



Åbent nummer

WOMEN, GENDER & RESEARCH is an academic, peer-reviewed journal that:

- Presents original interdisciplinary research concerning feminist theory, gender, power, and inequality, both globally and locally
- Promotes theoretical and methodological debates within gender research
- Invites both established and early career scholars within the field to submit articles
- Publishes two issues per year. All research articles go through a double-blind peer-review process by two or more peer reviewers

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- Book reviews and notices about new PhDs within the field

Articles: 6000-9500 words (all included). Essays or opinion pieces: 3900 words (all included).

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INDHOLD

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| REDAKTIONSLEDELSENS FORORD | 6 |
|----------------------------|---|

INTRODUKTION

ÅBENT NUMMER

| | |
|--|---|
| Af Camilla Bruun Eriksen, Maria Bee Christensen-Strynø and Søren Christian Krogh | 8 |
|--|---|

ARTIKLER

| | |
|---|----|
| BALANSRECEPTET: KONSTEN ATT HANTERA KLIMAKTERIET I SJÄLVHJÄLP SLITTERATURENS HORMONBERÄTTELSE Af Linda Berg, Anna Sofia Lundgren og Maria Jönsson | 11 |
|---|----|

| | |
|---|----|
| GENDERING HATRED – ADDING ‘GENDER’ TO THE HATE CRIME EQUATION? By Natalie Gunthel | 27 |
|---|----|

| | |
|---|----|
| ARBEJDET MED INKLUSION – OG MOD EKSKLUSION? Af Sabrina Vitting-Seerup | 43 |
|---|----|

| | |
|---|----|
| APPROACHING RESPONSIBILITY: A SENSORY APPROACH TO REFLEXIVITY ON RESEARCHER-PARTICIPANT RELATIONS By Katrine Vraa Justenborg and Ida Andrea Nilsson | 59 |
|---|----|

| | |
|---|----|
| DIFFERENT READINGS AND EVOKED CONVERSATIONS. A PIECE ON THE GENERATIVE POWER OF DIALOGUE AND CO-THINKING By Christina Hee Pedersen, Breny Mendoza and Adriana I. Churampi Ramírez | 75 |
|---|----|

| | |
|---|----|
| MINORITETSSTRESS – BEGREBET, DETS ANVENDELIGHED OG POTENTIALE Af Iram Khawaja | 91 |
|---|----|

ESSAYS

| | |
|--|-----|
| ABOUT FALLING APART AND TRUSTING THE PROCESS: SNAPSHOTS FROM THE LIFE (AND WORK) OF AN ACADEMIC WITH ADHD By Anne Bettina Pedersen | 108 |
|--|-----|

| | |
|---|-----|
| WOMAN, LIFE, FREEDOM: ON PROTESTS IN IRAN AND WHY IT IS A FEMINIST MOVEMENT By Tara Mehrabi | 114 |
|---|-----|

BOGANMELDELSER

THE PROBLEM OF RAPE IN THE 'GENDER EQUAL' NORDIC

Marie Bruvik Heinskou, May-Len Skilbrei and Kari and Stefansen (Eds.):

Rape in the Nordic Countries: Continuity and Change

By Signe Uldbjerg

122

VIBRANT DEATH AND QUEER MOURNING:

LYKKE'S POSTHUMAN JOURNEY OF CO-BECOMING WITH HER DEAD BELOVED

Nina Lykke: *Vibrant Death: A posthuman Phenomenology of Mourning*

By Ruben Hordijk

125

NY OG VIGTIG BOG MED EN LIDT SMAL RAMME

Gry Jexen: *Kvinde, kend din historie*

Af Rikke Andreassen

128

PH.D.

NYE FORTÆLLINGER OM DIGITALE SEKSUELLE OVERGREB

Signe Uldbjerg Mortensen: *Rewriting Victimhood: Stories of digital sexual assault*

Af Michael Nebeling Petersen, Britta Timm Knudsen and Anna Hickey-Moody

132

HVORDAN MOTIVERER MAN LIGESTILLING?

Ea Høg Utoft: *Motivation, organisational gender equality work and the postfeminist gender regime: A feminist approach*

Af Jens Peter Andersen

135

REPRÆSENTATIONSARBEJDE I DEN DANSKE FILMINDUSTRI

Tess Skadegård Thorsen: *Racialized Representation in Danish Film: Navigating Erasure and Presence*

Af Steen Ledet Christiansen

137

Redaktionsledelsens forord

Velkommen til *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning* nr. 2 i 2022. Vi præsenterer denne gang et åbent nummer, hvis artikler og essays dækker så vidt forskellige emner som narrativer om kvinder, hormoner og overgangsalder, juridiske spørgsmål i forhold til kønsbaseret vold, værdien af eksklusions- vs. inklusionsanalyser, en indføring i det psykologiske og affektive begreb om minoritetsstress, metodiske diskussioner af forskerens ansvarlighed i den situerede praksis, såvel som metodiske eksperimenter i form af eksplorativ samskrivning, en diskussion af akademias manglende evne til inklusion på tværs af neurodivergens, samt en analyse af hårets symbolske og konkrete betydninger i det iranske kvindeoprør.

Som sådan giver artiklerne – som redaktørerne også skriver i deres indledning – et indblik i noget af den pluralitet med hensyn til emne, metode og ideologi, som altid har præget kønsforskningen. Såvel af lyst som af nødvendighed (blandt andet på grund af den manglede institutionalisering) er kønsforskningen blevet udført på tværs af discipliner og metoder af forskere, som har delt en interesse i, hvad køn betyder og indebærer. Denne interesse har ført mange stærke og inspirerende samarbejder med sig, men den har som bekendt også nogle gange betydet store interne uenigheder om, hvordan og med hvilket formål køn bør være genstand for forskning. Enhver med indblik i de feministiske strømninger og traditioner ved, at disse altid har været præget af interne uenigheder, der afspejler vidt forskellige syn på køn og på forskning: Bør kvinders oplevelser være i centrum for kønsforskningen eller bør den hellere undersøge køn i en mere abstrakt form? Bør vi enes om en bestemt definition af køn for at forske i det eller bør definitionen af køn i sig selv udgøre et centralt emne for forskningen? Skal køn forstås som en biologisk baseret konstant eller snarere som en socialt konstrueret tilblivelse? Eller er det selve ideen om, at kønnet kan opdeles i to adskilte ontologiske sfærer, den er gal med? Udgør køn en særlig virkelighed og

erfaring, som gør dette fænomen fundamentalt anderledes end alle andre sociale kategorier, eller er hele pointen med køn, at det altid krydses med andre kategorier såsom klasse, seksualitet, race, alder og kropsduelighed?

Sådanne uenigheder har historisk betydet splittelse og interne stridigheder. Men de peger også på styrken ved kønsforskning: Nemlig evnen til at diskutere og undersøge køn fra mange forskellige vinkler og positioner og til at anvende uenighederne produktivt og skabe dialog på tværs af forskellige traditioner. *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning* søger at skabe et mødested for forskning blandt en flerhed af teorier og metoder, der spænder over et vidt felt: Fra statistik til autoetnografi, fra biologi til affektteori, fra psykoanalyse til queer teori, fra kritiske racestudier til kvantemekanik. Forsknings samtalen om køn foregår således over en mangfoldighed af discipliner og baggrunde. Det forenende er, at vi tager udgangspunkt i kønsforskningens traditioner og metoder som værktøjskasse.

Kvinder, Køn & Forskning bringer tekster, som præsenterer afrundede projekter og endelige forskningsresultater, men også tekster, som afprøver og eksperimenterer med nye ideer, metoder og projekter, hvis konklusioner, forskerne endnu ikke er helt sikre, hvordan skal fortolkes. Et akademisk tidsskrift giver plads til undersøgelser og eksperimenter og også til at tage fejl eller simpelthen være usikre på, hvor vores undersøgelser vil føre os hen. Styrken ved (køns)forskning ligger ikke blot i at kunne producere enkle og entydige svar, men centralt i evnen til at tænke nyt. Til at stille nye spørgsmål, på nye måder, gennem nye metoder. Kønsforskning inviterer til en fortsat åbenhed og nysgerrighed på kønnede fænomener og dermed til at dvæle ved forskningens kompleksitet og pluralitet.

Vi er stolte over, at tidsskriftet i år kan fejre 30-års jubilæum, og vil benytte anledningen til at takke nuværende og tidligere redaktørers engagement i at udvikle tidsskriftet og sikre en

platform for en kontinuerlig samtale inden for og omkring dansk kønsforskning. Allermest vil vi gerne takke de mange forfattere, som gennem årene har bidraget med indsigter, analyser, fortolkninger, resultater, polemikker og alt det andet

i tidsskriftet. Vi glæder os til at læse, tænke og diskutere kønsforskning i de næste 30 år.

På redaktionens vegne

*Michael Nebeling, Bontu Lucie Guschke
og Mons Bissenbakker*

Åbent nummer

Af Camilla Bruun Eriksen, Maria Bee Christensen-Strynø
og Søren Christian Krogh

I 1992 udkom det første nummer af *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning*. Det var, ligesom dette nummer, der følger nu 30 år senere, uden tema. Dengang bød nummeret på litteraturanmeldelser, masser af debatindlæg og artikler, der strakte sig over spørgsmål om ligestilling, betydningen af nye forældreroller såvel som feminismens mulige kulturimperialistiske karakter. Det virker derfor helt oplagt, at vi i anledningen af 30-året for tidsskriftet igen udgiver et åbent nummer, uden samlende tema. Modsat et temanummer, der anviser en forskningsmæssig sti og retning, giver et åbent nummer forfattere og redaktører friere hænder og muligheden for – dengang som nu – at publicere original forskning inden for eller relateret til emner som køn, magt, ulighed og feminisme i form af både teoretiske og metodiske bidrag og på tværs af fagdiscipliner – globalt såvel som lokalt.

På mange måder har *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning* som tidsskrift altid været et 'åbent nummer' i den forstand, at skiftende redaktører gennem tiden har efterstræbt, at *Kvinder, Køn & Forskning* skal være et tidsskrift med åbenhed og nysgerrighed over for nye perspektiver, idéer, metodiske tilgange og kilder til viden. Dette ideal efterstræber tidsskriftets nuværende redaktion stadigt, og vi

synes, at det afspejles i de bidrag, som samlet set er blevet til dette nye åbne nummer. I nærværende nummer kan du læse analyser af selvhjælpslitteratur om kvinders overgangsalder såvel som refleksioner over forskerens relation til informanter. Nummeret præsenterer også emner som hadkriminalitetslovgivning, minoritetsstress og kollaborative forsknings Samarbejdsprocesser.

Med udgangspunkt i tre eksempler på nyere selvhjælpslitteratur inden for emnet 'kvinders overgangsalder' undersøger Linda Berg, Anna Sofia Lundgren og Maria Jönsson moderne hormonhistorie i artiklen *Balansreceptet. Konsten att hantera klimakteriet i selvhjælpslitteraturens hormonberättelser*. Selvhjælpslitteraturen, der ifølge de tre forfattere hovedsageligt rummer tips, anvisninger og ideer til, hvordan de 'svingende hormoner' bedst håndteres af læseren, underlægges i artiklen et poststrukturalistisk feministisk perspektiv, hvorigennem forbindelsen til nutidig biokapitalisme, der har forvandlet den aldrende kvindekrop til en lukrativ forretning, udpeges og diskuteres. Gennem eksempler på selvhjælpslitteraturens repræsentation af kvinders overgangsalder og hormonkroppe i bred forstand undersøger de tre forfattere således populære fortællinger

om hormoner og dertilhørende forestillinger om nødvendigheden af kropskontrol. Gennem blandt andet pointen om, at hormoner ikke kan indeholdes i og af en individuel krop, men snarere formes af strukturelle forhold, afsøger artiklen desuden hormonfortællingers feministiske potentiale.

Bør hadkriminalitetslovgivning tjene som et juridisk værktøj til at håndtere og nedbringe vold mod kvinder? Hvis ja, skal den da indebære beskyttelsen af 'køn' eller mere eksplicit beskyttelsen af 'kvindeligt køn'? Disse spørgsmål behandler Natalie Gunthel i artiklen *Gendering hatred – Adding 'gender' to the hate crime equation?* Som et juridisk svar på udbredelsen af vold mod kvinder og systemisk kønsbaseret kriminalitet peger forfatteren på, at der er gode principielle grunde til at inkludere kategorien 'køn' i aktuel hadkriminalitetslovgivning. Men, advarer hun, en tilføjelse af 'køn' er ikke uproblematisk og vil uundgåeligt rejse en række udfordringer. I artiklen udfoldes og diskuteres to sæt af udfordringer: For det første en række begrebslige, der bunder i udfordringer vedrørende forskellige juridiske tilgange til og behandlinger af 'identitet' generelt og 'køn' i særdeleshed, og for det andet: En række praktiske udfordringer i forbindelse med at sikre, at hadforbrydelseslovgivning med tilføjelsen af 'køn' faktisk får konkret virkning på systemisk kønsbaseret vold og ikke kun symbolsk effekt.

I artiklen *Arbejdet med inklusion – og mod eksklusion?* undersøger Sabrina Vitting-Seerup sin hypotese, at et øget fokus på eksklusionsmekanismer – fremfor på inklusionsinitiativer – muligvis kan skabe nye og produktive forståelser af, hvorfor repræsentationen i danske museer ser ud, som den gør. "Undersøger vi udelukkende inklusionstiltag, risikerer vi at overse vigtige mekanismer, der kan forklare selve behovet for inklusion" advarer forfatteren. Gennem diskussioner af såvel in- og eksklusionsmekanismer og en række eksempler på museers arbejde med og overvejelser omkring repræsentation og diversitet udfolder forfatteren dels betydningen af forskellige konkrete tiltag og visioner, men retter også blikket mod de 'små' hverdagspraksisser, der udfolder sig på museet og som, ifølge forfatteren, kan have stor og afgørende betydning for,

hvordan den generelle repræsentation i danske museer tager sig ud.

I den metodeorienterede artikel *Approaching responsibility: A sensory approach to reflexivity on researcher-participant relations* anlægger Katrine Vraa Justenborg og Ida Andrea Nilsson et sanseligt orienteret analytisk blik på spørgsmål om refleksivitet og ansvarlighed i relationen mellem forskere og deltagere i uddannelsesforskning. Igennem en duo-etnografisk inspireret metodisk tilgang skaber de to forfattere det, de kalder et *kollektivt og refleksivt rum for analyse*, som, de argumenterer for, illustrerer de dynamiske, sansmæssige forhandlinger, der finder sted mellem deltagere, omgivelser og forsker. Ved at sætte den intersubjektive relation mellem forsker- og deltager-subjektivitet i analytisk fokus igennem en sanselig tilgang til refleksivitet foreslår de to forfattere, at forskerens ansvarlighed højnes og kan betragtes som en multifacetteret og situeret praksis.

Ligeledes optaget af metode har Adriana Churampi, Breny Mendoza og Christina Hee Pedersen samforfattet artiklen *Different readings and evoked conversations. A piece on the generative power of dialogue and co-thinking*. Med udgangspunkt i eksplorative samtaler mellem forfatterne benytter artiklen sig af 'collaborative writing' som en metode til at undersøge, hvordan forfatternes forståelser af begreber såsom intersektionalitet, social in- og eksklusion og social retfærdighed repræsenterer udfordringer for forskere i samtidens academia. I artiklen argumenteres der for, at netop disse eksplorative samtaler er essentielle redskaber til i fællesskab at kunne kultivere feministiske, anti-racistiske og dekoloniale lommer af kritisk forskningssamarbejde og undervisningspraksisser. Artiklen giver et udførligt indblik i, hvordan disse processer udspiller sig igennem adskillige samtaler forskerne imellem.

Iram Khawaja giver i sin artikel, *Minoritetsstress – en kritisk analytisk indføring i begrebet, dets anvendelighed og potentiale*, en introduktion til, hvad fænomenet og begrebet minoritetsstress er og betyder. Hun foreslår, at begrebet kan anvendes til at fremanalysere væsentlige nuancer i forbindelse med minoriserede og racialiserede

personers hverdagsmæssige erfaringer og udfordringer med mikroaggression, stigmatisering og diskrimination. I artiklen udpeges et, i en dansk kontekst, manglende kritisk fokus på former for stress, der specifikt knytter sig til oplevelser af at være minoriseret, hvilket ifølge forfatteren har en række negative psykologiske og affektive konsekvenser, der sjældent adresseres på andet end et individuelt niveau. Forfatteren argumenterer for, at begrebet minoritetsstress giver adgang til at forstå stressreaktioner som strukturelle og samfundsmæssige processer, der samtidig tager højde for social ulighed, racisme og diskrimination.

Dette åbne nummer indeholder også to essays. Det første essay har titlen *About Falling Apart and Trusting the Process: Snapshots from the Life (and Work) of an Academic with ADHD* og er skrevet af Anne Bettina Pedersen. I essayet udfolder forfatteren sine oplevelser og erfaringer med at være sendiagnosticeret med ADHD og færdiggøre en ph.d.-afhandling. Ligeledes appellerer forfatteren til, at disse oplevelser og erfaringer bør føre til mere refleksion over og tolerance af

neurodivergente studerende og forskere. Det andet essay, *Woman, Life, Freedom: On Protests in Iran and Why It Is a Feminist Movement*, er skrevet af Tara Mehrabi og tager sit udgangspunkt i den nuværende protestbevægelse mod det iranske regime. Essayet udfolder betydningen af sangen "Baraye" af Shervin Hajipour, som allerede tidligt blev en hymne for protestbevægelsen og argumenterer samtidig for, at protestbevægelsen i Iran bør forstås som en feministisk intersektionel revolution. Dette kobles i særdeleshed til den store politiske betydning af den civile ulydighed, som iranske kvinder har gjort brug af under deres protester (såsom offentligt at klippe deres hår af).

Slutteligt byder nummeret på en håndfuld anmeldelser og ph.d.-omtaler, ikke mindst de to afhandlinger som indbragte henholdsvis Ea Høg Utoft og Tess Skadegård Thorsen KRAKA-prisen i ved kønsforskningskonferencen på Københavns Universitet i august.

God læselyst!

Balansreceptet: Konsten att hantera klimakteriet i självhjälpslitteraturens hormonberättelser

Af Linda Berg, Anna Sofia Lundgren og Maria Jönsson

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Författarna vill tacka Vetenskapsrådet som genom stöd till projektet *Det är hormonerna. Kvinnor i transition genom berättelser om hormoner* (diarienummer 2020–01220) möjliggjort den forskning som ligger till grund för artikeln. Tack även till redaktörer och granskare.

Abstract

The Balance Recipe: The Art of Managing Menopause in Self-help Literature's Hormone stories

In recent years, menopause as a phase of transition has received great media attention in Sweden, not only in terms of the cessation of menstrual periods, but specifically with a focus on hormonal changes in the longer period of time during which female bodies undergo adjustment. In books such as *Hormonstark* [Hormone strong] (2020), *Perimenopower* (2018) and *Livet med klimakteriet* [Life with Menopause] (2020), the stressed reader in mid-career can get knowledge, tips, ideas and inspiring stories about how to deal with the fluctuating hormones that are said to affect the body during menopause. In this article, we take a poststructuralist feminist perspective on the narratives of hormones and body control in the above mentioned three examples of self-help literature. The aim is to explore how this type of literature represents women's menopause and hormonal bodies in a broader sense, and how women are in relation to this discourse. The results show that, although hormone narratives may have feminist potential, they primarily represent menopause as an individual rather than a structural matter. The result also display a close resemblance between hormone narratives and contemporary biocapitalism with the aging female body as a lucrative threat.

KEYWORDS: hormone narratives, self-help, menopause, body control, biocapitalism

Din inre biologi sträcker sig utanför ramen för din personlighet och dina invanda beteendemönster, och är i allra högsta grad påverkbar ned på molekylnivå
(Johansson 2020:5f.).

Introduktion

De senaste åren har man kunnat finna allt fler så kallade självhjälpsböcker om klimakteriet i bokhandeln. I dessa böcker får den stressade läsaren mitt i karriären tips, idéer och inspirerande berättelser om hur man kan hantera de hormonsvängningar som sägs påverka kroppen i samband med menopaus. Självhjälpslitteraturen erbjuder verktyg för att förstå varför framför allt kvinnor upplever fysiska reaktioner och känslomässiga fluktuationer under övergångsfaser i livet. Här samlas insikter om hormoners påverkan på kropp och psyke och tips på hur de kan hanteras för att må bättre, allt i enlighet med en av böckernas undertitel: "ta kontroll över hormonerna och bli ditt bästa jag" (Johansson 2020).

I Sverige, precis som i andra delar av västvärlden, har självhjälpsindustrin och självhjälpsgenren vuxit i raketfart (Brinkmann 2014; Spicer & Cederström 2015, 2018). Denna genre karaktäriseras av ambitionen att ge råd och vägledning, men reproducerar och förmedlar också normer om identitet och attityder till livet (Aspelin 2008; Illouz 2008). En gemensam nämnare i marknadsföringen av industrins olika produkter är budskapet om att ta kontroll över sitt eget liv, fysiskt och mentalt. Med nyvunna kunskaper och tekniker uppmuntras läsarna att, likt ingenjörer, manövrera känslor och reaktioner och främja det positiva (Berg 2012).

En litteratursökning inom området visar tydligt att självhjälpsböcker om hormoner i Sverige ökat markant under de senaste fem åren. En sökning på de svenska bibliotekens söktjänst Libris mellan 2016 och 2021 ger träffar på ett hundratal böcker om hormoner. Det är också tydligt att den populära diskursen om hormoner och kvinnokroppar inom självhjälpskulturen är medicinskt

influerad (Lyons & Griffin 2003), vilket i sig inte är förvånande. Sedan termen "hormon" myntades i början av 1900-talet – och då erbjöd nya förklaringsmodeller för symptom som tidigare ofta beskrivits som "hysteri" (Koerber 2018) – har den medicinskt influerade hormondiskursen blivit en del av hur vi förstår oss själva som människor (Oudshoorn 1994/2005). Den har kommit att bli en självklar utgångspunkt i en biomedikaliserad förståelse av kroppar, det vill säga att kroppar och kroppsliga tillstånd primärt förklaras utifrån medicinska biologiska perspektiv (se t.ex. Clarke et al. 2003). Om det i perioder av 1900-talet funnits socialpsykologiska förklaringsmodeller så har sådana idag ersatts av biologiska (Lundin 2012). Fokus på biologi har också bidragit till att göra kemiska processer och reaktioner (snarare än till exempel attribut och beteenden) avgörande även för definitioner av kvinnlighet och manlighet. Könshormoners centralitet märks exempelvis i debatter om gränser mellan män och kvinnor samt konsekvrering av cis-heteronormativitet (Fausto-Sterling 2000; Roberts 2007; Ah-King & Hayward 2013; Irni 2013), och de har varit centrala i drömmen om botemedel mot sterilitet (Nordlund 2008). Men berättelser om hormonella processer aktualiseras också i hög grad i relation till omvälvande perioder i flickors och kvinnors liv, såsom puberteten, graviditeten och klimakteriet. Därigenom har dessa berättelser blivit väsentliga komponenter i förståelser inte bara av könade kroppar, självbilder och identiteter, utan även av könade livslopp.

Under de senaste åren har särskilt klimakteriet som övergångsfas fått stor medial uppmärksamhet i ett svenskt sammanhang. Det handlar då inte endast om menopaus – den tidpunkt då menstruationen upphör – utan om klimakteriet som ett längre tidsspänn då kvinnokroppar genomgår en omställning med fokus på hormonella förändringar. I såväl radio- och tv-program som poddar har fenomenet uppmärksammats. Särskilt stort genomslag har ett antal böcker av självhjälpskaraktär haft, såsom *Perimenopower: hitta din superkraft när hormonerna svänger* (Wilk 2018), *Livet med klimakteriet: hormoner, träning och välbefinnande* (Woxnerud 2020), *Hormonstark: ta kontroll över dina hormoner och bli ditt bästa*

jag (Johansson 2020). Redan titlarna antyder en för genren central ambivalens. Å ena sidan positionerar de läsaren som maktlös inför kroppens till synes oregerliga hormoner. Å andra sidan tilltalas läsaren som en potentiellt stark aktör, som inte bara kan ta kontroll över situationen, utan också hitta en "superkraft" och bli sitt "bästa jag".

I den här artikeln utgår vi från dessa böcker som några exempel bland många liknande, och reflekterar över självhjälpslitteraturens hormonberättelser – vad de säger och vad de gör. Syftet är att undersöka hur litteraturen berättar fram klimakterium och hormonella kroppar i vidare mening, samt hur kvinnor uppmuntras att agera i relation till detta. Syftet är också att diskutera hur narrativen och självhjälpsgenren kan förstås i relation till en biokapitalistisk samtid.

Självhjälpslitteratur i en biokapitalistisk kontext

Självhjälpslitteraturen är en genre som i hög grad ingår i en kapitalistisk logik. Den bygger på försäljning av böcker och föreläsningsserier, men genom sin operationalisering av hur drömmar ska nås är den också förbunden med andra relaterade konsumtionsvaror, såsom träningskläder, teknologier, hälsokost eller annat. I överförd bemärkelse ingår också säljandet av författaridentiteter och produktion av läsarkonsumenter. Den investering i medicinsk diskurs, som särskilt självhjälpsböcker om hormoner gör, innebär att genren också förnyat sig själv. Efter decennier av beteendevetenskapligt inriktade diskurser om hur det går att "optimalisera jaget" erbjuds läsaren nu nya möjligheter till ett framgångsrikt liv, denna gång på biovetenskaplig grund.

Ett sätt att förstå självhjälpslitteraturens hormonberättelser är att inte bara relatera dem till deras kapitalistiska inbäddning, utan även till fenomenet biokapitalism. Biokapital, sprunget ur Marx teorier, fokuserar på dynamiken mellan arbete och varor som specifikt "kännetecknar tillverkningen och marknadsföringen av sådana delar som industriella och farmaceutiska bioprodukter" (Helmreich 2008, 464). Intimt sammanlänkad

med processer av biomedikalisering (Clarke et al. 2003) används termen *biokapitalism* vanligtvis för att beskriva den växande biovetenskapens och bioteknikens betydelse för innovationer som styr, förändrar och experimenterar med livets materiella grundstenar (Sunder Rajan 2006; Rose 2007). Ofta får begreppet ringa in hur nya kunskaper gör det möjligt att profitera på (vissa) människors levande kroppar genom att dra in dem i kapitalistisk värdeproduktion (Oksala 2019). I den bemärkelsen inkluderas – i Foucaults idé om biopolitik – inte bara individer och befolkningar, utan även hornhinnor, arvs massa, njurar, ägg och livmodrar (Helmreich 2008). Mänskliga kroppar utgör då biokapital och ingår i en ekonomi som strukturerar relationer mellan människor, men också ger plats åt specifika aktörer som erbjuder lösningar och tjänar pengar (Lettow 2008). När det gäller hormoner handlar det i första hand om läkemedelsindustrin, som ju under flera decennier skördat frukterna av hormonbehandling. Men det handlar också om skönhetsindustrin, hälsoindustrin, en svart marknad för hormonkonsumtion, och, sist men inte minst, självhjälpsindustrin (Rose 2001). Genom att begreppsliggöra en tidigare osynlig dimension av kroppen ringar självhjälpsindustrin in ett nytt område för exploatering. Självhjälpslitteraturen lär i sin tur ut ett slags "molekylär navigeringskonst" för att människor ska kunna ta sig fram i detta nya landskap. Det innebär att göra vissa saker som förväntas ha effekt på komplicerade processer på molekylär nivå inuti kroppen.

Inom feministisk forskning har biokapitalism framför allt aktualiserats i studier om IVF och surrogatmödraskap. Undersökningar visar exempelvis hur surrogat- respektive donatorkroppar blir produktionsmedel snarare än arbetande kroppar (Cooper 2008; Cooper & Walby 2014). I sådana processer tenderar kroppar att värderas i termer av "biodesirability" – deras önskvärdhet i en köparens ögon bedöms i storheter som ålder, friskhet, skönhet och bevisad fertilitet (Gunnarsson Payne 2015). Nedfrysning av ägg kan på detta sätt förstås som kapitalistisk exploatering (Walby 2015), snarare än enbart som ansvarsfullt och solidariskt reproduktivt medborgarskap (Carroll & Kroløkke 2018).

Även om den biovetenskapligt influerade diskursen om hormoner, vad vi vet, inte omfattar sådan varufiering av människors kroppar så menar vi att den är förbunden med en dylik marknad. På ett övergripande plan finns förbindelser mellan hormonrelaterad infertilitet och adoption, äggdonation och surrogatmödraskap – kulturella praktiker som alla involverar andra människors kroppar och liv. När självhjälpsindustrins hormonberättelser uppmanar till att ta kommando över kroppens minsta byggstenar, rör det sig dock inte om andras kroppar så mycket som den egna kroppen. Här finns också paralleller till tankarna om den vitala kroppen som vara och möjlighet, dvs till det instrumentella förhållningssätt till kroppen som exempelvis organhandeln omfattar (Lundin 2014), liksom till hur kroppen därigenom kan ses som bärare av drömmar. Den senare aspekten innebär att förståelsen av kroppen i termer av biokapital bör ackompanjeras av insikten om kapitalismens emotionella aspekter för att förklara de drivkrafter som är inblandade (Illouz 2008, 2019). Detta är viktigt inte bara för att skapa förståelse för biokapitalism som manifestation av politisk och ekonomisk makt, utan också som symbol för drömmar om nya former för subjektivitet och gemenskap.

Rabinows (1992) begrepp bio-socialitet kan här vara behjälpligt. Det betonar de sociala aspekter som i ökande grad erkänns som del av vad ett kroppsligt tillstånd betyder. Rabinow betonar betydelsen av information och kommunikation för skapandet av sådan socialitet. Vi menar att bio-socialitet är centralt för de känslor och identiteter som självhjälpslitteraturen appellerar till. En sådan identitet utgörs av "den hälsomedvetna konsumenten" som länge varit en prioriterad position inom nyliberala diskurser (Lindberg & Lundgren 2021), och som understödjer biomedikalisering och biokapitalism genom referenser till vad konsumenter vill ha (Petersen & Seear 2009). En annan identitet som adresseras är den heterosexuella kvinnan med karriär, familj och socialt nätverk, en etablerad person mitt i livet med tillräckliga ekonomiska förutsättningar att genomföra de förändringar som föreskrivs (Riley et al. 2019). Identiteten kvinna är relaterad till en dubbeltydig feministisk position som balanserar mellan kollektiva

och individualistiska förhållningssätt; mellan tilltal som både betonar kvinnor som (underprivilegerad) grupp och som enskilda (handlingskraftiga) aktörer.

Självhjälpsböcker uppmanar läsaren att ta kontroll och utger sig tydligt för att bistå i kontrolltagandet. Detta erbjudande om hjälp till kontroll är inte unikt. Snarare uppvisar samtiden en mängd kulturella produkter som (delvis) tjänar samma syfte: träningsredskap, dieter, hälsopoddar, hälsokost olika typer av appar (fertilitetsappar, weightlossappar, träningsappar). Som produkter förenas de på två viktiga punkter. Å ena sidan går det att se dem som delaktiga i bemyndiganden av kvinnor som subjekt i sina egna liv. Å andra sidan går det att se dem som producenter av begärliga mål att sträva efter. Båda punkterna har en förändring av något som mål, företrädesvis i kvinnoidentifierade kroppar – inte minst har övergångsåldern konstruerats som riskfylld och i behov av åtgärder som en konsekvens av biomedikalisering (Morgan 1998; Lyons & Griffin 2003). På så vis erbjuder självhjälpsböcker som produkter inga neutrala teknologier, utan utgör sociokulturella artefakter (Lupton 2014), som erbjuder konkreta mål och uppmuntrar individen till specifik handling. Med uppmuntran, snarare än krav, presenterar självhjälpsböckerna sin kunskap som en gåva till och ett stöd för sina läsare. Författarna tjänar givetvis pengar och får erkännande för sin produktion, men de positionerar sig även som aktörer och medsystrar som vill läsaren väl. Detta sätter fingret på en dubbelhet som återkommer i vår analys, och som även genomsyrar själva frågan om hormonberättelsernas roll.

Material och metod:

självhjälpslitteratur som berättelse

Materialet består som nämnts av tre böcker som fokuserar på spänningsfältet mellan hormoner, kvinnor och klimakterium. Vi kunde ha inkluderat andra men har valt ut dessa tre böcker för att de på olika sätt balanserar mellan "biomedicinsk folkbildning" och kvinnopolitiskt tilltal, de representerar olika tyngdpunkter inom genren och tillhör

några av senaste tidens bokproduktion som nått många. Boken *Perimenopower* (2018) är skriven av Katarina Wilk och faktagranskad av överläkare Evelina Sande Idenfeldt, specialist inom gynekologi/obstetrik. Den är översatt till sju språk och utgiven i flera länder. *Livet med klimakteriet: hormoner, träning och välbefinnande* (2020) är skriven av Katarina Woxnerud. Hon är naprapat och verksam inom träning, yoga och utbildning, och har skrivit en rad böcker inom området livsstil och hälsa samt driver företaget Hela Kvinnans Klinik. Boken *Hormonstark* (2020) är skriven av bioteknikingenjören Martina Johansson, och har en mer generell ansats med bred information om hormoner. Denna bok är en i raden av publikationer om hormoner, kost och coaching av samma författare, däribland bästsäljande *Hormonbibeln* och *Hormonbibeln 2.0*. Johansson har under det senaste decenniet använt sig av sociala medier för sina budskap, och har en blogg där hon marknadsförs som representant för biohackingrörelsen – en rörelse som syftar till att ta kontroll över kroppen genom mätning och manipulation av biologiska system.

Vi tar oss an självhjälplitteraturen som berättelser i vid bemärkelse – som utsagor som *reflekterar* något och samtidigt *gör* något. I den förra bemärkelsen menar vi att sådana berättelser som slår an i en så bred läsekrets har något att säga om läsekretsens erfarenheter: att läsarna upplever att berättelserna fångar något som de själva varit eller är med om. I den senare bemärkelsen menar vi dock att sådana berättelser också är med och skapar just sådana erfarenheter. I denna bemärkelse kan berättelser ses som performativa såtillvida att de åstadkommer något och skapar betydelser. Med inspiration från Riessman (2008, 8) har vi utgått från att berättelser är "strategiska, funktionella och målmedvetna". Även när den som berättar en berättelse inte medvetet avser att skapa en viss betydelse, eller i vart fall inte alla de potentiella betydelser som ett narrativ kan härbärgera, så kan analysen av berättelsen synliggöra en sådan kvalitet i berättelsens struktur och innehåll (jfr Riessman 2015). Det går att utifrån ett kulturellt perspektiv säga något om textens potentiella ärende och möjligheter. Här har det också varit nödvändigt att beskriva de positioner

som berättelser gör tillgängliga och hur dessa associeras till mer eller mindre framgångsrika subjekt. Vi har inte utgått från några givna subjekt-positioner utan har i varje enskilt fall studerat hur aktörskap görs och var det förläggs. Vi vill betona att analysen inte handlar om huruvida hormonella obalanser påverkar någon eller inte. Det vi undersöker är hur hormoner dras in i en berättelse om det goda livet, och hur de görs kulturellt begripliga i denna. Särskilt fokus har därvidlag riktats mot teoretiseringar av sammankopplingar av normativ kroppskontroll och individualiserande självstyre, där även begreppet biokapitalism varit fruktbart för analysen.

I det följande har vi utgått från och resonerat kring böckernas bärande teman och positioner, och satt dessa i relation till teorier om samtiden.

Biologiskt inbördeskrig

Perimenopower, *Livet med klimakteriet* och *Hormonstark* försöker på ett lättfattligt vis ringa in vad hormoner är och, och framför allt, vad de gör. Avsikten är att läsaren ska kunna lära sig mer och ta kommando över dem. Det konstateras tidigt i böckerna att det inte finns en utan ett oräkneligt antal hormoner som alla har effekter som få anar vidden av. Det faktum att samtliga böcker betonar vikten av kunskap om hormoner men att det är få som har den, positionerar läsaren inte bara i ett kollektiv av okunniga men vetgiriga kvinnor, utan gör också positioneringen trygg. Författarna intygar att de själva varit okunniga, men att de kommit till insikt och nu vill guida läsaren – och alla kvinnor – till samma klarhet som de själva fått eller tillägnat sig. Överhuvudtaget är samförståndsblinkningar (Wolanik Boström & Öhlander 2011) återkommande, och läsaren förväntas känna samhörighet med författarna och de väninnor som författarna ofta refererar till: kvinnor som alla skrattat uppsluppet åt beskrivningar av likartade symptom och erfarenheter, och som förfärats över hur lite de tidigare vetat om hormonerna i sina kroppar. Generellt betonar böckerna hur hormonnivåer kan förändras, antingen beroende på ålder och graviditet, eller beroende på livsstil. Även när

sådana förändringar beskrivs som naturliga, ses de också som potentiellt riskabla. Perioden som omfattar klimakteriet – preklimakterium, menopaus och postklimakterium – omtalas exempelvis som en period som för många kännetecknas av känslomässig "turbulens". Anledningar till detta uppges vara just sjunkande progesteron i förhållande till andra hormoner, däribland östrogen.

Den här obalansen mellan hormonerna kan ge en känsla av "gaspedalen i botten" för både kropp och sinne, och en känsla av oro. Det kan vara svårt att hitta bromsen och lugna ned systemet (Woxnerud 2020, 23).

Östrogen balanserar mot många hormoner som vi ska se, som progesteron, endorfiner, follikelstimulerande hormon liksom testosteron. Det är balansen mellan hormonerna som är viktigast för hur vi fungerar och hur vi mår (Woxnerud 2020, 28).

Beskrivningarna är ofta målande. Till skillnad från den balans som utmålas som det högt eftertraktade normaltillståndet utgörs klimakteriet av ett "hormonkaos". Hormonerna betar sig "okontrollerat", som "förvirrade höns" som "spjärnar emot". Under klimakteriet blir "hela systemet satt ur spel". Hormonerna "vägrar samarbeta", är "oförutsägbara", "svänger", går "bananas", och läsaren får veta att kvinnor måste "hjälpa dem på traven" för att de ska "hitta tillbaka till varandra" (Wilks 2018, 32–51). Genomgående beskrivs hormonerna som aktörer som trilskas. I detta narrativ positioneras de tänkta läsande kvinnorna som personer som riskerar att bli precis så förvirrade som sina hormoner – och därmed leva upp till stereotyper av kvinnor som yra höns. Valet av metaforer förbinder kvinnor och kvinnlighet med kropp, irrationalitet och känslsamhet (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). Metaforerna utgör ekon av Oudshoorns (1994) och Roberts (2006, 2007) forskning om hur hormoner blivit budbärare för kraftfulla idéer om "naturliga kön", och som del av en internaliserad misogyni erbjuds möjlighet att räddas från den

hormonella kvinnokroppen – att placera sig vid sidan av hormonkaoset och ta kontroll över det. Både problembeskrivningen och lösningen positionerar kvinnor inom ramen för en kropp/själdualism. De är kropp men också fångade i kroppen. Lösningen är att med rationellt agerande ta sig ur kroppens grepp. Att hormonerna beskrivs som aktörer bidrar till förståelser av det senare som en regelrätt kamp.

Humörsvägningar, att känna sig lite seg, eller att uppleva att tillvaron är tyngre ännu flera år efter att ha fött barn får sin förklaring genom beskrivningar som förklarar situationen i termer av "biologisk krigsföring" inuti kroppen, men som kroppens bärare gått ovetande om. Med krigsmetaforer beskrivs hur hormoner transporteras runt i blodet som små "arméer" (Wilks 2018, 30), och hur särskilt könshormonerna östrogen och progesteron, vilka ska vara ens "bästa vänner", ibland blir ens "värsta fiender", som ställer till "bråk" så att det blir "oro i hormonlägret" (ibid, 32). Inuti kroppen förs en "kamp", och det är effekterna av denna som får kvinnor att må dåligt. Krigsmetaforerna gör så att såväl klimakteriet som den kvinnliga kroppen ses som en konfliktzon, men kan samtidigt tolkas som att de begripliggör kvinnors agerande inom ramen för maskulint kodade och med aktörskap förbundna normer (Lazar 2009).

Men även om klimakteriets krigsliknande turbulens beskrivs som ett undantag som ska rättas till, så framställs den samtidigt som en naturlig process. Katarina Woxnerud beskriver den lättnad som kvinnor uttrycker när de förstår att de humörsvägningar eller den nedstämdhet de lidit av, som de trott haft att göra med andra saker, faktiskt "bara" var klimakteriet:

När kvinnorna hör talas om förklimakteriets möjliga förändringar blir det som en lättnad för dem: 'Aha, det var kanske förklimakteriet! Jag var inte tokig och det var inte min kropp som fastnat i amningshormonerna' (Woxnerud 2020, 23)

Författaren ger en kunskap som bjuder på avlastning. Upplevelser av att vara i konflikt med sin kropp blir förhoppningsvis mer lätthanterliga.

Erfarenheten görs naturlig (det är ingen sjukdom, och beror inte på att någon blivit "tokig") och detta innebär delvis att det ställs bortom den enskildes förmåga att påverka. Kroppen har sina faser. I förmedlandet och legitimeringen av detta görs känslouttryck såsom skratt och känslor såsom lättnad inte bara betydelsebärande utan också gemenskapande.

Återkommande tar böckerna dock upp att det inte finns några entydiga svar inom vetenskapen gällande vad som exakt beror på vad. Johansson (2020) går detaljerat in på neurohormoner (med fokus på hur kost och livsstil inverkar) och för resonemang om vad som påverkar humöret. Wilks och Woxnerud, som koncentrerar sina texter kring (pre)klimakterium, konstaterar att de inte kan ange en gräns för vilken specifik östrogennivå som påverkar humöret. Woxnerud lyfter dock fram att det finns vedertagen kunskap som bekräftar att östrogen har en positiv effekt på humöret – med hänvisning till att det påverkar serotonin, ett välkänt "må-bra och lyckohormon" med effekt på vitala funktioner såsom minne och inläring med mera. Men, om östrogen och serotonin är goda följeslagare, som vi uppmanas göra allt för att stötta, finns det ett annat hormon som är viktigt att hålla i schack, nämligen progesteronet. Det definieras som östrogenets "motpol" och associeras med "nedstämdhet och depression". I böckerna beskrivs detta hormon som en för många okänd och oberäknelig faktor vilken kan orsaka kraftigare humörsvängningar.

Det första hormonet som börjat minska under perimenopausen är progesteron. Många av de symptom som uppstår är på grund av en sjunkande progesteronnivå. Eller, om man ska vara noga: en sjunkande progesteronnivå i kombination med en hyfsat stabil östrogen. Vi får helt enkelt för lite progesteron i relation till hur mycket östrogen vi har kvar. De "normala" svängningarna som vi brukar ha under menscykeln är helt satta ur spel (Wilks 2018, 39)

Progesteronet verkar göra amygdala mer känslig så att den reagerar ännu snabbare.

Det här kan bidra till känslan av oro och rastlöshet liksom vissa oväntade humörsutbrott som kommer vid ovana situationer.

När progesteron bryts ned i kroppen kan restprodukterna bidra till en känsla av nedstämdhet och "blues". Det antas även ge en effekt på andra delar som har med vår vaksamhet mot fara att göra, liksom lugn-och-ro-system (Woxnerud 2020, 50).

Oväntat kraftig ilska eller sorg kan alltså bero på en nedsatt amygdala. I stället för att söka svar i sociala situationer – livets förändringar och andra kontextuella faktorer som har betydelse för upplevelser av oro, rädsla och rastlöshet – är förklaringsmodellen inriktad på att ge svar genom hänvisning till kroppens interna hormonella förändringsprocesser. Förklaringsmodellen förlägger upplevelser av olust, frustration och ilska bortom individuell och strukturell förskyllan. Den erbjuder en slags temporär patologisering, som omfamnar kraftiga känslor utan att uppmuntra till förändring av ohållbara livssituationer eller problematiska samhällsstrukturer. Det är budskap som ligger i linje med tidigare feministisk forskning om hur kvinnor reducerats och fortsätter att reduceras till hormonella, närmare bestämt "naturligt" hormonstyrda kroppar (Oudshoorn 1994; Roberts 2007).

Klimakterieobjekt

Annemarie Mol (2002) har beskrivit hur olika vetenskaper frammanar olika objekt, även om de benämner dem på samma sätt. I de här studerade böckerna framträder klimakteriet som två sådana skilda objekt: 1) Den aspekt av självhjälpsböckernas analys som handlar om att förklara och beskriva problemets ursprung avgränsar det huvudsakligen till det som händer i kroppen på hormonnivå, och mycket utrymme läggs på att beskriva hormoners funktioner och hur de relaterar till varandra. Definitionen av klimakterium riktar fokus mot processer som i praktiken är osynliga för ögat. Den förmedlade kunskapens objekt utgörs av ämnen och relationer på mikronivå, inuti kroppen, vilket

gör medicinsk expertis central – det är bara genom medicinsk provtagning som kunskapen kan erhållas. 2) För människor blir detta märkbart först genom dess effekter, eller rättare sagt, genom effekterna av obalanser och fluktuationer i hormonnivåer. För de beskrivna kvinnorna utgörs alltså kunskapens objekt av kroppar som får vallningar, humörsvängningar eller sömnsvårigheter och som slutligen slutar att menstruera. Klimakteriet går att se och känna för den som är mitt i det. För denna kunskap är erfarenheter centrala – det är människor som känner effekterna i sina kroppar. Även denna kunskap ägnas stort utrymme, och genom författarnas berättelser får läsaren stifta bekantskap med olika kvinnor som haft olika typer av symptom, och med vilka läsaren kan identifiera.

Mol (2002) menar dock att olika kunskaper om samma objekt kan stå delvis i konflikt med varandra, och att det som är det bästa att göra ur ett perspektiv inte alltid är förenligt med det som är bäst ur ett annat. Så, kan en sådan konflikt noteras i självhjälpsberättelserna?

Berättelserna om klimakteriet som förändringar på mikronivå respektive berättelser som handlar om mer förnimbara aspekter av kroppen och dess organ – svett, sömnsvårigheter och hjärtklappning – kan tyckas beskriva ett spänningsfält mellan helt olika förståelser. Men berättelserna har likheter. Båda positionerar kvinnor i klimakteriet som ett slags offer för kroppen. Det är hormonerna och kropparnas organ som utgör subjekten. Berättelsernas ordval frammanar, som nämnts ovan, hur hormoner (östrogen, testosteron och så vidare) är involverade i ett inbördeskrig: de bråkar, krigar och trilskas, och organen (svettkörtlarna, hjärnan) beter sig oberäkneligt och oönskat. Men i teorin kan båda berättelsernas producerade problem avhjälpas på samma sätt. Att vilja skapa balans i hormonnivåerna genom exempelvis specifik kost står inte i opposition till önskan om att slippa vallningar. Tvärtom. Det finns däremot ett perspektiv, som visserligen nämns men som inte tillskrivs betydelse i hormonberättelserna, vars lösning inte kan återfinnas i de föreslagna åtgärderna. Det handlar om betydelsen av det sociala, dvs den situation en kvinna i klimakteriet lever i. I stället är det inbördeskrigsmetaforer som hormonberättelserna betonar;

språkbruk och förklaringsmodeller begränsas till det som sker *inuti* kroppen, inte mellan kroppen och samhället utanför.

Båda berättelserna beskriver dock ett tillstånd som manar till handling. För samtidigt som turbulensen iscensätts som något närmast naturligt och delvis temporärt – som den enskilde kan notera för att därefter invänta att den ska upphöra – så vore en självhjälpsbok inte värd namnet om det inte också fanns en arsenal av förbättringsåtgärder.

Biohacking och normativ subjektivitet

Om det finns en berättelse i böckerna i vilken hormonerna positioneras som aktörer och kvinnor närmast som offer, så finns det också en parallell berättelse som handlar om hur denna relation kan förändras och förbättras. Förändringen går via den föreställda läsarens insikt om att deras upplevda problem inte alls behöver vara givna effekter av exempelvis åldrande, stressiga arbeten eller övervikt. Det kan också vara så att deras kroppar utgör ett "system som inte fungerar" men som via ny kunskap kan navigeras. Det är ett slags funktionalistisk förståelse som förespråkas där textens "du", den läsande och förmodade kvinnan, uppmanas att:

... bli den bästa versionen av dig själv. Om du ser kroppen som ett system av manipulerbara, kommunicerande enheter, kan du förstå vilket system som inte fungerar och varför det inte fungerar
(Johansson 2020, 5).

Inte sällan är de råd som ges direkt motiverade av forskning, exakta angivelser eller vetenskapligt associerade benämningar:

Ny forskning visar att tung styrketräning under 15 veckor kan minska vallningar med 44%!
(Woxnerud 2020, 33).

Om din insulin-, leptin-, och ghrelin trio är i balans så är din vikt också det. Om du har stor aptit och ofta är hungrig och sugen finns det goda skäl att tro att ditt leptin är satt ur spel. Det första du behöver göra då är att undvika alla livsmedel som du miss-tänker kapar din hjärna och får dig att vilja äta mer än du egentligen vill. (--) Idag är det sedan många år tillbaka vetenskaplig konsensus att insulinresistens och efterföljande komplikationer är en effekt av livsstilen (Johansson 2020, 54–58).

Detaljerad information om ämnen och processer på mikronivå erbjuds, men översätts snabbt till ett mer vardagligt och bildrikt språkbruk, där tidigare nämnda krigsmetaforer tydliggörs. Det tycks inte finnas några konflikter mellan de två perspektiven, utan detaljerade kunskaper om mikronivån översätts enkelt till vardagliga praktiker för läsarna att följa. Narrativet antyder att det gäller att navigera de hormoner och ämnen som får en att agera "fel" (i citatet ovan utgör "stor aptit" ett sådant fel) genom att "kapa din hjärna" och, exempelvis, få dig att "vilja äta mer än du egentligen vill" (Johansson 2020, 54).

Men det är inte primärt till sådant som könade, rasifierade och sexualiserade samhällsstrukturer materialiserade i konsumtionskultur, bantning, träning, dieter, plastikkirurgi etc. som ansvaret förläggs – vilket annars varit vanligt i feministisk forskning (se t.ex. Bordo 2003; Blackman 2008; Featherstone 2010; Harjunen & Kyrola 2017). Det är i stället hormonerna i läsarnas kroppar som beskrivs som aktörer som får dem att känna och agera som de gör, trots att det inte är bra och trots att det sker mot deras förmodade "egentliga" vilja – en vilja som råkar sammanfalla med rådande utseende- och hälsoideal.

Det finns ett drag i "hormonböckerna" som får återtagandet av kontroll över hormonerna att anta en närmast moralisk karaktär. Om hormonerna beskrivs som viktiga aktörer i skapandet av problematiska symptom, så är det läsaren – kvinnojaget – som framträder som det rättmätiga subjektet och ägaren av kroppen, den potentiella

hjalte som handböckerna stöttar, informerar, coachar och hejar på. Den molekylära navigering som föreslås – exempelvis genom att träna mer, ändra kosten, äta hormontillskott – görs alltså till normativa kontrollpraktiker. Att axla uppgiften blir ett sätt att arbeta inte bara med sin kvinnligt kodade kropp utan även med sin respektabilitet och klassposition. Men kontrollpraktikerna skrivs också fram som praktiker som ligger i det individuella subjektets intresse. I självhjälpsböckerna är det dock inte primärt kroppsideal som anges som den viktigaste drivkraften, utan måendet. Det är för att må bättre som kvinnor uppmanas att underkasta sig de föreslagna praktikerna för att kontrollera sina kaosartade hormonella inre och dess fysiska och mentala effekter. Detta sätt att motivera råden gör att de framträder som systemskapliga, snarare än patriarkala: författare och tänkta läsare förmodas helt enkelt dela vissa erfarenheter och önskemål som kvinnor. Men även om förbättrat välbefinnande snarare än utseende är målet för föreslagna åtgärder, så hänvisas det även till de positivt laddade normföljande effekter som åtgärderna också förväntas ge. I *Hormonstark* beskrivs hur de kvinnor som följer råden och förändrar sin livsstil kommer att få en större förståelse för sin kropp och hur den fungerar. Men där beskrivs också effekter som kan uppnås om "du" följer de olika råden:

- Sänka din fettprocent och få en mer tonad kropp utan att träna
- Veta hur du snabbast kan öka din styrka och få muskelvolym [...]
- Förstå ditt humör och mående, samt ta kontrollen över det
- Använda din nya kunskap om hormoner för att förbättra dina relationer
- Öka din mentala prestanda, viljestyrka, motivation och fokus
- Sänka din biologiska ålder och öka chanserna att få hålla dig frisk livet ut (Johansson 2020, 20–21).

Kontroll av kropp och beteenden är knappast något nytt och har beskrivits som en central dimension i själva civilisationsprocessen (Foucault

1979/1987). Under 1700- och 1800-talen fanns en rad externa sanktioner för reglering av kropp och känslor, där aga och annan kroppsbestrafning skapade beteendemässiga gränser (Elias 1991a–b). Idag finns kanske inte samma rigorösa yttre gränssättningar av en auktoritär makt. Däremot kan man med Foucault tala om en omfattande internaliserad disciplinering av jaget. Jag-kontroll och kontroll av andra fortgår förvisso, om än inte via sanktioner såsom kroppsbestrafning och explicita etikettsregler. Under modern och än mer senmodern tid har en intensifiering av en global kapitalism på ett avgörande sätt inverkat på hur människor uppfattar sig själva. Mot bakgrund av en dominerande liberal människosyn betonas idag vikten av att "ta ansvar" för sin kropp och sina känslor – och med detta för sitt liv.

I den studerade litteraturen är det i denna senare betydelse som kontroll måste förstås. Dock är den tydligare inriktad på att kontrollera namngivna men för ögat osynliga processer inuti kroppen. Uttrycket "biohacking" – som framför allt används i *Hormonstark* men vars innebörd är närvarande i samtliga böcker – är signifikativt. Biohacking innebär att individen tar kontroll över kroppen genom att manipulera de biologiska systemen med hjälp av medicinsk kunskap om hur de fungerar. På sin blogg "Next level biohacking" förklarar författaren till *Hormonstark*, Martina Johansson, hur hon kommit till rätta med egna besvär genom att använda sig av "diverse metabola fenomen", redovisade i detalj, för att förbättra sin "prestanda". Hon beskriver hur hon själv under tio år levt keto-gent, en kosthållning vilken hon förklarar som att hon äter "mycket fett, mindre protein och nästan inga kolhydrater" (Johansson 2020, 23). I *Hormonstark* legitimeras den här typen av närmast ingenjörsmässiga anslag genom att genealogier dras till såväl bibeln som modern science fiction.

Att förbättra och försköna sig själv har varit ett starkt intresse genom hela människans historia. Även tanken på att överskrida sina biologiska begränsningar har funnits länge, och dokumenterats i allt från Bibeln till modern science fiction (Johansson 2020, 9).

På bloggen "Next level biohacking" återfinns ett manifest där förhållningssättet inom biohacking preciseras:

Vi måste inte förbli desamma, eller bli lite sämre för varje år bara för att det är "normen". Vi vet att "norm" och "normalt" i ett samhälle som är sjukt inte är något att sträva efter.

Det är vad biohacking handlar om; insikten om att vi inte måste nöja oss, och att vi inte behöver vänta på någons tillåtelse för att bli den bästa versionen av oss själva (www.martinajohansson.se, 210611).

Framskrivandet och insäljandet av ett möjlighetsrum där läsarna kan ta kontroll och – om de lyckas med detta – förändra sig själva är inte enskilda praktiker utan har stöd av andra kulturella fenomen och produkter. I mobilens app-butiker finns appar att ladda ner för den som vill ha digitalt stöd i kampen mot de hormonella obalanserna, men också appar som erbjuder hormon-horoskop – för att förutspå humör och annat dag för dag. Böcker om antiinflammatorisk kost säljs med delvis samma syfte. Brodej (2018) har påpekat att hysteriseringen av kvinnan enligt Foucault ingått i ett slags repressivt maktutövande, där upplevt icke-ideala kvinnliga uttryck patologiserats och gjorts till föremål för förändrande insatser. Kanske kan hormonobalanser ses på samma sätt, som ett ord som pekar ut det vi inte vill kännas vid när ideala kvinnligheter skapas? Eller finns där flera lager?

Kvinnopolitiska paradoxer

En feministisk motsättning, eller åtminstone kvinnopolitiska paradoxer, synes framträda i självhjälplitteraturens hormonberättelser. De rymmer en vilja att åstadkomma förändring, både genom kunskapsförmedling och kunskapshöjande. Det senare omfattar såväl kvinnor själva som sjukvården som organisation. Berättelserna innehåller ofta en beskrivning av en situation där vården inte erkänner och känner igen kvinnors problem

på grund av bristande kunskaper, och hur kvinnor därför inte får den hjälp de är berättigade till och som de behöver. Den innehåller också brännande frågor om varför hormonbalanser normaliserats så till den grad att deras symptom ofta ingår i beskrivningar av normala förlopp, vare sig det gäller menstruationssmärter eller klimakteriebesvär. Denna diskussion känns igen från debatter om så kallade kvinnosjukdomar såsom endometriosis (se t.ex. Barry 2019; Young et al. 2019) och förlösningsskador (se t.ex. Lindqvist et al. 2019, Wallner 2022).

Flera forskare har betonat att självhjälpskulturen erbjuder möjligheter till frigörande lösningar (se t.ex. Russell Hoschchild 1994; Nelson 2019) mot bakgrund av en förtryckande kultur. I denna bemärkelse kan självhjälpplitteraturen vara viktig, såväl i dess bemyndiganden som i hur identifikation möjliggörs. Dess förmåga att utgöra en plats där kvinnors erfarenheter och problem tas på allvar och som också erbjuder hopp om förändring är betydande. Mot bakgrund av detta utgör självhjälpplitteraturens hormonberättelser viktiga synliggöranden som kanske skulle kunna bidra till förändringar i vårdens kunskaper och synsätt, och där personer med upplevda besvär, som förr setts som naturliga delar av kvinnors åldrande, kanske kan behandlas och få besvär avhjälpta.

Men även om betydelser av såväl strukturella som sociala fenomen nämns i den studerade litteraturen så sker det huvudsakligen i en slags kontextualiserande anda. Berättelserna väjer från att lyfta dessa nivåer som förklaringar. Framför allt undviker de att föreslå förändringspraktiker som vänder sig till och ställer krav på ändrade sociala villkor. De krav som ställs riktar in sig på den enskilda individen och blir därför aldrig kollektiva i syfte att förena kvinnor som grupp. Om det upprättas något systemskap är det mellan författaren som hjälpare och den läsande hjälpbehövande kvinnan, och det är inte en reciprok relation utan en som regleras av konsumtion (jämför Rapping 2001). Hormonberättelserna strävar inte heller efter att etablera samhällsförändringar. Primärt är det individuella kvinnor som stötts i sin önskan om att må bra genom att själva hantera hormonella effekter på deras liv och kroppar. Såväl

förklaringar som lösningar står att finna i den individuella kvinnokroppen liksom i den individuella kvinnans val av livsstil. Det är också primärt den individuella kvinnans välbefinnande och "bästa jag" som beskrivs som målen. Den feminism som skapas är i den meningen en populariserad form av kvinnopolitik som tycks syfta till att "stärka kvinnor", men som inte är nämnvärt intresserad av förändring av strukturer eller att närma sig vidare betydelser av kroppar, kön och reproduktiva funktioner.

Med vetskap om att många kvinnor är konsumenterna av självhjälpmedier och böcker med handfasta råd, har vissa genusforskare och feministerna också kommit att själva använda genren. *bell hooks* är kanske en av de mest namnkunniga som har använt självhjälpngenren för att nå en bredare publik (se *hooks* 1993, 2000). Med utgångspunkt i den klassiska devisen "det personliga är politiskt" visar *hooks* hur det "jag" som läsaren ska identifiera sig med i självhjälpstexter både är individuellt och kollektivt. I stället för att göra en skarp distinktion mellan samhälle och själv, som görs av de flesta självhjälpförfattare, visar *hooks* hur dessa i stället är nära inflettade med varandra (se Berg 2011; 2017). Strukturerna är inte bara något som finns utanför subjekten; det är även något som griper in och påverkar hur vi är och vilka erfarenheter vi går igenom. Genom att öka medvetenhet om hur rasism finns i samhället, hur den internaliseras och ingår i blicken på sig själv och andra, visar *hooks* hur enskilt lidande kan handla om mer än den enskilde. Det kanske inte gör att lidandet försvinner helt, men det kan skapa distans och lättnad snarare än att förstärka skam över utebliven glädje. Självhjälpberättelserna kan tyckas engagerade i detta mål genom att skapa ett slags bio-social igenkänning mellan läsaren och de kvinnliga erfarenheter som berättas (Rabinow 1982). Det finns gott om tillfällen då läsaren kan (och uppmuntras till att) känna lättnad över att inte vara ensam och hopp om att slippa besvär, som kanske oroar. Men i berättelserna om flukturerande hormoner och sätt att hantera dessa, lyser exempelvis den feministiska kritiken av normer rörande kvinnokroppars åldrande med sin frånvaro när den vetenskapligt medicinska inbäddningen

riktar sökljuset in i kropparna. Kroppars generella sårbarhet, åldrandets processer och sociala faktorer som likställer förändring med allvarliga problem ryms helt enkelt inte i förklaringsmodellerna som erbjuds i hormonlitteraturen.

Avslutningsvis

Klimakteriet utgör en period som huvudsakligen konstruerats inom ramen för biomedicinsk diskurs. Det har beskrivits som negativt laddat och emellanåt associerats med slutet på kvinnors fertila liv – ibland även slutet på deras sexualitet (Callahan 1993). Diskursen har mött kritik och klimakteriet har även uppmärksamats som kulturellt fenomen (Komesaroff, Rothfield & Daly 1997). Självhjälplitteraturens fokus på hormoner gör att den kritiserade biomedicinska diskursen både förskjuts och får förnyat fäste.

I en samtid präglad av nyliberalistiskt influerade subjektförståelser fungerar nya berättelser om hormoner som delar av ett större narrativ om den självständiga individen och hennes prestationer. Det narrativa förmedlar att vi – med de rätta kunskaperna och verktygen – kan förstå, kontrollera och styra våra kroppar (jfr Hamann 2009). Detta sätt att privatisera frågor och problem som tidigare utgjorde del av det offentliga är nyliberalismens etos och även en form av styrning. Den märks tydligt i självhjälpsindustrins lovsång till just självstyre. Tänker vi med Michel Foucault (1979) skulle vi kunna hävda att vi nu ser hur disciplinering breder ut sig genom internalisering.

Utan att ta ställning till självhjälplitteraturens hormonberättelser som entydigt förlösande eller entydigt problematiska går det att se hur de erbjuder attraktiva förklaringar till upplevelser, och hur de med mer eller mindre subtila medel formar självreglerande kroppar och subjekt – men också kvinnosubjekt som enas och stabiliseras av sitt förmodade begär efter denna typ av kunskap. Hormonberättelserna blir ofrånkomligen del i en biomedicinsk uppfattning om att behandla kroppar i syfte att optimera hälsa, som även reflekterar samhällsideal om självständiga, ansvarstagande friskhetsnormativa medborgare (se

Christensen-Strynø & Bruun Eriksen 2021, 50). I linje med vad Celia Roberts (2006, 55) konstaterat har primärt kvinnors hormonella kroppar fortsatt att vara något som de som "medborgare och patienter är uppmanade att göra något åt, i syfte att 'hjälpa sig själva'", och här är det fortsatt viktigt att påminna om den könade historien i omsorgsarbete – i vilket bekönade hormonella kroppar är en del (Roberts 2006).

Det finns en egenskap i hormonberättelsernas struktur som gör dem "strategiska, funktionella och målmedvetna", för att tala med Riessman (2008, 8). Genom en avancerad retorisk manöver förenas två centrala paradoxer i hormonböckerna. Den första paradoxen handlar om kvinnopositioneringar. Berättelserna skapar självhjälplitteraturens kunskaper som å ena sidan delaktiga i ett kvinnopolitiskt upplysningsprojekt och å andra sidan samtidigt underkommunicerar strukturella förklaringar; de tilltalar ett bio-socialt "kvinnokollektiv" men lösningarna och de förmodade drivkrafterna att konsumera litteraturen är individualistiska. Den andra paradoxen handlar om förståelser av normalitet och avvikelse. Berättelserna antyder att det är helt naturligt att hormonerna "svänger" under menopaus – det är en naturlig del av ett förväntat livslopp. Samtidigt förmedlas att hormoner ändå lätt svänger på ett obalanserat, oönskat och avvikande sätt i förhållande till ett påstått balanserat åldrande. Synen på åldrande är alltså både normativ och konstruktivistisk – det finns ett förväntat sätt att åldras som läsaren har att förhålla sig till. Att hamna i en osynkroniserad relation till denna livslinje är förvisso också "normalt" i en turbulent fas (Ambjörnsson & Jönsson 2010), men uppdraget är att med hjälp av molekyllär navigering se till att kroppen hamnar rätt igen.

Under de senaste århundradena har den globala kapitalismen haft en genomgripande betydelse för hur människor ser på sig själva, andra och världen. Idén att var och en ska kunna skapa sina drömmars liv förmedlar en bild av människor som både investerare och "humankapital" (Rimke 2010). Det handlar inte bara om företagande och att bli en god entreprenör – nej, människor förväntas vilja konstruera sig själva som representativa, välmående subjekt som återspeglar produktivitet

och mervärde (McGee 2005). De förväntas till och med redan vara sådana subjekt. Vad gäller självhjälplitteraturens hormonberättelser finns det ett "always already" som antyder att målet med självhjälpen är att nå *tillbaka till en balanserad biologi*. Detta resonemang pekar ut obalanser och dåligmående som något som inte är en del av det "rätta" subjektet, samtidigt som det skapar just detta rätta subjekt – ett kvinnosubjekt som förtjänar balans och har förmåga att (åter)skapa den. Det hyllande av normativa kroppar som emellanåt skymtar i den studerade litteraturen antyder också balansens unga ålder; klimakteriet beskrivs utan tvekan som en övergångsålder, men idealet är ändå att inte så mycket ska behöva ändras.

Resonemanget gör även mer. Det tar udden av kritik som skulle kunna riktas mot biomedikalisering och en industri som kräver förändring av kroppar (Berg & Linander 2022). Här innebär förändring i många fall att kvinnor når egenskaper som de redan anses ha, men som hormonella obalanser dolt. Samtidigt förläggs ansvaret för denna förändring mot välmående och självoptimering till kvinnorna själva. Att lära sig att kontrollera sina "inre biologiska processer" blir en del av att både välja sitt liv och ta ett samhällsansvar, och fortsätta att ta ett reproduktivt ansvar.

De populärvetenskapliga böckerna om hormoner kan situeras i självhjälpsgenren, och det råder inga tvivel om att de utgör ett självklart bidrag inom det som internationellt kallas för wellness industry. Men hur kan det kopplas till biokapitalism? Det menar vi blir tydligt om vi ser till böckernas innehåll. Den bioteknologiska epistemologin som förstår livet som en form av biologiska data (Franklin 2013) är central för narrativen. Den innebär en instrumentalisering av liv som avgränsar, till och med förhindrar, möjligheter till andra affektiva relationer där kroppar påverkar och påverkas av världen runtomkring dem. Östrogen, serotonin, progesteron och amygdala med mera har huvudrollen i dessa narrativ, och hanteras som materia som är möjligt (för att inte säga nödvändigt) att manipulera och konsumera. Det handlar inte enbart om den biomedicinska diskurs som länge dominerat såväl forskning (Dickson 1993) som självhjälplitteratur (Lyons & Griffin 2003) om

klimakteriet, utan även om hur bioteknologi har blivit detsamma som att instrumentalisera livet utifrån ett antagande om att biologi i sig själv är en teknologi som är modifierbar (Thacker 2003). Kunskap om hormoners påverkan på människokroppar saknas säkerligen av många, och vi avser alltså inte att förringa upplevelser av fluktuationer som ger ovälkomna effekter på en rad olika sätt. Det vi dock ser i dessa självhjälpsmedier är att de uppfyller genrens vardagliga råd om sömn, kost och motion och så vidare, men också att de identifierar åldrande kroppar, företrädesvis post-menstruerande kroppar, som ett vedertaget problem. Den föränderliga biologin ges olika värden, och gränserna mellan subjekt och objekt suddas ut. I enlighet med Nikolas Rose (2001) kan vi se hur den klassiska distinktionen mellan det som inte är mänskligt, möjligt att kommodifiera och äga, och det som är mänskligt och som enligt moralfilosofin inte ska vara legitimt att kommodifiera blir instabil, för att inte säga upplöst (Rose 2001). Här uppmanas till modifiering av kroppar, ända ned på molekylnivå.

I studier av hormoners historia påtalas gång på gång hur upptäckten av hormoner och intresset för dessa egentligen sällan förändrat förståelser av kvinnokroppar på någon fundamental nivå. Dessutom framgår det att det generellt fokuseras mest på så kallade könshormoner (Oudshoorn 1994; Roberts 2007). Betydelser knutna till äldre sjukdomsbeskrivningar som hysteri har fortsatt att göra sig gällande – men med ny vokabulär (Hausman 1999; Koerber 2018). Med begreppet topologi synliggör Amy Koerber centrala moment i omformuleringen från hysteri till hormoner, med betoning på hur den medicinska diskursens historia om kvinnokroppar snarast har snurrat några varv och vridit sig i motsatt riktning – och reducerat snarare än vidgat föreställningar om kön och kropp (Koerber 2018). Spår av detta återfinns även i samtida hormonböcker. I gränslandet mellan omsorg, fostran och ingenjörskonst återfinns självhjälplitteraturens hormonberättelser med traderade idéer om kropp, kön och drömmar om omprogrammering av åldrande post-menstruerande kroppar, vilka inte låter sig stabiliseras.

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Gendering hatred – Adding ‘gender’ to the hate crime equation?

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Abstract

Drawing on insights from human rights law, femicide laws, and hate crime studies, this article discusses the viability of including ‘gender’ in hate crime legislation, and the extent to which a legal approach of ‘gender-based hate crimes’ could serve a more efficient response to the global prevalence of violence against women than similar types of legal measurements. The article argues that although there are sound principal reasons for including ‘gender’ in hate crime legislation, its inclusion is complicated by substantial conceptual and practical challenges, motivating instead a plethora of legal and non-legal approaches to counter and combat systemic violence against women.

KEYWORDS: Hate crime, law, femicide, violence against women, gender-based crime.

In the early hours of a Sunday morning in February of 2022, nursing student Mia Skadhaug Stevn left behind the buzzing bars of one of the liveliest streets in Denmark after a night out with friends. Mia never returned home. Instead, her body was found a few days later, scattered in the nearby woods. In the wake of Mia's murder, a national debate arose in Denmark about women, like Mia, that never return home because they are assaulted and murdered. On social media, this debate revitalized the popular hashtag #TextMeWhenYouGetHome that had spread after the murder of British Sarah Everard, approximately a year before. A Danish survey, made just days after Mia's remains were found, indicated that 61% of female respondents fear getting assaulted if they are to return home alone after a night out, and that they generally avoid doing so (68%). Danish Minister of Gender Equality, Trine Bramsen, thus promised a political plan of action, stating that *"We have a problem with women being killed because they are women, and we have to do something about that"* (TV2 2022).

Notably, only a few months earlier, Danish lawmakers had passed a series of law changes that incorporated the terms of "gender identity", "gender characteristics", and "gender expression" into a number of Danish laws. Among these was an inclusion of the forementioned terms into the otherwise fairly limited number of explicated victim categories that enjoy protection against the type of offences popularly known as *hate crimes*; crimes that activate the aggravating circumstance clause in the Danish Criminal Code's § 81.6 that allows for sentence enhancement when criminal offences *"have background in"* specific aspects of the victim's identity, e.g. *"ethnic origin"* or *"sexuality."* The decision to expand the hate crime provision had long been debated in Denmark, but eventually gained traction after a citizens' proposal, supporting the inclusion of "gender expression," had gathered the obligatory 50.000 public votes to proceed to mandatory deliberation in Danish Parliament. In addition to fulfilling this popular demand among the general public, the change was also commended by the Danish Institute for Human Rights as well as LGBT+ Denmark that had both advocated the change.

And yet, not everyone was entirely eager to celebrate the expansion of the Danish hate crime provision. Thus, renowned Professor of Law, Kirsten Ketscher, remained hesitant:

This change does not make me rejoice (...) Had 'gender' instead been incorporated into the legal definition, it would have included a wider group of predominantly women that are subjected to hate crimes in the form of physical, psychological, and verbal assaults from men. But this group is continuously being overlooked
(DR 2022, author's translation)

If it remains to be seen how the terms will ultimately be interpreted in Danish legal practice, Ketscher's critique echoes a wider emerging concern of hate crime legislation: Namely that, whilst we see an increasing recognition of minority statuses in hate crime laws as part of a solidification of hate crime discourse across the world, it would appear that heterosexual and/or cis-gender women are, somewhat consistently, left out of this equation (Haynes & Schweppe 2020; Perry 2001; Mason et al. 2017). Hence, as noted by Mason-Bish (2014), although high profile cases of violence against women regularly demand popular attention, like the murder of Mia, the role of gender-based hatred as an element of such crimes has frequently passed *"unnoticed by the media and policy makers"* (Mason-Bish 2014, 170). Within hate crime scholarship, 'gender' has also remained largely on the margins, often left under-researched or entirely overlooked (Mason-Bish 2014, 170; Iganski & Levin 2015, 28). When gender is not ignored, opinions on whether to include the category are divided. Some scholars thus argue that crimes against women have comparable effects to that of already-recognized hate crimes, constituting a form of hatemongering (Card 1996) insofar that women sustain more severe injuries, are targeted by a wider array of crimes, and are regularly perceived easier victims (Mason-Bish 2014; Perry 2013; Iganski & Levin 2015; Benier 2016). Conversely, however, it is a common concern that the inclusion of 'gender' might "water down" hate crime

legislation as women make up half the population, thus hard to identify as a separate victim strand (Jacobs & Potter 1998, 167; Mason-Bish 2014, 176-177). While the jury is arguably still out on ‘gender’ within academic discussions, sociolegal realities are at least as indecisive, albeit in different ways. On the one hand, one can then observe a growing global awareness of gender-based violence as an area of legal policy, regularly presupposing public demands for explicitly legal responses to violence against women (Walklate et al. 2020). On the other hand, legal efforts have rarely proved adequately efficient and so the prevalence of violence against women remains (Smart 2019).

This returns us to the general question: Should hate crime legislation in fact entail protection of ‘gender,’ or even explicitly ‘female gender,’ to serve as a legal tool to handle violence against women? Hence, even if ‘gender’ is perhaps decreasingly overlooked as a source of victimization as evidenced by the Danish debates, we still have limited knowledge as to the viability of a hate crime approach as a legal response to structural violence against women. Even in countries like Denmark, characterized by high levels of gender equality, we are thus left with scarce insights into the extent and the implications of the particular threat that hate crimes pose to females (Perry 2013). This paper will therefore embark on a preliminary theoretical exploration of *gender-based hate crimes* as a legal response to the prevalence of violence against women in Denmark and beyond, collating insights on hate crime approaches with that of gender-specific legal responses, especially femicide laws. I argue that while there are indeed good principal reasons for including ‘gender’ in hate crime legislation, as this would serve a much-needed symbolic stance to condemn structural victimization of women, an array of challenges will inevitably arise. Namely, I identify two major sets of challenges, *conceptual* and *practical*, that will have to be taken into consideration if adding ‘gender’ to the hate crime equation; challenges that disclose overlapping intricacies of legal approaches to ‘identity’ as such, and to ‘gender’ in particular, and reveal a general conundrum of ensuring not

only *symbolic impact* but also *practical impact* of legal responses to systemic gender-based crime.

The global prevalence of violence against women

The WHO estimates that, globally, one in three women is subjected to physical or sexual violence during the course of their lifetime, constituting “a major public health problem” (WHO 2021). The Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS) concurs, establishing that violence against women poses “one of the most widespread violations of human rights”, affecting females from every race, every culture, and of every age (ACUNS 2014). According to Weil et al. (2018), although violence against women is thus largely recognized as a global human rights issue, the phenomenon has historically remained strangely invisible, and efforts of combatting it have often remained a low priority in practice (Weil et al. 2018, 2-5, 18). As such, the objective reality continues to be that many crimes against women go unpunished across the globe (ACUNS 2014).

In international lingua, violence against women is increasingly captured through the emergent term of *gender-based violence*. Hence, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) defines violence against women to be “any act of *gender-based violence* that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty” (UN 1993). As noted by Boyle (2019), although ‘gender-based violence’ is mainly equated with violence against women, the term has also occasionally been accepted to encompass violence against children (Boyle 2019, 19, 25-26). Another increasingly prevalent term is that of *femicide*, correlating female gender with homicide. Originally introduced in Latin America as the dual concepts of *femicidio*, denoting individual killings of females “*motivated by hatred, contempt, pleasure, or a sense of woman ownership* (...) because they are female” (Radford & Russell 1992), and *feminicidio*, specifically referring to states’ complicity in

the prevalence of such killings (Lagarde 2006), the general term of femicide has been gradually embraced worldwide (Neumann 2022, 140-141).

Naturally, a major focus point of the pre-occupation with ‘gender-based violence’ concerns the disproportionate victimization of females, but it also often involves an emphasis on the disproportionality of male perpetrators. Hence, as noted by the WHO, violence against women is generally committed by males (WHO 2021), and women are, habitually and consistently, murdered by men (Smith 2018, 168). According to Boyle, this implies a recognition of “*the broader social meaning of the abuse: that women are targeted because they are women*” (Boyle 2019, 23). Traditionally, *gender-based crimes* have been encircled by e.g. women’s vulnerability to sexual harassment (MacKinnon 1979), rape (Card 1996), and coercive control (Stark 2009). More recent areas of study include women’s vulnerability to anti-feminist assaults (Haynes & Schweppe 2020), honour-based violence (Gorar 2021), and technology-facilitated sexual abuse (Henry & Powell 2015). More than anything however, violence against women has been associated with *intimate partner violence*, encompassing sexual and non-sexual forms of violence perpetrated by the victim’s partner or former partner (Smith 2018, 161). This emphasis is by no means coincidental. Thus, the WHO notes that intimate partner violence affects approximately 27% of all females aged 15-49, with 38% of murders of women committed by an intimate partner (WHO 2021). A 2012 global study by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) likewise indicates that the vast majority of homicides committed in domestic settings involves female victims. Hence, nearly 50% of all homicides of females are committed domestically, as opposed to only 6% for males. This means that, every day, 137 women are killed by an intimate partner or family member (UNODC 2012).

Although violence against women is clearly a global phenomenon, it does vary regionally. In Europe specifically, 22% of women experience violence (WHO 2021). Markedly, while homicide rates are generally declining in Europe, the number of homicides of women remains fairly stable (Weil et

al. 2018, 11). As noted by Walklate et. al. (2020), violence against women thus apparently persists “*even in countries that enjoy high levels of gender equality*” (Walklate et al. 2020, 9-10). This is particularly visible in Scandinavia, often referred to as “*the Nordic Paradox*” (Rantala 2019, 130), where countries like Sweden, Finland, and Denmark consistently display high levels of societal gender equality yet this does not seem to significantly reduce the prevalence of violence against women. In fact, some have argued that higher levels of publicly recognized gender equality may even produce a backlash against women in domestic contexts (Smith 2018, 161). A 2012 survey from the European Union’s Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) thus also placed Denmark in an unfortunate 1st place among European countries with a staggering 52% of Danish females reporting to have suffered violence since the age of 15. Finland and Sweden placed 2nd and 3rd with respectively 47% and 46% (FRA 2012). Paradoxically, the same three countries simultaneously topped the European indexes on gender equality – and remain to do so (FRA 2012; EIGE 2021).

Formulating legal responses to gender-based crime: From human rights law to femicide laws

If these data evidently show that violence against women, including the most fatal kinds, is a systemic issue of immense magnitude, both globally and in Europe specifically, another question is if its general definition as *gender-based crime* may meaningfully coincide with a formal legal definition of *gender-based hate crime*, as is the focus of this exploration. One of the key tasks here involves tackling the risk of both under-including and over-including, potentially stretching definitions too far, or not stretching them far enough (Boyle 2019, 28). Initially, it would appear that gender-based crimes, insomuch that these target women “*because they are women*” (ibid., 23), readily tantamount with an effective denotation of hate crimes as “*targeted violence*” (Stanko 2001). However,

since few countries in fact monitor and report hate crime incidents explicitly against women (Perry 2013, 4-5), our knowledge on the possible correlation between female gender and subjection to hate crimes is somewhat vague. In Europe, the lack of legal uniformity has been attempted reduced by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) through a joint European definition of hate crimes as constituted criminal offences motivated by “*intolerance, stereotypes, or hatred*” including that based on the victim’s “*gender*”. However, despite these efforts, approaches to ‘gender-based hate crimes’ vary greatly in individual European countries, and in many cases, ‘gender’ is entirely absent from European hate crime laws (Mason et al. 2017, 54; Mason-Bish 2014, 170). Denmark is no exception in this regard. Hence, hate crimes according to ‘gender’ have not traditionally been recorded by Danish police. Before the forementioned law change, Denmark was thus among the numerous European countries that, despite the OSCE definition, had not adopted ‘gender’ (in any form) in its national hate crime legislation. The country has also yet to join the group of countries that report gender-based hate crimes to the OSCE, which in the most recent OSCE report only counted around ten countries, two of them being non-European nations, Canada and the United States (OSCE 2020). This is although national surveys indicate that ‘gender’ is in fact the identity aspect that makes Danes feel the most vulnerable to crime, with Danish females generally feeling more vulnerable than males and more often taking precautions as to avoid victimization (The Danish Ministry of Justice 2019), and although far more Danish females report being victimized by gender-motivated crimes than Danish males, and more often report experiences of violence in relation to such crimes (COWI 2016).

If evaluations on gender-based hate crime approaches remain limited in Denmark and in many other countries, it is worth noting that these are neither the first nor the only potential legal response to violence against women. Thus, hate crime legislation is pre-dated by numerous other legal approaches to gender-based crime (Mason-Bish 2014, 173) which may contribute to an

illumination of the efficiency of specific legal responses to violence against women. Markedly, ‘gender’ itself serves as a site of pre-existing legal struggles, just as ‘law’ serves as a site of ongoing gender struggles. As once argued by Smart (1989), we should therefore recognize the legal domain as constituting just as much a discursive site upon which ‘gender’ is exposed and contested, as it does a pragmatic tool of legal reform that may be mobilized for gender-related causes (Smart 2019, x). Shepherd (2019) elaborates on this, noting that particularly processes of making and enforcing legislation involve continuous interpretation of ‘gender,’ constructing “*horizons of possibility*” of specific gendered issues. In effect, the legal realm of gender-based crime will then inevitably be “*a site of politics*” (Shepherd 2019, 3-4), habitually exhibiting interplays between states, international organizations, and political and social movements (Moral & Neumann 2018, 454-455).

One of the most evident legal approaches to protection of ‘gender’ can be found within *human rights law* where international and regional human rights treaties and conventions serve to specifically protect women against discrimination, abuse, and, on occasion, gender-based violence. These include the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1980), its Optional Protocol (Op-CEDAW), and the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW) (1993). Regional documents include the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (1994) and The Council of Europe’s Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (2011), known as the Istanbul Convention. While it is true that human rights can provide a form of “*global script*” for domestic legal approaches (Moral & Neumann 2018, 456-457), it is, however, worth mentioning that human rights documents involve varying levels of legal obligation and enforceability. Namely, human rights documents are often only legally binding for the states that ratify them, or they are mostly declaratory forms of soft law (Moral & Neumann 2018, 457; Weil et al. 2018,

8). Accordingly, if international human rights approaches can certainly be symbolically important responses to ‘gender-based crime’, imposing an initial state responsibility, they are rarely adequate responses in and of themselves, seldomly stipulating the content of this responsibility (Moral & Neumann 2018, 453). Therefore, human rights approaches must generally be supported by domestic legal measures.

Among the most notable of such domestic responses to gender-based crime is, arguably, the adoption of so-called *femicide laws*, underscoring, according to Toledo (2019), “a growing conception that states themselves hold a significant responsibility for actively countering violence against women as an explicated form of crime” (Toledo 2019, 40). Over the past 10-15 years, the Latin American region has thus been the epicentre of a wave of specialized femicide laws that, in various ways, pose legal responses to the region’s excessively high numbers of violent crimes against women (Toledo 2019, 39; Moral & Neumann 2018, 452). Most of these laws impose stricter punishments on individual cases of femicidio, whereas a smaller number go further in legally addressing feminicidio (Neumann 2022, 140-141). The latter especially stems from mobilized efforts of local feminist movements that have petitioned for further state responsibility for the perpetuation of gender-based violence (Moral & Neumann 2018, 452). While femicide laws have been codified in almost 20 countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Mexico, Chile, Brazil, and Columbia, the content of the individual femicide laws do however differ greatly and are generally inconsistent across the region (Neumann 2022, 140-141; Toledo 2019, 43; Moral & Neumann 2018, 453).

If most feminist organizations largely consider the introduction of femicide laws to be an outright triumph for women’s rights, the reality is, according to scholars, far more complex. In many cases, femicide laws have thus hardly had the effects that was originally hoped, often proving inefficient or insufficiently enforced (Toledo 2019; Moral & Neumann 2018). One of the key challenges is, according to Toledo, that femicide provisions fail to gain legal impact:

Laws criminalising femicide often use words or expressions that are very difficult for legal practitioners, prosecutors, and the judiciary to interpret and apply. Some laws refer to a certain, specific mental state of the perpetrator, such as misogyny. Some say the crime is committed for gender-related reasons or because the victim is a woman. Some refer – as an element of the crime – to the context of unequal power relations between men and women. But all these expressions lead to serious problems of interpretation as they lack legal definitions and may not fulfil the precision required by the principle of legality. In practice, these difficulties may result in the laws not being implemented (Toledo 2019, 44-45)

Alongside interpretative challenges, Toledo notes, prosecutors frequently lack the very incentive to litigate a case of femicide insomuch that it is typically harder to prove and more time-consuming to substantiate yet rarely results in significantly higher sentences than regular homicide (Toledo 2019, 46). Neumann (2022) also identifies that femicides are often only sporadically counted and reported and argues that some Latin American states have either deliberately or incidentally minimized their own femicide laws by failing to strengthen, in some cases even reducing, police efforts of investigating femicides under the guise of a formally heightened response (Neumann 2022, 150-152). Similarly, Moral & Neumann (2018) contend that the successes of femicide laws have often been short-lived or highly compromised as the laws’ “transformative potential has been perverted in practice” (Moral & Neumann 2018, 453). Although it cannot unequivocally be concluded that femicide laws have outright worsened social conditions for women, Toledo argues that conditions are not improving either, yet the passing of the laws has significantly lessened the previously strong public attention surrounding the issue (Toledo 2019, 50). In this sense, states have sometimes implemented femicide laws out of sheer political convenience, apparently supporting a popular cause but “without committing to any more fundamental changes”; Though

laws have given an impression of a strong political stance, they have then merely constituted a viable response “*on paper*” (ibid., 43).

A principal defence of ‘gender-based hate crimes’

If neither human rights approaches nor femicide laws have been definitively efficient in handling gender-based violence against women, the question is if a gender-based hate crime approach would fare any better as a legal response in Denmark and beyond. Before turning to the legal challenges herein, I would argue that there are in fact very solid principal arguments for deploying a hate crime approach as a response to violence against women.

An initial argument in favour of a hate crime approach is in acknowledgement that gender-based crimes may be regarded messages of intimidation with corrective implications for women as such. In hate crime scholarship, there is thus consensus that hate crimes are, fundamentally, *message crimes* (Dixon & Gadd 2006) insofar that they send a message to not just the victim but also to the victim’s perceived group of association, reaffirming specific social hierarchies (Perry & Olsson 2009). In the case of violence against women, the prevalence of victimization may be viewed as messages of intimidation that aim at maintaining women in subordinated positions and serve to police their behaviours (Perry 2013, 5-6; Iganski & Levin 2015, 32-34; Haynes & Schweppe 2020, 281). Correspondingly, Card (1996) argues that rape and other forms of sexual violence against women are *instruments of domestication*, motivating females to seek male protection, deeply influencing their identities and behaviours, as well as a *terroristic instrument*, targeting not only the immediate victim but also other potential victims, motivating these to show compliance to avoid similar fates (Card 1996, 6-7, 11). Hence, if Danish women were more fearful of assaults after Mia’s murder, it may be explained by the *in terrorem* effects that hate crimes can cause in others than the immediate victim (Perry & Alvi 2012).

A second argument in favour of including ‘gender’ is that, like other forms of hate crime, gender-based crimes may be considered to be particularly *harmful*, therefore in need of expansive legislative approaches (Walters 2018, 56). Iganski (2001) famously argues that hate crimes produce “*waves of harm*”, creating “*a ripple effect*” that potentially extends from the immediate victim, over the victim’s neighbourhood, the general community, and all the way to society at large (Iganski 2001). The adoption of hate crime legislation is then also habitually justified by a common, albeit not always fully explored, conception that hate crimes hurt more than other crimes (Stotzer & Sabagala 2020, 252). According to Walters (2018), hate crimes thus impose “*an exceptional set of challenges*” likely to impact “*the emotional and physical well-being*” of both direct and indirect victims (Walters 2018, 56-59). Stotzer & Sabagala concur, contending that numerous studies substantiate the claim that direct victims of hate crimes are more likely to report greater physical and psychological injuries than victims of similar crimes, and that these harms often last longer, and persist regardless of whether victims were targeted for their actual identity or if they were mistaken for another by the perpetrator (Stotzer & Sabagala 2020, 252-261). Like direct victims, indirect victims may also experience a reduced sense of personal safety, increased fearfulness, and decreased trust in public systems and in the police (Walters 2018; Stotzer & Sabagala 2020; Iganski & Levin 2015). Consequently, indirect victims too may fundamentally change their behaviours in the wake of hate crimes – self-isolating, self-segregating, withdrawing from public society, or self-restricting personal movement (Perry & Olsson 2009; Perry 2013; Iganski & Levin 2015; Stotzer & Sabagala 2020). Reconsidering the results of the Danish survey conducted after the publicized murder of Mia, this can explain why one woman’s murder affects other women’s sense of personal security, even to the point that they alter their behaviour and take everyday precautions because of such fears.

What is arguably the common denominator of these two arguments is that including ‘gender’

as a victim category of hate crime legislation in Denmark, as suggested by Ketscher, would constitute an important symbolic recognition of the frequent risk of victimization, and the associated fear of victimization, that Danish women experience in the same manner as other vulnerable victim groups. Hence, Walters also maintains that one of the pivotal purposes of hate crime legislation is in fact to serve a symbolic message of condemnation to hate crime perpetrators (Walters 2018, 57); a communication on “*what is to be tolerated*” (Perry & Olsson 2009: 189). If hate crimes themselves thus constitute harmful messages of intimidation and correction to females, a recognition of gender-based hate crimes could conversely send “*an equally strong message*” (Mason-Bish 2014, 172), countering a historical tolerance of violence against women as ‘a natural condition’ (Card 1996, 14). Not too dissimilar from femicide laws, explicitly acknowledging gender-based hate crimes can thereby contribute to the important process of naming violence against women (Smith 2018, 162); of making these formerly invisible crimes plainly visible.

While there are then sound principal reasons to include ‘gender’ in hate crime legislation, as we have encountered in the Latin American femicide laws as well as more general human rights approaches, symbolic significance is, however, not identical to real-life efficiency. Hence, when it comes to law in particular, as Duff & Marshall (2018) rightly observe, good enough reason in principle does not always equate good enough reason in practice (Duff & Marshall 2018, 149). As part of this exploration of hate crime legislation as an alternative legal response to violence against women, I will therefore outline two major sets of challenges that each profoundly affect the viability of a gender-based hate crime approach.

Conceptual challenges of ‘gender-based hate crimes’

In the case of femicide laws, Toledo and other scholars outlined a limitation of the laws to be a general lack of interpretative clarity, causing law

enforcement and legal practitioners to refrain from making efficient use of the provisions. Similarly, the first set of challenges that I want to emphasize in relation to a hate crime approach to gender-based crime is a comparable reality when circumscribing ‘hate crimes’. Thus, the concept of ‘hate crime’ is notoriously ambiguous, disclosing profound *conceptual challenges* that are only exacerbated when coupled with the much-disputed concept of ‘gender.’ Namely, to implement a viable legal strategy of gender-based hate crimes, we will both have to legally qualify the ‘hate’ in ‘hate crimes’ and then, secondly, qualify this elusive hate as ‘gender-based’ within an intricate web of competing gendered identity categories.

Noting the first challenge of conceptualizing ‘hate crime’, like femicide laws, hate crime legislation too originate in abstract human rights concepts (Chakraborti 2015). Beyond this, however, as noted by Mason et al. (2017), ‘hate crimes’ have no singular meaning. Rather, they rely on interpretations within specific criminal justice domains and popular contexts (Mason et al. 2017, 6). In academic conceptualizations, hate crimes generally revolve around the element of difference insofar that they are, according to Levin & McDevitt (2020), “*motivated either entirely or in part by a real or perceived difference between the perpetrator and the victim.*” In a formal legal setting, hate crimes are generally already-defined criminal offences, aggravated by some motivational relation to ‘hate’ or other biases (Levin & McDevitt 2020, 179-180). Relatedly, within hate crime scholarship, the concept of ‘hate crime’ has competed with similar terms such as *bias crime* or *targeted crime* (Hall 2005), yet ‘hate crime’ is clearly the one that has gained most popular traction (Mason et al. 2017, 29). When glancing over the Danish hate crime provision, alongside many other legal hate crime provisions, one will observe, however, that the term ‘hate’ is either completely absent, or it plays only a minor role. And there might be good reason for that since the ‘hate’ in ‘hate crime’ is heavily contested (Mason et al. 2017, 29). Hence, transplanting our common conceptions of ‘hate’ into a formal legal handling of criminal ‘hate crimes’ leaves both lawmakers and law enforcement with several

explanatory tasks: For instance, when does the ‘hate’ adequately prelude the violent criminal act, and how should law enforcement distinguish the myriad of negative emotions, that will likely occur in many intimate relations, from an outright ‘hateful motive’ (Levin & McDevitt 2020, 179; McCauley 2020, 45-46)? To accommodate this conceptual challenge, hate crime scholars have often defined the ‘hate’ in hate crime as a deliberate and conscious *motivation* rather than simply an *emotion*, as hate will usually denote “a motivational process driven by the goal of and desire to harming another” (Rempel & Sutherland 2020, 106, 113). However, according to Brudholm (2018), there may be good reason for remaining vigilant when it comes to the ‘hate’ in hate crimes altogether. In fact, the ‘hate’ may even potentially be a misnomer, misleading inasmuch that it “evokes the assumption that all hate crimes are motivated by or expressive of hatred,” although many crimes counted as hate crimes are “committed with little or no evidence of hatred” (Brudholm 2018, 53-54). Not too dissimilar from what has been observed by scholars in relation to femicide law enforcement, this lack of conceptual clarity affects the real-life interpretation of hate crime legislation in a variety of ways, including how hate crimes are identified, recorded, counted, and investigated (Mason et al. 2017).

As the Danish debate on the inclusion of ‘gender’ alludes to, it is, however, not only the concept of ‘hate crime’ itself that produces conceptual challenges to a gender-based hate crime approach to violence against women. It is also the addition of ‘gender’ specifically. Thus, when asked about Ketscher’s call for an explicit inclusion of ‘gender’, the political spokesperson of the governing party in Denmark responded that the inclusion of “gender identity” was devised to encompass the widest array of gender categories, including biological genders, meaning that women were not left out at all (DR 2022). This underscores that, inasmuch law always constitutes a site of politics, hate crime legislation is especially a site of *identity politics*. Hence, Jacobs & Potter (1998) also argue that hate crime legislation revolves around the mobilization of political support of including some identity categories over others, inherently a

process of inclusion and, particularly, of exclusion (Jacobs & Potter 1998, 165-166). When adding new victim categories to the mix, Mason-Bish notes, it will therefore typically engage “complex relationships between campaigners, policy makers and researchers” and political activism often plays a major role (Mason-Bish 2014, 170-175). Like femicide laws, hate crime legislations are then historically shaped by the successful, or unsuccessful, group advocacy of including certain identity categories rather than others (Mason et al. 2017, 51-52; Levin & McDevitt 2020, 181). When it comes ‘gender’ specifically, Ketscher is right to observe that both ‘gender,’ in general, and ‘female gender,’ in particular, have consistently struggled to gain inclusion. Mason-Bish thus notes that although gender is intuitively and popularly conceived an “obvious” intrinsic victim category, it is still continuously disregarded and exempted in many domestic hate crime legislations (Mason-Bish 2014, 169-170), often due to a lack political campaigning for its inclusion (ibid., 169-170, 178), a general conception that ‘gender’ is dealt with in other laws or by other identity categories (ibid., 171), or perceptions that women are not minorities, neither numerical nor communal (Mason-Bish 2014, 175-176; Stotzer & Sabagala 2020, 260; Haynes & Schweppe 2020, 78).

A very specific conceptual challenge that an inclusion of ‘gender’ in relation to responding to violence against women entails, is then also whether to emphasize ‘female gender’ specifically, or simply include ‘gender.’ Haynes & Schweppe (2020) discuss this particular challenge, arguing that while the exclusion of ‘gender’ in hate crime law remains “striking” (Haynes & Schweppe 2020, 278), one can observe a growing trend of advocating the inclusion of, explicitly, “misogynistic hate crimes” in several countries (ibid., 278-279). While Haynes & Schweppe agree that many crimes against women could legitimately be regarded misogynistic, when put into an explicitly legal context, an emphasis on female gender may collide with legal principles of equality in comparison with the content-neutral ‘gender’ (ibid., 284-290). In this sense, Haynes & Schweppe resonate potential conceptual criticisms of femicide law, insofar

the primacy of the ‘female gender’ of victims may impose an unfair presumption of guilt on those committing crimes against women (Toledo 2019, 46), but that it may also neglect other gendered identities of equally vulnerable victims. On the other hand, simply preferring ‘gender’ is by no means an unambiguously ideal alternative either if the aim is to combat systemic violence against women. Relevantly, Boyle argues that an equation of crimes against women with ‘gender-based crimes’ “*may appear as a compelling way to force such crimes into the public legislative agenda*” but runs the risk of disguising the specific role of ‘female gender’ (Boyle 2019, 23). To Boyle, the conflation of ‘female gender-based’ with ‘gender-based’ can thus erase “*important differences in terms of who is doing what to whom, in which contexts, to which effects, and to whose overall benefit*” (ibid., 32). When choosing how to conceptualize ‘gender’ in ‘gender-based hate crimes’, we are then faced with the difficult task of striking the right balance between naming the unfortunate “*everydayness*” of women’s experiences of violence without minimizing the severity nor the criminality of such experiences (ibid., 22).

Practical challenges of ‘gender-based hate crimes’

Conceptual ambiguities do not in themselves warrant that hate crime legislation could not constitute a viable legal response to gender-based crime. In the case of femicide laws, scholars did, however, also emphasize that the inefficiency of femicide laws is evidenced by a practical inability, or disinclination, of legal practitioners to enforce the provisions. When considering a hate crime approach to violence against women, we may therefore note that hate crime legislation too is associated with recurring practical challenges that can profoundly reduce its efficiency and implementation, causing laws to be disregarded due to lack of resources, influence, or knowledge (Perry & Olsson 2009, 188). Namely, according to Walters et al. (2018), hate crime legislation is utterly plagued by a deep “*justice gap*” insofar that many hate crimes “*may*

result in no justice at all” (Walters et al. 2018, 58). But why this practical inefficiency? And would it potentially render gender-based hate crimes an inefficient approach too?

When dealing with ‘gender-based crimes’ in general, it is worth noting that these will impose specific constraints on legal practitioners. First, for a crime to be ‘gender-based’, this will have to be demonstrated beyond the purely speculative (Heinze 2018), making probable a credible link between diverse individual experiences of crime, encountered by specific women, and wider structures of gender oppression that justify criminal liability, without automatically assuming the primacy of gender inequality across individual cases (Sokoloff & Dupont 2005, 43-45; Smith 2018, 159-160). Second, any legal evaluation must be able to tackle the role that intimacy regularly plays in crimes against women, neither allowing pre-established relationships between female victim and perpetrator to serve as legal excuses, ascribing women partial complicity for the violence committed against them (Howe & Alaattinoglu 2019), nor denying that personal relationships will complicate a legal distinction of crimes as explicitly ‘gender-based’ (Sokoloff & Dupont 2005, 59). In hate crimes in particular, traditionally relying on a concept of *interchangeability* insofar that crimes target specific identities rather than specific individuals, it can be especially hard to prove that the committed crime could just as easily have been committed against another woman (Mason-Bish 2014, 174). Finally, legal practitioners will have to tackle realities of *intersectionality*, as much violence against women involves numerous cross-cutting vulnerabilities (Grossman & Lundy 2007). Hence, even in cases of domestic violence, where gender inequality is frequently privileged as a primary explanation, here too ‘gender’ may intersect with other biases (Sokoloff & Dupont 2005, 43); as such, what will typically have to be captured is then the compounding effect of ‘gender’ on other vulnerable identity statuses, or vice versa (Mason-Bish 2014, 177).

Turning to hate crime legislation specifically, it arguably shares with femicide laws that its enforcement is riddled with substantial *prosecutorial*

challenges. Hence, hate crime prosecution often ends up suffering from the same ailments as femicide laws as legal practitioners struggle to translate ‘hate crime’ into legal argumentation, or they end up not doing so for pragmatic reasons (Perry & Samuels-Wortley 2021; Grattet & Jenness 2008; Mason et al. 2017). In ‘easy’ cases, proving bias relies on the perpetrator’s demonstrated use of slurs or denigrative language in relation to the offence (Levin & McDevitt 2020, 184), motivating Jacobs & Potter to argue that a perpetrator can “avoid the hate crime tariff by committing his crime silently” (Jacobs & Potter 1998, 162). In the many cases where perpetrators do not use explicit language, however, prosecutors will instead have to engage in time-consuming processes of establishing other links that might result in only smaller sentence enhancements, if any (Levin & McDevitt 2020, 184). Since ‘gender’ introduces a broader and more complex category than most other hate crimes, a major challenge to a successful implementation of ‘gender-based hate crimes’ is then that cases of such crimes might only rarely end up actually litigated. In Denmark, as well as in many other countries, this challenge is only substantiated by the already relatively sparse number of hate crime convictions.

If prosecuting gender-based crimes can be difficult, investigating these motives can be at least as challenging. Notably, hate crime scholarship has also focused extensively on the recurring challenges associated with *policing* hate crimes (Mason et al. 2017, 53), exposing what Mason et al. (2017) refer to as “an implementation gap” between hate crime policies and real-world policing of such (Mason et al. 2017, 62, 50; Levin & McDevitt 2020, 183; Perry & Samuels-Wortley 2021, 68-70). Similar to femicides, policing hate crimes has been known to be notoriously difficult (Mason et al. 2017, 54, 62; Perry & Samuels-Wortley 2021, 68). Particularly two problems can be drawn out that might challenge an approach of gender-based hate crimes. First, police appear to generally struggle to identify and distinguish hate crimes, as they, much like prosecution, struggle to interpret motives of ‘hate’ or ‘bias’ (Mason et al. 2017, 17-18, 56-58). In many cases, police will then refrain from

investigating such motives because they lack training in how to do so, it is too time-consuming, they lack resources, or the unlikelihood of prosecution demotivates it (Perry & Samuels-Wortley 2021, 76). Second, hate crimes are also consistently under-reported (Perry & Samuels-Wortley 2021; Mason et al. 2017; Walters et al. 2018; Levin & McDevitt 2020). Thus, if popular conceptions of hate crimes are increasingly expansive, as victims and communities call for hate crime charges to be laid, police often deploy restrictive conceptions due to the low margins of prosecutorial success (Perry & Samuels-Wortley 2021, 75-76; Mason et al. 2017, 16-17). This might cause tensions, even trust deficits, between police and the public, further demotivating reporting on both sides (Perry & Samuels-Wortley 2021, 75-76; Mason et al. 2017, 57-58). Considering gender-based crimes specifically, if hate crimes are generally *under-policed*, crimes against women are particularly under-policed (Cunneen 2001). Due to the complex nature of gender-based violence, especially when committed in domestic contexts, one could also readily fear that policing gender-based hate crimes will simply be too complex a task for police to lift if they already struggle to efficiently identify, distinguish, and investigate hate crimes as is.

Therefore, even if an inclusion of ‘gender’ in Danish hate crime legislation would surely constitute an important symbolic recognition of women’s experiences with, and fears of, violence, when faced with these pre-existing ‘gaps’ of hate crime law enforcement, we must also consider the imminent risk that such recognition could become, like that of femicide laws, largely “on paper”. As noted by Grattet & Jenness (2008), when implementing hate crime legislation of any kind, measures cannot be purely symbolic. We must also ensure their *instrumental* impact for them to be an efficient legal response (Grattet & Jenness 2008, 520-521). If what has made femicide provisions inefficient responses is that they have rarely been enforced in practice, gender-based hate crime provisions could suffer the same potential perils. In my opinion, the concerning drawbacks are here twofold. First, unenforceable hate crime provisions may cause additional harms if crimes have

been committed de jure, yet victims experience that, de facto, they cannot obtain legal redress for such crimes (Stotzer & Sabagala 2020, 262-263). Second, similar to scholars’ concerns about femicide laws muzzling complicated debates about violence against women, simply subsuming gender-based violence under a hate crime approach could result in underlying issues and complexities to be overlooked – without laws simultaneously gaining real-life impact (Mason-Bish 2014, 176). Hence, if legislative approaches are increasingly expansive, but law enforcement approaches remain restrictive (Mason et al. 2017, 57), adding ‘gender’ to the hate crime equation could end up further alienating unfulfilled victims lost in-between the gaps.

Adding ‘gender’ to the hate crime equation?

Violence against women is, indeed, a global issue and one that must ultimately be addressed globally (ACUNS 2014). However, locally as well as globally, formal approaches to violence against women increasingly take form of explicitly legal responses to gender-based crime. In part, this is a symbolic undertaking, contributing to a greater process of naming the historically invisible phenomenon of violence against women (Weil et al. 2018, 2), communicating condemnation of its prevalence. Yet, the task is also highly practical, since the responses we choose will affect how we handle, legislate, and respond to real-life violence (Boyle 2019, 20-22). Thus, if legal responses to gender-based crimes are only symbolic, and states implement them without being able or willing to enforce them comprehensively, they may become, as in the case of many femicide laws, “empty promises” (Moral & Neumann 2018, 453). And it would seem that legal responses to gender-based crime often fall into this exact pitfall; there appears to be a more general conundrum of ensuring not only symbolic impact of legal responses to systemic violence against women, but enduring practical impact as well.

This paper has suggested that, in the pursuit of qualifying gender-based hate crime legislation, such worries may be warranted. Hence, I have

argued that although there are very good principal reasons for implementing hate crime legislation that unequivocally includes ‘gender’, there are also substantial practical and conceptual challenges that, if left unrequited, might cause such a response to eventually prove inefficient. Since it is already an ailment of hate crime legislation that it is difficult to operationalize for police and legal practitioners, the broad and complex category of gender-based hate crimes could thus easily drop into the numerous gaps associated with hate crime law interpretation and enforcement. Despite an increasing public rallying around both general legal responses to crimes against women and around hate crime approaches especially, a vital question is then: Even if ‘gender’ is finally added to the hate crime equation, how do we ensure that such a measure gains instrumental impact?

A massive obstacle toward answering this question is that we know staggeringly little about gender-based hate crimes, as these are an under-examined area, undoubtedly in Denmark but also in the rest of the world (Mason-Bish 2014, 178). Inasmuch the conceptual and practical challenges presented in this paper serve as waypoints, we lack empirical knowledge on how these challenges translate into concrete local challenges of interpreting, policing, and prosecuting hate crimes - particularly if adding ‘gender’ to the mix, just as we lack insights into the effects of hate crime legislation and its ability to grasp with the interpersonal contexts that frequently enclose violence against women (Jacobs & Potter 1998, 162; Walters 2018, 57; Rempel & Sutherland 2020, 109-125). Surely, data collection alone will not suffice to alter these realities, but we are certainly ill-equipped to produce efficient responses without them (Walklate et al. 2020, 3-11).

Furthermore, when collating hate crime legislation with other legal responses to gender-based crime, some overlapping intricacies of legal approaches to ‘identity’ as such, and to ‘gender’ in particular, are exposed. Namely, as we are increasingly aware, identity is far from static (Duff & Marshall 2018), and perhaps more than any other identity category, ‘gender’ is contested; in itself more of a continuous question to be asked than a definitive category to be implemented (Zalewski 2010). If

emphasizing ‘female gender’ in law generally risks the discrimination of cis-gender males (Haynes & Schweppe 2020, 279), hate crime legislation’s generic need for identifying neatly distinguishable identity categories can also come to reify oversimplified group distinctions (Jacobs & Potter 1998, 164; Mason-Bish 2014, 173), either overlooking or over-stressing non-binary gender identities. Yet, as we have seen, relying on neutral definitions of ‘gender’ might contrariwise contribute to masking the identifiable issue of violence against women. In this sense, defining ‘gender-based hate crimes’ can neither fix ‘gender,’ create false equivalences between gendered categories, nor ignore important links between them (Boyle 2019, 25-26). Therefore, this exploration also reaffirms Mason-Bish’s argument that the problem of ‘gender’ inspires a consideration of a more fundamental shift in our way of thinking hate crime legislation in the first place, ridding it of its singular focus on clear-cut identities (Mason-Bish 2014, 179), further acknowledging that victimization seldomly isolates itself to neatly identifiable categories (Garland & Chakraborti 2012, 49).

Insofar the underpinning of hate crime legislation itself is then a possible impediment for a fully adequate response to gender-based crime (Levin & McDevitt 2020, 180), one final question emerges: If neither femicide laws nor hate crime legislation pose ideal solutions, are legal approaches at all likely to be viable responses to violence against women? Will laws ever be able to sufficiently impact the real-life abuse of women across the world? Considering the relationship between law and feminism, Smart once argued that law reforms should not too readily be considered solutions to female suffering. In fact, laws can easily become “a non-fix solution” that preclude more efficient approaches (Smart 2019, xi). According to Smart, in the wake of many feminist-driven law reforms, tangible promises of change have been left unfulfilled, though inefficient laws have still managed to effectively silence mobilization around women’s rights in the sense that “*they had been given what they asked for and so had no legitimate reason to continue their complaint*”, waves of legal reform too often succeeded by “*deep troughs*

of silence and passivity” by the states (Smart 2019, xi). Following Smart, we should thus not expect legal interventions, by themselves, to resolve complex social issues of gender-based inequality (Smart 2019, xii, x; Smart 1989, 164). In the case of femicide laws, Smart’s concerns have certainly proved pertinent, as otherwise progressive laws have lacked the necessary instrumentality, sometimes even producing counterproductive results that have potentially worsened some women’s situations (Toledo 2019, 48; Moral & Neumann 2018, 455-457; Perry & Olsson 2009, 189-190).

Should we then not simply retreat from law altogether in order to find efficient responses to systemic violence against women? In my opinion, the answer is unquestionably no, nor does Smart imply a disqualification of legal approaches as important catalysts for change (Smart 2019, xii). Hence, law surely is, as noted by Howe & Alaattinoğlu (2019), a vital site for contesting “*historically mandated excuses*” for violence against women (Howe & Alaattinoglu 2019, 2). However, legislation can only be one part of a wider all-encompassing process of social change (Toledo 2019, 43, 49); simply changing or implementing laws will rarely be enough to combat underlying cultural attitudes (Heinze 2018, 94). And criminal law approaches in particular can be, as noted by Duff & Marshall, “*clumsy, crude, and expensive*” enterprises (Duff & Marshall 2018, 142). Accordingly, rather than “*getting too caught up in law reform*” (Howe & Alaattinoglu 2019, 2), responding to gender-based violence necessitates a plethora of approaches, not a singular legal response; Rather than searching for a decisive legal victory, we have to engage a variety of tools, and all of those tools require continuous scrutiny as conditions change and new insights are gained (Walklate et al. 2020, 4).

Though a gender-based hate crime approach should therefore not be discarded, it cannot be the only, perhaps not even the primary, response for us to resort to (Toledo 2019, 39; Smart 1989, 2). If it is to be a more effective response than femicide laws, it needs to be accompanied by supplementary legal approaches such as civil law tools (Duff & Marshall 2018), or restorative justice

tools (Walters 2018), alongside non-legal tools such as public education (Toledo 2019; Heinze 2018), communal and cultural approaches (Howe 2019), improved police training, and the addition of resources for hate crime investigation (Perry & Samuels-Wortley 2021; Walters 2018). What this exploration has unearthed is then that adding ‘gender’ to the hate crime equation is an entirely logical and principally sound legal stance to take.

However, it cannot be a symbolic gesture alone, nor can it stand alone. Thus, if ‘gender’ is to be, more consistently, added to protected victim categories of hate crime legislation, we must make profound considerations as to how this addition will gain practical impact; how the inclusion of gender can become not just a legal formality but a sociolegal reality as well. The equation will only ever make sense if the results eventually match.

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Arbejdet med inklusion – og mod eksklusion?

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Abstract

Working with Inclusion – and against Exclusion?

This article advocates for a stronger focus on the mechanisms of exclusion at play in Danish museums. Not every demographic is equally represented in the Danish museums, and several museums have worked with inclusion to tackle the problem. However, focusing only on inclusion and not on exclusion can lead to blindspots when trying to explain why representation is less diverse to begin with. This article combines representation studies from Danish museums with research on unintentional discrimination to show the potential of working with exclusion even when dealing with institutions with egalitarian ideals. If successful, the suggested approach could lead to longer lasting transformations of the current representation that would make further inclusion initiatives unnecessary.

KEYWORDS: inclusion, exclusion, discrimination, museum, gender, ethnicity

Blandt danske museer er der et voksende fokus på repræsentation af Danmarks mangfoldige befolkning. Det er ikke længere kun mænd og hvide majoritetsdanskere, der får deres historie fremvist eller deres kunst udstillet. Også kvinder og etniske minoriteter ses oftere afbildet og udstillet på landets kunst- og kulturhistoriske museer. Langt størstedelen af sådanne initiativer har dog fokus på *inklusion*, hvilket åbner for en række potentialer såvel som udfordringer. Det minder følgende citat af Sara Ahmed os om: "To be made welcome by an explicit act of address works to reveal what is implicit: that those who are already given a place are *the ones who are welcoming* rather than welcomed, the ones who are in the structural position as host" (Ahmed 2012, 43). Selve behovet for inklusion indikerer, at der finder en form for eksklusion sted (Dover, Kaiser & Major 2020, 166).

Ved at se nærmere på behovet for inklusion på museerne ved hjælp af af konceptet *uintenderet eksklusion*, det vil sige med blik for en ubevidst form for diskrimination, der indfanger både de diskriminerede og de diskriminerende parter (Skadegård 2014, 180), kan vi måske finde årsagen til den nuværende repræsentation og dermed skabe længerevarende ændringer. Jeg vil i denne artikel advokere for, at vi bør se nærmere på eksklusionen i danske museer frem for blot at fejre eller kritisere de mange inklusionsinitiativer, hvilket vigtige forskningsbidrag allerede gør (Odumosu 2019; Gabriel 2014; Egholk & Krogh Jensen 2014; Labadi 2018).

Min hypotese er, at et øget fokus på eksklusionsmekanismer kan skabe nye forståelser af, hvorfor repræsentationen ser ud, som den gør. Artiklen arbejder således ud fra forskningsspørgsmålene: Hvad er implikationerne af at analysere danske museers repræsentation ved hjælp af et eksklusionsbegreb? Leder brugen af et eksklusionsbegreb i analysen af danske museers repræsentation til andre hypoteser end dem, undersøgelser, der er centreret om inklusionsinitiativer, opstiller?

Det er ikke mit mål at give en udtømmende analyse af dette greb, men at identificere nogle af de potentialer og begrænsninger, som grebet kan afsløre. Dette vil jeg gøre ved at afsøge

implikationerne af tidligere studiers resultater, hvilket fungerer som en tidlig test af hypotesen, før eventuelle midler afsættes til empiriindsamling (Fraenkel, Wallen og Hyun 2012). Jeg vil således samkøre to forskningsfelter, henholdsvis socialvidenskabelig diskriminationsforskning og museologisk inklusionsforskning, med henblik på at teste et nyt greb, der kan have interessante implikationer. Ulempen ved dette er, at jeg udelukkende angriber repræsentations- og diskriminationsspørgsmålene ud fra en teoretisk og strukturel vinkel, hvilket man bør have in mente under læsningen af denne artikel.

I det følgende vil jeg først opridse status quo for repræsentationen på danske museer, og jeg vil påpege de begrænsninger, det medfører, når ens optik udelukkende består af et inklusionsbegreb. Dernæst vil jeg opridse det eksklusionsbegreb, som jeg afprøver i denne artikels analyser, og dets udspring i danske diskriminationsstudier. Efter disse indledende definitioner vil jeg undersøge, hvad det gør ved analysen af museernes repræsentation, når man anvender et eksklusionsbegreb frem for et inklusionsbegreb. Til sidst vil jeg pege på en af de mulige implikationer, som det kan have for fremtidig (empirisk) forskning, hvis vi begynder at arbejde med – og mod – eksklusion i dansk museumsforskning.

Repræsentationen i danske museer

I denne artikel arbejder jeg hovedsageligt med repræsentation, der finder sted *på* og *bag scenen* (Vitting-Seerup 2017). Det vil sige, hvem vi konkret kan se afbildet i museets udstillinger (*på scenen*), og hvem der fremstilles indirekte, fx i form af et kunstnernavn eller en performers krop (*bag scenen*). Det er nemlig ikke kun de mennesker og folkefærd, der kan ses afbildet på kunstmuseets værker og via de udstillede artefakter, som påvirker museumsgæsten. Også de kunstnere, folkefærd og befolkningsgrupper, der nævnes som skaberne bag værker og udstillinger, eller som blot bringes frem i en sidenote, har potentiel indflydelse på museumsgæstens oplevelse (Lidchi 2013). Både *på* og *bag scenen* oplever visse befolkningsgrupper

en meget lav grad af repræsentation. Det gælder ikke kun på danske museer, men generelt på vestlige museer.

I det følgende vil jeg fokusere på repræsentationen af to befolkningsgrupper, henholdsvis kvinder og etniske minoriteter. Når jeg udvælger disse to kategoriseringer, skyldes ikke kun, at jeg selv har en tilknytning hertil. Disse kategorier er heller ikke vigtigere end de mange andre kategorier bestående af befolkningsgrupper, der oplever manglende repræsentation, fx folk med funktionsnedsættelser, andre minoriserede køn, seksuelle minoriteter med flere. Udvalgelsen skyldes, at der findes mest (men ikke megen) forskning og flere undersøgelser af netop disse befolkningsgruppers repræsentation på danske museer¹.

Grunden til, at jeg fremhæver to kategoriseringer frem for én, skyldes ønsket om at lave en tværgående analyse, der kan afsløre tværgående mekanismer i den inklusion og eksklusion, som finder sted. Når man sammenligner tal og konklusioner fra rapporter, der beskæftiger sig med en enkelt kategorisering ad gangen, fx baseret på etnicitet eller på en binær kønsopdeling, kan de potentielt anvendes til at skabe en større forståelse af tværgående eksklusionsmekanismer inden for en specifik ramme. Derigennem kan man på et strukturelt plan skabe fundamentet for nye hypoteser om marginaliseringsstrukturer og således tydeliggøre, hvordan den stereotypificering og manglende repræsentation, der blandt andet rammer kvinder og etniske minoriteter, langtfra er enestående (Vitting-Seerup 2021, 43-44). Det gør det imidlertid ikke mindre væsentligt at beskæftige sig specifikt med henholdsvis kvinders og/eller etniske minoriteters diskrimination og levede liv. Tilgangen skal ses som endnu et perspektiv, der på sigt kan være med til at afdække både forskelle og ligheder i den eksklusion, som rammer bestemte befolkningsgrupper.

I Danmark har man i de senere år forsøgt at gøre bod på underrepræsentationen af henholdsvis kvinder og etniske minoriteter på de kunst- og kulturhistoriske museer ved at iværksætte en lang række initiativer. Det har fx været midlertidige særudstillinger såsom Museet for Samtidskunsts sommerudstilling *Art in Exile* (4/6-24/6 2016), Den

Gamle Bys *Somalisk lejlighed* (12/3 2016-30/12 2017) og Statens Museum for Kunst *Efter stilheden – kunstens kvinder tager ordet* (2021). Dette var Statens Museum for Kunst's første udstilling kun med kvindelige kunstnere (Møller 2021). Andre store kunstmuseer har dog tidligere lavet lignende udstillinger; et eksempel er Louisianas udstilling *Fantastiske kvinder* (25/7- 8/11 2020). Vi har i det seneste årti også kunnet se etableringen af museer, der udelukkende har fokus på de underrepræsenteredes historier, fx ved Immigrantmuseets åbning i 2012. Andre museer har opdateret deres navn og udtryk for at kunne rumme flere af de underrepræsenterede, fx skiftede Kvindemuseet navn til KØN i 2020.

Museolog Sophia Labadi forklarer, at mangel på repræsentation eller misrepræsentation i museerne kan føre til diskrimination og eksklusion, og den kan dermed forhindre de ikkerepræsenterede i at have "the freedom to achieve what they want to do and be" (Labadi 2018, 7). Museets valg af kunstnere, hvis værker udstilles, og af personer, som historisk fremhæves, er derfor ikke uden konsekvens. Spørgsmålet om eksklusion på danske museer er dog sparsomt belyst, og der findes i skrivende stund ikke større empiriske undersøgelser af de eksklusionsmekanismer, der potentielt spøger på de danske museer. I stedet beskrives de mange inklusionsforsøg med kyndigt og kritisk udgangspunkt i egen praksis (fx Gabriel 2014, Gade 2018, Odumosu 2019), og der udkommer løbende opgørelser af den nuværende repræsentation (fx Organisationen Danske Museer 2019).

Kunsthistoriker Claudine Zia foretog fx sin egen optælling af repræsentationen af BIPOC-kunstnere (Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color) på landets største kunstmuseer og kunsthaller og udgav denne på Idoart.dk i 2020. Det var umuligt at finde midler til formålet gennem danske støtteorganisationer, forklarer Zia i undersøgelsens medfølgende essay (Zia 2020). Alligevel formåede hun at opgøre repræsentationen på soloudstillingerne afholdt på Statens Museum for Kunst, ARoS, Louisiana, Arken og Kunsten i 2007-2019. Zia kunne hermed konkludere, at 12 % af soloudstillingerne var af BIPOC-kunstnere, og 8 % af museernes erhvervede værker i perioden 2014-2018

var skabt af kunstnere med "rødder uden for de 'vestlige' lande" (Zia 2020). Året efter Zia foretog kunstnerne Rikke Luna og Matias² en lignende optælling for samme platform, og de så en markant udvikling:

Kigger vi udelukkende på soloudstillinger på de 12 største museer og kunsthaller i 2019-2020, kan vi se, at knapt 20 % er skabt af BIPOC-kunstnere. Det er en lille stigning fra de foregående 11 år, selvom det selvfølgelig stadig er lave tal. Vi håber og tror på, at for året og sommerens udstillingsprogram er et udtryk for, at vi bevæger os i retningen af en mere divers kunstscene (Rikke Luna & Matias 2021).

Der sker altså noget på de danske museer i disse år. Da jeg i 2016-2018 interviewede repræsentanter fra danske museers inklusionsprojekter (Vitting-Seerup & Wiegand 2017), var ønsket om at inkludere bestemt også til stede. De fleste konkluderede dog, at der manglede talent. Kvindelige kunstnere og/eller etniske minoritetskunstnere er i mellemtiden blevet fundet frem og udstillet med stor succes, hvilket blandt andet Zias og Rikke Luna og Matias' undersøgelser viser. Forsøger vi at forklare denne udvikling udelukkende med et inklusionsbegreb, har det dog sine begrænsninger, som jeg vil uddybe i det følgende.

Hvorfor ikke bare arbejde med inklusion?

Undersøger vi udelukkende inklusionstiltag, risikerer vi at overse vigtige mekanismer, der kan forklare selve behovet for inklusion. Uden disse forklaringer kan et fokus på inklusionstiltag som løsning let signalere, at de inkluderede grupper er mindre kompetente end de grupper, der ikke har 'behov' for inklusion (Dover, Kaiser & Major 2020, 160). Som resultat får de inkluderede grupper ikke anerkendelse for deres arbejde på lige vilkår med andre, som ikke har været en del af en inklusionsindsatsen (Leslie 2019; Dover, Kaiser & Major 2020, 167). Med dette udgangspunkt ville man let

kunne forklare resultatet fra Zias og Rikke Luna og Matias' undersøgelser med, at museerne har forbarmet sig og gjort særlige inklusionstiltag for BIPOC-kunstnere. Når disse invitationer udløber, er det dog ikke sikkert, at kunstnerne forbliver udstillet i samme grad.

Museologen Amy Levin har i sin forskning påpeget, at museets arbejde med (midlertidig) inklusion bør suppleres med forsøg på at minimere den (vedvarende) eksklusion, der har holdt de underrepræsenterede ude af museets udstillinger og samlinger frem til inklusionsinitiativet (Levin 2017, 473). Som kunstner, kurator og forsker Helen Gørrill beskriver i sin bog *Women can't Paint* (2022), er der da også et væld af eksempler på, at selv omfangsrige inklusionstiltag blot er midlertidige. Gørrill fremhæver, hvordan Centre Pompidou i Paris tog initiativ til at finde kvindelige kunstners værker på deres depot og hænge dem synligt frem i hele to år i udstillingen *Elles@CentrePompidou* (2009-2011). Kuratoren Elizabeth Sackler Center skrev dog, at effekten hurtigt forsvandt:

'Elles' was a radical gesture of affirmative action – but one that was not longlasting. In the subsequent post-'elles' re-hang of the permanent collection, only 10 percent of the works on view are by women – exactly the same as it was pre-elles. Moreover, the acquisition funds for women artists almost immediately dried up (Reilly 2015).

Efter to år var Centre Pompidou således tilbage til status quo. En lignende tendens ser vi på dansk jord, når det gælder de mange udstillinger, der satte fokus på flygtninge i 2016-2018 (Vitting-Seerup 2021). Selv udstillingsstedet CAMP, der i 2015-2020 havde sin plads i Trampolinhuset (et københavnsk medborgerhus for asylansøgere og flygtninge), og som på mange måder blev toneangivende for repræsentationen af kunst skabt af etniske minoriteter, er nu lukket.

Særudstillinger med fokus på fx kvinder eller flygtninge har dog også et andet indbygget problem, som kunsthistorikerne Anne Hermann og Abigail Stewart har påpeget: Disse særudstillinger

fremstiller de udstillede, fx 'kvinder', som en særegen og homogen gruppe. "By construing women as different and devaluing them, alpha bias fosters solidarity between men by construing women as a deviant out-group which can then be devalued" (Hermann & Stewart 2000, 89). Som Gørrill udtrykker det, er der i sådanne tilfælde fokus på kunstnerens identitet frem for på deres kompetencer og kreativitet (Gørrill 2022, 75).

En anden kritik af inklusionsinitiativer, som vi finder i Bernadette Lynch og Samuel Albertis (2010) forskning og praksis, handler om, at museer ikke reelt deler ud af deres 'magt og autoritet' i inklusionstiltag, da disse tiltag udgør begrænsede invitationer (Lynch & Alberti 2010, 14). De inviterede indgår ikke som ligeværdige medlemmer af museets repræsentationspraksis, eftersom de ikke har magt til at bestemme, hvordan deres bidrag anvendes, eller hvornår deres inklusion ophører.

Endelig bør vi overveje, om inklusionstiltag slører den egentlige eksklusion. Gørrill har undersøgt, hvordan midlerne til det store britiske kunstmuseum Tate blev fordelt til henholdsvis mandlige og kvindelige kunstnere, og selvom det i 2014-2015 så ud til, at 35 % af midlerne blev brugt til at indkøbe værker af kvindelige kunstnere, viste tallene også, at kun 13 % af midlerne kom fra de normale indkøbsmidler – resten kom fra særlige 'kvindepuljer' (Gørrill 2022, 80). På den måde kan eksklusionens status quo bestå, samtidig med at museets overordnede repræsentation ser bedre ud på papiret. Hvad sker der mon den dag, hvor de særlige midler udløber? Måske det samme som i Centre Pompidous forsøg med *Elles*?

Det kan måske undre, at jeg her taler om systematisk eksklusion på de museer, der aktivt arbejder med inklusionsprocesser, for de er formentlig motiverede for ikke at diskriminere. Imidlertid findes der ikke kun intenderet og ideologisk diskrimination, men også implicite og uintenderede diskriminationsformer, som kan danne baggrund for eksklusionen. Jeg vil i det følgende definere nogle af de diskriminationsformer, der kan lægges til grund for den form for eksklusion, som vi ser på de inkluderende museer.

Uintenderet eksklusion

Diskrimination forbindes af de fleste med aktive handlinger, som bygger på bestemte værdier og overbevisninger. Det er dog ikke nødvendigvis det billede, der males i diskriminationsforskningen. Socialpsykologerne Dover, Kaiser og Major har set på feltstudier fra henholdsvis Europa, Nordamerika, Asien, Sydamerika og Australien, og i alle regioner fandt de eksempler på, at selv mennesker med idealer om egalitet kan diskriminere (2020, 153).

Denne form for uintenderet diskrimination har den danske diskriminationsforsker Mira C. Skadegård fundet særligt udbredt i Danmark. Den del af Skadegårds undersøgelser, som jeg vil inddrage her, er indsamlet i det danske uddannelsessystem gennem interview med 22 racialiserede universitetsstuderende mellem 20 og 30 år (Skadegård 2017; Skadegård & Jensen 2018). Det er således disse racialiserede personers oplevelser på vidensinstitutioner i en dansk kontekst, som Skadegård drager sine konklusioner på baggrund af. Skadegård konkluderer blandt andet: "(...) it remains a common misperception that most discrimination is explicit, intentional and readily identified" (Skadegård 2017, 217). I sin empiri ser Skadegård en tendens til, at det især er ubevidst eller uintenderet diskrimination, som hendes interviewpersoner møder. Skadegård arbejder altså med diskrimination af racialiserede personer, men de mekanismer, som hun har fundet, beskrives også i sexismeforskningen (Régner et al. 2019) og i den bredere definerede diskriminationsforskning. Sidstnævnte arbejder med diskrimination som en strukturel mekanisme, der rammer forskellige befolkningsgrupper, oftest på baggrund af køn, racialisering, etnicitet og/eller seksualitet (Sue 2010; Pincus 1996).

Når jeg i denne artikel diskuterer eksklusion, indsnævrer jeg mit fokus i museums konteksten til de handlinger, som leder til udvælgelsen af et værk, en genstand, en kunstner eller en historie. Det drejer sig således om de former for diskrimination, der specifikt omhandler en gennemgående oplevelse af at blive nægtet adgang, få afslag eller blive holdt udenfor (jf. Jensen et al. 2012,

9). Eksklusion er en interessant mekanisme i museumskonteksten, fordi udstillingen i sin natur konstrueres via tilvalg og fravalg. Fravalg er nødvendige, for at en udstilling kan tage form, men når det gang på gang er den samme type værker, genstande, kunstnere og historier, der fravælges, kan det skyldes en systematisk eksklusion foranlediget af uintenderet diskrimination.

Skadegård beskriver uintenderet diskrimination som kendetegnet ved, at den udføres via små, tilsyneladende uskyldige hverdagshandlinger. Skadegård kalder disse handlinger *mikro-diskriminationer*³ (Skadegård 2014, 173). Sara Ahmed, der arbejder med både feministisk- og queer teori i det postkolonialitisk felt, har i sin analyse af angelsaksiske forskningsinstitutioners diversitetsinitiativer set samme tendens (Ahmed 2012, 155). Mikrodiskriminationer er således ikke et særligt dansk fænomen. Mikrodiskriminationernes natur skaber dog problemer, når diskriminationen skal bevises: Diskriminationen foregår i små vanepregede hverdagshandlinger, som kan være svære at få øje på, og uden at de diskriminerende parter nødvendigvis har en intention om at diskriminere. Dermed kan den diskriminerende part også være uønsket påvirket af eksklusionens konsekvenser (Skadegård 2014, 180).

Når den uintenderede diskrimination tager form som "normer, vaner, historiske og ideologiske perspektiver" (Skadegård 2014, 173), kan det føre til 'usynlige' barrierer, som de diskriminerende ikke nødvendigvis holder i hævd ud fra en bevidst intention om at diskriminere. Diskriminationen pakkes så at sige ind i 'plejer' eller 'business as usual' (Pincus 1996, 192), som sociolog og diskriminationsforskeren Fred L. Pincus har udtrykt det. Først når mikrodiskriminationerne hober sig op og kan måles og præsenteres som overbevisende statistikker, kan diskriminationen ses og anerkendes som del af en struktur. Men i den enkelte, konkrete situation kan den være svær at få øje på. Manglen på intention gør det svært at håndtere diskriminationen, forklarer Skadegård (Skadegård 2017, 219). Manglen på intention gør det nemlig let for den ekskluderende part at afskrive eksklusionen som ikke eksisterende:

"Insisting that 'They don't mean anything by it' takes precedence over any potential negative impact or effect," påpeger Skadegård i en artikel med Iben Jensen, professor i interkulturel læring (Skadegård & Jensen 2018, 457).

Selv den ekskluderende part kan let komme i tvivl om, hvorvidt der overhovedet har fundet diskrimination sted: Hvis en racialiseret og/eller kvindelig kunstner oplever ikke at kunne få udstillet sine værker, hvordan kan hun så vide, om der i det enkelte tilfælde er tale om diskrimination, eller om hun som kunstner blot ikke er interessant? Og hvordan beviser man det ene eller det andet i det øjeblik, at fravælgelsen foretages? Problematikken med denne form for bevisbyrde er velkendt i offentlige instanser. Socialforskningsinstituttet skelner fx mellem 'oplevet' og 'faktisk' diskrimination (Jensen et al. 2012, 25) – en skelnen, der på mange måder er problematisk, men juridisk nødvendig⁴.

Besidder man en magtposition som gatekeeper, og ønsker man ikke at anerkende, at man kan være påvirket af uintenderet diskrimination (fx fordi det går imod ens bevidste holdninger og selvbillede), kan problemet sågar forstørres:

(...) groups whose members explicitly reject gender discrimination as a problem and doubt women's ability to succeed might allow the implicit biases of those on the committee to inform the collective decisions they make. In contrast, groups that see systemic barriers to women's advancement as a problem to be addressed are more likely to have members who are motivated to suppress or counteract biases that might arise (either by themselves or others) during group discussion and decision-making (Régner et al. 2019, 1171).

Når Skadegård og Jensen ser en tendens til, at vi også i Danmark afviser påstanden om, at det er muligt at være diskriminerende uden at ønske det, opstår et reelt problem, som er svært at overkomme. Overfører vi den viden til en museumskontekst, kan det betyde, at museer med inklusionsintentioner kategorisk afskriver at arbejde

med systematiske eksklusionsmekanismer, da diskrimination umuligt kan foregå i deres institution, som aktivt arbejder for inklusion.

Det er her værd at påpege, at museer ikke udgør særligt diskriminerende steder, men snarere er 'typiske', det vil sige præget af det omkringliggende samfunds normer og værdier. Denne pointe påpeges også af Lynch og Alberti, hvad angår britiske museers inklusions- og eksklusionspraksisser (2010, 14). Museumsforsker Richard Sandell har ligeledes påpeget, at udøvelsen af diskrimination på museer ikke behøver at være intenderet, men ofte er et udtryk for opbyggede vaner:

Some organisations, which may not necessarily operate direct racial discrimination, nevertheless may develop corporate cultures that reflect the norms, attitudes and values of the dominant majority and can serve indirectly to exclude ethnic minorities (Sandell 2000, 217).

De danske museer kan således gentage uintenderede eksklusionsmekanismer funderet i det danske samfund uden at ønske det eller være bevidste om det. Museerne har i dette perspektiv ikke tilstræbt at udelukke de befolkningsgrupper, de nu arbejder for at repræsentere – måske endda tværtimod. Den uintenderede eksklusions indlejring i vaner og tankemønstre kan endvidere være en af grundene til, at de inkluderende museer ikke lykkes med inklusionen på den lange bane: Så snart inklusionsinitiativet er ovre, gør de, som de plejer, og de kommer dermed til systematisk at ekskludere bestemte repræsentationer. Hvad vi kunne kalde uintenderet eksklusion kan dermed udgøre en potentiel forklaringsmodel for, hvorfor repræsentationen til stadighed ser ud, som den gør, på danske museer.

I det følgende vil jeg tage fat på egne tidligere empiriske undersøgelser og vise, hvordan det her foreslåede eksklusionsbegreb kan føre til nye, potentielle forklaringsmodeller.

Ønsker om inklusion – argumenter for eksklusion

Tager vi udgangspunkt i begrebet uintenderet eksklusion, kan museernes argumenter mod mangfoldighed analyseres i et andet lys. Sammen med kulturforsker Frauke Wiegand så jeg flere argumenter mod en mere mangfoldig repræsentation udfolde sig, da vi i 2016-2018 besøgte 6 tyske og 12 danske kulturinstitutioner for at se på inklusionsinitiativer og interviewe kernepersonerne bag (Vitting-Seerup & Wiegand 2019). Der er altså tale om institutioner og en stab, der aktivt arbejder for inklusion. Alligevel så vi, hvordan tiltagene for at fremme repræsentationen af mangfoldighed på museet mødte modstand hos de selvsamme mennesker, der beskrev et behov for at få mangfoldighed på museet både *på* og *bag* scenen (Vitting-Seerup 2017). Modstanden blev dog ikke nødvendigvis fremstillet som en modstand mod de mennesker og det perspektiv, en øget repræsentation ville føre med sig, men snarere som et forsvar for status quo:

The intention expressed is often to maintain what already is and is frequently described as a need to protect the cultural institution from a loss of quality and/or profit connected to what is communicated as a fear or belief that 'the people' 'can't handle diversity'(...)
(Vitting-Seerup & Wiegand 2019, 213).

Denne tendens til at beskytte status quo, især for de besøgendes skyld, finder Sandell også i sine noget ældre britiske undersøgelser (2003, 52).

Jeg vil i det følgende vise, hvordan to af de gennemgående argumenter, som Wiegand og jeg fandt, kan udlægges i et nyt lys, hvis man tager udgangspunkt i konceptet 'uintenderet eksklusion'. De to argumenter, der blev brugt til at forklare manglen på en varig og blivende mangfoldighed på museet, var for det første, at den manglende repræsentation ikke skyldes eksklusion i nutiden, men i fortiden, og for det andet, at der manglede talent inden for den befolkningsgruppe, som man søgte at inkludere.

Lad os se på det første argument; at den manglende repræsentation ikke skyldes eksklusion i nutiden, men i fortiden. Dette argument indledes ofte med en anerkendelse af, at der på vestlige kunstmuseer fortsat er en væsentlig overrepræsentation af hvide, vestlige, mandlige kunstnere. Det påpeger museologer, fx Bernadette Lynch og Samuel Alberti (2010, 15), kuratorer, fx Maura Reilly (2018, 17), og museumsdirektører, fx Frances Morris (Taylor 2016). Spørgsmålet om, hvorvidt dette også skyldes nutidens eksklusion, kan dog hurtigt affejes:

Visse forskere, fx Sofia Labadi, der blandt andet har bedrevet feltarbejde på Statens Museum for Kunst, advokerer for, at eksklusion i museums kontekster er et overstået kapitel (2018, 38-39). Årsagen til den skævvredne repræsentation bør i stedet findes i historien, lyder argumentet, da den hvide, vestlige mand *tidligere* har nydt godt af patriarkatets privilegier, og dette faktum afspejler sig i kunstkanonen og museernes samlinger. Kurator Mille Gabriel har endvidere forklaret, hvordan danske etnografiske museers indsamlede genstande i dag kan "kritiseres for at repræsentere menneskesyn, Vesten for længst har lagt bag sig, og som mange helt eller delvist afkoloniserede folk i dag søger at udfordre" (Gabriel 2014, 5). For at understrege denne problematik, har nogle museer valgt at foretage en såkaldt rekontekstualisering af deres eksisterende samlinger.

Gabriel peger selv på, at en rekontekstualisering af eksisterende samlinger er vejen frem for de etnografiske museer, der ønsker at arbejde med en mere ligeværdig repræsentation af 'andetgjorte', som hun skriver, samtidig med at museerne gør brug af deres nuværende samling. En lignende øvelse foregår på flere kunstmuseer. Eksempelvis har Statens Museum for Kunst satset stort på udstillingen *Ufortalte historier* (6/5-30/12 2017), der var foranlediget af hundredåret for salget af Dansk Vestindien, og som behandlede Danmarks fortid som kolonimagt. Pointen med denne spotudstilling⁵ var at anvende et "samtidens blik på Danmarks koloniale fortid"⁶ ved at vise malerier fra museets samling sammen med nye rekontekstualiserende tekster og lydoptagelser af nutidige kommenterende stemmer. Formålet var at få

samlingens værker til at fremstå i et nyt, opklarende lys (Odumosu 2019). Senere har Statens Museum for Kunst også givet sig i kast med at diskutere (og kritisere) ellers indiskutable klassikerens referencer i udstillingen *Kirchner og Nolde til diskussion* (21/4-1/8 2021), der diskuterede Ernst Ludwig Kirchner og Emil Noldes inspiration fra "mennesker og kulturer fra især Afrika og Oceanien"⁷. Derved blev der sat fokus på, hvordan vestlige, mandlige kunstnere har fundet deres inspiration, og hvem værkerne henholdsvis tjener og glemmer.

Rekontekstualiserende udstillinger kan således være med til at skabe en øget grad af repræsentation for de underrepræsenterede, idet fokus og vinkel på tidligere tiders historie og værker udlægges anderledes. Hermed kan tidligere bifigurer nu fungere som hovedpersoner, som det fx var tilfældet i *Ufortalte historier* på Statens Museum for Kunst, hvor vestindiske personer og deres historie blev sat i front via vægtekster og kataloger. En rekontekstualisering giver således mulighed for at opnå en bredere repræsentation, uden at museet tvinges til at erhverve sig nye genstande og værker, og det er i høj grad en nødvendig strategi for de danske statsstøttede museer: Indsamling, bevaring og formidling af genstande og værker udgør fortsat danske statsstøttede museers kerne, ikke mindst grundet den danske kulturpolitik vedvarende fokus på netop samlingens betydning (Nørskov 2018, 92). Her pålægges museerne et fokus på "indsamling" til, "registrering" for, "bevaring" af, "forskning" i og "formidling" af *samlingen*⁸.

Rekontekstualiserende udstillinger har således mange positive effekter, men der kan imidlertid også opstå den implikation, at man opfatter systematisk eksklusion som noget, der kun fandt sted i fortiden – og det kan være problematisk. Museologerne Lynch og Alberti har ved hjælp af Sara Ahmeds arbejde fremhævet, hvordan visse museer potentielt 'gemmer' deres nuværende ekskluderende praksisser bag indrømmelser af fortidens synder:

Is it possible that, by facing their colonialist past and its consequences, museums can find themselves indulging in what Ahmed calls 'a fantasy of transcendence', imagining

that 'if we say we are racists, then we are not racists, as racists do not know they are racists'?

(Lynch & Alberti 2010, 29).

Lynch og Alberti tager hermed udgangspunkt i, at eksklusion kan finde sted på samtidens museer. Hvis vi vil finde svaret på, om eksklusion (uintenderet og/eller intenderet) er i spil på samtidens museer, kræver det empiriske undersøgelser af museernes praksisser. De kan imidlertid kun foretages ved hjælp af en analyse, hvor eksklusionsbegrebet kommer i spil.

Selv blandt de museer, der anerkendte det potentielle problem med systematisk eksklusion i vores samtid, så Wiegand og jeg som nævnt en tendens til, at de interviewede hurtigt greb til næste modstandsargument: den manglende talentmasse. Hvis vi ser på diskussionen af etniske minoriteters repræsentation, modsvares anklager om eksklusion ofte med argumenter om udviklingen af Danmarks demografi. Der er da også sket en ændring i Danmarks befolkningssammensætning, især siden 1960-1970'erne, hvor det første hold såkaldte ikkevestlige gæstearbejdere fra fx Tyrkiet, Eksjugoslavien og Pakistan kom til landet (Andreassen 2007, 9) – en demografiændring, jeg selv er resultatet af. Ifølge Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet er antallet af "indvandrere og efterkommere med ikkevestlig oprindelse" steget fra at udgøre cirka 1 % af Danmarks befolkningen i 1980 til at udgøre 9 % i 2021⁹. Det er således fortsat under hver tiende indbygger i Danmark, der er opgjort som "en ikkevestlig etnisk minoritet". Her bør vi dog huske, at tallet ikke omfatter fx adopterede eller efterkommere med kun én såkaldt 'ikkevestlig' forælder – heriblandt mig selv¹⁰.

Et argument i sagen om den manglende repræsentation på danske museer går således på, at vi fortsat mangler genstande, værker, historier og talenter at udstille, fordi der er så få mennesker til at producere dette. Ser vi på lande med større mangfoldighed i befolkningssammensætningen, fx Storbritannien, ser man dog også her tal, der viser, at diversiteten i befolkningen ikke afspejles i museets sammensætning (Anderson & Mileham 2020, 598). Det er altså ikke givet, at et museums

udstillinger og samlinger bliver mangfoldige, blot fordi det omkringliggende samfund er det. Hvis vi anlægger et internationalt perspektiv, når vi diskuterer repræsentationen af såkaldte ikkevestlige kunstnere og folkefærd, viser det sig da også, at der slet ikke er tale om en minoritet: Såkaldte ikkevestlige personer udgør på et globalt plan en klar majoritet. Hvordan kan vi da mangle mennesker, historier og talent?

Flytter vi fokus fra eksklusionen af etniske minoriteter til eksklusionen af kvindelige kunstnere på danske kunstmuseer, ser vi samme argument, selvom kvinder udgør halvdelen af den danske befolkning – med eller uden 'vestlig oprindelse'. Her tegner der sig dog et interessant billede: Selv når befolkningssammensætningen og talentmassen ikke længere anfægtes, holder eksklusionen ved. Organisationen Danske Museer har opgjort "kvindelig repræsentation i såvel museernes udstillinger som indkøb"¹¹, og kun 22 % af de værker, som danske kunstmuseer har erhvervet sig i perioden 2004-2019, er skabt af kvindelige kunstnere. 29 % af museernes soloudstillinger og 34 % af gruppeudstillingerne inkluderede kvindelige kunstnere i samme periode. Det på trods af, at der uddannes lige mange kvinder og mænd inden for kunst i Danmark, hvilket Akademiraadet fastslog for flere år siden (Akademiraadet 2016, 34). De danske opgørelser er dog i kvindernes favør i forhold til de internationale tal på området: Kun cirka 2 % af al kunst, der blev solgt på auktioner verden over mellem 2008 og 2018, er skabt af kvindelige kunstnere (Burns, Halperin & Vennitti 2019). Omvendt finder vi også, i lande med en høj grad af ligestilling, eksempler på, at det kan se anderledes ud. Kiasma MOCA i Helsinki er et af de største nationale gallerier i Norden, og det huser Finlands omfattende samling af samtidskunst. Her er hele 46 % af værkerne skabt af kvinder (Gørrill 2022, 92).

Enkelte forsøg med anonymisering i den danske kunstverden har vist, at tilstedeværelsen af et navn kan få beskueren til at se anderledes på et kunstværk. Kunstnernes Efterårsudstilling forsøgte sig fx med at anonymisere kunstnerne bag bidrag i 2018, og det resulterede i et rekordhøjt antal udvalgte bidrag fra kvindelige og nonbinære

kunstnere (Fløche 2018). Sådanne eksempler er anekdotiske på nuværende tidspunkt, men analyser med udgangspunkt i uintenderet eksklusion kunne måske pege på behovet for at formalisere sådanne eksperimenter.

Et udgangspunkt i eksklusionsbegrebet kan tydeliggøre behovet for nye undersøgelser, ofte af empirisk eller eksperimentel karakter. Men hvor skal vi udføre disse empiriske studier? Set i lyset af Skadegårds definition af uintenderet diskrimination som noget, der tager form gennem normer og vaner (Skadegård 2014, 173), kunne vi med fordel lede efter svar i museers hverdagshandlinger. Flere britiske museumsstudier, der i højere grad balancerer inklusionsbegrebet med et blik for eksklusionsmekanismer, peger da også på, at vi bør se nærmere på stabens handlinger, muligheder og diskussioner.

Stabens hverdag i fokus

I det følgende vil jeg se på, hvad der sker *bag ved* scenen (Vitting-Seerup 2017). Det vil sige blandt den stab, der kuraterer, rammesætter og iscenesætter de genstande, historier og værker, som de kunst- og kulturhistoriske museer huser. Et blik på stabens viden og praksis er da også en stigende tendens i den britiske museumsforskning, der som nævnt oftere balancerer inklusion og eksklusion.

Når flere britiske studier har deres fokus netop her, kan det skyldes, at det trods alt er *bag ved* scenen, at beslutningerne om, hvad der skal repræsenteres *på* og *bag* scenen tages. Tidligere museumsdirektør i Storbritannien David Fleming peger på, at det særligt er stabens viden og handlen, der kan gøre en forskel for repræsentationen på museet, frem for kulturpolitikker og topledelsens direktiver (Fleming 2012, 79). Museumsforsker Anwar Tlili fremhæver ligeledes stabens syn på inklusion og eksklusion som den bærende præmis for museers udvikling henimod en mere mangfoldig repræsentation (Tlili 2008, 124).

Også Eithne Nightingale og Chandan Mahal, begge med karrierer inden for museumsverdenens diversitetsindsatser, udråber museets stab som den drivende kraft bag ethvert museums arbejde

med at fremme inklusion og mindske eksklusion (Nightingale & Mahal 2012, 17). Nightingale og Mahal udtrykker desuden overraskelse over, hvor stor en forskel enkeltpersoner (hvad Nightingale og Mahal kalder ildsjæle) gjorde i deres empiri (Nightingale & Mahal 2012, 18). Et fokus på stabens ildsjæle bør dog ikke føre til, at man overser betydningen af den kulturpolitik, som museet er underlagt, eller effekten af ledelsens opbakning eller modstand. De er ligeledes vigtige faktorer, hvilket de nævnte museologer og praktikere også understreger (Tlili 2008, 138; Fleming 2012, 77; Nightingale & Mahal 2012, 34). De er dog mest af alt vigtige faktorer i den forstand, at ledelsen og kulturpolitikken kan udgøre en stopklods for ildsjælenes hverdagspraksisser.

At skabe den rette kultur, hvor ildsjælene har mulighed for at handle på deres passion, involverer "a great deal of analysis, some of which can be painful" (Fleming 2012, 77), forklarer Fleming. Måske har den nye tidsånd, drevet af blandt andet #MeToo- og Black Lives Matter-bevægelsen, fjernet dele af den stærke modstand mod og frygt for politisk korrekthed, som både Danbolt, Wiegand og jeg tidligere har observeret på danske museer (Danbolt 2017, 108-109; Vitting-Seerup & Wiegand 2019, 214). Fleming peger endvidere på uddannelse af staben, herunder viden om diskrimination, som afgørende for, at ildsjælene kan opstå og udfolde sig (Fleming 2012, 79).

Kan den offentlige debat i de senere år have udgjort en slags uddannelse? Fleming henviser selv til uddannelse i mere formel forstand, men studier i antibias- og antidiskriminationskurser viser, at denne typer kurser sjældent virker efter hensigten (Forscher et al., 2016; Lai et al. 2014; Lai et al. 2016). Tværtimod har uddannelse i antidiskrimination og "implicit bias training" kun "modest and mixed effects, and almost universally fails to lead to behavioral or long-lasting changes" (Dover, Kaiser & Major 2020, 158). Frivillige kurser har en moderat bedre succesrate end de obligatoriske kurser (Dobbin et al., 2015; Kalev, Dobbin & Kelly 2006; Dover, Kaiser & Major 2020, 172), men det er især uddannelse med fokus på at være 'allieret', der kan lede til de ønskede ændringer (Dover, Kaiser & Major 2020, 172). Den pointe, at det er

vigtigt at undervise staben i muligheden for at være potentielle hjælpere og dermed kæmpe for den manglende repræsentation sammen med og/eller på vegne af de underrepræsenterede, hænger på mange måder sammen med en anden af Nightingale og Mahals pointer:

What has been striking during this research is the difference that individuals can make, sometimes (but by no means always) irrespective of their ethnic or social background, their experience, role or position with the hierarchy
(Nightingale & Mahal 2012, 18).

De nødvendige ildsjæle behøver altså ikke selv repræsentere de grupper, museet ønsker at repræsentere, men stabens syn på og tilgang til eksklusionshæmmende initiativer ser ud til at være essentiel. Wiegand og jeg fandt dog i vores undersøgelser af danske og tyske kulturinstitutioner en lille tendens til "greater negotiation of diversity in spaces led by marginalized art workers, while privileged (often white) cultural workers do not sense the need for or realize the relevance of critical diversity work (...)" (Vitting-Seerup & Wiegand 2019, 213). En repræsentation af kvinder og/eller etniske minoriteter skabt udelukkende af mænd og af en etnisk majoritet kan da også ende med at objektpositionere de repræsenterede, da de repræsenterede i så fald kun vil blive talt om. Inklusionsprojekter kan tildele de repræsenterede rollen som nogle, institutionen taler med, men vi mangler stadig at se, at repræsenterede kvinder og etniske minoriteter fremstår som mennesker, der slet og ret *taler*; dvs. at de fremstår som ligeværdige subjekter i museumsregi. Nightingale og Mahal påpeger derfor, at eksklusionsminimerende tiltag bør følges op af et blik på et givent museums stabssammensætning (Nightingale & Mahal 2012, 19).

De britiske museologers udlægning af ildsjælens betydningsfulde arbejde påpeger således, ligesom Skadegårds forskning, at vi bør se nærmere på stabens hverdagspraksisser frem for at undersøge særlige initiativer og kulturpolitikker (hvilket jeg selv har gjort, jf. Vitting-Seerup 2021).

Hvis vi for alvor vil forstå, hvorfor repræsentationen på de danske museer ser ud, som den gør, kan eksklusionsbegrebet dog også hurtigt komme til kort: Leder vi udelukkende efter hændelser på museerne, der kan kritisk analyseres i diskriminationens navn, får vi potentielt kun det halve af situationen afdækket.

Eftersom repræsentationen trods alt er blevet ændret på de danske museer i de senere år, må der have været ildsjæle til stede, som har handlet inkluderende på disse museer, og dem må vi ikke overse. Jeg vil derfor foreslå, at vi i de (forhåbentligt) kommende empiriske undersøgelser af museers hverdagspraksisser ikke kun har øje for uintenderet eksklusion og for (med Skadegårds ord) "mikrodiskriminationer". Vi bør også lede efter de inkluderende handlinger, der foregår på det mere bevidste plan. Inkluderende handlinger må som oftest bevidst bryde den status quo, som Wiegand og jeg fandt stærke fortalere for blandt museumsstaben.

Disse små, intenderede hverdagshandlinger, der fungerer som modsvar til de ekskluderende og vanepregede mikrodiskriminationer, kan vi kalde *mikrointerventioner*. Hvor mikrodiskriminationer ifølge Skadegård opretholder eksklusionen gennem ubevidste og subtile "everyday gestures of ordinary interaction" (Skadegård 2017, 221), er mikrointerventioner små, bevidste handlinger, der går imod de strukturer, som normalt fungerer som systematiske eksklusionsmekanismer. Ligesom med mikrodiskriminationer har den enkelte mikrointervention ikke nødvendigvis den store effekt.

Der skal mange vedholdende og gentagne tiltag til, for at et skift i diskurser og strukturer kan opstå. Det er disse skift (med andre ord: mikrointerventionernes resultater), som vi lettest kan observere. Det kan fx være Statens Museums for Kunsts sprogpolitik, som blev lanceret i 2016. Den bestod af en udskiftning af ordene 'neger' og 'hottentot' i forbindelse med museets værker, hvilket dog kun resulterede i udskiftning af 13 ord (Stockman 2016). Alligevel trak initiativet overskrifter og foranledigede debatter i både offentligheden og museums kredse. Mikrointerventioner kan dog også forekomme på et mere interpersonelt plan, fx ved at en museumsansat bliver ved at sætte

spørgsmålstegn ved det sprog, der benyttes i en brochure eller ved en rundvisning – også selvom sådanne spørgsmål, hverken første, anden eller tredje gang, leder til en synlig ændring.

Det er ikke let at observere og indsamle den viden, jeg her efterspørger. Wiegand og jeg oplevede en tendens til, at mangfoldighedsarbejdet på museerne fandt sted "in the often undocumented non-public aspects of everyday work life," og vi måtte desværre konkludere, at de reelt mangfoldighedsfremmende handlinger ikke umiddelbart var synlige (Vitting-Seerup & Wiegand 2019, 215). Selv når man får mulighed for at studere det nære, kan man let overse den konkrete handling, der ender med at gøre en forskel, hvad angår indkøb af et værk, indsamling af genstande eller sammensætning af en udstilling. Det kan være få ord, der ændres i et katalog, eller et perspektiv, der lægges anderledes i en vægtekst, som ender med at gøre en større forskel i sidste ende.

Ligesom vi i øjeblikket kan have svært ved gennemskue, om der er tale om systematisk eksklusion eller blot sortering, vil det formentligt også være svært for forskere og museumsstaben at genkende den eller de mikrointerventioner, der baner vejen for de (små som store) varige ændringer. Det gør dem dog ikke mindre interessante.

Afrunding: Om at rette blikket mod nye steder

Der sker noget vigtigt på danske museer netop nu. Også nu, fristes man til at sige. Der rykkes ved en praksis, som for blot få år siden blev beskrevet som umulig at ændre, og der er brug for støtte til empiriske undersøgelser, hvis vi skal nå at forstå denne ændring, før den blot fremstår som en ny norm – eller før den fordufter igen.

Jeg indledte denne artikel med at spørge, hvad implikationerne af at analysere de danske museers repræsentationer ved hjælp af et eksklusionsbegreb frem for et inklusionsbegreb kunne være. Det korte svar er, at denne artikels indledende analyse tyder på, at vi bør se nærmere på de hverdagspraksisser, som staben på museet er en del af, hvis vi vil forstå, hvorfor repræsentationen ser

ud, som den gør. Idéen er langt fra ny. Ahmed påpeger i sin undersøgelse af diversitetstiltag på uddannelsesinstitutioner, at vi er nødt til at se på 'de små handlinger' for at forstå repræsentationen:

Institutions provide a frame in which things happen (or don't happen). To understand how 'what happens' happens, we actually need to narrow (rather than widen) the frame: to think about words, texts, objects, and bodies, to follow them around, to explore that they do and do not do, when they are put into action
(Ahmed 2012, 49-50).

Museets små hverdagshandlinger kan altså vise sig at være essentielle, og det er derfor oplagt, at eventuelt fremtidige undersøgelser og indsatser tager udgangspunkt heri. Som museumsforskerne Alice Anderson og Michelle A. Mileham minder os om: "A museum is more than its collection, exhibits, and programs" (Anderson & Mileham 2020, 602). Et museum er også et sted, hvor mennesker er, arbejder og 'gør'. I den forskning, jeg efterspørger, er det vigtigt at balancere mellem et blik på systematisk eksklusion med et blik for mikro-intervenerende inklusion, så én blind vinkel ikke blot udskiftes med en anden. Det er derudover vigtigt, at vi i forskningen (og i museets praksis) anerkender, at systematisk eksklusion ikke altid er noget, der sker i ond mening.

Et spinkelt håb fra min side er, at vi ikke bruger eksklusionsbegrebet til at løfte pegefingeren og afkræve hurtig (og uigennemtænkt) handling fra museernes side. Flere organisationer afkræves i dag en kyndig udlægning af, hvordan de undgår diskrimination, men der tilbydes ingen evidensbaserede strategier, som organisationerne ville kunne læne sig op ad med henblik på at påbegynde arbejdet (Dobbin & Kalev 2017; Dover, Kaiser & Major 2020, 152). Denne afkrævning – at danske museer selv skal løse disse problemer – virker derfor overvældende. Det skyldes ikke manglende vilje – det vidner de mange inklusionsinitiativer og nylige ændringer om, men at museerne ikke kan vide præcist, hvor og hvordan eksklusionen og modstanden mod den udspiller sig.

I og med Skadegårds begreb mikrodiskriminationer og mit eget begreb mikrointerventioner har jeg fremlagt en hypotese om, hvad vi skal kigge efter, når vi undersøger museernes hverdagspraksisser. Hvis vi får stablet empiriske

afdækninger på benene, vil vi kunne tilbyde museerne et muligt startpunkt, hvorfra de kan skabe en vedvarende, mangfoldig repræsentation, der ikke kræver gentagne (og midlertidige) inklusionsinitiativer.

Noter

- ¹ Da jeg i høj grad trækker på andres empiriske arbejde, kan jeg desværre ikke fremhæve, hvor stort et overlap der er mellem de to grupper. Den form for intersektionel data mangler fortsat.
- ² Rikke Luna og Matias er kunstnernavne, som konsekvent anvendes af duoen.
- ³ Mikrodiskrimination er et begreb, som Skadegård har skabt på baggrund af den mere udbredte sociologiske term 'mikroaggressioner'. Begge begreber omhandler "subtile, underliggende discrimination that occurs within everyday gestures of ordinary interaction", men Skadegårds begreb "refers only to discrimination and not to the wider notion of aggression" (Skadegård 2017, 221).
- ⁴ Termerne er problematiske, da de fremstiller diskrimination som enten 'faktisk', det vil sige reel og virkelig, eller som noget, der subjektivt opleves af den diskriminerede part. Denne skelnen beskrives som en nødvendighed grundet juridiske forhold, da diskrimination baseret på etnicitet og racialisering er forbudt i Danmark. Hvis alle 'oplevede' hændelser kategoriseres som 'faktisk' diskrimination, kan det få juridiske konsekvenser for de implicerede (Jensen et al. 2012, 26-27). Dog er der kun tale om 'faktisk' diskrimination, når de markører, som danner basis for, at diskriminationen kan finde sted, konkret udtales og senere kan bevises at være blevet udtalt (Jensen et al. 2012, 26). Derfor dokumenteres og straffes 'faktisk diskrimination' relativt sjældent i Danmark (Jensen et al. 2012, 29).
- ⁵ <https://www.smk.dk/exhibition/ufortalte-historier/>, tilgået 1. marts 2022.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ <https://www.smk.dk/exhibition/kirchner-nolde/>, tilgået 1. marts 2022.
- ⁸ <https://slks.dk/omraader/kulturinstitutioner/museer/museernes-opgaver-og-drift/>, tilgået 1. marts 2022.
- ⁹ <https://integrationsbarometer.dk/tal-og-analyser/INTEGRATION-STATUS-OG-UDVIKLING> tilgået 1. marts 2022.
- ¹⁰ 'Indvandrere og efterkommere uden vestlig oprindelse' defineres af Danmarks Statistik som mennesker, der enten er født i et andet land end Danmark og ikke har dansk statsborgerskab, eller de har to forældre, som hverken er født i Danmark eller har dansk statsborgerskab, og som dermed har tilknytning til et land, som hverken er et af de 28 EU-lande eller Andorra, Island, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Norge, San Marino, Schweiz, Vatikanstaten, Canada, USA, Australien og New Zealand (jf. <https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/emner/befolkning-og-valg/indvandrere-og-efterkommere/indvandrere-og-efterkommere> og <https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/dokumentation/statistikdokumentation/indvandrere-og-efterkommere/indhold>)
- ¹¹ <https://www.dkmuseer.dk/nyhed/fakta-repr%C3%A6sentation-af-kvindelige-kunstnere-i-museers-udstillinger-og-indk%C3%B8b>, tilgået 1. marts 2022.

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Approaching responsibility: A sensory approach to reflexivity on researcher-participant relations

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Abstract

Feminist researchers have long argued that reflexivity is key to a responsible research practice. As a method, reflexivity has the capacity to reveal power relations and highlight situated perspectives. Consequently, it has become a mainstream tool in qualitative research. Yet it has also been criticised for producing tick-the-box reflections and promoting a researcher-centric narrative that undermines participants' contributions to knowledge production. This article takes a sensory approach to reflexivity and considers its methodological implications. Borrowing our interpretation of recognisability from Skeggs (1997), and that of emplacement from Pink's (2015) conceptualisation of sensory ethnography, we use the compound concept of 'recognisable emplacement' as a reflexive theoretical lens with which to analyse the researcher-participant relationship. We are furthermore methodologically inspired by duo-ethnography in that we as co-authors create a collective and reflexive space for analysis. The analysis therefore enables us to illustrate the dynamic negotiations between participants, environment, and researcher, and to shed light on the sensory cues that form these negotiations. Based on an understanding of responsibility as a multifaceted and situated practice we suggest that a sensory approach to reflexivity increases the researcher's capacity to take responsibility by foregrounding the intersubjectivity of researcher-participant relations.

KEYWORDS: Responsibility, reflexivity, sensory ethnography, recognition, emplacement, researcher-participant relationship

The idea for this article came from a wish to engage more profoundly with the practice of reflexivity to address researcher-participant relationships in our field of educational research. As PhD students and thus relatively new to the research profession, we often find ourselves getting involved in discussions about how to understand the concept of the 'responsible researcher' (cf., Haraway 1991; Riach 2009; Skeggs 2002). How do we balance our personal and professional identities while striving to achieve a good rapport with children and youth? How can we be respectful of the knowledge and experience of the participants in our studies, while taking on the role of interpreting and analysing them? We struggled to incorporate a practice of reflexivity that could address these and similar questions while avoiding the shallowness of the endless 'etc.' that comes with merely accounting for the identity categorisations to which one belongs. As Butler (1999, 182) has noted, such identity predicates "strive to encompass a situated subject but invariably fail to be complete". We therefore imagine this article as a methodological exploration that illustrates the practice of reflexivity in motion. We set out to examine researcher-participant relationships and discuss how reflexivity enables a responsible feminist research practice – specifically in educational research involving children and youth. By doing so, we do not presume to demonstrate a 'best practice'. We rather want to contribute to the literature on what reflexivity can look like and what (and how) we learn from practicing it as early career researchers in the educational field. In short, we wanted to write the article we ourselves needed to read, while hopefully becoming more responsible researchers along the way.

Reflexivity was originally conceptualised as an approach to the examination of researcher subjectivity with the aim of producing transparent accounts of the position from which the researcher views the world (O'Boyle 2018; Willis & Siltanen 2009). Its inception came about as critical researchers had argued that discursively produced categories of social identity are silent co-producers of knowledge in any research endeavour, and thus questioned the concept of

objectivity (Haraway 1988; Davies & Harré 1990; Rose 1997). Pierre Bourdieu famously developed his concept of reflexive sociology to highlight the importance of critical examinations of the researcher role to avoid taking and reproducing an objectifying gaze (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). Researchers must therefore acknowledge how they are embedded in theoretical and methodological frames for interpretation and should question what it means to do research within certain traditions of thought. Feminist ethnography arguably presupposes critical reflexivity, as it has traditionally accentuated the problematisation of power relations in the researcher-participant relationship and highlighted an intersubjective approach to knowledge production (Davids & Willemse 2014; Pedersen & Gunnarsson 2004; Pillow 2003; Riach 2009). As Pillow (2003, 178) states: "Reflexivity under feminism is not only about investigating the power embedded in one's research but is also about doing research differently". Nowadays, reflexively exploring the researcher-participant relationship is central to qualitative inquiries (Berger 2015; Davids 2014; Harrington 2003; Pillow 2003; O'Boyle 2018), and is an important tenet of responsible research, where the researcher is committed to continuous ethical reflections as well as methodological adjustments throughout the research process (e.g., Davids 2014; Davids & Willemse 2014; Haraway 1988; Mies 1993; Nencel 2014; Skeggs 1997; 2002; van Stapele 2014).

The lack (and impossibility) of a clear-cut script for how to perform a qualitative, feminist reflexivity has produced a large span of techniques to approach the matter. Critiques have been directed towards two interconnected trends. The first addresses a reflexivity practice that is too shallow, meaning that it only incorporates symbolic and empty *pro forma* statements of identity, without allowing reflexivity to contribute in terms of epistemological, ethical, or analytical aspects of research (Pillow 2003). Secondly, if a reflexivity practice becomes too centred on the identity, actions, and inner life of the researcher, it results in the overshadowing of the participants as competent actors in knowledge production (O'Boyle

2018; Skeggs 2002). The main challenge for reflexivity as a research practice is thus to avoid it becoming a tool for self-indulgent navel-gazing and tick-the-box accounts of researcher identities rather than being a means to conduct more responsible research (O'Boyle 2018; Pillow 2003; Riach 2009). Drawing on empirical data from a PhD project focusing on students in Danish secondary schools, this article approaches reflexivity within the framework of sensory ethnography. In the latter, the encounter between researcher and participant is understood as a process of negotiation where subjectivities are constantly resituated and remade in relation to each other. According to Pink (2015, 38), sensory ethnography is a reflexive project as it:

[...] invokes the inevitable question of how researchers themselves are entangled in, participate in the production of and are co-present in the ethnographic places they share with research participants, their materialities and power relations.

In a sensory ethnography it is thus implicit that the researcher is always speaking from a certain place and trying to understand the emplacement of others, which leads to a constant questioning of how such knowledge can become available to us. Our understanding of 'emplacement' will be unfolded in an upcoming section. For our analysis, we will use three empirical examples to explore how sensory subjectivities are negotiated on the basis of value-laden categorisations. We also explore how they shift through situated entanglement with other subjectivities. We will argue that engaging in a reflexive practice with a sensory outlook makes new ethnographic knowledge possible while allowing the researcher to explore the intersubjectivity of the researcher-participant relationship, thus strengthening the capacity to conduct responsible research.

Reflexivity and the researcher-participant relationship

As was mentioned above, reflexivity is a much-used tool in the exploration of researcher-participant relationships in ethnographic research. One central issue addressed by researchers through reflexive practices is the so-called *involvement paradox*. The latter concept refers to the constant and intricate balance that qualitative researchers must navigate between being an active participant in the lives and contexts of participants and keeping a professional distance (Anteby 2013; Langley & Klag 2017). The underlying assumption is that an overly involved researcher will develop blind spots that hinder a nuanced analysis. Meanwhile, the conceptualisation of the paradox builds on the idea that distance equals more neutrality and objectivity, a contention that has consistently been challenged by feminist ethnographers (Haraway 1988; Lather 2006; Mies 1993). As noted by Langley & Klag (2017), there is a broad consensus that representation of lived experience in academic research is only made possible by 'being there' to some extent. It is equally clear that 'being there' influences both the 'being' and the 'there' in significant ways (Cunliffe & Karunanayake 2013; Haraway 1988). These discussions are echoed in the literature on insider/outsider positions, which highlights the different dynamics that the presence or absence of shared lived experiences impose on a research situation (Berger 2015; Dwyer & Buckle 2009; Alderson & Morrow 2011). Having insider status implies having personal knowledge about the field from a participant standpoint and thereby an intimacy with the norms and rationales to which participants are subjected. Being an insider can significantly help with issues of access and the establishment of trust and rapport but can also subject the researcher to complex ethical dilemmas (Harrington 2003; Merriam et al. 2001; Spanger 2012). An outsider perspective can in turn have its own benefits, including a naïve curiosity that elicits fuller explanations from participants than they would give to somebody assumed to be in the know (Merriam et al. 2001). Importantly, thinking about insider/outsider in terms

of an 'either or' rather than a spectrum makes for a blunt reflection tool, which has been addressed by several authors (e.g., Dwyer & Buckle 2009; Li 2018; Merriam et al. 2001; Spanger 2012; O'Boyle 2018).

Besides addressing the fluidity of researcher emplacements, previous literature has demonstrated how reflexivity can highlight the important role that participants themselves play as co-producers of knowledge. Analysing researcher-participant relationships as an interplay between intersecting social positions, Qvortrup (2012) uses the concepts of disidentification and counter power to address antagonistic situations that were played out in his fieldwork. In so doing, he explores the ways in which the minoritised men in his study perceived him as a symbol of mainstream society, which enabled them to express their antagonistic relationship to society in general by challenging his researcher position. In her ethnographic study in a psychiatric ward in Denmark, Ringer (2013) has furthermore explored how the researcher positions made available to her by the staff and patients in her study became a source of knowledge about norms in the mental health services. Taking this as her point of departure for reflexive practice, Ringer (2013) uncovered several ways in which patients resisted objectifying practices they were subjected to by the institutions they were in – but also by her as a researcher. The researcher-participant relationship is thus never merely the meeting of two people and their personal motivations, but is also a negotiation between contexts, norms, and materiality, where participants affect knowledge production in significant ways.

As was seen above, addressing the researcher-participant relationship reflexively is by no means an under-theorised matter. Our contribution is to portray reflexivity in motion, using a sensory approach to learn more about the dynamics of researcher-participant relationships and develop our capacity for responsible research. In the following section, we outline our theoretical approach to reflexivity by introducing a compound concept called 'recognisable emplacement'.

Recognisable emplacement

In this paper, we analyse the researcher-participant relationship as an ongoing 'recognisable emplacement' in order to inform our practice of a responsible feminist reflexivity. 'Recognisability' is a term we borrow from Beverly Skeggs (1997), whereas emplacement derives from Sarah Pink (2015).

Skeggs (1997) describes the first part of the concept, *recognisable*, as the ways in which social categories are represented by and through our bodies. Embodied actions like language choices, tone of voice, and bodily gestures work together with material attributes like clothing, jewellery, and hairstyle to emit signals of our place in the world, and in so doing make our bodies inescapably available for evaluation by others (Skeggs 1997). Recognition is thus the act of placing these expressions in a larger socio-cultural context while assigning value to them. When we enter an educational setting as researchers, we are walking into a pre-existing cultural context where our bodies and bodily expressions become recognisable to the students and teachers in certain ways – and vice versa (cf. Harrington 2003; Li 2018; Ringer 2013; Skeggs 1997). During a recent visit in a school, the co-author experienced how a teacher who himself had an academic background eagerly¹ shared details of his thesis work to establish common ground with her. This teacher was excited about her observing his class as he himself had experience with using that method. Negotiation of recognition is in this way central when it comes to establishing relationships between us as researchers and the participants in our studies.

We will furthermore draw on the concept of emplacement as an alternative to concepts like position, identity, or role. Our understanding of *emplacement* is interpreted from Pink (2015, 28), who argues that emplaced ethnography "attends to the question of experience by accounting for the relationships between bodies, minds, and the materiality and sensoriality of the environment." According to this description, emplacement supersedes embodiment by placing larger emphasis on contextual factors in the environment as well

foregrounding sensory experiences. Sensoriality, according to Pink (2015), entails the researchers' embodied and historically informed experiences, which are central to how they understand the past, interact with the present, and imagine the future. A sensory approach is therefore more than just a registration of smells or the lighting in a room – it includes the experience of social tensions, moods, and atmospheres as well as knowledge about the norms that create them. Sensoriality is implicit and often silenced bodily knowledge that is co-produced in an interplay between participants and the research environment. Sensory ethnography thus emphasises the whole body – conscious and subconscious – as an instrument to navigate sociocultural practices during fieldwork and is thereby inherently reflexive in its practice. In its emphasis on the socio-material context of surroundings, the concept of emplacement therefore gives voice and place to implicit, sensed knowledge (Pink 2015).

We will use 'recognition' or 'recognisable' to refer to the process whereby the researcher is given value and emplacement as the physical and sociocultural position that is being spoken from – a position that is negotiated by recognisable bodily signs and actions expressing relations to norms and social hierarchies. By conjoining recognisable and emplacement as one analytical concept, we can analyse *how* the researcher is recognised and from *where* the researcher is emplaced when engaging with participants. Recognisable emplacement is a tool for reflexivity as it enables the analysis of how a specific relationship is negotiated between researcher and participant. Importantly, we view the emplacement in terms of researcher-participant relationships as fluid and non-linear because of its ability to be renegotiated in different forms. Thus, a specific emplacement can lead to a negotiation resulting in new recognitions, and a specific recognition can trigger the negotiation of a new emplacement.

Analysing the researcher-participant relationship in terms of recognisable emplacement, we tap into the critique concerning researchers' ability to establish a role in the field and remain bound to it throughout the research process (e.g.,

Harrington 2003; Ringer 2013). By doing so, researchers ignore how participants actively negotiate emplacement and recognisability in implicit ways and how emplacement and recognisability are thereby constantly malleable. With our conceptualisation of recognisable emplacement, we therefore want to acknowledge the participants as active, and sometimes dominant, parties in the negotiation of researcher-participant relationships.

Method

The authors of this article both work with educational research in Denmark and conduct fieldwork in schools. We also share some methodological and theoretical perspectives, mainly in terms of being inspired by feminist, queer, and intersectional approaches. Our research foci are however different, as we work respectively with students' conceptions of health and well-being, and teachers' understanding of dis/ability in inclusive education. Working on this article has thus been a way for us to learn from each other's experiences of fieldwork in a school setting. It has involved a cooperative and mutual effort to deepen our understanding of the participant-researcher dynamic and strengthen our capacity to take responsibility for future research processes. In this article we make use of Justenborg's empirical data, as she is further along in her PhD and has more extensive material. However, we use our different researcher emplacements actively, performing a joint analysis incorporating both insider (as data producer) and outsider (as discussant) perspectives. Even though our method falls short of being a duo-ethnographic analysis, it does borrow some of the elements from this approach, e.g., viewing differences between authors as a strength, taking on the dual role of researcher and researched in the analytical process, a reflexive focus, and the use of memory prompts to unfold narratives (cf. Sawyer & Norris 2009). The analysis is, however, not written in the characteristic, duo-ethnographic style of a dialogue. Instead, the dialogue took place behind the scenes, and the resulting joint

analytical understanding and reflection will be unfolded here.

The initial style of Justenborg's fieldwork was explorative, which in practice meant that she noted as many details about the environment of the school and her interactions with participants as possible. It also meant that her style of note-taking was not informed by a sensory ethnography approach at the time, but rather inspired by Geertz's (1973) principles of thick descriptions and Bourdieu's reflexive sociology (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). When we decided to pursue a sensory-focused path to our analysis in this article, we therefore spent significant time tending to the empirical examples. Although most of the information was present in Justenborg's original field notes, there were contextual cues and details of sensory experience missing due to the lack of a structurally applied sensory approach. A central component of our co-authorship has therefore been the reconstruction of the empirical examples through lengthy discussion, where Nilsson facilitated the recollection of additional sensory details. Justenborg had initially brought six extracts from her fieldnotes that described situations where researcher-participant roles were being negotiated. Each example was then discussed at length with Nilsson asking questions about what preceded the interaction, what Justenborg was feeling in the situation and why, what the atmosphere was like, what tone of voice was used in an exchange, what facial movements or small gestures were made and how were they received. Questions were also raised regarding later relationships and interactions with the same students, including anything and everything that could contribute to a more nuanced description with a special focus on sensory details. Based on these conversations Nilsson then rewrote the example in her own words, prompting new discussions and additions from Justenborg. At the end we were left with the version of the material that is included here, which represents a joint reconstruction of Justenborg's original fieldnotes. If Justenborg was unsure about an aspect of the situation (body language, tone of voice, or other details) this was left out. Half of the original examples were discarded mainly because the

recollection process could not contribute enough sensory details to support the intended analysis.

Justenborg conducted fieldwork observations in six classes (two classes each in the fifth, seventh, and ninth grades) in two schools from May to June of 2019 and performed four focus group interviews with a total of 18 ninth-graders from two other schools between August 2021 and January 2022. The participating students came from four Danish public primary and secondary schools and were between 11 and 15 years old. Two of the three examples presented below derive from fieldwork observations with seventh-graders, and the last example comes from a focus group interview with ninth-graders.

As noted by Davis (2014, 22), locating yourself as a researcher is key to enabling a "production of feminist knowledge that is accountable, reflexive and admittedly partial". However, as previously mentioned, one of our aims with the explorative approach to reflexivity that we exemplify in this paper is to avoid stagnating our reflexive practice in a listing of fixed social categories. Situating oneself should only be a small part of the practice of reflexivity – the important part is letting those categories go to work analytically and inform ethical considerations (Davis 2014; Skeggs 2002). The purpose of presenting Justenborg is thus to provide a contextualisation of our upcoming analysis, in which these categorisations become pieces of the analytical puzzle. Furthermore, social categories are plentiful, and are therefore necessarily subject to a selection process to make the analysis meaningful (Phoenix 2006; Delgado 2011). That said, Justenborg is a cis-gendered white woman who at the time of the research was in her late twenties and early thirties. She is Danish, grew up in Denmark, and attended Danish state school institutions.

A common assumption is that the more alike the researcher and participants in a study are, the easier the access to their authentic opinions and experiences will be, which in turn is assumed to strengthen the validity of the research (Merriam et al. 2001; Aiello & Nero 2019; Ringer 2013). Pink (2015) moreover describes how researchers, by aligning their and participants' bodies, can create

correspondence between experiences and move towards a similar emplacement. As the subject of her research contains sensitive elements about personal health, well-being, and body image, making the establishment of rapport important, Justenborg intuitively approached her fieldwork with the intention of creating trust and relatability with the students by emphasising similarities. Akin to Ringer's (2013) approach, she decided to align herself visibly with the participants of her study, the students. She did not want to be recognised as a teacher, as that comes with connotations of authority that might make students more inclined to say what they thought she wanted to hear, rather than their actual views. Before embarking on her fieldwork, she therefore observed the style of clothing of girls in the age group that she was researching and adapted her own style to resemble theirs. In this way, she attempted to signal a closer belonging to the students than to the teachers, a more peer-like figure, reminiscent of Mandell's (1988) 'least-adult'. However, she always answered their questions honestly and the details she shared about her own experiences in their conversations were genuine. We also wish to emphasise that the fieldwork went on for a longer period of time. Thus, even though it is not part of the data conveyed here, informed consent was given by all participants, and the researcher role and aims were explained in age-appropriate language.

Analysing (with) sensoriality

All three of the empirical examples selected for the following analysis illustrate a shift in the relationship between researcher and participant. This shift was experienced sensorially by Justenborg as a change in the atmosphere of the room and in the flow of the conversation. It was not something that she initially had language to describe but was very present in her memories of these situations. As argued by Pink (2015), sensory aspects of fieldwork are always present and a part of the general experience that the researcher has but putting sensory aspects into academic texts is a complex and difficult task. However, from the perspective

of a sensory ethnography, sensory experiences are valuable data, as they are a response to and reflections of the situated sociocultural norms under negotiation. This approach is supported by research arguing that methodological dilemmas are not solely issues of method but can instead become points of departure for analysis (cf. O'Boyle 2018; Ringer 2013; Qvortrup 2012). The sensory framework of our analysis has two main components. The first entails extra attention to the inclusion of sensory details in the empirical examples themselves. The second is the use of these details as springboards into analysis guided by our analytical concept of recognisable emplacement, which foregrounds embodied sensory experience.

Come with us to the canteen

The first empirical example stems from Justenborg's fieldwork in a seventh-grade classroom. This interaction takes place on her first day in the class, so the students do not know her at this point. The teacher introduces Justenborg to the class as a researcher with a focus on health and well-being and then assigns a task that the students work on independently using their computers. The room is quiet except for the occasional whisper between students, the sound of chairs scraping and fingertips tapping on keyboards. Justenborg notes that the students in the class are generally wearing clothes from designer brands, in neutral colours and styles. The group of boys in the following interaction are sitting together around the same computer and are seemingly deeply engaged in schoolwork.

I am sitting in the back of the classroom writing observation notes during the lesson. From my position, I notice that a group of boys in front of me are looking at shoes on a website instead of doing their schoolwork. Suddenly one of the boys turns around and sees me looking at them. He flinches, opens his eyes a little wider with surprise but holds my gaze, seemingly waiting for my reaction. "I think those ones look cool", I say, while

leaning my body forward in my chair and smiling. He nods, looks up at the teacher in front of the class and then keeps on scrolling the website (Seventh grade, School 1).

In this very brief interaction, an initial contact is established between Justenborg and a student in the class, which is significant for shedding light on their subsequent interactions. When one of the boys suddenly becomes aware of Justenborg's presence, he awaits her reaction. He knows of course that he is not doing what he is supposed to be doing, but as her presence is new, he seems unsure of what to expect from her. Justenborg responds with an inviting body language and a comment that signals approval of the activity. By showing an interest in the shoes and expressing her own opinion she is invoking recognition as someone not invested in whether he is following the teacher's instructions or not. Not only is she not condemning the fact that the boy and his friends drifted away from schoolwork, but she is also actively participating in the rogue activity by commenting appreciatively on a specific pair of shoes. She thereby becomes emplaced, by herself and the students, as other-than-a-teacher, which is further underlined by her physical position in the room as she sits with the students. She is negotiating a recognition of herself as open to interaction on their terms. The negotiation of the researcher-participant relationship continues in the following interaction:

I am writing observation notes in my notebook after class and the boy from before comes over. "Wow you are writing a lot", he says sarcastically and takes a few steps back. "There are many interesting things going on here", I say a little ironically while I smile and nod. "Really? What are you writing about me?" he answers, looking at me and smiling a little while raising his eyebrows. "Are you sure you want to know?" I smile again, raising my eyebrows too. "Can I see?" He steps in a little closer and leans his body forward towards my notebook. "Yes". He takes a quick look, so quick that it would be

difficult to read anything. His friend comes over and I ask them what they are going to do during the break. They suggest that I go to the canteen with them. As we walk to the canteen along an empty hallway, the boys include me in their banter. Jokes fly back and forth between us, and we laugh together. The canteen is full of students standing in line or talking in smaller groups. When we come into the canteen area, I start asking them questions about what the food in the canteen is like and what their lunch habits are. The atmosphere quickly changes. The boys are not laughing or smiling anymore, and I notice that the physical distance between us increases. They reply hesitantly to my questions and look down at the floor or towards the hallway. "We have to go", one of the boys suddenly says, and they almost run back towards the classroom (Seventh grade, School 1).

In approaching Justenborg outside of the classroom, the boy is showing interest in her notetaking while at the same time, with his sarcastic tone of voice, maintaining a distance between them. As they are talking, he also keeps changing the physical distance between them, moving in closer to say something and then taking a few steps back again. The ambivalence in his bodily expressions implies that he does not want to be recognised as invested in his interaction with her, but he is still initiating its continuation. Justenborg responds by smiling, answering tongue-in-cheek, and thereby inviting the recognition of her as fun, approachable, and relatable. When commenting on her writing, the boy immediately asks about his own presence in her notes, implying that she might have a special interest in *him*. The almost flirtatious undertones of this insinuation highlights their gendered emplacement as presumably heterosexual individuals in the negotiation of what type of interaction is possible and appropriate. The boy then asks to see her notes, and when she agrees he only symbolically glances at them. His curiosity about her notes is also part of the negotiation process – what will

she allow him to do, where are the boundaries of their interactions? Letting him look at her notes reemphasises her emplacement as a non-authoritative figure in the context, as she is not putting up boundaries and enforcing rules. As the boy and his friend invite her to walk to the canteen with them, their recognition of her seemingly reflects her emplacement as socially available and of equal status. She treats them as equals, mirroring their tone of voice and conversation style, laughing at their jokes, and replying in kind as they walk together towards the canteen, reinforcing her emplacement as a peer-like figure.

When they arrive at the crowded canteen, however, several things change, which affects their recognition of Justenborg and thus her emplacement. Justenborg starts asking questions about food and the canteen from an outsider perspective, which breaks the script of their social interaction thus far. Their shared physical surroundings have also changed. Their interaction started outside of the classroom with the rest of the class, who knew who Justenborg was. They then walked together through mostly empty corridors. The canteen, however, is crowded with their peers, to whom Justenborg is an unknown adult – probably recognised as an educator. The boys' recognition of Justenborg's emplacement therefore shifts. Their awkward and rapid escape from the situation indicates that they can no longer see value in interacting with her – she has become a social burden. The emplacement that she has had as socially available and peer-like is built on her playing along with their modes of communication, mirroring their banter and style. It does not allow for her to bring herself as a researcher into the interaction, and their relationship therefore becomes fragile. The rapport that their previous conversation had built immediately disappears when confronted with onlookers in the canteen, and she becomes a 'researcher', who through her questions proves to be less like them than they had previously recognised.

And then your body becomes the number

The following example stems from fieldwork observations in a different seventh-grade classroom. It is again Justenborg's first meeting with the class. She arrives for an English lesson and is introduced by the teacher. The students in the class are talking over the teacher, making noise, and distracting themselves and each other during the introduction. Some are facing away from the front of the classroom, with their feet on the tables, looking at their phones and generally ignoring both Justenborg and the teacher. Justenborg experiences the atmosphere in the class as tense and unwelcoming. Her first impression is therefore that establishing relationships with students in this class will be difficult. In this empirical excerpt, she approaches a group of students after the teacher has given them an assignment to work on independently. The students are dressed in feminine clothes and are all wearing visible make up. They smell of perfume and are wearing notably shiny jewellery, rings, earrings, and necklaces.

During a group work session, I approach a group of girls. They are talking to each other about something not school related. One girl is looking at her phone and one of the others is combing her fingers through another girl's hair. When I sit down next to them, they stop what they are doing and look at me. "This is boring", one of them says while leaning back in her chair with a tired expression on her face, crossing her arms over her chest. "I totally understand", I smile and shrug my shoulders. "I also hated English class when I was in school", I add while maintaining eye contact with her. "Why are you here?" one of the other girls asks quizzically in a demanding tone, frowning. "I would like to have your perspectives on well-being and health in school", I answer sincerely. "Fine. Then we do not have to do this [the assignment]", she says with a resigned sigh. "What do you want to know?" (Seventh grade, School 2).

As Justenborg sits down at the table, her presence causes the group to stop their ongoing conversation. They were visibly, almost demonstratively, not paying attention during her introduction, which means that at this moment she is probably emplaced as an educator. One of the students initiates the negotiation of recognition by exclaiming that 'this' (presumably referring to the content of the coursework expected of them) is 'boring'. Her statement is an open defiance of norms surrounding 'good' student behaviour in the classroom from an institutional perspective, which would mean students accepting the teacher's authority and working on assigned tasks. The comment, together with her defiant body language, is thereby part of negotiating the student's own recognisability in this context as someone in opposition to what she recognises Justenborg's emplacement to be – a representative of the school. Justenborg experiences the comment as directed at her and as an invitation to emplace herself in relation to the girls' expressed sentiment. Instead of scolding them for not working or even encouraging them to do so, Justenborg takes the girls' sentiment even further by expressing her own dislike of the subject they are supposed to be studying. The content and style of her answer make her recognisable as an adult presence different from the teacher and allows for a subsequent informal conversation and more peer-like emplacement. The girls agree to talk to her under the auspices of getting out of doing their assignments, which is another statement that contributes to their own emplacement in opposition to institutional expectations. Justenborg recognises their way of agreeing to participate in a conversation with her as a marker of distance from her. They are making it clear that it is not because they *want* to talk about the topics introduced by Justenborg that they agree to do so – it is only because the alternative is worse. Her emplacement is thereby recognised as valuable to some extent, but still under negotiation. The following interaction takes place after their conversation in the classroom, during the break:

I am standing with one of girls outside the classroom when two of the other girls from

the group walk up to us. One of them hands me a flower. "This is for you". She assumes an exaggeratedly girlish pose, crossing her legs and arms over her body, and looks down at the floor, giggling. "Wow, that's so nice of you"! I respond ironically and laugh, as do the other girls. We continue our conversation from the classroom and the girls tell me that they feel like the worst thing in the world is going to the school nurse, because you have to get on the scale and talk about your weight. I tell them that I remember having that same feeling about going there. "If you are not around the average weight, you feel like something is wrong. But what does that number even tell us?" I ask, rhetorically. The girls enthusiastically agree. "Exactly!" one of the girls says. "And then your body becomes that number" (Seventh grade, School 2).

After their conversation during English, members of the group of girls approach Justenborg outside the classroom on their own initiative. The need to recognise Justenborg's emplacement as a way out of doing schoolwork is now gone and the physical space of the hallway is more informal than the classroom. One of the girls hand Justenborg a flower, and in doing so she is in a playful manner emplacing Justenborg as part of their group again. Justenborg recognises the flower and the parodic way in which it is handed to her as an invitation to assume an emplacement on a more peer-like premise. Justenborg is a cis-gendered woman who has herself attended school in a similar overarching cultural and normative setting as that of these girls. She thereby has embodied, gendered knowledge of the unfolding social scripts, which allows her to act in a recognisable manner. She unconsciously plays along with the joke appropriately, which strengthens her recognisable emplacement as a peer. Their previous interaction in the classroom and the commonalities that were highlighted there allow for the girls to recognise Justenborg as someone whom they can approach in this way, allowing her to be emplaced as a trustworthy and peer-like actor in this context. Their conversation circles back to her research topic

and lands on the experience of being evaluated in the school nurse's office. Justenborg relates a personal memory of school nurse visits as a way to mirror and affirm the students' narratives and find common ground, thereby encouraging their recognition of her emplacement. By participating in the conversation with her own genuine experience rather than asking pre-scripted questions, the conversational tone is maintained, which allows the interaction to proceed in a relaxed way.

Even though Justenborg's age is twice that of the students, the practices of schools have remained similar enough for her to have had comparable experiences, including having been held to related gendered body norms. Her embodied experience of the school nurse increases recognisability of similarity and familiarity between her and the students and creates the conditions for an honest and intimate conversation about her research topic. The fact that her research explicitly deals with issues related to the body and is carried out in the physical space of the school calls attention to their similarities in a way that further strengthens Justenborg's emplacement as peer-like in this context. Their commonalities are constantly re-emphasised by the content of their conversations, which makes differences between them in other social categories, like age, less present and determining of their interaction. Hence, a recognisable emplacement from a dual perspective of peer-like and researcher becomes possible.

Researcher authority

The last empirical example illustrates a situation from a focus-group interview with four ninth-grade students. The students reached out to Justenborg because they were doing a school project about body ideals and were interested in an interview with a researcher specialised in the topic. Justenborg agreed to meet with them and subsequently asked if the students were willing to participate in a focus-group interview to discuss the preliminary findings of her PhD project. The following empirical example derives from that focus-group interview and takes place a week after their expert interview

with her. They reconvene in a meeting room at the university where Justenborg works. Justenborg notes that the students are all dressed in neutral colours. When asked during the interview, they describe their own style of clothing as 'basic'. They are polite, listen attentively, and respond willingly to all her questions. Justenborg puts out several bowls of snacks that the students never touch.

*I introduce the students to the practicalities of the interview process and finish by asking if there is anything else they would like to know before we get started. One of the students says yes and looks at me expectantly. "Well okay..." I say hesitantly, thinking about what to tell them. I suddenly feel unprepared and end up saying the first thing that pops into my head: "My name is Katrine; I work with well-being and health in schools as you know. I am married to my husband Jakob, and we have a baby boy together. Would you like to know more?" I ask with a short, uneasy laugh. "No", the same student answers, with a blank look on his face, leaning back in his chair. Silence follows. I immediately feel like I have said the wrong things because the mood in the room seems more tense. During the interview, I notice that the students repeatedly look at me as if they are awaiting my approval. They repeatedly phrase their statements as questions or finish their sentences with "...or at least that's what I think". I try to engage them by using myself and my own experiences as examples, but instead of stimulating the conversation it just leads to it fading out. I feel like attempting to create relatability makes the distance between us larger
(Focus-group interview, ninth-grade students).*

In this excerpt from Justenborg's research notes, the point of departure for negotiating the researcher-participant relationship is a different emplacement than in the two empirical examples. The moniker 'researcher' is assumed to be initially vague and new to the students in the

previous examples, making Justenborg's recognisability thoroughly negotiable. The students in the current example, however, presumably have a good idea about the meaning of the term, due to the premise of their previous interaction – their expert interview with her. Moreover, the interview takes place in a meeting room at the university. The physical emplacement and the interview format thus work together to create a coherent emplacement of Justenborg as a researcher and authority figure in this context. As the interview is starting, Justenborg relates personal information about herself and is immediately struck by the feeling that her response does not meet the students' expectations. Justenborg's comment about her family situation furthermore counteracts her usual approach to fieldwork, to blend in and be recognised as relatable, as it highlights their different lived experiences. In the moment, she interprets her sensory experience of the room immediately following her statement as a shift in the atmosphere and creation of more tension. However, considering this experience through the lens of recognisable emplacement, her emplacement does not shift as a consequence of this exchange – rather it is emphasised. She is already speaking from an emplacement that the students recognise as fundamentally different than their own. It is her own sought-after emplacement as peer-like that is unavailable to her. As the interview continues, Justenborg's instinct still is to perform the interview as she usually does, which means that she attempts to make the interview situation less formal by actively involving herself and her own experiences in the conversation. The students do not seem to recognise these aspects of Justenborg's emplacement as relevant to their relationship, and thereby do not respond as she anticipated. The insecure and hesitant manner in which the students answer her questions can from this perspective be seen as a reflection of her recognisability as an authority. Looking young or sharing school experiences similar to theirs is not enough for them to recognise Justenborg as relatable and to allow her to assume a peer-like emplacement in this situation.

Reflecting on a reflexive practice

Using the compound concept of 'recognisable emplacement' invites us to analyse the participants' valuations of the researcher's bodily expression and to become aware of how these valuations depend on the current environment, norms, and expectations. Drawing on this concept, we have been able to conduct an analysis that highlights an embodied knowing often dismissed as too subjective or made invisible due to the difficulty of expressing it in academic texts. In our analysis of empirical examples from Justenborg's fieldwork, we have thus made the sensed experience of interactions between her and the participants our point of departure rather than allowing them to figure as unfulfilling sidenotes. Furthermore, our collaborative approach has enabled a reflexive dialogue that has helped us see the empirical material from diverse, situated perspectives, and has also highlighted the partiality of our specific interpretations (cf. Willis & Siltanen 2009). In the following we will summarise our analysis and expand on some issues regarding responsible research practice that our approach has provoked.

In our analysis, we have exemplified how Justenborg becomes recognisable and emplaced in different ways in her interactions with students. The circumstances and details of the three situations are very different, yet Justenborg's interaction pattern follows the same script. In the first example, the quest to establish social relatability comes to overshadow her emplacement as a researcher and the clash created by trying to align a peer-like and researcher emplacement results in her emplacement as a social burden. The emplacement that Justenborg had negotiated in relation to the boys was dependent on their interaction remaining informal, jovial, and purely social, as well as on maintaining the material surroundings in which this was established. The attempt to negotiate a peer-like emplacement thus took over and made it difficult to use the social recognition she had achieved to pursue her wider research aims. In the second empirical example, the negotiation for recognition plays out differently. In this case, Justenborg is able to become recognisable

as valuable to the students in her emplacement as a researcher because it allows them to avoid tasks that they do not want to do. She becomes relatable by mirroring their affective stance towards schoolwork, grounding her recognisability in their similar sentiments towards a school subject. Still, she maintains her emplacement as researcher in their interactions, as the themes of her research and her questions are drivers for the conversation. As their interaction progresses, their recognition of Justenborg as similar and relatable is enhanced by their shared gendered experiences of the school nurse. The research topic of health and well-being allows for similarities between her and the girls to be constantly highlighted, thereby reinforcing her recognisable value to them. Although we can only speculate what a different researcher would have meant for the outcome of these specific situations, it seems like the emplacement of peer-like researcher contributes positively to the knowledge production in this situation, as Justenborg's shared embodied experiences enable her to have a relevant and genuine discussion about her research topic. Age, gender, and cultural background play together here to make her both approachable and relatable enough for the girls to abandon their initial scepticism and become engaged in the conversation. In the third example, Justenborg's recognisable emplacement as an expert has been pre-negotiated in the expert interview when the focus group begins. Justenborg then shares details of her personal life of being a wife and a mother, which serves to emphasise a very different emplacement than the students have. When Justenborg attempts to re-negotiate recognition of herself and become emplaced as more similar and relatable to the students the attempt falls flat. The fact that the focus group session takes place in Justenborg's workplace contributes to the emplacement of Justenborg as an authority. Her go-to strategy of using her own experiences to make the interview situation less formal and more relaxed therefore becomes unworkable here.

We would like to conclude by reflecting further on how our work with this article has inspired and expanded our conception of responsible

research. The first empirical example shows that there is a balance to be struck between building relatability and staying within the boundaries of a researcher emplacement. Justenborg fails to achieve this balance and the relationship with her participants suffers from it. Example three is the only example where there is a pre-existing relationship between researcher and participants within which negotiations of emplacement are initiated. Our analysis indicates that even though negotiations are ongoing, emplacements do become harder to change with time – especially when contextual cues overwhelmingly contradict the emplacement that the researcher strives for. It is therefore significant that the two first examples are from situations where Justenborg's role was still new to the participants. A quick conclusion could be that a peer-like emplacement *can* be constructive but has limitations as a general approach. Digging deeper, we might think about how we can know when our approach to building safe and constructive researcher-participant relationships is failing. A sensory ethnography allows the researcher to use the body as an instrument of knowledge production by taking its conscious and unconscious cues about the social and material environment seriously. We would therefore argue that a sensory focus is helpful in terms of evaluating the relationship approach continuously. Such a focus is especially helpful, perhaps, for early career researchers wanting to reflect on and learn about the relational dynamics in specific research situations. In relation to our future fieldwork, we are curious to explore what adapting your approach to building trust on the basis of contextual cues in an ongoing interaction might look like and how it would be received by participants.

We would furthermore like to highlight how a collective, duo-ethnographically inspired method allowed us to create a conjoint reflexive space that made a re-imagining of the empirical material possible. Actively engaging with our different emplacements as insider and outsider in relation to the empirical data as well as with our other theoretical, methodological, and social differences has added new depth to our co-authorship. Instead of

simply critiquing and attempting to align our gaze, our cooperation has implicated a truly iterative process of re-negotiating the empirical examples that created a new common foundation from which our analysis could grow. This foundation was built by constantly challenging preconceptions and assumptions in our understanding that were invisible to us both individually. As a result, our process has not only supported Justenborg, as the producer of the data, in taking responsibility. Rather it enabled a shared responsibility for the research to emerge from our mutual reflexive space.

Lastly, we acknowledge that this paper does not necessarily succeed in accommodating the critique of reflexivity as a narcissistic and self-indulgent endeavour. While our analysis unmistakably shows the influential role that participants play in the negotiation of researcher emplacement, the participants' own perspectives on the relationship are lacking. Inclusion of participants' voices is arguably especially important when working with young participants, as they are often described as vulnerable and as a group in need of specific ethical attention in research (Alderson & Morrow 2011; Graham et al. 2015). This description fails to recognise them as subjects with agency, which increases the risk of overlooking

their contributions and the many intricate ways in which they can control and gain from participation in research (Yang 2022). Skeggs (2002, 363) furthermore criticises the notion that a researcher's epistemological authority leads to an inequality of worth in researcher-participant relations as she encourages us "not to confuse positioning with morality or we become complicit in the reproduction of passive pathologies." The question then becomes: do their voices need to be incorporated more directly for research to be responsible? We have not asked them about our representation of their recognisable emplacements and we do not consider that to be a reasonable request. After all, there are limits to what they can be expected to contribute – not because they would not be able to, but because it is an abstract reflection that has little to do with their everyday lives. As argued by Bodén (2021), research *with* children is not inherently more ethical than research *on* or *about* children. Ethics, rather, are situational and multifaceted, which is also how we have come to view the practice of a responsible, feminist research. A key recognition here is that researchers do not know *more* about the participants in our studies, than they know about us – our knowledge just comes from different places.

Notes

- ¹ In Denmark, teacher education is managed by university colleges with strong relations to practice and leads to a 'professional bachelor' degree, in contrast to the academic bachelor degree achieved at a university.

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Different readings and evoked conversations. A piece on the generative power of dialogue and co-thinking

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Abstract

In this dialogic piece we insist on the value of keeping alive critical debates about how academic knowledge is produced, when it comes to understanding the complexities involved in laying bare the impact of socioeconomic and sociocultural differences crossing borders and contexts. The climate for conversations about difference is constructed and moved by sentiments like rage, shame, guilt, and resentment but also connectedness and shared excitement. Human conversations across difference involve risk-taking but also engagement, evocation and inspiration. Here we make a humble intent to do so, taking as a point of departure our participation in a symposium held to launch Christina Hee Pedersen's book *Collaborative Research Methodologies* (2021). We use collaborative writing as a method of inquiry to explore how our understandings of concepts like intersectionality, social in- and exclusion, social justice and different knowledge forms represent a challenge to academic subjects within a pronounced audit culture, filled with competition and unequal employment conditions. We argue that explorative conversations are pivotal to cultivate feminist, anti-racist and decolonial pockets of critical, collaborative research and teaching practices.

KEYWORDS: Collaborative research methodologies, difference, decoloniality, intersectionality, affect

A text born out of a fruitful encounter

This dialogic piece was born out of a fruitful encounter between the three authors in Denmark in October 2021. We came together in a symposium as commentators of Christina Hee Pedersen's book launching of *Crafting Collaborative Research Methodologies. Leaps and Bounds in Interdisciplinary Inquiry* (Pedersen 2021). Christina's book gave us an invaluable opportunity to delve into issues of difference and collaboration in research methodologies that was in many ways unexpected. In this dialogic piece, we insist on the value of keeping alive the critical conversations that arise in human encounters like seminars, symposiums, or conferences. Conversations about what we consider important knowledge, how we destabilize our taken-for-granted thinking through encounters with others, and how we deal with the complexities involved in laying bare the impact of socioeconomic and sociocultural differences. The climate for conversations about difference is often constructed and moved by sentiments of rage, shame, guilt, and resentment, but not seldom also feelings like connectedness, identification, friendship, and the thrill of joint discovery. We named our online communication platform for making this piece *The adventure of writing*. We find it meaningful to contribute and share our conversations about and across difference, conversations which not only involve affect and risk-taking but also break down barriers that sometimes appear unsurmountable. We hope it can engage, evoke, and inspire others in their work.

Christina knew Breny and Adriana long before the symposium. Breny and Christina have known each other since 1985 through their work in the feminist NGO in Peru *Manuela Ramos*. Adriana and Christina were fellow activists in the early years of *GALF*, a lesbian feminist organization in Peru (Jitsuya & Sevilla, 2008). However, Breny and Adriana had never met before the symposium in Denmark, and we were not very familiar with the academic work of each other.

Christina's book *Crafting collaborative research methodologies. Leaps and bounds in*

interdisciplinary inquiry at the center of the symposium gathers the fruits of many years of research and teaching. It is an assemblage of texts which blurs genres, geographies and theoretical traditions and it communicates and explores concrete experiments with collaboration in a double move of evocation and interpretation/analysis. It presents several practical methods based on poststructuralist feminist takes on methodology/analysis working with images, memory work and intersectionality. Through collective work with texts co-produced in Peru, Denmark, and Bolivia she explores the production of dominance, social exclusion and normativity with the intertwined concepts: *subjectification*, *belonging* and *social change*.

Here we use collaborative writing as a method of inquiry to explore how our understandings of concepts as diverse as methodology, intersectionality, coloniality, subjectivity, social in- and exclusion, social justice and committed knowledge production represent a challenge to researchers living in a pronounced audit culture, filled with competition and unequal employment conditions worldwide. We hold that such explorative conversations are necessary to cultivate feminist, anti-racist and decolonial pockets of critical, collaborative research and teaching practices. What you are about to read is a constructed conversation, an extract of a rich reading and writing process where we, through different 'downfalls' in the texts, put together an assemblage of ideas related to collaboration and difference that we have found meaningful to share through a 'slow conversational style.' We invite the reader to 'give in' and patiently follow the flow we have constructed to present insights about the multifaceted nature of academic collaboration and the generative power of dialogue.

What did we do, and how

We come from different disciplines and occupy different positions in the colonial structures of power. We recognize that we as all researchers are implicated in (re)producing dynamics of

power and norms when we read and evaluate our own academic work and that of others. Here we engage in the adventure of an open and unfinished dialogue (Bakhtin 1981, Phillips 2011). Our departures and arrivals are different, but we have been driven by an evoked curiosity to explore the generative power of dialogue. We share a common commitment to feminism. In our process, we have made use of different kinds of texts as sites of encounter and self(inquiry). We take as our point of departure a fragment from Christina's book and parts of Breny's and Adriana's presentations at the symposium. Subsequently, we write letters to each other and share our immediate reactions virtually. We consider this approach as one of many ways to generate knowledge, create topics of relevance and human connections across different positions and affects. With this we invite the readers to follow the outcomes of a collaborative process.

Christina had asked Adriana and Breny to model their presentations at the symposium over four simple questions: What impressed you when you read the chapter assigned to you? What did the reading make you think about? In what ways could you use the ideas in the chapter in your own work? Did the chapter raise important questions in relation to research/teaching about collaborative research and difference?

Moved by our encounter at the symposium we set off by re-reading a small section from the beginning of Christina's book and the presentations of Breny and Adriana. Based on Christina's experience with a methodology of letter writing to generate insights we wrote one or two pages with our immediate reactions (Pedersen, Phillips, Frydendahl 2021, Phillips & Pedersen 2020). We let two simple questions guide our letters: 'What made the biggest impression on you when reading the letters - and why?' We started out with a round of ten minutes condensed talk online with immediate reactions, followed by dialogue on topics evoked by our conversation. Using the genre of open-ended dialogue, we sought to create room for expressing doubts, sharing personal experiences introspection, analytical points, and new questions.

The topics of common concern are related to ideas about difference, collaboration, academic work, and the research subject. Arriving at a closure in our conversation, we end with a reflection about some tensional moments that arose regarding in relation to the issue of otherness. These moments have allowed us to reflect even more on the impact of difference, affect and power in collaborative research. Let us set into motion our assemblage:

Texts of departure

What follows is a small extract from Christina's book from her first chapter where she talks about the meaning and function of the concepts *difference* and *experience*:

"It is common to state that it is important to always address *differences* within the human and social sciences (Hall, 1997). I have to admit that for me the tensions and difficulties in theorizing difference persist. In every day meaning making our expectations and imaginaries work in relation to cultural codes and norms and how these connect to the constructed social categories. The biological signs on our bodies; breasts, white skin, body weight for example make us decode these signs in normative frameworks. We use difference to make sense of our surroundings, to take contact, to create distance, to legitimize our own norms or simply to describe the worlds we are part of. I am utterly aware that some of my writing without me being aware address difference in ways that may reproduce hierarchies and binary positionings about race and class for example. In fact, I want to show how this takes place through language in some of the analysis presented. In many academic texts you have for decades witnessed a most of all ritualistic mentioning of how difference and intersections among social categories play an important role in the unfolding of any social phenomena. Ann Phoenix calls this the difficult 'couplet of difference and identity' and she talks about it as a couplet that is taken up but also resisted in academic work (Phoenix, 2008).

In commonsense understandings difference is most often associated with identity and social categories. Therefore, a clear danger when a group in collaborative processes talk difference into being is to assume homogeneity within social groups and also to other differences in the name of consensus. One could say that collaborative methodologies per se take place within and with the dynamic entanglement of difference and commonality and often create a temporary common ground for those who collaborate.

(...) In line with decades of feminist thinking, I hold that an important point of departure, be taken in *experience*, or more precisely, what we as individuals have come to recognize as experience, sensation, and reality. Despite my strong epistemological and ontological base in feminist post-structuralism, I find it necessary to hold on to a starting point with roots in feminist activist practices and in what could look like a phenomenological take on what is commonly recognized as 'known and owned' by both individual and a group as a 'reality'. I am committed to a humanist ideal where the potentials produced through human encounters require the construction of a common ground for communication and a basic recognition of the 'other' and the possibility to learn from him, they or her. In a human encounter, we establish this common ground by aiming at constructing an account that convinces oneself and the other. We do this by linking together life episodes into long, causal sequences and by singling out certain events that we give a specific significance. I understand the telling of experiences as social constructions, created by a narrator in close interaction with the situation and the expected cultural norms. As such, what we share is put together with the help of culturally available instruments and ingredients (Bourdieu, 1986; Järvinen, 2000, p. 372).

When establishing research relations with a commitment to learning, a precondition must be that participants can enter subject-subject relations. This means that during the research process it becomes possible to relate respectfully to one another as unique and worthy participants. In such encounters, the claim or the reference to 'experience' is key, as it is activated through language

and vital when we make contact and share our stories with the other, even if we in constructivist terms understand this narration of ourselves as a construction. Construction or not, the effects of our understandings of the world are as real as can be. Reality will always be mediated to us by language and so embodied that we perceive experience as a dear belonging that make us who we are - a constantly constructed base upon which we live (Hultman & Taguchi, 2010; Olesen & Pedersen, 2013; St. Pierre, 2011)'''

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Breny read chapter two and chapter nine in Christina's book. In chapter two Christina presents her repertoire of theoretical concepts. Concepts like *subjectification*, *belonging* and *social change* are explained and brought to work in a small story to direct attention to complexities in meaning-making related to social differentiation. The concepts represent a certain reflexive development within feminist poststructuralist traditions – a theoretical conversation 'on the move' where the research subject is recognized an active participant in the (re)production of hegemonic positions.

In chapter nine *intersectional thinking* is used to explore the analytical possibilities implied in handling texts as jointly produced and unstable. A collaborative re-writing strategy is used to analyze sociocultural norms and the concrete effects of social categorization in interpretation. Christina had asked Breny to read these two chapters, recognizing Breny's expertise related to the content feeling at the same time a little nervous about how a decolonial reading of her work would look. This is part of Breny's reading at the symposium:

"Bringing educación popular or popular education together with poststructuralism as does Christina in her book is quite a task. Perhaps this is one of the most outstanding feats of her work. You see, Educación popular is a Latin American political pedagogy of the sixties much rooted in Marxism that also inspired collaborative research methodologies such as Orlando Fals Borda's participatory action research (Fals Borda 1978a, 1978b, 1979, 1981, 1984; Robles & Rappaport,

2018). But what Christina is doing in her book is very different and innovative. She engages the researcher in a process of deep self-interrogation and self-reflection through textual analyses and other post-structural strategies which were not present at all in previous participatory action research methodologies. Why is this important? Well, because while both collaborative methodologies seek social transformation, participatory action research was concerned mainly with giving the knowledge produced by the researcher back to the 'subjects-objects' of the research, it did not require a preceding or a subsequent self-examination of the social positions of the researcher. He or she remained partially invisible throughout the process of investigation. And in so being the top-down approach of traditional research or the relations of power between the participants of the research were left largely unanalyzed. Christina does the exact opposite. She uses poststructural theories as her guideline and as her framework of analysis to reveal the cultural norms, and the technologies (microphysics) of power that are operating in the process of writing and rewriting the texts that make up the fieldwork of her research, or her memory work. Her collaborative methodology is bound to a process of self-discovery and uncovering and even public exposure of the compromised nature of our social positions that requires courage, honesty, and ethical integrity. I can feel throughout the pages of the book the noble desire to exhume the power that a Nordic woman senses is buried in the margins, in between the lines, and in the depths of her own writing. But that is not the only thing that is happening; she compels the reader to enter into a dialogue with the texts she has chosen as part of the process of her self-interrogation. As a reader you are pulled in as a protagonist of the stories she is sharing. Not only do you feel like becoming the observer of her memory or perhaps the observed, but her memory also becomes part of the repertoire of your own memories. You literally imagine witnessing what she is witnessing and retelling. But are you? You know as a fact that you are outside of her memory, that her memory does not belong to you and that you would have told the story differently. What has

taken place then? You realize that you have become a collaborator of the analytical process she has put in motion. Such that at the other end of the memory/story, you not only produce your own analysis of her memory but have begun enmeshing your own memories with hers and started your own process of self-interrogation. This is one of the finest moments of Christina's collaborative methodology.

She gives us an excellent example of how this happens in chapter two with the memory of an incident that she recorded in the mid-80s at the Schiphol Airport in the Netherlands. In this memory or in my memory of her memory, Christina observes a Latin American middle-aged man (she does not reveal his race, but I imagine he is probably an upper-middle-class Peruvian of mestizo-criollo origin) at the gate in a flight to Lima, Peru. She describes him as taking up too much space, his body language showing too much assertiveness, he's interacting with a waitress that she assumes might be Peruvian also and he speaks to her with an accented English (like mine) that irritates her. Couldn't he have just spoken to her in Spanish she asks herself. He initiates an uninvited conversation with a group of younger men (nationality unclear) that just came back from Paris. Christina senses they are uncomfortable with him because he blurts out an old-fashioned stereotypical French utterance like oh-la-la which brings the conversation to an end. She interprets his utterance as overtly sexual which turns off the younger men. I sense she thinks this is stereotypical Latin macho behavior. The man also treats his wife with excessive deference or perhaps condescension by demonstrating at every moment who's in charge. He seems to have command of everything around him, but from Christina's perspective this man is missing all European cultural cues.

At this point of her retelling of her memory, I am a little terrified. I am stunned at the speculative nature of her comments and of the tone. But then Christina begins unpacking this incident and her discursive power. Step by step she uncovers the binary constructions she infuses in the textual memory, the racial tension that traverses her comments about the man, her overidentification

with the waitress and his wife and her presuppositions. Christina becomes acutely aware that she has written into the text of her memory, her privilege as a white European woman. She uses Mary Louise Pratt's notion of the contact zone "where cultures, meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" (Pratt, 1991) to interpret the situation at the Schiphol airport and to come to terms with the meanings she has produced in the text that reveal the discursive power that she possesses as a European cisgender woman and scholar. The memory work and the textual analysis following post-structural understandings of power as productive, the double nature of subjectification, and self-governmentality allow her to reexamine her own assumptions and to reevaluate the cultural norms embedded in the meaning-making process with which she has imbued her memory work. I leave out a sigh of relief. The collaborative methodology has worked wonders. It has laid out in the open the tensions and disturbances that are produced in the encounter of a white woman with the Other and has provided the tools to engage with them constructively. The researcher has courageously and voluntarily engaged in an act of self-revelation and recognized the mutual humanity of the observer and the observed Other. Christina, the Danish scholar has fought the demons of power face to face and has taken the life out of them. She can now find like she says a more livable coexistence with the different Other, but also with herself."

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Adriana was the second speaker at the symposium. Christina had asked Adriana to read chapter seven about the production of otherness in language. Through the analysis of a memory work from Peru the chapter demonstrates the workings of ideas we create of ourselves and others. The empirical material is a written memory about a dance performance realized in the late 80s by Christina in the activist lesbian group *GALF* where

they both had been members. This experience was turned into a written memory based on a 'memory work' session with a group of feminist friends in Lima, who explored the dynamic tension related to similitude and difference among women. Christina was both curious and afraid to hear Adriana's reading of her analysis confronted by the risk that Adriana could maybe feel 'upset' by the obvious otherings displayed in Christina's analysis. This is an extract of Adriana's read on the symposium:

"The chapter you asked me to read was an example of a collaborative memory work where you had facilitated a memory work session with a group of feminist friends in 2009 seeking to explore to understand the effects of modifications within feminist discourses on difference. The situation you describe in your story is a 'homemade' choreography where you Christina danced. We are in Lima, Peru.

The dance performance you write about took place 30 years ago as part of the cultural/political activities of *GALF* an activist group we both belonged to. Christina's memory about her dance performance was written as an example of how women across differences share common interests but is at the same time a text about the entangled production of difference and commonality. The remembered situation is a dance performance and therefore also connects body/writing.

The best word to describe my reaction after reading the chapter is *confusion* and *discomfort*. Let me explain a little more to better understand my reaction. I found myself divided between two aspects of what we can call my identity today: My academic side, the "training" in the discipline of literature of the last 20 years - a background that conditions my reactions every time I confront a text in search of interpretation. And on the other hand the memories of the 19-year-old Adriana, a young aspirant to *GALF*, the only lesbian feminist organization at the time that my first girlfriend and I were lucky to bump into in the Lima of the 1980s.

Unable to decide from which one of those perspectives I should prepare my talk - this tensional juxtaposition formed my reaction. I eventually decided to leave the personal side apart and center my effort in a traditional academic manner.

I confronted the text with order and discipline to become aware of my 'place of enunciation.' I work with Cultural Analysis in Latin American Studies, which means that I deal with interpretations, de-constructions and 'reading' of texts, novels, films, colonial sources and even song lyrics and comics. I automatically adjust myself to the steps of analyzing to arrive at an interpretation. But in Latin American Studies this is a complex matter. I frequently find myself "distracted" because concentrating on a cultural object also means setting aside that most of the time this 'object' is also part of my national, regional, and sometimes -even personal history, being a Peruvian Andean woman

Automatically I began reading the original text written by Christina wanting to add my own perspectives and observations about the story straight away, and these were my first observations:

I was surprised by the conviction of the author in making use of dance, music, and body language as a communication tool. In cultural analysis we learn that if there are two areas that are mined with culture and present difficulties for interpretation those are the ones. Because each of the concepts that integrate dance and body language are tied to cultural rituals, flexible conceptualization and misconceptions, eurocentrism, norms and values, gender, class, and power. They are powerful political manifestations. What amazed me was that the dancer in the story (Christina) is so certain that her message of her performance will be understood by others. The trust in the power of the author's imagination, the accuracy of her performance to make visible lesbian love were quite inspiring BUT... when the conclusions arrived, I got confused: What exactly did "*The night turn out to be a success*" or "*They have created a cultural space for women*" mean? New questions arose from these lines: Why was it a success? How was it measured? No other comments included who "they" (the other members of GALF?) were. Because the memory was a description of the dancer's personal preparation in creating the choreography, interpreting, and performing it I missed a personal summary, like for example: "*She ends up happy*" or "*she has shared very important feelings*

and proposals." But what creates confusion is that the title announces "*Dancing self and group into being*" so the expectations related to the dance were not only about a personal development but also a collective one. "*They*" have gained a cultural space and the possibility of doing more things in the future. There is an aspiration in the protagonist to have contributed to a cultural event with a dance crossed by other (political) issues that were not addressed at all.

Then I realized that the text had already been analyzed in 2009 during a memory work session with feminist friends and I felt out of place. I did not understand my task at the symposium: What exactly could I say? I read the chapter again and surprised myself by stopping and reflecting profoundly on these two lines: "*painful sense of otherness*" and "*moments of disruption and discomfort.*"

And then I realized the real effect of the text: the "*feeling of uneasiness*" was related to the fact of me being confronted with the limitations of my own academic tools for this task. I was suddenly reflecting and questioning the essence of my own place of enunciation. That was the discomfort the text generated, that was the real discovery from my work with the chapter. The text was the subject to work with, but the person-reader was the one to be questioned.

My reading of the chapter also made me think about my work situation. Most of my colleagues are Latin American. We face the same experience but deal with it in different ways. We exchange comments and tips, which works as a bonding strategy, but we never talk about our experience in a more analytical way to create a common opinion about these issues. Thus, the chapter inspired me to think about the creative potential of 'memories.' I didn't realize that the act of remembering (personal) events could be transformed into a tool for analysis. Applying analytical strategies most often means distancing yourself from the object of analysis but not always questions are posed to the academic subject doing the analysis.

Our students make a short trip to Latin America as part of their study program. Their work presents a frequent problem: they draw on stereotypical images of Latin America, its landscapes,

peoples, or cultural products. Dealing with the student's construction of otherness can be an exhausting enterprise. The teacher's work is double: to teach them the formalities of academic research and then the necessary 'academic distance' that allows students to reflect upon their own conceptions that they consider globally valid, irrefutable and undoubtedly modern and superior to the center of their study: the Latin American other.

When it comes to my/our own memories from GALF I find it incredibly interesting to think about applying a collective exercise of memory work to recall incidents from the past, about collective events that have been processed differently by the persons we have become. Maybe that could be the beginning of the big enterprise of rewriting our own story as a group - especially in view of the plethora of works that are beginning to appear which create, in my opinion, an unrecognizable story of the first Peruvian lesbian organization."

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The letters

Christina wrote the first letter in Spanish - the language we use to communicate - hoping thereby to get a fluid, more personal and direct contact, and communication.

Dear Breny and Adriana,

For me personally the symposium was an unforgettable experience, and it was lovely to re-read your presentations from that day. Little remains when you try to hold on to an oral presentation. But it was difficult to make this a short letter as there was much to say. Your presentations were condensed and complex and they touched on a wide range of topics at a profound and fundamental level; what is it to be a person, citizen, academic and activist in our times.

Adriana, you write that the chapter you read placed you in a position where it was difficult for you to choose between what you call 'the academic Adriana' and 'the personal Adriana'. You describe

this as an uncomfortable dilemma in your work situation and that it exhausts you - that your teaching often leads to tense and complex situations, where you simultaneously represent the privileged teacher, the one who evaluates the students, the powerful representative of the institution and 'the other', about which the students have to learn/analyze/describe.

When I read your presentation again, I wondered if you had felt othered by the way I wrote about GALF? In the chapter I analyze how otherness come into being through language. I demonstrate in detail how both individual and collective subjects are produced in complex dynamics of in- and exclusion. It was the analysis itself that lead me to exhibit an uncomfortable self-exposure of firstness. My question is: how did it make you feel to read my analysis of an experience shared by the two of us many years ago in GALF? Were you exhausted from reading the 'painful sense of my production of otherness'?

You also write that the easiest way for you is to avoid the inclusion of the personal dimension, but I also read between the lines that you are not satisfied with the option of totally excluding 'the personal Adriana'. The mixed emotions of discomfort, confusion, surprise, inspiration and amazement generated by the reading seem to exist simultaneously. I wonder if this is a result of being 'made other' by my descriptions? I also now ask myself if the certainty of the protagonist in the memory of the dance - a certainty that surprises you - could be an expression of privilege? How the white body perse at that point in time automatically gave access to the Peruvian reality. At the same time, the memory is a story of a person fighting to be included. A person that wants to escape the social category 'gringa' and longs to be just another participant in the group. Tell me what you think.

I actually invited you to precisely read these chapters to learn more from your readings as I had my doubts about how my texts could be read by others, - taking into account the sometimes-harsh atmosphere surrounding discussions about identities and privilege. You suggest Breny that there is a danger involved in the self-disclosures that I perform in my analysis. Does the analytical process of

making visible the formation of meaning and the position of power of the research subject become just one more example of putting the white feminist at the center of a text?

Considering my insecurity, I was relieved though to hear Breny say that you consider the tools I present practical contributions to collectively engage in relations that are highly asymmetrical.

I am looking forward to receiving your letters - don't be too harsh with my Spanish, ...love Christina

Dear Breny and Christina, to you both hugs and greetings,

After reading Christina's letter, a great relief came over me. What a pleasure to read and write in Spanish! Somehow the ghost of translation was limiting me from writing. I think for the more complex and emotional content I take more time and effort to find the correct English constructions. The experience of participating in the symposium was very important for me. Firstly, it was my first face-to-face conference after the Covid-confinement. I also left my comfortable research corner and managed to overcome the myth that if I didn't build up my presentation within what I consider 'traditional' academic" parameters, I wouldn't have much to say. I was confronted with the evidence that my model of being academic is based on striving to distance myself from the personal. This is strange, because the literary analysis of novels, short stories and comics are very personal opinions or perspectives even if they are wrapped in and sustained by academic conventions. Another reason why I consider this experience essential was because it became clear to me that I had come out of the exhaustion of 2020, then I had reached my limits within university's numerical productivity. As a result, I experienced a decrease in my engagement and enthusiasm. I consider it a sign of recovery to have been able to participate in the symposium and talk openly about these tensions. In Roskilde I discovered that my state of mind and my strength were back.

I read Breny's text with admiration. I was not familiar with Christina's way of thinking, and it puzzled me. But Breny provided me with an aerial view, that not only clarified the steps to be followed in

Christina's analysis, I could also understand that getting involved in the analysis ended up involving me in an unexpected self-analysis. I then understood and it explained the moments of discomfort, that grew out of my reading.

My work with stories made me pay attention to details in both Christina's and Breny's texts. Despite of you addressing the same topic, I noticed differences. Breny added details to the text that helped to better understand Christina's text

Another detail that struck me in Breny's text was the way in which she, in addition to addressing the case, Christina's analysis and adding her critical notes, also -as part of the dialogue with the text - tells us about a similar experience of privilege and asymmetrical relations that she came to think about while reading. In my opinion she thereby not only sustained the dialogue regarding the theoretical approach but also opens the door to involve similar feelings. This involvement as a reader seems essential to me since it adds a new element to the interpretation.

In the selection from your book Christina, there are aspects that have impacted me and moved me to reflection. To begin with, the certainty with which you conceive work and research as a collective process:" In my understanding, knowledge production is always co-created and communication always dialogical." You argue that the different phases in an analytical process: readings, theorization and then analysis can be carried out collectively. These observations lead me to reflect on the way I do and conceive my own work and I must confess that it is fundamentally an individual process.

I only worked collectively during my three years at another faculty and was fascinated by the way Christina includes the need for collective labor in processes that I think of as individual. And then again what strikes me is the possibility of extending the analysis to those who investigate: the researcher herself and this possibility of self-analysis when working with a text keeps dazzling me while it also worries me a bit.

Finally, a general reflection regarding the active participation of the researcher and her dilemmas when constructing otherness. How does this

process work when otherness - at least who is theoretically considered as such - is the one who does the analysis? For example, when I analyze novels about the Andean world, I read familiar expressions, I recognize close descriptions, they are almost home perspectives. What are the dilemmas that a literate otherness face? And I think of Spivak's observation (Spivak, 1988) that when the subordinate occupies privileged places (place of enunciation as academic) she ceases to be so. A theme for reflection (Churampi, 2009). This is what I've managed to 'cook' so far. A huge hug full of affection, Adriana

Dear Adriana and Christina,

To begin with, sharing those days in Denmark was sweet and warm. They will remain in the repertoire of my most pleasant memories. And now embarking on this collaborative process of writing over time is novel to me, potentially loving, and at the same time perhaps even rugged. Anyway, I've done my homework. I re-read the pages from the book indicated by Christina, Adriana's text, and Christina's letter.

Reading Adriana's text, I realized that she had actually lived part of the memory that Christina evoked because GALF was an organization to which she had belonged in her formative political years. In my case, I construct my presence in Christina's memory. I inserted myself into her story imaginatively. That maybe made some difference at the level of the affects involved. However, it has been interesting for me to think about the dilemma that Adriana presents, about how to approach Christina's text either as an academic in her analytical practice or as the person who is rooted in the history of otherness. After thinking about it for a while, I think that in the end this separation is superficial or tenuous because no theoretical perspective can be exempt from the place of enunciation and the structure of feelings with which one is in the world. It is rather than a question of form. It is a matter of writing style or of the decisions we make when we approach a text. And those decisions have consequences. That's why when I re-read the texts, I remembered my initial reaction to

Christina's chapters. She had half-jokingly asked me not to emphasize the decolonial perspective too much. Do you remember? I took that warning very seriously and tried to suppress a decolonial analysis but was not entirely convinced that I should. For this reason, after reading and re-reading the text, I can now admit that I also felt the uneasiness that Adriana talks about with Christina's theoretical framework. Maybe for different reasons or maybe they are the same? One is that I hardly work with the concept of 'difference' so central to Christina. I believe that the question of otherness or difference is a problem that Europeans consider pivotal, in particular, poststructuralists not only do they use the concept to de-stabilize their power relationship towards colonial subjects but also to disengage from their own position of power. Which tacitly constitutes a denial of its power and its re-constitution. What a problem for me!

I also always found it interesting that poststructuralists raise the question of otherness while such Others have developed their own theories in response to their being positioned as Other. Think of Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) or the critical theory of race (Crenshaw, 1996) black feminism (Hill Collins, 2000, bell hooks, 1994) postcolonial and decolonial perspectives (Mohanty 1997, Mendoza 2014) etc. However, they almost never carried out a conversation with them because, despite everything, poststructuralists liked to talk about the Other, but not with her. On the other hand, the being that embodied the so-called Otherness, although she was fully aware that she was perceived solely in terms of otherness from the colonial abyss that she inhabited, she never lost sight of her self-perception as a being in herself. She was always aware of being split off - in the way Du Bois describes it with his concept of double-consciousness (1993)- or Maldonado-Torres with 'the coloniality of being' (2007) - that is, in a perpetual struggle for her own self-definition and recognition as a human being.

In short, I entered this endeavor with another theoretical baggage and my thoughts/feelings came from decolonial theory. At first, your text Christina seemed to me, a difficult passage to cross theoretically. Likewise, the emphasis you put on experience caused me a bit of discomfort

due to your strong attachment to the present, that is, your presentism. Although I have worked with this idea before, I conceive the experience as a very post-structuralist construct. Anyway, I thought that maybe by privileging experience it was difficult to elucidate the history in which the experience of the present is always subjected. The epigenetic mark of the colonial trauma inherited from generation to generation seemed to me to be even more invisible if we only hold ourselves to what is happening in the present, in front of our eyes, close to our ears. Privileging the present seemed to me then another way to hide the colonial that defines us as white, European and as non-Western beings in Otherness. But then Christina, you introduce intersectionality as a bridge between the poststructural, feminist position and the dialogue with the Other, and that safeguarded some of the problems of the general approach that I present here. But it is still curious that the concept of intersectionality always remained as one of the few concepts that can be rescued from the enormous theoretical creation of non-European feminists. The history of concepts is important; just as it is sometimes difficult for us to apply concepts to our realities that were thought for other processes and eras. In general, I was struck by the absence of quotations from texts that were written by non-Europeans, especially Latin Americans. One of the things that I remember having thought through the discussions that took place at the symposium and later, is perhaps the need to create new concepts that could better account for the self-critical process that you carry out with your very original methodology.

That is to say that by dealing with the work of your memories and allowing myself to be led by the hand by your desire to free yourself from the limitations that our stories impose and with your spirit of collaboration, I was able to meet you half-way. Today I would insist again that your theoretical-methodological proposal with the combination with precepts that come outside of poststructuralism such as action research and popular education that in my opinion were best developed in Latin America are the ones that neutralized in the end the imperial effects that for me are still preserved

within poststructuralist positions. And for that reason, the methodology that you have created is without a doubt very important politically. Anyway, this is what I wanted to share today with the desire to open more discussions. With love and admiration, Breny

The dialogue

We started the conversation online with a discussion where we told each other what points we had found interesting in our letters.

Breny: When I wrote my letter, I had not yet read Adriana's letter. In my response to Christina's letter, I mention that what still disturbed me a little was how I had left decolonial perspectives out of my analysis. Christina as you are somewhat married to post-structuralism, I am to decolonial theories, right? And precisely these perspectives, so central to my thinking, you had asked me to downplay, and I had put them somewhat aside. Do you remember, Christina?

Christina: Yes.

Breny: The interesting thing about all this is that despite knowing you for so long, I was not very aware of your intellectual academic work. So, when I read the chapters that you had asked me to read, I was surprised by what I found. Despite also having been strongly influenced by poststructural perspectives years ago and despite being familiar with poststructuralism I had to re-enter this way of thinking. What I didn't know was how passionately you think with this perspective. So, when I started reading the book, I was careful not to read through a decolonial critical gaze. I remember that I found the reading quite complex. I read the chapters and made several notes because I felt that I needed to understand what you were up to. That is why I began to break down the text and this is what Adriana captured. It was a super good exercise for me because I was able to understand what Christina wanted to do, and I was able to appreciate the methodology she offers.

Then one thing that caught my attention in your letter Christina is that I felt a bit like I didn't touch a nerve in you. Adriana touched a nerve, but not me. You basically address Adriana, and you use me to make some point you yourself wanted to make. It made me feel ignored you know!

Christina: But I didn't want to ignore anyone! I realized that I had already written too much and that I had to finish the letter. But you are right, imbalances in participation when it comes to collaboration and voice are always interpreted and points to the fact that everything that one chooses to leave out constructs meaning.

Breny: Yes, it has consequences! Another observation is that when I read Adriana's letter, I realized that my relationship with Christina's stories was a little different than Adriana's. I know the world that Christina describes from Peru, but I am not a direct participant in her stories, as is Adriana being a former member of *GALF*. I gather that this has very different consequences for the process of interpretation and the affective relation to the text.

The last thing that caught my attention is that Christina in her letter asks you about how it made you feel reading her analysis. If you felt 'othered'. But when you write your letter you don't really give her an answer. I felt that Christina was very concerned about your possible reactions to the text.

Christina: She is ignoring me (*all laugh*).

Breny: That's why it made me think about how conversations don't have a directionality. They are very erratic. Every time you sit down to write something, what you write depends on what's on your mind at that very moment. And we don't get to know what you think Adriana because you don't answer directly. You do address the question about otherness, but very subtly.

Adriana: Your text impressed me a lot, Breny. Because when I first read my chapter, I was disoriented. I began to analyze the memory that Christina uses as an example and between bumps and

stumbles I managed to give a first opinion. But it was when I read your text Breny that I really understood what Christina had done and how her approach should be understood. Breny's text reinforced that intuition and the personal dimension that had disturbed me, and I understood that this was actually part of the objective of the analysis.

I was moved by that detailed addition that you make Breny when you share a memory of your own about difference and privilege evoked by the story in the chapter on intersectionality. It was a fabulous discovery for me to see how your story enriches the analysis and even adds new functions to it, such as allowing you to speak of healing as part of knowledge production.

About the excerpt taken from your book Christina, I am still impressed by how you so assertively think that all academic knowledge is co-produced. So, when you say that not only the interpretation, but several of the research phases can be and is done in dialogue, my reaction is; Wow! It inspires me to experiment more with collaborative analysis and with the integration of the researcher into the analysis even if it is quite disturbing as it can be perceived as a kind of undressing in public. All too often we move within the fiction of distance and objectivity.

Christina: Let me begin with Breny's letter - there were many things that touched me but one of the things that seem strongest to me is when you mention that many times gender trumps race in feminist analyzes. An important reason why I asked you for a gentle reading of my chapters is that I am aware that my analyzes lack profound knowledge and critical reflections on race. I was afraid that I was going to be 'undressed in public' as Adriana says. I certainly lack a decolonial perspective. I was afraid to be met with the sentence: 'Go home and do your homework.' I consider that phrase a discourse that closes a dialogue immediately. It is very strong and, in my opinion, often paralyzing. At the same time, I was extremely curious to hear your reading Breny and learn from it. I thought your presentation was great precisely because it showed that it is impossible to understand what happens in our construction of

memories about difference without taking in race and coloniality.

Breny: What I think now about this collaborative adventure is that we are three people from different places, and we have talked very little about that. Two of us have been historically, intellectually and academically, othered, and that has a strong weight in everything we are talking about. And you, Christina, having a different position - you are the European representative, the white one, - although you are not from the Empire, right? Despite coming from a small Scandinavian country, you end up representing 'the colonial'. Each one of us has a tremendous historical burden. Even if Adriana and I come from the same story, it is not the same, right? Because I am not Peruvian, and I come from a much more impoverished and smaller country with less symbolic power compared to Peru. I also experienced being a foreigner in Peru. That I had lived in Germany made a difference, but the fact that I was Honduran immediately put me in disadvantage. The different positions we talk from should not be completely lost in our article. Deep down they are present. Therefore you, with some anxiety ask Adriana that question about othering and that is why I question your insistence and emphasis on thinking about 'difference'. It's not that I don't think we should look at difference, but I have another sensitivity towards that concept. Because it seems to me that the fundamental problem of humanity is precisely that this concept obtained such a very powerful position and importance in the colonial context, from which and for the first time in history two-thirds of humanity are defined as truly without the status of human beings. And that is still the historical drama. My story and Adriana's are very determined by the European expansion and even our geopolitical position. And there is no escape from that, even though we both live outside Latin America. We have certain privileges as we live in the belly of the beast today.

Christina: When I in my analysis try to show how I construct otherness at the same time I try to show that this takes place in a double movement of trying to belong to the social in Peru.

Breny: Of course, that double movement is part of it, white, brown and black lives are entangled, but you mention it in just one line. I imagine very well, how you, the European, the white woman in Peru, desire to be accepted by others.

Christina: It's true I haven't been able to escape from the category of the ignorant gringa.

Breny: And there are other images from which we cannot escape, and neither can we deny that within the Latin American context, mestiza or the Euro-South American context there is a reproduction of forms of colonial power. I remember my experience in Peru. It was shocking to hear the white Peruvians referring to the indigenous Peruvians. They said horrible things.

Christina: That is why crossing differences in collaboration processes is not an easy thing. Every moment of the collaboration implies processes of omission and dominance - the methods I propose are to be able to talk about the embedded tensions and understand that security and trust must be built attending to these tensions. As I see it evocation opens a space of shared humanity, and the power of the affective dimension is brought into play in those situations as are our personal stories.

Adriana: When addressing my own difficulties in understanding the meaning of Christina's performance I also experienced some sadness because of the lost opportunity to enrich our daily interaction then among the different members of GALF. I felt frustrated because only decades later I understood that I had missed the symbolic meaning of the performance because I read it as an expression of Christina's cultural traditions and as such strange to us as Peruvians. And I didn't even ask her for more information about it. A lost opportunity!!

Breny: That affective part seems important to me in collaboration. Because it is true that, for example, I have a lot of affection for Christina, I have known her for so long and there is like an affective

current that colors everything. Adriana, I met you through Christina, and the affection that I feel there is between you, I have felt immediately. So, I think that in some way it is also mediating an open environment that influences the way we talk and exchange ideas.

Christina: There is a nexus between research and friendship. Male bonding and friendship is something that also maintains power in academia, although it is not talked about much.

Breny: No, and why not? I think it's very important. Returning a little to the point about whether knowledge is produced through individualized or collaborative work. I think that even if we work individually, in our imaginary we are always talking with a community, there is dialogue or perhaps not directly as we are living it now, but there always is. Look closely at our thought processes we are always talking to someone. There is no way for one to be monologic. But as we talk now, I feel that the conversation itself is very different from writing. Other things are said, other things are felt. And one does not reflect in the same way as you do when you write.

Christina: Establishing a conversation allows you to work with a lot of unfinished ideas and it allows you to make mistakes.

Adriana: That is true. For me to speak of a situation in which I don't feel 100 per cent safe is to show a degree of weakness that you should not allow yourself if you want to protect your status. For the first time I allowed myself to appear before an audience and say: This has cost me a lot, actually I had problems and entered a crisis. Saying this was new for me and it was a new experience to gain strength from that. It probably has to do with all the experiences I've had in the academy, right? As a Latin American woman in Western academy, you must perform not double but triple to be recognized and guaranteed your place of work - your space. This was a new experience of showing vulnerability and insecurity which at the same time created strength and important insights.

Arriving at a closure – on affect and difference in collaboration

All processes of collaboration imply endless interpretation and meaning-making. Alongside the process affects and relations are continuously (re) produced. We would like to close our assemblage with some brief reflections on affect. As you can see our collaborative experiment was moved by intense and subtle moments of subjectification, ideas of social belonging and our desires to change the world into a better and more just place for all. All human processes which co-produce affect. What stands out strongly closing this adventure is the way in which affect was a vital motor in our experiment, where we work across differences in social position, work situation, language, race, geopolitical situatedness etc. It was mutual trust, respect, friendship, and our joyful encounter at the symposium that made us want to enter the adventure in the first place. We are sure that our process, content, and tone would have been different if the positive feelings in our relationship had not facilitated the process. It allowed openness and self-interrogation, and we passed through unexpected topics and established connections between topics that had not been related before. Our feelings for each other contributed to our being able to keep open the conversation.

To work across power differences often create tensions and conflict. In our case we only briefly insinuate the *affective tensions* related to difference in power positions to be found in our text. In Breny's letter she writes that she feels somewhat ignored by Christina, Adriana systematically seems to overlook Christina's question about othering and Christina circles around her fear of harsh reactions from her friends when it comes to her way of thinking about race and difference. To dare to pose the uncomfortable questions about difference and power is vital to discover the perspectives of the so-called other and to explore the normative connections between the meanings that guide our taken-for-granted thinking.

Arriving at a closure we hope to have demonstrated how a small collaborative process set in motion by an academic encounter can pinpoint

the importance of positive affects in research processes, how tension exists, how relevant questions emerges and how trust can open up to conversations about difficult topics and refine practices of

relational ethics allowing urgent conversations to flourish in research which involve different life conditions and life experiences.

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Minoritetsstress – begrebet, dets anvendelighed og potentiale

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Abstract

Minority stress – a critical analytical introduction to the concept, its scope, and potential.

This article explores and gives an overview of what minority stress is as a phenomenon and concept by looking into how the concept can be utilized to understand minoritized and racialized subjects' daily challenges of dealing with microaggressions, stigmatization and discrimination. There is a lack of research on this concept in a Danish context where stress often is understood in individualized terms, and a focus on discrimination and othering rarely addresses the negative psychological and affective consequences of these processes. Minority stress represents a focus on the structural and societal conditions and discourses that position specific subjects as Others. The experience of being stigmatized, othered and racialized is connected to a constant form of stress and hyper-vigilance, which needs to be understood in its own right. To get a deeper insight into the complex processes underlying the experience of minority stress and the different ways of coping with it, central theories of stigma, emotional labour, internalized racism and passing, are addressed. The article points to how minority stress can lead to broader, more nuanced conceptualizations of stress and resilience as structural and societal processes taking social inequality, discrimination and racism into account.

KEYWORDS: Minority stress, micro-aggressions, racialization, hyper-vigilance, internalized racism, resilience

"Hver gang jeg skal høre nyhederne, enten på radioen - når jeg sidder i bilen - eller på fjernsynet, når jeg er hjemme, er jeg ængstelig. Er der nu igen en nyhed om et politisk tiltag rettet imod de problematiske flygtninge og indvandrere? Er der nu igen fokus på de utryghedsskabende unge 'indvandrer drenge'? Er der nu igen fokus på negativ social kontrol og manglende integration blandt muslimske piger? Jeg får kvalme og jeg må i perioder holde mig fra nyhederne og debatprogrammerne - bare tage en pause - da det påvirker min søvn. Jeg ligger vågen om natten og tænker: kan jeg skabe en fremtid i dette land? Bliver jeg nogensinde god nok? Jeg vågner træt og med følelsen af, at jeg ikke orker noget" (Mehmut, 27 år).

"Jeg får koldsved, når jeg skal ned ad den gade. Jeg forsøger så vidt muligt at undgå det - at tage den vej. Men det er den vej, der er kortest til min lejlighed. Jeg kan ikke altid tage en omvej. Mit hjerte banker hurtigere, jeg begynder at gå hurtigere, forsøger at få det overstået. De mentale billeder dukker op, selvom jeg forsøger at skubbe dem væk. Slaget, faldet, ordene og ydmygelsen. Jeg kigger mig over skulderen og rundt omkring - er jeg alene? Er der andre som mig? Andre der vil kunne gribe ind, hvis det skulle ske igen? Siden den dag jeg blev skubbet ned i asfalten og kaldt for en n-kælling og fik revet mit tørklæde af, har jeg ikke kunnet give slip på angsten og magtesløsheden - og ydmygelsen. Han råbte og skreg mig i hovedet, men ingen gjorde noget. Angsten sidder i min krop, aktiveres ved den mindste lyd - men særligt når jeg skal ned af den vej. Kommer det til at ske igen?" (Amira 18 år).

Mehmut og Amira¹ er på hver deres måde psykisk belastede af bestemte forhold i deres hverdagsliv. Hvor det for Mehmut handler om mediernes og politikernes problematiserende fokus på etnisk minoriserede, en gruppe han bliver associeret med, handler det for Amira om et racistisk overfald, som

kobler sig til en oplevelse af utryghed og frygt. Hvordan skal vi forstå, hvorfor de reagerer som de gør, og hvad der er på spil? Som udgangspunkt kan man forstå begges reaktioner som former for stressreaktioner, der på den ene side viser sig som angst og undgåelsesadfærd og på den anden side som en modløshed og træthed. I begge tilfælde er der tale om reaktioner på en oplevelse af udsathed og forskelsbehandling, der peger på, at der er betydelige negative psykologiske konsekvenser af oplevet diskrimination og racisme. Det er et felt, som i høj grad er underbelyst i Danmark, men som internationalt er blevet undersøgt og teoretiseret vidt og bredt bl.a. via begreber som 'minoritetsstress' (Meyer 2003; Wong et al. 2014) og 'race-based trauma'² (Williams et al. 2003; Carter 2007).

I denne artikel vil jeg sætte særligt fokus på fænomenet og begrebet 'minoritetsstress', som betegner den form for stress, der er forbundet med de belastninger, man oplever qua sin minoriserede position. Man kan være minoriseret ud fra forskellige identitetsformative parametre som køn, seksualitet, kropsform, etnicitet osv. Jeg vil her primært beskæftige mig med intersektionerne imellem at være racialisert, etnisk og religiøst minoriseret, da der mangler forskning med dette fokus i en dansk kontekst, og det desuden er dét felt, jeg forskningsmæssigt placerer mig i (Khawaja 2001, 2010, 2011, 2022). Formålet er at belyse, hvad minoritetsstress er ud fra eksisterende forskning og teori herom og i den forbindelse udforske, hvordan minoritetsstress kan føre til en mere nuanceret forståelse af sammenhængene imellem andetgørelse³, racialisering og stress. I første del af artiklen vil jeg trække på klinisk forskning og viden om minoritetsstress som fænomen. I anden del vil jeg rette fokus mod teoretiske vinklinger, som kan gøre os klogere på, hvad minoritetsstress kan tilbyde som kritisk analytisk begreb. Artiklen tilbyder således en oversigt over og en indføring i minoritetsstress som både klinisk fænomen og som begreb i en kritisk teoretisk optik. I sidste del af artiklen kommer jeg ind på, hvordan viden om minoritetsstress kan føre til mere udvidede forståelser af både stress og resiliens som kollektivt forankrede processer, der er forbundet med sociale og strukturelle uligheder.

Hvorfor minoritetsstress?

Man kan spørge, om der egentligt er behov for et adskilt begreb for de stressbelastningsreaktioner, som minoriserede personer oplever? Forskere indenfor det kliniske felt fremfører, at der er god grund til at tale om minoritetsstress som en særegen form for stress, fordi de forhold, der fører til minoritetsstress og de resulterende konsekvenser og reaktioner, er særegne (Meyer 2003; Sellers et al. 2003; Fingerhut et al. 2010). Når man taler om minoritetsstress, er der fokus på de strukturelle og sociale forhold og dermed de samfundsmæssige normer og praksisser, som skaber nogle grupper og individer som 'forkerte'; 'mindre velkomne' og dermed som andetgjorte. Dette får både personlige og samfundsmæssige konsekvenser, såsom social og sundhedsmæssig ulighed og skæv adgang til arbejdsmarkedet. Disse strukturelle former for ulighed er i sig selv stressende og belastende at leve med (Clark et al. 1999; Meyer 2003; Dressler et al. 2005; Fingerhut et al. 2010). Grundtanken er, at dét at have en minoriseret og ofte marginaliseret position i samfundet gør dig mere udsat for negative oplevelser som diskrimination, hvilket fører til ringere mental og social sundhed, lavere selvværd og en konstant oplevelse af stress.

Når man taler om stress, bevæger man sig ind på et meget velstuderet felt. Stress defineres almindeligvis som en belastningstilstand, hvor en person oplever, at ydre eller indre krav overstiger de ressourcer, den enkelte har og dermed udfordrer den enkeltes psykiske og fysiske helbred. Der er traditionelt tale om et individcentreret fokus på den enkeltes kognitive, fysiologiske, affektive reaktioner, belastninger og evne til at udholde psykisk pres (f.eks. Selye 1956; Lazarus 1984). Nyere forskning og teori peger dog på, at stress ikke kun skal ses som forbundet med den enkeltes evne til at klare særlige belastninger, men også med gældende samfundsmæssige og sociale strukturer, da de er med til skabe bestemte forventninger, uligheder og magtpositioner (Donnelly & Long 2003; Kirkegaard & Brinkmann 2015). Det er netop dette perspektiv minoritetsstress retter fokus mod; de strukturelle og sociale aspekter af mentalt helbred og trivsel og dermed på relationen imellem den

enkeltes samfundsmæssige position, de privilegier man har og den enkeltes trivsel og sundhed (Carter 2007).

Historisk har begrebet minoritetsstress udviklet sig siden starten af 00'erne ud fra en særlig opmærksomhed på LGBTQ+-personers oplevelser af forskelsbehandling, udsathed og systematisk eksklusion. Amerikanske studier viste, at kønnede og seksuelt minoriserede individer oftere oplevede trivselsmæssige og psykologiske udfordringer såsom depression, angst, selvmordstanker og stress (Clark et al. 1999; Fingerhut et al. 2010; Wong et al. 2014). Samtidigt viste studier, at netop denne gruppe i høj grad udsættes for diskrimination, fordomme og manglende accept fra samfundet (f.eks. Meyer 1995; Meyer 2003). Det er således muligt at observere statistiske sammenhænge imellem ringere trivsel og oplevet diskrimination. Minoritetsstress som begreb blev udviklet for at forstå disse sammenhænge. Sidenhen er begrebet også blevet anvendt i forhold til andre minoriserede grupper og personer, herunder etniske og racialiserede minoriteter. Internationale studier peger nemlig på samme måde som ved LGBTQ+-minoriteterne på, at racialiserede personer i høj grad på daglig basis må håndtere negative forventninger, racialiseret vold og forskelsbehandling, som over længere tid resulterer i psykiske og fysiske stressreaktioner (Consolacion et al. 2004; Wong et al. 2014; Paradies et al. 2015). Her har man både fokuseret på racialiserede minoriteter (f.eks. Sellers et al. 2003; Ong et al. 2009) og på grupper med migrant- og flygtningebaggrund (f.eks. Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti 2000; Fazel et al. 2012; Korp & Stretmo 2020). På tværs af disse studier af forskellige grupper og kontekster ses en klar sammenhæng imellem den enkeltes minoriserede samfundsposition, oplevet diskrimination og psykologiske belastningsreaktioner som stress. Man har i Danmark ikke lavet systematisk forskning, der kan vise sammenhænge mellem oplevet diskrimination og minoritetsstress, men eksisterende rapporter peger dog i den retning. LGBTQ+-personer har generelt ringere trivsel, oplever sig mere udsatte i forhold til diskrimination og udsættes i højere grad for vold pga. deres seksuelle orientering (Johansen et al. 2015; Rigspolitiet 2021).

Opgørelser fra Rigspolitiet (2021) viser hertil, at racistisk motiverede hadforbrydelser er de mest udbredte i Danmark, og antallet har været stigende de sidste fem år.⁴ Herefter følger religiøst motiverede hadforbrydelser og seksuelt orienterede hadforbrydelser. Muslimer udgør i den sammenhæng en af de grupper, der er mest udsat for religiøst motiverede hadforbrydelser, da de udgør 45% af alle tilfældene (Hassani 2020).

Minoritetsstress som klinisk fænomen og felt?

Ilan Meyer (2003) har udviklet 'the minority stress model', der beskriver sammenhænge imellem den enkeltes minoritetsposition og negative oplevelser knyttet til éns udsatte position som forskelsbehandling og psykologiske belastningsreaktioner. Han udpeger tre kendetegn ved minoritetsstress. De tre kendetegn er forbundne, men samtidigt adskiller de også minoritetsstress fra andre former for stress:

1. Minoritetsstress er *unik* i den forstand, at der er tale om en stressreaktion, som er forbundet med den enkeltes minoriserede position i samfundet. Minoritetspositionen giver i sig selv anledning til stress, da den enkelte er mere udsat for stigmatisering og eksklusion på grund af gældende sociale normer og diskurser.
2. Minoritetsstress er *kronisk* forstået som, at de forhold, der fører til minoritetsstress, er relativt stabile og langvarige, da de er knyttede til de i samfundet gældende normer, forventninger og diskurser. Det er ofte sådan, at man bliver opfattet som andetgjort og minoriseret på tværs af de kontekster, man deltager i i samfundet. Der er således ikke tale om en isoleret stressende situation, som man kan afslutte eller forlade.
3. Minoritetsstress er *socialt* funderet. Det vil sige, at fokus på stress ikke kun retter sig imod det enkelte individ men på de samfundsmæssige forhold, som det enkelte individ lever i og reagerer på. Her er det netop de gældende normer og dominerende diskurser, som er

bestemmende for, hvem der opfattes som minoriseret/majoriseret, førstegjort/andetgjort, rigtig/forkert.

Man deler i denne forbindelse minoritetsstress-stimuli op i to grupper. De distale og de proximale (Lazarus & Folkman 1984; Meyer 2003), som her for lethedens skyld kan oversættes som indre og ydre stressfaktorer. Ydre stressfaktorer henviser til det strukturelle samfundsmæssige niveau, som kan komme til udtryk som diskrimination, mistænkeliggørelse, mobning, vold eller trusler om vold, afvisning på jobmarkedet, oplevelsen af forskelsbehandling i sundhedsvæsenet, brud med eller afvisning fra familie og venner. Indre stressfaktorer betegner eksempelvis frygten for afvisning - måske på grund af tidligere oplevelser med diskrimination og afvisning - skam og skyldfølelse over at være forkert og nervøsitet over at blive peget ud som anderledes. Her taler man også om internaliseret negativ selvforståelse samt internaliseret racisme, hvilket jeg senere kommer nærmere ind på.

Det kan synes som en kunstig skelnen imellem ydre og indre faktorer, men pointen er at vise, at de to niveauer af stressorer er gensidigt afhængige af hinanden, og at man bliver nødt til at medtænke begge niveauer, hvis man vil forstå, hvad minoritetsstress indebærer.

Symptomer på minoritetsstress følger meget de almene symptomer, vi kender ved stress. På det kropslige og fysiske plan viser de sig ved øget hjertebanken, vejrtrækningsproblemer, anspændthed osv. På det affektive niveau viser de sig som oplevelsen af vrede, frustration, modløshed og depressive tanker og følelser, der kan udmønte sig i søvnproblemer, at man trækker sig fra sociale sammenhænge, og at man udvikler et negativt syn på sig selv eller samfundet. Disse symptomer ses udtrykt på forskellig vis i både Amiras og Mehmuts tilfælde.

De tre kendetegn ved minoritetsstress og de forskellige former for stress-stimuli kan ses som argumenter for, hvorfor det er vigtigt at rette fokus på minoritetsstress, da det åbner op for en opmærksomhed på, hvordan ulige og andetgørende sociale forhold, diskurser og strukturer er

forbundet med psykiske udfordringer og stressreaktioner i form af eksempelvis forhøjet blodtryk, angst, utryghed og depression.

Et kontinuum af stressreaktioner

Minoritetsstress skal samtidigt ses som en del af et bredere kontinuum af psykiske belastningsreaktioner, hvor man på den ene side kan tale om stress pga. oplevet diskrimination og hverdagslige oplevelser af at blive nedgjort. Det er også det, man kan betegne som mikroaggressioner, der er mindre men hverdagslige erfaringer af at blive set ned på eller at blive udpeget som anderledes (Sue 2010). Det kommer eksempelvis til udtryk hos Mehmud, som via medierne oplever en konstant stigmatisering, der er knyttet til hans position som muslim og efterkommer af indvandrere. Medierne og politikernes problematiserende fokus på indvandrere, muslimer og flygtninge berører ham på en måde, hvor hans nattesøvn forstyrres i forhold til en grundlæggende tvivl om, hvorvidt han nogensinde kan blive en accepteret del af samfundet. Stressforskning har fokuseret på, hvordan hverdagslige udfordringer og besværligheder ('hassles') påvirker den enkeltes mentale helbred i en negativ retning, da "...day-to-day stress can affect mental health when a large number of minor events add up and wear down a person, thus making her or him vulnerable to poor health" (Carter 2007, 26).

På den anden side af de hverdagslige udfordringer og på den anden ende af kontinuumet af stressreaktioner ses dét, som man kalder for 'race-based trauma', der kan oversættes som racialiserede traumer.⁵ Denne form for reaktion minder om det, vi kender fra PTSD, dvs. posttraumatisk stress, med reaktioner som f.eks. angst, mareridt og chok. Det ser man eksempelvis ved hadforbrydelser eller andre traumatiske og voldsomme oplevelser, hvor man f.eks. er blevet verbalt eller fysisk overfaldet pga. éns minoriserede position. Casen med Amira peger i den retning, da hun efter sit overfald udvikler angst og undvigende adfærd, der på omfattende vis påvirker hendes hverdag. Det er i den forbindelse vigtigt at være

opmærksom på, at man inden for forskningen ikke kun taler om traumer og muligheden for udvikling af PTSD, hvis den oplevelse, man har haft, er direkte forbundet med livsfare eller en trussel mod éns egen sikkerhed. Det kan ofte være en del af oplevelsen, men traumatiske stressreaktioner kan opstå som følge af mange forskellige slags situationer og oplevelser. Som traumeforskeren, Eve Carlson (1997) gør tydeligt, er nogle situationer og oplevelser

traumatic because they are emotionally painful... or because they involve the threat of emotional pain. In this case the negative valence is related to the psychological meaning of the event to the individual, not the physical consequences of the event
(Carlson 1997, 29 jf. Carter 2007)

Truslen om potentiel følelsesmæssig og psykologisk smerte kan i sig selv være nok og dermed udslagsgivende i forhold til stress. Netop truslen om potentiel smerte er ofte på spil ved hadforbrydelser og racistiske overfald. Man kan i den forbindelse sige, at det giver mening at tale om sammenhængen imellem racisme, hadforbrydelser og psykiske belastningsreaktioner, men ofte overser man de mere subtile, hverdagslige og de akkumulerede erfaringer af diskrimination og racialisering. Minoritetsstress kan netop her give os et sprog til at forstå disse mindre synlige, mikroaggressive processer og reaktionerne herpå.

I forhold til sidstnævnte peger nyere forskning på, at den hverdagslige og kontinuerlige stress i form af diskrimination, social ulighed og mikroaggressioner ligeledes kan føre til racialiserede traumereaktioner. Man taler i den forbindelse om en form for akkumuleret minoritetsstress - dvs. at man i meget lang tid har været psykisk belastet på grund af flere mindre men gentagne oplevelser og forhold, der påvirker én negativt og som i længden udvikler sig til en mere seriøs form for stressbelastningsreaktion. Akkumuleret stress over længere tid kan hertil føre til et generelt dårligt helbred i form af hjerte-karproblemer, forhøjet blodtryk mm. (se f.eks. Clark et al. 1999; Dressler et al. 2005). Umiddelbare stressreaktioner kan

dermed udvikle sig til mere kroniske former for helbredsproblemer.

I forståelsen af hvad minoritetsstress er, må man på den ene side trække på den viden, der eksisterer inden for stress- og traumeforskning, da symptomerne kan være meget diverse og komplekse. En stor del af den forskning, der er lavet om minoritetsstress er netop af denne art, som i overvejende grad er præget af en klinisk deskriptiv tilgang med udgangspunkt i statistiske studier. På den anden side er det nødvendigt også at inddrage eksisterende forskning og teori om intersektionalitet, stigmatisering, andetgørelse og affektiv belastning for at kunne få en dybere og teoretisk nuanceret forståelse af koblingerne imellem dét at være stresset, dét at være minoriseret og dét at opleve andetgørelse og diskrimination. Jeg har i den første del af artiklen særligt fokuseret på den førstnævnte form for forskning i en redegørelse af, hvad minoritetsstress er. I det følgende vil jeg komme nærmere ind på relevante kritiske teoretiske perspektiver, der er knyttet til minoritetsstress som begreb.

Intersektionalitet og minoritetsstress

At man i forskningen om minoritetsstress starter med at rette fokus mod kønnede og seksuelle minoriteter men bevæger sig videre til også at inddrage et fokus på racialiserede minoriteter peger på intersektionalitetsperspektivet (Crenshaw 1991; Brah & Phoenix 2004) som en vigtig opmærksomhed i arbejdet med minoritetsstress. Der er forskellige undertrykkende strukturer, dynamikker og forhold, der præger forskelligt positionerede personers stressbelastninger, -reaktioner og -udsathed. Det er således vigtigt at være opmærksom på, at den enkeltes minoriserede position kan være sammensat af flere forskellige kategorier som køn, seksuel orientering, alder, etnisk og religiøs baggrund, der tilsammen kan skabe komplekse former for udsathed. I forhold til oplevelsen af stress taler man om multiple faktorer og mangetydige former for minoritetsstress. Lisa Bowleg et al. (2003) fremhæver eksempelvis i deres studie af sorte homoseksuelle i USA, at de ikke

blot er udsat for en form for minoritetsstress, og at man må arbejde med mere sammensatte eller flerdobbelte former for udsathed og stressbelastninger i forbindelse med denne gruppe, da de er minoriserede og andetgjorte i forhold til forskellige sociale kategorier som køn, seksualitet, race og social status. Bowleg et al. betegner dette som en form for 'triple jeopardy', der kan betegnes som en tredobbelt udsathed. I en dansk kontekst kan man pege på samme tendens med henvisning til en omfattende rapport fra 2015 af Als Research (Følner et al. 2015), der sætter fokus på etnisk og religiøst minoriserede LGBT-personers levevilkår i Danmark. Her ses, at netop denne gruppe er mere udsat og mere psykisk og socialt presset pga. oplevet diskrimination og fordømmelse fra både samfundet og deres familiers side. I rapporten konkluderes det, at LGBT-personer med etnisk og religiøs minoritetsbaggrund oplever en signifikant højere grad af diskrimination, når man sammenholder med andre LGBT-personer, og der peges på, at: "Hver tredje nydanske LGBT person (33%) har overvejet at begå selvmord inden for det seneste år, mens det samme gælder for 19% af de øvrige LGBTQ personer" (Følner et al. 2015, 16).

Ved at inddrage et intersektionelt perspektiv på oplevelsen af udsathed og stress er det således muligt at tage højde for, at andetgørelse og diskrimination finder sted på flere parametre og niveauer, og at særlige intersektioner kan være forbundet med mere alvorlige belastningsforhold.

Det intersektionelle perspektiv skaber samtidigt også opmærksomhed omkring, at processer som racialisering og strukturel racisme må ses som former for diskrimination, der direkte knytter sig til minoritetsstress (Williams & Williams-Morris 2000; Sellers et al. 2003; Williams et al. 2003; Ong et al. 2009). Man kan følgelig rette fokus mod forskellige former for racisme som eksempelvis anti-sort eller anti-muslimsk racisme. I casen med Amira kan man se, hvordan de to former intersektorer, da hendes oplevelse af angst og undvigelse er knyttet til hendes position som både racialiseret og religiøs minoritet i Danmark, hvilket kan kobles til en form for anti-muslimsk racisme, der kobler synlig muslimskhed i form af tørklædebrug sammen med en synlig racialiseret andethed, hvor

hun på flere parametre kan fremstå som potentiel trussel for nationen (se også El-Tayeb 2011). Det er en form for andetgørelse, der baserer sig på komplekse sammenkoblinger imellem kønnede, religiøse og racialiserende forestillinger om 'den Anden', og som i Amiras situation ender med en konkret hadforbrydelse, hvor bl.a. hendes tørklæde bliver gjort til genstand for hadet.

Årvågenhed og stigma

Andetgørelse og stress i hverdagen kan opleves som noget, der begrænser én i at leve det liv, man gerne vil leve (Bhugra & Ayonrinde 2001), idet man kan opleve konstant angst, utryghed eller frustration. Det ses hos både Mehmud og Amira. Det kan handle om oplevelsen af, at man skal være ekstra opmærksom eller forsigtig i forhold til, hvor man bevæger sig hen, hvilket tøj man går i, hvilke signaler man sender og hvordan man bliver modtaget og set. Denne konstante angst og årvågenhed kan kobles til Erving Goffmans (1963) begreber om stigma og stigmatisering, som han fremhæver er forbundet med angst og nervøsitet hos det stigmatiserede individ. Ifølge Goffman (1963) er dét at være stigmatiseret forbundet med, at den enkelte "may perceive, usually quite correctly, that whatever others profess, they do not really 'accept' him and are not ready to make contact with him on 'equal grounds'" (Goffman 1963, 7). En fornemmelse som også kommer til udtryk i casen med Mehmud. Denne oplevelse af aldrig at blive accepteret eller forstået - af at være andetgjort - kan være forbundet med ensomhed og isolation men også en konstant overopmærksomhed på én selv og ens position i samfundet.

Overopmærksomheden på én selv, usikkerheden og udpegningen beskrives også mere specifikt i forhold til racialisering af sorte i vestlige samfund hos W.E.B. Du Bois (1903), som talte om 'double consciousness'. Det er en form for dobbelt bevidsthed, hvor man konstant er opmærksom på sig selv ud fra det blik, andre kaster på den sorte krop. Du Bois (1903) skriver det frem som "a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through

the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Du Bois 1903, 38).

Denne opmærksomhed på én selv kan kobles til begrebet om 'hyper-vigilance', en hyper-årvågenhed, som minoriserede personer både må udvikle og håndtere i forhold til deres udsatte samfundsposition. Årvågenhed som begreb kan spores tilbage til Gordon Allport (1954) og hans studier af fordomme og deres psykologiske og sociologiske effekter. Ilan Meyer (2003) bygger videre på dette fokus i hans undersøgelse af minoritetsstress i forhold til LGBTQ+ minoriteter, og fremhæver at jo mere stigmatiseret man er, desto større behov for årvågenhed. Det er i denne forbindelse vigtigt at forstå, at der er tale om en form for kronisk årvågenhed, da "it is repeatedly and continually evoked in the everyday life of the minority person" (Meyer 2003, 11), hvilket igen kan overføres til andre minoriserede positioner. Man kan således være i en konstant forsvars- eller angrebsposition i forhold til forventninger om, hvordan andre vil opfatte én, og om man vil blive udsat for diskrimination. Dette bliver meget tydeligt beskrevet i en tekst af Diaspora of Critical Nomads i Respons' temanummer om hadforbrydelser (2021):

"Ding Ding"-lyden kommer fra telefonen, jeg åbner beskeden, og det er en nyhedsartikel. Jeg har fået tilsendt en besked om endnu en hadforbrydelse i Danmark. Den næste besked lyder: "Pas på dig selv derude". Jeg træder ud ad døren med en masse tanker og en følelse af usikkerhed og frygt – er jeg den næste? Med disse følelser træder jeg alligevel ud i samfundet for at udføre mine daglige rutiner. Airpodsene er i ørene, og jeg er ude af døren. Øjnene fungerer som en laser, der aflæser ethvert individ, der passerer forbi. Jeg analyserer deres kropssprog, en nødvendighed for min sikkerhed, for at få en fornemmelse af, om de vil gøre mig fortræd eller ej. Min identitet kan ikke skjules, jeg er en sort, muslimsk kvinde, der bærer hijab. For at passe på mig selv er jeg konstant på vagt, min krop er klar til kamp, og mine

tanker ræser – for mens jeg skal tjekke, om toget kommer, så skal jeg stadig tage mine forholdsregler”

(<https://www.responsmedie.dk/om-hadforbrydelser-12/>).

Her kan man se, hvordan årvågenheden viser sig i hendes konstante aflæsning af andre personer og situationer, og hvordan det er forbundet med en kropslig fornemmelse af konstant at være kampberedt samtidig med, at hun foretager sine dagligdags gøremål. Samme årvågenhed kommer til udtryk hos Amira, når hun går på gaden og er ekstra opmærksom på, hvilken rute hun skal tage hjem og hvilke personer, der går på vejen. Hos Mehmud er årvågenheden knyttet til en forventning om at skulle lægge øre til endnu en stigmatiserende eller problematiserende nyhedshistorie, som er forbundet med en kropslig indsats for at 'tune ud' eller helt at holde pause fra medierne. I alle tre eksempler, *Diaspora of Critical Nomads*, Amira og Mehmud, er der tale om, at de forholder sig til en potentiel trussel om psykisk eller fysisk smerte og vold - en potentiel andetgørende, diskriminerende og racialiserende handling eller situation, som de har en forventning om, de kan blive udsat for, og som de dermed er på forkant med. Her bliver det tydeligt, hvorfor den kliniske forskning peger på, at truslen om psykisk smerte i sig selv er nok til at udløse stress. *Diaspora of Critical Nomads* har ikke selv oplevet en hadforbrydelse, men nyheden herom og sandsynligheden for at blive udsat for racialiseret vold er nok til at skabe øget årvågenhed og stress.

Denne potentialitet ved og forudsigelse af at blive andetgjort kan også beskrives via Ahrong Yang's begreb om 'racialized forecasting' (2021), som kan oversættes som foregribelse af racialisering. På basis af studier af skolebørn i den danske folkeskole udvikler Yang begrebet til at sætte fokus på, hvordan racialiserede og minoriserede børn forventer og kan være bekymrede for fremtidige situationer, hvor de må forholde sig til deres minoriserede og andetgjorte position. Begrebet kan anvendes bredere i forhold til racialiserede og minoriserede individer til at forstå den affektive investering i mulige fremtidige oplevelser af

andetgørelse og racialisering. Frygt, usikkerhed, årvågenhed og en foregribelse af mulige fremtidige andetgørende oplevelser kan i den sammenhæng beskrives som en næsten normaliseret betingelse og del af hverdagen for mange racialiserede minoriteter - men det er en betingelse, som har affektive omkostninger.

Affektive belastninger og minoritetsbeskatning

Dét at have sit alarmberedskab aktiveret konstant i forhold til mulige angreb på éns identitet, position og krop kan være nedslidende i længden, hvilket også kan vise sig som en oplevelse af frustration, vrede og modløshed, hvor oplevelsen af at blive skilt ud, angrebet og blive set ned på bliver for affektivt belastende. Det ses også i casen med Mehmud, som er træt af at være i en evig forklarings- eller forsvarsposition.

Det peger henimod forskning om forskelsbehandling og andetgørelse og de affektive omkostninger, det har for det enkelte individ. Det er affektivt belastende at blive positioneret som udenforstående, ekskluderet og andetgjort. Det kræver en ekstra indsats i form af årvågenhed og foregribelse af mulige situationer men også ekstra arbejde at kunne positionere sig som et acceptabelt individ. Louwanda Evans og Wendy L. Moore (2015) taler i denne forbindelse om 'the emotional labour' i deres studie af, hvad der skal til for at kunne klare sig som racialiseret minoritet i uddannelsessystemet. Denne affektive indsats er knyttet til en særlig forvaltning og performance af éns følelser⁶, på måder hvor man ikke træder for meget ved siden af, og hvor man ikke i for høj grad udfordrer de dominerende normative logikker. I en dansk sammenhæng kommer Tess Skadegård Thorsen (2019) ind på begrebet 'minoritetsbeskatning' for at beskrive de affektive omkostninger af at blive positioneret som minoriseret og andetgjort subjekt inden for en akademisk kontekst. Her rettes også fokus mod de omkostninger, det har for den enkelte at skulle forvalte og forhandle andetgørelse, diskrimination og mikroaggressioner. Evans & Moore og

Skadegård Thorsen tager udgangspunkt i uddannelsesmæssige kontekster men pointen om den affektive beskatning og byrde, der er forbundet med forhandlingen af éns minoriserede position, kan overføres til andre hverdagslige sammenhænge. Sara Ahmed (2012) beskriver ligeledes de affektive belastninger i form af udmattelse, vrede, træthed og frustration i arbejdet med diversitet (2012) og kommer mere generelt ind på de mange forskellige og nogle gange problematiserende affekter, der 'klistrer' sig til bestemte kroppe og positioner (Ahmed 2004). Hun peger i denne sammenhæng på, hvordan processer af andetgørelse, racialisering og forskelsbehandling i grunden er affektivt medierede (se også Hook 2005; Andreassen & Vitus 2015), hvilket også forklarer, hvorfor disse processer er associerede med stress og belastningsreaktioner.

Dehumanisering og internaliseret racisme

Forskning peger ligeledes på, at de ydre negative og andetgørende blikke på den enkelte kan internaliseres, hvilket også antydes i Du Bois' begreb om 'dobbelts bevidsthed'. Frantz Fanon (1952) har beskæftiget sig med dette i sine analyser af, hvordan oplevelsen af eksklusion og racisme, som følge af det koloniale system, er koblet til udviklingen af psykologiske problemer såsom lavt selvværd og et internaliseret negativt selvbillede. I en efterhånden klassisk case præsenterer Fanon sin oplevelse af at blive peget ud som en sort mand af en lille hvid dreng, og hvordan det ydre blik på hans sorte krop fastholder ham i en undertrykt position. Han taler i denne forbindelse om 'the white gaze' (1952, 90) på den sorte krop, der beskrives som et kropsligt strukturerende og styrende blik. Blikket er dehumaniserende og objektgørende og medfører en usikkerhed og yderst mærkbar opmærksomhed på sig selv og sine handlinger. Fanons analyse tager i denne forbindelse udgangspunkt i det blik, som koloniserede, racialiserede subjekter mødes med og bliver til igennem, men det kan overføres til andre minoriserede grupper - også i en nutidig kontekst - i forhold til en forståelse af,

hvordan de ydre blikke, man ses med, kan implicere en ikke-genkendelse af éns identitet og menneskelighed. Sidstnævnte, om hvorvidt man overhovedet ses som et menneske, kobler sig til den enkeltes muligheder for at blive genkendt som et legitimt subjekt og dermed at kunne overskride racialiseringens dehumanisering og objektgørelse (Wynter 2006; Khawaja et al. 2022). Dette udtrykker en dobbelthed i, på den ene side, at blive set på, udpeget og dermed være synlig men, på den anden side, samtidigt at få underkendt og usynliggjort sin eksistens som værdigt subjekt. Når Mehmet eksempelvis slukker for radioen og ikke lytter til eller ser nyhederne, kan man se det som hans måde at sikre en værdighed og menneskelighed på, hvor han ikke skal forholde sig til negative og ofte dehumaniserende italesættelser af flygtninge og indvandrere.

Hos nogle internaliseres de ydre negative og andetgørende blikke, og man taler i den forbindelse om internaliseret racisme (Speight 2007) eller internaliseret stigma (Herek et al. 2015). Det implicerer, at man ser sig selv ud fra de andetgørende og racialiserende blikke og samtidigt betragter andre, som man identificeres med, ud fra et umiddelbart negativt syn (Williams & Williams-Morris 2000). Internaliseret racisme og/eller stigma er begreber, der udtrykker, hvordan andetgørelse kan have dybdegående psykologiske konsekvenser for den enkeltes selvforståelse og mentale helbred. Det peger igen på vigtigheden af et begreb som minoritetsstress. Minoritetsstress kan nemlig indfange, hvordan den enkelte minoriseredes årvågenhed, bevidsthed og opmærksomhed på de stereotyper og det stigma, der knytter sig til éns minoriserede position, er forbundet med en konstant oplevelse af stress og affektiv belastning. Speight udtrykker det på en meget rammende måde:

The target's [minoritetspersonens] awareness and internalization of society's stereotypes is enough to produce a psychologically threatening situation; a racial encounter need not occur... Internalized racism is not so easy to see, to count, to measure and does not involve one perpetrator and one

corresponding victim, but instead has been adopted and resides in the psyche of targets (2007, 131).

Oplevelsen af at blive andetgjort, set som forkert, som et objekt og at blive ekskluderet er således ikke nødvendigvis knyttet til bestemte situationer af konkret udpegning og synlig diskrimination, sådan som det f.eks. kommer til udtryk i casen med Amira. Det er i højere grad forbundet med mere usynlige og subtile processer, der er knyttet til de måder, hvorpå man socialiseres ind i, indoptager og opererer ud fra andetgørende majoritetsdominerende logikker – logikker der kan føre til stress og et negativt selvbillede. Flere forskere peger i den forbindelse også på, hvordan oplevelser af racialisering og andetgørelse ikke kun er knyttet til enkeltpersoner og enkeltepisoder, men snarere må ses i forhold til bredere intergenerationelle og koloniale historiske spor, der viser sig på forskellige måder i forhold til forskellige grupper af minoriserede (Hunter 2021). Det kommer f.eks. til udtryk hos multikunstneren Jupiter Child, der om sit kunsteriske virke udtaler:

“How can I be Black and see myself as a beautiful person beyond the limits of “white gaze?” I am trying to express and liberate myself. However, I’m connected to all of those who came before me, all of those who are with me and will come after me. It is like whatever I do to liberate myself is basically simultaneously unlocking the chains of others linked to me, and the other way around” (Marronage 2021, 82).

Jupiter Child har rødder i Mocambique og bor i Danmark. Hendes kunst udtrykker hendes kamp for at skabe en værdig og accepteret position for sig selv, der rækker ud over hende selv og hendes smerte: til en generationel smerte, der er forbundet med slavegørelse og kolonial udbytning. I den forstand kan et blik for minoritetsstress også åbne for perspektiver, der tager højde for denne form for generationelle psykiske og fysiske vold.

Som Jupiter Child kommer ind på, er denne udsathed også forbundet med modstand og

strategier for at håndtere den konstante årvågenhed og stress. Netop strategierne, mener jeg, der er brug for, at man i højere grad sætter fokus på. Jeg vil nu bevæge mig videre til sidste del af artiklen, hvor jeg kigger nærmere på, hvordan et fokus på minoritetsstress kan åbne for et mere udvidet fokus på modstand og modmagt som forankret i kollektive processer og strukturer.

Modmagt - resiliens og coping

Det er vigtigt, at minoritetsstress ikke blot anvendes til at sætte fokus på de affektivt belastende oplevelser, som minoriserede personer lever med. Der er naturligvis brug for, at der sættes fokus på den dimension, og at man får blik for de negative psykologiske konsekvenser af diskrimination, andetgørelse og racialisering. På den anden side kan der være en risiko for, at man reducerer minoritetspersoner som 'ressourcesvage stakler' og undertrykte personer uden nogen form for indflydelse eller agens. Der er også en fare for, at man sygeliggør minoriteter blot på grundlag af deres minoriserede position. Det kan opfattes som en form for umyndiggørelse, og derfor er der en del forskere, som argumenterer for, at minoritetsstress også skal inddrage et fokus på coping-strategier, resiliens og den sociale støtte, der udvikles og ses blandt minoritetsgrupper (f.eks. Goodkind et al. 2020; Meyer et al. 2008; Wong et al. 2014). Det handler således om at sætte fokus på, at modstand kan se ud på mange forskellige måder, og at der, ved enhver form for undertrykkelse, uretfærdighed eller ulighed, altid findes modmagt, agens og forandring. Et punkt, som Maria Lugones har udmærket sig i at tydeliggøre, er:

If we think of people who are oppressed as not consumed or exhausted by oppression, but also as resisting, or sabotaging a system aimed at molding, reducing, violating, erasing them, then we can see at least two realities: one of them has the logic of resistance and transformation; the other has the logic of oppression. But, indeed, these two logics

multiply and encounter each other over and over in many guises (2003, 24).

Lugones pointerer her, at hvis vi ser forskellige minoriserede grupper og individer som undertrykte og ikke ser på, hvad denne undertrykkelse fører med sig af ikke kun negative psykologiske og sociale konsekvenser men også opbyggende handlinger, resiliens og modstandsstrategier, reproducerer man en undertrykkende, objektgørende og andetgørende optik. Derfor er det vigtigt at inddrage den forskning og de perspektiver, som peger på, at de udfordringer, der gør sig gældende som minoriseret, også kan skabe modstandsdygtighed og resiliens. Det kommer f.eks. til udtryk ved de forskellige coping-strategier mange minoriserede udvikler til at håndtere den hverdagslige stress og de affektive belastninger, som oplevelsen af diskrimination, mikroaggressioner og konstant udpegning er forbundet med. I eksemplet med Mehmud udvikler han f.eks. en strategi med at tage en pause fra medierne for at beskytte sig selv fra stressende input om etniske minoriteter i samfundet. Det kan umiddelbart ses som undvigende adfærd, men det er samtidigt en måde at håndtere stimuli, som han er bevidst om påvirker hans mentale helbred og overskud i en negativ retning. Anden forskning retter fokus på, hvordan modgang og fordomme, i f.eks. uddannelsessystemet, af mange unge anvendes som en ekstra drivkraft til at ville klare sig bedre på uddannelsen og mere bredt set i samfundet (f.eks. Mirza 2009).

Forskning peger også på styrken ved at søge fællesskaber med ligesindede, som har samme oplevelser med diskrimination og andetgørelse. Sådanne fællesskaber kan i sig selv fungere som 'helle-steder', hvor man kan sænke skuldrene og ikke hele tiden være i forsvars- eller angrebsposition (Meyer et al. 2008; Khawaja 2010; Wong et al. 2014). Fællesskaber kan på denne måde virke helende såvel som styrkende - som rum, hvor man kan spejle sig i andres lignende oplevelser af stress og smerte og bygge videre på nye fortællinger, der kan virke humaniserende overfor den form for objektgørelse og dehumanisering mange etnisk, racialiserede og religiøse minoriserede lever med.

At kunne passere

En del forskning retter derudover fokus mod de subtile hverdagslige strategier for at passe ind og virke mindst muligt forstyrrende - det man i forskningslitteraturen bl.a. betegner som 'passing' (Goffman 1963; Ahmed 2004; Carter 2007). At kunne 'passere' indikerer en indsats for at kunne være til stede uden at skulle skille sig for meget ud - uden at vække for megen opmærksomhed. Det kan handle om, hvilket tøj man tager på, hvilket sprog man taler, og hvordan man går ned ad gaden. Mange unge mænd med etnisk og religiøs minoritetsbaggrund fortæller eksempelvis, at de meget bevidst undgår at gå sammen med deres venner i for store grupper, da det potentielt kan virke truende. Når de går i byen en fredag, sørger de eksempelvis for at dele sig op i mindre grupper. 'Passing' beskriver disse processer af tilpasninger og justeringer, der kan siges at være drevet af et "desire for at blive set og genkendt som den person, man opfatter sig selv som - som en stræben efter genkendelse og anerkendelse" (Khawaja 2010, 233-34). Der har været tradition for at undersøge passing inden for critical race theory, feministisk queer teori og minoritetsstudier både med fokus på eksempelvis homoseksuelle, som forsøger at passere som heteroseksuelle og sorte, som forsøger at passere som hvide (f.eks. Smith 1994; Ahmed 1999; Kroeger 2003).

Man kan diskutere, om der er tale om modstand og modmagt, når vi er inde på bestræbelser på at passere, for handler det ikke om, at man blot forsøger at assimilere sig og tilpasse sig? Er der ikke blot tale om internalisering og efterlevelse af en andetgørende majoritetsdominerende logik? Forskere som Ahmed (1999) fremhæver dog, at indsatser i forhold til at kunne passere ligeledes kan ses som subtile måder at gøre modstand på, da den enkelte selv forsøger at styre sin måde at blive læst og forstået på. Val Kalei Kanuha beskriver eksempelvis i sine analyser af racialiserede homoseksuelle, at deres strategier for "passing may not necessarily represent a form of "internalized homophobia" as commonly suggested but perhaps a conscious strategy of resistance to societal oppression" (1999, 28).

De måder, man som minoriseret individ forholder sig til, forhandler og handler på sin andetgjorte position i forhold til de ydre blikke, man ses med, indikerer på denne måde en bevidsthed om de dominerende normer og evnen til at spille med og nogle gange imod disse normer, alt efter hvad der passer én bedst og dermed bedst tjener éns formål. At passere kan i dette lys også ses som en strategi til at nedbringe potentiel minoritetsstress.

Mikro-modstand

Det er muligt at sammenholde disse konkrete muligheder for forhandling og at passere i hverdagen som del af racialiserede og minoriserede gruppers udvikling af resiliens og coping-strategier. I sammenhæng med et fokus på mikroaggressioner, er der også rettet fokus mod muligheden for modstand. Man taler i den forbindelse om 'micro-resistance' (Evans & Moore 2015). Mikro-modstand bliver beskrevet som "an important aspect of racial resilience and resistance, enabling people of color to participate in racially oppressive institutions while maintaining and valuing their human dignity" (Evans & Moore 2015, 441).

Det handler om de hverdagslige måder at gøre modstand på, der på overfladen kan synes som tilpasning, men som egentlig handler om overlevelse og daglige forhandlinger af ens andetgjorte kropslighed og position. Det kan udtrykkes i en modstand mod stereotyper som f.eks. at blive set som 'ballademageren' eller 'den undertrykte tørklædepige', at anvende humor som modstand for at få afstand til en ubehagelig situation (Khawaja 2011), eller at man er omhyggelig med at vælge sine kampe i forhold til, hvilke diskussioner man indgår i og med hvilke formål. Der er således tale om en form for modstand, som er baseret på de hverdagslige strategier, den enkelte udvikler til at beskytte sig selv affektivt for at undgå at blive for stressbelastet. Det er knyttet til hyper-årvågenheden, som på den ene side kan være stressende men på den anden side også kan være beskyttende, fordi man udvikler relationelle, affektive og sociale kompetencer i forhold til at kunne aflæse og nogle gange foregribe en situation. Man kan

hurtigt indstille sig på og forholde sig til de logikker og den atmosfære, der gør sig gældende og handle bevidst og reflekteret på måder, hvor man kan passere.

Mikro-modstand, 'passing' og andre coping-strategier har meget fokus på, hvad den enkelte gør og kan gøre i forhold til stressorer som mikroaggressioner, stigmatisering og racialisering, men det er væsentligt at være opmærksom på, at resiliens og coping også kan og bør tænkes som forbundne med fællesskaber, sociale strukturer og bredere ændringer i diskurser og praksisser om 'de Andre' i samfundet (f.eks. Lugones 2003; Goodkind et al. 2020). Dette er særligt vigtigt i forhold til et fokus på minoritetsstress, da de faktorer, der fører til stress, i høj grad er forbundet med sociale, samfundsmæssige og strukturelle forhold. Et fokus på minoritetsstress fordrer et fokus på de forskellige former for uligheder og undertrykkelsesstrukturer, der forfordeler nogle frem for andre i forhold til særlige praksisser, forståelser, forventninger og fordomme. Hvis man ignorerer de magtrelationelle og strukturelle forhold og blot opfordrer den enkelte minoriserede person til at være modstandsdygtig, stærk og opbygge resiliens, kan man ende med, at man implicit ansvarliggør den enkelte for sin egen udsatte og andetgjorte position.

Kollektive og strukturelle strategier

Når man således skal tale om, hvad man konkret kan gøre ved minoritetsstress, er det vigtigt ikke kun at fokusere på den enkelte, der oplever eller snarere bliver udsat for stressbelastningerne. Dét, som Amira eller Mehmud går igennem, kan ikke kun ses som deres individuelle problem. Det er snarere udtryk for bestemte samfundsmæssige forhold, der diskriminerer, udpeger og andetgør personer, som ser ud som dem - og dermed er der tale om forhold, som de konfronteres med, og som de på daglig basis må håndtere. Minoritetsstress kan på denne måde beskrives som en social tilstand og problematik, der fremstår som individuelle og affektive reaktioner på bredere samfundsmæssige forhold. Derfor er det ikke kun op til den enkelte at komme sig over minoritetsstress.

Der er således et særligt etisk ansvar i at udvikle og arbejde med en bredere forståelse af resiliens og stress, som ikke blot er knyttet til den enkelte men i højere grad til, hvilke muligheder der kollektivt, socialt og strukturelt kan skabes for ændringer af etablerede racialiserende og andetgørende diskurser og strukturer.

Det er et fokus, man eksempelvis ser i pædagogiske sammenhænge, hvor ansvaret for at nedbringe mikroaggressioner, minoritetsstress og diskrimination ikke blot ses som den enkeltes opgave men bredere set som organisationens eller institutionens. I normkritiske og diversitetssensitive pædagogiske strategier, som anti-racistisk pædagogik og 'engaged pedagogy', arbejder man f.eks. med at skabe opbyggende fællesskaber, anerkendende deltagelsespositioner og genkendelighed i undervisningsmaterialer og -tilgange (f.eks. hooks 1994; Giroux 2013; Khawaja 2022; Lagermann & Khawaja 2022). Her handler det ikke om, at den enkelte blot 'skal tage sig sammen'. Man retter i stedet fokus mod, hvordan det er muligt at skabe rammer, så alle kan deltage og føle sig set, hørt og værdigt behandlet. Det samme kan overføres til arbejdspladser og andre sammenhænge, hvor man arbejder på at inkorporere en mere social retfærdig tilgang til eksempelvis rekruttering, repræsentation og arbejdsmiljø (f.eks. Shin 2008).

Afslutning

Artiklen indleder med en redegørelse af, hvad den kliniske forståelse af minoritetsstress er i forhold til kendetegn, definition og symptomer. For at kunne få en dybere forståelse af de processer, der ligger bag minoritetsstress, og hvordan minoritetsstress på forskellig vis kan påvirke den enkelte, inddrages eksisterende teorier og begrebsliggørelser af relevans for forståelsen af, hvad der er på spil, når vi taler om minoritetsstress. I den forbindelse inddrages bl.a. et fokus på affektiv belastning, hyper-årvågenhed og internaliseret racisme. Dette fører til en udvidet conceptualisering af stress som strukturelt og relationelt frembragt, hvilket samtidig fører til et fokus på resiliens samt coping som koblet til kollektive strategier for modstand.

I Danmark mangler vi desværre i udpræget grad forskning om minoritetsstress i forhold til udbredelse, omfang og behandling. Der har ikke været rettet fokus mod, hvordan stressbelastninger som mikroaggressioner, hadforbrydelser, eksklusion fra arbejdsmarkedet, forskelsbehandling i sundhedssystemet osv. har væsentlige affektive, psykologiske og fysiske omkostninger for racialiserede og minoriserede individer. Denne artikel er et første skridt i den retning, hvor jeg har foretaget en udredning og analyse af begrebet for at opnå en forståelse af, hvad minoritetsstress er. Det næste skridt er at udføre systematiske undersøgelser og producere empiri, der sætter fokus på, hvordan minoritetsstress mere konkret former sig og tager sig ud i en lokal sammenhæng. Der er således behov for mere forskning om dette, men med denne artikel håber jeg på at skabe øget opmærksomhed omkring begrebet og fænomenet – også med henblik på at professionelle og forskere medtænker dimensionen af minoritetsstress, når de arbejder med børn, unge eller voksne i forskellige udsatte positioner. Her kan man nævne nødvendigheden af at udbrede et fokus på og viden om minoritetsstress som et særligt fænomen, da det kan føre til et mere kritisk fokus på de strukturelle og diskursive rammer for racialiserede og minoriserede individers muligheder for tilblivelse og deltagelse i samfundet. Det kan også skabe opmærksomhed omkring de forskellige måder, man kan være minoriseret og udsat på. Når Amira kan have svært ved at bevæge sig uden for sin lejlighed, og hun evt. kan have vanskeligt ved at studere videre eller fortsætte sit job, må vi se hendes situation som præget af de oplevelser, hun har haft, og særligt den voldsomme oplevelse af at blive overfaldet. Det samme gør sig gældende for Mehmud, som kan ligge søvnløs med følelsen af ikke at blive accepteret i samfundet, og som må tage mentale og fysiske pauser fra emner, der berører etniske og religiøse minoriteter. De udtrykker på hver deres måde belastningsreaktioner, som er forbundet med intersektionerne imellem deres etniske, religiøse og racialiserede minoritetspositioner, som ved nærmere analyse intersekerer med andre betydningsbærende kategorier som køn, seksualitet, social klasse og alder. Ved at inddrage et fokus på

minoritetsstress får man således kritisk analytiske redskaber til at kunne forstå betydningen af at leve i og med en ofte konstant oplevelse af at være andetgjort, forkert og stigmatiseret. Minoritetsstress kan dermed som begreb presse os til at tænke ud over den enkelte minoriserede som

ansvarshavende for sin egen andetgørelse og potentielle oplevelse af stress til at se nærmere på de strukturer, rammer og normer, der skaber minorisering/majorisering, førstehed/andethed, inklusion/eksklusion.

Noter

1. Mehmet og Amira er cases baseret på personlige henvendelser modtaget i Psykologfagligt Netværk imod Diskrimination (www.psykimoddiskrimination.dk), som forfatteren er medstifter af. Casene er anonymiserede.
2. 'Race-based trauma' dækker over traumereaktioner foranlediget af den enkeltes racialiserede eller etniske identitet og minder om reaktioner, vi kender fra PTSD så som mareridt, undgåelsesadfærd, flashbacks osv. (Carter 2007).
3. Andetgørelse betegner den magtrelationelle proces af at blive positioneret som Anden i forhold til samfundsmæssige og historisk udviklede diskursive forestillinger af, hvad der er det normale og selvfølgelige. Det selvfølgeliggjorte har oftest status som det hegemonisk gældende og defineres som positionen som Første(gjort) (Foucault 1972; Said 1978; Khawaja 2001).
4. Hate crime recording and data collection practice across the EU (2018). https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2018-hate-crime-recording_en.pdf (1.7.2020)
5. Jeg anvender en del engelske begreber og termer i artiklen. Jeg har oversat de fleste, efter bedste evne, men det er ikke altid let, da vi endnu ikke har udviklet en dækkende dansksproget terminologi på dette felt. Det er yderligere et udtryk for, at der er tale om et meget understuderet felt i en dansk kontekst.
6. I min anvendelse af følelse som begreb trækker jeg på en forståelse af affekt, som ikke noget iboende den enkelte, men snarere som relationelt frembragt, som noget der cirkulerer imellem subjekter, og som får bestemte betydninger i de sociale kontekster, den enkelte befinder sig i (Ahmed 2004).

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About Falling Apart and Trusting the Process: Snapshots from the Life (and Work) of an Academic with ADHD

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Abstract

In this essay, I give an autophenomenographical account of what it is like for me to be late-diagnosed with ADHD while in the process of writing my dissertation. I explain how ADHD is an invisible disability and how little help is offered when the medication does not work. I explore how, because of my ADHD, my brain is at the same time my most valuable resource/tool and my worst enemy. I describe the various challenges in my life, psychological as well as physical, and call for academic institutions to provide structures that allow for non-normative temporalities and ways of doing research. In this essay, I offer some snapshots of my own experiences in the hope that neurodivergent students and scholars will see themselves reflected (and accepted), as opposed to an academic article *about* neurodivergents written by a neurotypical scholar.

KEYWORDS: ADHD, neurodivergence, the neoliberal university, slow writing, autophenomenography

The year before I got my ADHD diagnosis, at age forty-one, I attended a conference in Sweden. I already suspected that I had ADHD, but I did not yet know the vocabulary and did not fully understand how it affected me. During a panel at the conference, in which the audience had to sit still and either listen to audio or watch a video, I experienced what I now know is termed 'sensory overload' (Thank you, Neurodivergent Twitter!). I think the audience was supposed to become immersed in the experience and perhaps feel relaxed. The sounds awoke a sort of core of anxiousness in my chest, and I kept looking at the door, trying to figure out an escape route. I could not leave without disturbing everyone else, and I did not want to disrespect the presenter, so I just sat there and let the waves of discomfort roll over me. In my memory of the experience, the lights were out during the presentation, so I could not distract myself from my thoughts or calm myself down by embroidering, something that often helps me sit still and focus during lectures, meetings, and so on. I offer this account as an example of how ADHD is often an invisible disability – there may be a storm of emotions and thoughts raging on the inside, but people cannot necessarily tell, especially if the person with ADHD has become used to masking it and has learned to disregard their own emotions and physical sensations in order to blend in or as a defense against being called 'difficult' or 'dramatic'.

After the panel, lunch was served in the university cafeteria. I needed to be alone, so I avoided people I knew and sat down at an empty table, hoping that everyone would stay away. For me, ADHD does not look or feel the same every day – sometimes I am a social butterfly and enjoy mingling and meeting new people, but on other days I am afraid to answer my phone, I may avoid eye contact, I become unable to speak ('selective mutism'), and might become so overwhelmed that I have to leave a situation or event in order to prevent a meltdown. In the cafeteria, on that day, I was trying to soothe myself after having experienced sensory overload (I am very sensitive to sounds, smells, light, and physical sensations in general – it often feels like I am being attacked by

outside forces (especially during my period)). The cafeteria became more and more crowded, and strangers sat down next to me. I just looked at my food and tried to create a solitary and quiet space for myself amidst all the chatting. The chair opposite me was still unoccupied, and I really wanted it to remain empty, so that I could avoid small talk.

When conversations are superficial, I find it hard to pretend that I am interested, and I often start yawning, which is embarrassing, because it makes me feel like an impatient and self-centered child. Emotional dysregulation is pronounced when it comes to my ADHD. I cry easily, and for most of my life I have tried hard to suppress these feelings, the display of which has often been viewed by others as 'inappropriate'. During oral exams, I have experienced being affected by students' emotions. For instance, if students are so nervous or disappointed that they cry, I cry with them, and if they get excited because of a good grade and cry tears of joy, I also cry with them. I remember an examiner who told me that my tears were unprofessional, and another colleague who once told me that I would have to learn to control my emotions. Before I started doing research on death and trauma and attending conferences on these topics (especially the Queer Death Studies Network events), I felt (even more) out of place in academia; I never understood why there was no space for emotions in the Humanities, when so many of us read and analyzed works of literature that were meant to provoke feelings in the reader. If there was no space for emotions, there was no space for 'the real me'. My crying made me feel like a failure, and it fit into the narrative I have been fed all my life: that I was at the same time 'too much' and 'not enough'. I have become more gentle with myself, though, and I am in the process of allowing myself to show my emotions.

But let us return to the conference in Sweden and the empty chair at the lunch table. Eventually, the cafeteria became so crowded that someone sat down. I did not know this person. I think I may have nodded a "Hello". I went to get some coffee, and when I sat down again the silence started to feel awkward, so I made a comment about the coffee. The other person responded, and before I knew

it, I started talking about how much I dreaded situations such as this, where I might end up having to talk to strangers and trying to avoid small talk. They responded that they felt the same, and we soon started talking about family estrangement. They recognized me as 'the poet' who had read a poem about my estranged mother the previous night at a reception. Small talk drains my energy, but having deep (often dark) conversations about personal trauma and emotions invigorates me. At one point in the conversation, my new friend mentioned that they had ADHD, and I understood why I found it so easy to talk to this person I had just met. I told them I suspected that I also had ADHD, and we started comparing struggles. For the first time in my life, I felt safe being my 'authentic self' in public, and I learned how important it is for me to be around other neurodivergent people. I have always felt 'odd' and out of place – always on the outside of the circle and never inside. I have tried to fit in and have longed to be part of a community, but I have instinctually felt that people sensed there was something 'off' about me.

I have always read this rejection as a sign that I was somehow 'wrong'. After I got my diagnosis and read more about ADHD, I started to see past events through a different lens. 'Being lazy' was translated into having 'executive dysfunction', for instance. I have talked to other ADHD persons about the exhausting process that begins after diagnosis. It feels like falling apart; I became aware of how much other people had shamed me for struggling with various aspects of adult life and how I had internalized this shame. I grieved for the child I once was, who did not get the help she needed so that she could function well in school. I have always gotten good grades (in the subjects I found interesting), but I found it hard to concentrate when doing my homework, either because the world around me was too distracting, or because random thoughts made me lose focus. I also could not sleep at night, so I often overslept. I do not fit the stereotypical image of the (white) cisgender boy with ADHD who disrupts the classroom; my ADHD tends to create noise inside my mind, and my inability to sit still (which I tried to counter in school by drawing during classes) is

manifested through a constant switching between tasks – getting up from my desk to go do something in the kitchen, for instance. I now see how ADHD has affected almost every aspect of my life.

When I got my diagnosis, I had just entered the third (and last) year of my PhD fellowship; during the writing of my dissertation, I started to suspect that I was neurodivergent. I have always struggled with insomnia and have found eating to be a challenge. I thought I had an eating disorder, but I could never see myself reflected in any of the descriptions of eating disorders. I suffer from nausea, often accompanied by migraines (triggered by sensory overload), which makes it hard for me to eat. The lack of sleep and sustenance, of course, impairs my ability to function and focus. When speaking of these struggles, I am often met with the response that "Everyone experiences this from time to time". However, people with ADHD are challenged in ways that often wreck their lives. My ADHD means that I live in a world governed by contrasts; for instance, I am either unable to concentrate, or I am so (hyper)focused on something that I tend to stop listening to my body's signals (hunger, for example). I have seen other persons with ADHD point out that our inability to focus on one specific task is often caused by hypervigilance (also a symptom linked with childhood trauma), which means that we are unable to stop paying attention to *everything* that is happening around us. Thus, while I am trying to read a text, I am perhaps also hyper-aware of noises from the street outside, smells from within the home, light coming through the window, and so on. I find it easier to write at night (sometimes until the sun comes up), because the world is quiet(er). This, of course, messes up my circadian rhythm. Which affects my ability to eat. Which affects my ability to sleep.

I keep thinking of one specific phrase in the evaluation of my Master's thesis from 2008, in which my supervisor wrote that I had structured the chapters of my thesis, which was awarded the highest grade possible, in an 'unusual' manner. I still have no idea what she meant, and I was afraid to ask her, because then she would find out that I did not know what I was doing, and that I did not belong in academia. When writing my dissertation,

I was unable to follow the instructions of my supervisors, such as providing an outline for my study. I felt that I was letting them down, and that I was a failure, because I could not fulfill such seemingly simple tasks. I lost focus and started 'chasing shiny objects' in the form of new ideas – first, I wanted to include embroidery in my dissertation (it is now an important part of my study), and since I often have no concept of time, I thought that I could not only finish the embroidery (which is a slow process) but also make a short film about it. One of the benefits of having an ADHD brain is the creativity and the ability to come up with original solutions, but my ideas often cause me to lose focus. I have learned that my writing happens instinctually; I often experience an amazing creative flow and work on multiple parts of my dissertation at the same time. I somehow master this chaos, but it does require more time than more traditional ways of doing research. It took me two years to write my Master's thesis, which was supposed to take only a year. I started working on my dissertation in October 2017, and I am now way past the deadline. I got sidetracked along the way – by three deaths (my estranged mother, my beloved grandfather, and my cat Sookie), a custody case, a new relationship, and my diagnosis. As the collective of researchers behind the 2015 article "For Slow Scholarship: A Feminist Politics of Resistance through Collective Action in the Neoliberal University" write, "Sometimes life gets in the way [of doing academia]" (Mountz et al. 2015, 1244). My personal experience with ADHD is that I struggle with the everyday aspects and tasks of life and this affects my ability to work. When "life gets in the way" for me, I am already struggling with sleep deprivation, an inability to control intrusive thoughts, food issues, and an impaired memory, for example, because of my ADHD.

I had hoped that medication would help me manage the more severe symptoms of my ADHD. My psychiatrist prescribed Ritalin. I wrote sixty pages of my dissertation in two weeks, during the summer holidays, when my daughter was at her father's. I had never experienced being able to focus like that, but I felt completely stoned at the same time (like I had smoked a lot of pot). I also

experienced symptoms of depression; I remember walking through the city with tears streaming down my face and not knowing why I was crying. I tried two other types of ADHD medication, but the side effects were too severe: I felt dizzy, I lost my appetite, I was fatigued, and I lost the ability to concentrate on reading. The medications ruined the last six months of my fellowship. I went on sick leave for a month to recover from the havoc done to my mind and my body and to deal with the disappointment that the medication did not work. My psychiatrist had nothing else to offer me. She could not recommend a therapist who specialized in neurodivergence (I have since found one, who is very good but also very expensive). I was put on a waiting list for a course on 'Life Skills for People with ADHD' offered by the municipality. I had no idea where or how to get help, other than doing a self-study on ADHD (which was hard to do, when I also had to finish writing my dissertation) and becoming a part of the online community for neurodivergents on Twitter (which has been incredibly helpful). I bought books on ADHD, but I still have not had time to read them. I had to focus on developing the skills to get back to writing my dissertation. I have found out that performing tasks in intervals of thirty minutes usually works, although sometimes I am too antsy to sit down. I focus on working *with* my ADHD (which I have been doing for most of my life without being aware of it) instead of *against* it.

I have developed strategies for quieting or distracting my mind; for example, I watch series (currently *Star Trek: Deep Space 9*) on my iPad when performing practical tasks, such as cooking and cleaning, so that my mind does not get lost in negative thoughts. I have become vocal about how physical spaces can be made less stressful for me: I ask students to refrain from wearing perfume to class, since perfume often triggers my migraines and nausea, and I insist on eating indoors at restaurants, because sitting in the sun hurts my eyes (and can cause a migraine). I have found out that I have auditory processing disorder, which makes it difficult for me to process oral communication and to distinguish between sounds in noisy environments (for instance when I am having a

conversation with someone, and people around us are also engaged in conversations). Subtitles make it easier for my ears and my brain to communicate. I talk to my students about my ADHD and share the various strategies I have developed to get work done. I do this to counter the stigma that is still attached to ADHD and to be a positive role model for neurodivergent students.

When I was disappointed that the medication did not work, my supervisor reminded me that every time I had done a presentation on my dissertation, including my pre-defense, I had done exceptionally well, and he pointed out that I had made it this far in my career without ADHD medication. I realized that perhaps I had not been granted the fellowship *despite* my ADHD but *because of* my ADHD and my creativity and ability to think differently. I thought of Ann Cvetkovich's idea, in *Depression: A Public Feeling* (2012), of "resting in sadness" (14), which helped me through the process of mourning after my estranged mother's death a few years ago. This idea, along with doing needlework, showed me the importance of taking time, of slowing down, and of paying attention to emotions and sensations. I realized that in order for me to return to and finish my dissertation, I would have to 'trust the process' – my process, my way of working. So that is where I am at right now; I will hand in my dissertation, but I have to accept that it will take time, because I also need to deal with life and figure out how to function in a neurotypical world as a person with ADHD.

When reading about the concepts of Slow Scholarship and 'patient writing', as explored by Jenny Helin, Nina Kivinen, and Allison Pullen in "Until the Dust Settles: Pasts, Presents and Futures of Critical Publishing" (2021), I saw my own way of doing research reflected. I started thinking that perhaps these calls for forms of scholarship that prioritize allowing research to develop in a more organic way, directly challenging the product-oriented temporality governing the neoliberal university, also (indirectly) call for academia to make room for disabled scholars who might, for various reasons, require more time to do their research. My ADHD has me switching between two forms of temporalities; it sort of feels like existing

outside of 'normative time', because I experience time as moving either very slowly or very fast. Concurrently, I also tend to do things very slowly or very quickly. It might take me hours to bathe and get dressed (and years and years to write a dissertation), because I get distracted, but I also tend to read and process information quickly. I alternate between days of high activity and days where I have to prioritize resting. In "But You Don't Look Disabled": Non-visible Disabilities, Disclosure and Being an 'Insider' in Disability Research and 'Other' in the Disability Movement and Academia" (2020), Elisabeth Griffiths also calls for a different temporality in academia: "Much of what people experience around disability in academia is hidden for fear of stigma and the perception of not being able to 'keep up'. I want to feel welcomed and understood in academia, so that on the days when I cannot 'hyper-perform' then it is OK to say 'no more today', without it affecting my ambitions, prospects, collegiality or sense of self" (126). "[C]ollectively slowing down as an act of resistance in neoliberal academia", as suggested by Helin, Kivinen, and Pullen (2021, 106), and centering care and patience in the ways we (re)create working environments, would lead to better conditions for scholars with various disabilities.

Mountz et al. stress "the benefits of unexpected 'disruptions' in the research and writing process" (2015, 1238). My dissertation has grown from my periods of sick leave, which allowed me to examine grief and trauma from a different angle and caused my research and my life to 'bleed into each other'. I have struggled with accepting that I have missed multiple deadlines for handing in my dissertation. I have felt like a failure, even though I am still working on it and I still take pleasure in writing about my subject. I find comfort in reading Jack Halberstam's assertion, in *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011), that "failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world" (2-3). Halberstam does not write about neurodivergence, but I do pick up a neurodivergent vibe in the introduction to the book ("failing, losing, forgetting" sums up many aspects of my life with ADHD).

When Halberstam suggests that “failure allows us to escape the punishing norms that discipline behavior and manage human development with the goal of delivering us from unruly childhoods to orderly and predictable adulthoods” (3), I see myself dancing through the text, as both an unruly child and an unruly adult, whose survival, as a human being and as a scholar, depends on the rejection of systems and institutions that require me

to ‘perform normativity’ in order to be successful, according to standards I cannot live up to. ‘Trusting the process’ will get me to the finish line, but in my own time.

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Woman, Life, Freedom: On Protests in Iran and Why It Is a Feminist Movement

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September 16, 2022 marks the tragic death of Mahsa Zhina Amini, a 22-year-old woman who was killed while in the custody of the Iranian morality police. Mahsa Zhina's death ignited a series of anti-regime protests across cities in Iran, which are still raging as I write this essay on 28 November. While these are not the first large-scale anti-regime protests in Iran (examples include Kuye Daneshgah in 1999 and the Green Movement protests in 2009–2010), there are certain differences.¹ Mostly, what makes these protests powerful and unique is the overarching presence of women, and at the same time, women's issues and rights being placed at the center of the protests. As represented by the main slogan of the movement, "Zan, Zendegi, Azadi" (in Kurdish "Zin, Ziyar, Azadi," that is, "Woman, Life, Freedom"), the protests are indeed a feminist movement, or, as circulated on social media, a feminist revolution.

In this essay, I draw on the lyrics of a viral song by Shervin Hajipour titled "Baraye" (meaning: for the sake of). The song was released on 28 September and immediately became the anthem of the protest, leading to the arrest of the singer the following day. The song offers snippets of the multilayered grounds of the protests, connected

to the politics of gender, life, and sexuality. Shervin refers to certain national tragedies and struggles, such as economic corruption, poverty, child labor, gender discrimination, environmental degradation, species extinction and the downing of a Ukrainian passenger plane in 2020 by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). In three sections of this essay, I connect excerpts of the lyrics to the slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom" and the symbolic act of cutting one's hair that has come to represent the protests. In the first sections on *woman*, I reflect on the regime's gender politics (of hair), arguing that the act of cutting one's hair becomes a symbolic act of resisting such gender politics. In the second section on *life*, I focus on the act of cutting hair as a mode of mourning the unjust and untimely deaths, for which accountability is demanded. In the last section on *freedom*, I focus on the sexual politics of hair and the politics of the veil.² I argue that cutting one's hair publicly can be understood as a symbolic act of resisting modes of sexualization that are used by the regime to justify mandatory hijab. Putting together the three parts – woman, life, freedom – I conclude that cutting one's hair publicly in this context becomes a feminist act of resistance, an exercise of agency

through which Iranian women are taking control and reclaiming their womanhood, their lives, their bodies, and their freedom of choice.

On Womanhood, Gender, and Hair

*For dancing freely in the streets ...
For my sister, for your sister, for our sisters ...
For the girl who wished to be a boy
(From "Baraye," by Shervin Hajipour, my
translation)*

As a young girl slowly becoming a teenager, I would, every now and then, see one of my classmates shave her head. If asked, they would say that it helped their hair become thicker and stronger and gain volume. They would grow the perfect hair and become beautiful women. I too had long hair, but I never shaved my head until I was half-way through high school. To the horror of school guardians and parents, it became trendy for girls to cut their hair very short in 'boyish' styles, or to shave it off completely. For my generation, it was a rebellious act against puberty, refusing to hand our changing bodies over to the nation, to submit and to lose our freedom of movement. To pass as a boy meant we could once again hang out in the streets of Tehran with our friends. We could run, ride a bike, and play football, all prohibited for our now sexualized bodies marked by gender. Had we kept our long hair, had we become the beautiful young women we once wanted to be, our thick hair would have tied us down. We cut our hair; we wished to be boys so we could dance freely in the streets again.

Having long hair is what makes a woman a 'real woman', as I was told many times growing up. Marked by cis-normative stereotypes of femininity and masculinity as 'radical opposites', hair is seen as a visible material marker of gender both before and after puberty. As such, women's hair is heavily guarded by cultural norms, religious doctrines, and policing practices in a paradoxical way. It must be long, voluminous, and wild, yet tamed and hidden carefully under the scarf. Poems are written about

hair, stories told, idioms made, and even religious doctrines circulated.

Visiting several online religious forums, Imams' websites, and online religious magazines in Farsi, I was not surprised to see young women posting questions about whether cutting their hair short or shaving their heads is frowned upon or forbidden for a Muslim woman (this was before the protests). While responses from the 'experts' would argue that it is not forbidden by Islam, they would suggest avoiding it unless necessary (for example for hygiene reasons, to give their hair a boost, or to allow them to be more attentive to household chores instead of wasting time caring for their long hair). However, should the purpose of cutting one's hair be to look like a man, it was unanimously prohibited because it crosses gender boundaries.

Long hair (and wearing hijab) makes segregation easier as gendered bodies are assumed to be easily spotted based on the length of the hair. Hence, their movement across space could be more easily restricted and controlled. Gender segregation in Iran not only aims to separate material spaces (e.g., schools, universities, buses, etc.) based on gender, but also to keep women out of socioeconomic spaces by restricting them from certain occupations, educational topics, activities, and so on. While trying to break through these barriers to socioeconomic spaces through hard work, many young women, including myself, started to challenge the segregation of material city spaces by wearing masculine clothes, binding our breasts, and cutting our hair short or shaving our heads to move more easily in public spaces. During the past decade, this strategy has been mobilized by feminist activists in Iran (many of them probably the same schoolgirls who cut their hair as an act of rebellion, now growing up to become activists) to fight against gender segregation. For example, they have begun to enter spaces that are forbidden for women, such as Azadi (i.e. 'freedom') stadium to watch football games.

It must be mentioned that cutting hair is not always intended as an activist move. It is also a way of making life livable for some people, for example trans men or people with atypical bodily abilities.

While cutting hair was a search for freedom for us, it was the only way for our trans friends to survive and to be true to themselves, risking much more than any of us as they walked bare headed in the streets. Another example is disabled people. A widely circulated picture of the protests is of a hijabi mother posting a photo of her neuroatypical child who cannot bear to wear hijab due to hypersensitivity. Cutting the child's hair short and making her live as a boy was a strategy the mother and child undertook for the girl's mobility, allowing her to exit the confines of her home.

Whether wishing to be a boy or having to live as one, in a context in which religious and cultural discourses of cis-femininity are bordering-in bodies, their movements and practices, cutting one's hair or shaving one's head is political. It is a mode of feminist resistance against descriptive ableist cis-gender norms and gender segregation. Crossing the carefully policed, superficial and imposed boundaries of gender operating through hair, these women are cutting ties with such norms by way of cutting their hair. It is as if they are saying: "I refuse to live the gendered life you have assigned to me, I am taking my body and my life back. I become a wo/man as I become a sinner. I become a sinner so that I can become a wo/man."

Life

For living a mundane life
For the unreachable dreams of the child laborer
For the fucked economy ...
For the polluted air
For the dying Vali-e-Asr trees
For Pirooz and its approaching extinction ...
For the Afghan kids ...
 (From "Baraye," by Shervin Hajipour, my translation)

"Zendegi" has the double meaning of life as well as living, and in my interpretation of the lyrics as well as the slogan, the concept is used during the protests to highlight both aspects. This is especially the case if one considers the connection

between the words and the act of cutting one's hair, which, as I discuss below, is done when a life is taken unjustly.

The protests were born out of mourning. Mourning the death of Mahsa Zhina. Mourning the deaths of Nika, Sarina, Hadis and others, as more names are listed every day. Teenage and young women (as well as boys and men, and cis/non-binary/trans people) dying unjustly for showing a few locks of hair, or for wanting to live a mundane life. Their unjust deaths not only brought *their* families to mourning, but also revitalized mourning for the victims of past tragedies, such as the families of those executed for no reason, victims of political mass murders, victims of ethnic violence carried out by the regime, passengers and crew on the Ukrainian plane that was downed in 2020, those whose lives were lost to COVID, those whose deaths were due to poverty and more; they all came together, united in mourning.

Cutting one's hair is an ancient practice of mourning in many cultures, including that of Iran. It is mentioned in *Shahnameh*, in the *Book of Kings*, where Ferdowsi depicts Farangis cutting her hair in mourning of her husband Siavash. When a woman withdraws from life by cutting her hair – this symbol of life and femininity – it represents a moment of great pain. This is not a passive act of mourning, however, for in withdrawing from life the woman is demanding accountability. It is to show rage and anger, a warning of what is yet to come, ignited by that fury. While the tradition has been fading away in Iran, it is still practiced although to a lesser extent in some areas and among certain ethnic minorities, such as Lor and Kurd minorities.

Mahsa Zhina was a Kurdish woman, and as her mother mourned her unjust death by pulling her hair, she was relaying her anger, her pain, and her cry for justice. This cry was heard by many in Iran and outside, as they took the scissors to their hair, practicing this ancient ritual and bringing it to life as a feminist activist mode of demanding justice against the "necropolitical" machinery of the Iranian regime (Mbembe 2008; Shakhshari 2014). It was a practice that mourned the death of Nika, a 16-year-old, whose dead body was released to her family 10 days after her death, only to be

stolen again at her burial ritual to hide what had been done to her body. Although it started as an act of mourning these young lives, the movement as it is today and as it is presented in the lyrics of “Baraye” is mourning all lives that have been subjected to such necropolitics. It is the death of bodies of water, forests, species (such as the Iranian cheetah Pirooz, mentioned in the song, who is the last of its kind) and more that is being mourned.

To cut one’s hair turns not merely into an act of mourning, but also into a public eulogy to all deaths in the margins: gender and sexual minorities, ethnic minorities, Afghan refugees, non-human species, nature. All are lives not only made killable by the necropower of the regime, but also made ungrievable, as they are buried without a eulogy (Butler 2004). Memories of them must remain unspoken as families are put under pressure or threatened with death if they mourn their loved ones publicly. Cutting one’s hair in public in such a relation of necropower becomes an act of resistance, a refusal to forget or to make them invisible as mourning defuses and extends itself beyond bereaved families. The cutting of hair is particularly important, as it is a practice of the Kurd ethnic minority, whose very existence as a group has been systematically targeted by the regime since the beginning of the revolution (Amnesty International 2008, 36–41). The cutting of hair becomes a symbolic act to mourn each death and all deaths together, human and nonhuman, those from the past still haunting the collective memory, those from the present and those that are yet to come if the regime stays in power.

Last but not least, cutting one’s hair could also be interpreted as a protest against living conditions in which people are debilitated by capitalist corrupt economy, in which they are living a “slow death” (Berlant 2007). It is to acknowledge the social death of the LGBTQ+ community whose members are banished into the shadows of constant fear, harassment, execution, or honor killing. They are living in dying. It is to ask for accountability for the lives and living conditions of the Afghan and Balouch children who are forced to live without an identity and in extreme poverty, or the child laborers whose dream is simply to go to school, and

for scattered families all over the world, attending their loved ones’ funerals through the screen of a mobile phone. Cutting one’s hair publicly could be understood as a plea for the political and social activists, university students and others who are imprisoned for no reason other than wanting to live a mundane life, who are watching life pass them by. The same is true of child brides, victims of sexual violence and those who have lost their lives, or taken their lives, as the result of a system that does not see them as worthy of life. Cutting one’s hair, then, is not only mourning a death, a eulogy, but is also a practice of testifying for those who are living in death while saying enough is enough.

Freedom: Desexualizing the Body

*For the smile on your face ...
For this forced heaven upon us ...
For not suffocating under pressure ...
For zan, zendegi, freedom ...
(From “Baraye,” by Shervin Hajipour, my translation)*

For those growing up as part of the first post-revolution generation, hair was the battleground between *us* (women) and *them* (the regime). Not covering our hair properly in public was one of the most common reasons for being stopped by the morality police. It was argued that women have more control over their bodily urges than young boys/men do. Hence, the moral responsibility of the nation’s piety was on us to carry. By tucking our hair under the scarf as tightly as we could, it was said that we would protect not only ourselves and our virtue, but those of the young men and the nation too. In other words, a woman’s hair was presented as so powerful that a mere glimpse of it could change the path of a man from a life of righteousness to a life of sin and lead a nation to its destruction. Since I was curious to see how contemporary discourses of hair and hijab discussed this matter, I did a quick search online, I found many references to different Imams as well

as the prophet Mohammad in online forums and news channels for religious youth. However, this discourse is not only the stuff of my generation but is still ongoing. For example, in an article on the importance of hijab, Tasnim News, a private pro-government news agency, quotes Imam Reza, saying that “looking at married and unmarried women’s hair is haram [i.e. ‘forbidden’] because this gaze excites men and turns them on, hence leading them to ruin” (published on 25 Tir 1399/15 July 2020, my translation from Farsi).

To control such ‘destructive’ raw and sexual power, mandatory hijab is mobilized as a solution to the problem. Hence, hair is only to be revealed at home where women cannot be objects of desire due to Islamic kinship ties, or where they can be the rightful objects of desire to their husbands. To subdue our resisting souls towards mandatory hijab, texts often refer to divine punishments in hell, bringing such abstract notions of morality and sin to earth and locating them in the body to control young people through fear of bodily pain. For example, in the memory I share in the following, one can see how people in power attempt to convince us of the benefits of covering our hair through creating affective bodily strategies,

The school guidance counselor and the Quran teacher stood up, pointing at the student, whose playful strands of hair had escaped the confines of the tight maghnaeh (hijab), and said: ‘You will be hung by your hair in the burning flames of hell.’ The student looked the teacher in the eyes and said: ‘But the hair will be burnt off immediately.’ The teacher replied: ‘In hell it will grow over and over, and you will be hung by it eternally to feel the pain.’ The student said, challenging the teacher: ‘I have lots of hair, I doubt it would be that painful’ The teacher said: ‘You shall be hung by the little amount you are showing, you shall feel the pain.’ That night I dreamed I was hung by my hair in hell while burning, waking up screaming. I couldn’t tell which hurt more: the pulling of hair on my skull or the burning flesh.

The same discourse is still in use on TV, on billboards and in public speeches by the regime to condemn the protesters as ‘loose’ women, calling them names and trying to shame them into silence. Sinners who are held responsible for marriages falling apart by tempting other women’s men, destroying families, being the puppets of the west, and even natural disasters such as earthquakes are said to be the divine punishment brought upon people by God caused by women’s loose hijab. However, these days the discourse and narrative as such are not only mobilized to shame women into silence or control their bodies and sexualities, but also to reduce the demands of the protesters and their political agenda to a matter of “wanting to be naked in public.” In this context, cutting their hair is an act of deterritorialization of their heavily sexualized bodies. They are reterritorializing their hair by taking control over it, by refusing to submit to such affective rhetoric and promises of hell with which they have been indoctrinated at every corner: at school, at university, on TV, on billboards and in most contexts. Instead, by choosing the material life of this world over the forced promises of their heaven, the protesters welcome mortal pain (the pain of losing a loved one, the pain of being beaten up and shot at, the pain of being tortured, the pain of cutting one’s hair). The protesters, these *sinful* women, are bringing hell to earth and are unleashing it on the regime.

Hands Off My Body, Life, and Identity!

For zan, zendegi, freedom ...

For Freedom

For Freedom...

(From “Baraye,” by Shervin Hajipour, my translation)

In this essay, I have reflected on the current protests are of a feminist intersectional nature, as I have attempted to trace the practice of cutting one’s hair as a feminist act of resistance against the gendered, ethnic, and sexualized politics of

hair within the Islamic regime of Iran. The protest is connected to the long history of resistance against the regime's gender politics. Iranian women have been fighting this battle since the beginning of the revolution, refusing to submit to such dress codes (e.g., Rahbari, Longman and Coene 2019; Mir-Hosseini 2007). One contemporary example of such resistance that was formed in a more organized way is the *My Stealthy Freedom* activist movement, initiated in 2014 by Iranian journalist Masih Alinejad, now in exile. This campaign invited women to unite across boundaries of religion (including believers and non-believers), class and ethnicity, and to post pictures of themselves without a hijab in public spaces as a feminist act of reclaiming these public spaces through civil disobedience (Nasehi 2017). The years 2017 and 2018 marked another series of acts of civil disobedience when young Iranian women tied their scarves to sticks and held them over their heads in major city squares. This was inspired by Vida Movahed, who stood on a utility box in Meydan-e-Enghelab (Revolution Avenue), tied her white headscarf to a stick instead of wearing it, and held it over her head like a flag. She was arrested the following day. This is to say that the current protests have not come out of nowhere. The fight started on the streets 43 years ago, when wearing colorful clothing, loosening the knot of the scarf under one's chin, putting on makeup, driving a car, laughing loud in the streets became a sin in the name of religion and modesty. Starting then, one woman at a time fought to deterritorialize her marked body (by gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and religion) and demanded her freedom of choice through peaceful civil disobedience, that is, walking the streets in their chosen clothes. Slowly coming together, organizing online and offline, one by one, these women, their daughters and granddaughters have become the force of the protests in 2022.

Moreover, it is not only the regime's gender politics that are challenged in these protests, but also sexual and ethnic politics of the regime and its vision of the united Islamic nation, which they have been trying to establish through controlling female bodies. In post-revolution Iran, the regime's compulsory hijab policy was not only intended to deal with the question of women and their place in this new Islamic order. The policy also aimed for the assimilation of multiple ethnic and religious minorities who had their own cultural practices and clothing. Many ethnic minorities, such as Kurd, Lor and Balouch minorities, have their own clothing, with significant colorful patterns for women, including long skirts and head coverings (which could be considered as a full hijab).³ The new dress code (a headscarf, manto, pants and a chador in dark colors) was meant to erase such ethnic signifiers and move towards a united Islamic nation (e.g., Koo 2014; Mohammadi et al. 2022; Foroutan 2020). This is extremely important as Mahsa Zhina Amini was part of a Kurdish minority and that the regime's responses to the protests in Zahedan and Kurdistan, home to the Kurd and Balouch minority groups, have been most brutal, even called a genocide, reflecting the regime's ethnic politics.

Since, hijab and covering one's hair is argued by the regime to be the backbone of the Islamic state and a pillar of building a prevailing Islamic nation, any removal, showing, or cutting of one's hair in public becomes politically significant. It transforms into a feminist act of resistance through civil disobedience targeting the so-called backbone of the regime, its ideology, and politics. While chanting "Woman, Life, Freedom" and cutting their hair, these women are fighting against cis-heteronormativity, ableism, gender segregation, systematic violence against ethnic minorities, and many other oppressive structures. This is indeed a feminist intersectional revolution.

Notes

- ¹ The current protests are not 'peaceful', unlike the Green Movement. The protests encompass a much more diverse group of people in terms of class, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. Mass demonstrations are being orchestrated by Iranians in diaspora and allies all over the world, which makes the protests a transnational phenomenon. The protests also include a digital fight between the regime's cyber-police, hacktivists, and social media activists who try to be the voice of Iran.
- ² As an Iranian woman in exile, I find it important to situate my essay in a way that does not contribute to Islamophobia. What I am discussing in this essay is the Iranian Islamic regime's utilization of Islam as a way of governing. This has nothing to do with individuals' beliefs or people's choice to wear hijab or practice Islam. Simultaneously, I am not interested in evoking a romanticized notion of 'one true' Islam against which the Iranian version is a 'false' one or 'unreal'. To me, Islam is a situated phenomenon that is connected to a place, local culture, history, ethnic diversity and more. But more importantly it is embodied and lived. Therefore, to tell Iranian women who have been living a Muslim life in Iran, whether by choice or not, that what they have experienced is not the 'real' Islam would be unethical. Coming from a feminist new materialism tradition, Islam, to me, is multiple. It emerges in relation to a certain context and time (Khawaja 2014). While these multiple emergences share certain elements, they cannot be reduced to one or the other. In other words, I do not analyze the veil or covering one's hair as a religious practice or as a matter of cultural identity. Instead, I analyze it as a signifier under which a nation ought to be united, through imposing mandatory hijab as an apparatus of bodily production (Mahmood 2011, Najmabadi 1993).
- ³ I was born and raised in Tehran. My mother is from the northern city of Rasht and my father is part of the Lor minority located in the west of Iran. Although I grew up in a multi-ethnic environment where many cultural practices were cited, I have never been subjected to violence or discrimination due to my ethnic background as I always passed as being in the center. Hence, I do not wish to speak for the experience of such minorities who have been exposed to multiple strategies of ethnic cleansing, from higher execution rates to extreme poverty and surveillance. What I wish to highlight, though, is the systematic violence used by the regime against them.

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The problem of rape in the ‘gender equal’ Nordic

Marie Bruvik Heinskou, May-Len Skilbrei and Kari and Stefansen (Eds.):
Rape in the Nordic Countries: Continuity and Change

Routledge, London & New York, 2020, pages 246.

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The Nordic countries are often considered “the best” in gender equality; with Denmark as the only exception, they have been at the top of the Global Gender Gap Index for years. Gender equality is considered a relevant political topic in state politics, labour unions, public organisations, education, and several other fields. However, despite this awareness, sexual and gendered violence in the Nordic countries does not seem to have decreased over the past many years¹ and continues to be a pressing challenge for the Nordic ideal of a safe and equal welfare state.

In *Rape in the Nordic Countries*, Heinskou, Silkbrei and Stefansen point to how these circumstances make the Nordics a particularly interesting case for the study of sexual violence and its role in society and politics. Arguing for an empirical turn in sexual violence studies, they have gathered contributors with expertise in various academic fields including sociology, psychology, law and ethnography as well as media, youth and gender studies.

The anthology has four parts that fall in direct extension of one another. In the first part, the contributors address challenges related to defining and delineating rape and measuring its prevalence. Common for the articles are that they discuss the grey areas of sexual violence and argue for understanding rape on a continuum where delineation of what counts as sexual violence is complicated although sometimes necessary. For example, Monika Grønli Rosten’s article “Cultivating ethical negotiations or fetishising consent in BDSM?” respectfully and brilliantly investigates the different ways consent is secured, negotiated and compromised in BDSM relations and communities, offering a convincing analysis of how the limits between sex and violence are rarely as clear-cut as common understanding suggests.

In the second part, the contributors focus on rape within criminal law and the ways rape legislation has been a heavily debated topic in Nordic countries. The articles investigate and explain some of the main judicial as well as social and

political considerations and concerns related to implementation and formulation of sexual violence legislation in the Nordics. They address issues such as defining rape based on the use of force vs. the conditions of voluntariness or consent (Nilsson; Jokila & Niemi), and the ways victims might be treated in court procedures as either citizens with a right to participate in the trials, or as "too vulnerable" to be granted a voice of their own (Antonsdóttir). They also address the challenges of defining specific instances of rape where conditions such as intoxication are involved (Nilsson), or where the assault constitutes an intimate violation of trust in the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (Niemi). These are all perspectives and discussions that are highly relevant and thought provoking in current Nordic contexts, where consent-based rape legislation is being implemented and debated widely along with renegotiations of grey areas of sexual violence and their representation in legal and political systems.

The third part of the anthology concerns the construction of the perpetrator. This part has two chapters: one that investigates the (geographical) othering of a perpetrator and his community, in a highly profiled and prosecuted case (Gottzén & Franzén), and one that investigates the way perpetrators, who have not been prosecuted, negotiate their actions in relation to their deeper understandings of their identities and values (Schierff & Heinskou). These chapters include thorough case studies that illustrate perpetrator perspectives with great nuance and pedagogical potential.

Finally, the fourth part is dedicated to discussing rape and sexual violence in the context of digital media. The two first chapters are interested in perpetrators who have used digital and social media to pursue sexual abuse or engaged in practices of non-consensual, intimate image sharing. Including both an in-depth case study (Fransson, Martinsen & Staksrud) and a broader study of perpetrator characteristics (Harder et al.), these chapters present a wide variety of perspectives on digital sexual perpetration. The final chapter concerns the empowering ways that survivors of rape use digital platforms to 'break the silence' and find supportive peer communities; an investigation

sparked by and deeply relevant to current debates about Metoo and disclosures of sexual violence.

Rape in the Nordic Countries is an impressive anthology that covers a wide range of academic approaches to studying sexual violence. With its thorough investigations and discussions of current debates concerning consent, legislation and the prevention and documentation of sexual violence, it is also a highly relevant book for activists and professionals working with sexual violence in various ways. Additionally, the large number of thorough case studies has great pedagogical value and makes the complicated, nuanced, and contradictory aspects of sexual violence experiences and negotiations understandable and interesting to readers.

However, it is my experience, as a researcher and an activist, that there is a gap between rape experiences in practice and the focus areas advocated for in academic research and in this anthology. Over the past years, academic studies on sexual violence seem to have come to an often-articulated, rarely-documented consensus that victim perspectives have dominated studies into sexual violence while perpetrator stories are largely overlooked. While it is true that some of the founding theories of studies into sexual violence (such as Liz Kelly's *Surviving Sexual Violence*) are based on investigations into victim experiences, I have yet to see any documentation that victims are in fact over-represented in the more recent, empirical research on sexual violence.

Perhaps this choice of representation can be argued for in relation to a long academic tradition, but it is this kind of argumentation that distances academic knowledge production from the lived, and critically important, experiences of people working with sexual violence in contexts of politics, treatment, and crisis. And it is the kind of academic detachment from political and individual crisis that contributes to the marginalization of victims and survivors who do not experience that their voices are 'over-represented' anywhere in a society that still shames, blames, and ignores them.

Rape in the Nordic Countries has many academic and practical applications and an

impressive range and depth, but it falls short when considering its own normative power in framing the area of studies into sexual violence. I think this

book will become a landmark in studies in sexual violence in Scandinavia; and this is mostly, but not entirely, a positive progression of the field.

Notes

- ¹ For comparison to other forms of violence in Denmark see: Justitsministeriets Forskningskontor. 2021. *Udsathed for vold og andre former for kriminalitet: Offerundersøgelserne 2005-2020*. <https://www.justitsministeriet.dk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Udsathed-for-vold-og-andre-former-for-kriminalitet-Offerundersogelsene-2005-2020-WT.pdf>

Vibrant Death and Queer Mourning: Lykke's Posthuman Journey of Co-Becoming with her Dead Beloved

Nina Lykke:

Vibrant Death: A posthuman Phenomenology of Mourning

Bloomsbury Academics, 2021, 304 pages, 675 kr.

By Ruben Hordijk

Linköping University

"Like Orpheus, I was unable to return my beloved to life, but the journey brought me to understand the life/death threshold differently, and to see death as vibrancy rather than nothingness. Queerfeminist, posthuman, immanence philosophy, along with Spinoza's notion of conatus, the striving of all matter, dead or alive, to persevere, helped me in this process. With Vibrant Death, I offer you my travelogue." (p.2)

Nina Lykke's *Vibrant Death: A Posthuman Phenomenology of Mourning* is a book about death and mourning. Methodologically, *Vibrant Death* transgresses academic convention and the compartmentalization of theory and art/literature, by blending poetry, narrative, dialogue and philosophy. The book emerges from Lykke's experience of the loss of her lesbian life-partner and her journey of ongoing "spiritual-materialist mourning practices" that ensued, creating new assemblages and companionship with her beloved's corpse and the fjord and algae where her beloved's ashes are spread.

Lykke positions her affective-philosophical intervention within posthuman feminist debates, in particular through Spinoza- and Deleuze-inspired feminist immanence philosophy. The notion of "vibrant death" is an extension of Jane Bennet's Spinozist argument for the "vibrancy" and striving (*conatus*) of matter to dead bodies. Through this vibrancy, Lykke guides the readers on an affective, spiritual-materialist and theoretically rewarding journey of unlearning Western dichotomies of life/death and (chrono)normative models of "healthy mourning": a personal and political journey of erotic "co-becoming" with her dead beloved.

Throughout the book, Lykke's resistance to Western modern paradigms refers to (i) "Christian" ontology, which posits the transcendence and immortality of the soul; (ii) "Cartesian" (*qua* mechanistic-secular) ontologies, which define death as nothingness; and (iii) the normative power of psychology and psychiatry, which has a long history –from Sigmund Freud to the *DSM 5*– of pathologizing mourning. The figure of the "mourning I" or the "excessive mourner" is a commitment

to a situated queerfeminist theorizing: Against the pathologizing of the mourner and the sovereign subject of philosophy, Lykke argues that it is precisely through her mourning practices that she was able to unlearn Western presuppositions around life/death binaries, and embark on an existential and philosophical journey of re-ontologizing and affectively attuning to death as vibrant.

Lykke begins the re-ontologizing of death through a phenomenological and auto-phenomenographic account of encountering her beloved as corpse. The corpse has famously been described by Julia Kristeva as "abject". Lykke is interested in culturally situating this experience: The abject effects and affects of the corpse, Lykke suggests, are a consequence of a humanistic aim to conserve an image of personhood or subjecthood that belonged to the living body, avoiding the confrontation with the corpse's decaying matter and the disintegration of the human subject. Here, Lykke's posthuman queering of mourning begins, embracing the materiality of the corpse and its decay as part of her material-spiritual process of co-becoming with and learning from her beloved's corpse. This account prepares us for one of the key conceptual pairs that Lykke introduces: Building on Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of the molar and the molecular, Lykke describes her journey as a transition from "molar mourning" to "molecular mourning": "Molar mourning" refers to the humanistic approach aimed at remembering and preserving the image of how the person/subject used to be. "Molecular mourning", on the other hand, embraces "the process of inhumanization (...) which is taking place as the beloved becomes-imperceptible/one-with-zoe" (p.127). In molecular mourning, the excessive mourner is co-becoming with the ongoing (conative) striving of dead matter in its immanent molecularization. In the final chapters, Lykke takes a speculative and spiritual turn: From her desire for "spectral embraces," she broaches the existential and philosophical question of the possibility of miracles and whether this can be theorized in immanent posthuman terms, outside of mechanistic-secularist and transcendental-anthropocentric frames. Lykke speculatively defines miracles as "immanent (...)

a transcorporeal assemblage of multiple human and non-human actants coalescing to produce an intensely affective event involving a multitude of immanent co-becomings" (p. 158).

From a posthuman perspective, one might object that this re-ontologizing of death still privileges a human-all-too-human perspective. Lykke responds to this by following Astrida Neimanis' argument that phenomenology is a productive framework for posthuman theorizing and that "in a paradoxical sense, my personal entrance point helps me in my endeavours to avoid a re-exceptionalizing of (Western) concepts of the human" (p.8). Lykke's methodology allows for a challenging of humanism as a queerfeminist situated knowledge, which does not overstep her own perspective in a re-ontologizing that would repeat what Haraway calls science's "god-trick". The unlearning of Western and humanistic ontologies of death is further done through an engagement with Gloria Anzaldúa's work, read as a material-spiritual philosophy and praxis. Attempting to create "decolonial pluriversal conversations," she positions herself as an "apprentice", aiming to humbly and relationally unlearn and relearn.

In many ways, Lykke's work is an invitation: By guiding the reader on her journey of mourning and re-ontologizing of death, Lykke encourages a plural and pluriversal situated philosophizing, creating a space for theoretical, methodological and political resonances and coalitions across disciplines, methodologies and fields. She challenges the relation between art and theory, poetry and philosophy, arguing that philosophy emerged not from cognitive critique but from situated, vulnerable and compassionate co-becoming. *Vibrant Death* is a book that performs bridge-work: not only between the poetic and the philosophical, artistic and/as theoretical work, but also between posthuman and decolonial approaches, opening many possible dialogues and affective links between them. It also invites further dialogues with, and transformations of, more "humanistic" ethical traditions based on Levinasian and Butlerian themes of vulnerability, grievability and mourning.

Lykke's firm grounding of philosophy in her own Orphic journey, also welcomes the reader

who is not initiated in the posthuman nomenclature. Even when aspects might be unrelatable to some (e.g. the middle-class mourning rituals that Lykke challenges might not resonate with precarious lives who fall outside of the humanistic frames of grievable lives), Lykke's queerfeminist voice avoids normativizing her own experience or philosophical positions. These reflections are not mine but emerged from a small reading group with two PhD colleagues/friends Theo Ilichenko and Caroline Ektander, all of us entering the texts from very different experiential and theoretical positions. Just as Lykke develops her own eclectic "sounding board", her work became part of our sounding board, generating many different conversations that aided making sense of and rhizomatically connecting our own journeys, theoretical and otherwise.

How can the figuration of "vibrant death" speak to questions of ecological justice, co-habitation with nonhumans, and an ethics and politics

beyond the human and beyond the binary opposition of life and death? Lykke's figuration of vibrant death opens a horizon for a non-humanistic ethical and political community based not on a critique of necropolitical violence in the name of "life", but, affirmatively and affectively, on death's reconfiguration as materially and spiritually with us in the very elements that surround us. The excessive mourning practices do not isolate the individual facing her loss, but attune to immanent relations to human and nonhuman elements with which they are co-becoming. The affirmative basis for an ethical and political community then becomes a striving for each and every critter's vibrancy in life and death: "what if every critter's death was vibrant?" (p.252). With this question, Lykke ends her book, and opens many possibilities of queer, posthuman and decolonial bridge-work for a planetary ethics of vibrant companionship with the living and the dead.

Ny og vigtig bog med en lidt smal ramme

Gry Jexen:

Kvinde, kend din historie

Gyldendal, 2021, 336 sider

Af Rikke Andreassen

Nye kvindeportrætter

Historikeren Gry Jexen har med bogen *Kvinde, kend din historie* (2021) givet os et vigtigt værk, der på betydelig vis bidrager til at synliggøre de mange glemte kvindeskæbner og -historier, som vores fortid gemmer på. Bogen tegner 50 portrætter af danske kvinder – fra Dronning Dorothea (1430-1495) til Else Marie Pade (1924-2016) – og fortæller gennem hvert portræt en lille bid af Danmarkshistorien. Bogen er inddelt i 9 emner, der hver rummer 5-6 kvindeskæbner. Emnerne er: uddannelse; arbejde; ægteskab & parforhold; seksualitet & køn; at få børn; magt & politik; økonomi og iværksætteri; sport; kunst & litteratur.

Bogen er en udløber af Jexens Instagram-profil af samme navn ('Kvinde kend din historie'), på hvilken Jexen siden 2018 har delt fortællinger om og billeder af historiske kvinder. Jexen har en mission, nemlig at synliggøre kvinder i historien og at formidle historie på nye måder – hvilket hendes Instagramprofil er et godt eksempel på. Bogens bidrag til at udvide grænserne for, hvordan historie

kan formidles, består desuden i, at den visuelt er utrolig flot. Thit Thyrring har lavet illustrationerne, som er virkelig fine og giver et særligt liv til de kvinder, der portrætteres.

Den personlige historie som indgang til den store historie

Bogen både bidrager til – og udfylder efterspørgslen efter – den store interesse for kvindehistorie og kvinder i historien, vi har set de seneste år. Her er værker som Birgitte Possings *Argumenter imod kvinder* (2018) og Cacallo & Favillis *Godnathistorier for rebelske piger* (2017) blevet bestsellers, og skønlitterære romaner om historiske kvinder som Eva Tinds *Kvinden der samlede verden* (2021; om zoologen Marie Hammer (1907-2002)) og Lotte Kaa Andersens *Den inderste kerne* (2021; om seismologen Inge Lehmann (1888-1993)) fået meget stor opmærksomhed. Den store opmærksomhed skyldes selvfølgelig, at bøgerne er virkelige gode, men det er også som om, de store læseskarer har

ventet på bøger, der kan udfylde deres nysgerrighed for at vide mere om de (ofte) glemte kvinder i historien. Jexens bidrag er her især, at hun når vidt omkring i både personer, emner og tid, og dermed får plads til mange oversete kvinder i historien.

En anden styrke er, at Jexens portrætter – når de er bedst – på fornem vis introducerer den historiske kontekst og den tid, som de enkelte kvinder levede i, blev formet af og selv satte deres præg på. Portrættet af fotograf Mary Willumsen (1884-1961) er forbilledligt i denne henseende. Det fortæller både historien om arbejderpigen fra Valby, der lærte at fotografere og ernærede sig som fotograf, da hendes mand døde, men oplyser også om fotografiets historie, tidens moral og syn på kroppe og nøgenhed, sædelighedspoliets opståen, straffelovens paragraf 184 (forbud mod 'pornografi') samt citerer fra Mary Willumsens appelbrev fra 1922 til politiet, der anklagede hende for overtrædelse af netop paragraf 184. Denne sammenvævning af originalt kildemateriale, personberetning og den større samfundsfortælling er skøn. Jeg ville ønske, at Jexen i flere af portrætterne havde lavet disse sammenvævninger, hvor hun supplerer sin egen tekst med citater fra originalkilderne, for det er netop gennem kilderne, at tiden og kvindernes egne stemmer vækkes til live.

Plads til mange forskellige kvinder

En af de helt store forcer ved Jexens bog er dens blanding af prominente og almindelige kvinder. Bogen portrætterer både exceptionelle kvinder, der via deres erhverv og virke udgør historiens fortropper, som den første kvindelige minister Nina Bang (1866-1928) og den første stuntkvinde Emilie Sannom (1886-1931), og de helt almindelige kvinder, som bondekonen Marie Christensdatter (1778-1840) og husmoderen Lis Christensen (1933-2015), sidstnævnte var Jexens egen mormor.

Det må have været et stort arbejde at finde kvinderne og ikke mindst udvælge dem. Jexen skriver, at hun bevidst har fravalgt de mere kendte kvinder som Karen Blixen og Margrethe I for at sætte fokus på de mindre kendte, men ligeså betydningsfulde kvinder (s. 10). Jexen medtager dog

en række relativt kendte kvinder, som man (jeg) ville forvente i et værk om kvindestikkelser i Danmarkshistorien (som Thit Jensen (1876-1957), Natalie Zahle (1827-1913) og Nielsine Nielsen (1850-1916)). Men der er også en del overraskelser, som fx Karen Volf (1864-1946), hvis navn jeg mest kender fra småkagedåser. Men nu ved jeg også, at Volf voksede op hos sine bedsteforældre på landet, var en af de første, der fandt på at sætte et reklameskilt (for sine kager) på siden af sin bil (nemlig den bil, der bragte kager ud til kunder) og blev grundlægger af Danmarks første moderne kagefabrik.

Jexen bestræber sig på at inkludere kvinder fra samfundets top og bund, fra overklassen og underklassen, og det er prisværdigt. Samtidig bliver netop intentionen om at inkludere underklassen en illustration af, hvilke mennesker, der efterlader sig hvilke typer kilder, og dermed hvilke eftermæler, det er muligt at tegne af forskellige kvinder. Da jeg læste bogen, slog det mig, at historierne om underklassens kvinder – når vi ser bort fra mønsterbryderne, hvis historie indebærer en klasserejse – er dramatiske og spektakulære. Vi hører fx om Ane Cathrine Andersdatter (1829-1861), der "blev landskendt som den tredobbelte barnemoderske [...] dømt til døden og halshugget" (s. 148) og om Carla Hansine Petersen (1903-?), der pga. "løsgatighed" og "løgnagtighed", kombineret med en dårlig begavelse, blev sendt til kvindehjemmet på Sprogø, hvor hun senere blev (tvangs)steriliseret. Begge kvinders liv var præget af stor fattigdom, og deres historier vidner om vold og overgreb. Det er karakteristisk, at de beskrives via andres beretninger om dem: Ane Cathrine Andersdatters historie stykkes sammen via dommen mod hende og avisernes beskrivelser af hendes forbrydelser, mens det er medicinske journaler, som ligger til grund for beskrivelsen af Carla Hansine Petersen. Fattige kvinder som Ane Cathrine Andersdatter og Carla Hansine Petersen efterlod ikke spor, hvori de selv fortæller deres historie. De skrev ikke, som fx Karen Volf, deres erindringer, som deres historie kan fortælles igennem. Derfor bliver de også illustrationer af, at vi primært har fortællinger om fattige kvinder, når disse har været involveret i dramatiske, skandaløse eller usædvanlige hændelser,

mens alle de mange almindelige, fattige kvindelig sjældent har efterladt sig kilder, som vi kan skrive deres historie ud fra. Dette er ikke en kritik af Jexen (på ingen måde!), det er blot en refleksion over, at *Kvinde kend din historie* også er en påmindelse om, hvem der efterlader sig hvilke vidnesbyrd til eftertiden, som historien kan skrives ud fra.

Fravalg

Mange historikere, som læser bogen, vil savne egne yndlinge, da Jexen nødvendigvis har måtte fravælge mange interessante kvinder. Selv savner jeg Anna Hude (1858-1934), der jo er Danmarks første kvindelige historiker. Hude blev, som den første kvinde, cand.mag. i historie i 1887. Året efter modtog hun, igen som den første kvinde, Københavns Universitets guldmedalje for sin afhandling og i 1893 blev hun, endnu engang som den første kvinde, dr.phil. Desuden er Hude kendt som 'damen der skød på doktoren' (Manniche, 1993), da hun i 1880 skød familielægen Leerbeck på åben gade; han havde året forinden voldtaget hende. Hude er således en vigtig figur både som historiker og som en person, der sagde fra over for seksuelle overgreb. Leerbeck døde ikke af skuddet, og Hude fik senere en relativ mild dom pga. sagens omstændigheder. Fravalget af Hude i en kvindehistorisk bog skrevet i en #MeToo-tid undrer mig.

Et spejl med en snæver ramme

Jexen beskriver, at et af målene med bogen er, at læserne "på godt og ondt [kan] spejle [deres] eget liv i kvindernes skæbner" (s. 8) og netop spejlingen – at kunne se sig selv i historien – er også fremhævet i bogen undertitel *Spejl dig i fortiden*. Derfor overrasker det mig, at Jexen tolker familieliv og parforhold inden for så snævre rammer, at potentielle queer-spejlinger udviskes. Flere kvinder om hvem vi ved, at de levede sammen med andre kvinder, fremstilles i bogen som om de levede alene. Det gælder fx portrættet af Sophy A. Christensen (1867-1955), der i 1896 blev Danmarks

første kvindelige snedkermester, om hvem Jexen skriver: "Hun blev [...] aldrig gift eller stiftede familie" (s. 39). Jeg undres over den snævre familieforståelse, som må være anvendt her, for vi ved, at Christensen i en årrække boede sammen med lærerinden Ingeborg Glud. I deres fælles hjem indlogerede de kostskoledrenge, eftersigende for at få inspiration fra ungdommen. Det er også velkendt, at Christensen omkring århundredeskiftet boede sammen skuespillerinde Anna Petersen. Nej, Christensen blev ikke gift med sin samleverske, for det var ikke muligt på den tid, men hvorfor vælge at fremstille det som om, hun levede alene frem for at beskrive den alternative familie, som hun skabte for sig selv (?). Det undrer mig, at Jexen fremfor at beskrive Christensen familie som den var, så læsere kan spejle sig i den, vælger at fremstille det, som om hun levede alene og ikke havde en familie. Christensen var også kendt for sin maskuline fremtoning, men i Jexens bog tolkes denne maskulinitet som, at hun "lagde [...] låg på en del af sin kvindelighed" (s. 39). Igen forundres jeg over, at Jexen (bevidst?) vælger at indsnævre rammen for spejlet til en kønsmæssig snæver ramme, der hvor hun ellers havde mulighed for at skildre køn og samlivsforhold mere mangfoldigt. På samme måde noterer jeg mig, at Natalie Zahles privatliv ikke omtales, mens de andre portrætter nævner (heteroseksuelle) kvinders ægteskab og ægtefæller – også der, hvor det ikke forekommer relevant for den enkeltes historie. Netop fordi målet er at give læseren mulighed for at spejle sig, så ærgrer det mig, at Jexen ikke har turde udfolde familiebegrebet eller parforholdet lidt mere.

En tiltrængt bog

Generelt er Jexens bog vellykket. Den bidrager med ny viden og bringer glemte kvinder frem i lyset. Det er prisværdigt. Jeg savnede selv en bog som denne, da jeg begyndte at interessere mig for historie. Må *Kvinde kend din historie* bringe andre yngre kvinder og mænd (og altid derimellem) lige så meget glæde og inspiration, som jeg ved, at den ville have bragt mig, hvis den havde fandtes, da jeg var ung.

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Nye fortællinger om digitale seksuelle overgreb

Signe Uldbjerg Mortensen:

Rewriting Victimhood: Stories of digital sexual assault

Ph.d.-afhandling ved Aarhus Universitet.

Hovedvejleder Professor Carsten Stage. 214 sider.

Af Michael Nebeling Petersen, Britta Timm Knudsen og Anna Hickey-Moody

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Rewriting Victimhood er en innovativ og ambitiøs afhandling, især i udformningen af det deltagende og kreative metodedesign, som er både nytænkende og modigt. Med disse metoder skaber Signe Uldbjerg Mortensen ny kvalitativ viden om, hvordan ofre for digitale seksuelle overgreb *selv* oplevede overgrebene. Afhandlingen tilbyder således et dybdegående indblik i oplevelsen af digitale seksuelle overgreb fra ofrenes perspektiv.

Afhandlingen er artikelbaseret, og den består af en 'kappe', der præsenterer forskningsspørgsmål, state-of-the-art, metode og etiske overvejelser, samt fire artikler, der enten er udgivet eller under udgivelse i anerkendte tidsskrifter. Strukturen for afhandlingen afspejler den såkaldte aktivistiske forskningsagenda: at sætte de kvindelige ofres oplevelser i centrum for vidensproduktionen på alternativt kreative måder. Den første artikel *Writing Victimhood* (kapitel 4 i afhandlingen) er et manifest for en aktivistisk forskningsdagsorden, som ved at skabe en alternativ historie om 'oferskab' (victimhood), støtter ofre for digitale overgreb ved at give dem mulighed for at udtrykke sig.

Artiklen argumenterer for, at en aktivistisk forskningsdagsorden har tre fokuspunkter: en forpligtelse til forskningsklarhed, en forpligtelse til at yde omsorg over for de deltagende sociale aktører og en forpligtelse til social forandring i forhold til de problemstillinger forskningen vedrører (s. 75). Den anden artikel i afhandlingen *Defying Shame* (kapitel 5 i afhandlingen) udfolder skam som en analytisk linse og skammens udtryk på sociale medier ved at analysere fortællinger af tre ofre for digitale seksuelle overgreb. Den tredje artikel *The Rhythms of Shame in Digital Sexual Assault* (kapitel 6 i afhandlingen) diskuterer digitale overgrebs medierede karakteristika, nemlig at de digitale overgreb kan gentages i det uendelige, og at de er delbare. Karakteristika, der ifølge Uldbjerg etableres rytmisk og i konstante gentagelsesmønstre. Ofrets mulighed for at tage kontrollen tilbage udtrykkes ligeledes rytmisk, for eksempel ved brug af strategier, der enten begrænser eller udvider ens egen tilstedeværelse på de sociale medier, eller ved at foretage en affektiv omstilling fra skam til vrede ved at politisere angrebene.

I den sidste og fjerde artikel, *Counter-stories of Digital Sexual Assault* (kapitel 7 i afhandlingen), skifter Uldbjerg empirisk fokus og vender sig mod de danske nyhedsmediers dækning af digitale seksuelle overgreb i perioden 2017-2020. Her finder Uldbjerg udtalte dominerende offerpositioner som for eksempel den uskyldige hvide pige (s. 145), det skyldige og grådige offer (s. 148), det for evigt ødelagte offer (s. 150) og det heroiske offer (s. 151). Foruden at pege på at disse offerpositioner ikke tilgodeser ofrets muligheder for agens, så viser artiklen, hvordan ofrene yder modstand mod disse offerroller f.eks. ved at insistere på seksuel agens. Udpegningen af den hvide, uskyldige (nordiske) pige som dominerende medietrope forbliver dog uudviklet og efterlader spørgsmål om forholdet mellem køn, seksualisering og race i relation til digitale seksuelle overgreb.

Afhandlingen bruger to typer empiri: et datasæt af nyhedsartikler om digitale seksuelle overgreb fra 2017-2020, hvorfra de dominerende offerpositioner udlæses, samt de fem kvinders historier om at få delt intime billeder online uden tilladelse, som er indsamlet/produceret gennem eksperimentale og performative metoder såsom kreative skriveworkshops, interviews, samdesignede skriveopgaver og sms-samtaler.

Ganske overbevisende er metoderne baseret på en metodologisk-etisk ramme, der indrammer hele forskningsprojektet. Denne ramme foldes ud som tre etiske standpunkter. Det første standpunkt artikuleres som en *ethics of care* (s. 55), der opfordrer til og kræver lydhørhed over for andres behov såvel som en udviklet fornemmelse af magtbalancerne i det vidensproducerende forhold mellem forskersubjekt og -objekt. Det andet standpunkt består i en *ethics of listening*, som dækker over et imperativ om at lytte efter nye former for viden, der for eksempel kommer ud af de eksperimentelle skriveworkshops. Det indeholder eksempelvis aktiv lytning, hvor man også lytter efter det som ikke siges, det udtalte. Det sidste standpunkt er en *ethics of change*, der fordrer en aktivistisk forskningsagenda. Det er således vigtigt, at forskningen bestræber sig på at skabe forandring i forhold til de eksisterende og dominerende diskurser om 'offerskab'.

Til trods for det stærke metodiske fokus på kvindernes egne historier og agens, så kan historierne dog på paradoksalt vis forsvinde i afhandlingens form. Det er faktisk ganske lidt, vi hører fra kvinderne selv. Der kunne godt have været mere 'data' i afhandlingen, og læseren kunne få mere at vide om den kreative skrivning og workshopprocesserne. Ligeledes mangler læseren viden og fornemmelse af kvindernes socioøkonomiske baggrund, materielle og sociale verden. Hvad betyder deres socioøkonomiske baggrund, seksualitet, etnicitet, politiske holdninger eller alder? På den måde er afhandlingen til en vis grad fanget mellem sin *ethics of listening* på den ene side og en formel skrivestil, hvor kvindernes egne stemmer ikke levnes meget plads.

Afhandlingen hviler på tre teoretisk informerede analytiske tilgange, hvilke også udgør de tre analytiske kapitler (5-7), nemlig skam, rytme og repræsentation. Mens forfatteren motiverer dette valg empirisk, reflekterer afhandlingen ikke over implikationerne af dette valg i detaljer. Ikke desto mindre understøtter de teoretiske landskaber på den ene side det analytiske fokus på affektive tilgange gennem skam (Sartre, Probyn) og rytme (Lefebvre, Kofoed, Stage), og på den anden side diskursive tilgange til offerrollerens modhistorier (Kelly, Bassett, Kember & O'Riordan, Munt, Hinds og Filesborn).

Afhandlingen giver et solidt bidrag til dansk forskning i digitale seksuelle overgreb i en lokal kontekst, herunder hvordan ofrene oplever disse overgreb på egen krop. Analysen bidrager til både medie- og affektstudier i sine læsninger af, hvordan skam formes og etableres i digitale settings, og hvordan de fem forskellige kvinder bruger både mediemæssige og affektive strategier for at modsætte sig skamfulde positioner. Afhandlingen viser, at der ikke er nogen givet eller 'bedste' måde at håndtere digitale seksuelle overgreb på. Derimod præsenterer materialet mange strategier, hvorved kvinder kan give mening til og håndtere sådanne overgreb.

Afhandlingens vægtigste bidrag til feministisk forskning ligger i det praksisbaserede, delta-gende og kreative metodiske set-up og metodologiens etisk-politiske rammer. Uldbjerg opsummerer

selv sine metodiske valg sådan: *"I suggest that working with performative, practice-based and experimental methodologies is necessary when researching topics that are over-exposed and simultaneously tabooed and when listening for marginalized voices"* (s. 178). Den komplekse sammensætning af skriveworkshops, samtaler og deltagende vidensproduktion udgør et vigtigt og væsentligt bidrag til forskningsmetoder generelt og feministiske metoder i særdeleshed.

Afhandlingen er i sin helhed velskrevet, fokuseret og tilføjer værdifuld viden til det understuderede felt af digitale seksuelle overgreb. Den skitserer interessante analytiske fund vedrørende

tilskuerpositioner, det tætte forhold mellem rytmer, skam og angst på den ene side og digitale medier på den anden. *Rewriting Victimhood* og dens brug af deltagende og kreative metoder i en metodologisk ramme er imponerende. Den uforbeholdne aktivistiske agenda, der fokuserer på den politiske indflydelse af den viden afhandlingen producerer, inkluderer også en genforhandling af den traditionelle distancerede/objektive forsker, til fordel for en mere engageret og inkluderende forsker. Afhandlingen præsenterer således rettidige og innovative måder at forske på inden for humaniora og samfundsvidenskab.

Hvordan motiverer man ligestilling?

Ea Høg Utoft:

Motivation, organisational gender equality work and the postfeminist gender regime: A feminist approach

Forlaget Politica, 2020, 299 sider.

Af Jens Peter Andersen

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Formand for bedømmelsesudvalget ved Ea Høg Utoft's ph.d.-forsvar

"Jamen, vi har da ligestilling i Danmark." Det er i hvert fald et argument, der ofte bruges i debatter om ligeløn, ligestilling, kønskvoter i bestyrelser osv., da det jo er vedtaget ved lov. Vi taler også gerne om Danmark som et foregangsland inden for ligestilling imellem kønnene, men ikke desto mindre er det meget tydeligt i både den aktuelle forskning på området og debatten i medierne (tydeligt eksemplificeret ved #MeToo og lignende kampagner), at det altså ikke altid er tilfældet. Og netop det er et af de væsentlige temaer i Ea Høg Utofts ph.d.-afhandling, *Motivation, organisational gender equality work and the postfeminist gender regime*, som i år modtog Foreningen for Kønsforsknings Kraka-pris.

Afhandlingen anvender et postfeministisk perspektiv til at problematisere forholdet imellem en antaget, eksisterende ligestilling, og de udfordringer der stadig er forbundet med manglende ligestilling, både i en generel, kulturel kontekst men i højere grad i forhold til en organisationskulturel kontekst, som er det, der er hovedemnet for afhandlingen. Utoft kommer med skarpe observationer af, hvilke forhindringer der er for ligestillingsarbejde

på både et universitet og en stor, videnstung virksomhed. På vej dertil præsenteres læseren for en grundig gennemgang af feministisk og postfeministisk teori, krydret med eksemplificeringer igennem populærkulturen, f.eks. med reference til *Sex and the City* og *Nynnes Dagbog*. Eksemplerne fra kultur- og mediastudier er ikke kun relevante for den senere anvendelse i afhandlingen, men fungerer også fremragende som en hjælpende hånd til de læsere, der ikke i forvejen er velbevandrede i feministisk forskning.

Ud over den teoretiske gennemgang af feminisme og postfeminisme indeholder afhandlingen tre empiriske artikler, der tilsammen belyser, hvordan motivation for ligestillingstiltag bruges i en virksomhed og på danske universiteter på hhv. individ-, organisations- og samfundsplan.

Utoft har i løbet af sit ph.d.-projekt været tilknyttet en større dansk, videnstung virksomhed med kontorer både i Danmark og USA, hvor hun i begge lande har overværet arbejdet med at indføre planer for ligestilling. Hendes empiriske arbejde omfatter både observationer af hverdagen,

samtaler og interviews med medarbejdere og deltagelse i møder omkring arbejdet. Skildringen af forløbet er levende beskrevet, og man får igennem den autoetnografiske tilgang et tydeligt indtryk af mange af de problemstillinger, der er forbundet med at arbejde med ligestilling i denne type virksomhed. Det empiriske materiale anvendes til at udforske, hvilke drivkræfter der er bag arbejdet med ligestilling, samt hvilke barrierer man støder på. Om end metoden bygger på, at forskeren tager udgangspunkt i egne erfaringer, hvilket kan give anledning til spørgsmål om, hvordan resultaterne kan anvendes, formår Utoft at forholde sig reflektivt og kritisk til sit eget kildemateriale på en måde, hvor resultaterne fremstår transparente og ærlige. Dertil kommer, at det empiriske materiale er ganske omfattende og detaljerigt, hvilket giver læseren muligheden for også selv at uddrage mening fra de indsamlede observationer.

Det måske største bidrag Utoft kommer med, i forhold til hvad vi allerede ved om arbejdet med

ligestilling i organisationer, handler om, hvordan begrebet motivation kan anvendes i denne kontekst. Afhandlingen undersøger, hvordan arbejdspladser motiveres til at lave ligestillingstiltag, og netop her spiller det postfeministiske en afgørende rolle for motivation, forståelse og forskellige tilgange til ligestillingstiltag. Dette er med til at belyse, hvorfor ligestilling i Danmark adskiller sig fra de andre nordiske lande, og hvorfor vi ikke altid er lige så meget i førersædet, som vi som land i hvert fald tidligere har haft en selvopfattelse af.

Resultaterne af afhandlingen har, i kraft af deres emne og forankring i både universitet og virksomhed, stor relevans for både management- og organisationsstudier, samt studier af videregående uddannelse og forskning, policyforskning samt kønsstudier i det hele taget. Afhandlingen bør være af interesse for alle, der beskæftiger sig med ligestillingsarbejde inden for denne type af organisationer, samt forskere inden for området.

Repræsentationsarbejde i den danske filmindustri

Tess Skadegård Thorsen:

Racialized Representation in Danish Film: Navigating Erasure and Presence

Ph.D.-afhandling 2020, 238 sider.

Af Steen Ledet Christiansen

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Tess Skadegård Thorsen indleverede i 2020 sin Ph.D.-afhandling *Racialized Representation in Danish Film: Navigating Erasure and Presence* ved Aalborg Universitet. Jeg havde fornøjelsen af at være formand for bedømmelsesudvalget, sammen med lektor Ylva Habel og Senior Lecturer Anamik Saha. Det nedenstående skal dog læses som min anmeldelse af afhandlingen, ikke det samlede bedømmelsesudvalgs holdning, omend det skal understreges at bedømmelsesudvalget var enigt om, at afhandlingen er glimrende og vellykket.

Thorsens afhandling omhandler den racialiserede repræsentation i den danske filmindustri, både foran og bag ved kameraet. Med udgangspunkt i en socialkonstruktivistisk forståelse af race, benyttes en såkaldt mosaikmetodologi – en metode, som trækker på interviews, observationer af filmproduktioner (både før, under og efter optagelserne), industri-events, arkivforskning, samt politiske diskussioner og forslag. Omend sådan en metodisk tilgang er utraditionel, er det nødvendigt for at belyse den danske filmkulturs

deltagelse i den offentlige diskurs af og om racialiserede personer.

Thorsens afhandling er dermed et vigtigt bidrag til forståelsen af både dansk filmkultur og racialiseringsprocesser i Danmark. Hendes intersektionelle tilgang sikrer, at den danske filmindustri – herunder statsstøtten gennem Det Danske Filminstitut (DFI) – forstås i krydsfeltet af film, kulturelle og politiske handlinger. Disse tre akser udvikles gennem Thorsens primære teoretiske tilgang: repræsentationens logik.

Repræsentationsteorien som Thorsen benytter kommer primært fra Stuart Halls klassiske, banebrydende arbejde. Halls arbejde viste, hvordan produktionen former den kulturelle repræsentation. Thorsen benytter på fin vis denne logik til at analysere og kritisere den danske filmproduktion for at have en lang række blinde vinkler over for racialisering og racialiserende praksisser og handlinger.

Et godt nedslag er Thorsens analyse af hættrøjen som overdetermineret og ikke-italesat racialiserende objekt. Gennem hendes adgang

til filmproduktioner udfolder Thorsen en længere analyse af kostumevalg og styling på en konkret (anonym) produktion. Instruktør og kostumieren diskuterer, hvilket kostume hovedpersonen skal have. Instruktøren vil gerne undgå en stereotyp fremstilling af ikke-hvide danskere, mens kostumieren hellere vil udtrykke handling og karakteristik gennem kostumevalget. Race og klasse fremtræder ikke som direkte emne, men danner alligevel baggrund for diskussion. Kompromiset bliver en rød hættetrøje med lynlås, for "han skal ikke ligne en af dem..." (Thorsen 165).

Denne produktionsbeslutning og Thorsens analyse af den er et klassisk Hall-eksempel af, hvordan produktionen bevidst og ikke-bevidst afgrænser og determinerer repræsentationen af karakterer; i dette tilfælde en ikke-hvid dansk mand. En lang række kodninger foldes ind i denne repræsentation, i forventning af at publikum afkoder denne repræsentation i overensstemmelse med kodningen. Det er til afhandlingens – og Thorsens – fortjeneste, at analysen ikke stopper her. I stedet slutter Thorsen repræsentationens cirkel ved også at analysere, hvordan tidligere historiske og kulturelle repræsentationer er med til at forme og determinere produktionen. Dermed afsløres en lang række kompleksiteter på produktionssiden, som primært må stå som åbne spørgsmål, men dog er meget sigende, alligevel. Er instruktørens første ønske om, at karakteren skal være en "Hugo Boss-type" et udtryk for indsocialiseret hvidhed, gjort endnu mere komplekst af, at Hugo Boss designede naziuniformer? I hvor høj grad bærer hættetrøjen samme symbolkodning i Danmark, som den gør i USA? Samtidigt er hættetrøjen også tvetydig – den kan referere til berømtheders brug af hættetrøjer i lige så høj grad, som den kan referere til kriminelle handlinger. Hættetrøjen som et ekstra lag hud er nok med til at skjule ens identitet, men om den kun kan afkodes som en kriminel maske, eller om den også kan være et udtryk for at ville beskytte sin identitet i en kultur, som ikke accepterer ens identitet, står ligeledes åbent. Det er dybdegående analyser som disse, der viser Thorsens indsigt

i repræsentationspraksisser som dybt komplekse og dynamiske assemblager.

Thorsens analyser er sensitive over for sådanne komplekse forhold, især fordi Thorsen er velbevandret i den nyeste forskning inden for repræsentation og kritisk raceteori. Dette indblik bliver dog til tider afhandlingens svaghed, forstået på to måder. For det første fremstår afhandlingen som kraftigt analytisk motiveret – den vil kritikken af den danske filmkultur og -produktion. Dette er glimrende, nødvendigt og presserende. Rent strukturelt lever afhandlingen dog ikke helt op til denne motivation, simpelthen fordi analyserne først kommer over halvvejs inde i afhandlingen. Dermed når man som læser relativt sent til det afhandlingen rent faktisk vil opnå – repræsentationsanalyser af danske filmproduktioner.

Den anden problemstilling i afhandlingens teoretiske bredde er, at inklusionen af en del af disse teoretiske landvindiger fremstår selvmotiverende. Det vil sige, at man som læser forventes at være interesseret i teoretiske indblik på deres egne præmisser, uden at de nødvendigvis udfoldes eller benyttes i videre grad senere i afhandlingen. Som teoriglade akademiker er det ikke det store problem for mig som læser, men det skaber dog stadig en ubalance mellem teoretisk diskussion og analytisk brug. F.eks. gør Thorsen en del ud af intersektionel teori, hvilket er forståeligt, men afhandlingen er primært fokuseret på racialisering, hvorfor den intersektionelle analyse nødvendigvis ikke er så fremtrædende.

Disse kritikpunkter til trods fremstår afhandlingen stadig som et vægtigt bidrag til den kritiske diskussion af dansk filmkultur og -produktion. Thorsens grundige analyser af mange forskellige facetter af dansk film forfrisker og fornyr repræsentationsanalysen, som et vigtigt værktøj for at forstå de materielle og symbolske lag i den danske filmindustri. Thorsens idé om repræsentationsarbejde, som en kobling og relation til både reparationsarbejde og diversitetsarbejde, er et vitalt startskud til videre diskussioner og analyser – både inden for og uden for academia.