THE INTEGRATION PROGRAM: POWER RELATIONS AND EPISTEMIC VIOLANCE

MASTER THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

The refugee context as such comprises of three phases: 1) the initial one, in which the push and pull factors are weighed and the decision to leave is made; 2) the second, the flight, covers the temporal and spatial bridge between the abandoned reality and the one to be attained; 3) and eventually, when refugee status is granted begins the integration phase.

Having experienced various degrees of trauma back home, under fleeing and even while seeking refuge in a foreign country, often living for months, years in asylum centers, receiving refugee status might seem the end of the tunnel; however, it is by far not the end of the road. The refugee reenters an established social order, this time encountering a new language, a new culture, and, all of a sudden, is to live up to alien expectations difficult to conceptualize. The host community is also challenged by the newcomers, who enrich as well as disturb their social space. It is state responsibility to make the meeting of cultures as smooth as possible and to ensure a sound and well-functioning common social space for both parties. For that purpose has the Danish state developed a three-year Integration Program with strict rules as to what is expected of both the municipalities and the refugees in order to achieve success in the field. The integration teams of the municipalities are also granted freedom in coordinating certain aspects of the process, mostly the ones pertaining to local characteristics. Job search, for example cannot be centrally regulated, since the job market in an agricultural region differs greatly from job opportunities in a big city.

The present thesis focuses on Odsherred Kommune's, a smaller Danish municipality's struggle with the three-year integration program, including refugee participation, as well as the Integration Team's work. While doing internship in Odsherred, I was given the task of producing an evaluation of the municipality's integration work. Such a task is of great value to a student in Refugee Studies. One gets a glimpse at what preparations are made when a municipality receives a refugee; what tasks are to be tackled afterwards, how they are distributed; what the discrepancies are between the municipality's lawful obligations, its humane intentions and the refugees' expectations; how all that is judged by the refugees themselves and by all the participating parties.

Having examined these correlations, it has become evident that the integration milieu, created by rules, rights, responsibilities and mixed emotions seems to have developed a controversial scenario. Refugee status does secure protection to the newcomers; still, their freedom is conditional and strongly restricted. The state wants to protect the refugees, its citizens and itself, making sure the money put into integration is well spent. In the meantime, however, relations similar to colonialism/post-colonialism are created. Despite the fact that no physical space is colonized outside the dominant—Danish—culture's territory, the dominant culture and its language are forced onto others. Furthermore, refugee surveillance has close resemblance to the one in the colonizer-colonized relationship, and a center-periphery dichotomy develops along with the experience of one party's sense of exclusion, despite the fact, that the aim of the integration program is inclusion. Although the integration process is not a colonizing one 'per se', the two have a close resemblance to one another, which is important to recognize, since this parallel may enlighten us on the paradoxes and hindrances that block the integration venture despite good intentions on both sides; and might eventually highlight how to improve the integration venture.

Thus, the label 'colonial' is not a moral judgment passed on the way Denmark handles refugees, its system is actually more elaborate, more attentive to the nuances of integration difficulties, than what many European countries have. The parallel drawn between integration and colonialism/post-colonialism is simply an attempt at understanding the present controversial state of affairs in early integration, as far as power relations, social and cultural dichotomies, communication and identity issues go, posing the **research question**: *What problems of early integration does a parallel drawn between refugee integration and colonialism/post-colonialism highlight and what relevance that resemblance has in the current integration process?*

The methodological tools applied have targeted both empirical and secondary data. Empirical data have been collected by doing fieldwork at various locations of the municipality; by applying participant observation at municipality meetings, language schools, family visits, etc.; and by conducting semi-structured interviews. Standpoint analysis and reflexive ethnography have enhanced the interpretative process, at times sending me back to the field. Secondary data, such as laws, regulations, minutes, etc. have been collected by the use of desk research.

The theoretical stance taken has two major components: theories of integration and theories of colonialism/post-colonialism. Integration is employed as an acculturation strategy (Berry 1997: 8), which has its foundation in citizenship/rights/responsibilities; its facilitators in language, cultural knowledge and stability; its specific social connections; and the specific markers and means by which it functions (Ager & Strang, 2008: 170).

In understanding what power relations develop in the Integration Program and how those affect the integration process, the theory of colonialism/post-colonialism is helpful by revealing the dynamics of the center-periphery dichotomy and supplying analytical tools for investigating the social space of subalternity.

The analytical chapters explore how controversial aspects of the integration program can be uncovered through examining, with the help of postcolonial theories, power relations, center-periphery dynamics, 'othering' processes and the social space of exclusion.

METHODOLOGY

Problem formulation and theoretical considerations are based on data collected at Odsherred Municipality, one of Denmark's smaller, rural municipalities, located on the Northern edge of Zealand. Odherred has been recently grappling with the refugee challenge, having received 13 in 2008, while expected to run 198 newcomers through the three-year integration program in 2016, most of who will probably move out of the region after the program is over.

In case one's field of interest is integration, the following actors are to be taken into consideration: the refugees themselves (in Odsherred presently mostly from Syria); the Municipality's actors—Integration Team, Integration Council and mentors; interpreters, the educational institutions and the voluntary workers/organizations involved. Since my focus is not integration in general, but the three-year program, the Integration Council will not be in focus, since it has a wider scope of vision in such matters, reaching beyond the initial integration phase. The methodological tools applied in primary empirical data collection with the other actors have been fieldwork, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, standpoint analysis and reflexive ethnography. As for secondary data, desk research has been conducted: the Danish Integration Law has been consulted, as well as other documents like project and educational materials, minutes of meetings, annual reports, surveys.

Fieldwork

The 'integration field' of Odsherred is encompassed by several areas: the Jobcenter in Fåreveijle, where the Integration Team sits; two language schools, one in Asnæs, the other in Holbæk, responsible for different levels of language acquisition; the primary school in Højby, where all the refugee children start their education; the community building in Nykøbing Sjælland, where some of the projects are held; one of the conference rooms in Nykøbing Sjælland's Swimming Hall, used for inter-departmental meetings on specific subjects; the municipality building in Nykøbing Sjælland, where the family consultants from all over Odsherred meet; the municipality

building in Holbæk, where inter-municipality programs are held; the community building in Høvre, where the maternity meetings take place; and the homes of the refugee families.

Elements of the 'integration field' are as diverse as the integration challenge itself. Approaching them took not only physical but organizational efforts, as well, which nonetheless had its advantages. Given access to the Team's timetable, I was either approaching the field alone, or joining someone heading there. The latter also allowed for the possibility of relaxed discussions, informal interviews on certain related issues along the way, enhancing my knowledge and understanding of specific subjects, thus allowing for contextualization, seeing issues from different angles.

I have applied both field-note-writing styles: the "experiential style", putting down my ideas later, in case of an informal conversation or more involved participation; while used the "participating-to-write style", too, taking notes already in the field (also adding thoughts later), when I was more of an observer (Emerson et al. 1995: 16). Taking field-notes was a significant first step in the interpretative process of my work, since through the "first act of textualizing" does the interpretative process begin (Emerson et al. 1995: 16).

Participant observation

The dual act of observing the field and being a participant in the meantime, adds a new dimension to one's research. Observation implies being distanced, while participation equals involvement (Hastrup et al. 2011:31). Since the integration program as a whole is under consideration in this thesis, both sides: the subjects and the executors of the program, are to be closely examined separately, as well as together on occasions where these parties get in contact with each other and communicate the details of the process.

I have attended several meetings, 21 all together, with the Integration Team or inter-departmental or inter-municipality actors, also with volunteers, often participating in discussions, or sharing my views on the observed projects. At certain occasions observation dominated, at others I had an active part at the meetings; in any case, I communicated with the participants in all instances.

As for the subjects of the integration process, I visited the Municipality's two language schools, where there was a chance to talk to the refugees both formally and informally. I attended several language classes, was invited to join conversations, to solve tasks and to talk to the students in the breaks.

There were certain counseling occasions, when a case worker had a meeting with a refugee in the presence of an interpreter or the refugee's mentor, and specific aspects of his/her integration were discussed. I attended 11 of these with three different case workers, sat in the background and took notes. Permission to stay was asked for and granted in all cases.

I also participated in two counseling days at the language school. A case worker is stationed every Friday at Asnæs Sprogskole from 9.00 until 14.00. Students with problems to discuss sign up for a meeting at the beginning of the day and are called in one after the other for consultation. The two counseling days I attended were conducted by two different case workers, with 15 refugees showing up one day and 7 the other.

I also observed the Municipality's 5 projects: 'Projekt Uddannelsesklar', preparing educated refugees for further education in Denmark; 'Projekt Arbejdsmarkedsklar' in Danish and another one in Arabic, preparing refugees for the job market; 'Mindspring' for young refugees to help with integration difficulties; and 'Barselsgruppe' for pregnant refugee women and ones with small infants.

I was also allowed to follow closely the work of the Municipality's two family consultants, joining them at meetings and going along to home visits. I was at the homes of 6 families, making observations as to their living conditions, family structure, gender roles, communication problems and integration difficulties they face as a family unit. About these issues could one also learn at the refugees' individual consultations with the social workers.

During all the above listed meetings I could observe and take notes of what topics were discussed, with what attitude, in what tone, with what gestures, facial expressions and in what

atmosphere. I participated in most of the ongoing dialogues and tried to understand at every municipality-refugee encounter both the social and the emotional set-up.

Semi-structured interviews

Field work, observation and participation helped me to gain an overview of the system, its actors and the power relations behind their operations, moreover, these methods contributed to the conceptualization of subjects for interviews, and helped in finding the right interviewees. Different interview guides were constructed for the different fields. These guides are necessary in order to stay focused on certain topics and avoid disruptions, while they allow for other relevant points of interest to enter the conversation (Kvale 2007: 12).

Semi-structured individual interviews have been conducted with 3 social workers, 2 family consultants, 6 language teachers, 3 project coordinators, 4 mentors/interpreters and an independent counselor. There have also been group interviews at two projects with 10 and 12 people attending respectively, and with 15 students in one of the language classes, while individual interviews have been conducted with 5 refugee participants in two projects, 10 students in the two language schools and with one refugee woman a social worker introduced me to. The types of interviews varied between "key-informant interviews" and "life history or biographical interviews" (Walcott 2001: 161), while also bearing the features of conceptual interviews in the sense that "there was a joint endeavour to uncover the essential nature of a phenomenon" (Kvale 2007: 72-73), in this case that of early integration. Empirical data gained from the interviews are presented in the analysis by means of "theoretical reading" (Kvale 2007: 117).

It so happened, that none of the interviewees really consented to the use of a recorder. Some openly rejected its application; others expressed how uneasy they felt about its use. Since I was first on internship doing an analysis of the municipality's work, employees of the municipality and the language schools, as well as refugees themselves felt more comfortable voicing their criticism or bad experience in case the interview was not recorded. They did not want any proof of involvement, were afraid that traceability could badly affect their job or status as refugees.

Eventually, I dropped the idea of taping the interviews all together. I promised the interview would be conducted anonymously, scribbled notes during our conversations and right afterwards applied my first analytical method, which was partly 'meaning condensation', partly 'content analysis' and partly the first steps of the 'ad hoc' technique of interview analysis.

"*Meaning condensation* entails an abridgement of the meanings expressed by the interviewees into shorter formulations" and longer statements are rephrased (Kvale 2007: 106-7). In the meantime a categorization had to be done like in *content analysis* to "facilitate comparisons and hypothesis testing" (Kvale 2007: 105), which coincided with the first moves of the *bricolage or ad hoc tactics* of revealing patterns, themes, categories, contrasts and comparisons, "making metaphors" (Kvale 2007: 116). As Kvale points it out, the use of the bricolage approach entails that "there is no epistemological primacy accorded to any of the methods and techniques, they are different means of investigating a provoking statement" (Kvale 2007: 117). The provoking statement in Kvale's example is about grading, in ours it is the parallel drawn between the integration program and colonial/post-colonial attitudes.

The final analytical method used in this variety of interview analyzing techniques, and the one eventually dominating is '*theoretical reading*', in which no "specific systematic analytical tools" are applied, "[n]o tables or quantified categorizations of themes are presented", instead the "findings are reported in a continuous interpretative text" (Kvale 2007: 117-118), which incorporates the analysis of the other collected data as well. The foundation of the theoretical reading is made of two components: theories of integration and theories of colonialism/postcolonialism.

Standpoint analysis

I am deeply grateful to the interviewees and all my partners willing to enter into various forms of communication with me, for their contribution, for all the time and effort they put into supporting this project, for sharing their knowledge and experience. Whatever it was I encountered, I tried to understand what factors account for that. Thus, I have been doing standpoint analysis, gathering

data from people representing various standpoints, exploring their positionality and the power relations that determine their positions.

Reflexive ethnography

The researcher's presence and his/her awareness of the research situation itself are taken into consideration in reflexive ethnography; moreover, it situates the researcher inside the research field by highlighting his/her possible effect on it, also referred to as 'reactivity' (Davies 1998:7). In case of the present research, the reflexive method has been extensively utilized by means of the shared experience of foreignness between the refugees and the researcher on the one hand, and by means of the evaluation the researcher was asked to prepare for the Municipality on the other hand.

Whenever I entered the research field and had any contact with any refugee, I introduced myself. Just by looking at me and hearing me speak Danish could anyone tell that I am not an ethnic Dane, thus it was natural for me to add where I am from. In case I forgot to mention it, they would never fail to ask. As a consequence, we would also share experiences as to the difficulties of language acquisition and living in a foreign country. The fact that I have a background in language studies and cultural studies only enhanced their interest in me, often asking for my advice. Moreover, I was an outsider in the Municipality, not an employee, doing internship, evaluating the municipality's work, later doing my own research. All these factors placed us in the same field, a state of 'in-betweenness', a position from which mutual confidence can more easily develop, informal conversations and semi-structured interviews can more easily be conducted. Nonetheless, I was aware throughout of the ethical issues, assuring them that they would stay anonymous and never pushing any issue in case there was no willingness to elaborate. Beyond its advantages, I was also aware of the drawbacks of cross-cultural interviewing, in which, as Kvale states, "it is difficult to become aware of the multitude of cultural factors that affect the relationship between interviewer and interviewee". (Kvale 2007: 68).

I spent the first three months in Odsherred as an intern. A uniquely positive characteristic of Odsherred Municipality's Integration Team is that they are always out to improve their work.

While being aware of the fact that they represent state authority, and thus are bound by the law, they strive to be as effective and as humane as possible in individual cases, within the given legal framework. My major internship assignment derived from that initiative. I was asked to participate in the team's daily activities and eventually write an analysis/evaluation in Danish on the work done by the Integration Team. Members of the Integration Team saw me as another source of feedback on their successes and shortcomings in refugee integration and intended to use my reflections to improve their input. When an internal evaluation was coming up, I was to present my opinion on the matter in focus, like in the case of three projects run by an external actor. The evaluation I was to write at the end of the internship had another major component: it was to be put in a comparative light. I was asked to look into how some other municipalities on Zealand handle the integration challenge in order to put Odsherred's efforts into perspective and be able to make recommendations on the basis of both my evaluation and other practices.

The fact that I was to gain an overview of integration in Odsherred with a helping intention, but without any authority in the power structure, influenced people's attitude toward my inquiries in a positive way. Also, this was an inherently dynamic position, not a static one in the sense that I did not arrive with something specific to investigate, but with a concept of the frame and the intention to find out along the way what to investigate, how and with whom. As Mead points out, the investigative eye is "always in progress" (Mead in Davies 1998:25). I often voiced my progress by expressing how my vision developed or by going back to people, reposing questions in the light of other information. Seeing my progress influenced my research by affecting people's responses and attitude towards me. We all were in progress, the refugees, the Integration Team and me, sharing the same field, although standing on different portions of it. Our ongoing contact also invigorated heightened self-awareness of our mutual but also individual contribution to the progress, since "through dialogicity language creates our sense of the self" (Blaeser 1996: 27). Davies seems to be right in denying the authority of a "privileged voice", when contemplating the importance of postmodernism's influence on ethnography (Davies 1998: 15-16).

T H E O R Y

There might be discussions about what comes first: the ethnographer or the object of study, but in the case of this research project, both the discovery and the creation of the object of study are relevant arguments. During the three-month-internship in Odsherred did I discover how the integration program operates and after recognizing certain mechanisms did I realize that many aspects of this initial stage of refugee integration and the way the various actors function in it highly resemble those of colonialism and its consequences in post-colonialism, making postcolonial theoretical considerations relevant in understanding refugee integration. One might say, I 'created' this parallel and felt challenged to investigate it for two more months in the field, believing that it would reveal a new dimension of the integration enigma. The theoretical considerations applied in the analysis are the ones that naturally follow from the outlined stance: theories of integration and theories of colonialism/postcolonialism.

I)   <u>Integration</u>

The present research project relies on both international and Danish sources, since the research field is located in Denmark, and thus the analysis of certain components of the refugee integration process must adhere to this specific cultural milieu.

Integration is an often debated, controversial subject; no universally accepted definition of it exists. As Robinson puts it, "integration is a chaotic concept: a word used by many, but understood differently by most" (Robinson 1998: 118).

Thus, integration is not necessarily the path taken when refugee status is granted and an inter-/ intra-cultural discussion is initiated. It is rather acculturation that automatically takes place. In Berry's definition the term *acculturation* signifies "the general processes and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of intercultural contact" (Berry 1997: 8). With taking "cultural maintenance" as well as "contact and participation" into account, four acculturation strategies can be distinguished: *assimilation*, where the new society's characteristics take over; *separation*,

where interaction with the new culture is avoided and only the original culture is valued (segregation occurs when the dominant culture forces separation); *integration*, where a balance is hoped to be achieved between maintaining one's own culture and learning how to cope in the new; while in *marginalization* there is not much interest in either the maintenance of the brought culture or interaction with the new (Berry 1997: 9-10).

Of the four types of acculturation integration is generally believed to be the preferred strategy, because, ideally, both cultures involved in the contact influence each other (Mikkelsen 2008: 22). There are two reasons for the adequacy of the term in case of the present thesis: 1) the official word for the three-year program that introduces recognized refugees to the Danish society is 'Integration Program', consequently, the official intention is to integrate; 2) all participants of the process, refugees and municipality employees alike, live up to the expectation of what Scheffer underlines concerning integration, that one party intends to belong, the other intends to include (Scheffer 2009: 336).

Since "*mutual accommodation* is required for integration to be attained, involving the acceptance of both groups", there must be little prejudice, yet great sense of openness and tolerance on the social level, also implying, that integration is dominantly a 'collective' strategy as opposed to assimilation, for example, which is more 'individualistic' (Berry 1997: 10-11). The 'collective'-versus-'individualistic'-strategy argument is close to theories of 'system integration' versus 'social integration'. Of the various ideas on social integration and how they interact with system integration (Zeuner 1997: 15-17), the present thesis applies the theory rooted in the English sociologist, Anthony Giddens' ideas, claiming that *social integration* is based on mutual contact, a face-to-face relationship between individuals (some call it 'individual integration'), while in *system integration* communication between groups of people, communities, institutions are examined; when in contact, the two types of interaction influence each other (Zeuner, et al. 1998: 11-12). As discussed in the analysis, individual meetings between refugees and case workers at Odsherrred Municipality, their face-to-face contact determine the integration process as significantly as the refugee-Integration Law 'encounter' itself.

Yet another method of approaching the notion of integration, with less focus on the individual versus community perspective, is looking at that the routes leading inside social existence, which for Scheffer consists of three branches: the road through family, the road through education and the one through work (Scheffer 2009: 336). These social fields of activity are also incorporated in the analysis, especially education and work, since both refugees and the Integration Team consider them the main fields/targets of improvement.

Spencer's grasp on the concept is also relevant in the present context: she defines integration as "processes of interaction" between migrants/refugees and the citizens, institutions of the host society "that facilitate economic, social, cultural, and civic participation and an inclusive sense of belonging at the national and local level" (Spencer 2011: 203). The domains are the following according to her: *structural* (work, education, health care, housing), *social* (social interaction beyond the institutional contact); *cultural* (values change, as well as attitudes); *civic and political* (participating in the life of the community and the political sphere); and *identity* (the process that enables the migrant/refugee to identify with the host country) (Spencer 2011: 203).

Ager and Strang have conceptualized an even more complex system when describing the different domains of integration. They proclaim that the (1) *foundation* is citizenship and the system of rights it entails (Ager & Strang 2008: 170). Since refugees in Denmark are not granted citizenship when entering the three-year-integration program, the 'foundation' in their case consists of certain rights and responsibilities, which are embedded in specific discourses they do not always have access to or the competence to internalize (more about this in the analysis).

The (2) *facilitators* of integration, according to Ager and Strand are (a) "language and cultural knowledge" as well as (b) "safety and stability" (Ager & Strang 2008: 181). The significance of learning the language of the host community is considered to be the key to successful integration. Familiarizing oneself with the customs and regulations of the host country also affects the integration process in a positive way, as well as "non-refugees' knowledge of the circumstances and culture of refugees" (Ager & Strang 2008: 182). Danish language acquisition in Odsherred is a highly debated issue as well as the issue of how one should go about acquainting refugees with the Danish culture. Consequently, these aspects of integration are closely examined in the

analysis. Knowledge of the language and culture is one aspect of another facilitator of integration: the sense of safety both refugees and citizens feel in one another's company; ideally, no threat is posed to one by the presence of the other (Ager & Strang 2008: 183).

The third level in the integration process in the Ager-Strang system is the level of (3) *social connections* that mediate between the foundation of rights/responsibilities and "sectors such as employment, housing, education and health"; these connections are (a) "social bonds" that connect newcomers from the same ethnic background and make them feel more at home; (b) "social bridges" that connect refugees and host communities; and finally (c) "social links", "the connection between individuals and structures of the state, such as government services" (Ager & Strang 2008: 177-181). Mostly social links and to some extent social bridges are discussed in the analysis, since those are the ones affected by the integration program on the one hand, and also because I had less access to intra-ethnic relationships on the other hand.

The last domain of integration in Ager-Strang's system is (4) the domain of the "*markers and means of integration*", which are the "key areas of activity in the public arena": employment, housing, education and health (Ager & Strang 2008: 169). The marker most influential on other aspects of the integration process is (a) employment. Through work can one get close to the host society, can one practice and improve language skills, secure economic independence, stabilize the future and restore one's self-esteem (Ager & Strang 2008: 170). Under-employment might be a problem, when one is not employed on the basis of one's qualifications. Another key marker leading to a stable future is (b) education, which, for children at school, might also bring about the alienating experience of exclusion in the form of bullying, for example. Access to (c) health care, if language barriers do not hinder communication, is the factor that ensures good health, the basis for having a sound mind in a sound body for good prospects (Ager & Strang 2008: 172-173). The fourth marker of integration is (d) housing, which also contributes to the sense of home.

As to the specifics of how social and system integration work, how foundations, facilitators, social connections and markers function, they will be investigated in the analytical section.

II)   Colonialism/postcolonialism

The other set of theories applied in the present analytical investigation is colonialism/postcolonialism. Despite the fact that colonialism continues to exist in various forms, Bhambra claims that there has been a general "neglect of colonial relations" in sociology (Bhambra 2007: 872) and that the postcolonial "is not only missing from sociological understandings, but is also not recognized as present *within* the 'modern social', except as constituting the context of modernization for once colonized societies" (Bhambra: 2007: 875). Seidman believes that what accounts for this lack is the fact that sociology emerged under Western Imperialism (Seidman 1996: 314). Steinmetz, however, represents a counterargument, maintaining that a postcolonial sociology does exist, focusing on "six sets of causal mechanisms: (1) capitalism; (2) geopolitics, war and violence; (3) cultural representations and subjectivity; (4) resistance and collaboration by the colonized; (5) institutional dimensions of empires and colonies; and (6) conflict and compromise among colonizers at the heart of colonial states" (Steinmetz 2014: 77). On these grounds does Steinmetz enlist various types of colonialism, of which classic colonialism or settler colonialism, internal colonialism and post(-)colonialism are of relevance in the present thesis.

Classic colonialism

'Classic colonialism*'* is defined by territorial thirst, it is the "forcible takeover of land and economy, and, in the case of European colonialism, a re-structuring of non-capitalist economies in order to fuel European capitalism" (Loomba 2001: 20-21). Traditionally, colonizing power is put to force from the metropolis, though the colonizers are in minority on the colonies (Weaver 1998: 13). The metropolis and colony opposition has inaugurated a center-periphery dichotomy, in which colonial power was exercised from the privileged center and the colonized were pushed to the periphery of social and economic existence.

There is no geographical division in the integration context; nonetheless, the center-periphery dynamics in the three-year program are strikingly similar to the colonial ones. Integration law, which coordinates the integration process, represents state authority/the center that determines the

conditions under which the refugee is permitted survival on the periphery for a while or for three years (many are granted only one-year stay). Danish integration law also outlines surveillance conditions by which the specific institutional authorities (e.g. Integration team, language school) must execute central, state power. This partly geographical, partly symbolic center-periphery dichotomy that determines power relations coincides with, and, will thus be applied together with the sociological concept of center-periphery (Zeuner 1997: 17), to describe how one is pushed to the margins in the integration process and how that is related to individual or/and system integration.

Refugees do have rights and responsibilities; yet, those do not match what citizens in Denmark live by. Consequently, non-citizen refugees in the integration program end up in the paradoxical state of being presented the door to a future, being drawn into a social space in a municipality, while being kept outside the door, on the periphery, outside the actual social sphere. Such schizoid existence of both being there and being kept at a distance is hard enough for those under the colonial yoke, within the boundaries of their homeland, but it entails double alienation for those seeking refuge in a foreign land, outsiders from the outside as well as from the inside.

The state is not a colonizer in the classic sense while pursuing integration, yet acts like one, can thus be labeled as one. The reasons for doing so might be understandable, since there must be some control to refugee integration, however, the question arises whether the way integration is carried out serves the original purpose or works against it.

Internal colonialism

There is another type of colonialism, which is recognizably closer to the integration context: "internal" or "domestic colonialism", interchangeable with "domestic imperialism". Steinmetz defines it as targeting the aboriginal population (Steinmetz 2014: 84), while Krupat sees it as a more general concept, as the "condition of politically sustained subalternity" (Krupat 1998: 30). Internal colonialism is still very much alive in countries where the aboriginal minority is under the colonizing majority's control, creating reservations and ghettos, and is prevailing in countries where the refugee presence has grown into a serious social challenge.

Since colonization takes place within the boundaries of one country, there is no territorial, instead a social, political and economic division between center and periphery. The Integration program functions similarly. According to Adams, under "internal colonialism" "the dominant society controls and monopolizes the important cultural institutions, the legal and political apparatus, and the class structure […] traditional cultural values and customs are being penetrated and the content being redefined and structured" (Adams 1999: 9). Most refugees I talked to in the Integration program experience the same kind of domination, since their traditional social, cultural, legal and political values are gradually de-familiarized. The Danish legal system is alien to them; social hierarchies, often based on religious values or cultural traditions lose relevance in Denmark, thus refugees are lost when it comes to what political stance to take. To some extent it is again a natural concomitant of the integration process, but 'in what ways' and 'to what extent' is of crucial importance. In case State domination over refugees exceeds the extent to which Danes feel to be dominated by laws and regulations, it can seriously affect the success of the integration program in a negative way.

No matter which of its forms we consider, "[t]he story that *colonialism* tells about itself is something *more complex than a historical account; it is also a world view and a whole system of knowledge*" (Greedharry 2008: 52).

Post-colonialism/postcolonialism

Post-colonialism can denote the aftermath of the colonial era, or is understood to mean a critical stance, "the discourse of oppositionality, which colonialism brings into being (Ascroft, Griffith, Tiffin 2002: 117), even still under the colonial yoke. As oppositionality to colonialism, it is also the denominator of "global justice, multicultural citizenship and human rights" (Kohn & McBride 2011: 3). In contemporary world politics, the international refugee regime makes refugee movement and resettlement possible with the help of exactly the same notions: global justice, multicultural citizenship and human rights. It is intriguing to examine how the paradoxical forces of suppressive colonial politics and the liberating justice-rights dialectics of post-colonialism can go hand-in-hand in the integration context.

Postcolonialism, written in one word, however, signifies that "*our era is 'postcolonial'*" (Sylvester 2014: 185) beyond spatial and temporal considerations as to where and when colonial oppression and freedom from it were exercised. Thus postcolonialism is often distinguished as a system of theories on "issues of power, domination, and the possibilities of self-determination in relationship to hegemonic powers" (Kohn & McBride 2011: 6). These are relevant issues, not only because ours is a postcolonial era, but also because "[c]olonial mentalities…die hard" (Brydon 2000: 2). Postcolonial Studies "tries to understand and explain how colonialism has produced the categories of thought that we have today and to remain vigilant about how postcolonial attempts to break away from those categories sometimes succumb to the same problem" (Greedharry 2008: 8). There is also a current tendency to be more focused on contemporary and daily issues not just heroic episodes (Sylvester 2014: 194).

Postcolonialism's inquiries have also been across the disciplines, investigating and offering "relevant methodological-analytical tools needed to deal with new social, economic, cultural, and political contexts and situations" (Nayar 2016: 1). There has been a significant paradigm shift in the 1990s in postcolonial studies from "the *hierarchic binary* of 'West versus East'", to "an emphasis on exchanges, links, *hybridities* of racial, national, and cultural relations of 'West' and 'East'" and West and South, one consequence of which was "postcolonialism's transnationalization of Europe" (Nayar 2016: 2-3). Migrating from the East and South to the West, seeking asylum and integration are the direct consequences of colonial/post-colonial relations between the West and the South/East.

These consequences, however, are not homogeneous experiences, partly because the regions involved in the East and South "have strikingly different histories and concerns, and are not all postcolonial in the same way" (Ward 2013: 170), neither are the Western countries of destination homogeneous; and partly because individual stories and circumstances differ significantly. Postcolonialism thus investigates similar "multiple, interpenetrating determinations" (Ahmad 2016: 108)

The basic relation that determines all aspects of social, economic and political co-existence both in the colonial/post-colonial and in the integration context is the *power structure* developed by the dynamics of the center-margin dichotomy. Since the integration program is, by law, built on an authoritative power vs. refugee dynamic, what Postcolonial Studies investigates is highly relevant for this project: what the 'center' represents; what it is comprised of; how it operates and through what executive means. The margin's positionality is also explored in relation to authority and its institutions, to the wider society, and in relation to their own ethnic milieu, if any in case of refugees.

Bourdieu's Field Theory with the concept of 'capital' is a complementary addition to postcolonial theory. It helps to reveal how individuals are positioned and hierarchies are structured within and between social fields in the postcolonial integration process, using economic, social and cultural capital. According to Bourdieu, "agents are distributed in the overall social space, in the first dimension, according to the overall volume of capital they possess and, in the second dimension, according to the structure of their capital, that is, the relative weight of the different species of capital, economic and cultural, in the total volume of their assets" (Bourdieu 1989: 17).

Thus, along with mapping the fields of power, the interaction between the specific fields of power must be investigated, along with how they define one other; and what the means and consequences of this interaction are. This correlation defines the social space those kept on the periphery are allowed to occupy in their *marginalized social reality*.

Postcolonialism also examines through what strategies of '*othering*' in the process of center-margin interaction this social space of marginalization, the space of *subalternity* develops. "Subalternity is where social lines of mobility, being elsewhere, do not permit the formation of a recognizable basis of action", states Spivak (Spivak 2005: 476). It corresponds to the *space of exclusion* the refugee is banished to by not being granted citizenship, only temporary permission to stay.

In that space a new identity is imposed on the colonized/refugee through the epistemic violence of othering (Spivak 1998: 280), what the gaze of power initiates. As Bhabha point out, "it is not

the Colonialist Self or the Colonised Other, but the disturbing distance in between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness" (Bhabha 1994: 117). Moreover, the new identity of 'otherness' is the identification and essentialization of difference into a *collective identity*, which is deprived of its individuality.

Strategies of survival in the paradoxically both inviting and alienating sphere of refugee integration are also important to examine. *Mimicry,* for example, is when the subaltern copies the one 'othering' him/her in the hope of acquiring some of his power. The creation of a Third Space, however, is bringing about a space of hybrid existence, where "translation and negotiation" between the old and the new are possible (Bhabha 1994: 54-55).

Power relations, epistemic violence and coping in the Integration Program will be in the focus of the coming analysis.

A N A L Y S I S

POWER RELATIONS

The Integration Program as a field of social interaction is a unique phenomenon in the sense that its ontological status is ambivalent, while its empirical ordering is clear-cut. After examining the nature of ontological ambivalence surrounding the Program, the chapter will move into exploring the field itself, and look at its various actors along with the power relations that organize it, as well as the means by which the power structure functions.

The Integration Program—its ontology

Observing and experiencing the everyday reality of the Program in Odsherred has been seeing only one side of the coin, since, as Bourdieu claims, "the truth of any interaction is never entirely to be found within the interaction as it avails itself for observation"; most often "the visible, that which is immediately given, hides the invisible which determines it" (Bourdieu 1989: 16). The invisible here is refugee integration examined from the point of view of power relations, which highlights the ways in which the Integration Program as a power structure tries to control what is feared by the State to undermine social stability; that is, the program intends to set refugee presence inside a frame of reference everyone can comprehend and relate to, refugees and non-refugees alike. However, this is not a social space inside the established social order, as mentioned earlier, since refugees in the program are not granted citizenship. In order to understand what accounts for an arbitrary social milieu to be placed outside the social space to function in, the Program has to be put first within a wider frame of reference.

Allowing foreigners in need to live with us, feeling responsible for their well-being, even supporting them financially, is an act of solidarity. Solidarity is thus "the assumption that the realm of international, a location defined in terms of statehood, is somehow reined in, challenged, by another realm, that of the human" (Jabri 2016: 405). It presupposes a political stance beyond the national, in accordance with the expectations of the international regime, but, paradoxically,

the specifics of refugee integration get to be a more restricted vision of solidarity, limited by national interests. Solidarity in case of refugee integration does not target a group outside national boundaries, the foreigner is not helped at a distance, is shown inside instead. Issues of solidarity tend to collide with national interests at this point, especially in Europe, because, as Werbner claims, there is a difference between "European nationalisms, the only ones which posit a 'natural' cultural and linguistic homogeneity", and "[p]ostcolonial nationalisms, [which] are almost always, by contrast, linguistically and ethnically plural" (Werbner 2016: 446-447), despite, but also as a consequence of, the fact that the colonial has been closely affiliated with nationalism and the nation state. Nations are "communities created not simply by forging certain bonds but by fracturing and disallowing others (Loomba 2001: 202). As a result of late-modern migrancy, "the West moves between the rearticulation of nation and nationalism and the enunciation of cosmopolitanism" (Fernendes 2008: 40), allowing refugee presence but disallowing any presupposed threat that presence might pose.

Thus, ontologically speaking, the three-year Integration Program is a highly ambivalent social space, being physically inside the sovereign Danish state, yet symbolically outside the sphere of the national. Solidarity and nationality meet in a unique combination, in a post-colonial-like 'Third Space', as Bhabha would call it (Bhabha 1994:53), a space of in-betweenness, of both allowing and disallowing belonging, in which solidarity is practiced; the refugee is invited inside the boundaries, but, at the same time, is kept outside the social order with only temporary permission to stay. Such a "liminal space", however, "render[s] authority structures ambivalent" (Werbner 2016: 446), as is the case with the Integration Program, as well, often disempowering the actors by the sense of instability and ambivalence.

Inside the field—state authority

The actors inside the field of the Integration Program, as practiced in Odsherred Municipality, are the Danish state, the Municipality, NGOs, voluntary workers and the refugees themselves. State authority is represented by certain discourses and executed by the Integration Team and language schools, which, in turn, invite other actors to the field: mentors, interpreters, NGOs, like Dansk Flygtninghjælp, project coordinators or voluntary helpers.

The Danish State functions like a "world-making" symbolic power when creating the Integration Program, by 1) being "in possession of symbolic capital", that is, economic and cultural, and 2) the vision it proposes is "founded in reality" (Bourdieu 1989: 23), which implies none other than the reality that the refugee situation needs to be addressed and the State has both the economic and cultural capital to do so. The State then creates the world of refugee integration through ruling texts, like laws and regulations. These official discourses "impose a point of view" on the system, which is "instituted as legitimate that everyone has to recognize" (Bourdieu 1989: 22). Power is thus exercised through language first and foremost, through discourse—"narrative is authority itself" (Lyotard, 1989: 321). Furthermore, the State is in the best position in the social hierarchy of actors, a hierarchy based on how capital is "distributed" among agents and what "the overall volume of the capital they possess" is (Bourdieu 1989: 17), in this case the State being at the top of the hierarchy with the greatest 'volume' of economic and cultural capital.

The official discourses regulate 1) *what refugees are entitled to*, such as an integration contract; a personal integration plan; access to Danish language courses; a certain amount of financial support; a mentor/interpreter; health check; help with finding housing, work or internship; coordination in further education. Rules specify 2) *refugee responsibilities* as well, like paying the rent properly; not missing language classes or meetings with the case workers; accepting a job offer, even if it is not a dream job; informing caseworkers about travel intentions. 3) *The case workers' obligations* are also enumerated, such as formulating an integration contract along with an individual integration plan; holding follow-up meetings with the refugees every three months; being in contact with the language schools; ensuring there is retribution in case any aspect of the refugee-state/municipality agreement is violated; administering every refugee-municipality interaction and every aspect of every case (Flygtninge… Integrationsnet).

The above regulations are meant to ensure the success of the seven goals for integration: 1) Danish language competence and proper education; 2) integration to the job market; 3) economic independence; 4) no discrimination; 5) everyday contact between Danes and refugees; 6) participation in politics; 7) the endorsement of Danish norms and values (Ministeriet 2006: 6-7; Thorndal 2011: 146).

Regulating state discourses, however, need to be implemented by certain actors, since power has a "net-like anatomy, […] is not concentrated in some central body, such as the state" (Gallagher 2008: 399), and it is "exercised, not possessed" (Gallagher 2008: 397), it "exists only when it is put to action" (Foucault 1983: 219).

Executing state authority in Odsherred—municipality actors

The examined field, Odsherred Municipality, has developed two strategic units, two substantial actors in the field of integration to execute integration initiatives: a municipal, the Integration Team, and a partly municipal, partly communal, the Integration Council. The former is the major unit implementing national integration policy, overseeing early integration, handling daily tasks and overcoming practical difficulties, while the latter is an advisory board, made up of representatives from the municipality, as well as of already integrated citizens from various ethnic backgrounds, meeting once a month with the function of following the integration process in general, not specifically the three-year program. That is the reason why the present thesis focuses on the work of the Team and not the Council.

The Integration Team

The team is located at the Jobcenter, working closely with colleagues having experience in healthcare, education and the job market in the region. The Integration Team is made up of 10 employees with specific focus areas: a chief, overseeing the team's work; an integration consultant, managing organizational matters, also having cases of her own; three caseworkers dealing with individual adults' integration; two caseworkers are responsible for refugee children and family-related issues; two employees have the responsibility of solving all housing-related tasks, and last but not least there is an intern.

The three-year Integration Program the team is to carry out with each and every refugee from the moment of their arrival in the municipality demands a high level of logistics, involving the team members; the refugees themselves; interpreters and mentors; other municipality employees;

companies, organizations and educational institutions inside and outside the municipality; volunteer members of the community. Since the team holds all the threads, it needs to be well coordinated. Task-related and team-related meetings are held on a regular basis, ensuring proper communication within the team as a whole as well as cooperation within and between smaller team units (e.g. family caseworkers). Having moved recently from smaller offices to one huge office space enhances the team's capacity for exchanging ideas on a daily basis.

Beside the regular/daily tasks, the team lays special emphasis on developing a clear-cut system of boundaries for rights and responsibilities both for those working with and for those participating in the integration process in order to avoid misunderstandings developing into hindrances in refugee integration. Special events are organized for this purpose, e.g. 'Introduction day' for newcomers or 'Meetings for Mentors'.

Beyond regular personal contact with the refugees, the team offers extra opportunities for seeking help, like Thursday afternoon guidance in the presence of interpreters at the Jobcenter, or the same on Fridays at the language school. A maternity club supports women on maternity leave or the ones still pregnant. The municipality has also contact with volunteer organizations that offer extra help for refugees in various areas. A general feature of all the caseworkers at Odherred Municipality's Integration Team is that their primary concern is supporting the integration venture as well as possible. Some caseworkers even work extra hours; go on extra visits to families and children just to ensure refugees get the proper attention and support they need.

As Ragnhild Ihle points it out, "[r]efugee integration can be seen in various perspectives; from a systematic point of view, or from an individual management point of view" (Ihle 2006: 1). Odsherred Municipality tries to integrate both into its policy in a balanced way.

Challenges—two case studies

Certain specifics regulated by the ruling texts of the integration process are not difficult to execute, for example holding regular follow-up meetings, yet as to how to find jobs for refugees in the municipalities, how to handle conflicts children face at school, or what proper housing is

for them, these issues are left to the municipalities to handle. Such tasks are difficult not only because there are not enough resources or guidelines at hand, but also because of the previously outlined ambivalence inherent in the system. Hovering between humanitarianism, the pure intention of helping others in need, and nationalism with the deliberation of protecting national interests against potential danger those in need might pose, is a schizoid state to experience in an artificially created social field, like the Refugee Program, where municipality employees work and refugees are exiled to outside the national social space. Still, decisions are to be made, and as "all activities … under the rubric of participation in decision-making involve power of some sort" (Gallagher 2008: 395), Team employees do not only exercise but also execute power during their work.

To give an example for the complexity of certain dilemmas that arise from this dividedness between solidarity and nationalism, finding the proper housing in Odsherred is often a highly controversial issue, one causing major conflicts. Previously, when a newly arrived member of the community was not satisfied with the apartment or house offered by the Municipality, the Integration Team helped to find another one—not a legal obligation, only a humanitarian gesture. Yet, as more and more refugees are to be settled in the region, there are less and less alternatives. Moreover, the caseworkers are overburdened, with no capacity to take on extra duties. Consequently, it has been decided that the Municipality must stick to the law and should not keep offering alternatives in the future. As a result, those refugees who are dissatisfied with their apartments/houses are double frustrated: over the housing problem and over not being supported the way earlier arrivals were.

Because of the solidarity-authority duality, there has been much frustration within the Integration Team, too, concerning this issue. The housing problem came up at almost all the meetings I attended, both at the biweekly ones held by the Team and at the individual follow-ups held between a caseworker and a refugee. At times the problem is how one defines livable space, including what number of shelves or chairs to have, or how close the bathroom should be. The caseworker here simply plays the role of the authority, informing the refugee, that he/she has received one offer, but is allowed to move to another place of his/her liking at his/her expense—a difficult task at the early stage of integration, with no knowledge of the culture, even if there

happens to be mentor assistance. This is considered to be primarily a private matter in individual integration the municipality has nothing to do with further on; it does not concern system integration, as Team members often argue.

However, problems usually get more complex than that. A 19-year-old traumatized young man from Afghanistan, for example, was placed in a room (originally a corridor) that led into the house, being disturbed or woken up every single time another tenant entered or wanted to leave the house. This was a case of total frustration both for him and for the caseworker, since the way individual/social integration in this private matter goes does affect system integration, which then is, in fact, the municipality's concern. The boy with the burden of earlier trauma needed privacy, a sense of safety, and rest to be able to concentrate at the language school and study at home. Otherwise, his progress would slow down; he would need to stay longer in the language course, and that would cost the municipality more money. Moreover, the young man was clever and ambitious, read a lot, and did his best to learn Danish quickly, because, as he told me, he wanted to be placed among Danes at school, not among Arabs he feared would set back his integration by putting a lot of group pressure on him. At that point in time, when I got a glimpse at the situation, all the hindrances of his integration would flow from bad placement, thus the young man's future hinged on one of the key markers of integration, on proper housing.

Eventually, the Team decided to stick to the rules and not to offer the young man an extra helping hand. The reason was: lack of resources and a bit of nationalism, while the argument went like this: he is young and strong enough to survive this challenge, too; instead, it is older people in a similar situation but with health issues the municipality chooses to support by finding them another place to live. Authority won over solidarity in the young man's case, making state authority function like a colonial one in internal colonialism; that is colonizing social space by restricting individual ambitions, and diverting the natural route of the facilitators of social action. As a consequence, through one marker of integration, housing, one group of facilitators, 'safety and stability' (Ager & Strang, 2008:183) began to endanger the other facilitators: 'language acquisition and cultural knowledge' (Ager & Strang 2008: 181)—difficulties arising in concentration, not proceeding properly with language acquisition, with the perspective of forcing the young man into strengthening 'social bonds', connections with the same culture—going to

school with Arabs, instead of building 'social bridges' (Ager & Strang 2008: 178-179), connection with the new culture. Although, the young man, too, received much help from the Team, in the lack of resources, being forced to prioritize whom to offer extra support, as well as keeping the rules of 'national protection', the system itself has jeopardized both his social and his system integration with the housing issue.

The Integration Team also functions as mediator between Danish society and those in the program, when administering routes of entrance, placing children in educational institutions, for example. The field of inter-institutional communication, however, appears to be a 'no man's land', unregulated, outside the power structure. Consequently, no one knows who is to hold responsible if a case goes all wrong and the Team can end up lost and powerless. In one instance, a six-year-old from Congo was placed in a school last April. In June the school asked the Team to put him into kindergarten instead; he was considered to be difficult to handle, and perhaps not mature for his age, although the school was not sure about the latter. The boy had to drop out before the summer break and the search for a new institution began. When visiting the family in December, the boy was still out of school, too old for kindergarten, too problematic for other schools after having heard that no institution was willing to take him. One of the caseworkers was taking the boy's situation to heart, went on more regular family visits than usual, trying to spend time with the kid and teach him Danish. She also did everything administratively in her powers to solve the situation, wrote tens of letters to various authorities, arranged for an official psychological evaluation of the child, still without success in February. In the meantime, the little boy's older sister had a baby, who became the center of family attention, leaving the six-year-old boy so solitary, that when I visited the family, he would brighten up just by being talked to, and sat in one place for hours not to lose for one minute the presence of company. He was clever, open, eager to communicate, but lost in unregulated space between the Danish society and the Integration Program's space of exclusion. The great irony of the case hit, when the family received a letter from another department at the Municipality, informing them that every child must be enrolled in an educational institution in Denmark, and it will have legal consequences if the parents do not abide by Danish law. Overregulation has encountered under-regulation, with the consequence of system integration being denied to the boy.

Positionality

The Team's source of power in the first case study is not discourse, but positionality, although such a power position is gained by virtue of access to, knowledge of dominating discourses. Members of the Integration Team are in the possession of knowledge of the system, ruling texts included, thus are endowed with power in it over matters of everyday life. Municipality agents have a "*positional* superiority", as Said would say (Said 2016: 37). Still, the above cases also illustrate how an executive body, empowered to act, becomes disempowered by the ambivalence inherent in the system. Although acknowledging the young man's grounded need for assistance with housing, the Team decided otherwise, not only because of limited resources, but also in order to stick to the protection of 'nationalist interests' integration rules are meant to symbolize. In the little boy's case chaos rules the scene in the lack of proper guidelines. Neither overregulation, nor under-regulation works in operating the system, nonetheless, the hierarchy is visibly functioning.

Those occupying a higher position in the hierarchy, municipality employees in this case, have the right to decide the fate of others, influencing it either in a positive or in a negative way. One is at the mercy of one's position, which is not a feature characterizing democratic states, like Denmark in general, it is more the attribute of political systems based on hegemonic power, an attribute of colonialism, for example. This again illustrates that the Integration Program is outside the Danish democratic social order; it does not adhere to democratic governance Danish social and political life is built upon. It is rather a system of strict regulations and punitive sanctions. Consequently, the Integration Program does not belong to the Danish 'democratic center, it functions only on the periphery with regard to its ontology and empirical practices.

As for the position of the refugees, it is by nature peripheral and inferior, just like that of the colonized people in the shadow of a hegemonic power. Well do they know that; no wonder the use of a tape recorder during interviews was not accepted. The young man in the above case study kept asking me not to use exact descriptions of his room in the analysis I was to deliver to the Municipality, he was afraid, if the information was connected to him, negative consequences would follow. Such fear is the result of over-determining power relations, again characteristic of

oppressive, rather than democratic political regimes. Fear prevails because of the threat of punishment, and so punishment becomes another means of executing power. In case any aspect of the municipality/state-refugee contact is violated under the Integration Program, punitive action follows right away and the financial support a refugee is entitled to gets to be reduced.

Yet, punishment is possible if close surveillance is maintained. The subject of the integration program must always be conscious that there are rules to follow and should feel and fear the eyes of the authorities on him/her constantly. It is like the colonizer's gaze that is fixed on the colonized subject to ensure the distance and subjugated position of those colonized.

Refugees as actors in the field

As discussed above, refugees are set in a social position that is distanced from the Integration Team. Team members are invested with power over the refugees through narratives (e.g. laws, regulations, job descriptions) that establish a 'regime of truths' to use Foucault's terminology, formulating the norms of behavior within this specific context, defining the public realm of action (Foucault in Rainbow 1991), pertaining both to refugees and municipality employees. 'Positional inferiority' such hegemonic discourses create for the refugees, invite complimentary discourses to the arena, refugee reactions mostly, problematizing mutual understanding and common goals. The result is insecurity and frustration on all sides.

An essential problem caseworkers rarely realize is that the texts that organize this realm and influence the fate of refugees are not accessible to the targets of integration, to refugees themselves. The integration contract, for example, or other forms (e.g. 'bolig støtte' application form), are not sufficiently understood by most refugees, despite the fact that they are translated; the forms are often 'blindly' signed. Not knowing the system and the language (although interpreters are used) puts a refugee at the mercy of those mastering both, and no matter what his/her reaction is (humble or antagonistic), it is a *natural reaction* to dominant power, difficult to see for those involved. Thus, the complementary discourses that arise voice disempowerment, and have nothing to do with gratefulness/ungratefulness, as the caseworkers often suspect.

In case a refugee appears to be pushy in asking for assistance, it is again not a sign of ill will or aggression, but is a sign of partly being dominated by other cultural discourses (from 'home') and of not yet being aware of the Danish ones that regulate standards of behavior in the newly encountered culture. Likewise, if a caseworker appears not to react the way the refugee expects her to, it is not because she is not willing to help, but shows how she herself is dominated or restricted by certain discourses the refugee does not yet comprehend. As a result, uneven power relations established by primary discourses (laws and regulations) bring about secondary discourses of dissatisfaction and miscommunication that may block for good refugees' access to cultural discourses that otherwise would empower them later, when citizenship is granted, after having overcome early integration's temporary disempowerment.

While under the Integration Program, refugees must learn to navigate with limited social, economic and cultural capital. As actors they have limited freedom, since their lives are regulated by ruling texts, 'positional inferiority', close surveillance and punishment. They cannot travel or spend their money freely and have only limited power, like asking for help and deciding if they accept it and under what circumstances. Although, they do have the principal power not to obey the rules, bear the consequence of being denied participation in the program and being deported. Harsh as the above may sound, solidarity is always at work simultaneously, and when no assistance can be offered 'officially', Team members turn to voluntary helpers to pitch in and do the humanitarian part of the job.

There are, however, instances, when 'positional inferiority' of one refugee secures the future integration of another. I have met several families, where their traditional and the Danish gender roles could not be harmonized. The mother felt empowered by being allowed a wider range of activities, as well as a heightened level of participation in society, which frustrated the husband. Many find it difficult to accept not only the greater freedom their wives experience, but also the new male gender role they are to live up to, like involvement in solving their children's daily problems or even picking children up at school. Male identity crisis can lead to violence within the family and the wife eventually turning to the Team for help. In such instances the wife receives assistance even with moving out with the kids and then the family is offered counseling. It is, in fact, the abusive husband's 'positional inferiority' in the system that allows for the

Municipality to step in and support the wife. Gender equality and women's rights are issues alien not only to most refugee men, but to women, as well. An interviewee pointed out the importance of enlightening refugee women on rights they are not aware of and have no idea how to exercise. For such burdened women not comprehending their rights and not having access to those discourses equal being blocked from integration to Danish society. Gender equality is a new phenomenon for many refugees and that leads to several conflicts in the integration context, which is a challenging topic to explore, however, the analysis of gender issues is not in the focus of the present thesis.

The paradox in the Integration Program is that while its essential goal is to ensure smooth entrance into society, it is placed by law in the social space of exclusion—no citizenship for the refugees, limited freedom of movement or action, and close surveillance. Its ontological ambivalence is in the ambiguous dynamics between solidarity and nationalism, while its empirical ordering is a clearly regulated hierarchical space of colonial-like hegemonic power with under-regulated ties to the outer society.

EPISTEMIC VIOLENCE IN THE

INTEGRATION PROGRAM

The Integration Program as a socio-political construct is run, as has been discussed, by specific actors, whose actions are regulated by a hegemonic discourse and power relations in a colonial-like formula. The "rationality of power" that determines the social reality of a field, however, "is in its effects" (Gallagher 2008: 400), thus, in order to grasp the nature/essence of the Integration Program, its effects on its target group, the refugees, is to be scrutinized.

Identification

Who is the newcomer who enters the Program? Since it is the State that is in the power position to decide whether the newcomer can enter, it is the State that defines who/what the newcomer is. And the newcomer is not seen first and foremost as a Syrian, an Afghan or a Burmese fleeing from war or persecution, if it was so, he would be allowed quick entrance. The newcomer is looked upon as a *stranger* and is treated accordingly. "The stranger is neither a friend, nor an enemy", is an "undecidable", as Bauman points it out, thus, must be temporarily distanced (Bauman 1990: 145). While "[o]ppositions enable knowledge and action, undecidables paralyze"; they "bring the outside into the inside, and poison the comfort of order with the suspicion of chaos" (Bauman 1990: 145). Just like in colonial space, there is a constant duality and dividedness between chaos and civility; the open assertion of the anomalous produces an impossible cultural choice: civilization or the threat of chaos" (Bhabha 1994: 189). The State's solution to the anxiety the stranger's undecidability causes, the answer to "the fear of misrecognizing the stranger" (Fernandes 2008: 78), is exiling him/her to social exclusion, to 'non-citizen refugee status' in the Integration Program, where the refugee can legally be put under surveillance, and from where he/she can still be sent away or can entrance to society be administered in the pace the State sees fit.

Undecidables are unidentifiables. How should the stranger be identified when allowed into the 'transit zone', the Integration Program? Uncovering/recognizing a stranger's true identity is difficult or impossible, no matter what papers or stories are presented. Therefore, the 'uncertain'

gets to be erased and a new identity imposed upon the newcomer, when being labeled a *refugee* (after having been the 'asylum-seeker-stranger' before), still a stranger, a still distanced 'Other'.

The new label is also the new identity with the expectation of communicating in the host country's language and behaving in accordance with the host culture's rules. The place of origin, nationality or individual stories are all considered to be information from the past, only in special cases, like in conflicts between refugees, are these relevant identity attributes, or if a refugee's reaction is difficult to comprehend by the caseworker. Consequently, refugees in the Integration Program are identified as *subjects not on their own cultural and national right, but on the State's right to recognition.*

The State's recognition of the newcomer as 'Other' is a paradigm-shift for the refugee. "Conceptualizing and categorizing the social reality of the 'Other' involves a complex nexus of symbolic and material realities" (Guhin & Wyrtzen 2013: 235), comprised in the Integration Program of hegemonic discourses, positionality, surveillance, punishment, as well as educational and job opportunities, housing offer, financial support, etc.—as outlined in the previous chapter. It is the various cultural and political hegemonic discourses on these issues that specify who a refugee is, who the state's recognition expects him/her to be. These discourses, however, are alien and not accessible to him/her, due to the lack of cultural knowledge and linguistic competence, thus the refugee, like the colonized subject "is alienated from the possible space of meaning-making" (Frosh 2013: 147), from what/who he/she is meant to be in this alienating space of exclusion. The Integration Program is similar to colonial power in the sense that "[c]olonial power is built on this capacity of the colonizer to remove the source of subjecthood from the colonized; and this power is reflected and institutionalized continuously by the gaze" (Frosh 2013: 148).

The gaze

The authority's gaze stays fixed by means of surveillance and punishment, a reminder of inequality, also an educator in identity. The "structured gaze of power" (Bhabha 1994: 15) socializes similarly to a father's gaze, since the gaze is a Lacanian mirror as well, reflecting how

well the subject follows rules and lives up to expectations, but also reflecting "a state of fragmentation and lack of control" (Frosh 2013:147): in this case having been dispossessed of the past cultural self's relevance and thus of control. By looking into the gaze—the state's reflection/recognition of him—does the refugee learn 'refugee-ness' in the specific Danish context. Consequently, the government's/Integration Team's constant gaze is not simply surveillance, but is the key to the new identity, both alienating—from the previous self as he knew himself to be—and renewing, paving the way for a new self.

It is the gaze where authority hides when it is not visible. Since the Integration Team runs the government's three-year-integration-program and executes the rules and regulations that govern the procedure, they are the representatives of government power. I have never witnessed caseworkers or family consultants abuse their power in Odsherred; still, one can spot at all refugee-municipality encounters the uneven nature of power relations. It is reflected in body language (many refugees bowing more often when talking to caseworkers, than when with fellow-men), in the tone and manner of speaking (using softer tones when communicating with Danes), in the exchange of smiles (less wide, more polite smiles on both sides when communicating with each other), in the kinds of the problems that are addressed (trying to avoid personal issues), and in the way those problems are formulated (often difficult to get the specifics out). Uneven power relations are 'invisibly visible' in every blink, in the constant gaze, in all aspects of human interaction.

One could easily claim that to be a sign of "structural sin" (Hage 2003: 89), where fault is to be found with the conditions rather than with the people (Hage 2003: 89), which, is partly the case. However, since Team members are distanced from the refugee's position—by having executive power—they naturally occupy a different power position in the social space of symbolic power (Bourdieu 1989: 17), than the refugees do. At the same time, the shared position of authority is inscribed in their general mentality and attitude; consequently, they all share in 'authority's gaze'.

Therefore, the refugees' seemingly controversial reaction is always to that of power. Interestingly, this does not fail to surprise the caseworkers, who contend that they are nice and open and do not understand why refugees cannot see it. Also, some caseworkers feel, and from

their position justifiably so, that the efforts of volunteers are more valued than those of the team members, although the latter support refugees eight hours a day, sometimes even more. Nonetheless, refugee reaction has nothing to do with gratefulness, as has already been pointed out; controversial refugee behavior is simply a natural reaction of 'the disempowered' to the gaze of power.

This is an aspect of the integration context neither party seems to be aware of, which is quite unfortunate, since communication difficulties could be overcome in case this issue was consciously addressed.

Epistemic violence—'othering'

The identity the State assigns the newcomer is what the 'non-citizen refugee status' entails, a marginalized position the authority's gaze reflects. Identification and 'the gaze' are thus part of the process of *'othering'*, not simply by making the participant of the Integration Program an 'Other', since, like the colonized subject, the refugee is "in some sense already 'Other'" (Vaughan 1991:10), being a stranger, but by keeping the newcomer at a distance (perhaps less of a stranger when inside the Program, as a refugee, now a stranger by '*our*' definition). The same act in the colonial context is termed '*epistemic violence*' by Spivak, referring to "the project to constitute the colonial subject as Other" (Spivak 1998: 280). Violence is not a harsh word to apply here, since 'epistemic violence' is 1) the arbitrary means of constructing 'positionality' in a hierarchical system, like the Integration Program, 2) also of keeping the subject on the periphery, and, what Bhabha calls, 3) of 'splitting the subject' (Bhabha 1994: 66). The refugee/colonized subject, deprived of his/her historical origin, cannot "claim an origin for the self" (Bhabha 1994: 66). Consequently, there is an inherent "absence or invisibility that constitutes it" (Bhabha 1994: 67).

Not only is the subject 'othered', but is also *fixed* in the position of the 'Other' by being kept at a distance—in this case not at a physical but a social distance, kept in the ambiguous state of being 'the stranger'. The "concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness" (Bhabha 1994: 94) is thus not only a feature of colonialism. The danger of 'fixity' in 'otherness', however,

is that it maintains the center-periphery dichotomy, not allowing for proper system integration, or for social bridges to be erected, costing a lot to society later on, if economic dependency as a result of social distance stays fixed, too. A subtle but sure, though most probably unintentional, way of fixing 'otherness' is speeding up language learning.

Language acquisition

Integration law, critical literature, caseworkers, teachers and the refugees themselves all emphasize the significance of overcoming the language barrier in the integration process. "Language and cultural knowledge" are two key facilitators of integration (Ager & Strang 2008: 182). Nevertheless, language acquisition is a hotly debated, highly controversial issue. I attended several municipality and inter-municipality meetings, where there were long arguments over the issue; none of them reached a consensus. Some general rules regulate certain aspects of teaching Danish in the Integration Law, like what levels to take or what exams to pass; yet, as to the specifics, it is for each municipality to evaluate what policy they believe to best suit the refugees they receive.

Two approaches to achieving the proper level of Danish dominate in my experience: some believe in learning the language first and then entering society, mostly through entering the work force (represented primarily by teachers and the more educated refugees); others claim that no matter how good one is at Danish, if granted the chance to work, opportunity must be grabbed and language competence will develop along the way. I have met a refugee from Burhma, who could hardly understand and speak Danish after five years of various courses, another from Syria, who was almost fluent after eight months at the language school—both were without an internship or a job. Yet, I have also talked to a refugee from Syria, who was offered a job after a month's stay, took only evening classes at the language school, but, as he said, was always so tired that he could not concentrate, and could not communicate in Danish at all after a year. Unfortunately, there is no time and money to set up more individualized study programs.

Odsherred Municipality has chosen a path in-between the two main approaches: refugees study Danish 3 times a week and the Municipality uses all its resources to find internship for the

remaining two workdays. In theory, a good balance could thus be achieved; however, that is not so in reality. Refugees feel that internships are rarely rewarding, either language-wise or professionally. In case the task is to reorder shelves, for example, or to do packing in the company of other refugees, neither one's language competence, nor the understanding of the culture improves.

Furthermore, the expensive integration program forces municipalities to save money on language courses. Great emphasis falls on passing tests, and teachers complain about not having time for practicing speaking Danish. The schools must get refugees through the system as quickly and as effectively as possible. Unfortunately, according to all parties (refugees, language teachers, team members alike), this is to the detriment of quality language acquisition, which, in turn, is a hindrance to accessing dominant integration discourses, and allows for secondary discourses of failure and frustration to arise, a hindrance to well functioning integration. In such a case, however, the knowledge of the host country's language will be so limited, that language acquisition becomes the facilitator not of integration, but of strengthening the host country's "rhetorical sovereignty" (Lyons 2016: 239), as well as the refugee's social distance in the position of 'the stranger', making his difference a 'fixity'.

Cultural differences

Encountering an alien culture would not necessarily entail trying to erase its determining presence from inter-cultural contact. Integration by definition implies *mutual* accommodation to each other's cultures. Naturally, it is the host community that changes less and the newcomers alter their ways more; nevertheless, both are affected by the contact, otherwise, one might find integration shifting towards assimilation.

Mutual adjustments do take place in host communities, as well, during integration in the long run, although European cultures tend to be less open towards other cultures in a subordinate position. Under the Integration Program, however, it rarely happens as a result of the 'non-citizen stranger status' the refugee is positioned in. Just like in the colonial situation,

> "[f]aced with the incomprehensible and multifaceted alterity, the European theoretically has the option of responding to the Other in terms of identity or difference. If he assumes

that he and the Other are essentially identical, then he would tend to ignore the significant divergences and judge the Other according to his own cultural values. If, on the other hand, he assumes, that the Other is irremediably different, then he would have little incentive to adopt the viewpoint of alterity: he would again tend to turn to the security of his own cultural perspective. Genuine and thorough comprehension of Otherness is possible only if the self can somehow negate or at least severely bracket the values, assumptions, and ideology of his culture" (JanMohamed 2002: 18).

Such openness of bracketing one's own values is not characteristic of the Integration Program. Moreover, the very aim of the Program is to make the alien 'Other' bracket his/her own culture and learn the Danish ways as efficiently and as quickly as possible, afterwards act accordingly. Many in power positions in the integration power structure believe this to be the path to take[1]. In its present form, where the Danish culture is to exclusively dominate the refugee's, I believe, what would be a key facilitator of successful integration—cultural knowledge—, turns into its hindrance.

A common source of frustration, for example, that is the result of cultural differences, affects one of the "markers and means of integration: *employment*" (Ager & Strang 2008: 170). Integration to the job market is of major significance, since it influences many other aspects of the integration process, e. g. "promoting economic independence", "developing language skills" or "restoring self-esteem" (Ager & Strang 2008: 170). Geert Hofstede, a Dutch sociologist, identifies five factors in cultural differences that have an effect on refugees/migrants entering firms, companies and businesses. Thorndal has applied Hofstede's categories to the Danish context (Thorndal 2011: 133-144), using the following distinctions:

1) Power distance—In cultures where there is huge power distance within society, the elderly have great respect and parents play a determining role throughout people's lives; the workplace in such cultures expects employees to accept uneven power relations. In Denmark, however, where there is small power distance, more emphasis falls on dialogue (Thorndal 2011: 134).

2) Collectivism versus individualism—This entails a difference between 'we'-cultures as opposed to 'I'-cultures. The individual's opinion is less significant in the former, while

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[1] The fact, that the Municipality acknowledges, at times even supports certain cultural gatherings shows less the acceptance of their difference, than awareness of the fact that refugees might be sent back to their homelands, consequently, they need to maintain cultural knowledge and need to teach their children their mother tongues.

dominates in the latter, like in Denmark. (Thorndal 2011: 135). Dialogue rather than authority is likely to structure work in the latter's case.

3) <u>Masculine versus feminine cultures</u>—In a masculine culture, gender roles are clear-cut and distinct, while in feminine cultures they are more blurred, like in Denmark. As for the job market, professional qualifications matter more in the former, while social competence is of more relevance in the latter (Thorndal 2011: 136-137).

4) <u>Avoidance of insecurity</u>—In cultures where great emphasis falls on eliminating insecurity, there is a tendency to strongly categorize what causes insecurity as absolutely negative. Difference is considered to be dangerous, while in countries like Denmark, difference is interesting and fun (Thorndal 2011: 138).

5) <u>Short-term or long-term oriented cultures</u>—Short-term oriented cultures are more focused on fulfilling social expectations, while long-term oriented ones cherish perseverance and focus on future rewards (Thorndal 2011: 138).

When it comes to entering the job market, all the above listed factors weigh heavily in frustration and misunderstanding developing. Most refugees that are referred to the municipality come from huge-power-distance-cultures(1) and 'we'-cultures (2), which might be helpful in getting through the initial phase at a workplace due to respect toward authority. Nonetheless, refugees have a hard time grasping the notion of dialogue in relation to the job market, especially the long-term version of it. Danish society is in a special long-term dialogue with its work force. The dialogue takes the form of a series of courses and internships, either on one's own initiative, allowing for individual ventures, or with the coordination of the Jobcenter. To the majority of the refugees I have made interviews with, the concept of internship is a mystery; it is seen mostly as a waste of time and the proof of Danish society's unwillingness to employ them. Gaining experience through internships is rarely an argument they accept, since, according to them, it can be achieved with a paid job, as well.

In areas other than work, it is a determining factor that many refugees are from masculine cultures (3) with clear-cut gender roles they can barely imagine crossing. So much so, that their insecurity-avoiding-reflex (4) stigmatizes right away the very competences that could secure their integration. As a consequence, social competences respected in the country of origin will never

match what Danish society values. The schizophrenic psychological state of yearning to hold on to traditional norms, on the one hand, as the only solace in an alien environment, while, on the other hand, feeling the pressure to change them in the hope of survival, can become so drastic, that it can tear families apart. As pointed out earlier, some men, for example, fail to accept their wives' newly established freedom, while they often experience "status loss and limited status mobility" (Berry 1997: 22). In case the stigmatization of new Danish values cannot be undone, the integration process gets to be blocked.

When a cultural conflict is not easy to handle, "acculturative stress" develops, but when cultural differences are overwhelming, there is the danger of psychopathology, in which case "there is little success in dealing with acculturation", sometimes resulting in separation, sometimes in "culture shredding without culture learning" (Berry 1997: 19) As Thorndal states, most employers are after professionalism and competence in problem solving. This often brings success to both employers and employed refugees; still, being integrated to the job market does not automatically imply being culturally integrated (Thorndal 2011: 141-142), the reason why it is not necessarily good to favor jobs for language acquisition and culture learning in the early phase of integration. The integration process might simply stop, since at no point in time will it be possible for these people to properly access and culturally comprehend the discourses they are supposed to live by further on.

In case the above mentioned clashes in cultural norms and values are overlooked, the integration venture can end up either as assimilation or as marginalization. As Said warns us, the 'Other' should be treated/seen "not as ontologically given but as historically constituted" (Said 1989: 225) and then can communication begin.

Collective identity

The Integration Program in its present form does not truly take the "historically constituted" dimension of the refugee into consideration. At all the meetings I attended, municipal and inter-municipal alike, as well as in the minutes and documents I read, participants of the Integration Program were addressed as 'refugees'. And still, Odsherred's Integration Team is exceptional in

the sense that, on the initiative of the Team's integration consultant, the designation 'citizen' was beginning to be used at informative meetings, when something concerning the refugees' situation was to be communicated to the greater society or when refugees were addressed in larger groups. The intention was to make them feel included, although it was common knowledge that they were not. Neither could it be concealed, that the identity to be assumed in the Integration Program is not individual, but *collective*. Refugees, like colonized subjects, are 'depersonalized', talked about and characterized in "anonymous collectivity" (Memmi 1967: 88), often "portrayed as a mess" (Nyers 2006: 20).

Even when there is a visible sign of incorporating the refugee's original culture into integration, it only serves the purpose of smoother and quicker absorption of the Danish culture. One of the projects run by a third party but initiated and financed by the Municipality, "Projekt Arbejdsmarkedsklar", for example, was in Arabic, so that it would offer easy access to important information about Denmark. It is a good initiative, which works; still, it does not alter the Municipality's view of the refugees who participate in it as a 'collectivity'. National differences were not taken into consideration; the Arabic language was not more than a means to easy access to important information.

Not only are national identities bracketed, but individual histories, as well, no matter how relevant facing those would be for a balanced integration. Every refugee has the right to a general health check, in which, surprisingly, only the physical condition is examined, despite the fact that almost all have lived through some form of trauma. Only extreme cases of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder are taken seriously and treated by specialists, although, as Trauma Studies underlines, undiagnosed trauma can have long-term negative effects not only on the patient suffering from it, but on the surroundings, e.g. the family, as well (Ward 2013: 179).

'Terra nulla'

The Integration regime as a power structure constructs refugee existence with discourses (e.g. laws, regulations) and practices (e.g. 'othering') in such a way that no matter who the gaze of power is diverted at, it sees only difference represented in the collective identity it created. This

difference is deprived of subjectivity—of an identity having a nationality, a past, a cultural and political presence. This invisible subjectivity is further to be "understood in terms of a profound sense of lack" (Nyers 15), as the "subject of lack" (Soguk 53), is an ontological question mark. He/she gradually becomes invisible, like the colonized subjects, a "sign of absence" (Bhabha). Bracketing and collectivizing subjectivity carries in it the danger of the "fetishization of the Other", when "the self becomes a prisoner of the projected image" (Janmohmed 1985, 2002: 20), however, that is a question of later integration.

The Integration Program for the refugee is thus the social space that is constructed out of "a separation from origins and essences" (Bhabha 1994: 171), it becomes, like the colonized subject "terra incognita or terra nulla", "whose history is to begin" (Bhabha 1994: 352), has to learn language and culture all over again.

COPING

The refugee's is "this floating world without the gravities of history and politics that can ultimately become a deeply dehumanizing environment for refugees, even as it shelters" (Malkki 1995: 518). Having examined the power relations the Integration Program as a power regime is built on, as well as the effects it has on refugees in the field, the question arises: How do refugees survive in the field, how do they cope within this social context? How is meaning-making possible, if one is alienated from it, partly because there is no access to the new, and partly because the old is no longer relevant or allowed to function in the new context?

Hybridity and 'Othering'

Hybridity, as Bhabha claims, is "a doubling, dissembling image of being at least two places at once"—in the case of refugees, to be in Denmark, while being outside its social world of becoming—moreover, "it is not the Colonialist Self or the Colonised Other, but the disturbing distance in between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness" (Bhabha 1994: 117). Consequently, the key to coping with and surviving in the Integration Program's social milieu is coping with the de-subjectivizing distance brought about by refugee 'otherness'. One strategy to cope with this distance is to undo collectivized otherness by hybridizing, by constantly pointing out difference, thus bringing more 'othering' into the field, breaking down collective homogeneity.

The collectivized group of refugees I contacted was a diverse group; they came from various cultural backgrounds, although recent arrivals were mostly from Syria with diverse experiences of fleeing and seeking asylum. It became evident from the interviews, that those participating in the Program did not share the feeling of common identity with one another. Instead they were 'othering' one another. National differences, disagreements were brought along, causing difficulties in situations where common action was required. It was most obvious in the study environment, when in the language school they had to work together in groups, or at meetings, where the refugee did not get the right interpreter. For most Kurds, for example, Syrian Arabs had no individuality; they were a collective group not to like and vice versa. There are fewer

interpreters in Kurdish than in Arabic, and, since Kurds do understand Arabic languages, they would often get an Arabic speaking interpreter. In spite of the smoothness of the conversation in these cases, Kurds would always complain about not receiving a Kurdish speaking interpreter. In turn, Arabic speaking interpreters and mentors would always comment on the stubbornness of Kurds and their unwillingness to properly communicate, although both parties admitted, no language problems prevailed between them.

Neither was the Integration Team homogeneous, which was never an issue among Team members. They represented the Danish, the Bulgarian and the Kurdish cultures; many refugees I talked to shared an awareness of the Team's heterogeneity. And there I was, of Hungarian origin, speaking mostly Danish, at times English to a linguistically and culturally diverse group of people. As pointed out earlier, refugees always made sure to emphasize my cultural difference. Thus, a profound experience has been what Jameson calls "situational consciousness" (Jameson 2016: 87), a persistent claim for maintaining 'otherness' against the pressures of homogenizing collective 'othering'. However, as practiced in Odsherred by refugees, it has been a paradoxical strategy: there is a first step of 'othering' in order to hybridize; those 'othered' are, however collectivized in the long run. The same way as between Kurds and Syrians, members of the Integration Team were also seen as a heterogeneous group, yet, when it was about power relation, they became a homogeneous authority.

In critiquing Jameson, Ahmad warns us not to draw a simple distinction in such situations between specific cultural logics, but rather to look upon them as the "historicity of multiple, interpenetrating determinations" that are woven into any text or prononcement (Ahmad 1987, 2016: 108-9). "Jameson's is not a first-world text, mine is not a third-world text", states Ahmad, "[w]e are not each other's civilizational Others" (Ahmad 1987, 2016: 109). One is to realize that when reflecting upon the dynamics of 'othering' these contexts naturally entail, everyone is involved in the process both with fixed and shifting (e.g. now a migrant, tomorrow a case worker) as well as with open (e.g. nationality) and silenced (e.g. race, gender) positions. 'Othering concerns the whole of identity, and so in case these aspects of the 'othering' strategies were taken into consideration in all areas of the power structure, they would enhance our understanding of integration challenges along with the ways in which refugees cope with them, especially in the

field of social connections, considering both 'social bonds' and 'social bridges', like-ethnic and inter-ethnic connections (Ager & Strang 2008: 178).

Mimicry

When emphasizing his/her difference in relation to and in comparison with others, the refugee is practicing 'othering' in self-preservation and self-defense on the one hand, and distances others on the other hand.

This, however, is also an act of mimicry, a survival technique of socially oppressed people. "Colonial mimicry" in Bhabha's understanding is "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*" (Bhabha 1994: 122). Mimicry in subordinate situations aims at copying what the source of power of the oppressor might be, thus hoping to gain similar power and either fight oppression or/and become one with it.

"The mimic man is a contradictory figure who simultaneously reinforces colonial authority and disturbs it" (Sharpe, 2002: 99). In the act of mimicking 'othering', doing what he/she has to suffer from hegemonic authority when power is exercised over him/her, the refugee contests and disturbs hegemonic power by constantly disrupting and challenging its homogenizing endeavors of pushing all under "anonymous collectivity" (Memmi 1967: 88). Its 'othering' has a counter-homogenizing, that is a 'heterogenesing' effect.

At the same time, 'othering' other refugees and caseworkers also creates a hierarchy and positionality as destructive to inter-cultural relationships as the colonizer's 'othering', thus it, in reality, reinforces hegemonic power by reinforcing positionality and hierarchy on top of which only hegemonic power has the economic and cultural capital to stand.

I have met a housewife from Syria, who represents a milder form of mimicry. She did her best to learn the Danish ways of hospitality, invite people over the way Danes do, serve the food the Danes would serve. She was hoping to build a network with the strategy of showing intentions of almost assimilation by mimicking Danish habits. Unfortunately, it did not work the way she

hoped it would, since Danes found her behavior strange and would have expected national cooking instead of Danish meal.

In a more extreme version of mimicry, in trying to copy what one believes to be the source of power, the oppressed can easily become an oppressor himself/herself when internalizing the attitudes, values and beliefs of those in power (Ward 2013:175). There was a Syrian middle-aged man, for example, who talked to others during the break at the language school, as if he was the caseworker. He explained to newer arrivals what rules to be aware of, how to act to be liked by Danes, and at the same time how to behave with his fellow countrymen, also warning all that he would keep an eye on them. I learned about this from another Syrian refugee, when inquiring why he was avoiding this middle-aged man.

Hybridity and Third Space

Mimicry strengthens collective identity assigned to refugees. They do realize what kind of collective identity they have obtained and do not fight it when in contact with the authorities. However, many do not give in to the "terra nulla" ideology, not allowing for previous subjectivity to be erased and a new, collective to be obtained. They transform the 'terra nulla' concept into a 'frontier' that allows for contact between 'the new' and 'the old', allows for the re-conceptualization of traditions, even the inscription of a new history without erasing the former; it is a colonial-like "third space" of hybrid cultural existence. It is a space between traditional cultural models and new demands, a space of "translation and negotiation", the "bearer of hybrid identity" (Bhabha 1994: 54-55). It is a silent revolution against the imposition of one culture on another, against the imposition of a collective identity.

One form of it is coping with ruling texts. Although during early integration those texts are not yet understood, however, a result of interpretations and communication within one cultural group, a vague and general idea gets to be formulated. It became evident from the interviews that the practice of "inter-narrative exclusion", to use Currie's terminology (Currie 1998: 84) has been developed to counter the hegemony of dominating discourses. It is the creation of a narrative history that "bears traces of other stories, stories that are not told, stories that are excluded, stories

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of the excluded" (Currie 1998: 84). And the excluded here are the refugees themselves in their individuality. Beyond the frameworks, between the lines began bits of individualized story pieces, added by the refugees, to creep into Municipality narratives and begin to alter them.

It has been already elaborated what a controversial issue 'housing', a key marker and means of integration, is (Ager & Strang 2008: 171). There is a house available for refugee families, located out in the country, not within the boundaries of any of the small towns. The house is big enough, the neighbors are nice, cannot wait to help a refugee family settle in. Since rarely come whole families to Odsherred, they usually join one or two members through family reunification. The already present person is offered the house before the rest of the family arrives. In the case of this specific house, one family moved in but did not like it, soon moved out, afterwards another rejected it. Word went around that it was a house to be avoided and ever since everyone has rejected moving in without even looking at it. A small 'battle' was developing over it between the caseworkers and refugees involved. The caseworkers began to lose patience, believing that to be a very nice place many Danes would be happy for and considering it offensive that newcomers complain instead of being grateful. And anyway, the rule is that you take what you get. The refugees on the other hand felt they were degraded by what they considered to be a bad offer. After all the hardships, they wished for a place that suits their families more. While the conflict was growing, it became a symbol of resistance on both sides, gradually transforming into a 'Third Space', where, although fighting, the parties were beginning to be on some 'common ground', because narratives beyond the ruling discourses began to be told and heard. It was not only the rule and again the rule that was repeated by the Municipality. The housing situation was explained, together with the limited possibilities there are, and the number of families that arrive, etc. At the same time, on the refugee side, not only a 'no' was repeated, but, as dialogue developed, individual past stories were told and heard with details that in some way or another influenced value judgment in the matter (e.g. why someone had a fear of stairs). Cultural/religious reservations were also voiced (like the Muslim aversion of dogs, and the closest neighbor had one), or problems in logistics (e.g. if children go to this and that school in one town and parents to a language school in another, they simply cannot pick up the little ones).

The social space that developed in the above case was one that not only allowed for, but even invited the hybridity of cultural, religious, situational voices instead of sending messages from and to some collective identity. Every aspect of a story attribute was put in a specific cultural light, thus preserving cultural authenticity, and, at the same time, erasing the oneness of the collective and turning it into the plurality of the hybrid. Such communication initiates true dialogue, the result of which has been the initiation of another dialogue, within the Municipality over the rules that regulate the housing situation, over what aspects to change and how.

Thus, the above described heterogeneous "Third Space" of hybridity erases the 'terra nulla' attitude. Neither is it equivalent with the homogeneous space of exclusion assigned to non-citizen refugees as a collectivity. By introducing 'narratives of the actual' into the narratives of authority, true communication begins, reaching beyond social distance, placing the dialogue within the realm of actual Danish social reality, creating the space for proper integration.

The subaltern

Finally, and as a summary of coping strategies, one might ask: what does it mean to the refugee subaltern to be a subaltern?

It is being distanced, alienated from oneself and from the possibility of meaning-making. Having bracketed his/her subjectivity, the refugee is pushed into subalternity, into "a position without identity" (Spivak 2005: 476). Without identity, there is no true presence; and mimicry as "the metonymy of presence" (Bhabha 1994: 129) easily becomes one strategy for coping.

Non-presence, however, can be interpreted as being "removed from all lines of social mobility", not being permitted "the formation of recognizable basis of action" (Spivak 2005: 475-6). During several meetings has the issue of limited mobility been brought up through various topics, from having to report if the refugee is to travel outside the municipality to what internship or job offer he/she is allowed to take. For Spivak the question is no longer if the subaltern can speak, but how the subaltern grapples limited or no physical and social mobility. Spivak's suggestion is "to metonymise/synecdochise yourself, understand the part by which you are connected to that

abstract whole so that you can claim it" (Spivak 2005: 483). And this is exactly what refugees do when creating the "Third Space" of hybridity, as outlined above, when weaving actuality into collectivity with the help of caseworkers who listen. It is a coping strategy not only to survive but also to regain a 'basis for action' and an identity to integrate.

CONCLUSION

The interest of the present thesis has been the refugee situation in Odherred Municipality in the early phase of the integration process, the three-year Integration Program, administered by the State' executive power in the field: the Integration Team.

Empirical and secondary data have been collected by doing fieldwork, applying participant observation, conducting semi-structured interviews and doing desk research. The interpretative process has been enhanced by standpoint analysis and reflexive ethnography, although it has mostly been founded on theories of integration, colonialism and post(-)colonialism. A parallel has been drawn between these theoretical considerations in order to highlight controversial issues in the Integration Program.

Having examined the ontological status and empirical ordering of the Program as a field of social interaction and symbolic field of power, it has been unveiled that its ambivalence originates from the ambiguous dynamics between solidarity and nationalism. Its empirical ordering, at the same time, is a colonial-like hierarchical field, strictly regulated by hegemonic discourse and power relations, paradoxically creating a space of exclusion for the refugees under the guise of integration-like inclusion. Power is based on and maintained by ruling texts, 'positional inferiority', surveillance and punishment.

The refugee in the system becomes the victim of epistemic violence, a process of 'othering', mostly through identifying him/her a stranger and distancing him/her into non-citizen status, where the gaze of power identifies this difference in a collective identity. Origin and historicity are removed from refugee subjectivity and the refugee is alienated from the 'space of meaning-making', being turned into 'terra nulla' to inscribe new stories on.

Thus, coping in the three-year Integration Program requires special strategies of self-preservation for the subaltern refugee. These strategies have been identified as hybridizing the homogenized

collective space, 'othering', mimicry and developing a hybrid 'Third Space' for dialogue and integration.

The Program is a very good initiative in Denmark, functioning with the ultimate good intention of making the meeting of cultures and refugees' integration into Danish society as smooth as possible and to ensure a sound and well-functioning common social space for both parties. However, the way non-citizen status distances, hegemonic texts regulate power relations and identity issues are handled bring about a colonial-like social milieu, which might eventually block system integration by weakening the facilitators that build the social bridges between the newcomers and the host country.

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