were visible minority students. The mother implied by her statement that a Danish school was synonymous with ethnically Danish students, i.e. that a school was not considered Danish just because it followed Danish rules and regulations for public schools, like *Nordgaardsskolen* did. Yet another mother, Lise Lotte Christensen, who was interviewed in her son’s schoolyard with several visible minority children playing around her, explained that she wanted to remove her child from the school because other ethnically Danish parents had already removed their children: “We want to find a school where there are more Danish children because we hope that it will enable him to have more friends to choose from.”\(^{715}\) The interviewer asked: “But why can’t he play with the Arabs, Turks, and Pakistanis in this school?”\(^{716}\) She answered: “He can play with them and he does during school hours but he does not outside of school because they are not like each other.”\(^{717}\) In other words, her ethnically Danish son was too different from the children of Arab, Turkish, and Pakistani origins to become really close friends with them.

The dilemmas facing parents in their choice of school for their children were very serious. Half-Indian and half-Danish Manu Sareen, who has been a member of Copenhagen city council representing the Social Liberals [*Radikale Venstre*] since 2002, has focused especially on ethnicity and equality issues. He tried to explain the dilemma in describing why his children did not

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\(^{713}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19930610, original text: “Vi mener ikke, at det er forsvarligt at sende vores børn dermed [den lokale folkeskole]…Vi risikerer, at hun i en klasse med 20 bliver det eneste danske barn.”

\(^{714}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19930610, original text: “Vi ønsker også, at vores børn skal gå på en dansk skole, og det mener vi ikke, at Nordgårdsskolen er mere.”

\(^{715}\) TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 20030602, original text: “Vi vil prøve at finde en skole, hvor der er nogle flere danske børn i håbet om, at der så også er en større chance for, at han har flere venner at vælge imellem.”

\(^{716}\) TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 20030602, original text: “Hvorfor kan han ikke lege med araberne, tyrkerne og pakistannerne på den her skole?”

\(^{717}\) TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 20030602, original text: “Det kan han også godt, og han gør det sikkert også i frikværterne, men han gør det bare ikke uden for skolen, for der ligner de [ikke] hinanden nok.” This is very similar to a white father who in 1993 (DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19930610) explained why he would not send his child to the local public school which had a high number of visible minority students: “We think it will be complicated for the Danish children to find friends…because we have seen in the playground how children form groups depending on language.” Original text: “Vi tror, at det bliver meget svært for de danske børn at finde tilstrækkeligt kammeratdisk i så lille en gruppe….nu har vi boet i Gellerup i seks år, og der har vi set på legepladsen, hvordan børnene naturligt samler sig i sprogrupper.”

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attend the local public school: “There is no doubt that I think it is an admission of failure [when I send my children to a private school]. I attended the folkeskole [public school system] myself and I find that the ideas behind the folkeskole are great.” The interviewer challenged him: “But shouldn’t it be people like you who should lead the way, [by sending your children to the local public school]?” Manu Sareen replied: “Yes, I should be leading the way, and I am leading when trying to change this politically. But there is a difference between whether I should lead and whether my daughter should lead. My daughter should not be leading.” Sareen touched upon the concern of parents that they did not want their political views or support for the public school system to outweigh their children’s well-being. Similarly, an inspector at a public school in Copenhagen, Jørgen Knudsen, explained why an ethnically Danish mother had refused to send her child to his school: "When she heard that we had so many immigrant children, she said ‘no, that is not for me’, and it was not because she had anything against immigrants but it was the well-being of her own child she was thinking of."

Several of the news stories interviewing parents like Manu Sareen, seemed to harbor small accusations against the parents for not supporting the public school system. These were most likely based on a general belief that financially secure parents who refused to use the public schools contributed to a further decline in those very schools. When such families chose to send their children to private schools instead of to public schools, the argument went, it could start a vicious cycle: as more well-off families remove their children, poorer families would increasingly predominate in the public schools, which would cause other wealthy parents to remove their children, etc. Manu Sareen’s critique might further have been fueled by the fact that he, as a visible minority member of Copenhagen city council, represented and symbolized a ‘successfully integrated’ visible minority. When he sent his children to private schools it might have been interpreted as a rejection of the public school as a means of integration and thereby a betrayal of the system that had benefited him.

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718 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20030602, original text: “TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20030530, original text: “Jeg synes, at det er en fallitlerklæring, det er der ingen tvivl om. Jeg har selv gået på folkeskole, og jeg synes at ideen omkring folkeskolen, den er prægtfuld.”
719 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20030602, original text: “Jo, jeg burde gå forrest, og det gør jeg også ved at prove at ændre det rent politisk. Men der er forskel på, om jeg skal gå forrest, eller om min datter skal gå forrest. Min datter hun skal ikke gå forrest.”
720 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19890728, original text: “da hun altså hørte, at vi havde så mange indvandrerpår, så sagde hun nej, det var ikke lige sagen, og det var ikke fordi hun havde noget imod indvandrere, men det var hendes eget barns udvikling, hun tænkte på.”
In 1970, ca. 6 percent of students in Denmark attended private schools. This number rose during the 1980s until, through the 1990s and 2000s, the number reached 11-12 percent. In Copenhagen, the number was much higher, with 24 percent (2004) of students attending private schools. In Denmark private schools have been partly funded by public subventions – a private school receives 75 percent of the expenses of an average public school – and partly by tuition. Since the amount of tuition often accounts for more than 25 percent of an average public school’s budget, most private schools have been financially stronger than public schools. The expenses for tuition have prevented most low income families from sending their children to private schools, and the private schools have the right to deny access to certain students, such as those considered troublemakers or academically weak. Together, these factors have made the schools even stronger because the student body more often consists of resourceful students rather than pedagogically demanding students. Demanding students instead have been referred to the public schools, allowing private schools to devote more resources towards helping their already strong students. Private schools have not only educated ethnically Danish students. Around 10 percent of the students at private schools in the early 2000s have been visible minorities. While this is a similar rate to the percentages in public schools, these students have not been equally distributed among the private schools. Almost half of the students (46 percent) attended Islamic private schools, and one fifth (21 percent) attended international schools that primarily host children of diplomats, etc. This has left only one third visible minority students to attend ‘ordinary’ private schools, where they have constituted ca. 3 percent – much less than the proportion of visible minorities in the average public school.

Since the 1990s visible minority students have constituted a larger proportion of the student bodies than of the population. This difference has resulted from the higher number of children and lower number of elderly people among visible minorities, when compared with the ethnically Danish population. The number of visible minority students has differed regionally in Denmark as well. Several municipalities in rural areas have not had any visible minority students, and the absolute majority of municipalities have only had a few percentage visible minorities in their schools. From the 1970s to the 2000s, municipality Ishøj, South of Copenhagen, has had the largest percentage of visible minority students; in 2004 visible minorities constituted 45 percent of

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721 See Ministry of Education’s web site: http://pub.uvm.dk/2002/folkeskolen/2.htm
722 Analytic Institute PLS Ramboll “Det handler om mere end retstavning,” available via Ugebrevet A4, LO, ”Offentlige tilskud favoriserer privat skoler,” Nov. 08, 2004, # 38, see http://www.ugebreveta4.dk/smcms/Ugebrevet/4766/7055/7076/7080/View.htm?ID=7080
the student body. The same year, Copenhagen had 30 percent visible minorities among its student body. Aarhus had 17 percent and Odense 17.5 percent.\footnote{All numbers are from 2004, See Ministry of Education, “Kommuner med tosprogede elever i skoleåret 03/04,” http://www.uvm.dk/statistik/grundskole/tosprog0304/2_antal_kommuner.pdf} The geographical distribution of visible minority students in Denmark has not changed much since the 1970s, but the number of students has increased over the years. In Ishøj, for example, the percentage of visible minority students has increased from 30 percent in the 1970s to 45 percent in the 2000s. The following table illustrates the increased number of visible minorities in the Danish public schools.\footnote{Statistical numbers provided by consultant Jens Andersen, UNI-C Statistik & Analyse, København in an e-mail correspondence with me Nov. 2004.}

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>756,849</td>
<td>713,089</td>
<td>642,792</td>
<td>549,262</td>
<td>513,695</td>
<td>563,576</td>
<td>594,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible minority students</td>
<td>2,531</td>
<td>8,093</td>
<td>11,815</td>
<td>22,578</td>
<td>35,924</td>
<td>50,360</td>
<td>57,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis. min. stud.in percentage</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These numbers are composites. In reality, many schools in Copenhagen, Aarhus, and Odense during the 1980s and 1990s were categorized as ‘black schools’ or ‘white schools’, where ‘black schools’ had large numbers of visible minority students, and ‘white schools’ had large numbers of ethnically Danish students. In Denmark, parents have been able to freely choose which public school they wanted their children to attend. This ‘free choice of school’ [frit skolevalg] was debated many times in the news programs. In the early 1980s, the news broadcast interviews with people agitating for forcefully transferring visible minorities from schools with high concentrations of visible minority students to schools with lower concentrations.\footnote{See for instance DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19811029.} In 1990 Aarhus municipality, which has had high concentrations of visible minority students in its public schools in Gellerup, tried to spread visible minority students to other
schools voluntarily by offering free transportation for the children’s commute to ‘white’ schools. Lone Hindø, a member of Aarhus city council representing the Socialist People’s Party [Socialistisk Folkeparti], argued that “One of the keywords…is voluntariness. Others are information, guidance, and counseling. We need to get in and talk to every single foreign-language [visible minority] family and tell them which options they have.” Her statement indicated that the problems lay primarily with the visible minority students and their families, rather than with the ethnically Danish families who had refused to send their children to the local schools. Instead of trying to get the ‘white’ children back to the local schools in Gellerup, Hindø argued that the visible minority children should be sent to the ‘white’ schools outside Gellerup. The voluntary arrangement did not make the ‘black’ schools in Gellerup ‘whiter’, and a few years later, in 1993, Aarhus municipality debated whether they could force ethnically Danish families to send their children to the nearest local public school in Gellerup instead of using public schools outside Gellerup. The result was that ethnically Danish parents increasingly began sending their children to private schools or moved away from the area. DR news concluded about the situation: “Politicians are far from reaching their goal of integration – rather the contrary – when Danes leave the area [Gellerup].”

In all of these debates schools and the composition of student bodies were central to ideas of integration. There have been various understandings of the concept of integration. It has been viewed, for example, from a cultural point of view and from a social-economic point of view. The cultural view has focused on cultural differences between the majority minority populations, while the social view has focused on the participation of the majority and minority populations in the workforce, educational system, political institutions, etc. Both kinds of integration have been charted through to different stages ranging from assimilation to co-existence (often called melting pot or salad bowl) to segregation. Assimilation, on one end of the scale, implies from the cultural point of view that minorities give up their traditional culture in order to adopt the majority population’s cultural behavior. From the social-economic perspective, it implies that the majority minority populations participate equally and to the same extent in the workforce, educational systems, representational institutions, etc. The minority population could potentially keep their cultural traditions as they are not central for social-economic integration. Segregation, on the other end of the scale, has implies for both views that there is little or no integration or interaction.

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726 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19901112, original text: “Et af nøgleordene…er frivillighed. Det er information, det er vejledning, det er rådgivning. Vi skal ind og tale med hver enkelt fremmedsprøgede familie og fortælle dem, hvad muligheder de har.”

727 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19930610, original text: “Så politikerne har langt fra nået deres mål om integration, snarere tværtimod, når danskerne flytter.”
between the majority minority populations. From the cultural point of view the central issue, and concern, is that two groups live separately with distinct cultural traditions. From the socio-economic point of view the central issue is that the two groups are unequal participants in the workforce, educational system, political system, etc.\textsuperscript{728}

For both the cultural and the social-economic views, integration in the educational system is central. If the members of the majority population and the minority population are segregated on the educational level, it becomes difficult to integrate them on societal levels. The schools therefore have had a twofold function: They have been central sites for integrating majority and minority populations as well as sites for monitoring the success or failures of this integration. The news’ focus on Danish schools played upon both of these aspects throughout the period analyzed. When news journalists critiqued ethnically Danish parents for not sending their children to the local public school, they indirectly accused them of undermining integration efforts in Denmark, and when the news journalists and politicians repeatedly focused on schools with large numbers of visible minority students and on their problems, it was because they have interpreted these schools as illustrations of how visible minorities were not integrated into Danish society.

None of the sampled news material defined the concept of integration. This might explain the apparent contradictions, whereby reports simultaneously accused parents of not contributing to integration while at the same time showing sympathy for parents who removed their children from the local schools because they were not “Danish” enough. Despite the lack of a clear definition, the word “integration,” and not “assimilation,” dominated public debates and the news media. Integration tended to be presented more positively than assimilation, which might explain this dominance.

TV2 news described in 1998 how “some parents find that the consideration [of non-ethnically Danish students] has gone too far.”\textsuperscript{729} A voice-over informed viewers that a local public school, Grundtvigskolen in Copenhagen, no longer cooked with pork in its domestic science classes [hjemkundskab] and that it had cancelled Christian activities at the school “because two out of three children are not Christian.”\textsuperscript{730} The news clip broadcast an interview with a young, ethnically Danish mother, Christina Andersen, who was filmed near the school wearing a tracksuit. Tracksuits were

\textsuperscript{728} Udlandingses integration i det danske samfund, Tænketanken om udfordringer for integrationen i Danmark, (Copenhagen: Ministry of the Interior, 2001), Appendix A.
\textsuperscript{729} TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19981001, original text: ”nu mener nogle forældre, at hensynet er gået for vidt.”
\textsuperscript{730} TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19981001, original text: ”for to ud af tre børn er nemlig ikke kristne.”
connoted with working-class clothing, and her working-class background was confirmed by note that she worked as a “hospital assistant,”\textsuperscript{731} an occupation with very little or no educational requirements; her lack of education was also indicated by her linguistically incorrect Danish. She argued: “They [the school] should be considerate [of visible minority students] but they should not forget the Danish children.”\textsuperscript{732} The interviewer asked, “Do they forget them?”\textsuperscript{733} She answered, “Yes, a lot, often, because the Danish children want to see churches and Christianity, Danish culture and such things but all the time they are skipped because of the Muslim, the Turkish, and generally by their other cultures all the time.”\textsuperscript{734} The content of her argument was not much different than the middle-class, ethnically Danish parents who did not want to use the local school because it was not “Danish” enough. But Christina Andersen could most likely not afford a private school education for her child; her only option was thus to demand that the public school became more ‘Danish’, which, in her version of Danishness, meant that there should be less consideration of non-ethnically Danish children and more focus on Christianity.

Andersen’s argument and the middle-class parents’ arguments described above seemed to be based on ideas of cultural assimilation where integration meant that minorities adopted the majority population’s culture and traditions. This was similar to politicians from the right-wing party the Liberals [Venstre] who, represented by the party’s spokesperson on integration affairs Irene Simonsen, argued in a news clip about integration in public schools that “refugees who arrive in Denmark must sign a declaration stating that they will follow our rules.”\textsuperscript{735} The news clip had described how some public schools did not serve pork and allowed female students to attend physical education classes in salwar kameez (traditional Pakistani clothing) and to shower behind curtains. Irene Simonsen, whose party was in government at the time of the interview, argued that public schools should not take special considerations of visible minorities students; they should, for instance, not let children leave school at Ramadan because “that is not part of our festival days here in Denmark.”\textsuperscript{736} She further argued that female students should not be allowed to shower behind

\textsuperscript{731} TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19981001, original text: “hospitalsmedhjælper.”
\textsuperscript{732} TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19981001, original text: “Man skal tage hensyn, men man skal ikke glemmme de danske born.”
\textsuperscript{733} TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19981001, original text: “Bliver de nemt glemt eller hvad?”
\textsuperscript{734} TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19981001, original text: “Meget, tit, på grund af at de danske born de vil gerne se kirker og kristendom, dansk kultur og sådan nogle ting, men hele tiden skal det overdøves af hvad de muslimer, tyrkiske, i det hele taget deres andre kulturer hele tiden (sic).”
\textsuperscript{735} DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20030611, original text: “flygtninge der kommer her til landet skal underskrive en erklæring om, at de skal følge vores skikke.”
\textsuperscript{736} DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20030611, original text: “det er altså ikke vores helligdage i Danmark.”
curtains because “I find that is going too far…in our culture girls shower together after physical education lessons, and as a foreigner one needs to learn that when one gets to Denmark.” She explained her reason for not wanting to take special consideration of certain students, i.e. Muslim students: “the foreigners who come to Denmark…they must be informed about the fact that they have rights. But when one moves in and receives rights then one also gets some duties, and one of these is to be integrated.” She clearly understood integration as cultural assimilation, and as the clip did not have any voices agitating for social-economic integration, cultural assimilation appeared as societal goal.

There have not been any apparent changes in the sampled news material’s stories about visible minorities and schools from the early 1970s to the early 2000s. The content of the stories was consistent, emphasizing the same conflicts and issues. The only significant change over this period was the numbers of visible minority students. Although the number of visible minority students increased throughout the period, the number of negative stories stayed the same. Despite this continuity, several journalists treated these ‘school issues’ as if they were new. In 2003, for example, a television host offered the following comment to introduce a news clip about ethnically Danish parents’ refusal to send their children to schools with a high number of visible minority students: “For many years it has been a taboo, but now parents talk openly about the fact that they don’t want their children to attend schools with many immigrants.” As the analyses above illustrate, this has not been a taboo at all. The television host’s underscoring of the taboo might have resulted from the host’s lack of knowledge or from the narrative excitement elicited from breaking a taboo.

Parallel existence

Between the 1970s and the early 2000s, one of the main criticisms leveled against visible minorities was their lack of properly integration. Indeed, journalists, politicians, and other interviewees painted their the worst case scenario for visible minorities when they claimed that visible minorities were not integrated at all but rather lived completely segregated lives. The news

737 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20030611, original text: “Det, synes jeg, er at gå for langt…Vores kultur er jo…at pigerne bader sammen i gymnastik, og det skal man også lære som udlænding, når man kommer til Danmark.”
738 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20030611, original text: “de udlændinge der fremover kommer til Danmark…når de kommer, så skal de have at vide, hvilke rettigheder de har. Men når man flytter ind og får rettigheder, så hører der også nogle pligter med. Og det er at blive integreret.”
739 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20030530, original text: “I mange år har det være tabu. Men mange forældre taler nu åbent om, at de ikke vil have deres børn i skoler med mange indvandrere.”
often described this segregation as living a parallel life, or living outside society: ”a group [of visible minorities] are not even a part of society. They live isolated with their own norms and do not interact with the world around them...[they] are outside society.”

News reports described a variety of groups of visible minorities as living in such a state. Some focused on elderly people: “Many of the men who came to Denmark from Turkey [as labor immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s] never managed to become a part of the Danish society.” Others focused on young people whose crimes they connected with a lack of integration: “Problems with young [criminal] immigrants...are connected to integration of second generation immigrants, of all immigrants really, who have a hard time getting into society.”

In particular, though, the news media connected many of their examinations of segregated visible minorities to descriptions of ghettos. Newsprint and broadcasts presented ghettos as negative throughout the period analyzed; not one positive description appeared in the material analyzed. The news presented this negative characterization as a consensus: “Politically, there is a general agreement that new refugees and the foreigners who already live in Denmark must be spread out as much as possible throughout the country.”

The dislike of ghettos seemed to have influenced most of the news clips’ reports about how the Danish Parliament tried to prevent ghetto formations or to transform existing ones. One example of such an effort from 1993 focused, like many others, on laws that aimed to force visible minorities to settle in various parts of the country. This clip informed viewers that it had become possible for housing associations and municipalities to offer applicants housing in different housing associations than the ones they had applied for. For example, visible minorities who had applied for housing in Gellerup in Aarhus could be offered housing in a different suburb that hosted a smaller number of visible minorities. The clip mainly focused on the financial burdens of this new option and thereby gave the impression that visible minorities cost municipalities a lot of money. The news often equated high concentrations of visible

740 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020118, original text: “en gruppe som slet ikke er en del af samfundet, som lever helt isoleret med deres egne normer, og slet ikke kommer i berøring med det der sker i verden omkring dem...nogle...er uden for samfundet.”

741 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990910, original text: “mange af de mænd der kom her til fra Tyrkiet [som gæstearbejdere] aldrig nåede at blive en del af det danske samfund.” See also DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020114, original text: “De kom som gæstearbejdere for en kort bemærkning, troede de selv. Her 30 år senere, er de her stadig. Nu er de gamle, ensomme og isolerede borgere i et samfund, de ikke forstår.”

742 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960821, original text: “det [kriminelle synlige minoritetsgrunde] er en problemstilling med [der handler om] integration af andengenerationsdrenge, indvandrere i virkeligheden, som har svært ved at komme ind i vores samfund.” In this news clips it was argued by local politician in Copenhagen, Jesper Langebæk, representing the Socialist People’s Party [Socialistisk Folkeparti].

743 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19930110, original text: “Der er jo bred politisk enighed om, at både nye flygtninge og de fremmede som allerede bor i Danmark skal spredes mest muligt i hele landet.”
7. The unintegrated immigrant

minorities with problems and financial burdens. One news clip, for instance, was introduced by the statement: “In Aarhus, the problem with the many foreigners who live in the same area is the largest in Gellerup.” The journalist did not define or specify the problem; instead he presented it as if it was well-known and as if there were a causal relation between high concentrations of visible minorities and problems.

During the 1990s and early 2000s, there were also clips informing audiences about the various so-called ‘area lifts’ [kvarterløft], projects aimed at increasing the quality of an area so much that well-off, ethnic Danes would be attracted to settle there. TV2 reported about how Vollsmose, outside Odense, had received 500,000,000 Kroner from the state to lift an area. The leader of Vollsmose Secretary, Lise Færch, explained that “It is a lot [of money] but not too much if we are to straighten up Vollsmose.” The large amount of money needed for Vollsmose indicated the deplorable situation in the area. The area lift included improvements of the local schools, and a journalist reported from one of the schools that “Danish culture, roots, and consequences are going to be the school’s new trademark.” Accompanying footage from the school showed visible minority children singing the song Hist hvor vejen slår en bugt – a song, with words by Hans Christian Andersen, that has been closely connected to nineteenth-century romantics’ praise of Danish nationality. It therefore seemed like the trademark was to be reached via a re-vitalization of the national cultural heritage.

Journalists and politicians connected ghettos to a fundamentalist lifestyle. In 1995, a Muslim organization in Denmark spoke in favor of a Syrian death sentence directed at a group of Christians in Syria. Per Kaalund, who was a Member of Parliament for the Social Democrats and the former mayor in Brøndøj, which has included a large number of visible minorities among its citizens, commented: “It is totally obvious that they [the Muslim organization] are working against Danish society. Must we accept ghetto formations?” He thereby directly connected the politically fundamentalist viewpoints of an organization to ghettos, in the process indicating that all people

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744 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19930623, original text: “I Århus kommune er problemet med mange udlandinge, der bor i samme område størst i Gellerup.” See also for instance TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19950126 for stories about attempts to prevent ghetto formations via regulation housing associations’ offers and prices.

745 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010519, original text: “Jo, det er meget [mange penge], men ikke for meget, hvis man skal rette op på Vollsmose.”

746 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010519, original text: “Dansk kultur, rodder og konsekvens skal være skolens nye varemærke.”

747 See also for instance TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20010509 for a news story about an area lift in Norrebro.

748 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19950301, original text: ”Det er jo helt tydeligt, at de modarbejder det danske samfund som sådan. Skal vi accepterer ghettodannelser?”
living in these ghettos potentially shared the viewpoints of the organization; he also indicated that the ghetto formation itself was responsible for cultivating fundamentalist viewpoints.

The newspaper coverage of the Aarhus rape also included several articles that characterized the area where the rape had taken place, Gellerup/Bispehaven, as a ghetto.749 Physically, journalists described Bispehaven as a place where “all areas between the tower blocks are asphalted or covered with concrete with cars parked in basement level…. [There are] randomly green areas with grass and bushes.”750 They described the area’s reputation negatively as well: “Bispehaven in Hasle [the Aarhus-area that Bispehaven is situated in] has never had positive associations. The tower blocks have a reputation of being inhabited by immigrants and socially marginalized people, and most people in Aarhus do not know the area for anything positive.”751 Similarly, another journalist characterized the area as “mainly inhabited by immigrants…[with] foreign children…who do not want to attend school.”752 The articles presented an image of the area as a very depressed site for the financially and socially marginalized; the journalists also connected ghetto areas to crimes and rapes, and they therefore did not seem surprised that the Aarhus rape had taken place there. Just as Per Kaalund had argued that ghettos bred fundamentalism, articles in Jyllands-Posten gave the impression that ghetto areas bred rape offenders. Journalist Thomas Heine argued, for instance, that “suburban culture [i.e. the culture in the concrete ghetto suburbia] gives birth to gang rapes…[because rape] is about a suburban culture which has been generated in suburbia with high concentrations of immigrant.”753

The overall representations of the ghettos presented by the media was as physical spaces where parallel existences – including parallel cultures, behaviors, morals, etc. – have bred and easily continue to exist. To some extent it was sociologically correct that these areas were marginalized when compared to the rest of society, mainly because they were inhabited by groups

749 The names Bispehave and Gellerup function synonymously in the media, strictly speaking Bispehaven is the name of large housing concrete tower block complexes and Gellerup is the name of the area the complexes were build on. Gellerup is larger than Bispehaven and does also include some single family houses.


of financially marginalized people. But the area Gellerup, for instance, has also been inhabited by university students who set up housing co-operatives in the large apartments; however, journalists and news producers have not included these students in their representations of the ‘ghetto area.’

**Former ghetto-like living conditions for immigrants**

The news media characterized ghettos as a non-Danish way of living. A DR journalist for instance stated in the introduction to a news clip, as if it were a fact, that “ghettos are not the Danish style.” The correctness of this statement depended on the definition of ‘ghetto’. If ‘ghetto’ referred to a certain area inhabited by a certain categories of people who constituted a minority in society, there were several ghettos based on class in Denmark. For several decades, the housing areas north of Copenhagen have been limited, because of their high property prices, to financially very wealthy people. Similarly, there have been clear differences between different geographic regions across Denmark. In the early 2000s, Denmark’s most wealthy county Søllerød, north of Copenhagen, hosted inhabitants with an average income of $244,971 Kroner per person, while the inhabitants of the least wealthy county Allinge-Gudhjem, on the island of Bornholm, earned on average $90,203 Kroner per year. ‘Class ghettos’, therefore, seemed to be an integrated part of Danish housing patterns. At the time of the statement declaring ghettos to be of a non-Danish style, 18.6 percent of the population lived in housings similar to those critiqued, i.e. council flats [almennyttige lejeboliger]; a little more than half the population (51.2 percent) lived in single-family houses, and the majority of these owned their house, and the remaining lived in rented apartments. The critiqued form of housing can therefore not be characterized as ‘non-Danish’.

If by ‘ghetto’ the journalist referred to racial or ethnic ghettos, it should be noted that these have not been absent from Danish history, as several groups of immigrants have settled in ghetto formations in Denmark. At the beginning of the twentieth-century, groups of Eastern European Jews fleeing from pogroms in the Russian occupied territories of Poland, Ukraine, Crimea, and Belarus arrived in Denmark. The absolute majority of Jews settled in inner Copenhagen, where they soon created a ghetto of poor Jews. It was the poor Jews from Tsarist Russia who came to a close destination like Denmark, while the more wealthy Jews went to the

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754 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19930110, original text: “Ghettoer er ligesom ikke rigtig dansk stil.”


USA or Canada.\textsuperscript{757} The Jews who arrived in Denmark were predominantly young, working-class, Yiddish-speaking, and ‘Jewish’ in appearance and lifestyle, which made them appear as different from the majority of ethnic Danes and from the middle-class assimilated Jews already living in Denmark.\textsuperscript{758} The actual number of Jews who arrived has been unclear. The Danish census showed 264 Jews in Denmark in 1906, and in 1911 the number had risen to 1600. In 1921 the number of Jews reached 5875, of which 3146 belonged to the group of recently arrived Jews or had parents among these. But these census figures most likely underestimated the actual figures, and historians, like Bent Blüdnikov, have argued that the numbers were much higher with as many as 5000 Jews settling in Copenhagen between 1903 and 1917.\textsuperscript{759} Several contemporary newspapers described their living area in the inner-city slum of Copenhagen negatively, and underscored how financially poor and unhygienic the conditions were. The newspapers also connected the area with crime and civil disturbances.\textsuperscript{760} The later (1970s-2000s) news media’s descriptions of ghettos therefore, to some extent, seems to have paralleled earlier descriptions of immigrants’ living situation.

Other immigrants were invited to Denmark in order to settle and work in specifically designated areas that thereby turned into immigrant ghettos; three particularly well-known examples were the Dutch in Amager, the so-called ‘potato Germans’, and the so-called ‘beet girls’ from Poland.

At the beginning of the sixteenth-century, King Christian II (1513-1523) invited the Dutch to the Kingdom of Denmark so that they could grow the native foods that his Dutch wife Elisabeth missed. Around 1521, 184 families from the Dutch areas of Waterland and Marken settled on Amager, an island just outside Copenhagen. The Danes who lived in the area were forced to move to provide space to the newly arrived Dutch farmers, who formed a Dutch ghetto in the area. For the following centuries, the Dutch were the royal court’s main suppliers of agricultural products, birds, and fish; they also sold their products at local Copenhagen markets. For a number of years, the Dutch people remained isolated from the Danish population, living a parallel existence. They married each other and maintained their Dutch language and culture. Not until 1759 did the first marriage between a Dutch and a Dane take place, 253 years after the first Dutch had arrived. In the end, intermarriages and re-settlements into other areas slowly resulted in integration with the


\textsuperscript{758} Tatjana Lichtenstein, “Jews in Denmark,” in Encyclopedia of Diasporas, (Yale University Press, forthcoming).


\textsuperscript{760} Bent Jensen, De fremmede i dansk avisdebatt fra 1870’erne til 1990’erne (Viborg: Spektrum, 2000), 177 ff.
Danish population. Today several street names on Amager bear witness to the former Dutch population.\footnote{Bent Østergaard, \textit{Indvandrenes danmarkshistorie} (Copenhagen: Gad, 1983), 58-64. See also Bent Jensen, \textit{De fremmede i dansk avisdebatt fra 1870'erne til 1990'erne} (Viborg: Spektrum, 2000), 55.}

The so-called ‘potato Germans’ were similarly invited to cultivate Danish soil. At the end of the seventeenth-century, one third of the Danish mainland, Jutland, was covered in heath and moor. King Frederik IV (1699-1730) tried in 1723 to make Danes settle and cultivate the areas in Jutland by offering them privileges, but no Danes volunteered. King Frederik V (reign year 1746-1766) therefore invited Germans from the Rhineland to cultivate the heaths of Jutland. The German Rhineland was heavily populated during the mid-eighteenth-century, and during the previous decades, many people from the area had migrated to cultivate the heath in Brandenburg and the plains of Hungary. Many volunteered to relocate to Jutland; from 1759 to 1761, several thousands arrived in the Kingdom of Denmark. They were very poor, and the Danish government was forced to help them financially in the following years. At first the immigrants cultivated rye and buckwheat, but they were not able to harvest much in the sandy soil of Jutland. Instead they began cultivating potatoes, which grew well in the sandy soil, hence the name ‘potato-Germans’. It was a common belief that the Germans brought potatoes with them and introduced them to Denmark, but it has not been possible to find evidence for this in the existing sources.\footnote{Jørgen Nielsen, “De indkaldte hekedkolonister i 1700-tallet,” in \textit{Fremmede i Danmark. 400 års fremmedpolitik} ed. Bent Blådnikov (Ringkøbing: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1987), 87 ff and Bent Østergaard, \textit{Indvandrenes danmarkshistorie} (Copenhagen: Gad, 1983), 119.} When the Seven Years’ War (1756-63) led to an expensive mobilization of the Danish army and left the Kingdom with considerable foreign debt, the crown was forced to end its financial support of the German immigrants.\footnote{The Kingdom of Denmark almost participated in the Seven Years War’ (1756-1763) against Tsar Russia: Peter III acceded the Tsar throne in 1762, after which he put a claim on the Duchy of Slesvig and moved his army into Mecklenburg in order to direct it towards the Kingdom of Denmark’s southern boarders. The Kingdom mobilised an army, and the war was very near when Peter III was murdered. His excedder and wife, Katharina II, retreated the army and peace was signed in 1763.} The commissioner in charge of the heath settling project, Hans de Hoffmann, gained the King’s permission to expel “unqualified” [\textit{uagnei]} German immigrants. Two lists of immigrants were written: One with names of “the incompetent” [\textit{uduelige}], who were to be expelled, and one with the names of “those for whom there is some good hope” [\textit{hvorom haves nogenlunde god håb}].\footnote{Jørgen Nielsen, “De indkaldte hekedkolonister i 1700-tallet” in \textit{Fremmede i Danmark. 400 års fremmedpolitik} ed. Bent Blådnikov (Ringkøbing: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1987), 92.} By the end of 1763, the number of immigrants was reduced by half; this further decreased because many immigrants voluntarily left Jutland and to cultivate Russia’s unfarmed areas. About 60 families stayed and created their own community. Throughout the eighteenth-century, they
remained on the heath, spoke German, married each other, and had their own school where the language of teaching remained German until 1848. 765 During the nineteenth-century, people began moving away from the heath ghetto in search of employment, and several married Danes; together this resulted in their final incorporation into the rest of Danish society. 766

The immigration of the so-called ‘beet girls’ [roe piger] from Poland resulted from the development of the beet sugar industry during the late nineteenth-century. The cultivation of beets demanded intensive labor, and since Danish rural areas experienced a net loss of its Danish population via emigration, from the early 1890s the demand for seasonal labor was met with young Polish women (15-20 years old). At the time Poland did not exist as a nation-state; the area that today constitutes Poland was then divided between Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Prussia. The ‘beet girls’ came from rural areas of Habsburg-controlled Poland (Austrian Galicia) that were overpopulated and had little industry and old-fashioned agriculture. The number of Polish seasonal workers in Denmark rose substantially till the outbreak of the First World War. From ca. 400 in 1893, the number grew to ca. 1600 in 1898, ca. 2600 in 1907, 10,419 in 1910, finally culminating in 14,452 in 1914. With the outbreak of World War I and its aftermath, the number of Polish workers decreased because of the complicated situation in Europe and, perhaps more importantly, because Danish unemployment rose. It reached 20 percent after the war, which forced Danish workers to seek work in the beet industry. 767

The Polish beet laborers lived isolated from the Danish population in harsh conditions that contemporary newspapers criticized. The rural, working-class newspaper, Tyendebladet, wrote for instance: “We know how they live these poor slaves [Polish labor immigrants] whom our patriotic property owners abuse and exploit: Wretched wage, miserable food, brutal treatment, and a piggery for living quarters.” 768 The newspapers presented the workers’ ghetto life as a means to express a general social critique – this was especially the case with left-wing papers – as well as a means to provide sensational stories about crime and disease among the Poles. A 1906-article titled

765 Bent Østergaard, Indvandrernes danmarkshistorie (Copenhagen: Gad, 1983), 123.
766 This description of the heath settlers is based on Jørgen Nielsen: “De indkaldte hedekolonister i 1700-tallet” in Fremmede i Danmark. 400 års fremmedpolitik ed. Bent Blüdnikov (Ringkøbing: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1987), 76-94.
“Polish drama in Lolland” took advantage of the latter. It described how one of the few male, Polish labor immigrants had shot at a woman who had turned him down. Another reported on “A Polish woman’s childbirth”; the article presented readers a story about a Polish woman who, most likely out of wedlock, had given birth to a child, whom she afterwards perhaps killed.\(^{769}\) The newspapers did not critique the ‘beet girls’ themselves for their living conditions; instead they blamed their Danish and German employers. The lack of critique of the Polish labors immigrants might have derived from their gender, which allowed commentators to position them as victims and not agents of their fate. By contrast, the newspapers critiqued the Jewish immigrants and their ghetto lives and held the Jewish males partly responsible for the ghetto’s conditions and crimes.\(^{770}\)

**Who belonged to society**

The television news offered descriptions of how some visible minorities were placed in parallel existences outside society. In the process, the news media participated in defining inclusion and exclusion as well as the concept of society itself. The media seemed to define society as a rather closed unit, that one could be included in or excluded from, and as a unit that it was sometimes hard to enter. This rather narrow definition of society seemed to imply that one needed to actively and legally participate in society in order to be a member of it. A housing consultant [boligrådgiver], Hanne Hæsum, explained visible minorities’ lack of integration as a result of visible minorities’ inability to participate: “They are unable to manage to participate in the labor market. They are unable to cope socially. Therefore they end up isolating themselves and having badly paid jobs; they never get into society.”\(^{771}\) This summed up the general impression to be drawn from the news material analyzed, namely that being part of society was closely connected to being employed – and thereby to paying tax – and to participation in social and/or political organizations.

As the then-Minister of Refugees, Immigrants, and Integration from the Liberal Party [Venstre], Bertel Haarder, stated in a news clip: “Integration does not come automatically. Maybe it does in a society where there is no welfare state and where all people therefore need to work. But in Denmark, it is unfortunately possible to live isolated and on welfare and never ever get in contact

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\(^{769}\) After Bent Jensen, *De fremmede i dansk avisdebatt fra 1870’erne til 1990’erne* (Viborg: Spektrum, 2000), 122 ff. The original titles of the articles were: ”Polakdrama paa Lolland” and ”En Polakkvindes Barnefoedsel” (After Bent Jensen, *De fremmede i dansk avisdebatt fra 1870’erne til 1990’erne* (Viborg: Spektrum, 2000), 128).


\(^{771}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19960918, original text: “De kan ikke klare sig på arbejdsmarkedet. De kan ikke klare sig socialt. De er derfor nødt til at isolere sig, nødt til at klare sig med dårligt betalte jobs, de kommer ikke ind i samfundet.”
with the Danish society.”

This statement excluded the unemployed, people on welfare, those who were not active in any organization, etc. from membership in society. The definition of society could also have been more broadly defined, for instance to include everyone who physically lived in the country. Young, criminal visible minorities or elderly, unemployed, visible minority men potentially could have been viewed as part of Danish society, even though they might not have been viewed as members who contributed positively to society.

The clear division between those included and those excluded from society underscored the gap between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and has also contributed to constructing images of ethnic Danes as beneficial members of society and visible minorities as freeloaders on the welfare state.

Several of the visible minorities interviewed by Hervik explained how they were bothered by the media’s presentation of visible minorities as living parallel lives and not being integrated because they felt that these media descriptions marginalized them. They viewed themselves as part of society and underscored how they were employed or affiliated with educational institutions, but despite their active participation in society they felt affected by the media’s generalized representation of visible minorities as outside Danish society. Hervik has concluded that “It is the media’s responsibility not to contribute to constructing gaps and indifferences. Unfortunately, that is exactly what the media are at risk of doing when the youth [the interviewed visible minorities] can see that the media’s representation is one-sided. Then [they feel that] they might as well not participate in political debate in Denmark. In order words, the media’s representation has a marginalizing effect on the young visible minorities’ lives.”

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772 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 20030616, original text: “Den [integrationen] kommer absolut ikke af sig selv. Det gør den måske i et samfund, hvor man ikke har en velfærdsstat, og hvor alle er nødt til at arbejde for overhovedet at opretholde livet. Men i Danmark er det jo desværre muligt at leve afsondret af kontanthjælp og aldrig nogensinde at komme i forbindelse med det danske samfund.” This statement is an exaggeration; since the 1990s, people have needed to be in regularly contact with the unemployment authorities [Arbejdssfoendelsen] and to participate in job training programs as well as accept jobs offered them by the authorities in order to receive welfare payments.

773 This exclusion is similar to car drivers’ complaints about bicycles blocking traffic instead of viewing bicycles as part of traffic.

774 See also DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20030717, where immigration consultant Esma Birdi argued: “Ethnic minorities in Denmark live in mini-societies with norms and rules which are outdated long time ago.” (Original text: “De etniske minoriteter i Danmark lever i nogle minisamfund, hvor normer og regler der er foreldet for længe siden;” and TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19890906 where female high school student Laila e Banazir Changezi explains: “The tradition in many immigrant families is not compatible with the Danish society,” (original text: “Traditionen i mange indvandrervalere…den stemmer overhovedet ikke til det danske samfund.”)

775 Peter Hervik, Medierne muslimer. En antropologisk undersøgelse af medierne dækning af religioner i Danmark (Copenhagen: Nævnefor Etisk Ligestilling, 2002), 303 f., original text: “Medierne har et stort ansvar for ikke at være med til at skabe afstand og ligegyldighed. Det er imidlertid præcist det, medierne risikerer at gøre, når de unge eksempelvis kan se, at medierne fremstilling er ensidig, og at de lige så godt kan lade være med at tage del i den
these negative descriptions of visible minorities living parallel lives might indirectly have encouraged visible minorities to actually live separate lives.

Integration as a goal

Integration has been an often debated issue since the early 1980s, and from this time the news presented it as a worthy goal. During the 1970s, discussion on integration was limited because the majority of visible minorities in Denmark were foreign workers who were viewed as temporary visitors. Thus there was no need to discuss their integration into Danish society. In the 1970s, it was only issues like housing facilities and schooling for visible minorities that attracted public discussion. With the arrival of refugees in the 1980s and with the increasing number of foreign workers’ and refugees’ children attending Danish schools it became clear that the demographic composition of Denmark most likely was changing permanently. From the early 1980s, the news increasingly began broadcasting negative stories that focused on the lack of integration but also stories that carried positive and optimistic descriptions of integration projects, projects with the aim of integrating visible minorities. A typical example of a news story about such an integration project was a report from the one-year celebration of a Danish-Turkish organization [Dansk-tyrisk forening] in Aarhus. A voice-over informed the viewers that “through discussions and meetings about the guest workers’ problems in the fall of ’79, the Danish-Turkish organization was established. It has several task groups, e.g. the children group, the cultural group, and the women’s group.” The news story was accompanied with footage of happy people, ethnic Danes as well as ethnic Turks who laughed, talked, and danced together. The footage offered impressions of happiness and of the success of the project. But viewers also heard that the organization did more than just party; a central function of the organization was support because “several times a week board members of the Danish-Turkish organization are visited by members or their relatives who seek help to solve private or public problems.” The viewers saw footage of a 16-year-old woman of Turkish origin who, via a translator, received advice from two ethnically Danish women. They told her that she could not become a doctor because she did not speak Danish and because one needed high grades to get into medical school, implying that she did not have high grades. The news clip presented the story as a positive initiative, even though it retrospectively could be accused for positioning the Turkish visible minorities as people with problems instead of as resources, as well as
danske politiske debat. Med andre ord virker mediernes dækning som en marginaliserende faktor i de unges etniske minoriteters liv.”
as being accused for being a project with ethnically Danish people in structural positions of power, including the power to define the Turkish people’s problems and future educational options.

The positive and optimistic tone accompanying the news clip about integration projects in the 1980s faded in the 1990s and 2000s. Instead the news programs mainly broadcast stories about the lack of integration. The only positive integration stories were individualized stories in which a visible minority’s integration was presented as the exception that confirmed the rule. In one example of these individualized success stories, a DR news clip portrayed a Tamil heterosexual couple who was described as “an example that integration can be a success.” In case the viewer was unclear about the frequency of such successes, a voice-over immediately followed: “This [successful integration] is far from the case with all Tamil families.” The narrating news journalist characterized the portrayed couple as a success because she was employed and he was attending educational training – in other words, they qualified as members of society. The news described another success story, that of DJ Ali Movasat, a visible minority of Iranian origin, like a fairytale. The host introduced the news clip with this in mind: “And now to a modern fairytale. 15 years ago Ali Movasat fled Iran. Today he faces a breakthrough as a pop star.” The report briefly explained how Ali Movasat had been forced to participate in the war between Iran and Iraq and how he had managed to flee Iran and come to Denmark. The story treated Movasat’s life in Iran and his life in Denmark as strictly divided. The news clip illustrated his life in Iran with older footage showing soldiers fighting in a desert, most likely footage from the Iraq-Iran war. It illustrated his Danish life with pictures of himself in his home, which included a music studio. A voice-over explained how Movasat’s “dreams might come true” in Denmark because his music was selling well. The clip turned the success of Movasat into a story that contributed to a positive image of Denmark: In the news story, Denmark became a safe heaven from wars and a place where success was possible, where dreams could come true.

The portrayals of Movasat and the Tamil couple appeared as contrasts to the many news clips that negatively described visible minorities, characterizing them as neither integrated nor

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776 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19930115, original text: “Ægteparret er et eksempel på, at integration kan lykkes.”

777 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19930115, original text: “Sådan er det langt fra gået alle tamilske familier.”

778 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020529, original text: “Og så skal vi til et slags moderne eventyr. For 15 år siden flygtede Ali Movasat fra Iran. I dag står han foran et gennembrud som popstjerne.” Notice the narrative similarities, including the references to fairytales, between this news clip and the previously news clip analyzed about Zahide Seido Bayram who became Miss Denmark in 1999, described in chapter 5, Veiling and dressing. 779 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020529, original text: “Snart vil drømmen muligvis blive til virkelighed.”

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successful. The few, and exceptional, success stories therefore seemed to function as illustrations of how positive and successful visible minorities’ lives could be, if they were integrated. The stories simultaneously functioned as examples of successful living, to which others should aspire, and as illustrations of the lack of integration among most visible minorities.

One of the interviewees in Hervik’s focus groups, Umut, a 23-year-old female student of Turkish origin, complained that she was not able to recognize herself in the media’s portrayal of visible minorities: “The only times you see things about foreigners in the media are when someone is a model or a social scumbag. I don’t want to be any of those two…I just want to be myself.”

One of Hervik’s general conclusions from the interviews was that the interviewed visible minorities were not able to recognize themselves in the media’s portrayals of visible minorities. This was remarkable because it went against the news’ goal of mirroring reality or at least representing realities in a realistic way. This illustrated social constructivism because it has exemplified the complexity of reality and how realities were understood differently from person to person and from context to context. It was possible that the news were interpreted as realistic by some viewers, e.g. the white majority population who have not had any personal interaction with visible minorities, and unrealistic by others, e.g. visible minorities or white ethnically Danes who have had personal contact with visible minorities.

Journalists, politicians, and other interviewees presented integration as a goal from the 1980s – even though the content of this goal was unclear. Perhaps this lack of specificity can explain why politicians for decades have repeated the idea that “a fundamental goal in the immigration politics must be that foreigners…to the greatest possible extent become integrated into the Danish society.” The continuous repetition of the goal during the previous two decades illustrates the fact that the goal has not been reached. If it had been reached, if visible minorities in Denmark were integrated, there would not have been a need to state that integration was a goal.

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781 See also chapter 5, “Veiling and dressing”, for analysis of how the same news communication can be comprehended as realistic by some viewers and unrealistic by others, exemplified in the media’s coverage of veiling.

782 TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19890815, original text: ”et grundlæggende mål i udlændingepolitikken [må være], at udlændinge, der varig vil være i Danmark, i videst muligt omfang integreres i det danske samfund” (Here expressed by member of Parliament for The Liberal Party [Venstre] since 1976, Birthe Rønn-Hornbæk.)

783 For expressions, especially by politicians, of integration as a goal, see for instance: DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19810209, TV2 (Station), primetime news program *Nyhederne*, date: 19890124, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19900701, DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 19900726, DR (Station), primetime news
7. The unintegrated immigrant

The news media’s representation of visible minorities seemed to fall into two categories: The few success stories and the large number of negative stories. This division might derive from the establishment of integration as a goal. The success stories had integrated visible minorities as protagonists and illustrated how positive it can be when the goal was reached, while the many negative stories about visible minorities illustrated how negative it was when visible minorities did not integrate. But the media’s representation itself might be a barrier for integration on a practical level. One of Hervik’s interviewees Fatima, a 25-year-old woman of Pakistani and Afghani origin, argued that the media’s repetitive negative representations of visible minorities hindered integration: “The image that is presented [by the media] is always in the form of a problem…this problem angle has been there for a really long time, and it has participated in creating some negative prejudices. It has definitely not in any way promoted the integration.”

The concept of integration can be viewed as a floating signifier. Mouffe and Laclau have used the concept floating signifier to describe signs whose meaning differ from context to context. According to Mouffe and Laclau, meanings are not fixed, and there have always been antagonisms between different discourses trying to ascribe meaning to a floating signifier. Often one discourse has managed to dominate, and the meaning it ascribed became hegemonic. Floating signifiers would, as discourses, appear fixed even though they have always been changeable, and a hegemonic discourse would often appear as natural. But when considering the floating signifier ‘integration’ in the Danish news media, it did not seem to have a fixed meaning. Rather than different discourses explicitly ascribing different meanings to the concept, there were very few articulations that aimed at explicitly defining the content of integration. The potential antagonism between a discourse arguing in favor of cultural integration and one arguing in favor of socioeconomic integration also was not explicitly at play. There were voices, such as Member of

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784 Peter Hervik, Mediernes muslimer. En antropologisk undersøgelse af mediernes dækning af religioner i Danmark, (Copenhagen: Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestilling, 2002), 300, original text: ”det billede som bliver fremstillet [af synlige minoriteter i medierne], det er jo altid som problem…Så det er hele den problemvinkling, der har været i al for lang tid, som har været med til at skabe nogle negative fordomme. Det har i hvert fald ikke hjulpet integrationen på nogen måde.”


Parliament Irene Simonsen’s and the anti-ghetto articulations, who associated integration with cultural assimilation, and there were voices that connected integration with employment, which could be seen as an expression of cultural as well as social-economic integration. But besides these few aspects, the news media did not specify the content of integration. One explanation for the lack of definition could be that the floating signifier ‘integration’ was already fixed with meaning and that the antagonisms connected to this fixation took place outside the news media; this, however, is not likely because the news media were a main site for debating integration in Denmark. Another explanation could be that people talking about integration understood the concept hegemonically and therefore did not feel a need to explain themselves. A third explanation, the concept of integration could have floated throughout the period, allowing individual viewers to understand the concept in different ways according to their own understandings of integration. This could have included understandings of cultural as well as social integrations and could have varied from assimilation to segregation. Because the concept of integration was not defined, it has been complicated to determine how, or if, the news communication regarding integration changed over the analyzed period. Rather, it was possible to locate whether the news stories described integration, the options for integration, and the lack of integration as positive or negative. The lack of definition might also explain the lack of success in the integration policies. The various efforts to integrate visible minorities have failed because they did not clearly define what was meant by integration.

Integration and Employment

As mentioned above, there was a tendency to connect integration with employment, and this tendency seemed to become more widespread in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Social Liberal [Radikale Venstre] politician Manu Sareen expressed this connection explicitly: “Employment is the Alpha and Omega. Without employment there is no integration.” This connection was also implied in a news clip that told the story of how “The Danish Trades Union Congress [LO] and the Danish Employers' Confederation [Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening] are

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787 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020118, original text: “Arbejde er simpelthen alfa og omega. Uden arbejde så er der ingen integration.” See also DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990910, where it is argued that when guest workers “with the financial depression in the 1980s and its unemployment the chances for integration were gone,” (original text: “Mændene [gæstearbejderne] rende ind i 1980’ernes lavkonjunktur med arbejdsloshed til følge, og så var chancerne for integration forpassed;” and DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020114, where member of Parliament for the Conservatives [Konservative] and spokesperson on legal issues Helge Adam Møller argued that integration and employment was closely connected.
preparing several initiatives in order to promote integration." DR broadcast this story in 1999, and three years later they broadcast a similar story: "The Danish Trades Union Congress [LO] and the Danish Employers’ Confederation [Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening] now come together in a joint integration plan in order to get more immigrants and refugees jobs." DR presented the second story as if it was new and not a repetition of a three-year-old initiative.

In 1998, the Social Democrat-led government, with the support of the center parties and the right-wing liberal parties, passed a new Integration Law and a new Alien Act – the majority of parties representing the moderate left as well as the moderate right supported the new laws. The then-Minister of the Interior, Thorkild Simonsen, argued that the a main purpose of the new laws was “that newly arrived foreigners become self-sufficient as quickly as possible,” i.e. that the immigrants receive their income from employment rather than welfare.

Political scientist Claus Christian Jensen has argued that Danish politicians’ discourse about immigrants should be understood as in connection with political discourse about the Danish welfare state. The connection between the two discourses can be viewed historically: Left-wing as well as right-wing politicians in the 1960s viewed immigrants, in the form of guest workers, positively because the immigrants contributed to building the welfare state. During the 1970s, many guest workers, along with ethnic Danes, began receiving welfare payments because of the unemployment caused by the oil crisis. A wide spectrum of political parties viewed this positively because it created employment in the public sector. During the 1980s, immigrants’ unemployment fit well into right-wing liberals’ notions of a ‘natural unemployment’ as well as left-wing socialists’ interests in supporting the unemployed. Parties from the right and left generally viewed the welfare state positively and agreed that the state had a responsibility for marginalized and needy people.

788 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Åvisen, date: 19990924, original text: "Fagbevægelsen og Dansk Arbejdsgiverforening forbereder da også en række initiativer til at fremme integrationen."
789 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Åvisen, date: 20020129, original text: "LO og DA går nu sammen om en fælles integrationsplan, der skal skaffe indvandrere og flygtninge i arbejde."
790 The Alien Act was passed with 89 votes in favour from the following parties Social Democrats, The Liberals, The Conservatives, The Centre Democrats, The Social Liberals, 24 votes against from the Socialist People’s Party, The Red-Green, the Danish People’s Party and the Progressive Party. The Christian Democrats did not vote. The Integration Law was passed with 51 votes in favour (from the Social Democrats, The Centre Democrats, and The Social Liberals); 25 against (Socialist People’s Party, The Red-Green, the Danish People’s Party, the Progressive Party, and the Christian Democrats). 37 did not vote; the Liberals and the Conservatives supported the law but chose not to vote in favour of it because their amendment of the law which would have change responsibility for immigrants’ housing from being in the hands of municipalities to be in the hands of the individual immigrants was not passed. Claus Christian Jensen, Politikernes indvandrerdiskurs i velfærds samfundet. En analyse af sammenhængen mellem udviklingen i velfærds- og indvandrerdetabberne, (Unpublished Msc. thesis, Department of Political Science, University of Aarhus, 1999), 105.
Since the 1960s no parties holding government questioned the existence of the welfare state, although several right-wing parties argued that the welfare state should be less dominant.

During the 1990s various political parties began to shift their attitudes towards the welfare state. Politicians and ideologists especially questioned if the welfare state’s overall responsibility for its citizens had caused the citizens to be passive clients and freeloaders; they also questioned whether the welfare state model was the best solution to society’s contemporary problems. The political confrontation with the welfare state increasingly included a moral confrontation that quickly focused on visible minorities; together with other marginalized groups, they seemed to embody the central concerns. Visible minorities became increasingly associated with unemployment, passivity, freeloading, etc. – keywords for the connotations of the welfare state that the new welfare discourse wanted to remove. Politician Anders Fogh Rasmussen’s ideological book from 1993, From social state to minimal state [Fra socialstat til minimalstat], revolved around this message. In 1993, Fogh Rasmussen was a Member of Parliament representing the Liberals [Venstre], but when the right-wing government replaced the Social Democrat coalition in 2001, he became Prime Minister of Denmark. Drawing on Nietzsche, he argued in his book that the welfare state had created clients with slave mentalities who had become dependent on public assistance. The solution that would revive personal initiative and provide safe money for the state was, according to Fogh Rasmussen, to trim the welfare state by reducing its tasks and limiting the access to public benefits.

Jensen has argued that this new welfare discourse became increasingly hegemonic in Danish political discussions of the 1990s. Compared to the Liberals, exemplified in Fogh Rasmussen, the political left was less extreme in their proposals for diminishing the welfare state. Thus the Social Democrat government in the 1990s limited cut backs, but the ideal that everybody should be active rather than passive clients became dominant during the same period. This ideal was manifested by an increasing number of demands from the state to the individual citizens. For example, citizens could only receive unemployment benefits if they could prove that they were

actively looking for employment. Since the Liberals and Conservatives came into power in 2001, the demands have remained but the cut backs have been more severe.

During the 1990s and 2000s, the news media’s presentation of integration issues was closely connected to the state’s demands on visible minorities. A news clip that referred to a debate in Parliament about immigration laws was introduced by the statement: “Denmark must make demands on immigrants; in return they will be helped towards a better place in society.” The news broadcast several stories that revealed these demands: “Farum municipality, north of Copenhagen, has decided only to give welfare payments to immigrants if they speak Danish or are in the process of learning it.” Similarly, another news clip informed that “Aarhus [municipality] has decided that refugees and immigrants must work 30 hours a week in order to receive the welfare benefit that several of them receive.” During this latter statement, viewers saw footage of adult visible minority men playing soccer, which could connote that visible minorities did not work but just spent their time playing soccer. It is important to note that the increasing demands were not only geared at visible minorities. As the then-Minister of the Interior, Social Democrat Birte Wiess argued: “We must demand the same from foreigners as we demand from Danes,” underscoring that the exchange between demands and welfare benefits pertained to all citizens. The demands, however, seemed to target visible minorities because they constituted significant portions of the financially marginalized groups in Denmark. Many demands therefore directly influenced large groups of visible minorities.

The clip about Aarhus municipality demanding employment included an interview with an ethnically Danish expert in social research, Niels Plough, who associated visible minorities

795 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19920408, original text: “Danmark skal stille større krav til indvandrerne, til gengæld skal de hjælpes bedre på plads i det danske samfund.”
796 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19950630, original text: "Farum kommune, nord for København, har besluttet, at der kun skal betales bistandshjælp til indvandrere, hvis de kan tale dansk eller er ved at lære det.” This is similar to a news clips from 1993 where the then minister of the Interior, social democrat, Birte Weiss, argued that "For people who arrive in Denmark because of marriage, training in Danish language, Danish culture, Danish society must be mandatory. This means that the right to welfare payments is connected to the duty to follow the training.” (Original text: “Dem der kommer hertil via giftsmål, der skal undervisning i dansk sprog, dansk kultur, danske samfundsforhold være obligatorisk. Det betyder at retten til at få bistand eller dagpengerhjælp følges med pligten til undervisning.”)
797 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19920408, original text: “vå Arhus nu kræve, at byens flygtninge og indvandrere arbejder 30 timer om ugen for den bistand, som mange af dem får.” See also DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020118, which is introduced by a voice-over stating: “The immigrants who do not manage to find a job will be punished by a lower welfare payment,” original text: “De indvandrere der ikke formår at finde et job, vil blive straffet med nedsat kontanthjælp.”
798 TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19950301, original text: “vi skal stille samme krav til udlændinge som vi stiller til danskere.”
with lesser aptitude for employment. Plough argued that it would be complicated to find work for Aarhus’ 13,000 unemployed visible minorities, both because the number of employment positions were limited and because he considered visible minorities to have “poorer qualifications according to work, culture and language… [and] it is complicated to integrate people with bad qualifications.” The expert’s statement seemed to have several functions: Firstly, it explained why it might not be possible for Aarhus municipality to employ all visible minorities, and secondly it underscored that the ethnically Danish workforce was better qualified in terms of skills, culture, and language than the visible minority workforce. Reinforcing the quality of ethnically Danish workers contributed to a positive national self-understanding. Such a generalized statement presented visible minorities as one badly qualified, homogeneous group.

The news stories focusing on visible minorities’ social welfare benefits contributed to the impression of visible minorities as freeloaders. This has further contributed to a negative image of a hierarchical class society, in which employed ethnic Danes paid high taxes in order to maintain a welfare state that benefited visible minorities. The argument that visible minorities should be employed therefore not only referred to their integration but also to demands that they should pay taxes. This negative relationship between the employed white population and the welfare-consuming non-white population became a central plank in the platform of the Danish People’s Party’s [Dansk Folkeparti]. The demand for reducing certain parts of the welfare state therefore gained support both from the liberal critique of the welfare state, as expressed by Fogh Rasmussen, and from the populist right. They may have disagreed about the reasons behind the cuts, but they have agreed about the goal of reducing certain parts of the welfare state.

During the period analyzed, many news clips focused on visible minorities’ complications in finding jobs. Since politicians emphasized employment as central for integration, they also argued that it was a problem that so many visible minorities could not find paid work. As illustrated above, it was sometimes argued in the news that visible minorities’ poor qualifications prevented them from getting employment; one qualification, or lack thereof, to which journalists, politicians, and experts repeatedly pointed was the ability to speak Danish. News journalists treated this ability in a contradictory manner: On the one hand, some news clips confirmed and legitimized the belief that visible minorities do not speak Danish and that this inability prevented their employment. As one DR television host stated, as if it were a fact: “It is primarily the language
problems which prevent refugees [visible minorities] from getting jobs." On the other hand, other news clips questioned the argument. Among the latter group of news clips were several news stories in which the journalists sided with the unemployed visible minorities and narrated the stories from their points of view. In essence, they positioned the ethnically Danish employers as the antagonists who prevented the visible minorities from reaching the goal of employment. In one example, a 2002 news clip portrayed Nalica Katjaz of Bosnian origin, “who has been in Denmark since 1993, holds a Bachelor's degree in Commerce from Esbjerg [in provincial Denmark], and speaks Danish fluently.” Despite job offerings in her field, “no one cares about the Bosnian girl who has not even celebrated the triumph of being called for a job interview.” Nalica Katjaz explained for viewers, in grammatically and phonetically correct Danish, her lack of success on the job market: “I don’t think they even read the applications. When they see the name they think: ‘Hmm, where is she from?’” Besides the interview with Katjaz, the clip broadcast confrontational interviews with some of the people who had turned down Katjaz’ applications. In one of the confrontations it became obvious that the reason they gave for not hiring Katjaz was not valid. In these clips, where the news sided with an unfairly treated visible minority, the news functioned as society’s watchdog. Another clip took a similar approach in an interview with an ethnically Danish expert who explained that “some employers will not hire foreigners [visible minorities] because they are nervous that their other employees will not like working together with foreigners and the employers prefer to have a calm workplace.” In the clip, Leif Nielsen, the owner of a factory that had hired a

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799 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20030623, original text: "Det er primært sprogproblemer, der holder flytningene fra at få arbejde." See also for instance DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960214, where white ethnically Danish Niels Brochner who deals and repairs cars explains that we will not have visible minorities as interners because they do not speak proper Danish.” A ironic twist in this clip is that Brochner explains himself in a very grammatically wrong Danish, he says: “Kunderne kommer i kontakt med mekanikerne, når kunderne kommer i kontakt med mekanikeren, så skal man jo også kunne snakke med dem. Tysk skal man kan, og det mindste man skal kan, hvis man skal klare sig indenfor branchen her, det er da dansk (sic).” It translates, including the mistakes, as: "The customers get in contact with the mechanic when the costumers get in contact with the mechanic. German, one know must, and at least one know must, if one will cope in this business, that is then Danish.”

800 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020118, original text: "Nelica har været i Danmark siden 1993, er uddannet civiløkonom i Esbjerg og tager flydende dansk.”

801 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020118, original text: "Men der er tilsyneladende ingen interesse for den bosniske pige, der endnu ikke har opnået den triumf at komme til en jobsamtele.”

802 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 20020118, original text: "Jamen jeg tror slet ikke, at de læser, hvad der står i de ansøgninger. Når de ser navnet, så tenker de: aaraggh hvor kommer hun fra?"

803 See also DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960214 where visible minorities seeking internships are interviewed showing their qualities and where people who will not hire them are confronted.

804 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date 19990924, original text: "Vi har helt klart fået åt vide fra nogle arbejdsrådige, at en af grundene til, at de ikke vil ansette udlande, er det fordi, at de er nervøse for, at deres medarbejdere ikke bryder sig om at arbejde sammen med udlande, de vil hellere have ro på arbejdspladsen.”
Somali employee, commented on his colleagues’ fear of hiring visible minorities: “I just think they should give them a chance and then discover how good it is.”

This apparent contradiction in news programs that both confirm stereotypical beliefs about visible minorities’ lack of qualifications – which legitimized employers’ refusal to hiring them – and attempted to deconstruct the same stereotypes by presenting visible minorities’ sides of the stories, illustrated how news programs did not have a monolithic function. The Danish news media is complex; during the period under consideration news programs both presented stereotypical images of visible minorities as living parallel lives outside Danish society while they simultaneously interviewed visible minorities who spoke perfect Danish, were educated at Danish institutions, and were being prevented from entering the job market because of prejudice. One could argue that the news simply mirrored complex realities. This might be correct, but it is also important to note that there were far more stories about visible minorities lack of qualifications and lack of integration and that the media also presented these stories in generalized terms. Thus the negative characteristics became representative for all visible minorities. By contrast, the news reported on visible minorities with qualifications as individualized stories. The latter stories did not expand the individual characteristics to represent all visible minorities.

During the 1970s and 1980s, DR broadcast many of the stories in which they sided with individual visible minorities who faced discrimination in the job market. These stories generally portrayed visible minorities as victims of individual Danish employers’ discriminatory behaviors. In 1977, for instance, DR portrayed a foreign worker from Pakistan whose family in Denmark led a financially poor life because he, the breadwinner, was unemployed; the news clip illustrated his troubles in finding work by showing footage of written job offers that specified that they were “seeking Danish employees.” During the mid-1980s, DR carried a series of news stories about taxi companies that discriminated against visible minorities. Among the views presented in this series, one clip cited a manager for one of Copenhagen’s then-largest taxi companies, Radiobilen: “Foreign workers drive cabs like the blind people fight…Foreign workers are just not capable of doing this job [driving a taxi].” DR focused on this taxi-related discrimination for several days, and the public focus on the taxi company resulted in several

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805 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19990924, original text: “Jeg synes bare, at de skulle give dem chancen, og så prove hvor godt, det er.”
806 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19771021, original text: “danske arbejdere søges.”
807 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19850722, original text: “Fremmedarbejdere kører taxi ligesom de blinde, de slås…Fremmedarbejderner kan bare ikke bruges til det arbejde her.”
boycotts of the taxi company. These news stories were broadcast before DR lost its monopoly on the visual news. DR was therefore able to influence the public agenda in a different way than after the establishment of TV2 in 1988. After a few days of focusing on the taxi-related discrimination, DR presented interviews with Agner Ahm, then-leader of one of the main national newspapers Politiken, and with Social Democrat Per Kaalund, then-mayor of Brøndby, who both argued that their working places, the newspaper, and the county, would no longer use the taxi firm in question.

This illustrated how DR played an active, anti-discriminatory role in Danish public discourse. By drawing a negative image of the taxi company, by criticizing racist statements, and by confronting the customers of the taxi company, DR actively made the customers take a stand in the case. During the 1980s DR was particularly active in its anti-racist position. However, during the 1990s DR took up a more passive role. This change might be connected to the passing of the Law against Discriminatory Behavior on the Labor Market [Lov om forbud mod forskelsbehandling på arbejdsmarkedet m.v.] in 1995. This law made it illegal to discriminate in employment, and news stories like the taxi case almost disappeared from the mid-1990s. But racism in the Danish labor market did not fully disappear; instead, it increasingly took a new form that was less direct and explicit in its racial exclusions. Rather than directly expressing a reluctance to hire visible minorities, people argued, as illustrated above, that visible minorities were not hired because they were not qualified or because other employees or costumers would not like it. This difference in discriminatory practices might explain why the news ended its confrontational, anti-discriminatory role. The direct discrimination, exemplified with the taxi case, provided content for ‘good’ news narration by inviting producers to construct news stories based on the actant model. The stories involved ‘bad’ characters positioned as antagonists who discriminated the victimized subjects and ‘good’ characters who tried to help the subjects. Because structural and indirect racisms have been less explicit and more complex, they do not fit the simple formula of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ characters quite as easily and thus have been less suited for television narration.

Several news clips portrayed visible minorities as independent entrepreneurs, as a TV2 news clip from 2001 illustrates: “Refugees and immigrants are mainly occupied in the fields of service and retail and as independent traders. A new survey shows that since 1980 the number of refugees and immigrants who are occupied as independent traders has increased from 8-10 percent

808 See DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19850721, DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19850722, and DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19850723.
809 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19850723.
to 20-30 percent.\textsuperscript{810} The news generally presented it as positive that visible minorities have been independently employed. TV2, for instance, broadcast a news clip that juxtaposed a man of Iranian origin who had opened a fast food pizzeria and the then-Minister of Refugees, Immigrants, and Integration, the Liberal Bertel Haarder. The man of Iranian origin was shown in his pizzeria, where he explained his work with a smile. The news clip positioned him in a positive light and labeled him “integrated.” The news clip was introduced with a voice-over—“Around the corner, down in the basement, the local Iranian is integrated”\textsuperscript{811}—while the viewers followed a journalist who walked around a corner and into a pizzeria. Since there was consensus of integration as a goal, and since the news gave the impression that very few people have reached that goal, it seemed very positive to call the Iranian visible minority “integrated.” In the interview with the Minister of Refugees, Immigrants, and Integration, the Minister argued that “Foreigner[s] cannot and should not be Danish…but they must be forced to work.”\textsuperscript{812} The clip informed audiences that the man of Iranian origin was educated as an “economist and as a mechanic. But that was of no use in Denmark, instead he ended up with pizzas.”\textsuperscript{813}

The clip did not develop the conflict between the Minister’s demand for all to be employed and the man’s inability to find employment in his field despite his professional training. The majority of independent, visible minority traders in Denmark have opened fast food restaurants or vegetable shops; indeed, Denmark is said to have had the world’s best-educated fast food proprietors and grocers.\textsuperscript{814} The TV2 journalist did not question the negative societal aspects of a well-educated man who ended up being self-employed in a sector that required no or limited education; neither did he confront the Minister about the discrepancy between his demand and the fact that well-educated, visible minorities were unable to convince ethnically Danish employers to hire them. Instead the clip simply presented it as a positive story that a visible minority man was

\textsuperscript{810} TV2 (Station), primetime news program \textit{Nyhederne}, date: 20010704, original text: "For flygtninge og indvandrere er mest beskæftigede indenfor service og detailhandel, og som selvstændige erhvervsdrivende. En ny undersøgelse viser, at siden 1980 er antallet af flygtninge og indvandrere, der er beskæftigede som selvstændige, steget fra 8-10\% til 20-30\%."

\textsuperscript{811} TV2 (Station), primetime news program \textit{Nyhederne}, date: 20030616, original text: "Henne om hjørnet, nede i kælderen er den lokale iraner integreret."

\textsuperscript{812} TV2 (Station), primetime news program \textit{Nyhederne}, date: 20030616, original text: "Det [at være dansk] hverken kan eller skal de…men de skal i arbejde i Danmark."

\textsuperscript{813} TV2 (Station), primetime news program \textit{Nyhederne}, date: 20030616, original text: "Nationaløkonom og mekaniker, men nej, det kunne ikke bruges i DK. Det blev pizzeria."

\textsuperscript{814} See for instance previous Minister of Employment, Social democrat Pia Gellerup, who at a business conference \textit{[erhvervskonference]} in Aarhus in September 2000 argued: “There are several indications that we [in Denmark] have the world’s most well-educated vegetable shop owners.” (Original text: “Meget tyder på at vi har verdens bedst uddannede grønhandlere.”) Speeches from the conference can be seen via The Social Democratic Party’s web site, see http://www.socialdemokratiet.dk/Aarhus/udvalg/erhvervarbm/konference/tekst.htm
working; it was the fact that he was employed, not the content of his job, that was important. The clip illustrates how the news in the 1990s and early 2000s became more passive, as compared to its actively anti-racist role of the 1980s.

The television station’s lack of confrontation was most likely connected to the general trend of focusing on individual cases of direct discrimination – exemplified in the stories about the taxi firm – rather than broadcasting stories about more general or structural discrimination. The large number of visible minorities who have become independent entrepreneurs can be interpreted as a result of a structural discrimination that has prevented them from employment in other fields, including those in which they have been educated. There were several news stories that seemed to incorporate structural racism, but the television journalists seemed to ignore it, or were simply unaware of it. For instance, one portrayed the situation of a woman of Bosnian origin without talking about structural racism. Despite her professional training as an economist, she was being re-educated as a needlework teacher in order to find work in Denmark. 815 Another news clip reported from a course where visible minorities who wanted to apply to the Danish Police College [Politiskolen] could get training. The clip pointed out that visible minorities needed physical and language training before they could be accepted at the Police College, and this lack of training served as the sole explanation for the limited number of visible minorities in the Danish police force. The clip did not consider the possibility that structural discrimination within the police force or the Danish educational system could explain why the Danish police force did not mirror the composition of the population in Denmark according to gender and race. 816 Most likely journalists and media institutions became so embedded in the racist structures and discourses that they were unable to see them. The structural racism might have become so hegemonic that it appeared as natural, and thereby unnoticeable, to the majority of journalists.

Racism

Similar to the news’ active role in confronting direct racism in the labor market during the 1970s and 1980s, the news played the role of a watchdog in some cases of direct and explicit racism uttered verbally against people of color. During the 1980s, the news reported about ethnic Danes who attacked refugee centers and others who uttered explicitly racist statements: “They [foreign workers] have big flat noses, cauliflower ears, broad heads, a broad body [which is] hairy.

815 See TV2 (Station), primetime news program Nyhederne, date: 19980927. The clip also included a portrayal of a dentist, a woman from Rumania, who underwent training to become a teacher.
816 See DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960317.
If you look at a gorilla and compare it to an ape [and then take the next comparable step] then they [visible minorities] are the same way: They have the same movements, long arms, long fingers, and long feet. The news underscored that racist attacks and statements like the one above were illegal and negatively portrayed these incidents and statements.

The news also portrayed direct racism negatively in the 1990s. In a report about a woman of color who had been exposed to police brutality with racist undertones, the news clip informed viewers that “Prosecution authorities are in the process of investigation two uniformed police officers’ arrest of a woman in Copenhagen a few weeks ago. The woman got a complicated leg fracture and claims that she was exposed to racist remarks during the arrest. “ A reporter interviewed the woman in her home and filmed her from an angle that made her leg and its cast visible during most of the interview. The interviewer did not ask her about her physical injury but rather exposed it in words and pictures. This differed from the portrayal of the racist verbal harassment she had experienced. The interviewer partly questioned the validity of her complaint by presenting it as her claim rather than as a fact, as he did with the fracture. The woman said: “One officer held me by the hair while beating me. The other bent my legs behind me while he jumped up and down. I said he should let go of my legs and that he was hurting me. Then he looked at me and said I should shut up. This is how they treat Negroes in Denmark, and if I did not like it I could just go back home.” Immediately after this explanation the camera zoomed in on her leg and exposed a long stitching in her skin while the voice-over said: “The result can be seen here: A complicated leg fracture.” The voice-over did not comment on the potential results of being exposed to verbal racism by the police authorities. The news clip did not touch upon structural racism either; instead it treated the case as an example of individual police officers’ individual behavior and not as a result of a potentially racist discourse within the police force.

817 DR (Station), news program Søndags-Avisen, date: 19850721 (the statement is repeated the following date DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19850722), original text: “Det er store flade næster, blomkålsøre, bred hovedet, en bred krop, loden, hvis du ser på en gorilla og sammenligner den med en æbe, så er det samme fremgangsmåde, samme bevægelser, lange arme, lange fingre, lange fødder.” See the chapter about the Arrival for analysis of news clips about ethnic Danes attacking visible minorities at refuges centres.

818 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960802, original text: ”Anklagemyndigheden undersøger i øjeblikket to uniformerede betjentes voldelige anholdelse af en kvinde i København for et par uger siden. Kvinden fik et kompliceret benbrud og påstår, at hun blev udsat for racistiske bemærkninger under anholdelsen.”

819 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960802, original text: “En betjent holder mig i håret og banker løs på mig. Den anden børjer mine ben langt bagud og han hopper op og ned. Jeg sagde, at de skulle slippe mit ben, at det gjorde ondt. Så kikkede han på mig, og jeg skulle holde kælt. Sådan behandler de negre i Danmark. Hvis jeg ikke kan lide det, skal jeg bare fise hjem.”

820 DR (Station), primetime news program TV-Avisen, date: 19960802, original text: ”Resultatet ses her: Et kompliceret benbrud.”
The lack of focus on (or understanding of) structural discrimination is also revealed in news clips about so-called Danish humor. A news clip from 2002 explained that “it can be a hard transition to move from the school system to the labor market…. [and that] transition is even harder for students who are not of Danish origin… [because they do not understand] the rough humor and the biting irony…. [that] Danish workers are known for.”\(^{821}\) The clip gave examples of a visible minority mechanic apprentice, Chadi Hassan, who was being called “Taliban” by his co-workers, who also said things like “I will call George Bush so he can send you to Cuba.”\(^{822}\) The viewers were told that “In the beginning the 22-year-old Chadi Hassan from Lebanon did not do anything, but now, after two and a half years, he has changed tactics when the tone or the jokes are causing him problems.”\(^{823}\) Chadi Hassan began to respond to his colleagues harshly, and the news clip presented that tactic as a success. The reporter interviewed the chief consultant for the Danish Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises [Håndværksrådet], Anne Holm Sjøberg, and she gave advice on how to make the non-ethnically Danish apprentices more comfortable at workplaces: “In the beginning of the apprenticeship, one can tell the apprentices about the tone at the working place and tell that when one says something then it is not always as seriously meant as it sounds; it is simply an expression of the interaction at that place.”\(^{824}\) In other words, Sjøberg found the root of the problem in the apprentices’ lack of understanding for Danish humor and tone, and therefore the solution lay with the apprentices, who needed to learn that the tone was not meant negatively or harshly.

The clip did not at any point deal with the fact that such humor is not neutral. Everyone speaks from a position, and these positions have different access to power. When people speak to each other, they do not communicate from a neutral place but rather from a position that has privileges depending on gender, race, class, sexuality, etc. The humor used at Danish workplaces therefore does not take place on neutral ground, and it has functioned differently depending on who speaks and who listens. When people like Chadi Hassan’s colleagues uttered

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\(^{821}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 20020422, original text: “Det kan være en baks overgang at komme fra skolebønken og ud på en arbejdsplads…[og] overgangen er endnu større for elever, der ikke har dansk bagsgrund…[førd de ikke forstår] baks humor og bintende ironi…[som] danske håndværkere er kendt for.”

\(^{822}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 20020422, original text: “Nu skal jeg ringe efter George Bush, så kan han hente dig til Cuba.”

\(^{823}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 20020422, original text: “I starten lod 22-årige Chadi fra Libanon bare som ingenting, men efter to et halvt års lærerid har han ændret taktik, når jargonen eller vittighederne volder problemer.”

\(^{824}\) DR (Station), primetime news program *TV-Avisen*, date: 20020422, original text: “Det man bl.a. kan gøre, det er i starten af læreren at fortælle eleverne lidt om, hvad der er for en tone, man har på arbejdspladsen, og at når man nogle gange siger noget, så mener man det ikke helt så alvorligt, som det er sagt, men det er ligesom den omgangsform, man har.”
7. The unintegrated immigrant

racist jokes that harshly mocked the apprentices, they did not simply utter neutral statements that
did not really mean anything, as the news clip argued. They made statements from positions that
often were more privileged than Chadi Hassan’s position, for instance; most of them were white and
older than Chadi Hassan, and most of them had already finished their education and were Chadi
Hassan’s teachers, all conditions that positioned them as more privileged than Chadi Hassan. They
therefore did not have an equal relationship, and Chadi Hassan’s tactic of speaking back did not
level out the hierarchy between them. Similarly, the educational solution that Sjøberg advocated
would not have undermined the hierarchy; on the contrary, it might have contributed to maintaining
the hierarchy by camouflaging it. Both strategies (speaking back and education) were rooted in the
belief that language was neutral. If people just knew that the expressed statements were said
humorously, then they were harmless. This belief was so embedded within the news that the
journalists have not questioned it; instead they have reproduced it over the years.

From the 1970s to the early 2000s news programs simultaneously played on a variety
of discourses. They presented stories where they functioned as the watchdog and articulated anti-
racist discourses, and they participated in the articulation of racist discourses and in the
maintenance of divisions between ‘us’ and ‘them’. It might seem like a contradiction that the news
simultaneously criticized racism, when expressed directly in the Danish society, while at the same
time it fertilized the mental landscape for racist ways of thinking. This contradiction illustrates the
complexity of news programs and their effects. News programs cannot be defined or understood
singularly. Historically, news programs articulated the anti-racist discourse more during the 1980s
than during the 1990s and 2000s; this might have resulted from the more explicit manifestations of
discrimination and racism in the 1970s and 1980s.

Racism and integration are connected. The more racist a society is, the more
complicated the integration of visible minorities becomes. In order for different groups to function
on equal terms, they must be treated equally. This connection between integrating visible minorities
and equal treatment was underscored by various initiatives taken by the Ministry of Refugees,
Immigrants, and Integration that aimed at limiting racism in order to promote integration. In
Denmark, it has been illegal to utter explicitly racist statements for a number of years. When
veterinarian and politician Riemann, as a candidate in the 1979 European Parliament election
representing the Progress Party [Fremskridspartiet], said during his campaign that “they [visible

825 See for instance the Ministry of Refugees, Immigrants, and Integration’s website for a list of these initiatives, see
http://www.inm.dk/index/sog.asp?B=R&E=148&S=4
minorities] breed like rats,"\textsuperscript{826} he was charged and sentenced according to § 266 b. This paragraph is known as the racism paragraph \textit{[racismeparagraffen]}, and it states clearly that “Those who publicly, or with the intention to a wider circle of people, distribute, produce statements or other kinds of statements by which a group of people are threatened, insulted, or disgraced because of their race, skin color, national or ethnic origin, or faith will be punished by fines, mitigated imprisonment, or imprisonment up to two years.”\textsuperscript{827}

The history of § 266 b goes further back than foreign workers’ immigration to Denmark in the 1960s. It was passed in 1939 as a response to developments in Germany; the paragraph made it illegal to “spread false rumors and accusations, persecute, or stir up hatred against groups of the Danish population because of their faith, descent, or citizenship.”\textsuperscript{828} The Second World War led to the establishment of the United Nations, which during the mid-1960s passed a convention prohibiting all kinds of racial discrimination. According to this convention it became illegal to propagate ideas that were based on racial superiority or racial hatred. As a result, the Danish § 266 b was expanded to include not just Danish citizens but all people; the “threatening, insulting, or disgracing [of] others because of their race, skin color, national or ethnic origin, or faith” became illegal.\textsuperscript{829} Although the UN convention did not include the category of ‘faith’, it remained in the Danish regulations. In 1987, the categories in § 266 b was further expanded with the inclusion of ‘sexual orientation’; this inclusion was a Danish, and not an international, initiative.\textsuperscript{830}

During the 1970s and 1980s, very few people were sentenced based on § 266 b, despite the fact that some people made public statements that could be characterized as racist. The founder, and for several years leader, of the Progress Party, Mogens Glistrup, on several occasions during the 1980s and 1990s compared Muslims and visible minorities in general with rats. He said for instance: “Mohammedans-terrorists down from the Middle-East come up here and commit knife

\textsuperscript{826} Original text: “De formerer sig som rotter.”
\textsuperscript{827} This version of the paragraph is from 1971, it is cited after \textit{Vitt oljud}, a Nordic project about democracy at The Museum of National Antiquities in Sweden (\textit{Historiska museet}), texts from the project can be seen via the museum’s web site, see: http://www.historiska.se/vittoljud/art_norden/08_norden_2.html.
\textsuperscript{828} Niels-Erik Hansen, “Lad ’racekortet’ ligge i bunken,” \textit{Berlingske Tidende} (Copenhagen), June 03, 2001, original text: “udsprede falske rygger eller beskyldninger, forfølgte eller ophidte til had mod en gruppe af den danske befolkning pga. dens tro, afstamning eller statsborgerforhold.”
\textsuperscript{829} Niels-Erik Hansen, “Lad ’racekortet’ ligge i bunken,” \textit{Berlingske Tidende} (Copenhagen), June 03, 2001, original text: “truers, forhånes eller nedværdes på grund af race, hudfarve, national eller etnisk oprindelse eller tro.”
\textsuperscript{830} Niels-Erik Hansen, “Lad ’racekortet’ ligge i bunken,” \textit{Berlingske Tidende} (Copenhagen), June 03, 2001.
stabbings, fires, axe attacks on each other…but firstly they breed like rats.”

Laypeople and anti-racist organizations reported Glistrup to the legal authorities several times, but he was not taken to court because the Danish authorities refused to prosecute him. They argued that a trial would have the negative effect of making his statements more widespread. Glistrup was not convicted of racist statements until the year 2000, when he faced trial for racist statements expressed in a live television program on 25 February 1997. His case went through all three legal stages – the City Court, the National Court, and the High Court – all of which found him guilty. The High Court similarly convicted the leader of the Danish People’s Party, Pia Kjærsgaard of racist statements in June 2003. The Danish People’s Party has not considered itself racist; on the contrary, the party has, unsuccessfully, sued people for slander because they have called Pia Kjærsgaard a racist. As a result the Danish People’s Party has as one of its main goals the abolition of § 266 b.

In a way, DR functioned as a mouthpiece for these racist statements because it provided airtime for claims like Glistrup’s. DR gave room for the taxi company manager to publicly say that “foreign workers drive cabs like the blind fight,” and for ‘ordinary’ citizens to compare foreign workers to apes or to complain that refugees should not live in their town but rather on the heath. To provide space for these racist statements can be seen as a way of legitimizing racist remarks by broadcasting them within a public service news service.

These explicitly racist statements, which were broadcast during the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, seem to contradict the general consensus in Denmark from the early 2000s. This consensus argued that public discourses on immigrants and visible minorities became increasingly harsh during the last decade. But a comparison of the news coverage from the 1980s to that of the late 1990s and 2000s calls this consensus into question. What people said and did during the 1980s was harsher than statements and actions broadcast during the late 1990s and early 2000s. From a positivistic empirical point of view, one could therefore argue that the consensus was wrong. But from a social constructionist point of view, one must take into consideration that the repeated statements about the increase in harsh statements created an environment in which people have perceived the discourse as harsher. In other words, the statements about this harshness

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834 This is a claim that I repeatedly hear when I lecture publicly, from academic audiences as well as from laypeople audiences.
participated in creating a harsh environment. The feelings of increased negativity towards visible minorities might also have derived from an increased awareness of language. People in the early 2000s might have been more aware of racist statements than before. The idea of an increased harshness might also result from the absolute increase in the amount of news coverage, including an absolute increase in the number of negative statements broadcast.

**News media’s participation in a negative cycle**

The news media’s dealings with racism and discrimination involved complex and contradictory roles. As shown, the news presented stories where journalists and news programs functioned as the watchdog and articulated anti-racist discourses, while simultaneously articulating racist discourses and maintaining the division between ‘us’ and ‘them’. These contradictory roles, illustrating the complexity of the news media, were especially visible in the reports on integration.

Despite the news’ positive role as watchdog, the overall image regarding visible minorities and integration was that visible minorities have not been integrated. This lack of integration was one of the dominant themes in the news coverage from the 1970s to the early 2000s. The image was underscored by the various news portrayals that characterized visible minorities as living in parallel worlds very different from those of the average ethnic Dane. Stories about visible minorities as unemployed, as resident in isolated and non-Danish ghettos, and as parents of children burdening the Danish public school system further fuelled the news media’s stereotypical portrayal of minorities as unintegrated and as a financial burden on the Danish welfare state.

The news media might have played a role in the lack of visible minorities’ integration into Danish society. Despite the fact that the concept of integration was not defined in the news media, integration has been presented as a goal since the 1980s – and as a goal that has not yet been reached. During the 1980s, the news broadcast reports describing integration initiatives with optimism; however, this optimism vanished during the 1990s and 2000s, when reports and interviews primarily described integration or the lack thereof in negative terms. These descriptions of visible minorities as non-integrated might have contributed to a vicious cycle: When the news media portrayed visible minorities as unintegrated and generally described them in a negative light, this image might have complicated their actual integration because the majority population might have met them with the presumption that they were very different from ethnic Danes. Integration has been based on the equality of the minority and majority populations. The news media’s negative and stereotypical descriptions of visible minorities have therefore not made integration easier.
Instead news media might have fertilized a racist soil that made it harder for the majority to view visible minorities as equal. Simply stated by the previously mentioned interviewee Fatima: “The image [of visible minorities] that is presented [by the media]… has definitely not in any way promoted the integration.”

8. Conclusion

The stereotypes

The news media’s representation of visible minorities during the period analyzed contributed to stereotypical images of visible minorities. As described in this dissertation these images consisted of ‘immigrants who arrive as floods to Denmark’, ‘the criminal immigrant’, ‘the oppressed immigrant woman’, ‘the veiled woman’, ‘the sexually aggressive Muslim male’, and ‘the unintegrated immigrant’.

In this conclusion I sum up the primary results from my analyses of the news media’s coverage of visible minorities from the early 1970s to the early 2000s. I briefly describe the content of the news communication by summing up the different stereotypes. Then I explain how I have deconstructed these stereotypes in order to show that they did not necessarily reflect realities. After that, I describe the functions that the stereotypes might have had for the construction of Danish nationality and for images of Danishness. For this description, I include reflections on the way in which the news communication’s potential influenced how television viewers and newspaper readers understood Danish gender roles and gender equality as an integral part of Danish nationality. I also include reflections on the narrative forms and linguistic strategies of the television news as a part of the explanation for the use of stereotypes and ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ narrations. Finally, I look briefly at questions that the dissertation has suggested but not answered.

The first stereotype, the arriving immigrant, was characterized by news descriptions of refugees’ arrivals as uncontrolled floods of large, anonymous groups of immigrants. Despite the differences among the arriving refugees’ background situations, the news’ descriptions of them did not change much from the early 1970s to the early 2000s: They generally focused on refugees’ lodging situations, in particular the lack of space, the alternative lodging places which have housed them, and conflicts at the asylum centers. News journalists described the arriving immigrants as people who were very eager to live in Denmark and often connected their arrivals to politicians’ efforts to of limit the number of arrivals. The news programs broadcast several news stories about ethnically Danish citizens who tried to prevent refugees from settling in their local community, including stories where the local Danes forcefully tried to prevent the refugees from settling. These stories were especially prevalent during the mid-1980, but also during the 1990s and 2000s the media presented stories about how local ethnic Danes or local politicians tried to argue against
receiving refugees and immigrants in their areas. The arrivals of immigrants were therefore often connected with trouble and financial burdens.

The stereotype of the criminal immigrant was a rather new one, appearing in the early 1990s. This criminal immigrant operated in gangs and was outside the reach of social and juridical authorities. This unreachability gave the impression that it was very hard, and often impossible, for social authorities to reform the criminal immigrants. Therefore the criminal was doomed to living a criminal life. This view was underscored by politicians, especially right-wing populists, who argued in favor of expelling criminal immigrants. The news media described visible minorities as overly represented in committing crimes. Some journalists, as well as some interviewees, characterized their criminal behaviors as an integral part of visible minorities’ culture; they further characterized that culture as one within which certain visible minority families breed criminal children.

Journalists, newscasters, and interviewees generally portrayed visible minority women as oppressed throughout the period analyzed. Since the early 1970s the women appeared as victims of immigration rules and domestic violence. From the late 1990s to early 2000s, there were many news stories about battered, visible minority women at crisis centers. Journalists narrating these news stories often argued that visible minority women were overly represented as victims of domestic violence, and that the reason behind their exposure to domestic violence lay in Islamic marriage practices, namely arranged and forced marriages, and in the so-called Muslim view of women, which journalists and interviewees characterized as patriarchal and oppressive. The women also were described as victims of honor killings, particularly through stories of visible minority women who lived underground, on the run from forced marriages and/or potential honor killings. It was common for the representations that these women were not provided with much voice or the opportunity to be experts on their own situations; instead they were constructed as victims in object positions. The seriousness of the violations that these portrayed women experienced should not be underestimated; however, it seemed as if the news media turned individual stories and individual patriarchal or fundamentalist acts into general representations for the whole group of female visible minorities.

An integral aspect of the news media’s portrayals of visible minority women as oppressed was the construction of them as veiled. Visually, the television news predominantly used footage of veiled visible minorities when covering news stories about visible minorities, regardless of the content. Many news stories did focus on veiling, which the news presented as a one-sided symbol of female oppression. There were, for instance, several stories about work places that
refused to hire women wearing veils, giving viewers the impression that veils have stood in the way of employment.

Connected to the stereotype of the oppressed Muslim woman was the view of Islam as a patriarchal and oppressive religion and culture; Islam was often presented as the root of the problem.

Besides constructing the young, visible minority male as criminal, the late twentieth-century news media constructed him as a hyper-sexual threat. This stereotype ran throughout the period under scrutiny, but it intensified in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This stereotype prevailed in the news coverage of rape cases with visible minorities as perpetrators. These stories expanded the characteristics of the individual rapist to cover all visible minority males and inscribed the sexual danger onto the colored body. This stereotype dominated the images of the visible minority males to such an extent that relationships between visible minority, Muslim males and ethnically Danish women were presented as predominantly characterized by force and rape.

Finally, encouraged by the other stereotypes, visible minorities in Denmark were presented as non-integrated into Danish society. The news broadcast stories that examined the parallel lives of visible minorities. Integration was a dominant theme throughout the period analyzed, and there was consensus among various interviewed politicians, social authorities, etc. that integration was a goal. However, the content of this goal was seldom defined. The main messages therefore suggested that immigrants and their descendants were unintegrated and that they should make an effort to become more integrated. The lack of integration was especially connected to news stories about certain schools and housing sectors with large numbers of visible minorities. It was also connected to visible minorities’ lack of employment and thereby the fact that they pay less tax. The news media presented such a situation as a danger for the ethnically Danish population and as a financial burden for the Danish welfare state. There was a change in the news stories about integration during the period: At the beginning of the period, during the 1970s and 1980s, there were several positive stories that described various integration projects. This positive tone disappeared during the 1990s and 2000s, when the news covered this lack of integration with a negative and pessimistic tone, as if hopes for successfully integrating these groups had disappeared.

In general, visible minorities were presented as a homogenous group. The news typically did not differentiate between the visible minorities’ different national, ethnic, or religious backgrounds, nor between their immigrant statuses. Typically, journalists, politicians, and other interviewees referred to the group of visible minorities as Muslims, without differentiating between
different kinds of Muslims. Since they presented Islam as singular, ‘the Islamic view’ or ‘the Islamic culture’ appeared as a negative factors that saturated visible minorities’ lives and made them different from ethnic Danes.

The news media’s communication about visible minorities is important because it was a primary source of information about visible minorities for the majority of ethnic Danes during the period analyzed. Because so few ethnic Danes have had personal interactions with visible minorities, the media’s representations have most likely had more influence than they otherwise might have had if viewers and readers had personal experiences with visible minorities that they could compare to the media’s representations.

Deconstructing the stereotypes

I have aimed to deconstruct several of these stereotypes by comparing the stereotypical images to their contemporary contexts. Looking at the individual stereotypes, I have shown how arrivals of immigrants to Denmark have not taken the form of an uncontrolled flood but instead a rather restricted affair controlled by immigration rules that have been increasingly tightened since the 1970s. Similarly, I have shown how the waves of immigration that Denmark has experienced since the 1970s have not been without historical comparison. On the contrary, Denmark has a long history of immigration that puts the debates of the late twentieth-century into perspective. For instance, Denmark received more refugees in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War than in the last three decades of the twentieth-century, contrary to the representation in the news media. Regarding the criminal immigrant, I have shown how over-representation in crime statistics, as claimed by the media, might result from his socially and financially marginalized position in the Danish society rather than his culture. I have further illustrated that the introduction of this stereotype into the news media during the early 1990s might have been influenced by the establishment of TV2 in 1988, which resulted in an increased focus on sensational and dramatic news stories. My deconstruction of the stereotype about female visible minorities as victims of domestic violence and negative marriage practices was carried out by comparing the media images to statistics from the crisis centers that host battered women. These showed that the majority of women at the centers were ethnic Danes and that the majority of wife-beaters were ethnically Danish men, not the visible minority Muslims as the news media insinuated. Similarly assisted by statistics, I showed that that majority of young visible minorities have not been forced into arranged marriages against their will; instead it seemed that the majority of them
have chosen their spouse for themselves. I have further tried to nuance the images of female visible minorities oppressed by the veil by illustrating how the practice of veiling is very complex, not a one-sided symbol of female oppression as the news media has portrayed it. I have done so by including various feminist voices debating the issue. I deconstructed the image of the sexually aggressive, Muslim male in two ways. Firstly, I compared the image to rape statistics that show that ethnically Danish men might constitute a larger sexual threat to women than visible minority men. Secondly, I illustrated how the news media, in their coverage of rape cases with visible minority perpetrators, applied the characteristics of individual, visible minority rapists to all visible minority males. This differed significantly from their coverage of rape cases with ethnically Danish men as perpetrators. In these stories the media presented the men as individuals whose acts did not represent all ethnically Danish men. Finally, I have tried to balance the image of visible minorities as non-integrated by pointing to developments in the political discourse on the welfare state. The increased focus on citizens’ duties and participation in the 1990s and 2000s specifically targeted visible minorities and their supposed lack of integration. I have further looked at how racism has been prevalent in Denmark and have argued that direct racism and structural racism might have prevented visible minorities’ integration into Danish society. I have similarly reflected upon how the news media’s representation of visible minorities might have complicated efforts to actual integration.

The stereotypes’ functions in the construction of the nation

Besides the deconstruction of the stereotypes, I analyzed the functions of these stereotypes for the construction of Danish nationality and ethnic Danes’ self-perceptions. The news media’s descriptions of visible minorities presented visible minorities as very different from ethnic Danes. Several descriptions made direct comparisons between the visible minority population and the ethnically Danish population that contributed to images of the two groups as binary oppositions. Other stories indirectly compared the visible minorities in question with ethnic Danes, in the process constructing similarly stereotypical images of fundamentally different lives and behaviors. The overall image of ethnic Danes and thus Denmark, drawn from the images of the news media’s representations of visible minorities, was of a country so nice that large numbers of people were drawn to settle there. Indeed more would settle there if they could. Denmark was a welfare state that wanted to help refugees and give them shelter, but sometimes ‘fake’ refugees, i.e. ‘comfort refugees’, took advantages of Denmark’s hospitality and misused the Danes’ friendliness.
However, this friendly image of ethnic Danes was partly distorted by the news reports about local ethnically Danish residents who refused to receive refugees in their areas. But the friendly image was not totally distorted because the news media did not simply draw a negative image of these local residents. Instead the news focused on the claim that the local ethnic Danes reacted negatively because they were overly burdened with refugees. Generally, the news media characterized the ethnically Danish population as a homogenous group of people characterized by a behavior that was neither criminal nor violent. Their behavior was so positive that when non-Danes were criticized for improper behavior, they were told to “behave Danish.” In other words, being Danish functioned synonymously with a law-abiding and peaceful nature. The ethnically Danish women were emancipated and liberated throughout the period under scrutiny, and Danish gender roles were characterized by gender equality and sexual liberty. Ethnically Danish men were respectful of women and were characterized as persons who did not subject women to violence in the form of domestic violence or rape. On the contrary, they were good and respectful lovers and the ideal partners for the ethnically Danish women.

The focus on integration among visible minorities gave an impression of Danish society as divided between visible minorities and ethnic Danes. The ethnic Danes were portrayed as actively participating in society by being employed, by paying taxes, by respecting the nation’s law and order. The news created an image of the average ethnic Dane as one who lived in a nuclear family setting in a single family house with a garden, removed from ghetto areas. In this monolithic image ethnic Danes all belonged to the middle-classes, all holding jobs, and all able to afford single-family houses. The stereotype of this Danish way of living appeared as the ideal. The idealization was further encouraged by describing Danishness symbolically, for instance through Hans Christian Andersen’s national, romantic songs. The narrated opposition between visible minorities’ living situations and ethnic Danes’ living situations participated in creating an image of a racially divided society in which ethnic Danes and visible minorities belonged to different social classes and had no interaction in neighborhoods or at workplaces.

While many of these stereotypes changed and developed throughout the period analyzed from the 1970s, others remained relatively stable. As mentioned, a stereotype must continuously be repeated in order to keep a close connection between the signifier and the signified.836 It thus logical that a stereotype must be repeated in order to remain present in journalists’ mindsets and narrations, as well as in the minds of the media’s audiences. Furthermore,

836 Homi Bhabha, ”The Other Question”, in Screen vol. 24/6, Dec. 1983 (London: Oxford University Press), 18-36, 18 f.
it makes sense that, in order for the stereotypes to have played a role in the national construction, the stereotypes had to be well-known to both news narrators and media receivers. It might further be the case that the connection between the signifier and the signified was stronger and made the stereotype more powerful if the stereotype was repeated over a longer period. In other words, the stereotypes that remained constant throughout the previous three decades – such as the ‘the oppressed immigrant woman’ and ‘the sexually aggressive Muslim male’ – might have been more powerful and prevalent in the mindsets of journalists and media audiences and in the construction of the nation than the stereotypes that changed – such as the arriving immigrants – or the stereotypes that were introduced late in the period – such as the criminal immigrant. Constructions of gender and sexuality seemed central to the Danish national constructions and the stable stereotypes of ‘the oppressed immigrant woman’ and ‘the sexually aggressive Muslim male’ were closely connected to these constructions. Furthermore, the intersections between gender, race, sexuality, and nationality were especially clear in the news media’s presentations of those two stereotypes.

The Danish news media during the late twentieth-century expressed gender equality as an integral part of Danishness. A “normal Danish life” implied equality between the sexes and a wife and husband who shared domestic duties. Visible minority women’s living situations often were presented as lacking in terms of this gender equality, which placed them in opposition to the normal Danish life. Politicians and other interviewees often linked their critiques of visible minorities to this fundamental deficiency. The repeated focus on female visible minorities’ lives as negatively influenced by oppressive patriarchy, often juxtaposed with images, in words and pictures, of ethnically Danish women’s liberated lives, helped to maintain the myth that Denmark has enjoyed gender equality since the 1970s. The stereotypical image of female visible minorities as oppressed thereby fuelled the equally stereotypical image of ethnically Danish women as liberated and not oppressed by patriarchal structures. These stereotypes further were maintained by the few success stories that the news media broadcast over the years, in which so-called well-integrated, visible minority women were characterized as successful because of their embracement of the so-called Danish way of living and Danish gender roles. In this regard they also served as exceptions that proved the rule about visible minority women’s lack of gender equality. The idea that gender equality existed within the Danish society and among ethnically Danish people was so hegemonic that it was possible for politicians, like the Liberal [Venstre] spokesperson on equality Troels Lund Poulsen, to argue that debates about gender equality in Denmark should be limited to visible
minority women’s issues. ethnically Danish women, he argued, had already achieved gender equality.

the many arguments about the existing gender equality among ethnic Danes and the lack of equality among visible minorities functioned because they represented a familiar discourse for media audiences. the myth about gender equality was not questioned by journalists or interviewees in any of the sampled news clips, despite the significant number of clips that focused on this issue. This suggests to me that the understanding of Danish nationality as interlinked with an understanding of existing gender equality must have prevailed among the majority of journalists, politicians and other people interviewed. the communication about visible minority women as oppressed continuously repeated, and thereby maintained, this understanding.

the supposed differences between ethnically Danish women and visible minority women were played out visually by the news media’s portrayal of visible minority women as veiled. the news media left very limited room for reading veiling as anything but oppressive towards women, and the visual portrayals of visible minority women as veiled therefore underscored the understanding of visible minority women as oppressed. Similarly, there was only very limited room in the news media to interpret women’s exposure of naked skin as anything other than a sign of sexual liberation. Female dress was constructed as a field on which to measure the level of gender equality and sexual liberation. A rather rigid opposition was constructed between veiling, which symbolized oppression, and undressing, which symbolized liberation. the lack of room for alternative readings seemed to have two consequences: Firstly, ethnically Danish women appeared as sexually liberated because they, via their clothing, manifested a liberating discourse. Secondly, the constructed opposition between the veil/visible minority women and nakedness/ethnically Danish women participated in maintaining the myth that the public exposure of naked female flesh in Denmark was an indication of the liberation of ethnically Danish women. This might have limited the options for questioning the public sexualization of females in Denmark with regard to its potential objectification of women.

A central part of the positive construction of Denmark as a place with sexual liberation was the image of ethnically Danish men as good and respectful lovers. The news media presented rape and misogynist views of women as belonging to visible minorities’ culture and religion; this understanding of sexuality was especially expressed during the late 1990s and early 2000s. News prints and broadcasts presented rape as a “clash of cultures,” which indicated that culture instead of gender structures bore the primary responsibility for the existence of rape in
Denmark. Rape was also explained by various factors related to the visible minority perpetrators that prevented an understanding of rape as a sign of a society’s potentially gender oppressive structures. In other words, the late twentieth-century Danish news media presented ethnic Danes, and specifically ethnically Danish men, as non-misogynists. This contributed to an understanding of Danish mono-ethnic relationships as positive, because the alternative inter-cultural relationships between visible minority men and ethnically Danish women were characterized by force, violence, and rape. The white, male body was inscribed with familiarity and comfort and was embodied as a ‘good’ partner, in other words, the ideal partner was racialized as a white, ethnically Danish man.

The image of Denmark as a place with sexual liberation and gender equality added to constructions of Denmark as a progressive society. Societal progression was not only connected to politically progressive democracy or a socially progressive welfare state; the news media also constructed sexual liberty as a part of this progressive image. Ethnic Danes may have been able to embody this progressive identity, partly through the news media’s labeling of visible minorities as the purported violators of these progressive characteristics.

The news media underscored ethnic Danes’ political differences regarding the attitudes towards immigration and visible minorities but did not really emphasize any other differences. The news programs explicitly presented different political views by, for instance, juxtaposing politicians representing different political parties. The news media thereby opened the way for diversity between ethnic Danes regarding their political views; however, in matters other than this particular difference, the news media generally portrayed the ethnically Danish population as homogeneous, especially regarding their attitudes towards gender equality and sexual liberty. These latter characteristics were constructed as seemingly fundamental – as if all ethnic Danes embodied these characteristics – and on top of these ‘basic’ characteristics were constructed more fluid characteristics such as political attitudes. This might partly have been explained by – and also have explained – the stability in the stereotypes about the oppressed immigrant woman and the sexually aggressive Muslim male, while the stereotype of the arriving immigrant changed and was debated.

I have argued for expanding Joan Scott’s definition of gender as a relation of power to include not only power structures between sexes but also between races. The way gender, and especially the supposed differences in gender role between visible minority women and ethnically Danish women, was represented helped to construct hierarchies not only between men and women but also between the white majority population and the minority population of color. The news
media constructed gender as a multifaceted concept which intersected with, among other things, race. This intersection between gender and race involved the binary opposition of oppressed female visible minorities and liberated, female ethnic Danes. Power was constituted on different levels within the intersection of gender and race. It was ascribed via the large amount of news that privileged ethnically Danish men’s so-called “Danish” behavior – synonymous with respect for women, non-rape, and non-domestic violence – over the behavior of visible minority men – lack of respect for women, rape and violence. More ingeniously, power was also constructed via the news’ articulation, and thereby maintenance, of the hegemonic discourse that there was gender equality among the ethnically Danish population. This discourse played a part in maintaining and reproducing the current gender structures. Quite sophisticatedly, it seems that an integrated part of the news media’s articulations about gender and gender roles involved a hegemonic consensus that gender equality existed and that the current gender system therefore should not be questioned.

However, since reception and interpretation of news messages happens on the individual level, television viewers and newspaper readers might have received different messages from the news media. It might therefore also be possible that the hegemonically stated discourse about the state of gender equality in Denmark also produced counter-effects, in which viewers questioned their status of gender equality exactly because it was so uttered by the news media. The proclaimed myth about gender equality could therefore also have contributed the production of alternative views among viewers.

The stability of the two stereotypes of ‘the oppressed Muslim woman’ and ‘the sexually aggressive Muslim male’ pointed to some continuity within the news media’s representation of visible minorities. Previous scholarship within the field of Danish mass media and representations of visible minorities have generally argued that a change in the coverage took place during the 1980s. I believe that the discrepancy between my findings and previous findings has mainly resulted from my inclusion of gender and sexuality perspectives. My findings point to the importance of examining the intersections between, on the one hand, race and nationality, and, on the other hand, gender and sexuality; such intersectional perspectives can function as a window to a broader understanding of the construction of the categories in question.

‘Us’ vs. ‘them’

The many direct and indirect comparisons between the visible minority population and the ethnically Danish population led to a construction of ‘us’ vs. ‘them’, i.e. ethnic Danes
versus visible minorities. This division was underscored by the numerous portrayals of the parallel lives of visible minorities outside Danish society. Journalists and interviewees further characterized visible minorities’ lifestyles and/or culture as “medieval,” which implied that ‘their’ way of living was backward when compared with ‘our’ way of living. The connotation of “medieval” living and “medieval culture” was of a static society. In comparison, Danish society appeared as dynamic, progressive, and civilized with its continuous developments over the course of history.

This understanding of the visible minority population as different from the ethnically Danish population was heightened by representations of visible minorities as one homogenous group. When the characterization of individual visible minorities was expanded to represent all visible minorities, they all appeared to possess the negative characterizations that the news attributed to them. The positioning of visible minorities in binary oppositions to ethnic Danes thereby indirectly implied that all ethnic Danes, similarly one homogenous group, represented the opposite positive characteristics. The representations of gaps between visible minorities and ethnic Danes was therefore often linked to the hierarchal positions of the two groups, whereby ethnic Danes continuously were positioned highest and were attributed the most value.

Several linguistic strategies further increased the impression of ‘us’ vs. ‘them’. Visible minorities most often were labeled as “ethnic,” “Muslim,” “Arabs,” “foreigners,” “immigrants,” etc. By contrast, ethnic Danes constituted the norm and therefore were unlabeled. Groups of people who function as the norm generally do not need complementary descriptions in order to make readers and viewers understand what group of people the media refer to. In the news material analyzed from the 1970s to the 2000s, it seemed that white, ethnically Danish men constituted the norm to such an extent that neither their ethnicity nor their gender needed mentioning. Women constituted the norm to a lesser extent, and therefore they were named most often by their gender; white, ethnically Danish girls/women were labeled “girls/women,” while visible minority women were labeled “immigrant women,” “ethnic women,” etc. The division between ‘them’ and ‘us’ was especially clear in the use of the label “ethnic”; visible minorities were labeled as “ethnic” without any further reference to a specific ethnicity, and ethnic Danes were so normal that they were not ascribed any. This meant that being Danish constituted the norm to such an extent that it did not require an ethnicity, and being “ethnic” often functioned synonymously with being of color. Being Danish therefore was connected with being a white, ethnic Dane; the Danish public schools for instance were portrayed as “not Danish” if they had too many students who were not white, ethnic Danes. Similarly, holding a Danish citizenship was not equated with being Danish. For instance, the
news described visible minorities possessing Danish citizenship as “foreigners,” and immigrants’ children were labeled “second generation immigrants” instead of “first generation Danes.” In the end, Danish nationality, as constructed in the news media, was closely connected to whiteness, to the white race.

Visible minorities were often positioned as object in the news media. People ascribed an “ethnicity” were pooled into a large group of “ethnics,” through which individuality was taken away from the person described. The position as object was strengthened further by the limited voice that the news media gave visible minorities. It was characteristic that visible minorities were talked about, instead of talked with, and that they were not given room to be experts on their own situations. This was especially prevalent in the news coverage of visible minority women, in which the lack of female expertise and female voices not only made female visible minorities appear as objects instead of subjects, but also as passive victims of violence rather than as potential active survivors. Furthermore, when visible minorities eventually were placed in expert situations, it did not seem that they were always given the same authority as white, ethnically Danish experts.

The racialized aspect of ‘white Danishness’ was central to the news media’s construction of Danish nationality. The traditional separation between nationality and racism, as argued by Benedict Anderson, must therefore be nuanced to apply to a recent Danish context. Despite the fact that the language used in the news media only very seldomly included the word ‘race’ or directly mentioned racial differences, the communicated image of Danish nationality was closely connected to white ethnic Danes. Gender perspectives similarly have often been absent from traditional theories of nationalism, but this dissertation illustrates how recent constructions of Danish nationality must be understood in connection to constructions of gender.

**Narration**

The narrative forms and narration strategies employed by the news programs and newspapers cause much of the ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ communication. The lack of visible minorities’ voices can be seen as an illustration of the fact that the stations aimed at reaching the news programs’

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primary target groups, namely the white, ethnically Danish middle-classes. After the end of DR’s monopoly in 1988, news programs, like most other television programs, were narrated with the intent to create identification options for the viewers. One way of doing this was to interview people with whom viewers could identify and to place people with identification components similar to the target audience – the same race, class, age, etc. – in subject positions. This resulted in news programs in which white ethnic Danes performed the majority of the speaking, even in news reports about visible minorities. In other words, it resulted in very white news programs: news produced by white people, from a white perspective, for a white audience.

The use of the actant model further contributed to the gap between ‘us’ and ‘them’. News stories were narrated according to the actant model in order to create dramaturgic effects that enabled identification options as well as excitement aimed at keeping the viewers tuned in. The nature of news stories was to simplify realities, and the use of the actant model simplified stories to representations of realities in binary oppositions such as good vs. evil. The employment of the actant model combined with the considerations of the target audience contributed to constructing news that appeared rather discriminatory towards visible minorities because the news narrated complex and many-sided realities as simplified stories about ‘good’ ethnic Danes vs. ‘bad’ visible minorities.

The importance of narration for the communicated images of visible minorities is a central conclusion to this dissertation. When the news programs’ representations of visible minorities, especially during the 1990s and early 2000s, at times paralleled the populist rights’ cultural racism and celebration of Danish nationalism, it was caused to a large extent by the narrative strategies employed by the news programs. The Danish People’s Party’s presentation of culture as static and as determinative seemed to be echoed in the news media’s representations of visible minorities. Similarly, the Danish People’s Party’s emphasis on visible minorities’ culture as fundamentally different from Danish culture paralleled the news’ narration of ‘us’ vs. ‘them’. I think it is important to underscore two factors in these parallels: Firstly, the Danish news media stations DR and TV2, as well as the national newspapers, cannot be characterized as mouthpieces for the populist right. They have not viewed themselves as populist right media, and the Danish People’s Party has not viewed them as friendly outlets for their perspectives. I do believe that the similarities between the Danish People’s Party’s interpretations of Danish culture, including the interpretation of visible minorities as threats against that Danish culture, and the news media’s portrayals of visible minorities in ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ narrations, including contributing ‘us’ with more
positive values than ‘them’ were completely unintended by journalists and news producers. This leads to my second important point. It must be the actual content of communication which is and was important, not the intentions behind the communication. This means that, despite the journalists’ and media institutions’ intentions not to produced prejudiced representations of visible minorities, they have nevertheless done so in the last three decades. Prejudices and racism are not only representations of personal feelings or beliefs; they also represent social and institutional attitudes towards of members of certain groups of people.

Attitudes towards ‘them’

The representation of visible minorities in ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ narrations intensified with the establishment of TV2 in 1988. The establishment resulted in a break with the previous, rather strict, public service rules; among other restrictions, these rules prohibited sensational news and intentional editing of footage. The competition between DR and TV2 led to increased focus on viewer identification and in narrating news stories in ways that would engage the viewers in order to keep them on the channel. This resulted in new types of stories. Among these were several stories about criminal immigrants that were narrated dramatically and contributed to positioning young, visible minority males, who were constructed as potential criminals and dangers, as different from young ethnically Danish males. The young visible minority males were often positioned in the role of ‘antagonist’, i.e. ‘bad’ in the actant model narration, while the ethnically Danish men were positioned as ‘assistants’, i.e. ‘good’.

This racialized ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ narration with ‘good’, law-abiding, white ethnic Danes vs. ‘bad’, criminal people of color might have contributed to creating a climate of fear for visible minorities among ethnically Danish television viewers. A similar climate of fear might have resulted from the representations of the sexually aggressive, Muslim male who was constructed as a sexual threat to white, ethnically Danish women. Surveys have argued that Danes have ambivalent attitudes towards immigrants and descendants. They have expressed negative prejudice attitudes against visible minorities, while, at the same time they expressed tolerance and argued that Denmark should help and welcome immigrants. A similar ambivalence was found in the news media’s coverage of visible minorities: On the one hand, the news media contributed to images of visible minorities as a homogeneous group characterized by negative stereotypes, and this kind of

communication dominated the news media’s representations. But on the other hand, the news media simultaneously portrayed individual visible minorities and described them in a positive light, in a way that most likely evoked sympathy from viewers. The few individualized portrayals might have nuanced or balanced the negative stereotypical images and left viewers with the impression that not all visible minorities were equally bad. However, these individual portrayals often functioned as the exception that proved the rule, and they therefore might not have been able to challenge the overall impression or understanding of visible minorities.

Questions left to be answered

It would have been great, if it had been possible, to determine what effects the media communication had on television viewers and newspaper readers. For further understandings of this field, it would be interesting to carry out reception analyses of contemporary news media readings. It has not been possible to carry out receptions analyses within this frame of the dissertation, and unfortunately there have not been more than a limited number of pre-existing surveys to draw upon. One of these is Peter Hervik’s survey. Hervik has shown, among other things, how reception and the meanings drawn from media representations of visible minorities have differed depending on whether the viewer was a visible minority, an ethnic Danes with personal contact to visible minorities, or an ethnic Danes without personal contact to visible minorities. It would be fruitful for the understanding of the intersections between media communication, nationality and race to carry out further reception analyses that would incorporate gender and sexuality perspectives. Unfortunately this will only be possible to do in a contemporary perspective and not in a historical perspective.

Other questions opened but not fully answered by this dissertation included the role of individual agency within the media and political systems. From a Foucaultian point of view, one could argue that the role of individual people has not been central for the news product because all journalists, newscasters, etc. have participated in certain discourses that influenced the outcome of their acts. But if one departs from this Foucaultian notion, it might be interesting to take a closer look at the difference made by different news directors as well as news journalists for the construction of the individual news programs. It would be especially interesting to look for different cracks in the discourse, for potential alternatives to the dominant narrations and narrative strategies during the period under scrutiny.
Furthermore, it will be interesting to compare this dissertation’s results with similar Scandinavian and European media representations. Some surveys already exist, e.g. from Sweden and Holland, and others might need to be carried out before comparisons can take place.\footnote{840} It would give new insights to locate similarities and differences between these surveys and mine. I think it would be especially interesting to try to determine to what extent the Danish news communication was representative for the European communication and to what extent it was an exception.

Despite these unanswered questions within the field of media communication and visible minorities and within the intersections between race, gender, sexuality, and nationality, several questions have been answered in this dissertation. The dissertation has thrown light on previously un-researched areas by its analyses of the media communication in a longer historical perspective, namely between the 1970s and the 2000s, and by its analyses of the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and nationality in the field of media and national constructions. This dissertation does not hold the final answers to this field, but it does contain some new findings that scholars and interested laypeople can make use of.

Abstract

By Rikke Andreassen, Department of History, University of Toronto, 2005.

This dissertation focuses on the Danish news media’s images of visible minorities from the early 1970s to the early 2000s. Through analyses of television primetime news clips and national newspaper articles, the dissertation throws light on how the news media have represented visible minorities in Denmark and on what functions these representations might have had for the construction of Danish nationality. By drawing upon post-colonial theory, queer theory, feminism, media theory and theories of nationalism, the dissertation explores three aspects in depth: Firstly, it throws light on the actual representations and demonstrates how visible minorities have been represented in the news media. Secondly, it nuances theses representations by comparing them to their societal and historical contexts. Thirdly, it reflects upon the functions these representations might have had for Danish television viewers and newspaper readers. Regarding the third aspect, the dissertation especially examines how news coverage might have influenced viewers’ and readers’ constructions of Danish nationality and their understandings of gender, gender relations and sexuality.

This examination of representations in the news shows that the news media predominantly represented visible minorities in ‘us’ vs. ‘them’ constructions and in a series of dominant stereotypes: ‘The arriving immigrant’, ‘the criminal immigrant’, ‘the oppressed immigrant woman’, ‘the veiled woman’, ‘the sexually aggressive Muslim male’, and ‘the unintegrated immigrant’. These descriptions implied opposite constructions of the ethnically Danish population. When visible minorities were constructed as criminal, rapists, and oppressive towards women, the ethnically Danish population appeared as law-abiding and respectful.

This representation can be explained partly by the news media’s narration, especially the use of the actant model. This led to simplified stories where realities were presented in binary, racialized oppositions, such as good white Danes vs. evil visible minorities. The employment of the actant model combined with efforts to appeal target audiences, led to constructing news that appeared discriminatory against visible minorities, in particular because the news narrated complex and many-sided realities as simplified stories about ‘good’ ethnic Danes vs. ‘bad’ visible minorities.
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