Transmethodological mo(ve)ments – creating a third space for emancipatory research

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Abstract

This article presents the authors' collaboration with a former gang leader, referred to as X, as part of a research project exploring identity transformation and mo(ve)ments beyond gang engagement. The project is based on a transmethodological approach that involves different embodied researcher positionalities, theoretical engagements, and a merging of diverse research fields. The exploration of the different movements and changes in X's life is based on, what we call a transmethodological mo(ve)ment ethnography, exploring mo(ve)ments of transformation of identity, engagement and community in the everyday life of X, who is striving to become a good, practicing Muslim. This approach makes it possible to go into depth with key moments of change in a subject's life and pursue them from different theoretical perspectives by integrating and transgressing concepts, analytical gazes and positionalities. To analyze and understand the former gang leader's life and process of transformation, we utilize poststructuralist

and decolonial theory and integrate these approaches with those of social practice theory and critical psychology. In this article, we examine how we as researchers can transverse different theoretical and embodied positionings, analyzing transmethodology as closely linked to the positioning of the researcher, and ultimately pointing towards an emancipatory form of research practice.

Keywords: Mo(ve)ment ethnography, Muslimness, Gang exit processes, Researcher positioning, Transmethodology

Introduction

In this paper we propose a transmethodological approach based on a collaborative research process which transverses our theoretical perspectives, positionalities and research fields. We use the term transverses to convey that this approach expands, transgresses and moves our respective theoretical and methodological approaches in new directions. We understand the concept of "Transmethodology" as a concept inviting researchers to explore and discuss liminality as processes of becoming (Stenner, 2018). "Trans" can be understood as signifying a liminality and a kind of "crossover"—as an "emergence in the sense of the becoming of new processes, forms, structures, patterns, experiences and entities that were previously not present" (Stenner, 2018, p.16). It is important to note that "trans" does not simply signify moving from one approach to another, but that the movement in itself designates an ever-changing process of formulation and reformulation, definition and redefinition. This follows the trend set by scholars such as Rosi Braidotti (2010) and Mel Chen (2012) in thinking beyond "trans" as a transition or transgression, toward "trans" as signifying assemblage, affect, movement, and intensity. Here it is possible to invoke Chen's (2012) productive use of "trans" as a way to disassemble and disturb taken for granted taxonomies, practices and discourses

(also see Springgay & Truman, 2017; Khawaja & Kousholt, 2021). In the same sense as liminality, trans introduces a tension and indeterminacy regarding our ontological notions, pushing towards new ways of configuring what constitutes "the real", "the human" and the "non-human".

In this article we pursue and analyze how a research project conducted in collaboration with a former gang leader, X, takes form as a transmethodological ethnographic venture where we (re)produce and legitimize new research perspectives that transgress and challenge the methodological traditions we as researchers identify with. In this collaborative project, we build on and introduce different theoretical traditions: on one hand, poststructuralism and decolonial theory (Iram); on the other hand, social practice theory, including critical psychology (Line). We integrate these diverse theoretical perspectives in a transmethodological mo(ve)ment[1] ethnography which plays into our embodied possibilities of participation and positioning in the research process. Transmethodological mo(ve)ment ethnography in itself pushes the boundaries of what we would normally term ethnography in its transgressive pursuit of following significant moments and narratives in X's life.

In the project, we follow the journey of a former gang leader, X: from a criminalized way of life, to imprisonment and an embrace of a radicalized form of Islam, to incarceration in a forensic psychiatric ward and becoming a practicing Muslim who distances himself from both radicalization and criminality. We focus on studying mo(ve)ments, which are understood as moments linked to his movements and changes in his participation and positioning over time and space across the gang environment,

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1 We will explain what mo(ve)ment ethnography entails in the following section.

forensic psychiatry, religious communities and the prison[2]. The project is conducted as a collaborative form of research engagement with the aim of following X's journey as his identity transforms from being a gang leader to being a religiously devout individual determined to distance himself from his past.

The aim of this paper is to show how a transmethodological approach is embedded in the project's methodology as we use a mo(ve)ment methodology (Davies & Gannon, 2006; Mørck & Celosse-Andersen, 2019) to attain insight into the important moments and movements in X's life. Through an analytical exploration of key mo(ve)ments combined with a focus on our researcher positionings, we will show how transmethodological mo(ve)ment ethnography can enrich the process of analysis and point towards an emancipatory and humanizing research practice.

The paper is structured around three main transmethodological movements: 1. The merging and transformation of our theoretical approaches in our analysis of a selected key mo(ve)ment in X's life; 2. The interplay between research fields and interests forming a new transversal space of analysis; and 3. The embodied and relational researcher positioning in establishing trust in our collaboration with X. Before we explore this in greater depth, we will briefly introduce the research project and X.

X

X grew up in a neighborhood in a suburb of Copenhagen—a neighborhood characterized by low socioeconomic status, a high proportion of residents belonging to ethnic minorities and social housing. He was born in Denmark to Turkish immigrant parents who came to the country as guest workers in the late 1960s. He never intended to

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2 In another paper, we looked into how religiosity affects the formation of a new identity, transcending gang involvement and radicalization in developing a new sense of community and belonging (Mørck & Khawaja, in press). In this article we apply a more methodological focus on our approach and research endeavor.

become part of a gang, but circumstances pushed him in that direction. He was excluded from pursuing his passion for boxing at the local boxing club and was not allowed to attend the youth club following a misunderstanding that led to conflicts with and being shot at by a biker gang. The police kept a vigilant eye on him and, consequently, he was excluded from participating in social gatherings because he now was perceived as a gang member in conflict with other (biker) gangs. At this point he was not involved in gangs and crime, but he subsequently pursued this trajectory to regain the respect he had lost. His trajectory into the criminalized world began when he was around 20 years old and ended with his incarceration at the age of 24——during these years he had become a leader of a gang involved in one of the most violent gang conflicts in Denmark. He has since actively pursued a very different way of life. He has become religious and practices Islam in a spiritual way, believing that Islam saved him from his previous criminalized gang life. After completing his sentence in a forensic psychiatric ward, he is now trying to build himself a new life with his wife.

The research process – ethics and mo(ve)ment ethnography

We met X at a gang seminar[3] in 2017, where he had been invited to talk about his changed life and experiences. He was joined by the head nurse from his forensic psychiatric ward. We asked him if he would be interested in collaborating on a research project and arranged a meeting where we shared our research interests. We agreed to collaborate on a project exploring his movements beyond radicalization and gang involvement and his commitment to becoming a good Muslim. Since 2017, we have

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3 Gang seminar was a yearly seminar held at Grundtvig Folk High School in a city north of Copenhagen gathering researchers, practitioners, former gang members and their families etc. with a focus on intervention and sharing of knowledge. (see Mørck et al, 2013).

conducted a series of interviews with X and followed him through regular visits, conversations and exchanges of texts messages and e-mails.

As part of our engagement in the research field, we have also been invested in reflecting on and moving beyond recent political tendencies in Denmark stigmatizing, casting suspicion on or even demonizing former gang members with an ethnic minoritized background who are turning towards Islam (Mørck & Khawaja, in press; Christensen & Mørck, 2017). This approach can also be termed a majority-inclusive perspective (Kofoed & Staunæs, 2015), implying the researcher's attempt to avoid reproducing an othering gaze upon the minoritized and marginalized subject. Our aim is rather to challenge the normative and politicized narratives present in the field—such as the narrative of the former criminal gang member becoming radicalized through engagement in Islam. Our research tells another story of how active engagement in religiosity and spirituality becomes X's way out of a criminalized and radicalized way of life. In Denmark, conducting research on gang members' identity transformations as they move towards Islam is a highly ethically sensitive topic with a major risk of stigmatization for participating co-researchers. Former gang members face multiple risks – spanning from the risk of stigmatization and of being seen as (re)producing their former identity in the eyes of others, to the risk of severe curtailment of their possibilities for action in the course of their everyday lives' (e.g. their freedom to see their family, their access to job opportunities and their access to a trajectory pointing beyond the psychiatric treatment institution), to actually risking their lives and being in real danger (Mørck, 2021). From our first meeting with X at the mentioned seminar, where he explained how Islam had helped him in the process of gang desistance, he was very clear that he did not want to reproduce or promote aspects of his gang identity. His focus was primarily on sharing how

his religiosity had been part of his path away from a criminalized life. X's aim was to tell his story so that it could benefit others wanting to make a change in their lives and embrace a more religious way of life in their efforts to leave their gang involvement behind.

We have therefore carefully considered whether any part of the empirical analysis presented here risks reproducing the marginalization and stigmatization linked to the triple stigma of being a former gang member, a psychiatric patient with a treatment sentence, and a practicing Muslim. To avoid our research putting X at risk, our work is characterized by a high degree of transparency, discussing and negotiating with X which parts of our interviews will be used in particular articles or papers. We involve X in reflections on how our research might be meaningful for him. To minimize the risk of stigmatization and dehumanization, we also follow ethical principles of carefully reflecting the interests, positionings, agency and feelings of our co-researcher: What makes him engage in our research? How can we produce research that also expands his action possibilities, such as contributing to concrete movements beyond marginalization, radicalization and/or gang involvement? In this way, our approach shares similarities with other critical traditions working with social justice, participatory action research, critical race theory (Torre, 2008) and critical criminology (Brotherton, 2019) in their pursuit of research collaborations that challenge existing power relations and discursive structures. We will return to this point at the end of the article.

We employ a form of mo(ve)ment methodology. In collaboration with X, we select and critically reflect on the significance of specific moments and movements in his autobiographical narrative. Mo(ve)ment is a term introduced by Bronwyn Davies and Sue Gannon (2006) in their work on collective biography to highlight the interdependent

relation between memories of specific moments and how they are linked to structural and societal processes of subjectification. The focus on mo(ve)ments rather than simply moments, shifts the research interest from the individual experience to processes of becoming. We analyze the moments and the social, political-economic, cultural, institutional and social relations that affect X's processes of identity transformation in regard to what is (im)possible, expanding or restricting his ways of participating and engaging in the different contexts of his everyday life. The term mo(ve)ment in itself encompasses and expresses a transmethodological approach as it traverses our different theoretical vantage points by integrating a focus on subjectification and (auto)biographical material, and possibilities of participation as a legitimate member of society while also considering the broader structural dimension of participation in society. We will elaborate on this transversal analytical and methodological movement in the following sections.

The moment we have selected as an analytical example is marked by a double-bind situation (Laing, 1967) for X, which is reproduced by state hegemonic relations between institutions such as the police, municipality, forensic psychiatry, and racialized "tough on crime" political agendas. According to R. D. Laing, a focus on double binds entails a focus on the "contradictions and confusions 'internalized' by the individual," which "must be looked at in their larger context" (p. 93).

The broader hierarchical power relations present in X's double bind are related to political practices that tend to (re)produce religious and racialized othering and marginalization. However, we also seek to understand the conditions framing possibilities and ways of becoming, which over time (re)produce opportunities for X to expand his (collective) agency and produce conditions for positive interpellation and societal recognition in different communities (Butler, 2009; Nissen, 2012). X's life is filled with

commitments to specific others in and across partly overlapping communities—the psychiatric ward, the Muslim community and the Mosque, and the community with his wife and family.

We will now present how the project moves in three interweaving transmethodological directions as we analyze a key moment from X's life story. We begin with the first movement of; 1. The merging and transformation of different theoretical points of departure:

Theories meeting and merging during mo(ve)ment analysis

X is in his hometown, where he has a short internship at an auto repair shop as part of an initiative preparing him for life after his discharge from the forensic psychiatric ward. X is awaiting the decision on when he has served his time, which will be within the next six months. The word is soon out that X is working there, and he is approached by people familiar with his name and reputation in the town. These men, mostly members of the younger generation, call him by his former name—a name he has changed as part of the process of distancing himself from his past. They approach him, asking, "Hey, aren't you (saying his old name)….?", and treating him with respect and reverence. In these situations, he feels torn. On the one hand, he does not want to be known by his old name, and especially not by his former life and actions. He has used the last many years working hard to become someone else—a religiously devout and humble person who wants to make amends. This effort has extended to the minutest details, such as how he walks, what he wears and how he speaks. On the other hand, he does not want to seem unkind and reject the people who want to meet and talk to him. Often, such encounters involve

someone passing by saying hello. As he explains, why engage in a long conversation about how he has changed and is a different person now with each and every person that approaches him? The use of his former name and the setting in his old neighborhood where he was once a revered gang leader creates a double-bind situation for X. He was able to get the internship due to his existing contacts but being there reminds him and the people around him of who he once was. This also applies to the local police, who keeps a very close eye on him while he is there, calling the owner of the workshop and enquiring about X's activities, thus reactivating his constant vigilance.

Being trained to return to society, is a very positive development for X, who has at this point been in the forensic psychiatry for four years, but it also comes with challenges —the road back to a "normal" life beyond the ward and his past in the gang is not straightforward. On the contrary, it requires negotiation and constant awareness of his words and actions in the different contexts in which he participates. An analysis of this negotiation and his somewhat limited possibilities of participation can be approached from different angles. Line saw the use of X's old name as linked to the theoretical concept of (mis)interpellation (Althusser, 1983; Hage, 2010; Nissen, 2012), and the idea of how processes of identity formation are shaped by participation and one's (mis)recognition by others as part of different communities across time and space (Mørck & Celosse-Andersen, 2019; Nissen, 2012). Meanwhile, Iram interpreted it in terms of how processes of subjectification (Foucault, 1977; Butler, 2009) are linked to negotiations of otherness and abjection (Davies & Harré, 1990). Participation, interpellation and subjectification can be seen as interlinked but different concepts, highlighting our different theoretical traditions.

Iram works within the tradition of poststructuralism (Foucault, 1982; Davies, 2000) and decolonial theory (Fanon, 1952; Said, 1978; Wynter, 2003), focusing on processes of becoming, othering and belonging. In regard to the project with X, her focus is on negotiations of otherness and non-belonging, as well as on X's strategies for attaining a legitimate position, both within society at large and in regard to his close relations. Here, the category of Muslimness and how it plays into processes of subjectification and community is also very relevant when exploring how X forms a new life and performs a new identity. When other people call him by his old name, it indicates a process of conflictual positioning, where the way others see him clashes with how he wants to be seen. Rom Harré and Bronwyn Davies' (1990) concept of positioning as the discursive construction of self is relevant in this regard as it focuses on: 1. Reflective positioning; that is, how people position themselves and 2. Interactive positioning; that is, how people are positioned by others. In X's case, he seems to be caught between these two forms of positioning as they are not aligned. This places him in what he experiences as an awkward feeling of otherness and misrecognition—an otherness that is connected to the discursive possibilities of being seen and accepted as a legitimate subject (Davies, 2000). This coming into being - the process of subjectification - does not take place in a social vacuum but is interdependently linked to the established image of X as a gang leader and the narratives surrounding his past, which still live on in his old neighborhood. His desistance from his past and the process of transformation that he has undergone over the last few years are not acknowledged by the police or the people continuing to call him by his old name. At the same time, it is difficult for X to know whether the people he encounters see him as he is now or as he was before. It is a suspension between who he used to be and who he is now as seen through the gazes of others. Here, the theoretical

concept of gazes as disciplining, racializing and othering (Khawaja, 2010) is useful. While the gazes of young people in the neighborhood suggest a form of recognition, they do not recognize him for the person he is today, but rather the person he once was. Meanwhile, the gazes of the police do not offer any form of recognition or reverence, but rather suspicion. In both cases, the gazes do not acknowledge his process of transformation. In a decolonial theoretical perspective, this can be termed as a form of epistemic violence (Spivak, 1988), a term for the ways in which subjects are exposed to knowledges and gazes that fixes them in an othered, racialized and marginalized position. In Frantz Fanon's work (1952), the gazes of others are linked to dehumanization - an extreme form of othering, or rather abjection of the other, stripping away the possibility of being seen as a legitimate subject, as a human being. This includes questions of who can claim humanness and how, of who has access to this humanness and of what forms of humanness we are supposed to desire, grieve and long for (Wynter, 2003; Butler, 2009).

The question in X's situation is thus: How can he resist the gazes and "look back" without further marginalization, dehumanization or othering? In X's case, his positioning is more complex in that he does not only encounter gazes of misrecognition and suspicion, but also recognition. However, this is a recognition he does not desire as it reminds him of a past with which he no longer wants to be associated.

Line works within the framework of social practice theory (Lave, 2019), combining situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and critical psychological theory on 'Psychology from the standpoint of the subject' (Schraube & Osterkamp, 2013, Dreier, 2008). She integrates critical psychology's double focus on problems and possibilities as part of the conduct of everyday life (Dreier, 2008) with Lave's social practice theoretical concepts of everyday life, learning and trajectories of participation.

Mørck's further development of social practice theory focuses especially on movements beyond marginalization, dilemmas and double binds (Mørck & Celosse-Andersen, 2019), and on how recognition as part of a collective We can be empowering, offering new and expansive dimensions of interpellation (Nissen, 2012; Mørck, 2011). The concept of interpellation is relevant when seeking to understand processes of and changes in recognition and participation, including the new directionality of the misrecognition of X during his internship at the auto repair shop.

From the perspective of social practice theory, interpellation is not only a question of how X is seen and understood by specific others, but must be conceptualized in terms of the larger ideological and contextual field—the communities and action contexts in and across which X moves and participates (Nissen, 2012). In this light, it becomes relevant to pursue the question of how the double bind between recognition and misrecognition X encounters during the internship shapes his life trajectory and his conduct of everyday life, including his possibilities and limitations of participation in and across other contexts (Dreier, 2008).

We can only understand the severity of the mis-interpellation by analyzing X's prior mo(ve)ments and expansive processes of interpellation into communities where he is recognized and given the chance to participate fully and afforded important responsibilities. X's trajectory until this episode has been characterized by an expanded space for legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in and across emerging communities, such as a Muslim community linked to a mosque (Mørck & Khawaja, in press), that has produced movements beyond marginalization. As part of our years of collaboration, we have written the expansive movements of his conduct of everyday life on what we refer to as a positive list. Listing the (positive) meanings of his

everyday life conduct, as well as the dilemmas and double-bind situations he encounters, is our way of further developing mo(ve)ment approach as an analytical tool[4]. The life conduct list also implies a focus on the many different contexts of the subject's life, and the different actions, meanings and possible and desired positionings in and across different but interconnected contexts.

When applying this decentered (Dreier, 2008; Lave, 2019) understanding of the conduct of everyday life and processes of becoming, it is important to also understand the changes brought about in these particular moments. The misrecognition of X by the young people in the neighborhood and by the police affect other significant people at the psychiatric ward – and thereby constitutes a change, a new process of mis-interpellation (Hage, 2010). The mis-interpellation began when X was addressed by his old name, which produced a change in his social self-understanding and marginality (Mørck & Celosse-Andersen, 2019, p. 652) that threatened and closed off existing possibilities for legitimate peripheral participation and more respected positionings in other contexts of his life.

Just before the moment of misrecognition, the staff had applied to the municipality, asking their permission to appoint X to a formal and paid support position as a recovery mentor, which would allow him to live as a patient on the open ward while working as a peer mentor at the closed psychiatric ward where he had previously been a patient. He was also given responsibility as a patient spokesperson and was about to apply to have his treatment changed so that he could live with his wife, outside the ward. But after the call from the police to the staff at the psychiatric ward during his internship,

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4 The life conduct list was developed with Martin Celosse-Andersen (see Mørck & Celosse-Andersen, 2016), a former leader of a Danish biker gang. The life conduct list can be seen as an operationalization of some of the main theoretical concepts and approaches from critical psychology by transforming them into a dialogical intersubjective way of working for 'a common third' – a combined research and development tool. Writing on the life conduct list, we systematically document in depth and reflect on meanings in life (written as points on the positive list), as well as on problems and action possibilities as part of the everyday conduct of life (written as points on the list of development).

questioning his whereabouts, intentions and relations, and calling him by his old name, all these positions, responsibilities and future dreams were taken away and closed off. This made him feel depressed and he withdrew to his room. At the same time, the application for X to be appointed a recovery mentor was rejected.

Our analysis and theories overlap in many ways; however, this is especially true in regard to the moment outlined above with the common focus on how interpellation is linked to different possibilities for becoming, participation and belonging. With reference to Hage (2010), the moment carries an aspect of racialized gazes of mis-interpellation. Hage describes this process of mis-interpellation as involving an initial interpellation as someone who rightfully belongs within a given community or context. In X's case, this is reflected in him being allowed to pursue an internship and becoming part of a more normalized work routine and environment. Meanwhile, in Hage's description, this apparent interpellation is brutally interrupted by a process of misrecognition and being identified as someone who does not really belong. This applies to the outcome for X when, under the police's watchful eye, he is seen interacting with young men from his old neighborhood. X was not allowed to continue the internship because he was suspected of engaging with local gangs. As a result, he moved from the open ward to the closed ward. He lost some of the privileges he had worked hard to achieve, such as being able to visit the mosque frequently, long visits away from the ward, and enjoying a relationship of mutual respect with the staff. In some ways, the mis-interpellation and its consequences share similarities with the situation that initially pushed him towards his former criminalized life when he was excluded from his local boxing club because, mistakenly, he was seen as engaging in gang-related activities. X's internship, which was an avenue to

reintegration in society, was mistakenly seen as an attempt to re-engage with his former life.

Where decolonial and poststructuralist theories help us grasp the racialized and stigmatizing aspects of becoming, social practice theory allows us to understand the changes in participation, contradictions and differences in positions in regard to access across the contexts and communities that comprise X's conduct of everyday life. Furthermore, this approach highlights how the direction of his personal trajectory (Dreier, 2008) changes from expansive empowerment to marginalized and limited agency.

The detailed analysis of X's mo(ve)ments is not only enabled by our different theoretical conceptualizations and perspectives, but also by a merging and transversing of our different but overlapping research fields. We will now discuss the second transmethodological movement: 2. The interplay between research fields and interests forming a new transversal space of analysis.

Research fields overlapping and merging

In the project with X, Line's years of research into exit processes from of (biker)gangs, criminalized past and movements beyond marginalized positions in society through engagement in meaningful communities is expanded and transversed by and through Iram's research on religious communities of belonging, racialization and processes of othering in regard to ethnic and religious minorities in the field of inclusion and diversity in education. Common to both research fields is an interest in processes of radicalization and de-radicalization, which was the initial focus of our collaborative research project with X. We were interested in following and understanding X's journey and pathways in and out of gang-based criminality and radicalization, and how it is possible to create a new life beyond such marginalized positions. Following X's journey

and key mo(ve)ments entails a merging and intersection of our respective areas of research. For example, when X talks about a pivotal moment in his life, when he read an Islamic book while in extreme isolation at a high security prison, and how it changed his outlook and shaped his onward trajectory towards a more spiritual understanding and practice of Islam, we draw on Line's knowledge of how criminal gang members are often treated in high security prisons and their extreme marginalization (Mørck, 2016; Christensen & Mørck, 2017; Deuchar et al, 2016). At the same time, to understand the importance of religious materials such as the book he read, and how it turned him away from a radicalized understanding of Islam and life in general, Iram draws on her research on young Muslims in religious communities and the practice of religion as part of everyday life (Khawaja, 2014), as well as her own knowledge of Islamic practice and learning.

In some ways, this merging creates a new research field focusing on the complex intersections of the marginalization of criminal gang members and a religious, racialized and to some extent radicalized otherness. X's mo(ve)ments can be seen as a narrative of moving beyond a marginalized position, but also from one marginalized position as a gang member to another marginalized and othered position as a practicing Muslim. This enables an understanding that the previously described gazes of suspicion and otherness that X encounters during his internship extend well beyond the police and his criminal past. Studies show how young men with a racialized ethnic minority background are seen as potentially dangerous and more likely to cause trouble (Hooks, 2004; Gilliam, 2017), and how being Muslim and male is often connected with stereotypes of being prone to violent and uncivilized anti-social behavior (Razack, 2004). X is hence not dealing with just one single form of marginality, making his efforts to create a new life and identity even more

difficult. The intersections of a past as a criminal gang member, a racialized minority position and Islamic religiosity represent an especially challenging situation for X and other young people in his position. A transmethodological approach is in this regard well suited to grasp these complex nuances and layers, which is why we argue for the relevance and productiveness of forming research collaborations that transverse different fields, theories and contexts.

Co-creating a transversal third space for analysis

Perspectives on participation, interpellation and subjectification drawn from social practice theory and poststructuralism open up a transversal space for analyzing X's complex processes of becoming and participation - making it possible to take into account both the discursive and structural conditions of becoming. Poststructuralist and decolonial theory contribute here, especially in regard to analyzing processes of othering, stigmatization and abjection of people who are struggling with being seen through the lens of negative categorizations, such as ethnic, religious or racialized others (Fanon, 1952; Said, 1978; Khawaja, 2010; Hage, 2010). But such an approach is equally relevant when studying the processes whereby psychiatric patients and criminals/prisoners like X are categorized. To this end, we examine the intersections of the different problematizing categories (Crenshaw, 1991) and how they position X in positions of advantage or disadvantage - increasing or restricting his possibilities for agency and privilege. An approach grounded in social practice theory and critical psychology highlights how different gazes and discursive positionings are situated in concrete and structural conditions for participation that are connected to the communities of practice in which X engages. Furthermore, such an approach reveals how double-bind moments are (re)produced. In X's case, as shown above, the double-bind moment is simultaneously

productive and counterproductive in terms of how he wants to be seen and understood. It is also a double bind in the sense that whatever action he chooses to take (for example, when he withdraws to his room on the ward or chooses not to engage with people he meets), he risks being further othered and marginalized. The staff might become concerned or suspicious about what is going on. His movements towards a new life and identity are thus a constantly negotiated and conflictual struggle to become who he wants to be seen as. Bronwyn Davies calls this process identity work (Davies et al., 2001), which, when seen in light of the highly marginalized positionality of X, requires a lot of effort from him because the discursive structures, expectations and practices he is met with and positioned through in many ways prevent him from moving beyond his old identity – reproducing a position as a criminal gang member, a dangerous inmate and/or unable to succeed in the "outside world" beyond gangs and forensic psychiatry.

The interplay between participation, interpellation and subjectification is just one example of how our conceptual frameworks and research fields interconnect and create new transanalytical movements in the research project. There are many other examples, such as our focus on being more or less majoritized/minoritized, on agency and dehumanization, and on the structural/discursive conditions for gaining access to legitimate participation and positioning. These movements must be seen in light of the fact that our different theoretical traditions are based on a common epistemological goal of exploring the possibilities of a subject's being and becoming in relation to the societal, ideological or discursive conditions. The subject cannot be understood as an isolated island, but must instead be seen as a formative part of actual and concrete contexts of participation and becoming.

This theoretical meeting point via the concept of participation denotes a common third space (Bhabha, 1994; Blakely & Hemphill, 2021) beyond the basic ontological differences between, on the one hand, poststructuralism and decolonial theories characterized by a relativist and fluid ontology focused on power relations and how things and subjects come into being, and on the other hand, critical psychology and social practice theory characterized by a historical, dialectic-materialist ontology. The reader may wonder whether these ontological differences have implications for our research project with X—and if so, what are these implications? Some might say the differences represent an insurmountable conflict, but we have experienced no such deep-rooted conflicts or disagreements when conducting, writing about and publishing our research. Rather, the differences have inspired us and made us curious about new theoretical, empirical and onto-epistemological transversal movements, which has been productive in developing new analytical insights and possibilities. The third space can be seen as a reflection of our transmethodological approach as defined by a productive, interruptive and interrogative (Bhabha, 1994) analytical space. This is not the same as analytical triangulation; the transmethodological movements denote the creation of something new, transgressing what each theory and approach brings to the table.

This leads us to the third and final transmethodological movement, which is based on: 3. The embodied and relational researcher positioning at play in doing trust and establishing collaboration with X.

Researcher positioning

The participation and positioning of the researcher are seen as an integral part of the research process within approaches rooted in both critical psychology/social practice theory and poststructuralist/decolonial theory. These different theoretical frameworks are

based on a critique of positivist notions of a distanced, neutral and objective researcher who strives to minimize their impact on the process of inquiry, ideally eradicating all traces of the researcher's involvement. Contrary to this positivist position (criticized by Blakely & Hemphill, 2021 among others), we work with the premise of a subject-subject relation, basing our methodological approach on a joint venture and collaboration with X. This entails an exploration of this relationality, implying not only a focus on X's (im)possible ways of becoming and participation, but also on how our own positionalities are formative in terms of what we are able to access—and how—in the research process.

When we initiated our research project with X, our ambition was to establish a collaborative relation to X by discussing with him our common interests and aims (Mørck, 2021). This collaboration is an ongoing process where, for each article, paper or other research product, we reflect on possible content, aims, ethical dilemmas and risks of that product and the project as a whole (Mørck, Hartvig & Bildstedfelt, 2020). This implies an effort to build a relationship characterized by mutuality and trust. As such, it emphasizes the importance of a prolonged process of mutual engagement, where the involved parties (here us as researchers and X) come to understand each other and their collective joint venture. This subject-subject relation stands in contrast to an instrumental or subject-object-relation, where the researcher uses information obtained from the persons being researched in a unilateral and utilitarian way. This instrumentalizing approach can also be criticized for assigning individuals personal responsibility for their problems, as subjects are seen "as causes of their own problems" (Osterkamp, 2000, p. 9). Our rejection of an instrumental relation in our research is also based on a focus on destabilizing existing privileged positions of knowledge and power (Haraway, 1988, Søndergaard, 2005), including a critique of and movement beyond the researcher as omniscient. Instead, we see

the researcher as part of a larger research process, selecting, focusing on and shaping certain specific aspects of the field of research while blind to or setting aside others. The different layers of researcher positioning—that is, our embodied, theoretical, relational and ethical positionality —are part of the transanalytical and transmethodological movements of the research engagement with X.

The subject-subject relation is not merely a question of particular research approaches, but also a question of ethics that is an integral part of each step of the research process (Barad, 2003; Braidotti, 2013), closely intertwined with the relational aspects of how we as researchers engage with our research subjects (Kofoed & Staunæs, 2015). We understand, make space for and collaborate with X as a subject, seeking to identify common interests and aims in the research process. To some extent, this requires a longer and deeper engagement in the field and with the subjects in the field.

We have touched upon our theoretical positionings above and will now examine our embodied, racialized and gendered positionalities and how our researcher positionings, participation and engagement change over time. An example can be seen in the following excerpt from a memory work[5] session, written by Line, recalling a moment from our fieldwork when visiting the Muslim learning center[6] , which is a community X is part of:

> I step into the room behind the common room – the Sheikh (religious leader) is
> sitting with another man behind a table. Two volunteers - women with Muslim

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5 This 'memory' was reconstructed as part of a memory workshop arranged by Iram within our research program 'Engage'-(dis)engaging children and young people at Aarhus University, where participants were instructed to write a memory about experiences of ethnic, racialized otherness. Methodologically, the workshop was inspired by the memory work tradition of Frigga Haug (Haug et al., 1987) and the tradition of Bronwyn Davies and Susanne Gannon (2006) (further details are provided in Khawaja, 2022).
6 The Muslim learning center is what the religious leader (the Sheikh) calls the community, while X refers to the community and place as "the Mosque". As such, it is both a place of worship and a site for learning about Islam (Mørck & Khawaja, in press).

headscarfs, one with a baby - are standing in the middle of the room. Iram is talking to the women. Iram also wears a Muslim headscarf. I am the only woman in the room without a headscarf. They (the men) greet us with their hands on their hearts. The atmosphere is one of reverence. Iram and I sit on two chairs that are lined up in front of the podium where the Sheikh is sitting. He welcomes us and says that he would like to hear about our motives for the research we would like to do in their Muslim learning center. Iram talks about her research in Muslim communities, her interests. I sense that they are completely 'in sync' - there are clear common interests, I think to myself. Then it is my turn. I talk about my research on gang exit processes, our joint research with X, whom the Sheikh knows well. The Sheikh asks me if I am religious. I reply that I am not; that I am neither baptized nor confirmed. I feel they are looking at me in wonder. I further explain that my parents were Communists and did not believe in God. I can feel them looking at me, assessing me: Am I ok? Good enough to do research with them?

(Line, memory work excerpt, June 2019)

This memory work narrative tells a story of the experience of being a researcher entering new spaces that can call one's motives and background into question. For Line, who is positioned as a racialized white woman in her late 40s with an ethnic Danish background, this is a somewhat unusual position to be in, as she normally moves in contexts where she represents a majoritized position. That is, she is accustomed to a position where she is seen as naturally belonging and part of the national community. Meanwhile in the context of the Muslim Learning Center, we see how feelings of otherness and of not naturally fitting in shape the way she is able to engage with and

participate in the field. This also creates a sense of self-doubt - is Line good enough and will she be accepted? Is it distrust or just plain curiosity when she is asked about her own religiosity, and is it appropriate for a researcher to disclose such matters and talk openly about something which some might consider quite personal? These are important questions related to how we do research and how we envisage what it means to be a researcher. In a subject-subject relation, the researcher cannot stand apart from the relations created in the field, and Line's response and sharing of her personal story and position is part of what it means to do and create trust. It is a way of being transparent about who she is as a person and a researcher.

On the other hand, Iram, who is a practicing Muslim woman in her early 40s with a second generation immigrant background from Pakistan, is able to participate in the context of the Muslim Learning Center as an insider (Kanuha, 2000; Khawaja & Mørck, 2009). She is seen as someone who knows the ways of acting in the Muslim Learning Center, and who seems to "naturally" share the same interests as the Sheikh and the other women from the mosque. Iram is not questioned about her religiosity, and does not need to explain it, as it seems to be a given.

We are met with different gazes and expectations, giving access to different epistemological advantages and disadvantages. Line can use her position as an outsider to question and make visible many of the seemingly naturalized traditions and sayings at the mosque and within the broader field, and thus shed light on the taken for granted values, routines and conditions of participation. She is also able to position herself as genuinely curious and as a "different kind of outsider"—as someone who wants to know more about the field of religious practice and to move from the peripheral legitimate circle of participation to a more knowledgeable position. Her genuine curiosity is also a way of

showing X that what matters to him, in this case the religious practice around Islam in the learning center, also matters to her. This way of creating trust is also evident in the respect X shows in response to Line's interest and, for example, the time and energy he spends explaining religious practice, ideas and details to her. He sometimes also sends invitations to programs he follows at the Muslim Learning Center, thereby sharing and making us part of the central everyday practices and contexts in which he engages. As we mentioned earlier, religious practice among former gang members is often viewed as problematic and as a gateway to radicalization, especially Islamic practice, which is why X also has to be careful about how, when and with whom he shares his religious engagement. It can easily be misunderstood and become part of further processes of othering and increase suspicion towards him. The Sheikh at the Muslim Learning Center also touches on this in regard to why the center keeps a low profile regarding all the work they are doing to create positive trajectories for young people who want to exit the gang environment.

Meanwhile, Iram is able to utilize her position as an insider in regard to X and the others present in the Muslim learning center. As a racialized and religious other within Danish society at large, there is a sense of kinship, which for example entails sharing the same religious vocabulary and common-sense understanding of certain religious practices, habits and routines. It also entails shared embodied experiences, despite the gendered differences, of being minoritized, othered, racialized, and of being treated differently as a consequence. In the collaborative research process, this provides a foundation for building mutual trust and understanding in a highly contentious and politicized field.

We (Iram and Line) share a gendered background within academia and are as such both positioned as researchers. However, our different positionalities are not static but flexible, changing over time and place, between first and othered positionalities - moving

from (and between) more or less peripheral to experienced positions that give access to different levels of participation and different understandings of X's transformative journey. These movements in the collaborative process of inquiry are also evident in the ways in which our communication with X has developed: From sitting in a room at the forensic psychiatric ward with a tape recorder interviewing him about his life and important mo(ve)ments to communicating more informally through messages on social media platforms when the coronavirus pandemic prevented us from meeting in person. The process of inquiry is in this way based on the intersections of our different positionalities and more or less privileged access to different contexts and spheres. For example, X is able to give us both access to the Muslim Learning Center and its activities by vouching for us, and maybe especially Line who is more likely to be seen as an outsider, as is evident in the field note above. On the other hand, we can both give X access to academia, offering opportunities to be part of our teaching and to give feedback on and help shape our articles and papers. We are able to establish a form of mutuality that gives X a chance to be seen, heard and treated in a humanizing and respectful way which acknowledges his journey, knowledge and struggle. This is aligned with his initial motivation for participating in our collaboration.

How we work with and through our different positionalities, possibilities and limitations with regard to developing collaboration, trust and access is connected to a transmethodological approach to research inquiry as we are engaged in expanding, challenging and transversing established and familiar ways of framing and doing ethnographic research. As such, the research is formed by the shared relation with X and by our different positionalities and theoretical approaches, and it creates new ways for X and ourselves to participate, moving us towards more legitimate and acknowledged

positions. In our view, this is a form of research endeavor that points to an emancipatory and socially just form of research, as the methodology in itself is based on creating possible pathways beyond marginalized, othered and stigmatized positions.

Emancipatory research - A humanizing approach

The three main transmethodological movements that we have presented and analyzed in this article move us towards an emancipatory form of research. These movements are the merging and transformation of our different theoretical approaches, the interplay between research fields, and the embodied and relational researcher positioning. By emancipatory research, we ¨refer to our methodological and ethnographic approach. Our goal is to emancipate theories, concepts, methods and approaches from confinement to specific silos and traditions and move towards flowing, transversal and intersecting theories, concepts and methods. The emancipation is thus related to our research process and aim of creating new third spaces for inquiry and reflection, moving X and ourselves in new transformative directions of action, thinking and interaction. We hereby suggest that the different transmethodological movements on which the project is formed, in effect, form a collective process of learning through our small community and its exchange of knowledge, experiences, mo(ve)ments and perspectives. This community consists of all three of us (X, Line and Iram), each moving in different but interlocking directions. In the process, we create spaces and possibilities for mutual relations of recognition and trust that take into account and utilize our different access to the field and our respective privileges and positionalities. Our approach is linked to an aim of a socially just research process (Fine et al, 2003; DePalma, 2010), acknowledging X, treating him with respect and positioning him as knowledgeable as he is the one with the greatest insight into his journey. Furthermore, it is X who can provide access to key contexts such as the Muslim

Learning Center. The example from the memory work also shows how the balance of power relations is disrupted and how positions of firstness and otherness are negotiated and transversed in regard to our positions as researchers, showing how we (especially Line) also have to make an effort if we are to be accepted as legitimate participants[7] .

This approach, in our view, is also a humanizing approach, where trust, mutual relationality and positioning create spaces for X to be seen, heard and understood beyond the othered and dehumanizing stigmas and labels attached to him, such as "gang leader", "immigrant", and "radicalized Muslim". The relationality and collaboration that our transmethodological approach entails is in this way also connected to an ethical stance where we are seek to create possibilities of moving beyond dehumanization and othering. In line with Swartz's principle of 'giving back' (Swartz, 2011), we also consciously reflect on standards of "intentional ethics of reciprocation," finding ways to ensure that the research process becomes more just and beneficial to all participants. Our way of 'giving back' is to keep returning, (re)producing trust by sharing abstracts for articles, striving for a continuous and deep engagement in the field with X and at the same time deepening our understanding of the challenges and opportunities that he encounters. This kind of procedural and situational ethics[8] (D'Cruz & Gillingham, 2017) led us to think less rigidly about institutional ethics, caring more about how to engage and interact with X as a mutual and important part of the research process and making sure we are aligned in respect to the development of common interests (Osterkamp, 2000). We assessed such common interests by dealing, on the one hand, with ethical concerns about identifying

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7 Naturally, there is a big difference in the power dynamics and the extent of marginalization X has to negotiate compared to that experienced by Line, but it is nevertheless part of the overall research process of relationality and mutuality.
8 According to D'Cruz and Gillingham (2017), situated ethics is understood in contrast to institutional and professional ethics. Situated ethics recognizes that ethical practice is not external to contexts, but emerges within them (D'Cruz and Gillingham, 2017, p. 437).

empirical mo(ve)ments in collaboration with X and, if they were especially sensitive, discussing with X whether and how these mo(ve)ments should be included in a publication (Mørck, 2021). On the other hand, we are also aware that some sensitive mo(ve)ments and issues, when published, could nuance and expand established understandings and thereby bring about change, both within academia and other fields working with gangs, othering and radicalization. This change might also expand the ways we do research, legitimizing new research methodologies, new approaches and new understandings of, for instance, exit processes. As James Banks (2006) notes:

"Pursuing transformative research - which I define as research that challenges mainstream and institutionalized findings, interpretations and paradigms – is professionally risky (…) but is personally enriching because it makes a difference and helps to humanize our troubled and divided society" (p. xiii).

Banks here highlights the risk of being accused of bias or of advocating for a cause rather than being seen as an "objective" researcher. This is a debate and issue that, in Europe, has become especially urgent in the last year, after specific researchers and areas of research, such as gender, race, social justice and migration studies, have come under heavy fire for being too activist and hence pseudo-scientific[9] . A transmethodological approach, such as the one we have developed, can also be seen as a threat to common understandings and research paradigms that prioritize a linear process of inquiry, distance between researcher and research object, and a clear division between ontology and epistemology. In our research project, we transverse all these points in different ways with

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9 Academic freedom in Denmark - open letter from June 2021, signed by 3241 researchers. In English:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf-
RmUIF6b6M8u1ZVPmRfkWAAD1c9__HUKi2ErwIAPx6K1YJA/viewform

the goal of creating more humanizing and socially just possibilities for participating and positioning in the intersectional field of gangs and religious communities.

These processes and questions of humanization are fueled by our transmethodological approach, which enables a fluid, collective, transtheoretical and -analytical space for critical inquiry and ethnography.

Conclusion

In 2009, our first joint paper was published based on our different but overlapping research projects on young men with ethnic and religious minority backgrounds in Denmark (Khawaja & Mørck, 2009). In the article's concluding remarks, we noted the differences in the ways of understanding how and where research should make a difference between, on one hand, approaches based on critical psychology and social practice theory and, on the other hand, poststructuralist paradigms.

"There is a slight difference in the understanding of how and where one's research should make a change. That is, should it be targeted toward existing problematising and othering discourses? Or should it be targeted toward concrete othering and marginalising conditions of participation in practice and everyday life, and toward empowering research participants through changing their way of understanding the world and participating in it?" (Khawaja & Mørck, 2009, p. 41)

Over the years, and especially since embarking on the collaborative project with X, our research methodologies, theories and fields have merged and transversed, creating what we term a transmethodological and transanalytical third space for inquiry. This space is transformative in the sense that it is not limited to either poststructuralist and decolonial approaches or perspectives rooted in critical psychology and social practice theory, thus

bridging and transforming these theoretical and methodological positionalities. A focus on problematizing and destabilizing existing discourses and power structures enables a focus on what needs to be done in order to change the real-world conditions for participation, to gain access to legitimate and recognized positions, and thereby, to expand the subject's agency and conduct of everyday life (also see Lugones, 2003). On the other hand, a focus on the limits and conditions society places on participation across different life contexts enables insights into the dynamic and interdependent relations between discourses, actions and positions of varying degrees of privilege and power. The question we asked in our 2009 article on researcher positioning is one that we now, 13 years later, are more capable of answering. Change through research does not have to be on either the discursive or the practical level of action and participation. Indeed, there is no dividing line between these levels, and both can be addressed simultaneously to bring about transformation.

In this article, we have doubled our use of mo(ve)ment ethnography, that is we have used this approach on two fronts, also applying it to study our own researcher positionings in and across different contexts and exploring their implications for the research process. Together, we have come to recognize that, to be able to conduct research working closely with subjects in extremely marginalized positions, we must continually co-create trust across the different contexts and participants. We achieve this by engaging in ongoing dialogue with co-researchers and the broader field and by co-creating new forms of situated ethics of on our journey.

Transmethodological mo(ve)ment ethnography requires us to move in the directions X moves in, which has also shaped this article. When we began writing, X was still incarcerated and awaiting the court's decision on whether he could be released. As we are in the process of finalizing the article, it is almost six months since X was released and

has been living in his new home with his wife, awaiting the birth of their first child. Since his release, X has been engaged in creating a new life for himself and we have developed new forms of collaboration and participation in our joint research process. We look forward to seeing where this will lead us.

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