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Representation in Danish Films

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This MA thesis seeks to explore representation of female minority groups with Middle Eastern ethnicity in Danish films. I will be exploring recent claims of Middle Eastern women being represented as oppressed in films, thus I will be investigating and answering the following research questions: How is the stereotype of oppression applied to the non-white Danish character with Middle Eastern background in the two films Kald Mig Bare Aksel and Fighter? How are the characters (not) represented as oppressed? To analyse this matter, I select two films which I will be analysing (1) Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002), (2) Fighter (Arthy, 2007). I will use grounded theory method when approaching my research and structuring the analysis of the films. My theoretical framework will consist of three theories. First is Representation theory by Hall (1997), Racialisation by Murji and Solomos (2005) and Banton (2005), and Post-Colonial Feminism by Mohanty (1988). The findings of the analysis shows that film characters are complex regarding their representation as victims of oppression. Oppression is racialised as an issue among communities with Middle Eastern ethnicity, and it is used as an obstacle for the non-white Danish female with Middle Eastern background to overcome. However, the characters are presented as strong individuals who break free of conservative ideas of what females should do and in the process their families come around as well and reconsider their treatment towards their daughters, therefore, these women are not just portrayed as battered.

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1.0. Introduction

In 2020 the Danish film Shorta was released, its plot is about two police officers who are held as prisoners by a gang of immigrant boys in the Danish ghetto Svalegården. Everywhere in the country posters for the film showed a white police officer on top of a car holding a machine gun and the posters were edited with an orange filter. Although the film praised as an action-packed drama, criticism rose as it was another Danish film presenting non-white Danish people with Middle Eastern background as criminals. Danish research has noticed several stereotypes related to Muslim characters, an example is the violent Muslim man and the oppressed Muslim woman, who are controlled by men from their culture (Glerup, 2020). These stereotypes are presented repeatedly in Danish cinema, which influences viewers, who may only be presented to minority groups through media (Hervik, 2019, p. 9) In fiction characters are important because the narrative is told through them, their faults, their struggles, their development are all parts of great storytelling. Films are the gateway into unknown communities and become the window into the lives of strangers we meet on the street. Therefore, films play a significant role in shaping viewers beliefs and opinions of those communities, which viewers otherwise do not have access to. According to Andreassen (2005), who has analysed several Danish news media in her report, the media has defined certain issues as characteristics of the culture of non-white Danish women with Middle Eastern background (p. 160). Furthermore, issues such as abuse, honour killings, forced marriages, strict families, and lack of autonomy, has also been racialised by media as an issue of Middle Eastern culture (p.136-139). In my MA thesis I seek to analyse how the stereotype of oppression is used in the following films Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) and Fighter (Arthy, 2007), therefore I have established the following research question:

How is the stereotype of oppression applied to the non-white Danish character with Middle Eastern background in the two films Kald Mig Bare Aksel and Fighter?

To answer this research question, I will analyse Danish films, to research whether there is a pattern of victimisation or showing non-white Danish women with Middle Eastern background as oppressed, such as how they are represented in news media (Andreassen, 2005). To analyse whether a character in a film is represented as oppressed, I must research how she is/is not constructed as a victim of oppression, which leads me to my next research question:

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How are non-white Danish women with Middle Eastern background (not) represented as victims of oppression in the films Kald Mig Bare Aksel and Fighter?

I argue that this topic holds relevance, because it is important to notice whether films also redistribute stereotypes of others, because when recognising whether there are patterns of victimisation, then the discussion of how to break them down can begin. Representation of non-white groups with Middle Eastern background in Denmark is currently troublesome, as these groups are represented with negative connotations, they are portrayed as unfit for Danish society, which reasons several anti-immigration policies such as Ghettoloven (Glerup, 2020). Thus, representation affects minority groups in Denmark, and Danish society at large. If the same stereotypical depictions are portrayed beyond news media, such as in films, literature, etc. then the problem of representation of non-white Danish women with Middle Eastern background is bigger than what is first presented by Andreassen (2005) and Hervik (2002) (2019). Moreover, misrepresentation affects society as it creates negative expectations and assumptions, which is unconsciously taken as the truth by audiences (Brooks and Hébert, 2006).

The term 'non-white Danish' is inspired by Tess Skadegaard Thorsen's (Thorsen, 2020) research regarding minority groups in Denmark. In this thesis the term 'non-white Dane' referral to people living in Denmark but I will add 'with Middle Eastern background' to ensure understanding that my focus is on persons with Middle Eastern ethnicity. I will limit my research to the analysis of two characters from two different films, which I do to establish a qualitative analysis of the films, that gives time and focus to how characters are/are not represented as oppressed.

My focus group is non-white Danish females with a Middle Eastern background, this falls within two categories. First, they are a racial minority in Denmark, I specifically choose to focus on women and girls with a Middle Eastern background because this is a minority group that is under much scrutiny in news media (Hervik, 2019, p. 9). Therefore, I argue that it is important to investigate how people of this ethnicity have become targets of negative representation and whether these representations are also consistent in films. The second category that this focus group falls under is gender, I focus on how gender influences characters because it defines the storyline and attributes of the character (Gauntlett, 2008, p. 1). In Danish films, the ethnicity and gender of the actors affects the character's construction. By also focusing on representation of women with a Middle Eastern background, I limit my focus, as

men and women seem to be represented in very different ways, depending on the context of the film, thus need different theoretical perspectives to analyse their representation. By also focusing on women, I am researching why their representation is different from that of men, and what factors lead to them being represented as oppressed. Non-white Danish women with Middle Eastern background are presented in stereotypical ways in news media, meaning they presented in ways that perpetuate notions of how non-white with Middle Eastern background exist. The problem with lack of diversity in representation, is that it results in non-white women with Middle Eastern background being overlooked and only represented through stories that either directly or indirectly criticise a culture (Glerup 2020). Another reason why representation of both gender and race is important is as Stuart Hall (1997) suggests: "*It is only through the way in which we represent and imagine ourselves that we come to know how we are constituted and who we are*" (p. 580).

My MA thesis will consist of a grounded theory method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), which sets up constructing theories from data, that has systematically been obtained and analysed to set up theories that seek to contribute as a tool to answer my research question. Through this method I setup 'Representation' as my core category, and 'race' and 'gender' are two categories under the core category. When the categories are established, my data analysis and research will be focused towards these categories. I will then be researching theories which also fall under these categories, as the theories become tools to answer whether non-white Danish females with Middle Eastern background are represented as oppressed in Danish films. The first theory is linked with my core category 'representation', which is why I choose to use Stuart Hall's (1997) theory of Representation, which provides the argument that 'real' representation of persons do not exist, thus any representation that we see in films is a construction of others. The second theory that I will be including falls under the category of 'race' and is the theory of Racialisation, which is a core concept when analysing racial constructions (Murji and Solomos, 2005). To the theory of Racialisation, I will add Murji and Solomos (2005) who present racialisation as "*the processes by which ideas about race are constructed, come to be regarded as meaningful, and are acted upon*" (p. 1). I will also be referencing to Michael Banton's (2005) who presents the use of racialisation in practice. The third theory, Post-colonial Feminism by Mohanty (1988) also presents the notion of racialisation and othering but gets more in-depth with it in regard of the construction of non-Western women in Western literature. In my analysis I will analyse the two films Kald Mig

Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) and Fighter (Arthy, 2007) to learn of whether they women in the films are represented as oppressed. Moreover, I will be answering how the different scenes makes them either appear or not appear as oppressed. I will be adding theories to this section to see if the films fall within the theoretical explanations of how women are represented as oppressed. In this section I reckon that the two characters Fatima (Bovin, 2002) and Aicha (Arthy, 2007) are complex characters, therefore, even though the films do showcase racialised ideas of otherness, the characters cannot be categorised as only being a victim of oppression. In Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) does not appear as a victim of oppression, as her character and her family does go beyond racialised ideas of others and does not fit completely into theories that describe how women are victimised in literature. However, her life is more restrictive than her Danish peers and she is allowed to do less than them, which makes her seem more oppressed than her peers. In the film Fighter (2007) Aicha is established as a victim of oppression as there is a heavy focus on her family trying to control her sexuality. In this film, males are racialised as being oppressors, and their victims are women, such as Aicha, who they try to control. In this film oppression is used as a plot device, to give the character Aicha an obstacle to overcome. But Aicha's character is also more complex, as she is still presented as an independent and strong character who learns to stand up for herself. In my discussion I get more in-depth with how the characters are/are not represented as oppressed by reflecting on research of representation of Middle Eastern persons in Danish news media. Here I will be discussing my findings by referring to studies by Andreassen (2005), Hervik (2002), Thorsen and Rødje (2019), and Thorsen and Skadegård (2019). This section shows that representation of women with Middle Eastern ethnicity in films is both similar and different from news media. News media has a homogenous view on all immigrant women as victims of oppression and refrains from narrating women with any autonomy who must leave her family to gain liberty. The films that I include in this MA thesis have more nuance, because even though oppression is presents in Fighter (2007) and immigrant families are shown as more strict in Kald Mig Bare Aksel (2002), the characters do have autonomy, which in the end results in approval from their parents, the films did not showcase that the characters must leave their family to achieve liberty, rather it showed that the families were still very loving and could be persuaded to understand their daughter.

1.1. Films

My thesis will refer to two films (1) Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) and Fighter (Arthy, 2007). These films are chosen because their main lead is a non-white Danish female with Middle Eastern background, thus they are the focus of the film. There there is a lot of screen time to the non-white Danish characters, which allows for an in-depth analysis. From these films I can analyse whether they are represented as victims of oppression. I choose to narrow my focus to popular films, which excludes all television shows and short films. I will focus on popular film, because these are the ones that most persons have seen, meaning, I will be analysing films that have reached a wide audience. These films are publicly available, which gives me full-time access to them through www.CFU.dk, which is necessary when analysing, as I will need to constantly watch the films throughout the process. I choose to analyse Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002), as it is a children's film that is still popular, even though the film was released nineteen years ago, it is still a relevant film, as it is still shown to children in Middle school as method to explain Middle Eastern culture (Filmcentralen, n.d.). The character I am focusing on, Fatima, is a side character, but the plot is heavily emphasised on her family, her culture, and her religion. Another relevant aspect of the film is that it is very focused on the aspect of Arabic culture and how Middle Eastern families live. The film Fighter (Arthy, 2007) is the only film I could find with a non-white female as the lead. It depicts the struggles of a non-white girl and becomes a story of a girl becoming stronger both physically and mentally to achieve her goals. The film holds relevance at it is the only film with a non-white Danish girl with Middle Eastern background as the lead. It is a film that is focused on the struggles of being a 17-years old girl with Turkish ethnicity: "*There are a lot of Danish films about youths, who must find themselves, and who are in opposition to their parents. By making a girl with immigrant background to a kung-fu fighter, I could put that dilemma at the forefront*" (Der er lavet mange danske film om unge, der skal finde sig selv, og som er i opposition til deres forældre. Ved at gøre en pige med indvandrerbaggrund til kung-fu-kæmper kunne jeg sætte den situation på spidsen) (Arthy, 2007, as cited by Linberg, 2007).

1.1.1. Summary of Kald Mig Bare Aksel

Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Just Call Me Aksel) is a Danish 2002 children and family film Directed by Pia Bovin. The film is about a young boy, Aksel, who enters a talent show at his youth club with his two friends Mia and Fatima. Aksel looks up to the Muslim teens in his neighbourhood who he describes as gangster. To become like them, he decides to become a Muslim, he refuses to eat pork, touch dogs, and he calls himself Ahmed, and through his friend Fatima he learns more rules about Islamic traditions. The film focuses on the journey in which Aksel, Fatima and Mia write a song and practice a performance, all in dismay of Fatima's mother, who believes that it is inappropriate for girls to be on stage. Fatima's father does want Fatima to go to the youth club, and has allowed her to perform in the competition. In the film, the three children find a homeless dog which they are trying to take care of in secrecy of their parents as none of them want to adopt the dog, Fatima struggles even further, as she fears being seen with a dog, because her religion considers it unclean. Fatima is the one who is tasked with writing a song for her group, but as she struggles with it, she takes a poem, which her brother wrote to his girlfriend, and she chooses that as their song. One day the children want to earn money, so they can buy food for the dog, so they go to a public area and start singing in front of everyone. Fatima's brother discovers her and takes her home to tell their father. This is when Fatima is given house arrest, which her father argues is due to her embarrassing the family by performing with a homeless dog. On the day of the competition, Fatima is saved by Aksel, who tricks her family, so she can enter the competition, which they succeed with. Fatima's father and brother discover that Fatima is not in her room, thus they drive to the youth club and experience Fatima on the stage. The film ends on a happy note, with Fatima's father and brother being proud of her for singing and congratulating her on her second-place victory.

1.1.2. Summary of Fighter

Fighter is a youth film from 2007 Directed by Natasha Arthy. The lead girl is named Aicha, she is a high school student with a passion for kung-fu, however when she is recommended to join a mix gender professional kung-fu team, her father disapproves because he considers it inappropriate for Aicha to practice with men. Furthermore, he wants Aicha to focus on her school so that she can become a doctor, which Aicha seems hesitant to pursue. Without her

family knowing, she joins the team and here she meets a love interest, Emil, an ethnic-white Danish male. She also meets another male, Omar, who refuses to recognise her as an opponent because of her female status, and thus threatens to tell her family about her secret life. Aicha's brother Ali, is also studying to become a doctor and he is about to be engaged to a girl from their Turkish community named Yasmin. This engagement is heavily relying on Aicha's family staying honourable, or else Yasmin's father will not approve of the engagement. When Yasmin and Aicha's mother become suspicious of her dating Emil, even though is only practicing kun-fu with him, they warn her of the dangers of being with him and tell her that it will never succeed. At the engagement party of Yasmin and Ali, Aicha's secrets are revealed, she fights Omar in the kitchen, Ali and Yasmin's family comes in and stops the fight. But as Omar whispers derogatory word about Aicha in Ali's ear, Ali attacks Omer. This confrontation results in cancellation of the engagement, and Aicha is blamed for it by her family, as she is the one who is secretly seeing Emil. Aicha runs away from home to her friend Sofie but ends up returning home after a few days. Later as Aicha is driving around with her father, she receives a distressed call from Yasmin, who is telling her that her family found out that Yasmin is pregnant with Ali's child, so Yasmin's brother Mehmet is seeking out Ali to beat him up. When Aicha and her father drive to the scene of the crime and sees Ali being beaten bloody. Aicha start fighting all of the males with her kung-fu skills, but it is only when Omar enters the scene that the fight stops, as he is persuading Mehmet to leave the family be. Aicha is again condemned by her father and tells her that she is worthless. Aicha agrees with this and tells her father that she is also failing her classes at school and must repeat a year, which results in the father refusing to ever speak to Aicha again. In the end Aicha enters the kung-fu competition, her last component is Omar, who now agrees to fight her. Aicha wins the tournament, she returns home to a father who refuses to speak to her or look at her. Aicha takes his hand and reassures him that their relationship will get better one day, However, she will be living her life the way she wants to. Her father begins crying and holds Aicha's hand tightly but does still not look at her or speak a word.

2.0. Methodology

In this section I will present the methodological approach which I will use for structure of research to answer my research questions. I will apply grounded theory method, due to its

concept of generating a theory from a coding process, which is useful when analysing qualitative data. This MA thesis seeks to answer the research question, by making a qualitative analysis of Danish films, to analyse how the stereotype of oppression is applied to the non-white Danish character with Middle Eastern background. As I am analysing two films, the process of creating categories and inputting codes which I perceive from the films, it will provide a comprehensible method of analysis. In this section I will also provide information of the main literature which I will use for this project and present why I use them throughout this thesis. I use grounded theory method because of its flexibility in data collection, as it is not strict methodological framework but rather a tool with many applications. It is theoretically and methodologically flexible as it allows me to adjust and reflect accordingly to my data at hand Moreover, it allows me to be flexible in my data and what I choose to include as data for a qualitative analysis. The method also establishes, that the researcher should start their research from an objective standpoint, meaning I must ensure to remove bias from my head about the film to analyse whether they are representing non-white Danish women with Middle Eastern background as oppressed.

2.1. Grounded Theory

This master thesis follows a qualitative approach to investigate representation of non-white Danish females in films. I will apply the grounded theory method by Glaser and Strauss (1967) which has a foundation in constructivist approach as the user of it constructs their specific methodological strategies and content of my research (Charmez, 2008, p. 399).

Grounded theory involves a strategy of coding by breaking down the selected films into categories and sub-data and then analyse them (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 18). A qualitative approach is ideal as it provides a more complex analysis of the films and the different factors that lead to how the character is represented as oppressed. The framework of grounded theory, as introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, can be "*presented either as a well-codified set of propositions or in a running theoretical discussion, using conceptual categories and their properties*" (p. 31). The grounded theory method involves "*the systematization of the collection, coding and analysis*" (p. 18) of data to generate a theory that is grounded in the data. Since Glaser and Strauss (1967) first introduced Grounded Theory in 1967, it has been further developed and altered by several scholars

throughout the years, however, the basis of the method consists, as it aims to provide a framework for analysing data through theoretical sampling, constant comparison, coding, and theoretical saturation, which I will use as my method for research in this thesis.

2.1.1. Coding

The coding process is the central part of grounded theory, which entails labelling parts of the film which has potential theoretical significance (p. 37). To expand on the concept of coding I will refer to further work on the matter developed by Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin named *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (1998). Strauss and Corbin present a hierarchical coding process with three steps, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (p. 124).

Open coding is the first step of an analysis, which entails breaking down the data into discrete parts and create codes (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 102). My codes will be scenes from the film, which I will break down and analyse. The objective of open coding is to open up to new theoretical possibilities when I first engage with my data. The purpose of this step of coding is to break up the data and label it to contrast similarities (p. 120). This process is established to start researching the data from the ground up and to remove personal bias from the data (p. 120). The second step of coding is axial coding, it entails ''*relating categories to subcategories along the lines of their properties and dimensions*'' (p. 124). It is when I begin to organise and draw connections between the codes that are developed in the process of open coding (p. 124). Meaning, I will be organising the scenes in the films to see if there are any patterns, and then I will establish categories, which they are organised into. These categories are overall labels which ca entail several codes (p. 124). The last coding process is selective coding, which is where all the categories, established throughout the axial coding process, will be connected around one core category, which results in one unified theory that answers my research question (p. 125). Selective coding occurs later in the process and will be done after I do initial research on the categories that I define in the axial coding process. The core category that is defined through selective coding can result from developing a completely new category that summarises all the other categories, or it can be an elevation of a category from the axial coding process. My codes will be scenes or timestamp from the films, which I will put into the different

categories. Some codes will appear several times or in both categories, as they can hold information that is useful in several ways.

2.1.2. Theoretical Sampling

the process of theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory "*whereby the analyst jointly collects codes and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges*" (p. 45). My process of theoretical sampling begins on Danskefilm (Danskefilm.dk) which is an online library for all Danish produced films. But since the last dates to the 1930's, I will limit my research to films that were released between 2000-2019, I make this decision because I want to focus on more current portrayal of girls and women with a Middle Eastern background, as my focus is their represented in films.

After selecting about twenty films, which I can see has a non-white Danish character in the cast, I begin the process of watching them, this is where the process of open coding begins, as I watch films to investigate whether there are some patterns in the different films, as these patterns are what I will be focusing on.

I choose to select two film for my analysis (1) Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) and Fighter (Arthy, 2007), to make a qualitative analysis of the non-white character. As I am in the process of theoretical sampling, I have yet to analyse the depths of the films and how they represent non-white Danish women, however as Glaser and Strauss (1967) data collected by theoretical sampling, should be analysed at the same time, because then "*integration of the theory is more likely to emerge by itself*" (p. 109).

To select the films that I want to use for analysis, I will search for films that include one or more leading characters who are non-white, has a Middle Eastern background but still Danish and female. By selecting films where the character this thesis is focusing on, is the lead, I ensure screen time, so there are essential conversations, character introduction and -development, which allows for in-dept analysis. I choose the films Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) and Fighter (Arthy, 2007) because the non-white Danish character with Middle Eastern background is essential for the overall story. Moreover, these films do present the characters as being more restricted/oppressed than their peers, therefore I want to get more in-depth with their storyline,

to answer whether they are represented as oppressed. This pattern of having a goal, but not being allowed by parents, then living a double-life, being found out, and having to break free from the family, is a common pattern which emerged in almost every film with a non-white character, moreover, in the films that I view in the process of theoretical sampling, it is always the non-white female character who is a victim of her parents oppression and has to liberate herself. From this point on, my focus in on the victimisation of non-white Danish women in films, thus for further research and more sampling, I focus on finding data presenting the topic of representation of non-white Danish women in media. This leads to the next step of the grounded theory method, which is constant comparison.

2.1.3. Constant Comparison

The process of constant comparison is the process of re-watching Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) and Fighter (Arthy, 2007) and comparing it to existing findings regarding representation of non-white Danish women in media. When I start comparing with existing literature of the matter it delimits my focus to the topic of how representation of non-white women in media is constructed through racialised ideas of non-white minority groups in Denmark. The reduction of my focus of representation, leads to two major requirements of theory "(1) *parsimony of variables and formulation, and (2) scope in the applicability of the theory to a wide range of situations, while keeping a close correspondence of theory and data*" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 110). I will be comparing with literature by Rikke Andreassen (2005), Peter Hervik, (2002) (2019) and Tess Skadegård Thorsen (2019) (2020), who will be presented later in this chapter. I will be constantly comparing the findings an interpretation in the films to existing findings regarding representation of non-white Danish women, because by constantly comparing my findings with existing literature it will contribute validity of my research (p. 108) as my findings are consistently compared, both similarities and differences, to what other scholars interpret in their research. The process of constant comparison is where generating theoretical properties of the categories start to integrate: "*Thus the theory develops, as different categories and their properties tend to become integrated through constant comparisons that force the analyst to make some related theoretical sense of each comparison*" (p. 109). Through the process of constant comparison, I will begin the process of axial coding. I reduce my observation to focus on coding the parts of the film which in some way victimise the non-

white Danish character with Middle Eastern background, which results in also deducting my focus when looking for more research that investigates this matter. Overall, my consideration, coding and analysis becomes more selected and focused on the topic of media showing non-white Danish women as oppressed, which according to Glaser and Strauss (1967) ensures that I "*devote more time to the constant comparison of incidents clearly applicable to this smaller set of categories*" (p. 111). Meaning that because I limit my focus on a set of categories that I want to investigate further, I will devote more time to it, as this becomes my main interest. When the focus is narrowed down to investigating why non-white Danish women are represented as oppressed, I can begin to explore theories that can be used as an analytical tool to investigate my research question and to answer it.

2.1.4. Categories

Coding is the first approach to the data after it has been sampled, but before I start the process of coding, I must select the main categories because codes will be grouped into these categories (p. 37). Categories must be grounded in the data rather than already established preconceptions (p. 36), meaning my categories must be generated through not only my own preconceptions and hypothesis, but also from existing theories, this will provide "*a premium on emergent conceptualizations*" (p. 37). So before creating my main categories, I will research existing theories while comparing them to the films, to ensure that the theories fit within the themes of the films.

The first theory that I add to this thesis is Stuart Hall's (1997) theory of representation, which is presented in his book *Culture, media and identities. Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices.* Hall (1997) suggest that representation in media is constructed. I present a constructivist perspective to representation because I am analysing fictional media, the characters in the films are constructed by writers and producers, their issues are made up to create a story that is appealing to viewers (Andreassen, 2005, p. 161). With this perspective on representation, it leads me to the question of what affects representation of non-white Danish women. This focus group consists of two aspects that affect their representation, first is their ethnicity/race and second is their gender. This consideration leads me to narrow my categories down to two categories under the core category of Representation, which is: race

and gender. These categories will be connected to a theory to provide a plausible perspective and explanation of how race and gender affects films.

Within the category of race, I will add the theory of Racialisation by Karim Murji and John Solomos, which is presented in their book *Racialisation: Studies in Theories and in Practice* (2005) and Michael Banton *Historical and Contemporary Modes of Racialization* (2005). I add this to the category of race because it provides a constructivist argument of race, which is applicable to the topic of race in films. As I am focused on a racial minority group in Denmark, thus by providing theories of how race is constructed, I can apply to the analysis to learn how construction of race affects representation of non-white Danish women in films. Within the category of gender, I will add Post-colonial Feminism by Chandra Mohanty (1988), who theorises how Western literature tends to portray non-Western women, by applying narrow views of otherness. Mohanty's (1988) book *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,* is generally focused on representation of non-Western women, and she provides arguments as to how non-Western women are victimised in Western literature.

2.1.5. Theoretical Saturation

Theoretical saturation means "*that no additional data are being found*" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 61). It is the point of research where there is no more new data to collect or new codes or categories to identify (p. 61), thus when a category is saturated, it is time to move on to the next category until I have reached saturation of all categories. Saturation of data is identified when similar information occurs constantly, thus "*researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated*" (p. 61). The importance of saturation is to notice when new data does not change the theory and instead the information becomes repetitive. The process of theoretical saturation will occur in the analysis, as I research and add data to every category, I add codes from the film, and reach a theory, at some point it will be unnecessary to add more data, and then it is time to move on to the next category. Glaser and Strauss determine that the criterion for determining saturation is "*a combination of the empirical limits of the data, the integration and density of the theory, and the analyst's theoretical sensitivity*" (p. 62), if a category is saturated then it is unnecessary to go research it further as it will have no effect on the overall theory to try to apply more data, even if some data is missing it will mainly not

affect the overall outcome of the theory (p. 112). Thus, with saturation I will ensure that I do not linger too much on one category and instead move on to the next one.

2.2. Literature

Throughout this MA thesis I will refer to three main scholars who have researched the concept of racialisation and gender in Danish news media, which can be useful for my research of representation in Danish film, as I am adding additiona research that focuses on representation in a Danish context. The three main scholars that I will use are Rikke Andreassen (2005), Peter Hervik (2002) (2019), and Tess Skadegård Thorsen (2019) (2020). They all provide a critical perspective to how Danish media present non-white minority groups in media and discuss the consequences of it. Moreover, they get in-depth with the topic of racialisation and gender representation in media, which fall under the two categories 'Race' and 'Gender'.

The first scholar that I present is Rikke Andreassen, who is the author of the book *The Mass Media's Construction of Gender, race, sexuality and nationality: An analysis of the Danish news media's communication about visible minorities from 1971-2004* (2005). This book analyses news media coverage in Denmark between the years 1970-2004. Andreassen research how news media have constructed narratives of non-white minority groups and provides a critical perspective to the topic of news media. She argues that racialisation plays a significant part in constructing issues as a relation to the culture of non-white minority groups (p. 5). I add Andreassen's (2005) research to my thesis, because she goes beyond arguing whether representation of non-white Danes in media is true, rather she reflects on the intrigued details of news coverage when it discusses issues such as domestic violence, and how it is being presented as an issue of otherness. Andreassen (2005) also gets in-depth with how news media manages to do so through technical details and use of experts.

The second scholar that I present is Peter Hervik, who has written two books with the topic of racialisation in Danish news media. The first book that i refer to is *Mediernes muslimer: En antropologisk undersøgelse af mediernes dækning af religioner i Danmark* (2002). The purpose of this book is to present and analyse how Danish media covers the topic of religions of ethnic minorities (p. 8). Hervik's investigation on the matter includes analysing 800 articles covering the topic of religion and minorities from the five largest newspaper organisations in

Denmark, which are Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten, Politiken, Berlingske Tidende, Ekstra Bladet and B.T. (p. 8). Hervik concludes from this investigation that 95 percent of the articles dealt with Islam. Hervik argues that Danish news media present the 'us and them' division, which has dominated news media since the early 1990s: "*That is "us", or "we" the Danes, those who make up the "nation" or the "people" and "the other" or the "foreigners."*" (p. 9).

The second source by Hervik which I will refer to is *Racialization, racism, and anti-racism in the Nordic countries* (2019). This book investigates modern racism as well as discrimination, racialisation, racism, and islamophobia in Nordic countries. By examining critical media events, Hervik (2019) explores how the process of racialisation affects media, and concludes that news media presents anti-migrant and anti-Muslim narratives. Hervik's (2019) research on the matter of Danish news coverage of Muslims provides insight to the topic of racialisation. As I am researching a non-white minority group, it is important to learn how news media is presenting this group. Hervik (2019) also focuses on gender in his work, and argues that gender plays a significant part in how they are represented in media, however, media uses gender as another tool in their efforts to antagonise non-white minority groups (Hervik, 2002, p. 9)

The last scholar that I will refer to is Tess skadegård Thorsen, here I am referring to three literatures, two which are in collaboration with others. The first literature by Thorsen is a chapter named *Gendered Representation in Danish Film* from the book *Women in The Film Industry* (2020). This chapter analyses and critiques a diversity report from Det Danske Filminstitut (DFI), which shows that the Danish film industry is severely lacking in female representation throughout the production process of films. Thorsen (2020) provides statistics which were released in the report to showcase the lack of female influence, moreover, she critiques DFI and their lack of effort to try and solve the issue. This chapter by Thorsen (2020) provides a gender perspective on the film industry and shows that the Danish film industry needs improvements when it comes to gender diversity. I add this chapter by Thorsen, because it brings forth arguments a gender perspective of the film industry, she shows the lack of gender diversity in the film industry and provides arguments as to why more diversity is important.

In the book *Racialization, Racism, and Anti-Racism in the Nordic Countries* (2019) by Peter Hervik, Tess Skadegård Thorsen and Kjetil Rødje have contributed to a chapter called *(Re)Framing Racialization: Djurs Sommerland as a Battleground of (Anti)Racism.* This chapter focuses on racialisation of certain rides at the theme park Djurs Sommerland in Jutland, Denmark, which has come under scrutiny because the park officials have decided to remove a

racially insensitive ride called *Jungle Safari,* which includes riding down a river on a banana boat to see black robots depicted as cannibals. In this chapter Thorsen and Rødje (2019) discuss the many theme rides in an area of Djurs Sommerland named Africa Land, which includes Hottentot carousel and a cannibal stew pot ride. Another aspect that Thorsen and Rødje (2019) apply to this chapter is the public reaction to Djurs Sommerland's decision to remove Jungle Safari, which has mainly been critical as many do not want the ride to be removed. Through this case, Thorsen and Rødje (2019) offer an analysis of how media shifts focus from the debate of race and racial insensitivity to a focus on political correctness. I add this chapter by Thorsen and Rødje (2019), because of its focus on racialisation in Denmark, it also provides and in-depth analysis of the mechanics that media uses to shift the focus from race discussions, again showing the power the media has over the public, because instead of focusing on the racial insensitivity of the rides in Africa Land, the public was outraged by Djurs Sommerland's decision to remove it, and were instead critical of the topic of political correctness, the public reaction shows that racialisation is still an issue to be investigated.

The last literature that I will add from Thorsen is in collaboration with Mira Chandhok Skadegård and is named *Monstrous (M)others—From paranoid to Reparative readings of othering Through Ascriptions of monstrosity* (2019). In this article Thorsen and Skadegård discuss contemporary Danish films which female characters who exhibit monstrous behaviours, which can be perceived as a form of othering. Thorsen and Skadegård (2019) focus on the portrayal of mothers in Danish films and discuss how women and mothers are presented as terrible, abnormal, or monstrous, moreover they discuss societal impact on othering women in this manner. The article also includes an investigation of the portrayal of non-white immigrant mothers in film, which I find useful for this thesis, as I am investigating the portrayal of non-white Danish women with Middle Eastern background in films, this also includes. Thorsen and Skadegård's article provide both a gender discussion as well as a race discussion, as they are focusing on how women, both ethnic Dane and non-white Dane, are othered in film by being portrayed as monstrous.

2.3. Conclusion to Method

This MA thesis will use grounded theory method to structure the research and provide guidance in how to analyse my research to answer my research question of how the stereotype of

oppression is applied to the non-white Danish character with Middle Eastern background. I choose to use grounded theory method by Glaser and Strauss (1967) because it provides a method of creating theories through a system of coding. Grounded theory method because is flexibility in data collection, as it is not strict methodological framework but rather a tool with many applications. Moreover, this method also focuses on adding existing literature and theory to the process to maintain validity of the research. The qualitative process of coding and creating categories that is the core of grounded theory is a useful method in my thesis, because I am analysing the two films Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) and Fighter (Arthy, 2007). I will be focusing on why non-white Danish women are represented as oppressed victims in these films, while also contributing how the films show them as such. Since my motive with analysing films is to investigate why non-white women in films are represented as victims in Danish films, a qualitative approach is ideal as it provides a more complex analysis of the films. Grounded theory method by Glaser and Strauss (1967) involves a strategy, which entails creating codes when watching the films, then creating categories that these films can be organised in to. There are three steps of coding: (1) open coding, which occurs in the beginning of the research process where I establish as many codes as possible to investigate what patterns emerge between the data. (2) axial coding, which after open coding, in this step I organise my codes further by drawing connection between the different types of codes and re-evaluate the codes that were established in the open coding process. (3) Selective coding occurs after done after I do initial research on the categories that I define in the axial coding process. In this step I also reach the core category that is defined through selective coding, which results in developing a completely new category that summarises all the other categories. Before reaching the first step of coding, the grounded theory method begins with theoretical sampling, which is the process of collecting data, which in this thesis begins on Danskefilm.dk, where I look for all films with non-white Danish character between the years of 2000-2019. After watching circa twenty films, I recognise a common pattern of how the non-white female characters are represented, which I seek to investigate further. I then select two films to investigate further which are Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) and Fighter (Arthy, 2007), I select these films because they also showcase the pattern of victimising the non-white female leads, which I seek to investigate further, therefore for further, I focus on finding data presenting the topic of representation of non-white Danish women in media. After the process of theoretical sampling, I enter the process of constant comparison, which in this thesis involves re-watching the two films and comparing the stories to existing finding regarding

representation of non-white Danish women in media. This is also when the process of axial coding begins, as I start to narrow down my coding and focus on specific events. When the focus is narrowed down to investigating why non-white Danish women are represented as oppressed, I can begin to explore theories that can be used as an analytical tool to answer my research question. Throughout the process of constant comparison, I also begin the process of creating categories that my codes can be organised into. These categories will be generated through not only my own preconceptions and hypothesis, but also from existing theories. The first theory that I will add will be Stuart Hall's (1997) theory of representation, which suggest that representation is constructed. With this perspective on representation, it leads me to the question of what affects representation of non-white Danish women. This focus group consists of two aspects that affect their representation, first is their ethnicity/race and second is their gender. With these consideration in mind, I establish that my core category for this thesis is Representation, and under this category falls two other categories which are race and gender. This means that for the first category, I will apply the theory of Racialisation by Murji and Solomos (2005) and Banton (2005). For the category of gender, I will be adding Post-Colonial Feminism by Chandra Mohanty (1988). My research reaches and end at the process of theoretical saturation, which is the point where there is no new data to identify which will change the overall theory that comes out of using grounded theory method.

My thesis will consist of three main scholars: the first that I present is Rikke Andreassen (2005) who is the author of the book *The Mass Media's Construction of Gender, race, sexuality and nationality: An analysis of the Danish news media's communication about visible minorities from 1971-2004.* The second scholar that I present is Peter Hervik, who is the author of *Mediernes muslimer: En antropologisk undersøgelse af mediernes dækning af religioner i Danmark* (2002), and *Racialization, racism, and anti-racism in the Nordic countries* (2019). The last scholar is Tess Skadegård Thorsen, who is the author of the chapter *Gendered Representation in Danish Film*, from the book *Women in the Film Industry* (2020). Thorsen has also collaborated with Rødje and written the chapter *(Re)Framing Racialization: Djurs Sommerland as a Battleground of (Anti)Racism*, from the book *Racialization, Racism, and Anti-Racism in the Nordic Countries* (2019*).* Another one of Thorsen's literature which I will use throughout this thesis is her work with Skadegård: *Monstrous (M)others—From paranoid to Reparative readings of othering Through Ascriptions of monstrosity* (2019). I choose to apply these scholars because of their research of racialisation and representation of non-white

minority groups with Middle Eastern background in Denmark Danish news media. Thus, they provide information on the current issues with representation in a Danish context.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

In this section I will present the theoretical framework that is applied to my MA thesis. I have identified the core category 'Representation' thus I will first and foremost present the theory of Representation by Stuart Hall, which is introduced in his book *Cultural Representation and signifying practices* (1997). His theory argues that representation is a construct. True representation of a group or individual does not exist and that representation of others can occur through the process of 'othering'. To establish what results in constructing representation of non-white Danish females with Middle Eastern background, I will refer to two categories that theorise the idea of how power dynamics equate to representation of minorities. The first category is 'race', here I will first and foremost present the theory of Racialisation (Murji and Solomos, 2005) (Banton, 2005) to present how constructs of race affects representation. Race alone does not always explain why someone is constructed in a certain way. Therefore, I must also be investigating the category of 'gender'. Gender determines the role you are given, it determines whether you presented as the oppressor or the oppressed, therefore I will introduce Post-colonial Feminism by Mohanty (1988). Post-colonial Feminism also reflects on how the West have power over construction of non-Western, however, this theory focuses more on female representation. I have chosen to include these theories as they each reflect on construction of 'other', and when I mix these theories together, I get a sense of how representation is affected by racialisation and gender constructs.

3.1. Representation

Stuart Hall introduces Representation Theory in his book *Cultural Representation and signifying practices* (1997), in this he explains the interplay which exists between meaning, language, culture, and representation, and argues that they work within a system of representation (p. 15). The essence of representation theory by Stuart Hall (1997), is that true representation of people does not exist, but people can still be represented in many ways by

those who want to create a fixed meaning or understanding (p. 15). Meaning is created through construction of representation by what is present, absent and differences. According to Hall (1997), representation is a reveal of viewpoints and bias of creators rather than a view of reality, which refers to how there is no true representation of reality (p. 16). Through representation in films, it involves the viewers in creating their own meaning and understanding of individuals or groups which they gather through what they are shown or told (p. 17).

According to Hall (1997), representation can be broken down into two system, the first system is called conceptual map, which is a set of objects, people and events are correlated with sets of concepts or mental representations which individuals carry mentally (p. 17). Conceptual maps are a tool to understand the world in a comprehensive and meaningful way (p. 17). Conceptual maps do not happen coincidentally or naturally, it occurs through interpretations and conceptions of the world, and people within the same culture happen to share the same conceptual maps, because they gain the same interpretations and conceptions through society. This is where culture is relevant as people build up culture through our shared meanings and construct the world accordingly: "*That is indeed what it means when we say we 'belong to the same culture'. Because we interpret the world in roughly similar ways, we are able to build up a shared of meanings and thus construct a social world which we inhabit together*" (Hall, 1997, p. 18). Cultures gain the same meanings through shared mediums that help represent and exchange them*: "Our shared conceptual map must be translated into common language, so that we can correlate our concepts and ideas with certain written words, spoken sounds or visual images"* (Hall, 1997, p. 18). Individuals with different conceptual maps interpret the world differently and their interpretations of the world differs as well, therefore it can be impossible to share thoughts or express ideas about the world to each other (p. 18). Hall (1997) defines language in a broad and inclusive sense, language refers to both verbal and non-verbal communication, which can be denoted to signs (p. 18). A language that consists of a similar system of signs enables translation of thoughts into verbal communication, sounds or images, which according to Hall (1997) operate as *"a language, to express meanings and communicate thoughts to other people"* (p. 18).

The first system of representation allows us to construct meaningful sense of the world while the second system works as a method to translate language through signs (p. 19). This process that links concept from the first system and language from the second is what Hall (1997) defines as representation. Hall (1997) uses a constructionist approach to language; meaning is

constructed by social actors through a representational system that consists of concepts and signs (p. 24). When meaning is constructed by actors in the social world, it means that representation is also a constructed phenomenon, thus race and stereotypes that often appear in in regard of representation of 'others', is a social construct established to categorise individuals into groups. Hall (1997) argues that the process of othering, it comes from the 'us' versus 'them' discourse, in which 'them' are characterised with negative attributes, to set them apart from the 'us' which is then represented as better (p. 236). In terms of 'othering', He argues that meaning of others cannot exist if it is not in opposition to Whiteness. Hall (1997) quotes Douglas (1966) who states that: "*social groups impose meaning on their world by ordering and organizing things into classificatory systems*" (as cited in Hall, 1997, p. 236). In this context it means, that Western Europe impose meaning on others and classify them into systems of representation to gain meaning of their own world. A defining concept of representation is 'power', those in power determine how to represent others (Hall, 1997, p. 259). Those in power try to 'fix' representation of others into a certain meaning. Therefore, those who are in power decide on the context of representation.

3.2. Racialisation

According to Murji and Solomos (2005) racialisation is a widely used term to discuss racial and ethnic relations and to analyse whole institutions such as "*the police, educational or legal systems, or entire religions, nations and countries*" (p. 1). Racialisation is in general a core concept in analysing racial phenomena, in which ideas about race are constructed (p. 1). Murji and Solomos (2005) describe Racialisation as *"the processes by which ideas about race are constructed, come to be regarded as meaningful, and are acted upon"* (p. 1). The concept of Racialisation is a part of critical race theory to understand the process in which racial meanings are constructed and attached to something that is not race-related. The theory of Racialisation is useful for describing the process in which meanings are attached to particular issues, which are often treated as social problems, in these cases race is presented as the key reason for how the issue is defined and understood (p. 3). In reality the issues that are racialised has no relation to race: "*The Notion of racialization commonly draws attention to the constructed nature of racial categories and race-thinking processes, and contains a more or less explicit instance that race is not real, at least in a biological sense* (p. 5). The theory of Racialisation provides

focus on the process of constructing race categories, which also underscores how construction and representation of racial categories reinforce and strengthen them (p. 5).

Michael Banton (2005) argues that racial categories are invented by Anglo-Saxon Protestants in the West and has been spread to wherever it had influence, meaning that the West are the culprits for current notions of race (p. 58). To this he provides the argument that in most parts of the modern world, such as Asian countries do not organise their social lives by refencing to distinct racial categories (p. 58). Therefore, they do not treat people accordingly to their race but rather accordingly to their skin colour (p. 58). Banton uses this example to argue how race is a social construction, where phenotypical differences, such as skin colour, construct categories like black, white, brown etc. However, there is no biological justification to create distinction between races (p. 59).

Language plays a significant part in racialisation, if the language of race is not present when discussing and issue or topic, then it is not racialised, however racialisation is not always visible, as it can present itself through coded language, where race itself is not always mentioned as the central issue (p. 62). It is important to notice that the process of racialisation is not always visible rather the process takes place throughout society and in discourse in multiple stages in both visible and invisible ways (p. 62).

Racialisation theory presents identity as a construct, which affects the identity of 'others' as well as national identity. In this the state plays an important part in constructing the image on both national identity and minority groups such as migrants, which happens when the process of racialisation is used for political agenda: "*It would be surprising were not state institutions to some degree involved in the development of the relations between migrants and the majority population*" (Banton, 2005, p. 63). When topics such as immigration are racialised it is because either the politician or the public in general want more immigration control to protect the biological character of the nation state (p. 63). Banton's arguments of the construction of race and how it is used politically to strengthen the national identity, identifies that the idea and construction of race, this construction categorises individuals into groups based on non-race related ideas of others.

The fault in Banton's (2005) theory in relation to my thesis, is that he determines racialisation as a process that happens consciously by politicians to achieve national agenda. But as I am analysing films, the concept of racialisation for a political agenda, is not something I conclude,

as I do not see these films (Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) and Fighter (Arthy, 2007)) as political motivators for immigration-laws. However, this theory is still useful, as I can investigate how films either consciously or unconsciously reflect racialised ideas of otherness.

3.3. Post-colonial Feminism

Post-colonial feminism is a combination of post-colonial critiques of Western representation of others, and feminist concerns of gender, race, ethnicity, and class (Ozkazanc-Pan, 2012, p. 574). It argues that neither feminist theory nor post-colonial theory is inclusive of non-Western women, which is why this theory was established to examines representation of women in colonial and post-colonial literature, and challenge assumptions of women in both literature and society (p. 574). Post-colonial Feminism challenges Western ethnocentricity and critiques mainstream post-colonial theory as it is a male-centred approach that excludes the concerns of women and fails to address women from post-colonial areas, which has resulted in obliterating the role of women for independence while misrepresenting them in national discourse (Tyagi, 2014, p. 46). As Post-colonial theory focuses on the discourse that aims at misrepresenting non-Western men as inferior, the Post-colonial Feminist theory suggest that non-Western women suffer from double colonisation, as she simultaneously experiences oppression from the patriarchy and colonialism: *"She has to resist the control of colonial power not only as a colonized subject, but also as a woman. In this oppression, her colonized brother is no longer her accomplice, but her oppressor"* (Tyagi, 2014, p. 46).

The focus of post-colonial feminism is women from past colonial regions, and it critiques the construction of non-Western women in Western societies and suggests that Western feminists are also culprits in misrepresentation of "Third World Women" as homogenous object/subjects (Ozkazanc-Pan, 2012, p. 574). Post-colonial feminist theory is primarily concerned with the representation of women of colour in both post-colonial countries and in Western countries, it critiques the construction of non-Western women in Western societies and argues that Western feminists are also culprits in misrepresentation of "Third World Women" as homogenous object/subjects (p. 574). Thus, this theory suggests that women from post-colonial countries *"suffers at the hand of Western feminists from the colonizer countries who misrepresent their colonized counterparts by imposing silence on their racial, cultural, social, and political specificities, and in so doing, act as potential oppressors of their "sisters" "*, which is because

Western women tend to speak for non-Western women, which results in misrepresentation (Tyagi, 2014, p. 46).

Post-colonial feminist theorist Chandra Talpade Mohanty expresses in her essay *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* (1988), the tendency that Western feminists put all women from a third world country into a collective category of 'other' (p. 51). Mohanty's (1988) theory argues that current literature and representation of non-Western women reflects homogenous constructions of other, which is rooted in global hegemony of Western scholarship, meaning the production, publication, distribution, and consumption of information and ideas (p. 55). Her concept can be applied to analysing representation as she argues that Western hegemony over literature regarding non-Western countries is dominating non-Western representation (p. 55). Mohanty (1988) also introduces the concept of "third world difference" which is "*the stable, ahistorical something that apparently oppresses most if not all women in these countries*" (p. 54). She argues that it comes from a single monolithic notion of patriarchy, which disregards the complexities that characterises the lives of women in non-Western countries (p. 54). This leads to Mohanty's (1988) claim that Western feminism uses three main analytical principles regarding construction of the third world. First is the assumption that women, regardless of class, ethnic or racial location, are already a coherent group with identical interests and desires, which expands universally and cross-culturally (p. 55). The second principle is the lack of criticism of these presumptions of women (p. 55). The third principle implies that there is a model of power and struggle which is relying on political presuppositions which causes the methodologies and analytical strategies that constructs the idea of third-word women (p. 56). The principles of a women as a homogenous group, lacks understanding of how class, ethnic or racial location also factors into the idea of being a woman, and with absence of these factors as well as critical perspective of feminist and post-colonial methodology, a "*homogenous notion of the oppression of women as a group is assumed, which in turn, produces the image of an "average third world woman*" (p. 56). Western feminism and post-colonial literature constructs women from third-world countries as being constrictive by her family, sex, and traditions, moreover she is domesticated, uneducated and victimised: "*This average third world woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually conspracticeed) and her being "third world" (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimised, etc.)*" (p. 56). In comparison Western women are

defined as the opposite of non-Western women, which brings in the element of Orientalism. Western women are constructed as "*educated, as modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities, and the freedom to make their own decisions*" (p. 56). This contrast stems from Western women having the privilege of overseeing their representation.

This brings me to Mohanty's (1988) final points of arguments, she claims that the homogenous approach to non-Western women is an act of colonialism, which she defines as: "*relation of structural domination, and a suppression (…) of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question*" (p. 57*)*. She introduces five ways in which Western scholars apply a homogenous perspective when analysing non-Western women:

1. **Women as victims on male violence**

The oppression and victimisation of non-Western women become a homogenous issue in which portrays all non-Western women as sexually controlled by men, moreover they construct a narrative that men's goal is to assure female dependency and subservience (p. 57). Physical violence against women, such as rape, sexual assault, excision, infibulation, etc. is then carried out with astonishing consensus among men in the world. Here women are defined consistently as victims of male control (p. 57). This approach to understanding non-Western women defines women as archetypal victims and freezes them into object-who-defend-themselves, whereas men become subjects-who-perpetrate-violence (p. 57). It also puts society into two categories: the powerless (women) and the powerful (men) (p. 57). Mohanty (1988) argues that the problem with this approach is that it lacks more depth into theorising male violence, it is a phenomenon that must be theorised and interpreted within every society with historical and political factors applied, rather than perceiving it on a universal scale (p. 57)

2. **Women as universal dependents**

In this category Mohanty (1988) challenges literature which constructs the notion that all women are universally dependent on each other due to their sex, moreover literature tends to group non-Western women into positions of powerlessness (p. 58). She argues that scholars tend to construct dependency relationships based on race, sex and class, and that it is instead the common context of political struggle against class, race, gender and imperialist hierarchies

that may constitute third-world women as a strategic group at this historical juncture (p. 59). Thus, all women cannot be grouped together due to their gender, in terms of representation of a group, all women cannot be represented as a collective group as they have different experiences and beliefs.

3. Married women as victims of colonial process

In the portrayal of marriage in non-Western countries, women getting married are described as an exchange between men due to marriage rituals where the groom must exchange something to be allowed to marry a woman (p. 60). Thus, women are constructed as victims of colonial processes, as they are regarded as objects for exchange. The problem of this assumption, according to Mohanty (1988), is that "*it is to treat the initiation as a ritual with no political implications or effects. It is to assume that in merely describing the structure of the marriage contract, the situation of the woman is exposed*" (p. 60). Women are then assumed to be sexual-political subjects of men prior to entry into marital structure (p. 61).

4. Women and familial system

This category is addresses how literature about non-Western women assume that women are constructed to fit into a family, most often this is a patriarchal family structure, which also contributes to structuring non-Western women as an oppressed group in these societies (p. 61). Meaning there are assumptions that non-Western families have established a patriarchal family structure, and women in this structure are automatically oppressed, but Mohanty (1988) argues that to link female oppression to the patriarchal structure as the reason for socioeconomic status of women is to assume that assume that women are sexual-political subjects prior to their entry into the family (p. 61). In this regard literature links the patriarchal family structure to Middle Eastern and Muslim regions (p. 61). Literature fails to address the "*particular historical, material, and ideological power structures that construct*" visions of women in Middle Eastern and Muslim societies (p. 61). Moreover, this idea assumes that all women regardless of class and cultural differences, are affected by this system, and there is no regard for "*specific practices within the family which constitute a woman as a mother, wife, sister, etc*". (p. 61)

5. Women and religious ideologies

According to Mohanty (1988), a state's religious ideology contributes to the construction of non-Western women's struggles. Religion is a factor that affects women; however, one should

not assume that all women are victims of religious ideology, regardless of the religion they are in (p. 62). Literature about non-Western women reduces Islam to a set of ideas that inherently favour power of men and powerlessness of women (p. 62). However, as Mohanty (1988) has states with the other categories, about constructing narratives of non-Western women, more than one aspect must be analysed. By structuring women as victims of religious ideology then women are assumed to be a victim due to religion rather than any other economic or social factors (p. 62).

Overall Mohanty's (1988) main arguments is that women cannot be categorised as a homogenous group, context matters, meaning that social-, economic-, class-, religious-, cultural-, and other factors must be taken into consideration before constructing a narrative of non-Western women, ignoring these factors can lead to misrepresentation. This theory by Mohanty (1988) is useful for my thesis, as I will use it as a tool, to see whether the characters from the films fall into these assumptions that Mohanty (1988) has lined up. This theory is added as it provides a focus on racialisation of gender, and how non-Western women are racialised in literature. This theory serves as tool for my analysis to see whether the non-white Danish characters with Middle Eastern background in the two films Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) and Fighter (Arthy, 2007) fall into the five ways which Mohanty (1988) argues that Western literature tends to do. Her theory draws attention to power structure, as it describes how Western feminists and Western literature about non-Western are in some ways controlling literature, thus they are in power of construction of the other. These constructions may not be rooted in consciously portraying women as victims to tell some greater narrative about the evil men of non-Western countries, but they do apply the stereotypical perspective of non-Western women being victims.

3.5. Conclusion of Theory

The theory of Representation by Stuart Hall (1997) is essential as it sets up the notion that representation is a construction, meaning it is not rooted in reality. With this I can get more focused on what causes representation of non-white Danish women with Middle Eastern Background, moreover, as I focus on representation of minorities in a Danish context. As my categories are 'race' and 'gender', the theories that I provide, will serve as theoretical tools that

can help me navigate how a character can be interpreted as a victim. The first category is 'race', here I will first and foremost present the theory of Racialisation by Murji and Solomos (2005) who present Racialisation as a process in which ideas about race are constructed, racial meanings is constructed and attached to something that is not race-related (p. 1). This theory is useful to when describing the process in which racial meanings are attached to issues, which are often treated as social problems (p. 3). I will also refer to Michael Banton's (2005) theory of Racialisation, in which he presents the argument that racial categories are based on phenotypical differences (p. 59). Banton (2005) uses this example to argue that race is a social construct, where phenotypical differences, such as skin colour and other physical appearances categorises individuals into groups. However, there is no biological justification to create distinction between races (p. 59). Racialisation affects the identity of 'others' as well as national identity, the state plays an important part in constructing the image on both national identity and minority groups such as migrants, who tend to be racialised my politics for political agenda (p. 63). Hall (1997) suggests that the construction of people from non-Western countries is established through a discourse of 'othering'. The construction of othering, which refers to a process where an individual or group are attributed with negative characteristics to set them apart from 'us'. It establishes an 'us' versus 'them' narrative, where the 'us' is presented as more developed and the 'them' is dehumanised (p. 236). This notion of 'us' versus 'them' is used to idealise the 'us' as better than others. From this I gather that Middle Eastern representation in Denmark is established through this lens, which is created to reflect how the West is better than the others. As the theories of Racialisation lacks a focus on gender, and how gender influences representation, I will use Post-Colonial Feminism, to present a theory of how women are presented in films. Mohanty (1988) argues that current literature and representation of non-Western women reflects homogenous constructions of other, which is rooted in global hegemony of Western scholarship (p. 55). The West has hegemony over literature regarding non-Western women, which is dominating non-Western representation (p. 55). As I am focused on representation of non-White Danish women with Middle Eastern background in Danish films, I can include this theory to see whether it is a Danish perspective that constructs these representations. Mohanty (1988) brings forth five ways in which Western scholars apply a homogenous perspective when analysing women: women as victims of male violence, women as universal dependent, married women as victims of colonial process, women and family systems, and women and religious ideologies. By using Mohanty's theory I can provide theoretical reasoning for whether the cause of representation of non-white Danish women with

Middle Eastern background is related to Western hegemony of literature and assumptions of 'others' and whether these assumptions stem from racialised narratives that derive from an 'us' versus 'them' discourse.

4.0. Analysis

In my analysis I will be analysing the two films Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) and Fighter (Arthy, 2007) to answer in which ways oppression is applied to the two characters Fatima and Aicha. Moreover I will be answering, in which ways they can/cannot be considered oppressed. The film Fighter (Arthy, 2007) is a youth film about with a focus on interrational lo,ve whereas Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bocin, 2002) is a children's film about friendship. Even though the two films are two different genres with two different themes, they also present the same plot point regarding non-white Danish characters with Middle Eastern background.

4.1. The non-white Danish female with Middle Eastern background as more restricted compared to her Danish peers.

In this section of the analysis, I will be analysing how the film portrayed non-white Danish females with Middle Eastern background as oppressed by making a comparison of how much her otherness differs from whiteness. Both films accentuate the difference between non-white females with Middle Eastern background and ethnic white females. The purpose of this part is to present how the films emphasize the stereotype of non-white women with Middle Eastern background as oppressed, by showing how much they differ from ethnic-white peers.

There are clear phenotypical differences between Fatima and her friends Mia in the film Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002). Mia is a blond, blue eyed and pale girl, whereas Fatima has brown hair, brown eyes and darker skin. In the film Fighter (Arthy, 2007) there is also a clear distinction between Aicha and Sofie, where Aicha has brown skin, dark eyes and long brown hair, Sofie has blue eyes, light skin and short blond curls. It is through these phenotypical differences that create racialised categories (Banton, 2005, p. 59), meaning when seeing the struggles that Fatima and Aicha go through, it becomes related to her race (Murji and Solomos, 2005, p. 5), as the viewer is then presented with how their ethnic-Danish peers does not face

the same issues as Fatima and Aicha. Moreover, their ethnic-Danish peers consistently show confusion about their way of life, which shows that their life is so different and confusing compared to Danishness. The film Kald Mig Bare Aksel (2002), appears as an introduction to the Arabic culture, there is a heavy focus on Fatima, whose life is often distinguished by what she is not allowed to do compared to her ethnic Danish friends Mia and Aksel. Representation of Fatima's culture is constructed through differences between her culture and Mia and Aksel's culture, which Hall (1997) suggest is how meaning of others is constructed (p. 15). When Fatima's life is represented in regard to its difference to the life of her ethnic-Danish peers it provides an 'us' versus 'them' narrative, that amplifies the cultural differences (p. 236). When Fatima's situation is compared to her ethnic-Danish friends, it does present Fatima as more victimised than them, which Mohanty (1988) presents as a typical depiction of non-Western women which ends up only focusing on race as a way to provide meaning of others (p. 54). Both Mia and Aksel are allowed to do more than Fatima, they are also not punished for singing in public and they are never seriously threatened that their liberation will be restricted. The process of othering happens when it tries to explain Fatima's culture or way of life, which results in representing Fatima as part of a homogenous culture, where girls are allowed to do less. The film does manage to racialize issues that may not have a connotation to race, however this does not essentially victimise Fatima, rather she is individualised from other Arabic girls, because she can still go to the youth club after her mother complained about it, and she is forgiven by her family at the end.

The film Fighter (Arthy, 2007) is also constructing an 'us' versus 'them' narrative where Aicha's life is shown as being more oppressive than her ethnic Danish peers. Viewers experience Aicha's life and are shown that she struggles with oppressive actions from her family, but on the other side viewers are introduced to Sofie, who is very different from Aicha. Sofie can practice kung-fu without her mother getting involved, she signs up for the competition without any regard for whether her mother will allow her, and she has her sexual liberty. These are all actions that Aicha must think twice about before doing. When Aicha is sitting with a group of ethnic-Danish girls, the difference between Aicha and their life is highlighted (Arthy, 2007, 01.01.07). As the topic of romance and sex comes up, the girls talk comfortably about how they have sex with persons they do not know, and then we hear from Aicha, which says that she does not understand how persons can have intimate relationships before getting married (Arthy, 2007, 01.02.21). As this scene shows two very different attitudes

about sex, it is the phenotypical differences that explain these attitudes, as the viewer is not given any other reason as to why any of these girls have these opinions, which then results in racializing sex before marriage. As Sofie and her friends are introduced, the film shows that they lack understanding of why Aicha cannot date who she pleases. It does present the notion of ethnic-Danish women as more liberated, as they do not have to struggle with these issues, and they can freely engage in sexual encounters without their parents' interference.

The stereotype of oppression is reconstructed as the non-white Danish girls with Middle Eastern background are represented as more oppressed than their peers. In this matter the films are similar, as her otherness is emphasized by how oppressed she is compared to whiteness. However, Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) does present that even though the two characters Fatima and Mia differ much in their appearances and way of life, it shows that Mia still understands her friend and they can be close. Whereas Aicha is not seen with Sofie after the scene where Sofie and her friends are drinking. Rather, Aicha seemed so uncomfortable in that situation, that it seems their difference in lifestyle does make them too different to be close.

4.2. The patriarchal family as strict guardians who oppress their daughters and sisters

In this section I seek to answer how oppression is applied to the non-Danish female because of her being structured into a patriarchal household. The household of the non-white Danish female with Middle Eastern background is presented in both films as the culprit of her restrictions, as it is the reconstruction of a Middle Eastern family as patriarchal that results in the beliefs of what a woman's role is. Mohanty (1988) argues that the West tend to present women as victims due to a notion of patriarchy, which disregards the complexities that characterises the lives of women in non-Western countries (p. 54). Patriarchy is then linked to being the sole reason for non-Western women's suffering. Fatima and Aicha's family structure can be regarded as a patriarchal family structure as their father is the head of the household, he is the one determining the rules and the rest of the family must appeal to him or ask him for permission.

The two films do show some differences in the families, even though Fatima's father is the head of the household, it is the mother who is the strictest parent. In one instance, Fatima's mother wants to forbid Fatima to participate in the competition, but she is begging her husband

to prohibit Fatima rather than doing so herself. This is interesting, as the mother is often portrayed as being dominating and overbearing, she has much to say, however she still needs to ask her husband to make final decisions, as when she learns that Fatima is writing a love song for the youth club's talent competition (Bovin, 2002, 00.23.50). I notice that Fatima is not subjected to any violence by men, nor is she racialised as a victim of male control, rather it is Fatima's mother who is controlling, as she is the one who does not want Fatima do go to the youth club, and she is the one who tries to convince her husband, to not let Fatima go. Instead, she rather has her daughter at home to do household chores and take care of her little brother. When it is revealed to her mother, that Fatima is going to sing on stage at her youth's clubs talent competition, her mother is the one who considers it inappropriate for girls to sing on stage (Bovin, 2002, 00.22.50).

Moreover, non-white Danish girls in this context with Arabic background, are exposed as homogenous in their suffering as they are generally restricted. Fatima's father and older brother are mainly very supportive of her and want her to participate in the youth club competition, which stands as opposite of the racialised idea that men are the controller or the oppressors (Mohanty, 1988, p. 57). Her father is represented as being very calm, and her older brother is considered a romantic, which is shown by the love letter he sends to his girlfriend, which again shows that this film does not racialize the men in Fatima's life as oppressors or as controlling.

However, Fatima is at points subjected to control by her male family members, as her brother threatens that her freedom will be taken away, when he sees her sing in public: "*you are coming home to mom and dad. You know they won't be happy about this*" (Bovin, 2002, 00.33.20). Additionally, even though her father is considered the one who is supportive of Fatima, ultimately, he is the one giving her house-arrest (Bovin, 2002, 00.34.37). When she escapes from her home, with help from her friend and main character Aksel, Fatima's older brother and Father are the ones who drive to the youth club's competition to collect her and to bring her back to the home for further punishment. When they see her perform on stage, they are again turned into supportive characters, who celebrate her actions (Bovin, 2002, 01.14.17). The film does not necessarily present this family structure as negative, or that it is necessarily the patriarchal family structure that leads to Fatima being restricted from certain actions. The films manage to not represent Fatima as oppressed in terms of being a victim to patriarchy. Moreover, rather than constructing her family as oppressors, viewers feel compassion for Fatima's father, as he plays with them (Bovin, 2002, 00.10.11), he supports Fatima's desire to be in the youth

competition (Bovin, 2002, 00.24.46), and he helps Aksel to food and shelter when he is stuck outside in the rain (00.20.06). Moreover, when Aksel wakes up on Fatima's couch (Bovin, 2002, 00.22.24), her family is very inviting and friendly towards him. Fatima's family is presented as more complex than just a structure that tries to construct women to fit into it (Mohanty, 1988, 61). The mother and father are more nuanced than being victims or victimisers, they are each presented as being both supportive and strict with Fatima. Although there are moments when Fatima is shown as being extremely dissatisfied as when she is ordered to do the laundry while she is writing a song (Bovin, 2002, 00.13.50), it does not necessarily mean that Fatima is dissatisfied with her role in the household, thus she is not constructed to fit into the patriarchal structure. There is also a moment where Fatima and her mother are having a good and heartfelt time while doing laundry together (Bovin, 2002, 00.40.54).

When seeing how Fatima's family is compared to Aksel's family, I do notice some stark differences in their family, which is how the patriarchal family structure becomes racialised, as it is though the construct of 'us' verses 'them' narrative (Hall, 1997, p. 236), where it is the phenotypical differences such as skin colour (Banton, 2005, p. 59), that distinguishes Fatima's family from Aksel or Mia's family, which is present in the construction of mothers. Aksel's mother is a single mother, who listens to her children, even when Aksel, declares that he wants to convert to Islam, she considers it as a child going through a phase, but she still supports his decision (Bovin, 2002, 00.05.09). While Aksel's mother is progressive, peaceful, head of the household, and liberating, Fatima's mother is the binary opposite, as she shows an aggressive demeanour when she tells Fatima that she cannot participate in the competition (Bovin, 2002, 00.23.50), and when she tells Fatima to do the laundry (Bovin, 2002, 00.13.50). Another distinction that shows the cultural differences of Arabic way of life and Danishness happens regarding Mia's family as a support system. Mia's parents and especially her mother is looking forward to seeing her perform (Bovin, 2002, 00.12.20), whereas Fatima's mother is outraged when she learns about the youth club's competition (00.23.50). The lack of support from her mother becomes a racial issue, as it is presented that she cannot perform because she is Arabic.

In Fighter (Arthy, 2007) a contrast of the two ethnicities does also strengthen the reconstruction of non-white families being more oppressive than ethnic-Danish families. Aicha's family is constructed with a patriarchal family structure. The father is the head of the household and next is her brother, as he also determines what Aicha can do. This reflects Mohanty's (1988) argument that patriarchal family systems are racialised as a non-Western issue, which results

in female oppression (p. 61). This perspective of non-Western families is visible in Fighter (Arthy, 2007), as her father's decisions does cause suffering to Aicha, because she is refrained from participating in kung-fu. Aicha's father is the one making the final decisions, however her mother does still have influence. Such as, when she protects her daughter from verbal abuse from her father (Arthy, 2007, 00.17.26), and when she allows Aicha back in the home after she ran away (Arthy, 2007, 01.05.43). But when Aicha's father has made up his mind, her mother is not allowed to intervene, such as when Aicha asks her mother for help and her father intervenes by yelling: "*you have humiliated our family, you have ruined your brother's life. From now on we will never help you!*" (Arthy, 2007, 00.55.44). Aicha is someone who does not fit into her family, as she must live a double life to be able to satisfy her own needs. This presents Mohanty's (1988) argument that Western literature do presume that women are constructed to fit into a family (p. 61). This construction happens to Aicha, through the patriarchal family, as it relies on a system of a good reputation and honour. This suppresses Aicha, because going to a mix gender team will damage their reputation. So Aicha must adhere to her family and their needs rather than her own.

This film does contain one instance of violence, which is when Aicha's father learns that she is failing Gymnasium, leading him to hitting her (Arthy, 2007, 01.12.40). In many instances her father shows aggressive behaviour such as throwing objects (Arthy, 2007, 00.55.44), and being demeaning when talking to his daughter: "*You embarrass me with that eye*" (Arthy, 2007, 00.17.20), "*who will love a girl like you? I get it, you will never become anything*" (Arthy, 2007, 01.12.00). Her father shows many signs of control from the moment he tells her that she is not allowed to practice kung-fu anymore (Arthy, 2007, 00.07.23). His actions portray male dominance over Aicha, which is rooted in him wanting her to stay home and study to become a doctor, because his family's pride relies on her behaving subservient. Throughout the film, Aicha consistently becomes an object-who-defend-herself (Mohanty, 1988, p. 57) towards her father, to reason her actions and achieve a good relationship with her father. She steps up towards her father twice. First time is when he hits her and she acknowledge his words and call herself useless (Arthy, 2007, 01.12.40). The second time is at the end of the film. Their relationship gets worse throughout the film, but the films last scene is Aicha returning home after the kung-fu championship to reassure her father that their relationship will improve one day (Arthy, 2007, 01.30.40). Although her father is oppressive of Aicha, as he is demeaning and controlling, the film still presents the father as loving. The viewer learns that the father has

been working hard at a factory for several years, which has been physically and emotionally exhausting, however, he did it to support his children, which he then argues he love and are proud of (Arthy, 2007, 00.33.53). When Aicha tells her father that their relationship will get better, he holds her hand while crying (Arthy, 2007, 01.32.12), showing that even though he is disappointed and angry with his daughter, he too wants to rebuild their relationship too.

Another male that is controlling, is her brother Ali. He shows signs of control as he threatens Aicha to behave, so that it will not affect his engagement to Yasmin. When Aicha practices kung-fu at her club for the first time, she receives a black eye, which she excuses as being hit by a door. Her brother knows that she received that black eye from kung-fu, which leads him to threaten her to behave: "*From now on you do what you are told. I am so tired of going around being your nanny. When I move out, you better behave properly and take care of your school. You better not come here and ruin my engagement*" (Arthy, 2007, 00.19.36). The brother was portrayed as being nice and supportive of her passion for kung-fu in the beginning, but when she enters a mixed gender team, she does not get any support from her family. Another male that is presenting control over Aicha, is a guy named Omar, who knows the family. The first time the viewer is presented to Ali, we learn that he has misogynistic tendencies, as he refuses to fight Aicha at the kung-fu club, because she is female (Arthy, 2007, 00.38.00). However, he does accept fighting other males. By refusing to fight Aicha, he shows that he considers her a weaker sex and not an opponent. Omar becomes a big obstacle to Aicha, as she learns that he is well-known within their community. At Aicha's brother's engagement party, she is again faced with Omar, who proceeds to whisper to her "*I have met your father, does he know you practice at the club, and what about Ali?* (Arthy, 2007, 00.48.58). This is a threat to reveal Aicha's secret. It becomes obvious that Aicha's spare time activities are more related to the presence of men at the club, rather than just her passion for kung-fu, as Omar states: "*you practice at a club with a lot of guys, what's wrong with you? And you're having sex with Emil*" (Arthy, 2007, 00.49.42). Omar proceeds to call Aicha cheap, which is when a kung-fu fight escalates between them (Arthy, 2007, 00.52.00), and Aicha is again an object-who-defend-herself. Omar's attitude towards Aicha changes at the climax of the film, which is when Omar accepts Aicha as an opponent at the kung-fu championship and fights her (Arthy, 2007, 01.25.14). The film lacks context as to why Omar changed his mind regarding Aicha, however, it is a moment that shows that Omar considers Aicha an equal.

The film shows that the main issue with Aicha being in the kung-fu club, is that it is a mixed gender team. Thus, she is in the presence of men: "*a woman does not fight, especially not with men (…) what will people say of you messing around with other men?*" (Arthy, 2007, 00.07.58). The film presents that Aicha's family is focused on controlling Aicha's sexuality, which Mohanty (1988) argues is a trait of Western construction of non-Western women, mainly the aspect of female sexuality of non-white women are controlled by men, and that non-Western culture is preserved with the notion of controlling their sexuality through dependency and subservience (p. 57). As the patriarchal family structure is holding Aicha back, it does lead to her oppression, thus Aicha is represented as being a victim of oppression. In the end she receives support from her brother, Ali, as well. This is shown when Aicha comforts him after he finds out about Yasmin's pregnancy (Arthy, 2007, 01.15.02). The film does not only show Aicha's family structure as a cause of her suffering, but also as a big support system. Her father is shown as a man who has been through back-breaking work to support his family (Arthy, 2007, 00.33.53), and in the last scene with him, we see his tears as he also suffers from his current relationship with his daughter (Arthy, 2007, 01.32.12). As the film ends with her family being on the path to restoring from the division that has grown throughout the film, and Aicha is jumping through the streets due to happiness, showing that in the end she is happy. The film strays away from mentioning whether Aicha's family structure is due to their culture, religion, history, or other contextual matters, we then left with the notion that it is because of her ethnicity that her family is structured in this manner, which results in oppression of Aicha. Fighter (Arthy, 2007) does construct that women of the same culture are universally dependent, that implies that Yasmin is dependent on Aicha, because if Aicha's reputation becomes tarnished, Yasmin's father will not allow Yasmin to marry Ali. They are in a position of powerlessness as it is the men who decide what they can and cannot do, and who they can be with or marry. Aicha is also someone who knows Yasmin's secret, which is that she meets Ali in secrecy and that they have a sexual relationship (Arthy, 2007, 00.06.00). As Mohanty (1988) argues about the topic of women being presented as universally dependent, scholars tens to construct dependency relationships based on race, sex, and class (p. 58). Here it is their background that connects these women and make them dependent on each other. By showing how Aicha and Yasmin are connected through their struggles of being controlled by their family, the film manages to show that oppression of women is a result of a patriarchal family.

The stereotype of oppression is applied to Aicha and Fatima as they are both presented as subjects of oppression due to their family's beliefs. Aicha's family is shown as being definite oppressors, as the males in her household and Yasmin's are the ones in control of the girls' sexual liberty, and the mothers in these films are more submissive and obedient to their husband. Here Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) differs as Fatima's family has a more complex dynamic, where even though the father is the head of the household, he is not necessarily using this power to be oppressive.

4.3. cultural and religious practices lead to oppression of girls

The point of this section is to present how cultural and religious practices are presented as being the cause of oppression. The family is presented as being the ones subjecting the control that leads to oppression, but their actions are presented as being due to religious or cultural reasons. The difference in the two films, is that Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) showcases that religion is the cause of oppression, whereas Fighter (Arthy, 2007) presents that this is a cultural issue.

The aspect of cultural difference becomes visible at several instances in Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2007) such as when Fatima mimics her mother saying "*there are a lot of Arabic girls who are not allowed to*" (Bovin, 2002, 00.24.40). This part presents racialised assumptions others. As Banton (2005) argues race is constructed as the central issue (p. 59), so when mentioning that Arabic girls cannot go to youth clubs, it presents the presumption that Arabic girls are restricted in general. When they discuss why the topic of petting dogs (00.25.18). Mia is refrained from it due to her mother's allergy, whereas Fatima says: "*because I am a Muslim*" (Bovin, 2002, 00.25.20). When the film is tagged with 'cultural differences' it means it is constructing ideas about race that may not be race-related or related to Arabic culture (Murji and Solomos, 2005, p. 1). Petting a dog, or not being allowed to go to a youth club does not necessarily have to be related to Fatima's ethnicity, but this film manage to reinforce racial constructions, by adding reasons such as being a Muslim (Bovin, 2002, 00.25.20) or being an Arabic (Bovin, 2002, 00.24.40) to explain why Fatima cannot do the same as her peers. According to Mohanty (1988), religion contributes to the construction of non-Western women as victims of oppression (p. 62). In the film Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002), religion is a big factor, as the main plot is about Aksel wanting to convert to Islam, and how he regards

Islam as a gangster culture of wearing loose pants and chain necklaces (Bovin, 2002, 00.08.11). Thus, the film presents itself as an explanation of what Islam is. When the main protagonists learn who Allah is (Bovin, 2002, 00.32.38), how to pray (Bovin, 2002, 00.47.11), and what is means to me a Muslim, the viewer is also introduced to this religion in a more objective manner. The film does not portray Islam as antagonistic but is more introductive to the topic in a way that is understandable to children, which is because Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) is a children's film. The film lacks distinction in what is Islamic culture and what is Arabic culture. But even though the film is presenting Islam in this manner, is still presents Islam as the cause of Fatima's oppression, as it is due to religion that she is not allowed to be around a dog, but she is, and it results in her not being allowed to be in the competition. Moreover, Fatima showcases fear when she is near the local Imam. In the scene where Fatima and her friends pet a homeless dog, she sees the Imam from the mosque her family goes to, so she hides behind her friend and then washes her hands and face in a puddle of water (Bovin, 2002, 00.28.50). Fatima shows disdain towards the local Imam, as she states when talking about him: "*If he wanted to, he could just do this *snaps her fingers* and then I would never be allowed outside again*" (Bovin, 2002, 00.29.30). With this statement, the film does portray how it assumes power relations are within a Muslim community in Denmark. The Imam is the one in control, which indicates that Islam is in control of what Fatima can and cannot do. This notion is later confirmed, as the father showcases his fears of the Imam seeing Fatima with the dog (Bovin, 2002, 00.34.12). Therefore, even though the film is not necessarily antagonistic about Islam, it does show that in some ways it leads to oppression of Fatima, because her actions are restricted due to religious beliefs.

In Fighter (Arthy, 2007) religion is not presented as being oppressive, rather it is cultural practices that stem from a patriarchal system. The men in both Aicha and Yasmin's household control the sexuality of their daughters, which is presented through the topic of marriage as a cultural practice. Marriage is used as a tool to keep Aicha under submission. It is used to ensure that Aicha does not engage in a relationship with anyone the family does not approve of. Both Yasmin and Aicha's mother mention the topic of Aicha getting engaged to Mehmet (Arthy, 2007, 00.31.35) (Arthy, 2007, 00.41.24), to ensure that she stays 'pure'. Marriage is then also used as a tool to threaten Aicha to not be with Emil. Mohanty (1988) regards that Western literature present marriage between non-Western people as an exchange between men, thus women are constructed as victims of colonial process, where they are an object for exchange

(p. 60). The engagement to Mehmet is not set up as an exchange between two men, but rather as a method of control, especially as the mother threatens to find someone else that Aicha will marry: "*If it is not him, I will find someone else*" (Arthy, 2007, 00.41.24). When analysing Yasmin's engagement to Ali, there is an exchange between Ali's father and Yasmin's father, because if they get married without issues, Yasmin's father will allow Ali's father to work as a taxi driver at his company (Arthy, 2007, 00.19.18). Their marriage can be perceived as an exchange, as Yasmin is the reward for good behaviour from Ali's family. Ali and Yasmin are presented as a couple who want to marry each other, thus Yasmin is not represented as a victim of oppression, until her marriage is cancelled due to her family's conflict with Ali's family. However, Aicha becomes a victim of oppression, as her desires must be suppressed to keep her family satisfied and so the engagement can continue.

The concept of marriage, in general, is viewed in two very different ways in this film. On one side we have Aicha, who presents the belief that no sexual intercourse can happen before marriage, and that marriage should happen before dating as well. This is shown in the scene, where Aicha states to Sofie: "*I cannot have a boyfriend before I get married*" (Arthy, 2007, 00.59.49). Her views are also present when Emil and Aicha realise they cannot have a relationship, in which Aicha states: "*We cannot date, because we will never get married*" (Arthy, 2007, 01.00.28). In the same scene we are presented to the other side of the spectrum, meaning the other opinion of marriage. Emil laughs at Aicha's statement, which shows how absurd he thinks this statement is. Aicha's Turkish ethnicity is then reflected as the opposite of whiteness (Hall, 1997, p. 236). Through the process of othering, views on marriage become racialised, where the 'other' presents marriage as the only option for a relationship.

The film presents that Aicha's family is focused on controlling Aicha's sexuality, which Mohanty (1988) argues is a trait of Western construction of non-Western women, mainly the aspect of female sexuality of non-white women are controlled by men, and that non-Western culture is preserved with the notion of controlling their sexuality through dependency and subservience (p. 57). Aicha is confronted several times about the aspect of sex and dating. Moreover, at two different scenes, her mother and her sister-in-law Yasmin confront her, as they believe Aicha is sexually active with an ethnic-Danish male named Emil. The first conversation about her circumstance with Emil happens between Aicha and Yasmin. This conversation occurs after Yasmin sees Aicha hugging Emil in public (Arthy, 2007, 00.30.55). Yasmin tries to keep Aicha sexually control, by first initiating that Yasmin's brother Mehmet

and Aicha could get married. When Aicha dismisses any interest in Mehmet, Yasmin guilts Aicha into submission by telling her that Aicha's actions will be consequential for all of the people involved in her life: "*Aicha you know it is impossible, it's going to affect me and Ali*" (Arthy, 2007, 00.31.35). The second conversation about Aicha's sexuality happens between Aicha and her mother. Aicha's mother is suspicious of her daughter and when she hears moaning sounds from Aicha's room, which is due to Aicha doing push-ups, she then decides to talk to Aicha about Mehmet. She tries to convince Aisha to get married to Mehmet and when Aicha shows complete disdain over him, she says: "*if it's not him, I'll find someone else*" (Arthy, 2007, 00.41.24). These scenes show that it is not only men who try to control Aicha's sexuality but also the women in her life, who try to get her married off to a male with Turkish ethnicity, before she has sex with an ethnic-Danish man. Whether Aicha is in a relationship with an ethnic-Danish male, is the main concern of her family. They keep asking her about it and presents that her relationship with him will destroy their family's reputation (Arthy, 2007, 00.55.16). To ensure Aicha's submission, the process of guilt tripping continues throughout the film, such as when Aicha acknowledge that she is in love with Emil to her mother. Her mother then states: "*It is never going to work (…) you must think about your family and on Ali's future*" (Arthy, 2007, 01.06.50). This film represents Aicha as a victim of oppression, as she is consistently threatened to behave. She is guilted into submission and she is not allowed to be in a kung-fu club among other men. She is controlled by both men and women in her family and outside of her family. The only male, who does not try to control Aicha, is her love interest Emil. As Banton (2005) suggests, race itself is not always mentioned as the central issue. Racialisation can happen both visibly and invisibly through coded language (p. 62). In terms of the film Fighter (Arthy, 2007), racialisation occurs invisibly as it is not mentioned that it is due to their Turkish ethnicity that the males are oppressive of Aicha. However, it is hinted as every ethnic Turkish male is either oppressive or controlling of Aicha, and this notion gets stronger when we meet the only ethnic-Danish male in Aicha's life. Emil is the supportive character who helps Aicha practice kung-fu, and it is only when she practices with Emil that she seems content and happy, as this where she smiles and laughs (Arthy, 2007, 00.22.24). Emil is shown as the opposite of the non-white Danish males with Turkish background, thus showing them as the opposition to whiteness (Hall, 1997, p. 236). What separates Emil from the other males in this film, is not only his support to Aicha, but his physical traits as well. He is ethnically Danish, thus his character traits become associated with his ethnicity. Whereas the multiple ethnic-Turkish men are darker skinned, and their character traits become associated

(Banton, 2005, p. 59), meaning it is an association of darker skin colour and oppression of non-White Danish females with Turkish background.

Aicha and Fatima differ, as Aicha's oppression is shown as stemming from her culture, whereas Fatima's oppression is from religion. The similarity of the two types of oppression, is that it stems from a male dominant system, in which men control women. Thus, oppression is the obstacle to overcome through rebellion.

4.4. Rebellion as the answer to oppression

This section is relevant as the non-white Danish character with Middle Eastern background in both films do rebel against their family at some point in the film as an answer to the oppression they face. Mohanty (1988) argues that non-Western women tend to define women as archetypal victims and freezes them into object-who-defend-themselves, moreover they are categorised as powerless (p. 57). Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) presents Fatima as powerless as she relies on her father's approval to participate in the competition, and her friends to help her through the journey.

The struggles that Fatima and Aicha go through are related to their individual backgrounds, such as family situation and culture. Fatima is represented as being more restricted by her parents, as they allow her less, she is the only one to suffer consequences of their actions, and she is consistently afraid of getting house arrest and losing her freedom. Aicha must keep her passion for kung-fu secret to be able to practice it, or she will face repercussions, which is psychological exile from her family. These films are about youth rebelling from their parents, who are of a more traditional and conservative generation, in which they must prove that they can succeed by being more independent. Such as when Fatima escaped her family to sing on stage, and when Aicha participated in the kung-fu competition. The difference between the two films is that in Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002), Fatima does obtain her brother and fathers approval at the end because she went against her family, whereas in Fighter (Arthy, 2007) her action did result in psychological exile, as her father is ignoring her. Both Fatima and Aicha are presented as relevant characters in these films because they rebel against the patriarchy, which is their family. From the beginning both are presented as different from other Arabic or Turkish girls within their community Fatima is shown as dissatisfied with the role her mother

believes she should fit into, and she is dissatisfied of the religion that can result in her oppression. Aicha is a character who is very different from her peers. Aicha is someone who does not fit into Turkish peers or ethnic-Danish peers. There is a scene where Aicha is invited to Yasmin's bachelorette party, which presents girls dancing a traditional Turkish dance. They are laughing and having fun, however, Aicha sits uncomfortably on the couch (Arthy, 2007, 00.21.41). At the engagement party of Yasmin and Ali, Aicha is again sitting alone, as if she is not enjoying her time (Arthy, 2007, 00.48.48). Generally, it shows that Aicha is dissatisfied or uncomfortable with her surroundings. When she spends time in her Turkish community, Aicha is presented as an outsider. Yet she is also shown as uncomfortable when sitting with many ethnic-Danish girls, who are drinking alcohol. Aicha is again shown as being uncomfortable and unwilling to be there, she then goes for a run outside (Arthy, 2007, 01.01.07). Aicha is individualised in this film. She is presented as different than her peers, regardless of their ethnicity. Aicha is happiest when she is practicing kung-fu. The films present that it is because they are different from other women with Middle Eastern that they must rebel from their family, because they are unfit for their family, as they cannot fall within patriarchal gender norms. The stereotype of oppression is applied to the non-white Danish character with Middle Eastern background through the depiction of her being unsatisfied of her dissatisfaction and unfitness with her family and their way of life. It moves the plot further, as there is something she must rebel against. Thus, they are reconstructing the stereotype that Middle Eastern culture is static and set in old ways, thus for non-white Danish women who do want to live within the norms of this culture must rebel to be free. The films are also in some ways deconstructing stereotypes, as they show that even though the girls must rebel to achieve their dreams and be liberated, they still end up maintaining a close relationship with their families, which indicates that immigrant families with Middle Eastern background can evolve and be more liberating of women, thus they are not a stagnant culture.

5.0. Discussion

In this section I will discuss my findings by referring to work by Andreassen (2005), Hervik (2002), Thorsen and Rødje (2019), and Thorsen and Skadegård (2019). Oppression is used in these films and presents that the two girls are victims of oppression due to their cultural/religion background. It is the result of a stagnant culture, which they must rebel from, to achieve

personal development. In this section I will compare my own findings to representation in news media to get in-depth with the question of how they are/are not represented as victims of oppression.

Rikke Andreassen (2005) argues that news media "*presented visible minority women as victims instead of survivors, victims of violence, victims of immigrations laws, victims of their culture, and victims of Islam*" (p. 163). In this case, Andreassen (2005) refers to news media, which portrays several different nationalities as one single culture that is indistinguishable from Islam, and in this homogenous culture forced marriage, violence against women and oppression as an integral part of it (p. 147-148). By representing other cultures in this manner, a comparison is created between non-white Danes and ethnic Danes, in which ethnic the latter are the binary opposition of the former, so ethnic Danes are presented as a group with a progressive, non-patriarchal culture (p.126). When applying Andreassen's (2005) arguments to the character Fatima from the film Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002), I notice that there is a stark difference between how news media victimise non-white Danish women with Middle Eastern background and how the film does it. As I am stating in my analysis, I argue that Fatima from the film Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) is represented as oppressed, because she is more restricted than her ethnic-Danish peers. Fatima is not presented as someone who must combat or survive her patriarchal culture, nor is she the receptor of any violence from abusers. Fatima's father and older brother are instead shown as someone who help her towards the goal, as the father is the one who ultimately lets Fatima participate in the competition at the youth club, even when he must argue with Fatima's mother. However, this film does racialize Arabic culture as more suppressive, as Fatima still has to be more considerate of her actions, because she knows that if her father discovers her petting a dog, he can take her liberty away, which are not issues her ethnic-Danish friends struggle with. Which ultimately sets up and 'us' versus 'them', where the 'us' is generally more liberated than the 'them', who must be careful of their actions, because their liberty is hanging by a thin line that will break if they do not follow cultural rules. Through this 'us' and 'them' construction Fatima can be interpreted as being oppressed, as she is the only one of the three children who fears being oppressed and knows that it can happen to her if she is discovered. With this in mind, it does make the question of whether Fatima is represented as oppressed more complex.

Fatima overall lives with more rules than her ethnic-Danish friends, and the source of these rules were presented as being due to her and her family's way of life. Most of the time the rules

and restrictions were reasoned as being due to their religion, thus religion becomes the source of Fatima's fear. In Andreassen's (2005) book, she argues that news media does not distinguish culture from Islam, thus persons from Middle East, regardless of their nationality, are culturally Muslims (p. 147). Within this culture oppression of women is constructed as an essential part of it (p. 148). According to Hervik (2002) many Danes believe that religion is a phenomenon that stands opposed to secularisation and modernity, whereas modernity is liberty, religion is suppressive (p. 210). So, when watching a non-white Danish woman with Middle Eastern background, viewers have established beliefs regarding what issues she must be having in her life, and that these issues are caused by religion. This argument is also reflected by Thorsen and Rødje (2019), who argue that media tends to create clear division between Danishness and Islam, in which Islam becomes the opposite of Danishness thus the two are incompatible: *(...) and understood to be essentially so different to 'Danes'(whether Danish citizens or not), that they are often considered irreconcilable with 'Danishness'* (Thorsen and Rødje, 2019, p. 221). The representation of non-White Danish women with Middle Eastern background is constructed through how they differ from ethnic-Danish women. In the film, the representation of Fatima is through how she differs from her friends, which is set up to introduce viewers to the 'other'. The viewer is supposed to see Fatima from Aksel's perspective to learn about non-white Danish groups with Middle Eastern background and their religion. The film begins with Aksel being a naïve boy who believes that being Muslim means being gangster or being cool, but throughout the film Fatima becomes the one who shows him what being Muslim means and how it is a faith rather than a trend. The film is for children; therefore, I argue that it serves as a tool to explain to children what Islam is and how it affects a person such as Fatima, who due to her religious background says she cannot eat pork or pet dogs, moreover she explains concepts such as what an Imam is, what praying and who Allah is. The film does not antagonise Islam as a religion and does not construct it as something opposed to Danishness, as Aksel, Mia and Fatima are shown as good friends who can easily play together without her religion or ethnicity coming in the way. There are scenes in which Fatima is more restricted than her ethnic-Danish friends to participate in the same activities, which is reasoned as being due to religion, but this serves as a tool to explain children why their non-white Danish peers with Middle Eastern background may not be allowed to do as much. This does present racialised ideas of otherness. As Fatima is used in the film as representation for all non-white Danish girls with Middle Eastern background, it racializes her way of life and her family's beliefs as being typical or common of Middle Eastern families in Denmark.

As it is presented in my findings, the main character Aicha is presented as a victim of oppression, although she does resolve this at the end of the film. Throughout the film she is continuously oppressed by the males in her family who oppress her to keep her sexuality under control. In the film Fighter (Arthy, 2007) there is no mention of culture as the motivator for Aicha's suppression, but as it is centred around a Turkish family, it does hint that the reasons for their beliefs. Andreassen (2005) presents the argument that the cultures of immigrants from Middle East living in Denmark are presented in news media as an unchangeable and stagnant culture with misogynistic and patriarchal tendencies: "*(…) The news media generally described this culture as essentially patriarchal and misogynist as well as singular, stagnant and unchangeable. The news media also saw visible minorities' culture as fundamentally different from Danish culture (...)*" (Andreassen, 2005, p. 135). Their culture is represented as something that cannot assimilate with modern society because their values differ so much from Danish cultural values (p. 135). Although Andreassen (2005) is addressing news media in this statement, the way that news media portrays cultures from Middle East is recognisable from the way in which Aicha's culture is presented. The patriarchal aspect in her family is clear, as it is her father dominating the household, as he makes the decisions and her Aicha's mother's opinion about the matter is never regarded. Moreover, it is clear, that the men, including her brother Ali and rival Omar can to some extend also control Aicha's life, as they use threats to keep her under control. The patriarchal structure is also represented in Yasmin's family, as her father can determine who his daughter marries, and whether she is allowed to marry Ali. Thus, their culture is presented as being male dominant, as it is the men who make the overall decisions for their daughters, and when someone does not listen, they are punished, such as when Ali was beaten for impregnating Yasmin, which means they had sex before marriage (Arthy, 2007, 01.09.30). The film then presents this culture as misogynistic, as the men of Turkish ethnicity show that they do not believe that Aicha can control her own sexuality, moreover there is Omar who refuses to fight women, only because they are the opposite gender. The culture is presented as stagnant and unchangeable, because they rely on old beliefs about women and purity, where women must be kept in control or married away to ensure that their family reputation is clean. This is also resonated in the multiple times the father mentions his family's honour and upkeeping that honour several times throughout the film: "*a woman does not fight, especially not with men (...) "what will people say if you mess around with other men*" (Arthy, 2007, 00.07.58), "*you embarrass me with that eye*" (00.17.20) "*you have*

humiliated our family" (Arthy, 2007, 00.55.44). Moreover, as Aicha presents that she cannot have intercourse with anyone before marriage, it again presents that their Turkish culture is stagnant and stuck in old ideas about gender norms, sex, and honour. Aicha however, becomes the token minority (Andreassen, 2005, 161), as she is someone who does not comply with the standards of her culture and decides to do as she pleases. The Turkish culture that is presented in this film is reflected as being the binary opposite of the Danish culture, as the viewer is then presented to the character Sofie and Emil. Sofie is presented as being the opposite of Aicha, although they have a mutual interest in kung-fu. Not only is Sofie outgoing and talkative, but something also that Aicha is not, she is shown as a person who can do as she wishes. I argue that throughout the film Sofie asks Aicha many questions and doubts that indicates that Aicha's way of life and beliefs are very foreign to Sofie, which strengthen the narrative that Turkish culture is fundamentally different from Danish, which brings me to the argument by Thorsen and Skadegård (2019) that racialised groups are constructed as incompatible with Danish society, norms, and culture (p. 221). When the Aicha is sitting with multiple Danish girls who express their desire for sex, they showcase how they have liberty over their sexuality, and how no one has control over that aspect of their life. This scene defines how different the Turkish culture is from the Danish. Andreassen (2005) presents that in news media, the culture of persons with Middle Eastern ethnicity is represented as homogenous, stagnant, patriarchal etc., which then strengthen the notion that Danish society is progressive, non-patriarchal, gender-equal society (p. 126). I argue that Aicha's family is representing the culture she stems from, which the film presents through racialised assumptions of others. Often when there is focus on non-white minority women with Middle Eastern background in news media, the focus is on them as battered women, a person with no agency, who suffers due to her culture, this plays a role in maintaining stereotypical depictions of non-white Danish females with Middle Eastern background (p. 163). Andreassen's (2005) argument of the portrayal of Middle Eastern migrant women resembles the character Aicha, although she is not a victim of violence, she is represented as a victim of oppression who suffers due to her culture, which is a culture that tries to control females. What differs from Fighter (Arthy, 2007) and Andreassen's argument (2005) is that Aicha does show agency, even though she is conflicted throughout the film regarding her choices, she still acts in ways to satisfy her own desires, such as signing up for the kung-fu competition and engaging in a romantic relationship with Emil. These parts show that Aicha has agency, even though her family disapproves of her. There is an element of oppression, which is the obstacle they must fight to achieve their goals, which is argued by

Andreassen (2005) as a common construction of non-white Danish girls with Middle Eastern background (p. 136). Issues such as abuse, honour killings, forced marriages, strict families, and lack of autonomy, are racialised by media as an issue of Middle Eastern culture (p.136). Aicha (Arthy, 2007) faces obstacles that are related to her ethnicity and gender, which shows that race is a reason for her issues, and as she is a female, her issues are related to gender. I argue that Aicha is represented as victims of oppressed because her main problem was linked to suppression by her family and the need to control her sexuality. In Fighter (Arthy2007) racialisation is present as the main character's family, world view and struggles are characterised by stereotypical depictions of what it means to live as non-white Danish female with Middle Eastern background.

When Aicha is determined to leave her family, compete in the kung-fu competition, and stands up to her father, she becomes an autonomous actor, who is stronger because she goes against her family. Andreassen (2005) argues that this is a typical depiction of otherness: "*Unlike the other visible minority women whom the news media described as representative for all female visible minorities, the article portrayed this woman as an individual representing only herself. The Journalist drew an image of her as an exception – the token minority – whose story was interesting precisely because she was exceptional* (Andreassen, 2005, p. 161). As Andreassen (2005) argues minority women are given a voice in news media when they segregate from their family. This is also when she becomes a modern woman who takes a stand against her medieval family, when characters such as Aicha goes through character development it is only when she chooses the western progressive side/the Danish side rather than the Middle Eastern side, which is to show that Danish values are better and "*placed higher on the imaginary hierarchy than 'their' values were.*" (Andreassen, 2005, p. 153 - 154). Victimisation is added in terms of representation of non-white Danes, these characters are narrated as oppressed by their family and their cultural heritage. Moreover, she is longing for liberation, but she can only achieve this if she escapes her family and breaks bond with them. Thus, non-white women with Middle Eastern background are never represented as more than victims until they escape, and only then are they no longer representatives of a homogenous culture, but instead are considered as individuals, who have chosen modernity, progressiveness, and gender equality over their patriarchal, oppressive, and backwards heritage (p. 154). However, although Aicha escapes her family for a brief period, the film does show that she was unsatisfied with this decision, as she returns home again, rather her strength and character development increases as she learns to

stay within her own family but also speak up for herself and tell her father what she wants to do. I argue that although Aicha is represented as a victim of oppression in the beginning of the film, it is due to her character development that in the end she is no longer a victim, but rather a person who has learned to speak for herself and is happy with her own family.

Both Aicha from the film Fighter (Arthy, 2007) and Fatima from Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) are presented as complex characters, although they are oppressed as some point, the film manages to establish that they resolve this issue, not by leaving their family, but by standing up to their family and proving their independence, which ultimately does lead to either forgiveness and/or pride with their family members, especially their fathers. Moreover, as I am analysing films, it is important to notice, that films do focus on creating a dramatic plot, where the characters must resolve some issues through individual progression, which is why characters such as Aicha and Fatima are presented as being oppressed or restricted as some point. However, the problem maintains, that non-white Danish women are generally represented as being oppressed in Danish films, which is set up as the obstacle they must defeat. My research still shows lack of diversity in casting, as these are the roles that non-white Danish actresses with Middle Eastern background are in. They are represented as the 'other' and are there to showcase the Danish viewer how they differ from Danes and how their culture is a stagnant patriarchy which they must overcome.

I argue that these representations are due to the production and post-production processes which leaves out minority voices in the process. These films were both written and directed by ethnic Danish characters, thus even in the production of films regarding non-white Danish characters their voice is non-existent in the production team, meaning the films are based on the framework of knowledge that ethnic white-Danes have on non-white Danes with Middle Eastern background. With the lack of minority voices and the overexposure of ethnic white voices in terms of non-white cultures and experiences, and with a lack of non-white individuals in production and post-production, then films generally lack perspectives from persons with Middle Eastern ethnicity in the film production process. I will then argue that non-white women are represented with euro-centrist bias of otherness, because it lacks non-white influence in the production process (Banton, 2005, p. 59). As the Danish population consist of 4,9 percent of immigrants from Middle Eastern countries (Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet, 2019), the majority group of audience are ethnic-Danes, as production companies wish to make profit, they add stories that will appeal to the majority audience. In this context stories of battered

women from other cultures are appealing as they match caricatures of others: "*the White race stood above all other races, representing reason, culture and civilisation (...)*" (Andreassen, 2016, p. 89). In a report by DFI (Det Danske Filminstitut, 2018) which is analysing diversity both in front of and behind the camera, it shows that non-white Danes are 2,9 percent of production and postproduction of films (p. 9), in production non-white Danes make around 4 percent of directors, 1,6 percent of producers and 1,2 percent of manuscript writers in 2018 (p. 12). Although DFI's report does not distinguish between gender, we can assume that women are under involved in the production of films in Denmark. Thorsen (2020) argues that the Danish film industry "*industry is failing women in general (...) while they were underrepresented in post-production positions, like editing, colorgrading, and sound editing (...) Women were especially underrepresented in technical roles, and made up 10% or under when it came to film photography, sound, and lighting positions. They were also underrepresented in key creative roles, making up 34% of director roles, 34% of writing roles, and 36% of editing roles across the entire film industry and all types of films*" (p. 114-115). I will add to Thorsen's argument by arguing that it is failing non-white Danes with Middle Eastern background as well, as they are the least involved in the Danish film industry. In terms of roles, in between 2015-2017 minorities played lead roles in 5,1 percent and played secondary characters in 6,4 percent of all Danish films produced those years. This shows that generally there is extreme lack of non-white representation in Danish films, so when non-white Danish women with Middle Eastern background are presented in racialised roles with stereotypical depictions of immigrant women, this becomes the only aspect of non-white people which ethnic Danish viewers are introduced to. The report by DFI (2018) shows that there is a lack of not only female involvement but also minority involvement, so majority of Danish produced films are set through a Danish perspective of what is means to be a non-white Danish woman with Middle Eastern background living in Denmark. Thus, representation of non-white Danish women with Middle Eastern background is due to majority of ethnic-white actors in production and post-production and their assumptions of otherness. Although Fatima (Bovin, 2002) and Aicha (Arthy, 2007) manage to create stories of females who overcome their obstacles, these obstacles are still rooted in racialised assumptions of otherness. More diversity is still relevant in Danish film, as a non-white Danish female can still have issues that are unrelated to her ethnicity or her family's culture, but rarely do Danish films create films with this perspective.

6.0. Conclusion

In Denmark, the portrayal of ethnic Middle Eastern characters is being discussed after the release of the film Shorta in 2020. Non-white Danish actors with Middle Eastern background are represented through stereotypical depictions of men as criminals and women as victims of oppression, which leads me to the research of this thesis. I seek to answer whether these complains holds truth, thus I have the research question: *How is the stereotype of oppression applied to the non-white Danish character with Middle Eastern background in the two films Kald Mig Bare Aksel and Fighter?* To get more in-depth with the research and understand what makes them either oppressed or not oppressed I establish a following research question: *How are non-white Danish women with Middle Eastern background (not) represented as victims of oppression in the films Kald Mig Bare Aksel and Fighter?* Through and analysis of two films Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002) and Fighter (Arthy, 2007), I can conclude that representation of women with Middle Eastern ethnicity is more complex and that they are not purely represented as victims of oppression. Although the creation of the character, her struggles and worldview are based on racialised assumptions of otherness, assumptions of women as suppressed, her story is about more than just being a victim. In Kald Mig Bare Aksel (Bovin, 2002), the character Fatima does not go through oppression, but does have strict parents, who she in the end must run away from to be able to perform on stage. In the film Fighter (Arthy, 2007) oppression and control by her family and culture is the obstacle she must overcome to achieve her dreams. I argue that Aicha character is a victim of oppression, as her family is trying to control her and her sexuality throughout the film. At the same time, the film shows that Aicha is a character who can stand her own ground, she is strengthened as a character throughout this process. It is important to recognise the factors that leads to racialised depictions of women as oppressed, as the first step to securing further diversity in casting, is to understand what traits are representing her as oppressed. Both Fatima (Bovin, 2002) and Aicha's (Arthy, 2007) stories were regarding not being able to do something due to their culture, which emphasizes assumptions of others. I reckon that more diverse casting is still important, as there is a major lack of casting ethnic Middle Eastern persons in diverse roles. Stuart Hall (1997) suggests that representation matters, because media is constructing a narrative of others through representation, which affects viewers perceptions and assumption Thus, to combat racialised assumptions of others as criminals or victims of oppression, it is important to create more diverse meanings of others trough diverse representation.

7.0. Literature Review

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