

The narrative construction of identity by sexual harassers

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Rapportens samlede antal tegn: 190.180

Svarende til antal normalsider: 79,2

Aalborg Universitet

31. maj 2019

10. semester, Psykologi

Kandidatspeciale

Cultural Psychology

Abstract

This master thesis is a qualitative study of how men, who have engaged in sexual harassment, narratively construct identities in light of what they have done. The subjects of the study are seven men, who have participated in interviews as a part of a podcast series made by a Danish newspaper, about men's perspective on #MeToo, consent and sexual boundaries.

The research question is approached with a cultural psychological perspective, meaning that narratives are regarded as a cultural practice through which everyday meaning-making is achieved. The study is based on a social constructionist and relativist ontology, combined with a discursive psychological methodology, meaning that identity is approached as a mental phenomenon which is discursively produced in social interaction. Positioning theory combined with the narrative practice approach as represented by Michael Bamberg is chosen to facilitate analysis of the men's stories, as they are both helpful when addressing issues of identity construction, and they make it possible to integrate both a top-down and bottom-up view on discourse. This theoretical framework is concerned with acts of positioning, issues of morality, and narratives as the site of construction where identities are practiced and tested out, and it treats stories as interactive positionings. Within the narrative practice approach narratives are furthermore defined as "small stories" in opposition to "big stories" as in the traditional narrative approach. This involves a novel approach to narrative analysis, focusing not just on the content of narratives, but also on the performative aspects of them. Concretely, with this approach we address how specific identity dilemmas are navigated in the stories of the men. These dilemmas are: 1) the continuity/discontinuity dilemma, 2) the uniqueness dilemma and 3) the agency dilemma.

The study finds that men, who have engaged in sexual harassment, seem to be concerned with positioning themselves as distanced from who they were when it happened, by emphasizing that they have changed, more than they are the same (continuity/discontinuity dilemma). They also position themselves as more similar to others, than they are unique (uniqueness dilemma), which also substantiates a claim they make, regarding how anyone could have done, what they did. In navigating the agency dilemma, they lean towards positioning themselves as passive undergoers, not in

much control of the events, therefor being less responsible for what happened. Additionally, they highlight a more collective responsibility for sexual harassment, which can point towards developing more collective prevention strategies, in favor of e.g. individual intervention.

The main contribution of this study is not about revealing the “real” identity of these men or making claims about what “type” of men engage in sexual harassment. Rather, it is about exposing processes of constructing various identities by the use of different narrative strategies and concrete discursive means, in order to reveal aspects of the phenomenon of sexual harassment, which are otherwise hidden, and which can contribute to knowledge on this issue which might lead to more well-founded possibilities of prevention.

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1.0 Introduction

In October 2017 the hashtag #MeToo went viral on social media and sparked a worldwide public debate about the prevalence and nature of sexual harassment in the 21st century. Thousands of people, from all over the world, shared their stories of sexual harassment and assault. It transformed into a movement, aimed at raising awareness and giving people an idea of the magnitude of the problem of sexual harassment.

The concept of sexual harassment (henceforth SH) emerged as a topic of research in the 1970s and has since been recognized as a serious issue (Pina, Gannon, & Saunders, 2009). The literature consistently shows how SH has a strong negative impact on the harassed person's overall mental health and well-being. Being subjected to SH in the workplace greatly reduces workplace satisfaction and productivity at work (Pina & Gannon, 2012). People subjected to SH report emotions like anger, fear, sadness, humiliation and mistrust as well as a range of physiological symptoms as nausea and sleeping problems (Pina & Gannon, 2012). Furthermore, SH can cause depressive and panic symptoms (Bastiani, Romito, & Saurel-Cubizolles, 2018), as well as lead to PTSD (Stockdale, Logan, & Weston, 2009).

Studies of SH focusing on the harassed person are important in order to substantiate the fact that SH has serious personal consequences. A literature review of approaches to studying SH, that I conducted last year, showed that studies of SH has so far mostly focused on the perspective of the harassed part, studying the experience of SH, or on the perspective of people in general, studying perceptions of SH (Christensen, 2018). However, as the review concluded, if we as researchers want to contribute to preventing SH from happening to the extent that it does, a "first-person perspective", that is focusing on the harasser, could also be rewarding. Perhaps the perspective of the harasser has been neglected in empirical SH research due to a limited availability of people volunteering to participate in this type of study. However, if we want to understand SH, we should also ask the people who do it. Some studies have tried to characterize, what type of person engages in SH by using scales and personality tests to measure correlation between proclivity to engage in SH and certain personality traits (Pina et al., 2009). This type of thinking stems from an under-

lying assumption, that certain types of people could engage in SH behavior. It is easy to assume, that only “bad people” do “bad things”. But if the problem of SH is as widespread as the #MeToo-movement suggests, either there are extremely many “bad people” or the “bad people” are extremely busy. Or – perhaps the proclivity to engage in SH is not necessarily related to certain personality traits.

Being founded in a social constructionist epistemology, within the present study, personality traits are not viewed as something innate, which can result in certain types of behavior. Rather than studying SH with personality traits as the starting point, I am interested in studying identities, as something people construct and re-construct in social interaction in their everyday lives. The #MeToo stories shared on social media are seen as an example of a site for identity (re)constructions. As I aim to explore SH from a first-person perspective, I will correspondingly explore stories of SH from the other side – as they are told by men, who have engaged in SH. What is seen as interesting in this context, is not whether these men are “bad people” and therefore did “bad things”, but rather how they make sense of who they are, in relation to having sexually harassed another person.

This leads to the following question, which will be guiding the present research:

How do men, who have engaged in sexual harassment, narratively construct identities in light of what they have done?

The inspiration for the present research also came from a podcast series called *Grænseland* (eng. Borderland), made by the Danish newspaper Information. In five episodes a journalist talks to 17 different men about themes like #MeToo, consent and sexual boundaries, as well as their own experiences with SH. Of these 17 men, seven of them tell stories of engaging in SH of one or more women. It is these seven men, who will be the subjects of this study. Their narratives, of what they did, will be studied, with focus on which positions they take up, in order to come across in certain ways. Furthermore, telling their stories, accounting for what they have done, requires navigation of what is right and wrong, and this moral dimension also opens up the question of responsibility for what happened. Ultimately, the aim is to come closer to an answer to the research question above, regarding how identities are accomplished.

Before proceeding with an account of the cultural psychological perspective

which underlies this study, and a contextualization of the issue at stake, it is relevant to explain how sexual harassment, being the central concept of this thesis, is defined here.

1.1 Defining sexual harassment

#MeToo stories involve many different types of sexual transgressions. In Danish these are commonly labelled as “seksuelle krænkelser”, which is what I refer to, when I use the term sexual harassment in this thesis. But what does this term cover exactly?

As it was pointed out in my literature review, there exists no universal definition of SH (Christensen, 2018). The review was based on a rather broad definition, as any attention that is regarded as unwanted from the perspective of the person being harassed, and which is sexual in nature or based on sex, was perceived as SH in the review. This made sense in that specific context, as the focus on the review was methodological rather than conceptual (Christensen, 2018). The focus of the present study is neither conceptual nor methodological. Here focus is on narratives of SH, as they are told by men, who have done it. Consequently, what constitutes SH in the present context, is defined by these men, as they refer to what they have done, as sexually transgressive actions, within their stories.

Firstly, I wish to highlight, that these men aren't just labelled as sexual harassers based on my subjective judgement. The seven men, whom I study, are chosen, because they explicitly identify themselves as having sexually harassed one or more women. They don't call themselves harassers, which is why I also mostly refer to them as “men who have engaged in SH”, but they e.g. state: “I could easily be someone's me too story” (appendix 2, l. 12) or “I know for sure that I have done something wrong once” (appendix 3, l. 2-3). Additionally, for the purpose of the present research, they might just as well have been female harassers, but the podcast series only features interviews with men.

Secondly, as mirrors of the #MeToo stories which are shared by people, who have been harassed, the men's stories also cover a wide range of transgressions, ranging from yelling at women, at one end of the continuum, to rape, at the other end. What the stories have in common is, that the men who tell them, identify themselves as having engaged in SH, just as people sharing their stories under the hashtag

of #MeToo identify as having been subjected to SH.

To sum up, sexual harassment is, in the context of the present research, defined by the men, who are studied, within their stories. The episodes, they talk about, are to a large degree consistent with the definition of SH as unwanted sexual attention. However, whether something is unwanted, is necessarily the subjective assessment of the person being subjected to it, and therefore the men, in some of the cases, don't know for sure, unless the woman made it clear. Yet, what is important, in relation to the research question of this thesis, is, that the men themselves regard what they did as sexually transgressive, and not whether it was actually experienced as SH.

1.2 Employing a cultural psychology framework

This section will briefly describe what a cultural psychological perspective on research means, as this perspective permeates the present research. It is in opposition to the traditional view of culture, which assumes that people live in one culture, referring to a homogenous context, and that they approach other cultures with concepts and models that reflect their own (Brockmeier, 2014). Valsiner (2012) calls this the “culture as a container” view. Today many theorists have come to another understanding of culture, emphasizing that we live in a variety of cultures, which are heterogeneous, enforced and legitimized by some members of society, and questioned and rejected by others. Brockmeier (2014) sees cultural worlds as permanently under dynamic construction, as well as increasingly open, inter-related and fleeting. Valsiner terms it “culture as a tool within the person” and “culture as a process of relating to the world” (2012, 2014). This corresponds to a definition of culture, as a symbolic resource, which can be transformed by individuals, and when treating culture like this, it becomes interesting how human beings use it to make meaning of the world in their everyday lives (Shweder, 1991; Valsiner, 2014a).

As a perspective employed in research, cultural psychology involves seeing culture as the frame that allow phenomena to become meaningful – to see phenomena in a context without which they would be unintelligible (Brockmeier, 2014). As Shweder puts it: “Cultural psychology is the study of the ways subject and object, self and other, psyche and culture, person and context, figure and ground, practitioner and practice, live together, require each other, and dynamically, dialectically, and jointly make each other up” (1991, p. 73). Bruner (1990) also emphasizes this point,

when he says that not even the strongest causal explanation of human conditions makes sense, if it is not interpreted in the light of the symbolic world which constitutes culture. Psychological phenomena can't be understood in a contextual vacuum.

One important cultural mean, that humans make use of in their everyday life to make sense of the world, is language. One way of conceptualizing everyday meaning construction is to regard narrative as a cultural practice, through which it is achieved (Brockmeier, 2014). Studying language in use can be done with a discursive approach. Discourse is seen as all forms of spoken interaction and written texts, and focus is on the action orientation of language (Murakami, 2014). Language is not a tool or medium to represent the inner states of mind, rather we do and accomplish things with talk in social interaction. In accordance with the cultural psychology perspective, Murakami (2014) points out that "culture is not a matter of the researcher's concern to handle as a causal factor or independent variable to bring out differences in behavior, perception, and attitude" (p. 469). Rather, with a discursive approach culture is seen as a resource for the participants (Murakami, 2014), corresponding to the conceptualization of culture as a tool or process of relating to the world, mentioned earlier.

In relation to the research question asked here, the aim of employing a cultural and discursive approach is to ask the question: "What is accomplished through the stories told?". To study how the narrator of the story, the harasser, construct himself through the story, is a study of how identity is accomplished through language as a cultural resource. Identity is here explored, not as something innate which can be measured by scales, but as a practical interactional and situated business that people attend to and accomplish through talk-in-interaction. This will be further elaborated on in later sections on the epistemology and methodology which underlies the present research, as well as in the theory section.

1.3 Contextualization: Consent law and school education in Denmark

In accordance with the cultural psychological perspective, if we want to understand how men, who have engaged in sexual harassment, make sense of themselves, we must have knowledge about the context within which they act. In this case it is rele-

vant to look at what is happening at the moment in relation to sexual boundaries and transgressions in the Danish society. I have chosen two things to have a closer look at: consent law and school education. These two things reflect different levels of intervention with regards to sexual transgressions. Consent law is an attempt to secure the legal rights of rape victims. This reflects intervention on a societal level of legislation, however it is primarily after “the damage has been done”. School education on the other hand is an attempt at prevention.

Amnesty International is at the head of a movement, which is fighting for a consent law (da. samtykkelovgivning). A consent law would make it illegal to have sex with a person, who didn't give their consent. The need for this law is based on statistics which show, that the majority of rapes remain unpunished. According to a report by Danmarks Statistik, in 2017, 78% of rape cases didn't end with a conviction (Danmarks Statistik, 2019). Furthermore, it is estimated that the actual number of rapes that occur is much higher than the number which is reported (Det Kriminalpræventive Råd, 2018). This is what Amnesty and others want to change. Today rape cases are decided based on whether it can be proved 1) that the victim was subjected to violence, force or threats, and 2) that the victim said no or resisted, or 3) that the victim was in a condition where he or she wasn't able to resist (Straffeloven, §216, 2018). Supporters of the law believe, that when responsibility is put on the person accused, to make sure that sex happens voluntarily, more rape victims will report the incidents to the police and impunity for rapists will be reduced. Furthermore it is believed, that this legislation could affect people's attitudes towards consent in general (Amnesty International, 2018a).

More than 55.000 people have currently signed a petition to implement consent in the Danish legislation (Amnesty International, 2018b) and in February this year 50.000 of the signatures were handed over to the Danish Minister of Justice (Amnesty International, 2019).

As mentioned above consent law can be seen as a type of intervention after the damage is done. However, as Amnesty also makes clear, changing laws can change people's attitudes towards a phenomenon. Nevertheless, this constitutes a form of top-down pre- or intervention. Other attempts at preventing sexual transgressions from happening are also present in the Danish society at the moment. Sex education in schools, constitutes as bottom-up, concrete preventive strategy before any damage

is done. The organization Sex & Samfund works with developing teaching materials and offer them to schools. Each year they develop materials specifically for week six, in Danish called “Uge Sex”, where many schools put sex education on the students’ timetables for a whole week. The theme of 2019 was boundaries, which was inspired by the public debate on sexual transgressions as well as increasing issues of e.g. children and adolescents sharing intimate photos of each other online. The aim of the teaching material is to teach children to become aware of their own and other’s boundaries, in order to understand and respect them (Sex & Samfund, 2018).

These are examples of initiatives at different levels of society aimed at preventing and/or intervening in relation to sexual transgressions. They can give an idea of the broader context within which identities are constructed and can e.g. constitute discourses which exist as either recourses to draw on or as constraints of how narratives can be constructed. This will be elaborated on later.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

After this introduction follows a section which establishes the epistemological, ontological and methodological reflections underlying the present study. The third section of this thesis describes positioning theory and the narrative-in-interaction approach respectively, as these theories later contribute to the analysis and interpretation of how the men accomplish identities through their stories. The next section regards the methods of this study. First the material of the study will be described. Then follow reflections regarding the transcription process, including a brief discussion about anonymizing the participants in the material, even though it is publicly available. After this, the coding-process as well as the approach to the analysis will be accounted for. The actual analysis is the most voluminous part of the thesis and constitutes section five. It consists of four themes, which proved to be prominent across stories, and concludes with a summary of the main points from each theme. After the analysis some of the main findings will be discussed and placed in a broader context. Ultimately, possibilities of prevention and intervention will be discussed, and possible limitations of the present study will lead to suggestions for further research. When reaching the end of this thesis, we will have come closer to an answer to the research question of how the seven men accomplish identity in the light of the stories they tell, about having engaged in sexual harassment.

2.0 Ontology, epistemology and methodology

This section addresses the ontological, epistemological and methodological starting point of the present research. As a study of narrative constructions of identity, the present research takes up a discursive approach, built upon a social constructionist epistemology and relativist ontology. In this section, first the relation between epistemology, methodology and method is defined, and this paragraph serves as an argument for, why it is important for researchers to be aware of these concepts while conducting research. Then follows reflections regarding the social constructionist and relativist assumptions immanent the present research, as they are inherent in the methodological approach that has been chosen. The discursive methodology will then be accounted for. The concrete method of this study will be described in detail in the methods section later.

2.1 The relation between epistemology, methodology and method

The concepts of epistemology, methodology and method are defined in conflicting ways in the literature. In the context of the present research I will draw on the definitions laid out by Carter & Little (2007), to whom epistemology and methodology is about justifying knowledge and method, and method is the actions taken in relation to the research.

Epistemology is theory of knowledge, and the study of what the nature of knowledge is. As a researcher, it is important to reflect on one's assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge, since it influences different aspects of the research practice, such as how the relationship between researcher and participant is seen, what measures are taken to ensure research quality, as well as the nature of how the research is reported. Epistemological position also draws the researcher towards specific methodologies, which is the next step of planning the research (Carter & Little, 2007).

Methodology is not reducible to just methods. It is the description, explanation and justification of methods and how research should proceed. Methodologies are

internally heterogeneous and dynamic: Within a methodology you have a range of choices in relation to methods. What methodology contributes with, in addition to provide justification for methods, is to connect research to theory in different ways. Methodologies arise out of certain disciplines and formal theories, thus the methodology adopted can link the research to those theoretical bases (Carter & Little, 2007). So, methodology is concerned with the theories behind methods, and different methodologies reflect different epistemological assumptions.

Methods differ from methodologies in that they are concrete procedures, tools or techniques for doing research. Carter and Little (2007) define methods as research action, or as the practical activities of research. The relation between the three concepts is illustrated in figure 1: Epistemology modifies methodology. The methodology justifies the method, which produces data and analysis, which in turn produces knowledge. This knowledge is justified by the epistemology. It is crucial that choices of method, methodology and epistemology are internally consistent (Carter & Little, 2007).

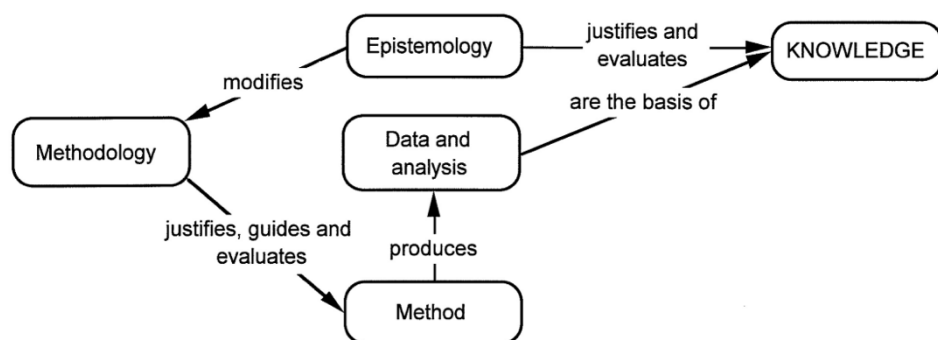


Figure 1 - From Carter and Little (2007)

Based on this description of the three concepts, I argue that they are fundamental aspects of doing research, which shouldn't be neglected in reporting. A lack of concern with these issues can pose a problem e.g. for the internal consistency of the research, when methods are chosen that are not in line with implicit assumptions in the research question. Because as Carter & Little (2007) puts it: "Epistemology is inescapable. A reflexive researcher actively adopts a theory of knowledge. A less reflexive researcher implicitly adopts a theory of knowledge, as it is impossible to engage in knowledge creation without at least tacit assumptions about what knowledge is

and how it is constructed.” (p. 1319). In sum, epistemology, methodology and method should provide the framework for both planning qualitative research and for evaluating the quality of it (Carter & Little, 2007). When it comes to ontological issues (regarding the nature of reality), this is not a part of the framework presented by Carter and Little. However, I would argue, that the importance of reflecting on one’s assumptions and making them clear in research, also applies to ontology. Consequently, in the following paragraph, my reflections on both epistemology and ontology in the present study, will be laid out.

2.2 Social constructionism and relativism

The epistemological position that this study is based on, is that of social constructionism¹ (henceforth SC), and the ontological position is that of relativism. This means, that certain assumptions regarding knowledge, reality and truth underlie the research, influencing how questions have been asked and how the research has been approached.

With the epistemology of SC, knowledge is placed within the processes of social interaction (Gergen, 1985). It is in opposition to a positivist-empiricist conception of knowledge, meaning that knowledge is not seen as something people possess in their heads, rather it is something people do together. SC abandons subject-object dichotomy altogether, and challenge dualism as the basis for a theory of knowledge. Instead it places knowledge in the hands of people, in the sense that we can’t distinguish knowledge from the knowledgeable (Gergen, 1985). Concretely, SC approaches are concerned with the processes by which people describe, explain and account for the world. They often focus on language as the medium through, or tool by which knowledge is shared and accomplished, prompting researchers to focus on the per-

¹ Following Gergen (1985) I use the term constructionism instead of constructivism. Gergen used this term in order to avoid confusion with other, very different theories, like Piaget’s perceptual theory, which is labelled constructivism. Gergen also preferred constructionism to enable a linkage to Berger and Luckmann’s *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966).

formative use of language (Gergen, 1985). Also, it challenges the objective basis of conventional knowledge. This implies that social constructionists don't take the world and its categories (e.g. identity or sexual harassment) for granted as commonly accepted. They hold the assumption that categories don't acquire their meaning from a "real world out there", but in the context of their usage. This substantiates an important point in SC, that how we describe and explain the world constitutes social action (Gergen, 1985).

In relation to the "real world out there", the rejecting of dualism in relation to knowledge within SC, that Gergen (1985) argues for, corresponds to a rejecting of dualism in relation to what exists. This means that a dualist ontology wouldn't distinguish between a subjective, internal world and an external real world. Does that mean that there exists no (objective) world independent of the subject?

Relativists believe that reality is subjective rather than objective (Edwards, Ashmore, & Potter, 1995). This means that reality can only ever be "reality-as-known", which is consistent with an anti-dualist ontology. Edwards et al. discuss the relativism/realism debate in their article *Death and Furniture: the rhetoric, politics and theology of bottom line arguments against relativism* (1995) and show how relativists are often accused of rejecting that there is any type of objective reality by the use of rhetorical moves invoking suffering and physical objects as aspects of the world whose existence surely can't be denied. But saying that reality can only ever be "reality-as-known", is not the same as saying that no objective reality exists. An independent world could exist, but it's just not possible or relevant to distinguish the subject from it (Edwards et al., 1995). As Iversen (2016) puts it: "knowledge is investigated and understood in its own right, as practice that builds versions of reality." (p. 29). The only reality relativists are interested in, is the common-sense notion we as members of cultures have of what reality is (Edwards et al., 1995).

Accepting the possibility of many different realities constructed within different contexts – historical and cultural, also means that no version of reality is "the right one". According to Burr (2003): "this is the position of relativism; different constructions of the world can be judged only in relation to each other and not by comparison with some ultimate standard or truth." (p. 81). However, rejecting ultimate truths and claiming that right, wrong or "true" is always relative to the specific situation, isn't equal to "anything goes". Gergen (1985) emphasizes, that scientific activity will al-

ways be 1) governed by normative rules and 2) historically and culturally situated. According to him, SC research is also not morally relativistic. Insofar as research findings enter into the lives of people and have the power to sustain certain types of conduct and destroy others, the researcher *must* evaluate his findings in terms of good and bad (Gergen, 1985).

These are the epistemological and ontological assumptions, which has shaped the present research. The research question centers around the social construction of identities through narratives, and views identities as indistinguishable from the situated subject. Furthermore, the present study attends to the different versions of identity that the men construct and doesn't regard any identity as truer than others.

When doing research based on this epistemology and ontology the knowledge which is produced is viewed as jointly created by the participants together with the researcher. This also means that the knowledge created in research is specific to the place and time of the research, since it is the product of the specific interaction of the research situation where material is collected (Carter & Little, 2007; Iversen, 2016).

Furthermore, I, as the researcher, can't get inside the participants heads. Participants words do not provide access to "internal states", since phenomena like, in the case of the present research, identity, is not seen as an innate, static entity which can be accessed and measured. What the researcher *can* do, and is interested in doing, is to study how people make meaning of something (Carter & Little, 2007). The research question in the present study reflects this interest, by focusing on the way men construct and understand themselves as sexual harassers.

In relation to ensuring quality of research based on a relativistic SC, it is crucial that researchers reflect on their own participation as active creators of the research and are transparent about their own subjectivity, so that readers can make judgements for themselves. Gergen (1985) calls it a myth that application of rigorous methods will yield sound facts or "truth". With a relativistic SC approach, what is most important is not whether data is "true", but rather that researchers are self-reflective and provide information of all their choices when reporting the research. Acknowledging one's own influence on the research means, that one should not try to make oneself invisible from the research when reporting it (Carter & Little, 2007). I aim to live up to this criterion of transparency, by making all my reflections and choices along the way clear within every section of this thesis.

2.3 *A discursive approach to research*

As it has already been stated, the methodology of the present research is a discursive one. Discursive psychology is the application of ideas from discourse analysis to issues in psychology, and is therefore not a method, but rather an approach that encompasses both metatheoretical, theoretical and analytical principles (Potter, 2003).

At this point, many of the inherent assumptions in a discursive methodology are hopefully already clear. The present paragraph aims at laying out some of the relevant methodological features of discursive psychology, as described by Wiggins and Potter (2008), and introduce a definition of different types of discourse which leads to the next section on the theoretical perspectives underlying this study.

First of all, there are no universal set of rules governing research on discourse (Wiggins & Potter, 2008). Rather the different approaches based on discursive psychology are defined by a shared interest in action and interaction as situated, practical and orderly. The most basic feature of discursive approaches is, that the topic of investigation is discourse. Discourse is defined by Edwards (2005) as talk and text of any kind, and discourse is regarded as the primary medium for carrying out social action (Wiggins & Potter, 2008). It is action oriented, in the sense that people do things with words, and discursive approaches study how this action is accomplished. Furthermore, discourse is situated both sequentially, institutionally and rhetorically, and it is both constructed and constructive (Potter, 2012a; Wiggins & Potter, 2008). Another methodological feature of discursive psychology is that it starts with practices – people interacting with one another in everyday social settings (Potter, 2012b; Wiggins & Potter, 2008). Furthermore, it is interested in how psychological phenomena are managed, often implicitly, and made relevant for participants in interaction (Edwards, 2005; Wiggins & Potter, 2008). Interviews is a method for collecting material which is employed in some discursive studies. However, this kind of material is an issue of debate within discursive psychology (this will be addressed in the methods section later). Other key methodological features mentioned are, that materials are transcribed in a way, so it captures relevant performative features of the talk (see method section about transcription). Furthermore, analysis focuses on both standard patterns and exceptional cases in order to develop and test ideas about what is going on in the interaction (Wiggins & Potter, 2008). Another important methodological feature of discursive studies is that the presentation of research is transparent in that

it allows readers to assess the validity of the claims made about the material (Wiggins & Potter, 2008).

In relation to defining discourse Bamberg, De Fina and Schiffrin (2011) differentiate between two views on discourse, capital-D and small-d discourses, which differ in terms of how much agency and control the person is assumed to have or be subjected to. Theorists working with capital-D discourses, Foucault being an example, view the person as constructed in and through existing discourses. With this conceptualization of discourse, the individual is seen as highly constrained by norms and practices which are imposed on the individual by society. This approach focuses on these social and institutional conditions which frame and constrain the life of the individual in the sense that no one can say whatever they want, whenever they want. The object under study would be the conditions that hold particular discourses together, and how these conditions or the discourses change over time (Bamberg et al., 2011).

Approaches based on studying small-d discourses, are typically linguistic informed traditions. Within this view the person agentively constructs who they are by use of discourse, and analytically focus is on what is said, how exactly it is said and what the function is of this utterance in the local context. Similar to the assumption within capital-D research, the choices a person can make when speaking are limited, however for this perspective the center of interest is the actual choices made, as it reveals something about how a person make sense of the local context within which they interact (Bamberg et al., 2011).

The two perspectives can be seen as a top-down and bottom-up approach to studying discourse. Bamberg, De Fina and Schiffrin (2011) also present approaches that have attempted to bring together these two perspectives on discourse in the study of identity. Such approaches have integrated both views by focusing on how normative practices impact identity formation processes while at the same time attending to local conversational practices in which notions of self, agency and difference are constituted and managed. Positioning theory, which is a specific approach to analyzing discourse, is presented as one of these approaches. Another approach which also integrates both perspectives in the study of discourse, is Bamberg's functionalist-informed approach to identity, the narrative practice approach – which also draws on positioning theory. Positioning theory and the narrative practice approach, and their

relevance in studying identity processes through discourses, will be further explicated in the next section.

3.0 Studying identity through storytelling

This section describes the theoretical framework of the present study. It is a study of identity as performed through narratives, and within these narratives positioning as well as of morality is also explored. Still, positioning theory is the first theory which will be described in this section, as it also constitutes an inspiration for the next approach, which will be described. This is the narrative practice approach (NPA) presented by Michael Bamberg. As we will see through this study, this is an “approach” more than simply a “theory”, as it also constitutes a method for analyzing material. However, for linguistic convenience positioning theory and NPA will henceforth be referred to as the “theories” or “theoretical perspectives” of this study.

These two theories are chosen in the context of the present research, since they, as just mentioned, integrate the small-d and capital-D perspectives on discourse, meaning that they make it possible for this study to focus on the microgenetic construal of identity *in relation to* preexisting normative discourses (here termed master narratives). By implementing positioning theory, it is possible to address the specific positions taken up by the men in their stories, and as we will see shortly, narrative order is constituted by positions. The NPA is also included, as it contributes with a specific theoretical notion of what challenges self and identity formation processes face, in the form of three dilemmas, which requires narrative navigation. Further arguments for why these two perspectives are relevant, will be made during the following description and evaluation of the theories.

3.1 Positioning theory

Positioning theory is an application of discursive psychology and the notion of positioning is developed, to better understand how people construct subjectivity or “do” being a person (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré, 2014; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Grounded in a discursive methodology, it has the basic assumption that mental phenomena are discursively produced. Produced in the sense that discursive practices don’t just make mental phenomena come to existence, rather mental phenomena are immanent in the discursive activities themselves (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). This substantiates the approach of the current study, which explores identity

as a discursively produced mental phenomena.

Positioning theory is based on the assumption that people live their lives in terms of their ongoingly produced self, as they are constituted and re-constituted through the various discursive practices within which they participate. To take up a particular position means inevitably seeing the world from that specific point of view, from that certain discourse within which one is positioned (Davies & Harré, 1990). So, a person is a product of the discursive practices he/she engages in, however we each experience multiple and contradictory positionings in our everyday lives. Furthermore, not any position is available to take up, so who one is, is dependent on which positions are available in the discursive practices one participates in (Davies & Harré, 1990).

The term “position” is an alternative to the concept of “role” often used in dramaturgical frameworks, such as Goffman’s (1959), and it is criticized for being too static (Davies & Harré, 1990; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). With the concept of positioning, it is emphasized that social interaction is dynamic, since people can both position and be positioned by others in social settings, and positions can easily shift. It is defined as the discursive process by which people are located in conversation (Davies & Harré, 1990). The structure of conversations can be understood in terms of a triad consisting of: position, act and storyline, which are mutually determining (Harré, 2014; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). A position is a conversational location, consisting of a cluster of short-term right and duties to act in certain ways according to a local moral order (Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré, 2014; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Storylines are inherent in conversations as an underlying “plot” or theme of the story, which structures actions and make them intelligible as acts with social meaning, and these storylines make certain positions available (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Lastly, communicative acts, or speech-acts, are utterings that carry social meaning. Here the theory draws on speech act theory (Austin, 1962), while emphasizing that the social effect of an utterance is dependent on the positions of people in a conversation (Davies & Harré, 1990; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999).

3.1.1 Types of positioning

For analytical purposes we can make some distinctions regarding types of positioning. An overview is provided in table 1. Of these types I will go more into detail with intentional self-positioning (both deliberate and forced) as this type is especially relevant in relation to the aim of this study, which is to explore how the men in the podcast construct their identities. The following will illustrate how.

Deliberate self-positioning occurs when a person wants to express their own identity. According to van Langenhove and Harré (1999) it can be done in at least three different ways: by stressing one's agency, by referring to one's unique point of view and by referring to events in one's biography. These points are similar to some of Bamberg's points, regarding managing identity dilemmas about being agentive versus passive, being the same as versus different from others, and lastly changing versus being consistent over time. This will be clearer, when Bamberg's theory is explicated later in this section.

Another point, which Bamberg and van Langenhove and Harré have in common, is that people try to come across in a certain way. Van Langenhove and Harré (1999) call it strategic positioning, when people try to achieve certain goals by deliberate self-positioning: "The stories people tell about themselves will differ according to how they want to "present" themselves" (p. 25). This type of positioning permeates the stories of the seven men studied here.

In opposition to deliberate self-positioning, forced self-positioning is when positioning is demanded by someone else than the person doing the positioning (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). This can simply consist of someone asking, "how have you been lately?" which would then force that person, to make a self-report. The demand for positioning oneself can also come from an institution, asking someone to account for their behavior, thus requiring that person to position him- or herself as an agent. This could be said to be what is at stake in the material of the present study, where a journalist, representing a large Danish newspaper, asks questions which require the interviewees to position themselves and account for their behavior. So, their self-positioning is both forced, to some extent, but also deliberate and strategic, as they employ different discursive means to come across in certain ways.

At this point it is hopefully clear that the types of positioning presented here, and in the table, often occur simultaneously. For instance, a typical kind of positioning

talk is first order, tacit and performative positioning, that is, when people position themselves, position others and are positioned by others in an evolving storyline. In the case of this study first order, tacit, performative positioning takes place in the podcast interviews, where the participants are positioned by the interviewer, while they are also required to position themselves, and are simultaneously positioning the audience and the interviewer. In addition to that, third order, accountive, intentional positioning is taking place, as prior positionings of the first and second order, is a topic of their stories.

Table 1 – Types of positioning

First order positioning	Persons locate themselves and others within a moral order, by using categories and storylines.
Second order positioning	When first order positionings are questioned and have to be negotiated.
Third order positioning	An act of repositioning in another discursive practice than the one in which the original first order positioning took place. Is necessarily accountive.
Self-positioning	Positioning oneself. A person always positions oneself while simultaneously positioning the other.
Other-positioning	Positioning others. A person always positions the other while simultaneously positioning oneself.
Performative positioning	Positioning self and others within an ongoing storyline in the here and now, so that acts have immediate effect. Is necessarily first order positioning, as it can't occur if positions are challenged.
Accountive positioning	“Talk about talk”. Accounting for prior acts of positioning either within the conversation where the initial positioning took place (second order accountive positioning), or within a new conversation about the original conversation (third order accountive positioning).
Moral positioning	People are always positioned with regard to the moral orders in which they perform social actions, more specifically with regard to what is expected of them morally.

Personal positioning	When one is positioned/positions oneself in terms of their individual characteristics. The less a person's actions can be made intelligible by reference to roles, the more prominent personal positioning will be.
Tacit positioning	Most first order positioning is not intentional or even conscious.
Intentional positioning	Can be both forced or deliberate positioning of self or others. Second/third order positionings must always be intentional, but while an intentional second/third order positioning is going on, a tacit first order positioning will have occurred as well.

3.1.2 Morality

Before proceeding with Bamberg's approach to narratives, I wish to elaborate a bit more on the concept of moral in relation to positioning, as this is a central concept in positioning theory, and perhaps even more central when dealing with sexual harassment. As already mentioned, positions are always connected to certain moral orders, regarding what one has a right to or is expected to do. The key moral concepts are rights and duties, and with a position follows rights and duties to, or prohibitions against, performing certain meaningful actions (Harré, 2014). It is important to understand this moral dimension of positioning, based on which actions take place, as it also opens up the dimensions of responsibility, and thereby positions of praise and blame. Moreover, it is important to remember that moral orders are local (Harré, 2014). What is morally acceptable in one context, might not be in another. This corresponds to the socio-cultural constructivist view on moral presented by Branco (2014). She claims that moral is not something which is in the head, but something primarily out in the world relating to action, and that, consequently, cognitive theories about moral are reductionist and there is no linear moral development taking place in each individual. She furthermore criticizes the Kantian notion of moral as rational, and claims that people don't always act morally, despite being aware what would have been the moral thing to do. The central point of this view is, that moral is dependent on the context.

3.1.3 Summary of positioning theory

This theoretical perspective represents an integration of the small-d and capital-D perspectives on discourse. It encompasses both a top-down and bottom-up approach to discourses in the sense that it recognizes that discourses both have a constitutive force while simultaneously people are capable of exercising choice in relation to which discursive practices to engage in and use them as a resource. Like other psychological phenomena identity is accomplished through discursive means, and one way to approach it is by conceptualizing it as based on positioning. The discursive methodology provides the focus on discursive practices, and what positioning theory is then especially useful for, is uncovering the specific language games, to borrow a term from Wittgenstein (1953), that takes place in these practices.

Before proceeding with another complementary, theoretical perspective on studying identity, which analytically is focused on narratives, first a word on the terms storyline versus narrative. Both positioning theory and Bamberg's approach take stories as their starting point. Both Davies and Harré (1990) and Bamberg (2008) assert that we tell stories to make sense of ourselves, our own and other's lives. With both approaches one function of stories is to construct a sense of who one is. The term "storyline", which is primarily used in positioning theory, is occasionally used interchangeably with "narrative" for example when the storyline pole of the positioning triad is also called the narrative pole (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 25). Similarly Bamberg uses "narrative" and "story" as synonyms (Bamberg, 2012, p. 208). This can seem as conceptual confusion. Often narratives are conceptualized as consisting of different elements, e.g. requiring certain features consisting of a pentad, like Burke (1969) presents it, or of six structural parts like presented by Labov (1972). In this case a storyline could be seen as constituting the plot of a narrative like "the male hero rescues the female". Then a narrative could encompass more than one storyline, and storyline would thus be a subcategory of narrative. However, as Brockmeier (2012) argues, narratives are not constituted by a set of structural features, rather what constitutes narrative is context-dependent. With this view, what distinguishes narrative from other forms of discourse is that a narrative becomes meaningless if you isolate it from its context and reduce it to a narrative structure. Whether a story constitutes a narrative or not depends on the local context in which rules of narratives have been formed, meaning that particular audiences have accept-

ed particular discourses as narratives (Brockmeier, 2014). This means that a storyline might as well also be a narrative. As we will see in the next section, it also corresponds to Bamberg's notion of narratives, which favors "small stories" over "big stories". All in all, in the present study the notion of "storyline" from positioning theory and the notion of "narrative" represented by Bamberg will be viewed as referring to the same thing, and "narrative" will be the term employed.

3.2 Bamberg's narrative practice approach

The approach to studying narratives, presented by Bamberg, can be viewed as part of a second narrative turn in psychology (Bamberg, 2006; Brockmeier, 2014). The first narrative turn in psychology involved seeing life as storied (Bamberg, 2011), with a focus on the stories people tell in terms of what they are about (Bamberg, 2006). Bamberg (2011) labels approaches within the first narrative turn as "biographic" or "big story narrative research", as they often privilege "life stories" and he is critical of them for several reasons. Some of the points he makes are, that they reduce language to its referential function (Bamberg, 2011). What language is taken to refer to is a self or identity, which people *have*, meaning that these approaches essentialize self and identity, as some internal organizing principle which can be located in the big stories people tell (Bamberg, 2008). This is in opposition to the view just described as inherent in positioning theory, where identities, as well as other mental phenomena, are regarded as discursively produced. In accordance with this view, Bamberg believes that: "To start with the assumption that narrative and the interpretation of selves (and others) are based on internal (psychological) constructs would seriously underestimate the dialogical/discursive origins of our interiors" (Bamberg, 2006, p. 143). He views identity as something which is negotiated in communicative space, meaning that it can't be reduced to how characters are depicted and how they develop in the story (Bamberg, 2010). Identity is not something that is referenced or represented through language, rather identities are constructed, formed and performed within the space of everyday talk in interaction. Biographic approaches mostly disregard the meaning of the context in which narrating takes place. Bamberg argues, in opposition to this, that the content of a story is dependent on the interactive situation in which it is told (Bamberg, 2011). Stories, also life stories, are told for specific purposes, meaning that people generally attune their stories to various local

and interpersonal purposes, but also in a sequential manner, stories are always oriented to prior and upcoming talk (Bamberg, 2011). This is all generally a critique of reducing narratives to what they are about (Bamberg, 2010), and Bamberg (2011) argues, that we need an alternative approach to narratives.

This came in the form of the second narrative turn. With this turn focus shifted to the practices of storytelling and to the social and cultural circumstances in which a story is told (Brockmeier, 2014). Here, approaches study what people do with their talk when they tell stories, and more specifically how people use narratives to accomplish a sense of self (Bamberg, 2006).

The specific approach by Bamberg, focuses on analyzing “narrative-in-interaction” (Bamberg, 2004, 2006, 2011), that is the way small stories surface in everyday conversation as the place where identities are continuously practiced and tested out, thereby exploring the self at more levels, both the talked-about and in the here-and-now (Bamberg, 2011). Formerly, he labelled it a “small story approach” as a contrast to the “biographic/big story approach”, but more recently he calls it a “narrative practice approach” (NPA), really emphasizing the focus on the practice of telling stories (Bamberg, 2012). In addition to focusing on narrative practice, his approach is also microgenetic and functionalist-informed. Microgenetic in the sense that the discursive space between people where identities are microgenetically formed and performed, is microanalytically accessed (Bamberg, 2004), and a functionalist informed approach in the sense that a large focus is the *action orientation* of the participants in small story events and to a lesser extent on what is reflected upon in the stories told. Especially this focus is what makes it crucially different from biographic or big story approaches (Bamberg, 2011). What a small story is, and other characteristics of the narrative practice approach, will be explicated further shortly, but first it is relevant to make clear the role of positioning in this approach. This is relevant since Bamberg moved from conducting his research under the header of positioning analyses (e.g. Bamberg, 2004, 2008), to focusing more on identity dilemmas and the analyses of how these are navigated (e.g. Bamberg, 2010; Bamberg, De Fina, & Schifffrin, 2011). Within his new approach there is, what he calls, a new model of positioning with a focus on the agency-dilemma, which will be accounted for later. Positioning is especially relevant in relation to this dilemma, in exploring how a speaker positions him- or herself as an agent, when the socio-cultural con-

straints are always and already as work positioning the subject, or in other words, how people as agentive actors position themselves and in doing so become positioned (Bamberg, 2011). This notion of positioning is in accordance with the positioning theory described in the prior section, and Bamberg (2004; Bamberg et al., 2011) also acknowledges that his concept of positioning is influenced by, among others, Davies and Harré (1990).

So positioning still has a prominent role in Bamberg's small story approach, which views stories as interactive positionings, where people are continuously challenging and confirming each other's positions (Bamberg, 2008, 2011). Through talk speakers establish both what the talk is about (content) and simultaneously particular social relationships, positioning themselves in relation to the world out there and the social world here and now (Bamberg, 2006).

3.2.1 Exploring narratives as small stories

Here I will go deeper into the notion of narrative and narratives as small stories in Bamberg's approach. Narrative, in this approach, is defined as giving an account of actions or events (Bamberg, 2012). It is irrelevant whether what is accounted for lies back in time or is more immediate in nature, and whether speakers disclose events or actions from their own life, from other people's lives or refer to fictional characters (Bamberg, 2006). It's how they construct and position characters in the story-world that index the way that speakers want to come across in the here-and-now (Bamberg, 2012). Narratives are useful to study identity processes because we construct our everyday experience in narrative form (Bamberg, 2004). Narratives don't just *carry* meaning, but are sites for social and individual meaning construction (Bamberg, 2008). Making sense of the world as well as oneself by telling stories, big or small, is an ongoing process taking place in everyday, mundane situations (Bamberg, 2008). This is also why Bamberg suggests to use the term "narration" rather than "narrative" or "story", since that would emphasize the activity of narrating and de-emphasize the final product of a text (Bamberg, 2011). As already mentioned, this approach, in accordance with its methodological origin, emphasize the practice of narrating. Narratives are situated and contextual in nature, embedded in sociocultural practices, and it's within these practices they can be analyzed and interpreted for what they are accomplishing (Bamberg, 2006). With this type of narrative analyses we are less inter-

ested in who a narrator really is and more interested in how narrators engage in the activity of narrating, which is giving an account, for instance by engaging in making (past) actions accountable from a particular (moral) perspective for particular situated purposes (Bamberg, 2006). Because stories do moral work. They are designed in a specific way with a particular orientation toward a particular moral ground concerning who one is, and they provide a basis for evaluating the “rightness” or “wrongness” of whatever is being reported in a story, in relation to how we account for our actions (Bamberg, 2004, 2006). This approach also has less focus on coherence of narratives, like traditional narrative approaches. On the contrary it explores the inconsistencies, ambiguities and contradictions inherent in narratives, as well as how people navigate between different versions of selfhood in local interactional contexts (Bamberg, 2011).

In relation to defining small stories, they are in opposition to big stories. As it is mentioned above, with the biographic approach, stories are analyzed as representations of the world and of identities. With a small story approach, on the contrary, it is analyzed how people use narratives to construct a sense of who they are (Bamberg, 2011). Small story research focus on what is done in interaction; how identities are emerging and are managed by use of narrative-in-interaction (Bamberg, 2006). The function of stories is seen as positioning identities, taking them back and revising them, as testing out boundaries and engaging in identity practices (Bamberg, 2010).

In relation to the present study, it's important to note, that it's not that big-stories can't or shouldn't be studied, but they should be approached in the same way as small stories – with a focus on how narratives are used to construct certain identities (Bamberg, 2010). For example, it can then be studied, how biographical identities are made use of in an interview situation (see e.g. Bamberg, 2010). In the present study, biographical material could also very well be made relevant by the men, in an attempt to account for their actions. Additionally, the stories which are the subject of study here, are from an interview setting, and are far from small stories. Rather they are longer, not every-day-kind-of stories, and they are not embedded in an every-day-kind-of interactional context. Consequently, they resemble big stories, but Bamberg (2008) has shown, that small story analysis can just as well be applied to big stories, and that it can reveal aspects of identity that traditional big story analysis can't.

This way of studying big stories is fundamentally different from narrative approaches within the first narrative turn, since it studies the construction of identity and self as a process (Bamberg, 2008), rather than something given, constituting a resource one can draw on in communicative interaction (Bamberg, 2004). This doesn't mean however, that sense-making about the self doesn't exist previously or outside the discourse situation which is studied, but when analyzing narrative-in-interaction we should look at *what participants make relevant* in the particular interactive setting (Bamberg, 2004). Through telling stories, making certain things relevant rather than others, people engage in "identity work" that results in situated displays of a sense of self (Bamberg, 2008). This model of positioning makes us see identity constructions are two-fold: The referential world is constructed with characters in time and space in a certain way. In addition to this, the referential world of what a story is about is constructed *as a function* of the interactive engagement, meaning that the way the story-world is put together points to how the speaker wants to be understood. According to Bamberg, it is especially this part which is neglected in traditional identity research (Bamberg, 2011).

A final comment on narrative: It's not that it has a special status over other discursive actions, however narrating enables the speaker to disassociate the speaking self and thereby take a reflective position in relation to the self as a character, as well as making past or imagined events relevant for the act of telling in the here-and-now (Bamberg, 2011). Storytelling practices are furthermore a good opportunity to practice navigation between the three dilemmas which are inherent in constructing identity: To position characters in relation to other characters, to position characters as agentive or recipient and to account for changes in the main characters history that did or did not occur (Bamberg, 2012). These dilemmas will be further elaborated on in the following section.

3.2.2 The three identity dilemmas

According to Bamberg, navigating identity is profoundly dilemmatic (Bamberg, 2010). That also means that answers in the form of identity narrations will never be simple or clear - especially when having to do with heavy-duty moral accounting, which is also the case in the present study regarding sexual transgressions. Claims of identity faces three overarching dilemmas, which are also analytic domains in Bam-

berg's approach (Bamberg, 2008, 2010, 2011; Bamberg et al., 2011):

1. Continuity/discontinuity dilemma: How is it possible to consider oneself as the same across time in the face of constant change?
2. Uniqueness dilemma: How is it possible to consider oneself as unique in relation to others in the face of being the same as everyone else and vice versa?
3. Agency dilemma: Is it the person who constructs the world the way it is or is the person constructed by the way the world is, in which the person is subjected to it?

The three dilemmas are linked with each other and focusing on one dilemma will not suffice. Research faces the task of tying these three contradictions together: "Viewing the narrating subject (1) as not locked into stability nor drifting through constant change, but rather as something that is multiple, contradictory, and distributed over time and place but contextually and locally held together; (2) as positioning self in terms of membership claims vis-à-vis others; and (3) as agentive, though simultaneously situated and contextualized in a sociocultural context." (Bamberg, 2010, p. 112).

3.2.2.1 Dilemma 1: Constancy and change across time

To navigate this dilemma the subject has to find balance between two extreme endpoints on a continuum: not changing at all (which would make life utterly boring) versus changing radically or suddenly from one moment to the next (which could create potential chaos) (Bamberg et al., 2011). In action, this navigation requires diachronically navigating between constancy and change, identifying which events are relevant, in order to maintain that we are the same we used to be but having to account for our actions (Bamberg, 2010, 2011). Like with the other two dilemmas the speaking subject must navigate this conflict by positioning themselves in terms of *some* form of continuity against the background of *some* change and vice versa (Bamberg et al., 2011). A story can also be plotted with focus on either transformation or consistency, and different discursive devices are picked for the different purposes (Bamberg et al., 2011). Like it has already been mentioned, with this approach we don't care whether a person really *is* the same across time, but rather

we're interested in how this dilemma is navigated constructively in small-d discourse trying to weave together past and present into a more or less coherent whole (Bamberg et al., 2011).

3.2.2.2 Dilemma 2: Being same as or different from others

This dilemma is about the management of differentiating and integrating the self from/with others, by choices of small-d discourses which signal a position of the subject in relation to others, both in the story told and in the current interaction (Bamberg et al., 2011). As mentioned earlier, according to positioning theory, people experience many and varying positionings in their everyday life (Davies & Harré, 1990), making it quite relevant for constructing our sense of self and identity, both how we are the same across time (previous dilemma) as well as how we are similar and different from others. This dilemma is based on the assumption, that we can't be same as and different from specific others at the same time, however, we can make different aspects of sameness and difference relevant in different situations (Bamberg et al., 2011). In action it is accomplished by marking proximity or distance to membership categories, thereby drawing up boundaries around oneself and others, while simultaneously flattening them, so that individual identities and group belongings become visible (Bamberg, 2010; Bamberg et al., 2011). It is similar to what traditionally has been called *social identities*, which is associating with particular groups favorably, comparing in-group and out-group, and desiring an identity that is positively distinct in relation to the out-group (Bamberg et al., 2011). The discursive perspective however, dissolves the contradiction there seems to be between what is social and what is individual (Bamberg et al., 2011). This doesn't mean that there is no culturally shared sense of what counts as personal or private in relation to what counts as public, but it means that discursive perspectives don't ask where the individual starts and where it becomes social, nor do they ask where the social starts and whether or how it impacts the individual (Bamberg et al., 2011).

Like with the other dilemmas, self as same as or different from others is something we practice in everyday conversations. Different versions are negotiated with others, tried out, rejected or accepted in conversations, making it a continuous navigation process (Bamberg, 2011). It can be accomplished by directly marking by the speaker, that he/she belongs to certain social categories, but often category member-

ship is more implied or hinted (Bamberg et al., 2011). Whether it is direct or implied, adhering to certain membership categories can align a person with certain master narratives (Bamberg, 2010).

3.2.2.3 Dilemma 3: Who-is-in-control?

The dilemma regarding agency requires navigation between oneself as the active, agent in control, while simultaneously attributing agency to outside forces (Bamberg, 2011). Either a speaker can pick discursive devices that lean toward a person-to-world direction of fit or they can pick devices that construe the direction of fit from world-to-person (Bamberg et al., 2011). Choosing devices from one end of the continuum, the world-to-person direction of fit, entails low-agency, possible victim role, less influential, less powerful and less responsible, also meaning less blame-worthy when actions are negatively evaluated (Bamberg et al., 2011), e.g. in the case of having sexually harassed someone like in the present study. Picking discursive devices from the other end of continuum, the person-to-world direction of fit, entails positioning oneself as an agentive self-constructor, in control and self-determined (Bamberg et al., 2011). Following this, the agency dilemma is particularly relevant in relation to placing responsibility (credit and blame).

3.2.2.4 Self vs. identity in the dilemmas

In order to ensure conceptual clarification, it is necessary to say a few words about self versus identity within this approach. Bamberg mostly uses identity as the overall term, for his field of study. However, he also tries to differentiate between identity and self - while using self and sense of self synonymously (Bamberg, 2011). Like Bamberg, I also mostly use the term identity to refer to all constructions of who one is, but the distinction is still relevant to present, as it relates to the different dilemmas.

When narrators position characters, including themselves, in their stories, as same as or different from others, and make claims with regard to agency of these characters, these positions index a "synchronic sense of self" and this type of character positioning, accomplishing navigation of these two dilemmas, can take place in other discursive practices or genres besides storytelling as well (Bamberg, 2010, 2011). It is first when a character is positioned diachronically, across time and space,

that we can talk about identity and identity formation, and typically narrative is the primary genre for doing this (Bamberg, 2011). So, self/sense of self, is accomplished by navigating between sameness and difference (dilemma two) and agency (dilemma three), and identities are accomplished in light of navigating the continuity/discontinuity dilemma (dilemma one) (Bamberg, 2011). All in all this makes the uniqueness and agency dilemmas different from, if not prerequisites for, establishing a diachronic sense of who one is (Bamberg, 2011).

3.2.3 Summary of the narrative practice approach

Like positioning theory, this approach is an attempt to integrate the small-d and capital-D perspectives. Narratives are analyzed as small-d stories, exploring self and identity both at 1) the level of the “talked about” as well as 2) at the level of the teller and 3) performance in the here and now (Bamberg et al., 2011). These three aspects all contribute to the larger project at work in telling stories, where selves are positioned in relation to capital-D discourses by more or less implicit referencing and orienting to social positions and discourses above and beyond the here and now (Bamberg et al., 2011). Bamberg defines these larger discourses as “preexisting social forms of communication”, whether they are called master narratives, culturally available narratives or dominant discourses (Bamberg, 2004). However, across publications, Bamberg most often employs the term master narratives (Bamberg, 2004, 2006, 2010; Bamberg et al., 2011; Korobov & Bamberg, 2004). Focusing on small-d stories allows for the study of how people as agentive actors appropriate particular capital-D discourses in order to construct and position themselves in small-d discourse so as to display a sense of how they want to come across, claiming a sense of self (Bamberg, 2008; Bamberg et al., 2011). This overcomes the internal contradiction between two opposing subject theories: that the subject is determined by preexisting discourses, or master narratives, versus that the subject is the only ground from which narratives and selves are constructed (Bamberg, 2006).

To sum up, with Bamberg’s approach interactional, context- and performance oriented aspects are brought into the analysis of identities (Bamberg, 2011), that is the context in which narratives take place, what they consist of as well as how they are performed (Bamberg, 2006).

4.0 Method

This section concerns the more practical aspects of how this study was carried out. First, the material of the study is described. Here issues regarding its secondary nature and how it's public will be reflected on. This part also includes my arguments for basing this study on this particular material. Then I discuss whether the material is naturalistic, since this is an ideal within discursive psychology. The following section addresses reflections regarding the process of transcribing the podcast episodes and includes a transcription guide. In the end of this section, I briefly discuss an ethical issue that came up regarding anonymizing interviewees despite the material being publicly available. The last part of this method section presents the process of coding the material and the approach used to analyze it.

4.1 *The material*

Like it was previously introduced, the material of this study is a podcast series named *Grænseland – samtaler med mænd om sex* (eng. Borderland – conversations with men about sex) made by the Danish newspaper Information. The theme of the series is to listen to the stories of men, about times when they went too far and times when they didn't go far enough. They talk about how they are expected to take the first step, and at the same time not risk crossing any boundaries. The purpose is to gain knowledge about why transgressions happen and how we can better avoid it in the future. The journalist from Information who has produced the podcast and conducted the interviews is Rasmus Bo Sørensen.

After an intro episode follows five episodes, with individual interviews of some men, and group discussions between others. A total of 17 men participate in the podcast, however, as mentioned in the introduction, only seven of these men state that they have engaged in SH. In accordance with my research question, I focus on the stories of these seven men, and exclude the remaining ten. The men, who tell stories of SH, are: Michael and Jens from episode one, Søren and Anders from episode two, Niels from episode three, Philip from episode four and Carl from episode five. Søren tells a story of yelling at women at Roskilde Festival and Anders and Carl tell stories of touching a woman without her permission. Niels kissed a woman against her will,

and both Michael, Jens and Philip had sex with a woman who, more or less certainly, didn't want it to happen. All the men are between the ages of late 20's to 47 and tell stories which happened when they were younger. Two of the men, Jens and Philip, are anonymous in the original podcast. In the present context, all men are anonymized. This will be addressed later in this section.

Working with a podcast series, as the material for psychological research, has several issues which should be reflected on and discussed. First of all, this data is not produced or collected by me, the researcher, which makes it secondary data – that is data which is already collected by someone else (Blaikie, 2009). I, as the researcher, had no direct contact with the participants, as is the case with primary data. When using secondary data, it can be difficult for the researcher to judge the quality of the data, as information about how it was collected, what assumptions were behind it, how questions were developed and what the initial aim with the data was, is not always available (Blaikie, 2009). This also applies in the context of the present study. However, the transcriptions of the podcast episodes were made by me. This is important in relation to the aim of my research, which is to analyze both content as well as performance of the stories told in the interviews, making the style and quality of transcription especially important. My reflections on the transcription process follows later in this section.

Another characteristic about this material, which is relevant to discuss, is the fact that the material is public, in the sense that it is both created for the public and continues to be publicly available. This inevitably had implications for how the interviewees wanted to come across and thereby for how they told their stories. They performed their stories for an “imagined audience” – a term used by Bamberg (2008). This is “an audience that is coming from different backgrounds, with potentially quite different expectations, and an audience that is “timeless”” (Bamberg, 2008, p. 188). This both makes the podcast interviews different from everyday situations, where identities are usually practiced, but also from interviews conducted as a part of research. Research interviews, which are primary data, are usually produced in a confidential setting, with participants usually being anonymous, and the purpose of data is to be used for research, not for the public to be entertained by. Had I conducted these interviews with these men, as a part of my research, surely the outcome would have been completely different than what it is now. So, besides the one clear ad-

vantage of using secondary data, which is saving time, why didn't I conduct interviews myself? This was a pragmatic choice related to access. If I had decided to conduct my own interviews, my first task would be to find eligible participants. I would have to search for participants through the channels which I have access to, which is mainly through people I know and through university. I have asked myself, what motivation anyone would have to contact me in order to meet me with the purpose of exposing themselves by telling a story of them engaging in SH. As a 10th semester university student I don't have the same credibility and clout as a newspaper with more than 80.000 readers (Kantar Gallup, 2019). Participating in the newspaper's podcast, their stories has a more direct and larger impact on the public, than they would have in my master thesis. Furthermore, I have wondered whether there could be an issue of me, the researcher, being a woman. Maybe it was easier for the men to expose themselves in these stories to another man, than it would have been to a woman.

This challenge of finding men, who have sexually harassed someone, and who would be willing to participate in psychological research with the purpose of analyzing how they construct identity, could be solved by using material, which was already existing, created for another context. Whether these interviews resemble identity processes in everyday situations, will be addressed in the following.

4.1.1 Naturalistic material

The last issue related to the material used here, that I wish to discuss, is how naturalistic it is. Data can come from a variety of settings, from more natural social settings to artificial settings (Blaikie, 2009). When conducting research within a discursive psychological methodology, one guideline in relation to data is, that it should be "naturalistic" or "naturally occurring", in opposition to "non-natural", "artificial" or "researcher-provoked" (Speer, 2002; Wiggins & Potter, 2008). The argument is that naturalistic data are qualitatively different from, preferable to, and/or better for the purposes of analysis than the non-naturalistic data, and this distinction is mapped onto certain types of data, which are then defined as either naturalistic or non-naturalistic (Speer, 2002). For example, data generated through experimental methods as well as through qualitative interviews and focus groups are seen as non-natural (Potter, 2012b; Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Speer, 2002). The reason for this,

which is also why discourse psychology is distinct from the earlier tradition of discourse analysis in almost completely abandoning interviews as a research method, is challenges regarding how interviews are produced and analyzed (Potter & Hepburn, 2005; Wiggins & Potter, 2008). I will highlight a few of these, and then relate them to the material used here.

The problems of interviews, presented by discursive psychologists, primarily relates to the role of the researcher/interviewer and the research setting. Potter and Hepburn (2005) as well as Wiggins and Potter (2008), point out, how difficult it is to disentangle the agendas of social science at large, and of the researcher more specifically, which is imported into the interview through terminology, question construction and the whole set-up. In relation to the set-up, participants are often recruited as members of certain categories (e.g. sexual harasser), but they may speak from many different positions in the interview, drawing on different category memberships. However, this is often not attended to (Wiggins & Potter, 2008).

In relation to the interview set-up, there is argued for a general unavailability of information regarding this, e.g. in relation to what category participants are recruited under, but also for example in relation to what participants are told the interview is about and for (Potter & Hepburn, 2005).

Another challenge regarding interviews, which is also pointed out from the discursive psychology perspective, is the failure to consider interviews as interaction (Potter, 2012b). Often focus is solely on isolated extracts, or interviews are transcribed in ways which don't represent the details of talk, which constitute the interactional features (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). Within discursive psychology, it is important to attend to the interactional context of an interview, and analyze the interview within that context (Potter, 2012b). According to Wiggins and Potter (2008), working with naturalistic materials situates research in everyday life and thereby "captures life as it happens". It studies people's practices in situ, rather than having to be concerned with whether a finding can be applied from the interview setting to a mundane setting. It also avoids imposing the categories, expectations and assumptions of the researcher on the data, and thereby also makes it possible for the research to be guided by issues that had not been anticipated (Wiggins & Potter, 2008).

Although what constitutes these naturalistic materials, is not completely agreed on, naturalistic records is by Potter (2012) defined as activity which would have hap-

pened as it would regardless of whether it is recorded – it is not got up by the researcher. Some of the examples he provides are recordings of conversations in mundane settings, records of professional-client interaction (e.g. therapy), television programs and documents such as personal diaries. This does not leave it straightforward to determine, whether the material of the present study, being podcast episodes, fit the definition of naturalistic or not.

The material used in this study is generated through an interview, which then, by default, makes it non-naturalistic. It also can't be described as taking place within a mundane social setting, as being interviewed for a podcast series is not something people usually do in their everyday life. Also, the interviewee's might have agreed to be asked certain questions and not others, beforehand – we don't know – which also points to the problem of information about the set-up being unavailable. We can have a theory of the men probably having been recruited as members of the group “men” and some more specifically as “men who have engaged in sexual harassment”, but we can't know for sure. We also don't know what the men were told about what the interview was about and for. We can make assumptions, based on the introduction episode for the series (see appendix 6), that the men were told it was about #MeToo from men's perspective, including sexual boundaries, consent and so on. We can also assume, with more certainty, that the men were aware that the purpose of the interviews was to be published – since for example two of the men chose to be anonymous. However, all in all, the material has many features which would make it non-naturalistic.

On the other hand, these interviews were not conducted in a research setting. That means that they avoid the social science agenda in the set-up, terminology and questions. Also, the interviews are neither initiated, planned or conducted by me, the researcher, which mean that the data isn't influenced by my expectations or assumptions. Furthermore, as it will be clear later, the material will be analyzed and interpreted within the situated context where it was generated – as part of interviews for a podcast. In practice it means that the men's utterances are seen as related to both the questions from the interviewer as well as to the audience of the podcast.

Using material, which is generated through interviews, and regarding them as somewhat naturalistic, is also consistent with the theoretical perspectives of the present research. Whoever the interviewer is, he or she is regarded as also contributing

to the way a narrative is performed, e.g. through asking challenging questions or the like (as in Bamberg, 2004). Furthermore, making sense of oneself by telling stories is an ongoing process which take place in everyday, mundane situations, before it is repeated for example in an interview (Bamberg, 2008). This supports the argument that the present material is naturalistic, since it reflects the everyday situations where identities are usually practiced. Within the approach taken here, the question is also asked: what is the purpose of saying this in this particular context? That means, that no context is “better” than another.

However, there is one challenge related to this material, which makes it less naturalistic, and that is the fact that, as programs for radio usually are, it is edited. That means, that the order of what is said potentially could be different from how it is presented in the episodes. Furthermore, it seems like many questions from the interviewer are cut out from the final product, meaning that listeners don’t hear if certain statements or stories are elicited by certain questions. This makes it challenging to be true to an approach, which emphasizes the importance of analyzing and interpreting within the interactional context of what is said. This fact constitutes a limitation of the present material, which can’t be redeemed, however, it is reflected on and considered throughout the research.

As a concluding statement of this section on the material, I want to make clear, that the interviews are not seen as the true stories of what happened. Rather they are seen as reconstructions of past events, which are constructed in relation to the context. For the purpose of the present research, it is not important what really happened, rather what is important, in correspondence with the epistemology, methodology as well as theoretical perspectives of this study is, how the men construct and accomplish identity in the specific context of the podcast series.

4.2 The transcription process

When it comes to transcription, according to Lapadat and Lindsay (1999), there seems to be an “unreflective assumption that oral discourse can be transformed into written text without consequences” (p. 74). This could be one reason why transcription as a process is often not discussed or reflected on by researchers (Kvale, 2007; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). The aim of this paragraph is to make clear why it’s important to reflect on the transcription process both before and during transcribing.

Furthermore, the choices that were made before transcribing the podcasts of the current study will be accounted for.

When embarking upon the process of transcribing a recorded interaction, many choices have to be made by the researcher, and there is no single formula for success. Standard conventions can make transcribing easier, however, they don't always make sense in relation to the specific data of a study, which is always situated in time and place (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). Therefore, the researcher should ask themselves: How detailed should the transcription be? How much, if at all, should pronunciation be reflected? How much contextual and non-verbal information should be included in the transcript? (Kvale, 2007; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). It can be difficult to know beforehand, what could be of key importance in the recording, but a helpful constructive question that could be asked is: What is a useful transcription for my research purposes? (Kvale, 2007). In other words, it is reasonable to transcribe as exact as is required by the research question (Flick, 2009).

These points substantiate the argument made by Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) that transcripts are not direct, one-to-one reflections of the actual interaction, that one wishes to study. Researchers face the challenge of competing demands of efficiency and accuracy of the process, while selectively reducing the data in a way that makes it readable (Flick, 2009; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). So, transcription is an inherently selective process, as well as a constructive and interpretive process, as it is based on the knowledge and beliefs of the researcher, which is also why choices made in the process should be accounted for (Kvale, 2007; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). Striving for objectivity in transcriptions, while at the same time perceiving talk as something situated and ambiguous is counterintuitive (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999). Already in the moment when voices are recorded, we move one step away from the real interaction we are studying, and transcribing the recording moves it one step further away. This supports the view that transcriptions are textually constructed representations of the recorded interaction, rather than an exact reflection of it (Flick, 2009; Kvale, 2007; Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999).

Summing up on all of the above-mentioned points, it is important that researchers become more reflective on their transcription procedures. In relation to standard conventions, one-size doesn't fit all, and flexible approaches are required to fit different purposes (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999).

In relation to the current study, choices have also been made regarding how detailed transcriptions should be, and what stylistic aspects of what is said in the interaction are important to include (see table 2 for a detailed transcription guide). Since the purpose of my study is not to make a detailed linguistic analysis, but rather to look at how identity is constructed through storylines of sexually harassing another person, the level of details included in the transcription should reflect this. Studies by Bamberg, where he uses his narrative practice approach, which is part of the theoretical framework of the present study, has been an inspiration for the transcription guide made here. His transcriptions are overall quite readable (see e.g. Bamberg, 2004, 2010; Bamberg, De Fina, & Schifffrin, 2011), since they don't include too many details, but at the same time still they are written in a verbatim style including e.g. interjections and repetitions. The transcription guide of the present study is inspired by Bamberg's approach to transcribing, as this approach makes it possible to analyze not only the content of what is being said, but also the performative aspects of how it is said. This corresponds to the selected approach to analysis, which is based on Bamberg's functionalist-informed NPA (see e.g. Bamberg et al., 2011).

In relation to what will be included and excluded in the transcription, for the purpose of the present research, pauses will be reflected. However, the exact length of the pauses will not be stated, rather it will distinguish between short, medium and long pauses. This is decided since it can be relevant if the narrator hesitates before saying something, however the exact number of seconds he hesitates is not necessarily more informative. In relation to the present material this is because what is said in the podcast has been edited e.g. for dramatic purposes, which was addressed above.

Consistent with Bamberg's transcriptions, interjections like "um" are also included in the present transcriptions, as they can say something about the narrator's emotional state or reaction to a question. They can also reflect hesitation, being insecure about what is said, whether it is true or not, being perplexed or simply trying to remember what to say - dependent on the specific context. Also, laughing or clearing one's throat can carry a certain meaning depending on the context, which is why this kind of information will also be included. Similarly, repetitions will be reflected in the transcriptions. For more information on what is included see the transcription guide (table 2)

In relation to what is actively excluded from the present transcriptions are

(mis)pronunciations of words. Words will be written as they are properly spelled, even though they are pronounced differently. Furthermore, since the material here is an audio recording, non-verbal information is not available to include and also not a lot of contextual information.

These choices, regarding what to include and exclude, are the basis on which the transcriptions here are aimed at balancing between competing demands of being accurate and readable at the same time, as well as being appropriate for the research question.

Table 2 – Transcription guide

(.)	Short pause of 0.5 second or less
(.. ..)	Long pause of more than 0.5 second
(.. .. .)	Silence = pause of more than 3 seconds
<<word>>	Tone of voice, laughing, clearing throat, inaudible speech, manner of speaking and contextual information
//word//	Indicate beginning and end of overlapping speech
<u>Word</u>	Words which are emphasized
@word	In front of a word marks laughter during word
Wo-	Cut-off word
Wo=ord	Lengthening of a sound
°word°	Speech that is quieter than normal speaking voice

4.2.1 Anonymizing participants

In relation to the transcription, I want to engage in a brief ethical discussion regarding the anonymization of the interview participants. As previously mentioned, the material used here is publicly available. In the original podcast, only two of the 17 men have chosen to be anonymous, while the rest use their actual names – some of them even their full names. One could argue, that by participating in a public podcast with their real (and full) names, the men are presumably aware that anyone can find

it, listen to it and use their words in varying contexts, as well as tie it to them personally, and even maybe contact them. Then I might as well use their stories, as the basis of my research as well. However, one could also argue, that as a researcher, I have an ethical duty to ensure, that research participants have given their consent to participate in my research. The 17 interviewees in the podcast, have presumably given their consent to participate in the podcast, but they have not agreed to have their identities analyzed in the context of the present research. Consequently, even though I am not directly obligated to anonymize their names in the transcriptions, ultimately, that's what I decided to do. One could argue, that it is easy for anyone reading my thesis, to find out what their real names are, as I still provide the title of the podcast series and other details of who produced it. That might be true, but in the context of the present research, the proper precautions are taken, in order to avoid any ethical transgressions of what the podcasts interviewee's have agreed to participate in.

4.3 Coding and analyzing

Coding is the precursor for analysis, with the aim of reducing data (Potter, 2003; Wiggins & Potter, 2008). It's an iterative process which, within a discursive psychological approach, doesn't follow a specific method. With a discursive approach to coding the course of action involves searching the transcript for interesting phenomena and isolate what is most relevant from the rest of the material, making analysis more straightforward (Potter, 2003). In the beginning of the process coding is more inclusive, and it can continue throughout the research process, as ideas are refined, and understandings evolve (Potter, 2003).

In discursive research data is often met with an interest in a particular setting in general, and/or in more specific phenomena (Potter, 2003). The material of this study was approached with an interest in identity processes related to stories about engaging in sexual harassment. Furthermore, it was approached with a more specific interest in what positions were taken up and how certain dilemmas relating to self and identity were navigated, and this constituted codes given by the employed theoretical framework. Other codes emerged from the material, based on reoccurring patterns and theme. Table 3 provides an overview of the most prominent codes, which were deemed relevant for analysis, and illustrates how these were put together into four different themes.

Table 3 – Themes, codes and sub-codes

Themes	Codes	Sub-codes
The episode	Labelling it The woman Reactions	Dilemma 3: Agency Feelings
Explanations	Direct >< indirect explanations Internal >< external reasons Dilemma 3: Agency	Personal positioning Signals Consent Harasser as victim Control >< no control
Anyone could have done it	Dilemma 2: Emphasis on being similar to others	Personal positioning
Change over time	Dilemma 1: Emphasis on change	Being young and ignorant Getting wiser with age

For the analysis, Bamberg’s micro-analytic functionalist-informed approach, as it was described in the theory section, is followed, combined with a larger focus on positioning. Through this analysis, it is explored, how the three identity dilemmas, which are also analytic domains (Bamberg et al., 2011), were managed. In addition to this, several other questions, inspired by the theory section, are asked. Some examples are:

- Why is this story shared here and now?
- What are they saying compared to what they could have said?
- How is the audience included or addressed through the story?
- What capital-D discourses do they orient towards – more specifically, which membership categories do they construct themselves as belonging to (or resisting), and does that align them with certain master narratives?

Also, following Potter (2003), in accordance with a discursive psychological methodology, attention is given to deviant cases, as they can be rich analytically, for ex-

ample as exceptions that prove the rule.

Overall, the analysis centers around how the seven men, who tell stories of engaging in sexual harassment, discursively accomplish to construct identity through these stories, by taken up varying positions.

Something that became evident during analysis was, that when using a micro-analytic approach, being as detail-oriented as it is, the amount of material was overwhelming, even though focus was narrowed down from 17 to only seven men's stories. Consequently, the stories couldn't be analyzed exhaustively, from one end to the other. Rather, the analysis presents the examples from the different stories, which are particularly relevant under each theme. This also means that the outcome of the analysis is more focused on processes across stories relating to identity claims, rather than being focused on how each man individually constructs identity. To repeat an earlier point by Bamberg (2008), just as we are not looking for one "real" identity, we also aren't looking for different or multiple identities, which can be ascribed to a person. Rather, we explore the construction means that narrators use to hail different subjectivities or identities into being.

5.0 Analysis

This analysis is comprised of four themes each containing different codes and sub-codes. The two first themes constitute the most voluminous themes and concern the questions “what did I do?” and “why did I do it?”. Within the first theme is addressed how the men describe the episodes of sexual harassment, involving who the woman was, their relation, how they both reacted in the moment, and how the man labels the experience. The second theme turns to the men’s subsequent reflections on the episodes and analyzes how they try to account for what they did. This includes attempts at legitimizing it, and placing responsibility, and it all requires navigation of the agency dilemma in terms of who is to blame. The third theme deals with a prominent claim across narratives, being that sexual harassment is something anyone could possibly engage in. Lastly, reflections on what they think about the episode today, constitutes a theme on its own since it was also prominent across the men’s stories, where they were especially attentive to stressing how much they’ve changed. The codes are divided into these four themes since it is most convenient for the purpose of analyzing them, however, it is important to stress that the division into themes is somewhat artificial, and so themes and codes will inevitably overlap during analysis.

5.1 Describing the episode

This theme addresses how they describe the episode in terms of how they describe the woman or women that they harassed, what their relationship was like, how they themselves reacted in the situation, when boundaries had been transgressed, including what emotions were felt and expressed, and how they label what happened.

5.1.1 The woman and their relation

In the majority of the stories, the woman or women, who were harassed, are not known by the men in advance, but rather coincidental acquaintances. Both in the cases of Søren, Niels, Anders and Carl, the women are strangers, whom they just met her (at Roskilde Festival, in a bar, at a party), also making the relation between them very limited, which could be a reason why they are not a focus in their stories. Also, in Michael’s story we hardly hear anything about the woman. Once, he calls her “a

women in my life” (l. 110), which seems like quite an upgrade from hardly being mentioned. However, from the context it is unclear whether “in my life” relates to her, or it refers to it being the “first and greatest big mistake” of his life, which he just said in line 109. Still, emphasizing this as such a big mistake in relation to another person, he positions himself as someone who actually does care about her, even though he doesn’t know her. This corresponds to him also expressing concern about how the episode affected her afterwards, as he “of course really doesn’t hope that it’s something that has haunted her” (l. 96). Adding “of course” has a moral function in showing that he, as the good guy he is, hopes she is unaffected today, rather than still thinking about it. Emphasizing “her”, at the same time shows that *he* thinks about it still, which he also says subsequently.

In Philip’s story, the woman in question is someone who he met at a party. She is described as looking “damn fine” (da. så brandgodt ud), there was a “good chemistry” and they had “lots to talk about” (l. 61). He thinks “wauw”, as he imagines that he could pick up “the kind of girl like this one” (da. sådan en pige som hende her) (l. 64). He paints a very flattering picture of her, later also describing her as “vivacious” and “talkative and flirtatious” (l. 72-73), which makes it no surprise to the audience, when he states that he had hoped they could have become an item (l. 95). However, as they were about to have sex, it was as if her mood changed to being distant (l. 71-73), she drifted away and was less active (l. 75-77). So, through the story the relation between them shifted from one of mutual attraction, to only him being active in the course of events leading them to have sex. He never heard from her or saw her again (l. 89, 92), making it an abrupt and definitive ending to their relation.

In Jens’ story the woman in question was his girlfriend through one and a half years (l. 43). Still, in opposition to the woman in Philip’s story, she remains quite anonymous through the story. What the listener learns about their relation is, that he was at her place almost every day (l. 47). Even so, their relationship was apparently not “balanced”, and they were not “newly in love” at the time of the episode, which is something he says towards the end of the narrative (l. 148-149). This can seem surprising to the listener, as he has so far constructed himself as a boyfriend who cares very much about his girlfriend (see later). The reason he says this, can maybe be found in the context of the statement, which is an attempt at explaining why he didn’t act on her saying no, before they had sex. Then it makes sense to claim that

their relationship wasn't the same anymore, since it helps legitimize his actions (more on this later). He also already stated that they broke up "not many months" after the episode (l. 133-134), but they tried to become friends, though "that's difficult" (l. 219). That it is difficult, is saying it as a general fact, by what he can mean that it's difficult for all couples breaking up to become friends, so the reason they couldn't is not related to the episode, making the episode sound less severe. He also says, that they are still in touch, in the sense that they can contact each other, if they feel the need. This makes Jens the only one of the seven men, who is still in contact with the woman in question. And he has made use of it a few times with the purpose of talking about the episode (l. 219-220, 222, 227), meaning that it is something that has troubled *him* years after, as was also the case with Michael. It makes sense that both Michael and Jens express concern about how the woman is today, and that the woman is more prominent in the stories of Jens and Philip, since in these three stories the men had sex with the women in question. But even though the women are more present in Jens' and Philip's, and also partly Michael's, stories, the women are generally positioned as quite anonymous characters – though not necessarily as passive characters. This will be addressed further within the theme of explanations.

5.1.2 Reactions

Some of the men emphasize in their stories, how they realized something was wrong, more or less immediately after the transgression happened. In Jens' story, his girlfriend starts crying when the intercourse is over, which surprises him "very much" (l. 56-57). Emphasizing the surprise, positions him as someone who so far believes, he has acted in good faith. His girlfriend might have said no, but he already stated that he didn't regard that as a sincere no in the specific situation (l. 53). He then immediately experiences feelings of enormous embarrassment and guilt, when he realizes that something is wrong (l. 57-59). He later claims, that it's already in the moment when the intercourse is finished, and they "don't meet" and "there is a distance" (l. 160), that he "feels bad" (da. får det skidt) (l. 161). Based on this, he concludes that he is aware that something is wrong "pretty fast" (l. 161).

In Michael's story, he doesn't directly claim to have realized it fast, however, he describes how he had a terrible hangover in the morning "both in one way and the other" (l. 87-88). In addition to the physical hangover from drinking too much, he

has a “moral hangover” (da. moralske tømmermænd), which refers to him realizing, that he did a stupid thing, when he was drunk, which he now regrets. He also emphasizes that he “remembers”, that he “didn’t have any doubts”, when they woke up, that this was not all right (da. den var sgu ikke helt i orden) (l. 89-91). It is interesting how he explicitly claims to remember this. As Bamberg (2008) states, when someone tells a story, it goes without saying that everything which is said about what happened is remembered. Therefore, explicitly claiming to remember something, means that something else is implicated. In this case, it can show how important it is to Michael, as also to Jens, to stress how fast he realized something was wrong, and how certain he was of it. Both Jens and Michael realized as fast as possible, and they both find that important to stress in their stories. This can serve to position them both as characters in the stories, as good guys, morally aware about right and wrong already at the time, and in the case of Jens, as a good boyfriend, who knows his girlfriend and cares about her. Also, in Anders’ story, he realizes that what he’s doing is wrong, after a few minutes of caressing the girl on her belly (l. 286-287), also positioning himself as morally aware already at the time – just not in the few minutes he was caressing her, as with Jens and Michael, who also weren’t aware during the act itself.

Michael and Jens also have in common, that they both stress how they talked with the woman about it after the episode – which none of the other men did. Stressing this, can also contribute to position themselves as good guys. For Jens, it can be seen as his duty as a good boyfriend, to want to solve it, if he cares about his girlfriend, and, most importantly, if he didn’t transgress her boundaries on purpose. Michael also didn’t do it on purpose, and he faces the woman, and “looks her in the eye” (l. 105-106) when they meet, as if he has nothing to be ashamed of. To face one’s mistakes, can also be seen as the duty of a good guy.

When Jens and his girlfriend talk about it though, one of the girlfriend’s friends is on the way which makes Jens imagine all these “worst-case-scenarios” in his head (l. 121), because he is “basically afraid of losing face socially” (l. 122), despite “of course” being upset that he caused this experience (l. 123-124). He therefore “convinces” his girlfriend not to tell her friend, because he can’t cope with the consequences from it becoming “public” (l. 125-127) (which seems like an exaggeration for dramatic purposes, since telling her friend hardly counts as public). This positions him as the character in the there-and-then as more concerned about himself than

about his girlfriend and is thus contrary to the good boyfriend he so far positioned himself as. Maybe that is why he follows it up by saying that “of course” he is upset about it too – stating it in a way, as if it is unnecessary for him to say. In his terms, he is obviously upset about it, implicitly saying that only a guy who didn’t care about his girlfriend, wouldn’t be sorry for something like that – again positioning himself as the good boyfriend back then. Also, his head is spinning (da. kører rundt i mit hoved) (l. 130), meaning that this state of fear is something that he has no control over. In relation to the agency dilemma, he constructs himself as the victim of all the scary thoughts in his head, relating to whether he will be socially excluded if it becomes public. This self-positioning, is simultaneously an other-positioning of the audience, as having a reason to feel sorry for him. By emphasizing that he has no control over the thoughts he is subjected to, the audience should understand, that he is not a bad boyfriend, for fearing these consequences.

Like Jens and Michael, Anders also describes his reactions in negative terms. After shortly explaining what he did, he states:

fuck (..) hvor er du (.. ..) ækel Anders jeg havde det sådan jeg følte jeg var (.. ..)
fy for helvede hvor er jeg gået langt over grænsen ikke (..) (l. 287-288)

From this excerpt it is clear, that Anders, as the character in the story, loathes himself. By using multiple swearwords, he emphasizes how disgusted he was by himself. He is suddenly looking at himself from a third person perspective, and then realizes that what he is doing is very wrong. He further adds, that it was “insanely done” (da. sindssygt gjort), and “an insane move” (l. 291-292), as well as it being “way too much” (l. 294-295). Based on these statements, Anders is the one who employs the most powerful negative words in describing his reaction to what he did.

The other men interestingly describe their reactions in more positive terms, compared to Jens, Michael and Anders. In Søren’s story, he continuously describes it as “interesting” (l. 49, 53, 57, 62) as well as “insanely funny” (da. sindssygt morsomt) (l. 66), when he yells at people walking past his camp at the festival. This way of describing his feelings about it, positions him in the story as someone who didn’t realize it was wrong at the time – or perhaps just didn’t care.

Niels, like Søren, describes his feelings in and after the moment of transgression,

as rather positive. In the moment, he feels “the drunk man’s bravery” (l. 45), and despite the woman clearly both saying and showing, that she doesn’t want it (l. 49-51), he kisses her. And he explicitly states, that he didn’t feel ashamed (l. 56) – which also indicates, that he believes now, that he should have. On the contrary he felt “some kind of um (.. ..) um cocky” (l. 57). Usually he would be afraid of doing anything (da. turde ikke reagere). This time “at least I reacted” (l. 60-61). So, the fact that he acted, and just *did something*, is a success to him. At first glance, these positive feelings that he has, feeling brave, successful and proud that he did something, doesn’t make Niels look very good, neither as character nor narrator. However, like Jens, Niels also displays what seems to be an attempt at positioning the audience to feel sorry for him here. Through the rest of his story, he also stresses, how he struggled to pick up girls, lacked self-esteem and had a fragile ego (l. 228), which supports this interpretation. But Niels also uses the word “cocky” (da. kålhøgen), to describe his feelings, which has a negative tone to it. When Niels employs this word, he manages to distance himself as the narrator, from the character back then, positioning only the character Niels, in an unsympathetic manner. The character Niels purposefully forced the kiss, and he didn’t feel bad about it. Later in Niels’ story it also becomes clear, that even though he was aware that the woman didn’t want to be kissed, he still didn’t realize how wrong it was at the time. He states directly, that it wasn’t until a “long time after”, he started to think, that him kissing that woman back then “wasn’t okay” (l. 63-64). From the rest of his story it is clear, that he believed he had to be aggressive to get success, so it wasn’t just that he knew it was wrong but didn’t care. He did what he thought he was supposed to do (this will be elaborated on within the next theme).

To sum up, Philip, Niels and partly Søren have in common, that they didn’t realize, what they did was wrong, right after the episode, as Jens, Michael and Anders stress in their stories. This also corresponds to, who describes their reactions as mostly positive and who describes them as negative. Except for when it comes to Carl. He felt an entitlement towards women (l. 149-150), so he was sincerely offended, as well as mildly hurt, after the woman asked him to remove his hand from her thigh (l. 162). By constructing the episode like this, Carl positions himself in relation to the agency dilemma, as a victim in the story, which makes sense in relation to him feeling entitled towards women. So, Carl had a negative reaction at the time, but not be-

cause he realized that what he did was wrong – quite the opposite. His negative reaction was due to the rejection

5.1.3 Labelling the episode

It can be difficult to know, what to call episodes like these. There are many things to take into consideration, e.g. what is appropriate, how will others look at you, what does oneself feel most comfortable with and so on. Based on this, it is understandable, that the men largely seem to avoid labelling the episodes or employ neutral labels for them. Niels once calls it “the episode” (l. 127), which is an example, of a neutral label, but other than that he mostly refers to it as “it” (da. det) (l. 64, 65, 67). Similarly, Michael uses “it” frequently, e.g. when he says “it” wasn’t completely all right (da. den var ikke helt i orden) (l. 90-91), and also “it wasn’t good” (da. den var ikke god) (l. 94). These are not the only two times he refers to the episode by using the Danish pronoun “den”. This is how he refers to it from the beginning of the story and until line 109. It’s a specific manner of speaking that Michael displays, which makes him sound rather informal, and which for example Jens would probably never employ. Jens also mostly refers to the episode as “it”, but by using the Danish pronoun “det” rather than “den”. From a practical point of view, it makes sense to refer to the episodes by using “it”, as it would sound strange to say “the experience” or “intercourse” every time, but using “it” continuously, could also be a way of avoiding labelling the episode.

There is also an example of Jens being hesitant, right before naming the episode, where he calls it “this (..) um (..) experience” (l. 123-124), with the hesitation marker “um” indicating that he might be unsure of what to call it, and then he employs a neutral term. This is a term which Jens continuously uses through his story (in Danish as “oplevelse”) (l. 42, 124, 212, 225), as well as the term “intercourse” (l. 56, 143, 170), which is also neutral, though more specific in relation to describing what actually took place, than “experience” is. Philip also uses only neutral labels when referring to his own experience (l. 104, 428), but then he also talks about whether it is possible for men in general, to come forward and say, that they actually did something once, which was a violation:

jeg har sgu faktisk engang (..) gjort noget som (.. ..) var (..) ja (..) en (..) måske

Even though he is talking generally here, by talking in the first person, one could get the impression, that he also relates this statement to himself and his experience. If that is the case, he then acknowledges that him having sex with a woman, who seemed to change her mind, could have been experienced as a violation by her, focusing on the pain he could have caused her. Jens also focuses on this, when he refers to the episode as to “step out of line in a way that hurts others” (da. træde ved siden af) (l. 299), which, even though it is a more negative way of labelling it, also is to construct in the here-and-now as a mistake he made back then. Michael also labels the episode in his story as a mistake (da. fejltrin), when he calls it “my first and greatest big mistake”. Constructing or labelling it as a mistake, is a way of acknowledging that it might have hurt someone, but it was not on purpose. In Danish “træde ved siden af”, as Jens says, means stepping outside something, e.g. a path of virtue, which contributes to position Jens in the here-and-now as being morally aware, that what he did was wrong, and it contributes to emphasizing that it was not on purpose at the time.

Another way of referring to the episode, is e.g. when Jens calls it “that moment”, “that night” (l. 65), “that episode” (l. 223) and “that situation” (l. 244). By using “that” it can seem as if he takes up a more distant position from it than if he had said “the moment/night/episode/situation”. Also, in line 65 he corrects himself from referring to it as just “a moment” to “a night”, emphasizing that it was a whole night, not just a moment, that he in the here-and-now remembers as “not very pleasant” (l. 65). That he feels this way about the memory he has, also supports the interpretation that he tries to distance himself from it. Distance from the episode, or from negative labels of it, can also be discursively achieved more directly. Carl, for example, starts his interview by stating that he hasn’t raped anyone (l. 82), and he hasn’t done any of the things people usually refer to as sexual harassment (l. 84-85). This is followed by a medium pause and then a “but”. So, first he explicitly distances himself from having done these kinds of things, then follows the “but”, and then he mentions different examples of things he *has* done, which he labels as transgressive behavior (l. 90). This is a term he uses again in line 147, and it is a clear negative label. This is also a term Søren uses, when he says that what he did was “incredibly transgressive”, when

he thinks about it now (l. 73-74). Anders also acknowledges that what he did was transgressive. He doesn't label the episode directly in his story, but he tells the story based on a question from his friend Christian, who asks whether anyone can remember times when they felt they transgressed signals or where too pushy (l 282-283).

In relation to negative terms, probably the most interesting navigation labels, is displayed by Jens. Towards the end of his interview he launches into a new small narrative (l. 209-213) regarding the term "rape". It starts by him accounting for how he "some years ago" was reading articles "about um (..) rape". As the pause indicates, he hesitates briefly before using the label rape, which could indicate that it's an unpleasant term for him to use. He then emphasizes, that he read the articles "with great curiosity" (l. 210), positioning himself in the there-and-then as someone who thought of rape as an important subject to learn more about. It also underlines how big a surprise it was for him, that their experience "apparently" could be categorized as a rape (l. 212). "Suddenly" it occurs to him, that "it is about me" (l. 211). Relating this to dilemma two, he is suddenly not just like every other guy. Through the articles he is positioned as a rapist, making him unique in a way that he doesn't want to be. He describes it as "rather unpleasant" (da. ikke særlig rart) (l. 213). When the journalist later asks directly, whether Jens himself would label it as a rape (l. 248), he answers that we would call it rape at the time, when he read the articles about it, "but um (..) I probably wouldn't now" (l. 249). As the pause indicates, he hesitates briefly before stating that he wouldn't call it a rape now, and continues to explain why he changed his view, indicating that he believes it requires explanation. Adding "probably" in the sentence, can be a way of trying to mitigate his answer. By adding this, he discloses that he wouldn't call it rape now, *even though* the episode obviously still fits the definition. It is understandable why he believes this requires further explanation. His reasons relate to dilemma two, as mentioned above. Jens in the here-and-now thinks that it is a challenging category to be placed in (l.250-251). With this, he emphasizes that being in this category is something that is done to him (here by the articles he read), which he also emphasizes by repeating that to "be labelled" (da. få sat mærkat på sig) as a "rapist" is an "unpleasant category" (p. 251-252). Jens as the narrator, in the here-and-now, doesn't see himself as belonging to this category membership, which it is to be a rapist, with all that entails, and that is why he won't call it rape, even if it fits the legal definition. In his navigation of the uniqueness di-

lemma, he clearly differentiates himself from rapists, and he states that he would rather say that he “was a young man without sexual experience who had issues with controlling himself and his instincts” (da. drift) (l. 253-255). This category applies to many young men, and Jens considers himself as more similar to other young men, then to men in the rapist category. Overall, despite acknowledging that the episode fits the definition of rape, he seems to avoid negative labels for it, by using only the term mistake when he describes it in more negative terms, and by explaining why he won’t call it a rape today. Some of the other men display use of more negative and specific terms than “mistake”, e.g. labelling it as transgressive as both Carl, Philip and Søren do – and implicitly Anders too, who is not trying to avoid negative labels to the same extent. But what these other men did, also wasn’t rape. Using negative labels can make it sound quite bad and thereby make the man look bad, but it can also contribute to the narrator coming across as honest and objective about what happened back then.

5.2 *Explanations*

Something that was prominent in the interviews of the men, where their attempts to explain, including attempts at legitimizing, why they acted sexually harassing. Besides it being understandable that they might feel a need to explain, it was also something that the journalist asked the men about. These questions elicited attempts at direct explanations for their actions, and, in other contexts, indirect explanations emerged. Indirect explanations are here understood as reasons that are not invoked *as* explanations, but rather seems like they are just parts of describing what happened.

Other distinctions which are helpful in analyzing their attempts at explaining are, whether reasons are constructed as internal or external (coming from the individual himself or from the outside), and whether they are out of, or within, the man’s control. Both direct and indirect attempts at accounting for their actions, whether reasons are constructed as internal, external, possible, or not possible to control, involves placing responsibility – in this case blame.

There is one of the seven men, who doesn’t provide any explanation for what he did, and this is Anders. As we shall see from the following, this still reveals something about how Anders sees himself or attempts to come across. Apparently, Anders doesn’t feel the need to provide any reasons for what he did, or, before he has the

chance, one of his friends in the group discussion tries to provide a reason for him – revealing that the friend needs there to be an explanation. Thus, in line 296, Jon starts by saying “you probably thought” and then suggests the explanation that she wasn’t too drunk to wake up. Furthermore, he says, that “hopefully she gave you some signals earlier” (l. 297), indicating that this would be a valid reason for his behavior. It would be easy for Anders to just confirm Jon’s suggestions, and thereby achieve, at least what Jon believes, a sufficient explanation, which also places responsibility on her (signals) rather than on him. But Anders neither confirms nor denies Jon’s suggestion, he just says he can’t remember (l. 301). He continues to say that what he *does* remember is, the feeling of what he did being so far over the line, indicating that he just has a moral point by telling the story. He positions himself as someone who has no excuses, but who, already at the time, was painfully aware, that what he did was wrong, and who accepts the blame for what happened. One could argue, that it is also “easier” for Anders, to get away with not providing any explanations or try to legitimize it, and thereby take responsibility, since what he did was “only” caress a passed out girl on the belly, and it didn’t involve neither kissing nor sex or any force, like some of the other men’s stories. How the other men constructed their explanations, will be addressed in the following.

5.2.1 An internal drive

Like mentioned above, reasons for why the men did what they did, can both be constructed as originating from within the man or from the outside. An example of an explanation based on something within the man, is employed by Jens. In line 167 he says, that the touch that “her body gave me” woke his drive (da. drift), and that the drive “got him” onto something which he thought was good (l. 167-168). Jens returns, more than once, to an explanation involving his internal drive or instinct as a direct explanation, also labelling it as “impulses” (l. 214), or as something “primitive” (da. urmenneskeligt) which “rushes into me” (da. blusser op i mig) (l. 246-247). He also mentions it, though not as a direct reason, when he says that today he tries to let the situation develop “with” the woman instead of being “consumed by his own explosion of impressions” (l. 174-175).

Talking about it in this way, he is constructing himself in terms of the agency dilemma as passive in this context. It is interesting how he places his drive in the sub-

ject position as agent, thereby positioning himself as the passive undergoer. This, together with him drawing on primitive instincts, “det urmenneskelige”, which could be said to be a master narrative, as something which resides in all human beings, as well as labelling it as an “explosion of impression”, contributes to establish this situation, in relation to the agency dilemma, as something out of his control. Rather, he is positioned as the victim of his own primitive instincts and a dramatic “explosion” of impressions, provoked by the touch of his girlfriend. This interpretation is supported by the fact that he, towards the end of the interview, states that he had troubles with managing (da. tøjle) his drive (l. 254-255). So, even though it is something internal, coming from within himself, he still manages to discursively construct it is out of his control, thereby removing responsibility from himself.

5.2.2 Personal characteristics

Similar to the previous explanation, personal characteristics is also commonly understood as something originating within the individual. What is interesting, in relation to employing personal characteristics as the reason for engaging in transgressive behavior, is that this seems to be the deviant case. Niels is the only man, who makes use of this kind of explanation, and it’s not just that the other men don’t do it – they do the opposite. As it will be addressed within the next theme, more of the men stress that it’s *not* because of who they were as a person, that they did it, thereby marking distance to the category membership of being “a bad person”. Why would Niels want to position himself as belonging to this category? Having a closer look at what exactly Niels says, can help clearing that up.

Starting in line 42, Niels makes use of personal positioning, when he describes himself as “a very reserved person” back then, which made it “incredibly difficult” for him to talk to people that he didn’t know. That resulted in “so many nights” where he missed opportunities, because he was “afraid to do something” (l. 59-61). As the narrator in the here-and-now, he then claims, that “some kind of aggression is necessary to get success” (l. 347-348). And this is something “you learn”, when “you” (da. man) are young, in the formative years, that only the people who take chances and “dare” to risk something “get the reward”. If you are careful, you probably won’t have sex or kiss the woman, you would like to kiss (l. 129-133).

Whether it is true, that aggression is necessary, or that it is something people

learn when they are young, is not relevant. It is relevant why he constructs it that way. Maybe it is simply based on his experience as a young man. But it also happens to legitimize why he was acting aggressive, when he kissed the strange woman. He had to. If he was never aggressive, then he would never have success, as the reserved and careful guy he was – then we would just be a failure.

Niels also says that he considers himself “fundamentally as one of the good guys”, but that he did it anyway (l. 64-65). This is more similar to the way some of the other men uses personal positioning to claim they are not bad people (which will be addressed within the next theme). His point is, that he belongs to the category of good guys. So, to answer the question asked earlier, he is not acknowledging that he is “a bad person” even though he uses personal characteristics as an explanation for what he did. He doesn’t just provide the audience with facts, as in neutral information, about what he was like, when he was young. By constructing himself as the character as reserved and unsuccessful, he performs a speech act with the probable intention of trying to affect the audience to feel sorry for him and understand why he would do something like that, because of his insecurities and how he thought he was supposed to act.

In relation to the agency dilemma, explaining due to personal characteristics could seem like taking responsibility for one’s action. How aggressive he was, was in his control, and therefore the episode could be viewed as his responsibility. However, he constructs it as something “you learn”. Using the pronoun “you” (da. man) serves to distance it from himself and rather construct it as something which applies to people, or young men, in general. In relation to the uniqueness dilemma it makes him the same as any other young man, who also learned this. Furthermore, constructing it as something you learn, makes it less of the individual’s fault when it has a bad outcome, as in the case of Niels. Again, in relation to the agency dilemma, Niels leans toward the world-to-person direction of fit, making him less responsible.

5.2.3 Consent

Consent was a topic which all the men talked about, and two of the men engaged in explanations for their actions, relating to whether the woman in question said no or not. Through his story, Philip continuously stress that the woman he met at the party didn’t say no or rejected him in any way, when they were about to have sex. As men-

tioned before, her mood changed, but he states that “it was not a rejection” or “a stop-sign she held up” (l. 74-75). He explicitly “remembers” though, that there were “some kind of reciprocity” (da. gensidighed) (l. 80) in the intercourse. She didn’t “push me away or anything like that” (l. 85). So, it’s not just that she didn’t say no, she also didn’t do anything else, e.g. signal to him physically that she didn’t want it. As he also says, he never clearly forced sex when someone said no or clearly signaled that they didn’t want it (l. 101-102), which also means that her changing from being active to being passive, was not a sufficient signal for him. It lies implicitly, that she should have done more, if she didn’t want it to happen. As he says, when he thinks about it now, she probably didn’t want to have sex but “she let it happen” (l. 106, 107), meaning that it was her responsibility to say no.

Jens says something similar to Philip, when the journalist asks him directly, why he thinks he “overheard” his girlfriend, who actually did say no in the situation (l. 138-139). Even though Jens then emphasizes that this is not the first time he considers the answer to this question, he “honestly” can’t remember (l. 140-141). Invoking honesty, can be a strategic positioning of himself as reliable. He is being honest in contrast to lying, so the listeners should trust him when he says, that he can’t remember, rather than the truth being so appalling that he won’t tell it. However, he can “imagine” (da. forestiller mig) that he perceived her “no” as part of the sexual act (p. 141-142). Why this is something that he would imagine, with good reason, is clarified in what follows next, when he refers to his memory again. Because what he *does* remember, is that it wasn’t “a very clear no”. He remembers it “maybe” more like a “no, I’m a little tired” (l. 143-144). So, this is how he experienced it at the time, not just something he imagines. He still displays some uncertainty though, by saying that it was “maybe” a “no, I’m tired” rather than a “clear no”. Or perhaps he adds the “maybe” as a way of showing, that he is aware that this is not something he’s supposed to say, if he wants to come across as morally reflected. In correspondence to this he adds that “no, I’m tired” is a “sufficient no” (l. 144-145), but this is again followed by a “but” (l. 145), indicating that Jens finds himself in a dilemma between coming across as someone who knows and respects consent, while at the same time having to explain why he, as the character in the story, apparently didn’t respect it.

Respecting a “no” is something Michael talks about too, when he says that he generally didn’t take “the first no” serious, and then “the next no” was definitely not

as sincere as the first (l. 259-261). Again, as in Jens' story it becomes a question of, whether the woman's "no" is sincere enough to make the man stop. And according to Jens' story, the specific context of an intercourse influences whether a "no" is sincere or "part of the act". This is also anticipated earlier in his narrative, when he describes the concrete situation. He says that they are about to have sex, when she says no, but he doesn't regard this as a sincere no "in that situation" (l. 53). So, there is something within the situation that leads him to believe, that she would like to have sex with him despite her saying no, and that is what makes him continue. What it is about the specific situation, is something he addresses in the lines 145-152. Here he contemplates that it was because of the specific context of the there-and-then that her "no" was a sincere "no", and therefore it ended like it did (l. 147) ergo consent is constructed as context-dependent. He says that it could be due to lack of balance in their relationship and them not being newly in love anymore (l. 148-149), perhaps they hadn't reconnected since his trip, or he was busy (l. 152). Three of these four reasons that he mentions (lack of balance, not newly in love, hadn't reconnected) are not just on him, but a mutual responsibility in a relationship. Only the fact that he was busy at the time, is solely his responsibility, and then again this could also be something which is subjected to him from the outside in the form of his job. So overall, the possible reasons for why he overheard or disregarded her "no", is discursively constructed as not his fault. By constructing it as not his fault, he again positions himself as someone who didn't do it on purpose. To construct it as not his fault, but having to do with the specific circumstances, also successfully lets him manage the dilemma of him claiming to know and respect consent and being morally reflected, while still doing something like this.

In relation to the agency dilemma, both Jens and Philip construct themselves as passive in relation to whether the woman gives her consent or not. As if it is outside of their control. However, one could argue, that it is definitely the responsibility of both parties to ensure consent. Yet, as the legislation about rape is now based on saying "no" rather than saying "yes", legally it is the responsibility of the individual to say no, and since the woman didn't say "no" (clearly) in these stories, it's on her, and the man becomes less blameworthy. This could be a sign, that the current legislation is a master narrative which permeates the men's reasoning. Even though, there is also a moral aspect of consent, in addition to the legal, some of the men actually use the

lack of a (clear) “no” as an explanation. At the same time, they emphasize though, that they know now, that they should have asked directly, whether she wanted to have sex or not, or that they should have stopped anyway. The naïve young man, at least was aware of the legal aspect, positioning him as not purposely evil, but maybe just lacking in moral awareness in the there-and-then.

5.2.4 Being drunk

More of the episodes that these men talk about took place during a party, a night out or at a festival. What these contexts have in common is, that alcohol was involved. This is both mentioned as a seemingly neutral fact, but also as a direct explanation. For example, in the beginning of Niels story, he describes the circumstances of his story by saying, that he is in his usual bar, it is nearly closing time, “(.. ..) I am very drunk” (l. 42). This appears as just three facts, until he says, “I had the courage of a drunk man” (l. 45) as an explanation for why he, this night, dared to take a risk.

Similarly, Michael also describes the circumstances of his story as after a “good party”, and “definitely with a serious hangover the next morning” (l. 87-88) leaving the audience with no doubt that he consumed quite an amount of alcohol during that party. Even though he also indirectly, partly blames the alcohol here, he still had a moral hangover in addition to the physical, as it was previously addressed. However, he doesn’t take much responsibility, as he also said earlier that it was “a mutual thing we did” (l. 81), meaning that they were probably both drunk. He had a feeling though, when they woke up the next day, that she was not a hundred percent into it. Still, emphasizing that it was something they both did, and that it was not just him who was under the influence of alcohol, contributes to make him less blameworthy in relation to the agency dilemma. In any case, according to him, she was just as agentive as he was in doing what they did. He constructs it as if alcohol resulted in poor judgement for both of them.

Søren also uses alcohol to legitimize his behavior at Roskilde Festival. He begins his story with noting, that it was his first time at this festival, maybe implicitly anticipating, that he just did what the others did. At any rate, he laughs as he asks the rhetorical question, what “you” (da. man) do, when you are at Roskilde Festival and the sun is shining, and you have brought camping chairs. He then answers the question by continuing to explain how “you” (da. man) place your chair so you can see every-

one who walks by your camp, and then “you” start talking about them with your friends first. Then he changes pronouns and says that then “we” realize that “we” can say stuff to them (l. 48-51). Continuously using the Danish pronoun “man” (more than ten times in six lines) contributes to emphasize that this is not just something he and his friends did, but something people do in general at Roskilde Festival, which can help legitimize that they did it too. Changing to “we” makes it less distanced from himself, but still stresses that it wasn’t just him doing it alone, but a result of him being with his friends. He also refers directly to alcohol playing a role, when he says that “we” thought it was “insanely funny” as “you” (da. man) sat there getting more and more drunk (l. 66-67). The more alcohol they had, the more fun it was, which again supports the interpretation that alcohol is constructed as the reason behind their inappropriate actions as well as reactions.

The point of employing alcohol as an explanation, for the men in these stories, overall seem to be in order to construct themselves as less responsible. One could argue, that the individual is in control of how much he or she drinks, but still, it generally seems legitimate to say, “I was drunk, so I didn’t really know what I was doing”. It is a fact, that alcohol can result in poor judgement, and it could be viewed as a master narrative which these men draw on as a resource to construct themselves as less responsible in relation to what they did. It is something you would expect, that people drink alcohol when they go out, attend a party or go to a festival, and might do stupid things. They also might have been agentive in what they did, since alcohol can remove your inhibitions, but constructed like this, they are still less blameworthy.

5.2.5 Something structural

As the last explanation I want to highlight, many of the men refer to something structural in society, not as a direct explanation for why they did, what they did, but more as a general issue in relation to why sexual transgressions happen.

Søren, for example, talks about the role of the media. He states, that there is something in the culture related to being a man, in the form of expectations, which makes “one” (da. man) act as one thinks he is supposed to, which comes from the media (l. 205-208). He mentions both TV, computer games, movies and comedy, and says that they often take the man as the starting point, mostly focusing on what the

man does (often to the woman), and what the man gets, and less focused on the interaction between the parties (l. 207-215). So, according to Søren, there are expectations for the man to be agentive, which is interesting in relation to, how the men across their stories here, generally lean toward constructing themselves as undergoers, as seen above. But even if the men had been constructing themselves as more agentive, the reason for it is here placed on an outside force, in the form of the media, which is something out of the man's control.

Another way of referring to something structural in society as an explanation, is when Carl talks about the "incredible negative culture" of behaving like this, that both he, and so many others, emphasizing that he is not the only one who has done something like this, has co-created (l. 96-98). Similarly, Philip refers to "a structure in our society" which many people, including "both men and women" unconsciously contribute to (l. 210-218). Ultimately, "we" lack some good role models, he believes (l. 237-240). Carl also states that "we" have many fragile ego's (l. 176-177). Constructed like this, by Carl and Philip, it's a mutual responsibility of all people that this structure exists, and it's a mutual problem for us as well. Therefore, it also makes sense when the men implicitly refer to it, as something we are mutually responsible for solving. According to Philip, "we" must be better at showing consideration for other people, "we" must support women more, "we" must ensure women feel safer, "we" must make "our" children more knowledgeable – and he continues to list things like this (l. 504-509). Similarly, Søren stresses how "we" have to teach "our" young people about consent (l. 321-326). Philip and Søren also emphasize what *they* can do, or are already doing, in relation to this structural issue. Philip "wants to reflect on" how he as a man can contribute to a better knowledge and awareness about sexuality (l. 225-227), and Søren says, that for him it is important in his work as a teacher, to work "against these pop-cultural references" which young people are subjected to (da. som de unge får) (l. 309-310). By saying this, Søren emphasizes that in teaching his students he is being agentive in resisting the expectations presented by the media.

Overall, even though a "structure" is something external, seemingly in opposition to the individual, it's still acknowledged by the men, as something "we", people, create together, and support by acting in certain ways. In relation to placing responsibility, the men then can't disclaim all responsibility for what they did, but they

can't include everyone else in it too. No one can change cultures on their own, but some of the men still emphasize that they do something active against it, making it clear how they as narrators position themselves as taking their share of the responsibility, and are being agentive now, in opposition to their characters being passive in their stories.

5.3 Anyone could have done it

The third theme of this analysis relates to a claim that was prominent across the men's stories, and which is also a kind of explanation, in that it can contribute to legitimize their behavior. It regards how the episodes they talk about, according to them, are quite common, and that anyone could have done, what they did. Whether this is really true, is not our area of interest. What is interesting is, how and why they make this claim, and what it makes them accomplish in terms of identity constructions. This also regards the second identity dilemma about being same as or different from others, which the following will illustrate. It will focus on the use of certain pronouns, and the use of personal positioning in the men's stories.

5.3.1 Using the pronouns "you" and "we"

Within the previous themes, we have already seen several examples of the men using the Danish pronouns "man" and "du" instead of saying "I" in their stories, and how it can be seen as speech-acts that allowed them to distance themselves personally, from what they are saying, and downplaying their own agency, as they include the audience, or people in general, in their claims. In relation to the present theme, what it can also do, is let the man construct himself in relation to dilemma two, as the same as the audience or as people in general, rather than unique. For example, in Niels' story, we find several examples of both pronouns being used:

man lærer jo også (..) at (..) at øh (.. ..) det er kun den som tager chancen det er kun den som (..) som tør risikere noget (.. ..) som får belønningen (.. ..) hvis du er forsigtig (.. ..) så har du sandsynligvis ikke sex (.. ..) hvis du=u (..) er (..) forsigtig så ha- (..) kysser du sandsynligvis ikke hende som du gerne vil kysse (.. ..) du er nødt til at tage chancen (l. 129-133)

det man kan se virker for andre er selvfølgelig den opførsel man prøver at tillære sig selv (l. 335-336)

The points of these two utterances are, that Niels just learned the same as everyone else, in relation to the need to take risks if you want the reward. Furthermore, it's a general thing, that what you can see work for others, is something you try to copy. Also, if you are careful, you won't be successful, and this also applies to you, the person who is listening to this, whoever you are.

Using the pronoun "we" has the similar function. Niels, also uses this pronoun, when he says:

vi er hunderædte for det her (.. ..) og derfor (..) overdriver simpelthen vores frygtløshed (..) altså (..) se hvor frygtløse vi er vi kan gramse på dig (l. 296-297)

Overall, claiming that certain statements also applies to "you", the listener, I argue here, is like saying that me and you are the same, because it applies to both of us. This becomes even more clear when the pronoun "we" is used, since the man then claims that this applies to both me and you as members of the same category. When the man claims that he is the same as you or people in general, he is also implicitly saying that you, the listener, meaning anyone really, could have done what he did.

5.3.2 Personal positioning: A good man

Within the previous theme we have also already seen examples of personal positioning, when it was analyzed how Niels used it to explain why he kissed a strange woman. As it was anticipated in that analysis, using personal positioning in this way was an exception, as the other men use it oppositely, which will now be addressed.

Jens refers to personal characteristics when he says that he "finds himself in this situation", even though his friends have later "confirmed" that he is not a demon (l. 234). He is "known as" a calm, sympathetic, intelligent guy – a guy no one would suspect of harassing women (l. 234-236). Here he makes use of personal positioning, to convince the listeners that he is not the type of guy who would do this on purpose, as he is not evil. He already suspected that he was not a demon, but still needed his

friends to confirm it, which could mean that he was still unsure about himself. But since they confirmed it, it must be true. Depending on his friends like this, to confirm that he is not evil, also positions him as both a character in the story as well as in the here and now as passive rather than active. But the point of him making use of personal positioning here doesn't have to do primarily with agency, rather it has the purpose of showing that it's not because of who he is as a person, that this happened.

A type of personal positioning which is also prominent across more of the men's stories is, when they emphasize, that it wasn't because up their upbringing, that they did what they did. Michael refers to a tweet he published on twitter, where he wrote that sometimes, when he was younger, he was a real idiot, and "I don't even believe I am badly raised" (l. 191-192). Similarly, Søren states, that he comes from a family where his father's words are the most important, but that "this is how it is in many families" (l. 99-102). Jens also claims to have been "raised with very healthy values relating to equality and gender" (l. 240), primarily by "a mom and some sisters" (l. 241-242), so he understands what challenges women face in modern society (l. 243-244). So, Michael and Jens construct themselves as the same as everyone else, who had a healthy upbringing, and Søren constructs his family as the same as every other family. Despite this, these men find themselves in these situations. The point by saying this is, that a healthy upbringing, with the right values, is obviously no guarantee.

Overall, both the use of pronouns as "you" and "we", and the use of personal positioning to construct it as if these men are more the same, than they are different, from other people in general, is a navigation of the uniqueness dilemma which contributes to the implicit point that anyone could have done, what these men did. It is not just rapists who rape, as is clear from Jens' construction of his story. Any "good guys" can do "bad things", which then also means that even though these men did what they did, they can still be (also in the moment of the transgression) good guys. This is also what Jens tries to navigate, when he positions himself as a morally reflected, well-spoken man who did something like this, because of unfortunate circumstances and things he generally couldn't control. He is, and has always been, a good guy.

5.4 Changing over time

This theme is relevant since the navigation of the dilemma regarding staying the

same or changing over time was salient in the men's stories. More of them emphasized, how they were young, and thereby naïve or ignorant, when they did what they did – as, interestingly, all the episodes they talk about, happened years back. Consequently, as they have grown older, they now know better, and had it happened today, they would have stopped.

5.4.1 Being young and inexperienced

When placing the stories in time, more of the men emphasize how it happened a long time ago, and therefore they also struggle to remember it now. Jens, for example, says that it's some years ago, so he's not sure what happened (l. 54-55), and that he can't really remember the details anymore (l. 141). Similarly, Michael says that the specific situation happened "many years back" so what exactly happened is blurry to him (l. 85-86). Two more examples are Philip stating, "it's quite some years ago" (l. 48) and Niels claiming to not have thought about the episode, in almost 20 years (l. 127-128), which stresses how far back this episode lies. They are all examples of showing, that it seems important for the men to emphasize that these episodes lie years back, and that it's been so long, that it's even difficult to remember now. This can be one way of distancing themselves as narrators from themselves as characters. Time has passed, so consequently they have changed, since they have gotten older. The issue of age becomes clearer, when more of them also state directly, that they were young, when the episodes took place. When Anders places his story in time, he says, as a kind of indirect explanation for what he did, that "it was in elementary school" (l. 288-289), making him a young teenager at the time (he is 27 years now). Similarly, Michael places his story as taking place when he was 17-18 years (l. 79), and today he is 35. Furthermore, referring to one's teenage years could also be referring to adolescence, as a certain period of one's life, with all that it entails. At one point Michael also says, that in his "young days" (*da. i mine unge dage*) he definitely transgressed some boundaries (l. 186-187), which also serves to distance himself as the narrator from the characters, as he is not in his "young days" anymore. Referring to youth, is also something Jens does. Instead of calling himself a rapist, Jens would rather say that he was young and lacked sexual experience, and therefore he couldn't control himself and his instincts (l. 253-254). In this statement, being a young man equals lack of sexual experience. Consequently, he implicitly says that having grown

older also means he has gotten more sexual experience – emphasizing change. Similarly, Niels refers to “the young and formative years” (l. 129), equaling youth to a time where many changes take place and shapes who you are. More of the men say things, which can support the idea that it’s a master narrative that young equals ignorant, because you were learning who to be, and you didn’t know better. For example, Søren says that he just sat there as a “stupid nineteen-year-old boy, fresh out of high school” (l. 86-88), also equaling this time of life to not knowing better. In addition to this, in relation to dilemma two he also constructs himself as the same as all other 19-year-old boys just coming out of high school, which also contributes to generalize his point, that 19-year-old boys are stupid. Niels also says, that when you are young your ego is fragile (l. 228-229), also supporting this master narrative. To give a last example, Philip talks about, when boys grow up to be men, they don’t learn how to “move from being a boy to being a teenager to being a grown up man” (l. 237-238), which also emphasizes all the transformation that takes place, in different phases of life, when people grow up in general, and therefore also emphasizes changes.

A master narrative of youth equaling not knowing better, and therefor growing older equaling becoming wiser, is a culturally available resource for the men in telling their stories, that can maybe also function to legitimize their actions, as it then applies to everyone, not just them (dilemma two), making it more of a condition than their responsibility. Furthermore, it can function to distance themselves from what they did back then, as they are not young anymore, so they know better now (dilemma three).

5.4.2 Today I would have stopped

As it has already been illustrated within other themes, more of the men also talk about, how they would have behaved differently, had it happened today. Similar to the master narrative about being young and naïve, getting wiser with age, can also be a master narrative. There are also examples from the men’s stories, which can support that idea. Michael most directly draw on it as a master narrative, when he says that “luckily most people get wiser and better people with time” (l. 195-196). Similarly, Søren says, that “when one thinks about it now it seems incredibly transgressive” (l. 73-74), where the use of the pronoun “one” (da. man) constructs it as a general thing, that thinking about something like this, when you are older, you see it in a

different light. Søren also says, that he has become very aware of boundaries “the older I got” (da. jo ældre jeg er blevet) (l. 192-193). Now, as the narrator of the story, he would have told himself, as the character, to shut up (l. 514).

More of the other men also direct the audience’s attention to how they’ve changed and/or would have acted differently now. As we have already seen in an earlier theme, Niels points out how he used to be a very reserved person (l. 42), which is also implicitly saying that he’s not anymore. Later in his story he also says more directly that he has changed, when he says, that he is more relaxed now (l. 212-213). Jens has also become more attentive and aware of signals (l. 166) and of how a situation can be experienced differently (l. 169-170), so today he does more to make sure everything is all right during intercourse. Now he lets the situation evolve “with her”, meaning that he used to be too focused on himself back then, but he isn’t anymore. Jens also points to a specific moment of transformation, when he reads about rape, and realizes that it fits with their experience. That realization has raised his alertness in these situations (l. 212-214). Michael points to a similar moment of transformation. He says, that becoming a father of a daughter, made him aware of more structural issues in society (l. 310-311, 312-315). He also talks about, how he would react today, in a similar situation, where he says that he “hopes” he would respect a “no” (l. 261-262), and he repeats it when he says he “hopes” that he is so “smart” (da. klog) now, that he would respect it (l. 267-268). It is interesting, that he feels like he can only “hope” for this to have changed. Again, he refers to a master narrative of becoming wiser with age, but at the same time, he is apparently not sure, that he has changed so much after all. The same point is illustrated in Philip’s story. He believes, that if he had had a better sense of his own boundaries and of consent back then, then he would have stopped (l. 107-110). He follows this by saying:

o=og (.. ..) det (.. ..) ja det (..) det håber jeg jeg ville <<griner>> (l. 110)

This excerpt indicates that he is about to proceed, but then he hesitates before he says that he “hopes” he would. So, he implicitly claims that he has a better understanding of boundaries and consent today, but if he had had it back then as well, he still isn’t sure he would have stopped. His laugh could be a sign of embarrassment to say that. Similar to Michael, Philip also isn’t sure that he has changed so much after all. This

way of invoking a master narrative of getting wiser with age, but still questioning whether this really would change how they behave in these situations, also corresponds to an earlier point, that knowing what's right doesn't necessarily mean complying with it, thus "good guys" can do "bad things". This leads to the next paragraph, regarding if there is also some constancy constructed, and if so, what does it consist of?

5.4.3 Total chaos or some constancy?

As we saw in the theory section, focusing only on change across time could mean potential chaos. Also, as with the other dilemmas, it's a conflict of constructing oneself as changed on the background of some constancy and vice versa. So far, we have seen how the men almost solely position themselves in terms of change. However, some constancy is also present in some of their stories, for example, when they refer to their upbringing, as we have seen in a previous theme. I will briefly show another example of this here.

Jens accounts for, how he was raised with healthy values, primarily by his mom and with sisters (l. 240-242). He was this person, with a healthy upbringing back then, and he is still this person today. Nevertheless, he did what he did. Michael has the same point, when he says that people get wiser with age, but "that's no excuse for all the shit we knew we weren't supposed to do" (l. 196-197). This appears to be a paradox. People get wiser with age, but they still knew it was wrong at the time. Both change, in relation to getting wiser, as well as constancy, in relation to having known all along what was right and wrong, is emphasized in this statement. This question of having moral continuity, leads us back to a discussion from the first theme, relating to whether the men knew it was wrong, when they did it. And if we accept this as valid, then if getting wiser with age, doesn't refer to a moral development, in what way do people get wiser? Maybe there is a clue in Søren's statement, when he says what he would have told himself back then, if he had the chance: "if you think about what you're doing for two seconds, then you would stop" (l. 515-516). This means, that he knows it's wrong at the time, and this knowledge is not far from his awareness, because he only needs to think about it for two seconds. But the problem is, that he didn't think. So, the change that these men emphasize, also present in the master narrative of getting wiser with age, maybe doesn't relate to a moral development, but

to learning to think (about consequences) before acting.

5.5 Summary of the main points

This brings me to the end of the analyses, and here the main points from the analysis will be summarized, before some of them will be discussed in the following section. But first, I want to repeat a very important earlier point, which is, that the analysis is not aimed at revealing the one “real” identity of, or even ascribing multiple identities to, the men. My contribution is about demonstrating and exemplifying the process of accomplishing identities, and what narrative strategies and concrete discursive means are employed in order to construct varying identities.

When it comes to describing the episodes the men generally don’t give much attention to the women in their stories. They are anonymous characters in most of the stories, regardless whether they are known or strange to the man before the time of the episode. Some of the men though, describe the woman or their relation in more detail, and/or stress how they are concerned about the consequences for the woman today, thereby positioning themselves as caring. This larger focus on the women is most prominent in stories where the episode involved sex.

In relation to how the men choose to describe how they reacted after the transgression, some only use negative terms, which position them as morally aware at the time of the episode. Some of the men choose more positive ways to describe their reactions, but that is in the cases where the man didn’t realize at the time, that what he did was wrong. In opposition to that, the men using negative words, also makes it clear that they realized as soon as possible, that something was wrong, positioning them as good guys. In relation to describing reactions, some descriptions also seem to be meant to affect the audience to feel sorry for the man.

In relation to labelling, the men mostly use neutral labels, when they don’t seem like they try to avoid labelling it. When they use negative labels, it is labels which stress, how wrong it was, what they did, so it has a moral function in relation to the audience. Another reason for using negative labels, could be to come across as objective and honest in telling their stories. For the men it’s a balancing act between being honest about what happened and not making it sound too bad, so they don’t make themselves look worse than what is necessary for the purpose of the story.

In relation to the second theme, about why they did it, the men employ both di-

rect and indirect reasons, coming from themselves or from the outside, constructing them as more or less out of their control. Overall, they lean towards the world-to-person direction of fit on the agency dilemma continuum, as they largely construct themselves as neither very agentive nor very individually responsible. The responsibility they carry, we all carry. This is also consistent with the point of the third theme, which is, that many of the conditions which applied to these young men back then, also apply to people in general, and thus anyone could have done what they did. But luckily, people change and become wiser with age – or do they? All the men have in common that they construct their stories, as if their character wasn't aware *in the moment*, that the women didn't want it (except from Niels), but as narrators in the here-and-now, they all know. The point of the last theme is, that in relation to navigating the continuity vs. discontinuity dilemma, changing over time is emphasized by the men. However, there is also some continuity present, as some of them claim that they also knew back then, just not at the exact moment of the transgression, that what they did was wrong. This moral continuity is also consistent with the claim that any "good guy" can do "bad things". What the change then consists of, we can't really get a clear answer to, but it could be about learning to think before you act.

6.0 Discussion

The focus of this section will be to discuss some of the main findings of the present study as well as to place it within a broader context. The aim is to get closer to the phenomenon of how men, who have engaged in SH construct identities as well as what this study can contribute with. The analysis has shown, how the seven men, who were the subjects of this study, through certain discursive means, accomplish to construct varying identities. This discussion will be critical towards some of these findings. Key points will be made about the issue of responsibility, the influence of the #MeToo discourse as well as motivations for sharing stories like these. Another question, which will be taken up in this discussion is: So, what can we use this knowledge for? This leads to a discussion of possibilities for prevention and intervention, which brings us back to the contextualization in the introduction, concerning consent law and school education. Lastly, I will briefly comment on some possible limitations of the present study, in order to make suggestions for future research on the subject of sexual harassment.

6.1 *Who is responsible?*

The analysis showed, how men, who have engaged in sexual harassment, position themselves and navigate identity dilemmas in their narratives, of what they have done, in a way where the past is reconstructed so that they now acknowledge, that they have in fact transgressed someone else's boundaries sexually. The analysis also highlighted, that even if they now acknowledge this, they generally don't construct themselves as very individually responsible, for what they did. At the same time, they stress a more mutual and collective responsibility for SH taking place. If we were to look at the analysis more critically, one could argue, that by focusing on how the men to a large degree disclaim individual responsibility, it implicitly criticizes the men for doing just this, indicating that they should take more responsibility. If this is true, we could ask the question, why it could be tempting to insist on blaming the men? Why would we like to hold them individually responsible for engaging in SH?

There could be many reasons for this. First, one could argue, that it's inherent in the #MeToo discourse, in relation to which, these men tell their stories. As men-

tioned in the introduction, the #MeToo movement is aimed at giving people a sense of the magnitude of the problem of SH. Furthermore, it has proven to be a major force in holding perpetrators accountable for what they have done. For example, many powerful men have been fired from their jobs as a consequence of people coming forward with stories of their transgressive behavior. It can be argued that the discourse of #MeToo impact attitudes towards sexual harassers, in a way so that we want them to take responsibility for their own actions and feel the consequences of them. The influence on the #MeToo movement will be further addressed in the next section.

Holding people accountable for their own actions, is not just limited to the #MeToo discourse though. It can be argued, that the incentive to blame the harasser, comes down to a sense of justice, for example in relation to the person who was harassed. That it should have personal consequences for the harasser, equal to the personal consequences it might have had for the harassed, could also be said to be what the legal system is based on – restoring justice. Some forms of SH can be punished, and the legal system punishes individually. In this context, arguments of a collective responsibility probably won't be valid.

Another possible argument for maintaining an individual responsibility for SH is that, despite the men's claims that anyone could do it, and #MeToo showing how widespread it actually is, everyone doesn't do it. So, something still distinguishes the people who do it, from people who don't. However, that doesn't necessarily have to do with the person doing it but could very well have to do with the circumstances, as the men also pointed out in their stories. As the cultural psychological perspective also emphasize, the person is always situated in a context, without which their actions aren't meaningful. So, could the men be right, when they downplay their personal responsibility in favor of a more collective responsibility? Shouldn't we blame them to the extent that we generally have a tendency to?

Through their stories, we see the men arguing that norms and expectations regarding masculinity, e.g. learning to be aggressive to be successful, as well as for example the media, has had an influence on their actions back then or generally promote stereotypical gender norms, which ultimately normalizes SH. These are cultural issues, which we can't disregard, when addressing SH. Following the cultural psychology perspective, person and context are inextricably interconnected in a sense

where they require each other as well as make each other up. This dynamic and dialectic relation entails, that the individual can't completely change culture on his/her own, but it also isn't determining, and it can definitely be resisted. So, why didn't the men resist external influences, if that was what led them to sexually harass someone else? The issue of adolescence might shed some light on this. For all these men, the transgressions took place when they were young and inexperienced. Perhaps this made it more difficult to resist external norms and expectations regarding how they should act.

A point I also would like to stress in relation to seeing SH as a more collective responsibility is, that following a social constructionist epistemology, knowledge is not just in mind of the individual but socially distributed between people, who "do" it together in interaction. This could be argued to mean, that the individual also isn't individually responsible for the knowledge that they hold. If you believe, that aggression is necessary to get success, even if this was an idea *you* had by yourself, it is still necessarily a product of engaging in social interaction with other people.

These points, supporting a more collective responsibility of SH, doesn't mean however, that we shouldn't maintain some kind of individual responsibility for people's own actions. Also, despite constructing their stories like this, sexual harassers probably can't avoid being blamed to some extent. The main contribution of discussing this issue of responsibility, and outlining possible opposite views is, that viewing men, who have engaged in sexual harassment, as harassers who should pay for what they have done, might not be the most constructive strategy. This will be further elaborated later in this section.

6.2 *The #MeToo discourse*

As the analysis also revealed, the men draw on many different discursive resources in order to accomplish different things. As we saw in the methodology section, this study integrates two approaches to studying discourse, based on focusing either on small-d or capital-D discourses. In combining these two approaches to studying discourse, both concrete conversational choices of constructing and managing self, agency and difference, as well as broader, normative conditions framing and constraining the individual is attended to. However, so far focus has been mostly on the choices made by the men who are studied, and on master narratives which they have

used as resources. But what master narratives are they framed or constrained by, in a way so that they can't construct themselves completely freely in their narratives?

I will argue, that the #MeToo movement can be seen as a master narrative which they reconstruct their past in relation to, and that it is both a resource which they draw on, but simultaneously also a discourse which frame and constrain their possibilities of reconstruction. What constitutes this master narrative could be a whole subject of study in itself, and so I can only say some general things about what it involves, which can be identified in the narratives of the men.

As it was already mentioned in the above discussion, the #MeToo movement is based on the view, that sexual harassers should be held more accountable for their actions, as they have so far gotten away with it. Additionally, it could be said to have a feminist ideology inherent in it, as it exposes how men abuse the power they hold. Perhaps it is also the feminist ideology, which led to it mostly being women sharing their stories, and perpetrators mostly being described as men, although some people have afterwards attempted to make the movement more inclusive.

I mention these as examples of the #MeToo discourse, as they are reflected in the stories of the men. Firstly, managing blame and responsibility, proved to be a theme across their stories. Although, it seems like they, to some extent, resist the part of the #MeToo discourse, saying that they should be held accountable for their actions, it still constrains their narratives in a way. For example, they probably couldn't have said, that they don't feel bad, about what they did, today. In that sense, they comply with the norm inherent in this master narrative, saying that harassers should be ashamed and feel guilty about their actions.

In relation to the feminist ideology inherent in the #MeToo discourse, although it was not a prominent part of the analysis, we see how the men address issues of gender and equality in their stories. One could argue, that by engaging with the discourse of #MeToo, then men can't simultaneously say that they disagree with feminism. Additionally, their narratives are constrained in a way, so that they have to acknowledge an existing gender inequality in the favor of men.

These are brief examples of, how #MeToo can be seen as a master narrative, which the men construct their narratives in relation to, and which also constrain their reconstructions of the past and thereby their process of constructing identities. Another question, which I find interesting to discuss, in relation to the #MeToo move-

ment, is whether it really made the men reflect on what they did, or whether they are just presenting something to us? This leads to the next point of discussion.

6.3 Why share these stories?

After listening to the stories of the men, one could wonder, why anyone would want to come forward and tell a detailed story of, how they sexually harassed someone else. What could the motivation be, to share these stories publicly?

Through the analysis, we see how the men position themselves in relation to the audience as honest about what they did back then, and as feeling guilty about it today. One could get the impression, that they seek praise for coming forward and sharing their story, as it is generally a taboo subject, to publicly acknowledge that one has engaged in SH. Getting praised could possibly be a motivation for some of them, but the men who chose to be anonymous in the original podcast can't get praise. Maybe they try to appease their guilty conscience? One could imagine, that it can be relieving to come forward with a story like this, in the same way that it can be relieving to come clean about a lie or big secret. Being able to tell the truth can be relieving – and by being anonymous, these men also don't face any personal consequences by doing it. The men who aren't anonymous however, even if they get praise, also risk personal consequences. Everyone they know, could potentially hear this podcast, from friends and family to acquaintances, colleagues and potential customers – and also the woman, whom they harassed. All these people will probably form an opinion of what they hear and could either praise the man or distance themselves from him as a result of this opinion. Also, people who the man doesn't know could form an opinion of him and coming forward in public can lead to a risk of being contacted by strangers who might or might not have positive intentions.

Another motivation for the man to come forward, despite the risks of doing it publicly, could be trying to get forgiveness – either directly from the woman he harassed, or indirectly from other's confirming that it wasn't just his individual responsibility or saying that he shouldn't feel guilty about it anymore. However, not all the men report that they still worry about what they did.

Some of the men directly state, that they hope their stories can help prevent SH in the future, by shedding light on, why they did it. This would be equal to “sacrificing” themselves for the greater good – which also could be an attempt at getting praised.

But perhaps they should also get some praise. Regardless if they really are sincerely sorry for what they have done, and now acknowledging that they are sexual harassers, they still face possible risks and negative personal consequences by participating in this podcast. Perhaps it is brave. And through this study, they also end up contributing to research on SH, resulting in knowledge that might lead us closer to ways of preventing it. Also, to take up the initial question, whether the #MeToo movement really made them reflect, or whether they just present something to make themselves look good or getting praised, this is an interesting question, but it is not relevant in the context of the present research. Following the epistemological, ontological, methodological and theoretical foundation of this research, it doesn't matter whether what the men say is true, how they really feel, or who they really are. Within this study, we are more interested in, how they *want* to present themselves and how they accomplish this. As we shall see from the next section, this can ultimately tell us something about how we can prevent or intervene in relation to SH.

6.4 *Prevention and intervention*

To return to the contextualization in the introduction, I now want to briefly discuss, what we can use the men's stories for in terms of prevention or intervention, when they construct identities the way they do, according to the analysis. Following the social constructionist epistemology, as represented by Gergen, the findings will be evaluated in terms of good and bad, since it potentially could influence the lives of people.

From an earlier discussion point we saw how the men might have a valid point in insisting on a mutual responsibility, and that it could be more of a structural and collective problem that SH takes place, than it is an individual problem. In relation to possibilities of prevention, only regarding SH as an individual issue, would also leave us with very limited, if not zero, options, since preventing on an individual level would demand too many resources. As it was also already mentioned, we do *intervene* individually though, when people are punished for their actions, e.g. getting fired for sexually harassing someone, but also in the legal system, e.g. when someone is convicted of rape. Following this, consent law could be seen as an individual form of intervention, as it, as a part of legislation, has the purpose of punishing the individual. However, it can also be seen as collective prevention, in that it

could change people's attitudes towards consent. As it was seen in the analysis, the current law regarding rape, which is focused on saying "no", also seem to be quite prominent as a master narrative influencing the men's views on consent, supporting the notion that the focus of the law actually does have an influence on people's everyday attitudes.

So, to try to answer the question of, what we can use the men's stories for, the way they construct identities could show us, that attempts at preventing SH should primarily focus on collective types of prevention. Furthermore, according to their way of positioning themselves as distanced from the time, when they did it, types of intervention might ought to focus on adolescence. But, according to the analysis, it shouldn't focus on moral development, as more of the men construct a sense of moral continuity, meaning that they also knew back then, that what they did was wrong. As one of the men said, it could really come down to, not thinking before you act in the situation. However, this seems difficult to develop any prevention for, as it is something which is generally regarded as a skill which children and young people learn gradually. Thinking before you act, could be seen as something you learn by making mistakes and feeling the consequences of them. But when it comes to SH, it would be preferable if mistakes didn't have to happen first – hence the aim of preventing it. This is also what Sex & Samfund try to, with their teaching material for schools, as we saw in the introduction. It corresponds to another explanation the men bring up, which is the insecurity about their own as well as the boundaries of others, which was exactly the theme of the teaching material from Sex & Samfund for week six this year. That it is targeted at schools, makes it a collective preventive effort, which seems to be consistent with the findings of this study. To sum up, what we can use this knowledge for, about how the men construct identities, is to target preventive attempts at people collectively, instead of individually, and focus it on adolescence (or earlier) as the time for prevention. In this sense, the findings of the present study contribute to a greater good. Future research could explore what concrete possibilities there are for prevention types of this kind, in addition to the one by Sex & Samfund and to consent law aiming to change people's attitudes. Other suggestions for future research follow in the next section.

6.5 *Limitations and future research*

The point of presenting some of the possible limitations of this study is to recognize that the phenomenon of sexual harassment is complex, and that, based on this study, I can only make claims based on one aspect of it, here being harassers' constructions of identities. Furthermore, possible limitations of the present study can lead to suggestions for further research on SH.

One possible limitation of the present study could be, that the material which the study is based on, is published in the beginning of 2018, and so it is produced in the time period when the #MeToo movement peaked. Now, in 2019, it could be argued that #MeToo has decreased in topicality and news value, even though focus on SH might still be more prominent than before the movement. However, had similar interviews, to the one's used here, been conducted today, reconstructions of identities in relation to #MeToo would most likely look different. Perhaps resistance towards the #MeToo discourse would be more prevalent? Perhaps narrative strategies employed across stories would be more varying? Future research on the subject of SH in relation to #MeToo could use or generate interviews which is more up-to-date, in order to explore harassers' identity constructions a few years after the movement emerged.

Another possible limitation of the present study could be, that only the perspective of the harasser is represented here. As I made clear in the introduction, it was a specific purpose of this study, to explore the first-person perspective, rather than focusing on e.g. experience or perceptions of SH, as the perspective of the harasser is generally under-represented in research on SH. Therefore, this is not a limitation in relation to the conclusions I draw in the present study regarding how sexual harassers construct identity. However, when broadening out the subject, I can still only make claims about SH based on the perspective of the harassing part, and for example, can't speak about transgressions in themselves or the harassed part. My point is, that future research on SH could benefit from an approach, which combines perspectives (what I have called the first-, second- and third-person perspectives), so as to shed light on the phenomenon from more than one side.

The final possible limitation of this study that I want to highlight, also relates to the material used. More specifically, this study could be criticized for being based only on male harassers. Generally, SH involves a sex/gender aspect, which the pre-

sent study hasn't concerned itself with. I would argue, that this study doesn't take it for granted that harassers equal men – it is simply a limitation of the material, which was used, as the aim of the podcast was to explore sexual boundaries from the perspective of men. The present study could however have engaged in a larger discussion of the sex/gender aspect, but I would argue, that this is an issue which could constitute a whole paper on its own. However, future research on SH could explore whether or how sex/gender of the harasser influence identity constructions. This could be approached in various ways, e.g. as a study of sexual harassers which doesn't distinguish between whether participants are male or female.

7.0 Conclusion

The aim of this master thesis was to study the construction of identities as a process inherent in narratives of having engaged in sexual harassment. More specifically it asked the question: How do men, who have engaged in sexual harassment, narratively construct identities in light of what they have done? The seven men whose narratives were studied, were participants from a podcast series focusing on men's perspective on sexual boundaries in the wake of the #MeToo.

The study was rooted in a cultural psychological approach, which meant that focus was on narratives as a cultural practice where every day meaning-making through language as a cultural resource is achieved. Furthermore, a social constructionist epistemology and relativist ontology supported approaching identity, within a discursive psychological methodology, as a mental phenomenon inherent in discursive practices, rather than a core self or entity located in the mind and distinguishable from the social settings in which the individual participates. Also, the purpose of the study was not to search for generalizable truths about how sexual harassers construct identities. On the contrary it is acknowledged, that what is "true" is always relative to the specific situation, and so consequently, how identities were accomplished by the men, within these specific circumstances, was interpreted in relation to these circumstances. I also want to highlight, that it wasn't the specific identities accomplished by the men, that this study was aimed at exploring, but rather the processes of constructing various identities. This is in accordance with the theoretical perspectives of positioning theory and the narrative practice approach by Michael Bamberg, which were employed. Through these theories, which also guided the method of analysis, this paper unfolds the process of identity construction and re-construction through narratives of having engaged in sexual harassment.

Through the analysis, we saw how the men constructed stories based on complex interactional strategies in order to create and sustain a sense of who they are in relation to what they have done. The analysis showed, that men, who have engaged in sexual harassment, narratively construct their identities in light of what they have done, through various discursive means. It illustrated how the men narratively construct identities for certain purposes, through positioning themselves in certain ways

and navigating identity dilemmas. To come closer to an answer to the initial research question, it can be argued, that men, who have engaged in sexual harassment, seem to be concerned with processes of distancing themselves from what they have done, arguing that anyone could have done it, and pointing to a mutual responsibility for SH rather than an individual one, when narratively constructing identities. Through a discussion of the issue of responsibility, we see how acknowledging a more collective responsibility opens up possibilities of pre- and intervention, which don't correspond to insisting primarily on an individual responsibility.

Through a discussion of the influence of #MeToo, it also becomes clearer how the men construct identities in relation to one of many master narratives, which frame and constrain their stories. One could be critical of, whether #MeToo really has made people reflect and acknowledge to be harassers, but within the approach of the present research, whether someone presents their "true" identities or constructs entirely fictitious versions of themselves, is irrelevant. By treating these stories as interactive positionings, they can reveal interesting insights of identity constructions, which can ultimately lead to a better knowledge of how SH can be prevented in the future.

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