An Analysis of Belonging of Post-Yugoslav Women in Denmark

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Abstract

This thesis explores the self-perception of belonging to the Danish community with a focus on highly skilled migrant women from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia.

Background: Denmark is known as a small, culturally homogeneous nation with a strong national identity. Due to the ever-increasing proportion of temporary and permanent residents from abroad, Danish nationalism has become a distinguishing feature when it comes to negative stereotypes about foreign residents. This particularly affects women, as it is assumed that gender equality does not exist among foreign women. As the conflict between modernity and tradition is assumed to be most pronounced among Muslim women, there has been a failure to investigate the affiliation of "more compliant" European women who, if viewed from the same angle, would also fit into the Danish media's image of the 'foreign woman'. This research aims to contribute to broadening the view of this image.

Methods: Six women in their thirties with a completed university level education, who have lived in Copenhagen, Denmark, for a minimum of two and a maximum of ten years, are interviewed and their subjective interpretations are evaluated by means of thematic analysis. The thesis is particularly concerned with the women's vision of the Danish nation and nationalism and their self-knowledge based on innate and acquired characteristics, from the perspective of imagined communities, the Danish cultural world of unbridgeable differences and gendered nationalism.

Results: Belonging was conceptualised as a negative experience, but one that was accepted as a given due to normalisation of racialising foreigners as different from Danes created by the Danish media. Belonging in my sample could be seen as an 'either-or' phenomenon - 'either' they remain invisible by hiding parts of their own culture and assimilating Danish culture (which still makes them invisible to Danes but shields them from criticism), 'or' they are excluded for displaying that culture (which they have suffered in relation to their gender, reducing their chances of inclusion due to the symbolic role gender plays in nation-building). In both cases, belonging is associated with invisibility.

Conclusion: Gender is central to women's experience of belonging, which in interaction with age influences women's well-being in Denmark.

Keywords: belonging, nation, nationalism, Danishness, women, Yugoslavia

Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction to the Study

The introductory chapter provides an overall overview of this study. It begins by outlining the genesis of the thesis, which is accompanied by a brief introduction to the problem and the reasons for writing the study in the context of gender. In this chapter, I establish the research questions and clarify what I intend to accomplish in this area of research. I argue that it is important to study the topic in the context of Denmark because of its unique politics of belonging based on cultural values, particularly the value of gender equality. Finally, the introductory chapter provides a summary of the organization of the thesis.

Background

In November 2020, I joined a Facebook group of immigrant women from the former Yugoslavia in Denmark. I followed the questions the women were asking, the issues they were raising, the forms of help they were seeking, and most importantly, the dynamics between the women as they talked about their efforts to belong. In the beginning, I was curious to the extent that I stopped by the timeline every day so I would not miss the day's conversations. Soon I realised that I was not only an observer but also a researcher, and I decided to channel my reflections on the topic and my accumulated insights into an academic setting. That was when this thesis came to light. There were repeatedly discussions in the group about how many Danish friends the women had, what they did to acquire the Danish language, how often they consumed entertainment such as Danish films and music, who was better informed about the norms of Danish society and represented its values, and criticism of those who did not leave the cultural patterns they had brought with them from their country of origin. Yet it seemed that hardly any women had Danish friends. I therefore decided that the tensions must be rooted in the lack of recognition by the Danish community and called the problem loneliness. However, I realised that I did not know what to do with this emotional state I had diagnosed in them and I doubted my judgement, so I decided to talk to the women. It turned out that their experiences of belonging were characterised by feelings that resembled sadness, whether it was loneliness or melancholy, nevertheless, the responses they conveyed also included concerns such as the ease they thought integration would go for them based on their features. This led me to conclude that the women's interpretation of their own efforts to belong to Denmark and the image they have of themselves as migrants with certain characteristics is the core of the problem and should be investigated as such. My research was framed accordingly.

Research Problem

In the Danish environment, immigrant characteristics are seen as the main factor weakening homogeneity and cultural tradition, hence Danish nationalism revolves around immigrants (Hervik, 2011). The most striking indicator of Danish nationalism is the division of Danish inhabitants into "us" (Danes, hosts) and "them" (others, guests), with the latter group presented as a problem (ibid.). In the mind's eye, Danish cultural values are seen as so important and exceptional that everyone else is "too different to be integrated into Denmark" (Hervik, 2011, p. 53). The normalisation of 'otherness' is present in every aspect of Danish discourse, including the media, politics and institutions (Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2009, p. 2, in Erdinc, 2011, p. 3). Due to such representations, the idea that immigrants are undesirable within Danish borders has become an integral part of the Danish collective consciousness, and thus the experiences of immigrants in Denmark are strongly influenced by the collective images of them (ibid.). It should therefore come as no surprise that Denmark consistently ranks near the bottom in reports on the reception of 'outsiders' (The Expat Insider report, 2021). In the largest annual survey of expatriate life, The Expat Insider report (2021), Denmark ranks 66th out of 68 countries in terms of how well expatriates feel in the categories of 'feeling at home', 'friendliness' and 'making friends'. Yet, the issue of immigration in Denmark, and usually in developed countries, is mainly studied in terms of governmental and economic development (Massey, 1989; Rytter, 2019), with highly skilled immigrants painting the picture of people who contribute to the wealth creation of the host state (Jolly et al., 2005; Boucher, 2020) and are thus able to interact with and fit into a new environment, and are likely to be open to accepting differences (De Haas et al., 2019). These indicators speak to immigrants' ability to cope with integration-related adversity, which ultimately shapes their experiences in the host country (ibid.). However, rough positioning in the host society is an often overlooked challenge faced by immigrants, especially women. Out of Danish society's concern about the insecurity of its cultural values, the Danish Ministry of Culture launched the so-called "Danishness Project" (The Locals, 2016) to identify the "cultural DNA" of the Danish population and the cohesion of Danish society. Among the ten values selected on the basis of citizens' votes, the value of gender equality created the greatest distance between Nordic and 'other' cultures as perceived by Norsemen, and therefore found its way into public discourses on women's personal, family and professional lives (Siim & Stoltz, 2013). One could therefore assume that women are more likely to experience identity confusion, negative encounters with the host population, exclusion and emotional distress. The aforementioned challenges are the subject of my research.

Due to historically reduced freedom of movement and economic dependence on spouses (Jolly et al., 2005), women have been neglected. Today, interest in the study of female professional migrants is growing among political scientists, and many researchers express the need for further knowledge contributions on this topic (Kofman, 2000; Docquier et al., 2009; Liversage, 2009). In an issue of the International Journal of Population Geography, for example, this was called for through Eleonore Kofman's article on the invisibility of skilled migrant women in Europe (Kofman, 2000). Kofman draws attention to the reasons for women's invisibility and argues that it is research interests and the choice of methodological and theoretical approaches that make women invisible (ibid.). She suggests fellow researchers examine the world of highly skilled migrant women beyond work and generate data through narratives (ibid.). With the stories of women from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, my study contributes to this field of research.

Research Questions

In this thesis, I hypothesise that migrant women from post-Yugoslav countries in Denmark understand their belonging, and thus their lives are shaped, based on their interpretation of the Danish image of an undesirable "other" and how they themselves fit into this image. Against this background, the study answers the question:

How do highly skilled migrant women from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia understand their belonging to the Danish nation?

I have divided the question into three sub-questions to structure the study and address the topic of the study. The three questions are: *1. How does the media portrayal of foreigners as "the other" influence women's self-perception and positioning in Danish society? 2. How do women understand and interpret the community with the Danish nation? 3. What role does gender play in the experience of belonging to the Danish nation?*

Research Aims

The overall aim of this thesis is to understand how women from post-Yugoslav countries encounter nationalism in Denmark. It seeks to answer the question of how women identify with the Danish nation as their new home society. Furthermore, the thesis aims to understand the women's inner processes that lead them to chase ‘Danishness’ and force them to reconsider

their belonging and affiliation. I am interested in how the problematisation of immigration affects the women's articulation of belonging. I assume that the women's (unrequited) longing to belong, or to feel the sameness with Danes, commands their urge to establish the national identity of their home countries so that they feel at home. Thus, I wonder how it challenges their position in Denmark. I am inspired to hear the voices of women in their thirties whose identities, apart from migration, are shaped by significant life events characteristic of the years of early adulthood (e.g. starting a family, establishing a career, fewer opportunities for social contact, etc.) (Carmichael et al., 2015), and in this context I want to understand how women give meaning to the experience of loneliness. Although I do not draw a broad picture of Danish nationalism and belonging among migrant women from post-Yugoslav countries in Denmark, my aim is to provide six different accounts in order to produce a wealth of data for future research projects of longer duration.

Thesis Structure

The introduction to the study is followed by six chapters. First, I present the empirical framework of the study, which deals with (post)Yugoslav national identity and migration with a focus on gender. This is followed by an overview of the literature on Danish nationalism and belonging that has guided my research and on which I will base new analytical discussions. Thirdly, the theoretical framework is presented, which consists of theories on imagined communities and gendered nationalism, as well as the theoretical concept of the Danish cultural world of unbridgeable differences, and why these particular approaches were chosen for the analysis of the data obtained through the women's narratives. In the following chapter, I present and discuss the methodological approach and methods of data collection, going into more detail about the use of qualitative interviews to gain an in-depth insight into the experiences of the participants in the study. In this chapter I introduce the participants, present my approach to data analysis and finally state my position in the study and my ethical considerations for it. The penultimate chapter is the analysis chapter, where I analyse how the study participants fit into Danish society based on their interpretation of the phenomenon of 'otherness' and how this affects their willingness and effort to 'become a Dane' (Hervik, 2012). The thesis concludes with a discussion of the main findings in relation to the research questions and calls for further research in relation to gender to illustrate why additional attention should be paid to women when researching exclusion issues in Denmark.

Chapter 2
Empirical Setting: (Post)Yugoslavian National Identity and Migration

This chapter describes the (post)Yugoslavian environment of my thesis and serves as background information. It includes features of (post)Yugoslav nationalism and migration, as well as reflections on why women from this region were chosen for the study.

The former Yugoslavia was a multinational socialist community consisting of republics that historically belonged to different empires (Van Winkle, 2005). Within its borders there were six national cultures (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia) and five religious denominations (Christianity in its Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant forms, Islam and Judaism) (Majstorović, 1980, p. 16). The people of Yugoslavia did not share a common history, but built it from scratch. They ended up creating a history marked by abuse and political power games that lasted for seventy years (Van Winkle, 2005). Van Winkle describes Yugoslavia as an attempt to arouse national feelings in people without positive cultural memories who cannot imagine themselves as a collective because of the differences in their cultural traditions (ibid.). Yugoslav nationalism is seen as imbued with aggression and based on the discourse of heroism and masculinity, as well as intolerance towards women (Rener & Ule, 1998). The image of women drawn from the history of nations portrays Yugoslav women as "mothers of future warriors and guardians of the nation's virtue" (Rener & Ule, 1998, p. 109), as defenders of family and household (ibid.). However, the position of women wavered in the wake of nationalist movements. The equality rights they were granted after the Second World War in terms of their participation in public life were short-lived. The rebirth of nationalism in the post-war period disregarded women's position in society and regarded feminists as enemies of the people (ibid.). In response, women fought for change, and the construction of a new Yugoslav image of women came into view (Majstorović, 2018). Women were now portrayed as modern, emancipated from patriarchal culture and equal to men. They were also dubbed as fighters and national heroes (ibid.). According to Rener & Ule (1998), Yugoslav women's modernisation efforts posed a threat to the disruption of Yugoslav patriarchal culture and even loosened it. Their inclination towards modernisation is also reflected in their search for substitute national communities (ibid.). After the disintegration of Yugoslavia, when the individual states moved to a democratic model of government, the

cultures took on "a clearly modern character" (Cabada, 2009, p. 92). However, Cabada (2009, p. 90) calls the post-Yugoslav societies a "deformed socialist model of modernisation" because these societies do not fully reflect the modernisation models of Western Europe. For example, despite their efforts to keep up with developed European societies, they fail to keep up with the evolution of the way women are viewed in these societies, which promotes their individualisation and detaches their gender identity from certain roles in society, especially women's family life (ibid.).

The migration of the Yugoslav population to Denmark has been going on for more than 60 years and has varied in scale and roots (Nannestad, 2004). From 'guest workers' in the 1960s, when Denmark opened its doors to Yugoslavs, Turks and Pakistanis due to the expansion of the manufacturing economy (ibid.), to refugees from the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s - Yugoslav refugees being predominant immigrant population in Denmark at that time (Jensen & Pedersen, 2007) - to economic migration linked to global talent flows from the 2010s until today (OECD.Stat., n.d.). Although initially a mainly male migration, the wars of the 1990s produced equally male and female refugees, and the equal gender representation among post-Yugoslav migrants continues today (ibid.). As mentioned above, I focus on women from three out of six post-Yugoslav republics, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. On global ranking on the human flight and brain drain 2021 index (The Global Economy, n.d.), the scores of three countries are above the global average of 5.25 index points - Bosnia and Herzegovina 6.5, Croatia 5.7 and Serbia 5.9. As outlined in the World Bank's study "Dynamics and Determinants of Migration: The Case of Croatia and Experience of New EU Member States", Croatia has seen an estimated 230,000 Croatian nationals emigrate to the eleven Western European countries since its accession to the EU in 2013 until 2016 (Draženović et al., 2018, p. 416). The "Croatian exodus", as the authors addressed the issue, comprised an almost equal share of women and men, and the average age of emigrants was 33.6 years (ibid., p. 419). By 2019, the outflow of Croats had expanded to the point where ⅕ of Croats live outside Croatia, making Croatia the second highest emigration rate among all EU countries (World Bank report, 2019). The same report states that the non-EU countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia have lost 50% and 14% of their populations respectively, both male and female citizens (ibid.).

Attention to the nationals of Yugoslavia was drawn by the Yugoslav wars, the events of which are still alive in the studies of many political scientists (Dahinden, 2009; Glenny, 2012; Štiks,

2012). The populations of the post-Yugoslav countries are also the subject of recent studies (Draženović et al., 2018; Drnovšek Zorko, 2020), but it is the prism of war that makes them much more interesting as research subjects in migration studies. There has been a failure to examine who the migrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia are when the 'cloak of war' is removed from them. The refugees of the Yugoslav wars should certainly continue to be studied. However, we should challenge the notion that all Bosnians and Herzegovinians, Croats and Serbs identify with the wars. In the words of Tatjana Bijelić (Bijelić, 2019, p. 100), it is necessary to "offer them emotional detachment from the "dark years" of war in their birth country" (the words Bijelić used to justify the need for a Serbian author to write in a language other than Serbian). I believe that the situation of Bosnian and Herzegovinian, Croatian and Serbian women is a good case for the study of women belonging to Denmark, a country relevant to my study, as many Bosnian and Herzegovinian, Croatian and Serbian women aspire to live there. In fact, the Bosnian-Herzegovinian ethnic minority is the eighth largest in Denmark (Statista report, 2021). The results of a number of studies also present Bosnian refugees as role models for successful integration (Valenta & Ramet, 2011). For example, a group of authors from the Centre for European Policy Studies in Belgium (Barslund et al., 2017) have drawn so-called "lessons from Bosnia and Herzegovina" in relation to integration in five EU countries, including Denmark. As they clarified in the context of the current refugee problem, "it would allow refugees to live a decent life and might accelerate their integration into the host society" (ibid., p. 257). Therefore, I wonder if a better understanding of contemporary Bosnian immigrants (including other post-Yugoslav nationals) might draw lessons of the same worth.

Due to the collective identity of the countries, it should not be neglected to link the post-Yugoslav migrant women in Denmark with the migrant women from the Western Balkans and the post-socialist societies of Eastern Europe (Emerson et al., 2021) who have chosen the Nordic countries as a permanent destination for their immigration.

Chapter 3
Literature Review

Many scholars have studied the question of the inclusion of immigrants into Danish society and have published works with their different views. To a large extent the subject of interest is

the connection between the figure of the foreign woman and the growing intolerance of otherness. This chapter summarises the academic works on this topic that have guided my thesis.

Danish Quest for Homogeneity

In relation to Danish nationalism, I present two understandings that correlate with the experience of immigrant life within Danish borders. The first understanding is that of Peter Hervik (2014), who seeks the roots of the national quest for homogeneity in history and provides an overview of recorded developments. He argues that the Danish utopia of building a homogeneous nation began to exist when, on the occasion of the Second World War, Denmark lost all inhabitants who used other languages and was for the first time inhabited by Danish people only. In this sense, according to Hervik, the Danes understood the merging of South Jutland after the war as a reason for creating minorities, in contrast to other countries that used such events to create majorities. He then outlines Denmark's subsequent class-based attempt to build its homogeneity, i.e. Denmark's advocacy of a nation of people worthy of democratic rights based on their education and cultural manners. This endeavour also distinguished Denmark from the rest of Europe, even from neighbouring Sweden, whose nation was created through class and state unity. The last root is that of the present and concerns the shift from the most liberal to the most radical integration policies, which led to a new form of nationalism (Hervik & Rytter, 2003), which is an integral part of my theoretical framework. Similarly, based on Tobias Hübinette and Catrin Lundström's analysis of the Scandinavian longing for a homogeneous culture (2011), Tine Møller has conducted a study on Denmark's identity crisis and cultural appearance (2012). She argues that a homogeneous society is also seen as a "perfect society" consisting of culturally equal people. She uses the concept of 'Homo Scandinavicus' (Witoszek, 2008 in Møller, 2012) to address the self-created but also the world-created notion of Scandinavian people as "particularly evolved beings with specific embedded characteristics such as rationality, nobility, knowledge, beauty and tolerance" (Møller, 2012, p. 240), and frames Scandinavia as a "utopia woken to life existing outside the realms of the rest of the world, thus protected and with the ability to exist on a higher level than all others" (ibid., p. 241). The second understanding of Danish nationalism concerns the cultural value of gender equality. Two Scandinavian gender equality researchers, Birte Siim and Hege Skjeie, examined the multicultural challenges related to Danish and Norwegian feminism (2008) and concluded that the value of gender equality in Scandinavian societies actually creates

inequalities between groups of women. In their understanding, the states have created a conflict between Scandinavian gender equality standards and the way foreign women practise their culture in their families. Scandinavian women are seen in a positive light as embodying the Scandinavian value of gender equality, while foreign women's expression of their culture of origin is portrayed as a threat. The authors call the conflict the "Scandinavian gender equality paradox" and question the Scandinavian self-image as a "women-friendly" society which rather fails to care for diversities of interests of women's groups. In this context, Siim and Skjeie consider class, gender and ethnicity (and the intersection of the three) as key to Scandinavian politics of belonging. Following the train of thought that foreign women face greater challenges "in the name of women's rights" (Farris, 2017 in Siim, 2021, p. 62) because Scandinavian nationalism exploits gender equality against foreign women, Rikke Andreassen, another researcher in the field of gender equality, brings evidence of how the construction of Muslim women's physical appearance is abused by nationalists (2012). In this context, Andreassen claims that the current trend among Danish politicians to advocate feminism and fight for women's rights shows nothing more than their desire to exclude non-native women who do not conform to Danish norms from the Danish community. Andreassen claims that gender equality in Denmark is misrepresented as an existential national value of good Danish society and a characteristic of ethnic Danish women who lead "very different, liberated lives" (ibid., p. 146) than minority women, regardless of their ethnic background, even though this value is neither unique to Danish national culture nor is it equal.

These studies offer important insights into Danish nationalism that reveal a context for the study of belonging that is indeed exceptional. They suggest how both Danish history and cultural and integration policies function as problem distributors that influence the constitution of collective identities in Danish society. Drawing on Hervik's notion of a bipartite society, which will be used as a theoretical lens for this thesis, the articles challenge the existing consciousness that disregards the internal differences between members of the "homogeneous" groups of immigrants and ethnic Danes.

"Going on a Class Journey"

Marianne Holm Pedersen, a Danish researcher on everyday life and community participation among Muslims in Denmark, provides a different view of what influences migrants' experience of belonging. In her study titled "Going on a class journey" (2012), Holm Pedersen examined the impact of social decline among well-educated Iraqi migrant women on their perceptions of

and belonging in Danish society. She found that women's status in Danish society and the construction of social networks, as well as the way they perceive Danish society and their belonging to it, depend on how aspects of social class, gender, age, ethnicity and the local context in which they move influence each other. Based on their (previous) social class and education, the women recognised that they belonged to what they saw as the Danish national community, which in turn affected the choice of people with whom they wanted to socialise. Her participants felt that they were different then "other" migrants because of their specific characteristics, so they decided who they interacted with based on these constructed self-images and the images they had of Danes. Holm Pedersen therefore concluded that their experience of inclusion and exclusion depended on how the women constructed their belonging, rather than on how the Danes constructed an image of the foreigner.

Holm Pedersen's study is one way of filling the gap left by the one-sided interpretation of earlier studies. While these were more contextual in character, "Going on a class journey" took me into the world of women. The author's logic is that exclusion also comes into play as a reaction to how immigrants see themselves. Her article provides data on how the interplay of self-concept and notion of the nation shapes immigrants' experience of belonging in Denmark. She bases her study on the theory of intersectionality which, however, is not going to be my approach. This is because although the participants in our studies share aspects of identity, ethnicity as the most important signifier of otherness for Holm Pedersen's participants in the post-Yugoslavian case does not seem to play such a large role. Nevertheless, inspired by her findings, I decided to conduct a similar study using the theory of imagined communities.

Ways to Enter the Danish Community

While acknowledging the challenges of inclusion in Danish society and in fact publishing criticisms of Danish policies, several researchers suggest alternative ways to overcome extreme Danish nationalism. Their suggestions focus on the personal involvement of immigrants in promoting Danish values, but they also address changing images of kinship and what constitutes a 'real' Dane. Nauja Kleist (2007), a researcher on recognition, belonging and gender in the context of African migration, highlights the aspect of women's involvement through their engagement in association activities. She has found that such initiatives portray migrant women as having common interests with the Danish population, so that women are seen as resourceful members of society who behave decently and therefore deserve inclusion. Kleist believes that despite the different gender constructions of Danes and foreigners, values such as gender

equality are most likely common to both Danes and foreign women and can therefore make them fight together. According to her, unlike rigid governments, associations are more open and therefore an easier way to integrate. Moreover, associational activism is seen as a core value of Danish culture. Kleist noted that associations that advocate for women's rights primarily ensure women's belonging, as women's empowerment is in line with Danish aspirations for women in the world. Linda Lapiņa (2018), a scholar of cultural encounters in Denmark, on the other hand, takes a personal approach by suggesting that the key to a healthy correlation between an inner sense of belonging and the Danish community's recognition of belonging begins with immigrants' "becomings". She argues that 'Danishness' is not an "either/or category" (p. 8), thus immigrants can be seen as Danish and incorporated into the Danish community depending on how their various identity markers interrelate. For her, the perception that 'Danishness' produces exclusion is subjective and based on immigrants' emotions resulting from interactions with Danes. Lapiņa analysed the course of her passing as Danish as a woman of Eastern European origin who married a Dane in her early youth and moved to Denmark. She explains that her transition from Eastern European to Western body was driven by the images she constructed about herself and the images the Danish media created about the Eastern European population. She constructed herself based on the belief that Danes viewed her move as a "conservative, calculated, class-motivated and gendered manoeuvre to benefit from Danish social welfare" (p. 2). She understood that her age, origin and motivations for migration "intensified the gendering and sexualization of young Eastern Europeanness" (ibid.). At the same time, the Danish media portrayed Eastern Europeans as a threat from the spread of labour migration due to their accession to the European Union at the time. The author goes on to say that the subsequently acquired identity markers, which include mastery of the Danish language and a doctorate in philosophy, enabled her to re-imagine herself and be perceived as a native. Lapiņa explains that her new image brings her closer to being Danish and that she proved this rapprochement by managing to do something that (only) Danes do (i.e. the language). She discovered that because of her achievements, the Danish community tends to ignore other aspects, such as the foreign accent, that clearly make her an immigrant. However, the author suggests that in addition to effort, the presence of other immigrants who were more different from the Danes and her meant that she passed as Danish. The last alternative is offered by Mikkel Rytter (2010), a professor at Aarhus University who is involved in research programmes on culture and society in Denmark and who studies kinship images in Danish integration policy. Rytter believes that the Danish national community, i.e. the Danish "family", excludes immigrants because of its nature based on kinship images. Nevertheless, he

believes that immigrants can become "real Danes" because of new "strategies of kinship" (p. 312), which include, on the one hand, the change of kinship images through today's family patterns such as "single parents, couples 'sharing' children, the experience of having 'weekend siblings', alternative collective families, long-distance relationships of transnational families, the legal possibility of gay marriages and the right of lesbians to artificial insemination" (p. 316), and on the other hand, the change in the image of the "real Dane" through the granting of Danish citizenship to people from different ethnic backgrounds and multicultural marriages. The author argues that this creates Danes of different skin colour, religion and name, i.e. Danes with characteristics that are at odds with those considered to be an ethnic Dane. Such a changed Danish society also changes feelings and ties towards the nation, which in turn leads to the emergence of new images of the national community, Rytter concludes.

Taking these three perspectives into account, Kleist, Lapiņa and Rytter propose solutions for the integration of those who leave their ports for Denmark. Kleist's dissertation, which differs in its theoretical approach, has influenced my work methodologically because it is based on women's narratives. Her findings are also relevant to my study because of the ethnicity of her participants, who on the subject of inclusion, have a long history of being studied in comparison to post-Yugoslav immigrants in Denmark (which I will discuss in more detail in the analysis chapter). I found Rytter's study useful as it provides information on what could theoretically make an immigrant a Dane. However, he does not provide explanations as to whether political, social or personal views correspond to his theory. The importance of Lapiņa's study for my research lies in the European context it provides, on which there are fewer studies due to the prevailing discourse on the problematisation of Muslim women. Similar to Holm Pedersen, Lapiņa addresses the issue of self-representation and juxtaposition with other immigrants, on the basis of which she interprets her belonging. Moreover, as I read it, she brings in a perspective in which she combines inclusion with invisibility by obscuring the markers of her national identity. The subjective nature of the study in which she was the only participant raises the question of how far her findings actually extend. It seems that the intersectional view holds the lead in studies of women's belonging, including Lapiņa, therefore I will base my thesis on other approaches. Like Holm Pedersen, these three scholarly works contain elements of both imagined communities and the "us" and "them" society, and as such have influenced the direction of my thesis.

Chapter 4
Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I set out the theoretical foundation for my study. The chapter outlines the selection of theories and concepts that I found most relevant in building the theoretical framework and applying it to the data collected: the theories of imagined communities (Anderson, 1983, 1991, 2006) and gendered nationalism (Yuval-Davis, 1997), and the concept of the Danish cultural world of unbridgeable differences (Hervik, 2004). The three lenses will serve as tools to fragment the study and analyse the pieces (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). The concept of the Danish cultural world of unbridgeable differences and the theory of imagined communities will be used to analyse women's identification with media coverage of 'the foreigner' and the Danish nation, while the theory of gendered nationalism will be the analytical tool for interpreting women's self-construction as 'the other'. The individual lenses correspond to the respective research questions, but also complement each other. I understand belonging as a matter of imagination, and each of the three lenses takes this matter into account.

Theory of Imagined Communities

Benedict Anderson's seminal analysis of the meaning of nationalism and national identity, Imagined Communities (1983, 1991, 2006), is considered a landmark in transforming the field of nationalism studies as he rethought the definition of nation as a natural phenomenon (Christensen, 2014; Xidias, 2017). His central insight is that nations are a collective construct, namely "imagined communities" made up of nothing alike strangers who believe they belong to that community because of a shared identity such as history, cultural heritage, language and ethnicity. Anderson argues that the nation is imagined because people construct the image of a community based on a unity that results from a sense of shared values and interests rather than on familiarity. Since this research was in response to my concern that most of the female members of the Facebook group had a conceptual rather than a practical relationship with the host nation they talked about on a daily basis, I found Anderson's 'imagined' attachment to a nation a good starting point. According to him, the nation is imagined as a community because its members feel a "deep horizontal camaraderie" among themselves, regardless of possible inequalities. Anderson assumes that there is a multiplicity of imagined communities because an imagined community presupposes a community that goes beyond personal interaction. Emphasising the emotional power of nations constructed by people, Anderson argues that a threat to (imagined) national identity brings people together and drives them to fight. He

therefore explores the types of imagination rather than questioning their existence. Looking at the wall between Danes and immigrants or, as Hervik put it, the "us" and "them" society, I wanted to apply Anderson's theory to find out how women imagine togetherness in such a social setting.

According to Anderson, the notion of cultural unity among members of such constructed groups is based on promotion by the mass media. In his view, nationalism emerged with the advent of mass media printed in languages known to ordinary people (print capitalism, as he put it), as this made people aware of the multitude of people with whom they shared language. Anderson links people's identification with others to a sense of belonging to them. However, he argues that such awareness also awakens a sense of difference between 'them' who share common identity features and those with other identities (Anderson, 1983 in Drew, 2021). Thanks to the media, it could be argued that the whole world imagines, to some extent, a community with Denmark. If nothing, then equality, prosperity and "hygge" are comprehensible to many. On the other hand, Denmark is portrayed throughout the world as the most 'immigrant proof' nation. My intention is therefore to use Anderson's theory to analyse how the two modes of representation affect women's self-perception in the Danish community. Anderson compares the beliefs of nationalism to those of religion rather than political ideologies, but at any rate distinguishes nationalism from religion - while religions welcome everyone, nationalists restrict access for those not seen as belonging, under the pretext of the threat universalism poses to the nation. Accordingly, "imagination" and "community" are not the only attributes Anderson ascribes to nation-building. For him, the nation is also conceived (as) limited and sovereign. The nation is limited by the existence of other nations. In Christensen's (2014, p. 18) words, "this means that for a nation to exist, there must be other nations against which the construction of a self-definition can take place". Christensen's interpretation suggests that "nation" can only exist if the members of the imagined community exclude others (ibid.). I will use Anderson's exclusionary character of a nation to understand to whom women restrict access at the expense of their sense of inclusion. The nation is imagined as sovereign because of historical roots, Andersen says. The birth of the nation occurred after the collapse of royal and religious structures, when people began to see themselves as part of an imagined community to which they felt they belonged.

Concept of the Danish Cultural World of Unbridgeable Differences

The concept of the Danish cultural world of unbridgeable differences will be used to examine the effects of confronting anti-immigrant public discourse in Denmark on women's self-perception as Danish residents.

Peter Hervik's (2011) angle for rethinking nationhood in Denmark concerns racism and integration. In his view, Danish nationalism builds the ideology of the nation state against minorities. For him, the daily portrayal of immigrant identity and everyday life in the media has created an image of "incompatibly different out-groups who are not living where they naturally belong, thus their presence in the wrong place will create xenophobic reactions as conflicts appear at the fault lines between cultures or civilisations" (ibid., p. 37). Such an image has been accepted as reality by Danish society, which is why Denmark uses difference as the moral logic behind the exclusion of immigrants and calls it 'Danishness' which, compared to "whiteness" as formulated e.g. in the US, aims to hide inequality. Danishness (Danish: Danskhed) stands for a "co-operative and egalitarian similarity within Denmark and independent difference from the rest of the world" (Jenkins, 2011, p. 103). He calls the phenomenon "cultural war of values" (Danish: kulturkamp), which implies that through culture, rather than economy, the development of Danish society can be achieved (Lykkeberg 2008, p. 268 in Hervik, 2014, p. 164). In this respect, based on Anderson's theory, the Danish nation is a community whose members see themselves as culturally related and continuously develop ideas about Denmark because of their desire to keep the Danish nation alive. Consequently, the Danes determine who belongs to this community, which is largely conditioned by sharing Danish racial identity, and thus the living conditions of migrants in Denmark become a reflection of how the Danes construct them.

In contrast to Anderson's theory, which provides me with the basis for analysing the community with which women are likely to feel the same, I will use Hervik's concept of the Danish cultural world of unbridgeable differences (2004) to explore their attitudes towards the otherness created by the community with which they perhaps feel the same, towards a group with which they share an 'inconceivably different' identity. Since my informants' national origins mask their visual differences and their education and employment account for their fusion with their surroundings, I am interested in finding out which community they feel they belong to.

Theory of Gendered Nationalism

By applying the theory of gendered nationalism, I will analyse the role that gender plays in women's integration efforts.

Nira Yuval-Davis (1997), conceptualist of the gendered approach to the phenomena of nations and nationalism, suggests several ways in which gender and gender equality are constructed. She considers national and ethnic collectivities as inseparable constructions and addresses them in terms of Anderson's imagined communities. Yuval-Davis believes that gender is an essential element in the biological, cultural and political reimagining of national and other collectives in which women participate in national and ethnic processes in the form of: "biological reproducers; reproducers of the symbolic boundaries of ethnic and national identities; ideological reproducers of collectivities; the symbolic signifiers of ethnic-national differences; and participants in nation-building, and economic, political and military struggles" (summarised by Siim, 2021, p. 50). She distinguishes three gendered dimensions of nationalist ideologies - the dimensions of constructing citizenship of particular states, particular cultures and particular origins of people - and elaborates the importance of the roles that gender relations play in each of the three dimensions. In the context of the first dimension, the way women's status as citizens is seen in the public sphere is a reflection of how the state constructs the image of them based on their private lives, especially their family status. As far as the gender dimension of the construction of culture is concerned, women play a particularly important role in maintaining the traditions and customs of their culture of origin. From her perspective, women have historically had the role of upholding traditions, including through songs, cooking, dress codes and culture-specific behaviours. She therefore addresses them as guardians of borders. The last gendered dimension concerns the control of women as biological national reproducers. In this respect, in the context of belonging, women symbolise home and homeland in the collective imagination and are in many ways linked to children and thus collectivity because of the collective notion that collectives are constituted through family units.

Gender equality is an important indicator of modern nations (Abdou, 2017), which has brought women into the focus of nationalist discourses. While Yuval-Davis' theory invites us to look at the position of women in comparison to men in Anderson's imagined community of the Danish nation, I will use it to look more at the position of post-Yugoslav women in comparison to Danish women. As far as gendered nationalism is concerned, immigrant women are subject to exclusion merely for the fact that they biologically cannot produce the Danish nation, under

assumption of which I will be looking at the ways Yuval-Davis' reproductive symbolism excludes them.

Chapter 5
Methodology

Chapter five contains my methodological considerations, which are intended to contribute to the understanding of the research I have conducted. The chapter begins with an outline of my research approach and phenomenology. I then discuss the methods used to collect data and their contribution to the research. In the remainder of the chapter, I discuss my considerations of ethics that I took into account when conducting the study, as well as my positioning and its impact on the research outcome. In addition, the chapter introduces the participants and explains the materials and interview process.

Research Approach and Phenomenology

I was driven to understand women's worlds based on their interpretation of what was happening in that particular context, which is a common feature of social science researchers and a characteristic of qualitative research (Silverman, 2020). Thereupon, I approached the research with a qualitative methodology. As it explores the phenomenon from the perspective of those who experience it (ibid.), this approach was considered the most fitting to address the concern of my study and answer my research questions. It helped me to identify and discuss women's experiences and to find out what commonalities they have in experiencing the issue (Ibid.). One reason I chose this approach is my in many aspects shared background with women who participated in the study. In contrast to the descriptive phenomenological approach, the interpretive approach I chose assumes that the researcher's knowledge or prior engagement with the topic motivates them to conduct the study and helps them to collect and analyse the data (Horrigan-Kelly et al., 2016). An overview of prior knowledge has been provided earlier in the thesis, while my preconceived notions and shared experiences will be considered in the coming sections of this chapter. My final reason for choosing the interpretive phenomenological approach was my decision to interpret the findings through the use of a theoretical framework, which is a feature of such an approach (Lopez & Willis, 2004).

Sampling Methods

The study used a purposive, also known as a judgement sample, and a snowball sample (Taherdoost, 2016). The sample of women was deliberately selected so that each of the three countries was represented by nearly an equal number of women. Women who met the following inclusion criteria were considered for recruitment: 30 to 39 years of age, having completed a bachelor's or master's degree, having lived in Denmark for more than two years at the time of the survey. As I wanted to collect a broad range of data on women's experiences of inclusion in Danish society, informants with different affiliations to Denmark, who I thought might represent a broader group (ibid.), were selected for the interview: a woman in a relationship with a Dane, a woman in a relationship with a person of the same nationality, a woman showing a strong national identity of her home country, a woman showing a strong affection for Denmark, a woman running a support group for women from the former Yugoslavia, a woman showing a neutral attitude - inclined neither towards her home country nor towards Denmark. Three women were contacted directly after I had done a short preliminary research, which consisted of skimming their posts in the Facebook group and searching for information on their social media accounts. My pre-understanding of the sample accounted for the purposive sampling (ibid.). For the remaining participants, the snowball sampling was used, where either participants or acquaintances put me in touch with women who they knew met the criteria for recruitment.

Data Collection Methods

In order to obtain a more nuanced idea of the situation, I applied data triangulation (Flick, 2004), which consists of the research methods of interviews and secondary data analysis.

Interviews

The semi-structured and narrative interview method, a feature of the phenomenological approach, means that the researcher is guided by the desire to get to the core of the participants' experience, i.e. to understand what they experienced and how they experienced it, in order to then describe it comprehensively (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004). Given this shared motivation, I decided to collect data using the two interview methods. Their use was also significant to me because narratives connect to informants' identities (Kartch, 2018, p. 2 in Tsegay, 2020, p. 126) in a way that "they help people to create a sense of belonging and make meaning from their points of view" (Tsegay, 2020, p. 126). Using the interview method to collect data allowed

women to convey different trains of thought and comprehensive inner narratives, and brought me to understand their sense of narratives about themselves (Riessman, 1993).

The questions of interest were compiled into four separate sections and formulated into an interview guide for the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 1). It consisted of the following sections: Questions to collect basic demographic information (age, country of origin, ethnicity, marital status/household composition, education, occupational status including a brief employment history in the home country and in Denmark, place of residence); migration-related factors (year and circumstances of moving to Denmark - with whom they moved and for what reason); personal engagement and acculturation into Danish society (motivation and aspirations to integrate - willingness to become Danish, frequency of and barriers to social contact with Danes, social life before moving to Denmark); culture and national identity (perception of own or Danish national identity before and during the the life in Denmark, completion of the sentences "Them Danes", "We from Denmark", "We women from former Yugoslavia"); belonging, otherness and loneliness (perception of exclusion, inclusion and loneliness, feeling of visibility, solution to exclusion and loneliness). As I wanted to find out what was important to the women, I asked them open-ended questions, for example about their average week and the challenges they encountered. This would have given them the opportunity to highlight notable issues they experienced. Additional questions were directed to the administrator of the women's group to obtain information about her motivation for starting the group. The duration per interview was between one and a half and three hours.

All interviews were moderated by the same interviewer, namely me. They were conducted in Croatian, Serbian and the language of Bosnia and Herzegovina respectively, which are official languages of the three countries and variants of the former Yugoslav official language Serbo-Croatian (Harvard University, n.d.). The interviews took place from 20 February to 5 March, with the exception of one interview which was conducted in April. Each woman was asked pre-formulated questions that formed part of the interview protocol, supplemented by additional questions that arose from each individual interview. The women were not led to answer the questions and it was not apparent that they needed to be encouraged to expand on their answers. It is reasonable to assume that the extent to which the women responded expressed their desire to be heard. The same applies to the way they accepted the invitation to participate, notably "I am in", "sure, just say when". The latter could also be understood as doing a favour for someone of their own, according to one informant. The first interview

protocol was tested and filtered, resulting in a new protocol version. It turned out that the questions asked in the original version about the division of the post-Yugoslav nations into Bosnians, Croats and Serbs did not elicit different responses, as the three nations were addressed as one unit, as "we". The questions were therefore reformulated and disregarded respectively in subsequent interviews, with the exception of two questions that were posed to one more informant to confirm my assumption. In turn, the new question was launched in the form of ending the sentence "We women from former Yugoslavia". A variation of the excluded questions proved relevant in the interview with the Bosnian participant and was used accordingly.

Secondary Data

More to interviews, the study was based on correspondence between women recorded in the Facebook group of which some women were members. This gave me an insight into the way the women presented their understanding and construction of 'Danishness' and how they shaped their identities on their social platforms. Bosnian and Herzegovinian, Croatian and Serbian representations of Denmark in the media were also analysed (Molvarec, 2015). The book "Danci i Stranci" (Eng: The Danes and the Foreigners) by the Croatian author Kristina Wolsperger Danilovski was an important source in this regard (Wolsperger Danilovski, 2013). "Danci i stranci" is a collection of diary stories in the form of memoir essays in which Wolsperger Danilovski compares Denmark and Croatia and describes how the differences between the two cultures shaped her everyday experiences during her life in Copenhagen (Molvarec, 2015). This work was published as a result of letters the author wrote to her friends, who reportedly wanted others to hear her stories and encouraged her to publish it (ibid.). The book was met with great interest and became one of the most widely read easy-readings in Croatia at the time (ibid.). Based on the reactions to the book in various Croatian media (ibid.) and the findings from personal conversations with people, I dare to speculate that the book was a main source of information about life in Denmark for the Croats.

Sample: Presentation of Informants and Reflections on the Recruitment Process

Jelena (Bosnian, 35 years old) was introduced to me by her husband, who was a healthcare provider in one Danish municipality, and with whom I talked about my research as a part of small talk. He spoke to her and after she expressed interest, he sent me her phone number and we made an appointment. She was a mother of two school-age children who were being looked

after in her home because of the school holidays, so Jelena asked if the interview could take place at my home. During the interview, while she was talking, she slid from the sofa to the floor, leaning at times her back or hand sideways. She stood up, stretched and talked along. I understood it to be a manifestation of coziness. She offered her help with further recruitment, thinking out loud through her network of friends and acquaintances, and suggested advertising my quest. The next day I received Jelena's message with contact information and a brief introduction of three women who expressed willingness to participate in the study.

Vrijeska (Croatian, 31 years old) posted on the Facebook group defining her work situation and asking the members for advice on employment. Her previous posts in the same group were displayed and showed her involvement in advising a newly arrived woman in Denmark on work and life issues. I searched her account for related information and found that she was posting pictures with associated text supporting volunteering in Denmark and writing in favor of Denmark. I sent her a private message writing about what I had seen and asked her to participate in my research. She agreed on the spot. The interview with Vrijeska took place online, for the reason of her, at that time, location elsewhere in Europe, where she was sent to work for three months. She said that she likes to talk about Denmark and for this reason she was happy to take part in this research.

I knew Kristina (Croatian, 32 years old) from a short text message conversation that took place about a year before this research. The conversation was initiated by Kristina, who found out from a university colleague of mine that I had studied, which she considered. We became Facebook connections and I learned about Kristina, whose Croatian nationality inclined posts piqued my interest. This time I texted her, telling her about my research and asking for her participation. She agreed and we made an appointment. Due to personal circumstances, she asked for a few changes in our schedule. The meeting finally took place in the form of a video call via the voice platform "WhatsApp Messenger". At a late point in the interview Kristina's husband entered the flat after his work without knowing that the conversation was going on. When the interview started to loosen up, he joined the conversation because he remembered a situation Kristina had recently experienced and wanted me to know about it. The conversation deepened and new interesting information came to light. Their toddler woke up so Kristina left the conversation to comfort him and her husband took over.

I learned about Nataša (Serbian, 33 years old) through a Danish language lecturer for foreign students. The two had known each other for many years and had shared experiences. He put us in touch and we agreed to meet in person. She was invited to my flat, but could also choose the place where she felt more comfortable or preferred for other reasons. She chose to meet in a

cafe. The interview took place on a Saturday morning and the café was well attended. We happened to get a table in a corner, but had to be careful that the background noise did not drown out our conversation. We ensured this by placing the recording device on a vase-like decoration that adorned the window we were sitting next to, at the height of her mouth. Although we were initially aware of it, the setting seemed to be ignored as the conversation progressed. Nataša expressed feelings of nostalgia about the length of our stay while sipping coffee, saying that it reminded her of Serbia, where such a thing was part of the culture. After the interview, Nataša, who was a student herself, and I discussed my research, which she also looked at from an academic point of view.

Iva (Croatian, 37 years old) was the administrator of the Facebook group, and her posts largely determined the outset of this study. I sent her a private message, which she immediately replied in the affirmative, saying that I could definitely include her in my research. She preferred a face-to-face meeting to an online one, explaining that it was her "time for me" to get out of the house. The interview was thus arranged to be live, but in keeping with her weekly rhythm, it was moved to a series of fragmented conversations in the form of voice messages. I decided to give it a try, although I was worried about how this kind of information exchange might develop. First, I sent her a list of interview questions, to each of which she responded with a lengthy voice message. Then I listened to her answers again and asked additional questions about what else I wanted to know. She documented and sent her thoughts. Iva recorded during the commute, which was noticeable by occasional murmurs in the background. However, there was no discernible difference in the richness of the data, and the sum of time for the voice messages was the same as the time frame in which the other interviews took place.

Milica (Serbian, 34 years old) was recruited for this research on the recommendation of Nataša, as the two had studied together back in Serbia. We came to talk together after quite some time, as her request for a face-to-face meeting could not be fulfilled due to the Covid infection in her household. Milica told me that before our meeting she had talked to her partner about the reasons for participating in my study, wondering whether she wanted to help or be helped. Namely, she felt that it would be nice to help "a person from the Balkans", but she also felt that by participating she could meet "a person from the Balkans", to have someone of her origin in Denmark. Our conversation took place in two cafés, as the café where we originally met closed before the end of the conversation. The conversation situation was modeled on Nataša's example.

Data Analysis Method and Processing of Data

All seven interviews were included in the analysis. Prior to analysis, all recorded interviews were manually transcribed and parts of them were subsequently translated from Bosnian and Herzegovinian, Croatian and Serbian into English. Due to the different languages, the transcripts are not attached to the thesis, but remain stored on my server for possible queries. The method of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) was used to analyse the data for three themes: identification with 'the foreigner', identification with the Danish community and the role of gender. Each transcript was read through, sections of text were highlighted and what was perceived as a possible code was then singled out. The list of codes was evaluated and the preferred selection was organised in the form of a table. This resulted in a coding framework consisting of categories made up of codes. The framework was first tested on one of the transcripts to ensure that it did not require corrections or further advancements, and then applied to the rest of the data. Themes were developed and reviewed, and associated quotes were added. This approach to analysis meant that once the data had been extracted from the transcripts, it was reassessed and interpreted as a whole, rather than looking at the transcripts again individually. Excessive engagement with the transcripts could have risked influencing the development of biases (Verity et al., 2021), therefore I did not continue interfering with them. The aim of this analytical approach was to find out if the findings were applicable to my sample and the concern of the study, not so much to achieve generalisability (ibid.). Although this is of paramount importance when conducting research, it is difficult to demonstrate generalisability in a study of this scale (Golafshani, 2003). For this reason, I focus on the applicability of the findings and hope that my research design can be replicated and my findings can be applied to similar research of a more universal nature.

Ethical Considerations

Before I began collecting data, I informed the women of the purpose of my research and asked their permission to record the interviews and use the information they provided. Finally, the women were asked if we could keep in touch in case further questions arose or the answers needed clarification. I wanted to ensure that any possible indirect harm to the women I spoke to was excluded, so I anonymised all the women, although only two women asked for this, three of them encouraged me to use their names and one suggested that I address her by her initials. The administrator of the Facebook group may still be identified as the group itself can be found online, nevertheless, the group is closed, thus, personal information and

correspondence is protected. For this reason, and upon the informant's request, I have decided to include the information about her role (Muff Kristiansen, 2020).

My Position in the Research

I found the fact that I have a similar identity to the informants in the study an advantage, as it gave me immediate access to them. Would my origin not be of theirs, I believe the recruitment would take more time and persuasion. For some women, some of my characteristics such as gender and language (which could also indicate my ethnicity) were obvious from the first encounter, as I used my social media account, which included a photo of me, and I wrote messages in Croatian. The women who were recruited through the snowball method may also have been familiar with my age, my migration status and even my personal experiences, as they had heard about me through intermediaries who had this information. The shared identity made me an 'insider researcher' (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Being an insider meant that the women and I could relate to each other's experiences and understand each other's perceptions. The attempt to relate was evident in the first sentences of the women's responses, such as "I do not know if you had that experience/impression too" or "I do not know how you feel about it". Another advantage of the insider position was that there was less likelihood of asking naive questions compared to the researchers with other backgrounds (Tsegay, 2020). However, the insider role kept me alert during data collection and analysis to challenge my awareness that although I am part of the culture, I still could not understand the subculture (Rose, 1985 in Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 55). During the study, I also reflected on the power imbalance that women may have perceived (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009). For example, to reduce the chances of being perceived in a position of power, I asked the women to choose the setting for the interviews (Muff Kristiansen, 2020). I also made sure that I was touching upon what they perceived as a problem by asking them if I was posing relevant questions and encouraging them to bring in their own considerations to the table.

Chapter 6
Analysis

PART I
Identification

The first part of the analysis sets out to analyze and reflect upon how the six women interpret their understanding of the "othering" of immigrants in Denmark and how they position themselves within this context, along with how they identify with the Danish nation.

Identification with "The Foreigner": 'More Like Danes' Guests

The political climate in Denmark changed when a larger number of Bosnian refugees arrived thus turning the public debate about the presence of foreigners from economically problematic to culturally problematic (Kleist, 2007). Bosnian nationals were thus the first immigrants, the first "others", deemed to have a negative impact on Danish cultural identity. However, on the occasion of the admission of the Somalis, Danish tabloids and anti-immigration parties used the presence of the Bosnians to symbolize "sameness" with the Danes in order to contrast the "otherness" of the Somalis resulting from the intersection of their "mediaeval culture" (p. 127), skin colour and religion. With this picture in mind, I will first seek an answer to the question of how the narratives of the six women reflect the binarism between Danish and non-Danish residents and how the aforementioned representations influence their self-image. To do this, I will draw on Hervik's theoretical concept of the Danish cultural world of unbridgeable differences, which portrays foreigners as guests for whom Denmark is not a natural habitat.

Obedience to the Danish Rules

I begin my analysis with the case of the Bosnian informant Jelena, who emigrated to Denmark in 2013 for the reason of family reunification with her husband, a Bosnian Muslim with Danish citizenship, who came to Denmark with his family as a refugee from the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s. Her numerous extended family-in-laws are all Danish citizens with Bosnian and Herzegovinian roots who have lived in Denmark for about 30 years, and her children are Danish-born Danish citizens.

Jelena's diction was indeed colored by the distinctiveness of Bosnians among other minorities in Denmark. In her general experience, other nations were well integrated in Denmark too, but she saw Bosnians as standing out from the rest. This was not only her opinion about Bosnians, but she also knew documentaries that portrayed Bosnians as such. She held the same opinion for each of the five nations that once formed Yugoslavia. To help me understand what she thought distinguished Bosnians, Jelena explained it using the example of her Bosnian husband and his sister's Turkish husband. While the first man had mastered the Danish language from an early age and displayed Danish patterns of thinking and behaviour ("When he comes to BiH [refers to Bosnia and Herzegovina], he is like an alien. It takes 15 days before he starts to get the jokes. He has a certain calmness and does not clap his hands when he speaks."), while the other man, although born in Denmark, had an accent and had never accepted Danish culture.

> "So there are differences. And I am not saying that all Turks and all of us behave like that, we are different for sure, but there are differences between us and other migrants. I think our people want to fit in, and I know more young people who speak exclusively Danish, even if they are among us Bosnians, without Danes. Even Bosnian men take the Danish surnames of their wives, they want to become Danish. They are mostly well educated, have a good job and are good looking. Quality people I would say. And that's why I think the Danes give our people more support, opportunities, whatever you want to call it. But as far as other nations are concerned, there are a lot of nations that remain in their communities and do not want to learn a language, they work illegally, they live in ghettos, they just keep doing their way. But that is their decision."

Although it is not clear who other immigrants besides Turks Jelena was referring to, her description of other nations' lifestyles and their decision not to assimilate could be understood to correspond to representations of Muslim residents in the Danish media. Jelena's perpetual distancing from religion - she is an atheist and her Muslim husband, like the majority of Bosnian Muslims in Denmark, does not practise any religion - could be seen as supporting this interpretation. Jelena's understanding of Bosnians' obedient behaviour can be translated with Hervik's findings on the Danish public construction of migrants as guests who have to follow their host's rules (2004). In her view, the inclination towards one's own nation rather than adopting Danish cultural traits was a matter of decision by which "other immigrants" created their own problem (ibid.) of not getting the opportunity that the Danes granted to Bosnian immigrants.

Two Croatian informants, Iva and Vrijeska, shared Jelena's understanding of immigrants as guests and went on to explain how they thought one should behave in the host's home.

Iva brought up the attitude of some mothers she had met in the Facebook group she was hosting, who kept reducing their children's fever in Denmark with medicines from their home country. When her child caught a cold for the first time in Denmark, she looked for a medicine similar to the one she had used to treat her child's fever in Croatia, but learned from the pharmacist that this is not how it is done in Denmark. This lesson was enough for Iva to turn to the Danish healthcare approaches.

> "Many women here are shocked when they realise that you cannot do a blood test every time a child sneezes to find out that the child has a virus. There are mothers who brag that they got a pack of Neurofen [a fever-reducing medicine], so they have that here in Denmark. I say, look, I live here now, right. And I do not want to give my child something I brought from Croatia and then tell the doctor I brought it to myself. No, if the rules are like that, then I will just follow those rules, because I do not want to... I am not saying it's bad or the best, just like I do not think Neurofen is bad, but here there are such rules... Or if I use Danish health care, if I go to a Danish doctor who is also responsible for my child's health, then I will not perform magic at home, right."

As she said herself, Iva had read a lot about Denmark before moving in, and her narratives much resembled representations of the Danish nation in the Croatian media. Here is an example of such a portrayal, written by the author of the book "The Danes and the Foreigners", Kristina Wolsperger Danilovski, and published in the main Croatian daily newspaper as a "recipe for happiness":

> "Danes do not fall prey to the scam of the pharmaceutical lobby and do not give out medicines for nonsensical reasons, because - you do not die from most things. This is the mantra not only of average Danes, but also of their doctors. Plugs, syrup and compresses, first aid remedies for every Croatian mother, are mostly despised by Danish mothers. Just as unnecessary visits to the doctor, for example, for high fever or chicken pox, are generally despised." (Jutarnji list, November 30, 2013)

This was not the only example of Iva's compliance with Wolsperger Danilovski's instructions, as will be seen elsewhere in the analysis. Such representations of Danes taught Iva what the Danish rules were. Not only did she learn about Danes, but she also received a kind of warning about what behaviours would exclude a Croatian mother from the community of Danish mothers. The pre-understanding she had could possibly explain her conformist positioning in Danish society.

Vrijeska disapproved of the migrants' expressions of dissatisfaction with the people and the system in Denmark. She had understood that not everyone consciously chose to migrate to Denmark, but those who did should accept all the implications of their decision:

> "Ok, they are colder and more closed, but if you play by their rules, which they have set for themselves... That is why their system is the way it is. That's why we all like to be in a system where if you lose your job you are not left on the street, that's why we all love everything to be digital because everything works for us. Well, I mean, then you play by those rules, and sometimes you have to take a little step back because you are not fully in that society yet, but there's no point in saying they are like this and they are like that. This way of living and all the opportunities that I have been given, even if there is no opportunity that I want to take, I can create it myself and I will have the support of the environment. And that for me was the main reason why I adapted so quickly while others could not. (...) I do not comment on politics at all, I trust the Danish government completely. Even if Mette Frederiksen is not my favourite politician, I have enough trust in her, because why should I comment when I know she will do the best in the interest of the whole of Denmark, including me, because I am a resident there."

Because she worked in an international environment with English as a corporate language and her work occasionally involved extended stays outside Denmark, Vrijeska did not enrol in the Danish language school. As will be seen later in the analysis, she blamed much of her unruly behaviour on her exclusive encounters with Danes. "Now I really said it's time to learn the language. You know, it is clear to all of them that it is difficult to speak fluently, but if I want to get full respect from them, I have to learn the language," Vrijeska said.

Speaking about the Bosnian immigrants, Jelena also interpreted their devotion as an expression of respect for providing them with a home during the war. "For example, I do not feel comfortable speaking against Denmark. What am I doing here then! We have that ingrained in

us," she explained. Jelena understood that some older Bosnian refugees benefited from the Danish welfare system, but she felt that this was because they had experienced the war and "seen it all" and that their children were largely integrated. Welfare recipients, Hervik (2004, p. 262) argued, were unwelcome guests: "If there is no reciprocity and no good reason why the guest cannot compensate, the host becomes the victim of exploitation." By focusing on the good integration of children, Jelena likely saw this as making redemption for their parents' sins.

The three views presented were not held only by Jelena, Iva and Vrijeska. It was rather my informants' shared frame of mind to think of themselves as being the guests.

Compatible Appearance and Demeanor

The influence of the Danish neo-nationalist construction of the foreigner was also felt in the women's self-portraits. When asked what would enable a Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian woman to be accepted into the Danish community, they looked for answers in their physical appearance and characteristic Danish behaviours. Their self-descriptions were seemingly constructed around the characteristics that visibly distinguish a foreign woman from or resemble a Danish woman.

In Kristina's opinion, the way in would be for women from the three countries to appear cooler, calmer and dress differently. Although she expressed disbelief that such a thing could happen, because for her the differences were as clear as day and the women's faces were not "Danish", she gave in to her thoughts: "Yes, some of our women are blond too, but they look like they are from the Balkans or something, maybe from Russia, you can see it's not that. So, if we dress up, maybe we have a chance. A bit more urban behaviour. Those things." In Nataša's eyes, she had a pass, yet she interpreted her lifestyle and lack of previous experience as an irreconcilable difference. She did not have the "youth culture" of attending festivals like her Danish peers, nor did she frequently eat outdoors. She was also not a "member of a million associations" and she generally lacked the Danish belief that the world could change for the better, so she was constantly planning "for the dark days".

Jelena imagined that despite her "Danish" appearance, she had sharper features than Danish women. However, she stressed that she had never noticed "on her skin" that she was not accepted, although she had heard that " (...) they did that with some other migrants. Is it, this is going to sound ugly, because I am light-skinned? Is it the appearance itself," she paused and

wondered. She described the example of her child sitting in the schoolyard with two dark-skinned classmates when a man, who the girls thought was Dane in his twenties, came up to them and called them names because of their foreign origin. Her daughter was upset because she recognised herself as a foreigner in his descriptions, even though the man was calling the two classmates names. Jelena understood that skin colour played a role in putting her daughter in a privileged position compared to the two girls just because she looked "a bit more Danish". Milica also answered the question by highlighting her similarities with Danes. Although she was employed, had a Danish partner and was a professional in Skandinavistik, she noted that appearance was a key element for her inclusion:

> "So I would call it successful because, um, but, I think, um, that I have the advantage of not only knowing the language from the beginning. It's also a certain visual advantage because someone does not recognise that I am from 'across the border'. They already see me as someone who, um, who can be from here. It's not that I think... I mean, hair colour or eye colour is not that important, but we just have the advantage that we do not look like we are from... from the other side of the planet. Because I just cannot imagine how hard it is for people who are desperately trying to fit into an environment that does not accept them as their own at first glance."

Milica's statement could be understood as a double pass into Danish society. She felt included because of her resemblance to Danes, but also because of her dissimilarity to "people from the other side of the planet". What the other side entails seems to be in irreconcilable contradiction with the Danish outlook (Hervik, 2004), which could also be understood as a passport that Somalis ensured to Bosnian refugees in the 1990s. Although Jelena and Milica were not explicit about how exactly the different guests they were comparing themselves to differed, it was evident that their sense of privilege had to do with the intersection of at least their race and ethnicity, suggesting that the two identity markers of some immigrants (race and ethnicity) are a problem. Gender could be part of this intersectional equation, as the characteristics rejected by the Danish community (unemployment and physical appearance) are more prevalent among immigrant women.

Vrijeska aware of her physical dissimilarity considered herself looking as a Dane due to her efforts to appear as one:

> "For example, I can see from the way I dress that I am completely... You can still see that it's not entirely Danish, but I am, I dress completely differently. I started drinking beer because it's part of Danish culture. In Croatia I never drank beer. But in Denmark I started drinking beer. I do not think I am becoming a Dane in the full sense. But I am already a good part, I see for example that I am much calmer. I am much more patient. In Croatia I was always a bit nervous. I do not know, it was just such an environment, so I became such an environment. I love sitting by the canals, listening to music and just having fun with my friends. I do not necessarily have to go to cafés because they [meaning the Danes] do not have to. And that's why the Danish weather is not a problem for me. Because the way of life in Denmark is so inherent for me, that then the weather... OK It would be better if the weather was a bit better, but you know, when I am at home, I am sitting on my nice couch, everything is hyggelig, I have my lamps, I have my Netflix and a blanket, and I am fine. For example, what bothered me a bit about my Croatian friends is that now they have all told me that I have suddenly become a Dane."

Vrijeska merged with the Danish environment in exactly the same way that the media carried Danish culture out into the world. This brings us back to her quest for respect from Danish society as compensation for learning their language and condemning the misbehaviour of other migrants. Put together, the two pieces of the puzzle paint a picture of how she tried to achieve acceptance - namely, through complete invisibility to avoid the displeasure of her Danish hosts.

Recapitulation of the Section

My findings suggest that the women were in the guest mindset not solely for displaying gratitude to their host for meeting their unmet needs back home (Vrijeska's personal development and a fair state system, and a home in the case of Jelena's husband), and hence compensating by learning host's language and restraining themselves from criticism, but also because they stood up for Denmark when other migrants disobeyed. The women's understanding of inclusion fits with Hervik's theory that foreigners are seen as "outwardly defined population" (Banton, 2000 in Hervik, 2004, p. 253) whose biological characteristics, including dress and food, for example, are "to the point that it is unbridgeable" (Hervik, 2004, p. 253). Yet such a construction resonated differently with different women. While some understood that full inclusion of migrant women from post-Yugoslav countries was out of the question and therefore engaged in inspecting details such as different facial shapes and dining habits, others did not hear their names mentioned. Media coverage of foreigners as visibly

different from Danes, in accordance with Hervik's theory, influenced the women's reasoning of the presence of foreigners in Denmark as unnatural - for them too, it was taken as a given reality.

Identification with Imagined Community of the Danish Nation "I divide it into common sense and 'Balkan sense'": Iva

In this section, I set out to analyse the women's interpretations of their belonging to the Danish nation through two features of Anderson's notion of the formation of a community - the imagined and limited. Namely, according to Anderson (1983), a community is constructed as imagined and limited based on two conceptions of its members: shared norms and values within the community and the exclusion of threatening others who should remain outside the border.

Community Based on Exclusion of Co-Nationals

The women were asked if they could reflect on the idea of belonging to the Danish nation. The way they formulated this was rather interesting. Namely, the feeling of belonging to Denmark was derived from the feeling of alienation from their co-nationals.

I will start with Vrijeska, who, apart from the promising prospects for personal development in Denmark, left Croatia because of the people: "When I sometimes hear Croats on the street, I think, well, you really are 'hillbillies'." For her, Croats naturally belonged to the Balkans because of their clothes, their shoulder bags, the chains around their necks and their unseemly behaviour in public spaces, and she believed that the vast majority of Croats could fit into this image.

> "And then I kind of think to myself, it's no wonder we are perceived that way in Europe, because sometimes we really do behave like dilettantes. I have an example from Germany, because my sister lives in Germany, she lives in Munich, there are many Croats there. A Croat is in the shop and he sees a slightly bigger gap between the two people, and now the smart guy puts himself between the two people. He pretends to be stupid, but he's not really stupid. He's just an idiot. These little things that would not occur to a Dane or a German. Although that can happen with Danes too. I think they are so funny when they get on the train, there's no order or plan and they just go, they trample on each other, they are too funny."

That is why Vrijeska could not spend more than two days a month with her co-nationals in Denmark and had very little contact with her friends in Croatia: "I see that our mentalities are just... I am completely out of touch. Sometimes my mother says to me: 'Vrijeska, these are the girls you used to play with'. Well, yes, but I play in a different sandbox now." Evidently, Vrijeska has imagined the Danish nation through exclusion of Croats. Their behaviour could reinforce the obvious negative image that Europe has of Croats, and as such they pose a threat to Vrijeska as a Danish immigrant. By ascribing adjectives such as "hillbillies" and "idiots" to them, she clearly wanted to draw a line between them and herself, to cleanse her face of others' shared perceptions of her nation. It was eyecatching how Vrijeska's narrative changed when she gave an example of similar behaviour by the Danes. Again, she embodies the image of a submissive guest who by no means would upset them.

Iva guessed that her feeling of not belonging to Croatia was rooted in her personality or upbringing: "I do not know what to call it, whatever, but for a very long time and very often and very strongly I felt that I literally did not belong in Croatia."

Jelena distanced herself from Bosnian women: "I doubt that I will ever become a real Dane, but I also think that I have completely separated myself from the image of a girl from BiH." Although it is not known what is the real Dane and what is the image of a girl from Bosnia and Herzegovina, by "completely" separating herself, as in the case of Vrijeska, Jelena gave the impression that being a Bosnian woman was something undesirable. On the contrary, she did not exclude the possibility of becoming a real Dane, she only doubted it. She might have based her thoughts on a belief in common interests, such as, as mentioned earlier in the analysis, the preservation of Danish culture. Moreover, the population in Jelena's hometown in Bosnia and Herzegovina was Muslim and Catholic, and before coming to Denmark, Jelena lived with her immediate family, which consisted of two nationalities and three religions ("the real former Yugoslavia," as she said). Not wanting to choose sides, she felt that she never developed a sense of belonging and a need to be part of the Bosnian community. As much as she shied away from choosing a nation that cost her a sense of belonging, she was unspokenly on the Croat side, as was my understanding, when she brought the Croat origin of one of her parents to the fore when she talked about how the Bosnian nation was known in the world. For her, Croats had a good reputation because of the country's membership in the European Union and Croatia's popularity around the world as a holiday destination, while Bosnia and Herzegovina was represented exclusively in terms of war. "I think that Croats are still ahead of BiH, both in culture and in

the way they express themselves and look," she concluded. But unlike Vijeska, Jelena wanted to demystify the Bosnian nation by showing the positive sides of BiH. She heard from a Danish-Bosnian couple who wanted to get married in Sarajevo: "And now I want him and his Danish family and friends to like us Bosnians, our society and our country. I feel the need to tell them where to eat and what to see. To tell them to ignore what is wrong. And that even though I do not know these people at all."

Nataša's family background, like Jelena's, has shaped her sense of belonging to Serbia. Belonging to an ethnic minority, she had a different family name and did not maintain Serbian traditions: "I do not know, I always thought of myself as some kind of supranational being [laughs]. I do not know how to describe it." She also could not relate to Serbian nationalism:

> "For some reason, if you are not a nationalist by your sensibilities, and since it's a country where that's been the case for a long time, and now it's not like anything has changed... There is this nationalism that is quite, um, how should I put it - aggressive. Somehow there are many of us who do not want it to rule our lives. And we strive for that openness and for things to develop, for there to be an exchange, I do not know, and yet we are shaped by that, I do not know... 90s [refers to wartime], that growing up was not the best. This feeling of being closed, so they bombed us, and after that everybody else can travel, enter the EU, and we can not go anywhere. I do not know, we have this context, just when... Yeah, I do not think I feel Serbian, but on the other hand maybe because I associate it in my mind with a form of nationalism that is quite aggressive."

Milica, who did not feel she belonged to Serbia because of her different mentality, said that if only she could give up parts of her identity, it would be that of her ethnicity, considering that Serbia is known in the world as the main perpetrator of the Yugoslav wars (Glenny, 2012).

> "Somehow I do not want to get into situations where I am ashamed of my origin. Because the media has demonised this whole conflict down there. I do not want to say poor Serbs, only we were demonised. But I think that Serbia, from all my experiences, is kind of, looked at very badly. I mean, I can not blame them too much, because neither the Drina nor the Sava [refers to rivers in Serbia] can wash away what the media did. Phew, that got me a little carried away."

A Norwegian once asked her if it was true that Serbs hate Croats. Another time she was called a very unusual Serb because this person thought all Serbs looked like Roma. In this context, Nataša experienced being asked if people in Serbia use cars. Milica's first encounter with the Danish Immigration Service was equally bitter - because of her Serbian passport, the official suspected that she might be an illegal migrant. She was also disturbed by Serbia's patriarchal character, as well as bribery and corruption in the government: "It is a shame for me how we continue to practise this in our modern society, how it is that people cannot think healthier and elect better politicians in the government. How is it that we love our country so much and everything is in chaos." It seemed that Milica's sense of belonging had also influenced her Danish partner. He gave her a genetic test to confirm his suspicion that Milica's love of Scandinavia was also in her DNA.

Obviously, both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia were known in connection with the Yugoslav wars, the former as a victim, the latter as an aggressor. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina are better classified than Serbia, the status of victim might also sound provocative in the Danish context. It alludes to the need for aid to be given without expecting anything in return. For the "worned out" philanthropist Denmark, this may be unacceptable. In fact, it has to do with the shared history of Bosnians and Danes, as the arrival of Bosnian refugees has disrupted Denmark's image as a humanitarian world power. Accordingly, as mentioned above, Jelena wanted to reassure the future Danish groom with what she thought he knew about Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ethnic origin seemed to bother the two Serbian informants the most. They are described as haters, illegal immigrants and backward nation. Unlike Vrijeska and Jelena, however, they did not leave the impression that their idea of community involved discrimination against their fellow citizens. However, since there are such representations of Serbs, the image they have of community with the Danish nation was probably sufficient for them to sacrifice their ethnic identity.

It is interesting to recall how in the earlier analysis concerning their demeanor, Jelena's and Milica's ethnicity created a sense of privilege over their (dark-skinned and Muslim) fellow immigrants, while the same ethnicity was now a stumbling block that Milica's partner tried to remove by trying to prove that she was in fact Scandinavian.

Community Based on Shared Interests with Danes

Below are three examples of how women envisage communion with Danish nationals based on common interests. Since, as will be seen, the women again drew attention to their co-nationals, these are also examples of the explicit interplay of both features of Anderson's formula for nation-building.

First, Vrijeska expressed that people from the former Yugoslavia are often late, adding, "I am punctual, I always tell people beforehand if I am going to be late." Vrijeska was not only punctual, she was punctual like the Danes. Even though she did not express it in this sentence, she was clearly aware of this characteristic of the Danes when she suggested, during our initial contact, that we schedule the interview the "Danish way", that is, ahead of time. Let us look at how the pattern repeats itself in two of Iva's statements. Iva always had the impression that people from Croatia feel the need to show off their material possessions:

> "In Croatia it is normal that people live on credit to buy a great car because everyone sees that they have a great car and great clothes. And here I can say that it is not so important for them to have the most expensive things. For me it's totally normal to buy something in Bilka [a Danish supermarket chain] and wear it and get compliments on how great my T-shirt is."

The last example concerns the differences in Croatian and Danish attitudes towards children. While Danish children are allowed to run barefoot, sleep outside, eat fresh vegetables for dinner and be muddy, Croatian children have to be warmed up and cleaned and have to eat stew - a "sacred meal" in the Balkans, she commented.

> "My child also slept in the pram to the extreme during walks in all temperatures. I can not say it's because I am Danish, but maybe it's something that was common sense for me. Not necessarily Danish, I do not distinguish between Danish and Croatian, but I do distinguish between common sense and 'Balkan sense'. Nobody imposes on me here as much as they would impose on me in Croatia because my child is different."

Through her own example of modest consumerism, which matches that of the Danes, Iva positions herself in this seemingly impartial division of Croats and Danes in the "Danish team".

The same goes for the parenting model. Although Iva was confused at first, her reasons for not belonging to Croatia seem clearer now - the Balkan sense was tainted.

While it is not clear if and where from Vrijeska got the guide to Danish punctuality, both of Iva's comparisons consisted of ingredients of the previously mentioned "recipe for happiness" that the Croatian newspaper Jutarnji list shared with the Croats:

> "The Danes are an extremely thrifty people and save on everything. Non-purpose loans, which appear en masse in our country when we spend excessively, are extremely, extremely rare in Denmark."
>
> "The Danes firmly believe in the therapeutic effect of children sleeping outdoors."
>
> "Danish children rarely get sweets, and care is taken to eat raw food."
> (Jutarnji list, November 30, 2013)

These examples also show that women created their identities on the basis of the "co-national other". Nevertheless, these were also examples of identification with a place where the two women could practise their values without being seen differently. The media, i.e. Jutarnji list, can be seen as mediator who, by juxtaposing Danish and Croatian culture, translated the language of Danish culture into a language that Iva could understand. Not only could she understand the culture, but because of their common interests, she could also believe that she and her future community understood each other, which established the notion of her belonging to such a constructed community. The role of the media in women's construction of the Danish nation is not accidental. According to Anderson (1983), one could not imagine a community without the print media.

Recapitulation of the Section

Here too, the women placed their narratives in the scenario of "us" and "them", with "them" serving as a reference for the nationals of the three post-Yugoslav countries and "us" for the imagined community of Danes and the six informants. It is safe to say that these results are an epitome of Anderson's belief that the nation is an imagined and limited community, as the women, for the sake of their sense of belonging, felt that they had to exclude their co-nationals, on the one hand and have common interests with the Danes on the other. More than that, both

their imaginary sense of otherness and commonality with two groups of people sprang from the media, the key of Anderson's imagination. In short, all the women moved to Denmark in response to the alienation they felt towards their co-nationals and felt threatened by their presence in the mass media. For this reason, they looked for the elements due to which they would not be recognised as Bosnians, Croats and Serbs, or at least for the positive sides of their home societies. On the flip side, they learned from the media about Danish society and understood that they were already acting as promoters of Danish values and lifestyles in their home countries, which established their sense of community.

PART II
The Construction of Women as "The Other"

In the second part of the analysis, I want to find out whether or how women's experiences fall under the nationalist construction of foreign women as "the other". To do so, I will explore how their self-understanding corresponds to Yuval-Davis' dual role of women in the construction of national identities: women as symbols of the nation who embody national values, and women as mothers who pass on the culture to the next generation and reproduce the nation (2011).

'Less Like Danish Women' Women "You can take a girl out of the Balkans, but you can't take the Balkan out of the girl": Milica

While women considered themselves to belong because of their difference from the "foreigner" and their sameness with the Danish nation, their narratives of belonging became quite exclusive as soon as the element of gender appeared.

Superfluous Gender Equality

When asked what they considered to be fundamental Danish national values, the unanimous answer was gender equality. Vrijeska said that she knew for sure that she would leave Croatia and go to Denmark when, on one occasion a girl was treated unfairly by the Croatian system, she realised, "What message is this sending to me as a woman in my own country if I have a daughter one day?" The issue of gender equality triggered an avalanche of thoughts about the

different position of women in the home and host societies, which can be summed up in Milica's portrayal of women in what she called patriarchal Serbia:

> "Many of us are self-sacrificing. As for women. We sacrifice ourselves ceaselessly for something. Of course you have to sacrifice yourself for something that is important, but I think that many women in Serbia sacrifice their progress, their careers for the sake of that rule, that you have to start a family, that you have to get married. These are some unwritten rules that our parents demand from us. Many women in Serbia have woken up and realised how long this patriarchy has been going on. But they can not do anything because the rest are still stuck in the Middle Ages. The male side is resistant to this. They know exactly what they are doing. There is no understanding or respect for the different genders. When a woman rebels, there is also a risk of acting like an extreme feminist, and I often see men calling the one who rebels names. I risk generalising too much if I go on like this [laughs]. That's what you learn from an early age, what you have to do as a woman, what you have to think about. Here it seems to me that children learn from childhood that everyone should be involved. I see the involvement of both parents much more around the child. Again, I do not want to generalise, but this is something that strikes me. What else? There's no one shouting at you - meh, stupid woman. Or something like that. You often hear stupid comments like that down in Serbia. Here there is no such thing. I do not hear that here. Men, as if, I do not know, in Serbia at least, some of them... as if... it's like they made a child so that a woman has something to do. Maybe my experience is so bad, I do not know. I do not want to contaminate your research."

For Milica, the absence of patriarchy and respect for the "other sex", as she addressed the female gender elsewhere in the interview, was at the core of Danish society. However, when she experienced the other side of the spectrum, she reminded herself how much of the Balkans was profoundly instilled in her. Namely, there was a situation when she was exercising with her friends at her Swedish friend's house when his partner told him to take care of their crying newborn because she wanted to watch a TV show. "It was like someone had turned the whole world upside down. You can take a girl out of the Balkans, but you can not take the Balkans out of the girl," Milica laughed. She also felt that gender equality goes a little too far, citing as an example the equal share of female politicians in parliament and female managers in the workplace, as is the case in Denmark. One thing in particular struck me as she elaborated on her thoughts. Namely, she said that women are "too caring and unwilling to step on others to get ahead". It looks like she was making a clear division between the sexes by describing

women as non-political carers and men as naturally suited to fighting. Her statement can be read as a reflection of Yuval-Davis' theoretical view of gender and nation, in which men are aggressive defenders of the nation, while women are seen as producers of the nation. The Serbian gender divide, as interpreted by Milica, could be seen as the embodiment of a backward society divided into the male and the "other gender", whose existence is merely of a reproductive character. Nevertheless, although she did not approve of Serbian values at all, it seemed Danish values were too modern for her, and so she rejected Danish women's ideas of equality. This clash somewhat draws on the Danish nationalist strategies that aim to preserve national identity by portraying Muslim women and Muslim families as too traditional to fit in (Hervik, 2012). In the Danish world, where culture is a key differentiator used to justify racialisation (ibid.), by taking such a position, Milica might be seen as someone who is taking a risk to become a target of Danish nationalists.

Jelena might also fear this. Although gender roles in her family were outwardly complementary, she considered Danish feminism unreasonable:

> "So that's a bit of a Bosnian woman in me talking. I think it's all forced, and that's why there are some divorces. As competition. If he works, she needs that too. A woman can and should be a CEO just like a man, a woman can work 40 hours a week just like a man, but again, why does it matter if a man takes paternity leave for the same length of time as a woman, for example. Personally, I would like to work part-time. Because I would not want to lose the community at home. I would like to be involved in bringing up the children. (...) Even if I carry a heavy bag, I give it to my husband. We are not the same here. I tell him to carry it, it's heavy for me."

Similar to Milica, Jelena's description took on the character of (post)Yugoslav nationalism, in which a man's national role was to be a working citizen whose masculinity had to do with physical strength. Jelena, on the other hand, positioned women in the private sphere - at home - and granted them a role of 'community' carer. According to Yuval-Davis (1997), the family represents an isolated, apolitical institution that renders women who identify with it publicly irrelevant. This could mean that if Jelena chose to live as she prefered, working part time and having more time for her kids, it would weaken the state budget and exclude her from the public sphere as a Danish resident (Walby, 2000). It could be argued that Jelena embodies an image

of women as reproducers of a nation, but the Bosnian nation she advocated puts her and her family in direct conflict with Danish nationalism.

Interestingly, both Jelena and Milica, who spoke out against gender equality as practised in Denmark, were the only ones among the participants whose partners were Danish citizens. One could conclude from this that not only were the attitudes of the two women at odds with Danish nationalism, but also that their Danish partners probably accepted it. Such families could, in Rytter's view, be seen as creators of a nation whose members have loosened ties to the nation (2010).

Nataša, who in the past has been involved in cooperation between a Danish school and immigrant parents from post-Yugoslav countries who needed help understanding and adjusting to Denmark, concluded from her experience:

> "Despite the fact that most women went to work and were a pillar of the family, I think there were somehow some elements of tradition in the upbringing of children. I don't think the Danes really like that. Gender equality is very important to them. I don't know, I think the Danes really like, or rather they don't like to hear and feel it when someone emphasises another nationality too much. And that someone maybe emphasises... that someone isn't sure if they're a Dane, with themselves, or that they want to be in Denmark, or that they don't like something in Denmark so much."

Although Nataša's task was to work with both male and female parents, the very fact that she shared the experiences of mothers could support Milica's and Jelena's connection of women with upbringing. It is conceivable that Nataša's Danish colleagues also recognised their traditional parenting, which is likely because Nataša, being their fellow citizen, could see the difference. In this case, it could be argued that the school as a public institution intervened in women's private lives by constructing images about them based on their nationality. This interpretation can also be applied to Kristina's case. Although she did not feel as such compared to Danish mothers, she said she appeared as a "helicopter parent" who believed that a newborn's place was with the mother and therefore hesitated to enrol her child in daycare until the age of two. This was something that Danish mothers rarely did. When she finally decided to have her child looked after in a day-care centre, the institution she preferred refused to accept the child because she was not well-versed in the Danish language.

Post-Yugoslavian versus Danish Women

When I asked the women to give their thoughts on the sentences "Them Danes", "Us from Denmark" and "We women from the former Yugoslavia", I was surprised that the last sentence evoked a dissociation and even a condemnation of Danish women. I understood this to be a result of the gendered form of the sentence, but wondered why the sentence "Them Danes", which I assumed was more exclusive in its form, actually evoked reactions of unity with the Danes. Below are examples of how the informants in the study distinguished themselves from Danish women.

Kristina believed that she could benefit from sharing the personality of the Danish women: "They are quite their own. It's not like you can mess with them. But as for me as a woman, I can not say I want to be like them." Iva agreed: "I can not say that I can identify with Danish women. They are not for me the idea of something I would like to be in life."

In many situations Nataša felt different from the Danes and blamed herself for this difference: "But then I think I am okay in the sense that I am not exactly like the Danes I imagine." It was not clear if Nataša's comparison had to do with gender, but during the interview she realised an interesting point: "I was generally thinking about the fact that I do not have any female Danish friends, I have more male Danish friends than female ones, that's very interesting to me." Nataša was in fact the only informant who not only had Danish friends, but had an extensive network of Danish people she felt close to. She was, in fact, studying Scandinavian languages and literature in Belgrade, Serbia, and as part of this she spent a semester as an exchange student in Denmark, where she fell in love with a young Dane and moved to Denmark after graduating in Serbia. As a professional in Scandinavian studies, she immediately started working in the field of Danish primary education as a native speaker and mathematics teacher for adults with migrant and refugee backgrounds. At the same time, she enrolled in and completed the Danish Bachelor's degree programme in Education. However, among this rather extended network of Danes, the women with whom she made lasting friendships were from Southern or Eastern Europe.

Clearly, identification with Danish women was unimaginable for women from the former Yugoslavia, and the three examples below will show why this is so, based on the symbolic and reproductive role of women in the creation of the nation.

Although Jelena felt that she had adopted 90% of everything considered Danish, and was careful that her daughters did not feel different or miss anything about Danish culture and tradition, she was determined to implant characteristics of Bosnian women in them. For her, being a Bosnian woman meant being devoted to home, marriage, family, neighbours, parents, the sick and elderly, and work, unlike as she put it the cold Danish women who easily disregard such things.

> "We were brought up to care and court, to flatter, to entertain... I think it's just ingrained in me, I can not change it. And I think I will keep thinking that way and I think that's how I'm going to raise my daughters. I still have the Bosnian authority and respect to instill in my children that my parents also instilled in me. It has to do with the fact that our upbringing was so rigid. What I do not like about Danish women is, as I said before, that individualism, as good as it is, it can also be bad. I mean, that quick change, going over things, that someday, it will get back to them at some stage of life where they stay left alone with their vitamin D lamp [refers to the light therapy lamp used in Denmark to treat depression]."

For Jelena, the hallmark of her Bosnian identity as a woman was clearly concern for others. Plagued by the idea that the display of care would make her unacceptably different and thus excluded, she tried to hide this from the eyes of the Danes. For example, she struggled to adapt to Danish views of older people and kept checking to see if her elderly neighbours needed help carrying groceries up the stairs or giving the seat to elderly people on public transport. When her Bosnian-born Danish husband pointed out to her that this might offend older people because she was questioning their physical well-being in this way, she decided not to abandon her cultural principles, but simply to adopt a strategy that allowed her to continue living her values. That is, she stayed close to them to keep an eye on their well-being and if she saw an elderly person coming towards her, she excused herself and pretended she had to get to the next bus stop.

Jelena once again confirmed her image of an inherent threat to Danish nationalism, but this time the threat was of greater proportions. That is, she was not only against the promotion of Danish national values, but she was also raising her daughters to "threaten" the Danish nation. Her sense of duty to teach her daughters what she learned from her parents serves as an example of the cultural transmission that women are obliged to do in Yuval-Davis' conception of

nationalism. Despite Jelena's comment that her desire to pass on Bosnian culture was a possible result of the rigid upbringing, it seems that she could not let go of it at any cost. However, she was aware that if she dared to act openly, so to speak, instead of hiding her true self between the walls, this could mean symbolic exclusion, as she would stand for a woman living beyond Danish norms and defying Danish rules.

Milica, who was not a mother, believed that motherhood was an essential part of women's post-Yugoslav national identity, and so her example was filled with symbolism of motherhood:

> "We like to please. We like... we like to indulge. Somehow we have this kind of motherly attitude even towards our partners. I think that's something that Danish men are crying out for. Because their families... I do not want to say they fall apart, but they separate when the children leave the mother's nest. I think we have a good sense for the little things that others like. To spoil others. We know a little better. I say that from experience, because that's how we have been conditioned since childhood."

While Jelena provided an example of the reproductive role of women, in Milica's words the woman represented the symbolism of motherhood. It was interesting that Milica did not experience motherhood in the sense of giving birth, but since, as she said, women in Serbia are conditioned to be mothers, she felt that she was one. For her, the mother is home ("mother's nest"), and following this train of thought, home could also be translated as nation.

Although the last example is a replica of two earlier examples, I find the fact that it comes from Vrijeska particularly valuable. Since she was the loudest advocate of the Danish nation while censuring people from the former Yugoslavia, I wondered if she would be willing to assimilate.

> "Well, complete assimilation I would not say, because I still love some values that my family and the Balkans as such instilled in me. Let us just say it's completely inconceivable to me that they break up terribly easily, for example. While we will do a little more work on these things, which is typical for me, I would do the same. Another thing: when I invite people, it would not occur to me to ask them to bring something extra. I invited you, I will offer you my food and drinks, I will always make sure that my guests have everything. I am just a real Balkan host, I always have a table full of everything. So I do not think I am becoming a real Dane in that sense. When I come home from Croatia, it's classic, like all our people, I buy a suitcase of 23 kilos and there are no clothes, only food. And then I have

> people in the house all week. You need to try sausages, cheese, I do not know what to bring, um, chokeberry juice, jam, ajvar, everything, come and taste. And then I show it with pride. In Croatia it was completely normal for me. The Danish men are crazy about the Balkan women - you know, they'll make me coffee and they won't send me to hell."

Such a view does not seem to fit Vrijeska's understanding of the Danish structure, which she advocated in the first part of my analysis. Obviously, the inclusion of gender has brought about changes. In addition to the change in narratives about identification with the home and host country, Vrijeska's case was interesting from two other perspectives. First, she drew attention to the gendered dimension of the construction of culture by upholding the tradition of her nation through the proud reception of her guests in Denmark, and second, she constructed Danish men as attracted to this tradition. If we assume that the Danish family is fragile in its structure, the outward display of familial affection by the women from the former Yugoslavia could perhaps highlight the exemption of the same feelings in Danish women. This in turn can also be seen as an attack on the Danish family, as it highlights their problems and presents a solution that is not in line with the Danish way of life.

Encounters with Danes

In the concluding reflection of the second part of my analytical chapter, I will consider how gender and nationalism interlink with language, motherhood and age, which will be shown through the women's encounters with Danes. In this regard, I will tell the stories of Kristina and Iva.

Kristina’s Story

"They would always run away from me. And from my child. Even children. Incredibly, these children are robotically taught to run away from foreign children as well." These are the words by which Kristina described her encounters with Danish mothers at playgrounds.

When Kristina moved to Denmark, her head was in the clouds, she said. She thought that the Danes were the best people and she wanted to get to know them. However, since she worked in the tourism and hospitality industry, she felt that she was out of reach of the Danish people. For this reason, she tried to enroll in studies, as I wrote in the informant's presentation, with the aim of improving her situation in Denmark, solely because she believed that this would bring people into her life. However, she was a mother of a toddler and wanted to expand the family,

and her professional background as an art historian limited her in choosing a profession that could increase her chances in the Danish labour market. She also felt that, given her age and family situation, she could not start from scratch and embark on a bachelor's degree programme. She attended a language school two or three times, but due to the international work and everyday environment, she could not use the language, so she never mastered it. She met a Danish language professor who said that the main reason for people not continuing to use the language is that the Danes do not understand you, and that such reactions humiliate people because they feel they have said it correctly but get the feedback that they are not understood. She compared it to Germany, where you can pronounce the language in different ways and be understood, but in Denmark that's just not the case ("Well, why they do not understand, is it a question of their intelligence or are they really so deaf, I do not know what the problem is, but here it is."). Kristina's husband, who, as mentioned earlier, joined the conversation at one point during the interview, was determined to practise the language every day. He went to language cafés to practise, knowing that it was a Sisyphean task:

> "There would not be need for such things to exist if... nothing would be needed, nothing would exist if they, the Danes, were more open. That you can hang out with them, that you can actually have Danish friends, that you can talk and learn with them. And this is why these cafés are organised, that you go there to talk, ultimately not with Danes, but with people who are not Danish, who are also learning Danish. It's again... Even if I managed to master the language completely, I would not have made any progress. But again one would have felt less excluded from this society. When you call the institutions, not to ask in English or anything like that. But that your social aspect will improve, that is, your friendship with the Danes - no. I doubt it. I know countless examples."

Nataša, the specialist in Scandinavian studies, mirrored their thoughts: "I think that the Danes should accept a little that there are foreigners who speak a little strange Danish, but that does not mean that they do not belong here. But when someone constantly points out the things that divide you, it just reminds me that maybe I do not belong at all."

On the other hand, Vrijeska, who was determined to befriend Danes and actively contribute to Danish society by volunteering to care for the elderly and participating in an English-language support group for cancer patients, still felt she was not doing enough to fully integrate. During lunch breaks, for example, it happened that colleagues she was sitting with switched to Danish

when she checked for work emails on her mobile phone, and when she raised her head, they continued speaking Danish. "But it was not because of them, it was just a natural human behaviour that they displayed, and it was another step for me to do something to belong. It is up to me to learn the language, they will not learn it for me," Vrijeska concluded. A close international friend of hers also had a Danish flatmate, at whose parties Vrijeska occasionally found herself in. Vrijeska thought that all of them spoke excellent English, but when they were together, they spoke Danish. Once when they were playing a board game and had to guess associations, they told Vrijeska that they would rather play the game in Danish.

> "I would talk to all these people too, but anyway, then I say to myself, let's go, and go to the city and hang out with people who speak English. That's what I always do, I go where I belong. In those moments I lose a bit of willpower, but that's because I don't speak Danish. That's still entirely up to me. Because they always ask me where I come from, what brought me to Denmark, what I like here, what I do, they're always curious. If I spoke Danish, I'd probably talk to a bunch of them all night."

Failure to create any kind of meaningful connection with Danes, made Kristina feel generally excluded. The Danes' rejection has affected Kristina's zeal for social life:

> "What has happened to me, um, is that I'm not as friendly and sociable as I was when I lived in Croatia. It's pure psychology, you know, when you hardly have anyone for years, and even if you happen to have someone, you don't feel like it anymore. You know, the habit of loneliness leads to that. So when you're constantly in this vicious circle, you get a kind of Stockholm syndrome. Somehow this loneliness has hijacked you, and as much as you hate it, you love it."

When Kristina became a mother and thus turned her life towards her family, she realised that integration alone would not be enough to belong, as she had to give up her traditional views on motherhood in order to assimilate into Danish society, so she gave up on her pursuit of Danish people. Her sense that motherhood had to exclude studies and vice versa can be understood as a traditional gender role division as shown by the example of her delaying the registration of her child to nursery because she believed that children should stay with the mother, as mentioned earlier in the analysis. Furthermore, it was obvious that her traditional views clashed with the Danish view of the concept of a constructor of culture when her two-year-old child was rejected at a nursery because she did not use the Danish language, and if we place this

within the framework of the woman's role as a constructor of culture, it was her duty to transfer the language to her child. Her husband, who like her had a background in art history, also had to change his career, although his motivation to learn Danish did not diminish, even though he felt that making friends with Danes was unlikely. This could be a good indicator of how gender can play a role in integration, especially when looking at the family and the role of gender in different cultures.

For this reason, I kept the language in mind a little longer using the examples of Nataša and Vrijeska. Although the two examples differ in that one woman feels excluded because of it and the other feels guilty about it, both examples show that language is an important symbol of the Danish nation that foreigners cannot take care of, even disregarding the contribution that Nataša and Vrijeska make to Danish society, Nataša through her professionalism in Scandinavian studies (which indeed also means passing on culture to others, but perhaps not to a sufficient degree, since as a foreigner she cannot pass on culture in as pure a form as Danes would, and furthermore she was passing it on to immigrants who, as seen through Hervik's theoretical lens, are not deserving of Danish culture) and Vrijeska through her voluntary work. Again, Vrijeska volunteered to fill the gaps that the Danes could not, namely the gaps that concerned immigrants.

Iva's Story

Encounters with Danish mothers were not easy for Iva either. Everyone told her it was impossible to make friends with a Dane. But she did not want others' experiences to define her life, so she started several projects to connect with women, starting with the mothers of her child's kindergarten friends. She invited them to Croatian dinners and organised playdates for their children. At the same time, Iva wanted to build on her more than 10 years of professional experience in marketing and established appropriate networks. To this end, she did an internship for a marketing project in a Danish start-up company, where she worked to bring money into the company by trying to attract business partners from Croatia. For two years she worked as a volunteer in a well-known Danish start-up company run by two women. Then she started a Facebook group to bring foreign and Danish women together: "It was a kind of hope. It was kind of a crazy idea to attract Danish women." She also blogged about and promoted networking projects organised by the Danish government for newcomers to Denmark, although she was matched with a British woman who did not seem to have a Danish network herself and so could not help her. Nothing brought a Danish friend into her life. So she decided to start a

Facebook group to gather women from the former Yugoslavia: "In the end, I was doomed to really just hang out with our women." I wondered if she felt lonely as a migrant woman in Denmark to which she replied:

> "Well, I'll tell you honestly that I haven't felt that kind of feeling, that kind of loneliness and not belonging since we came here because... Maybe it sounds a bit shabby now, but my husband and my child are really everything to me in the world, and as long as I have them by my side, I can't be lonely at all, right. Maybe there have been moments when I've felt a little lonely and isolated, but it was so insignificant that I didn't pay much attention to it. I've felt lonely when I've tried to relate and socialise and it hasn't, um, it hasn't come back the same way, even partially."

Iva invested excessively, but the fact that she brought a touch of Croatia to every encounter may have blocked her access.

Iva said that it was natural for her that Danes did not have encounters with foreigners, as they had their own lives and did not really manage to get in touch with other people because of the fast pace of life. Age was indeed the main reason for the women's interpretation of the lack of encounters. The women believed that it was not so much because of the Danes, but because of their age: "I think it's a trap that it's very easy, that it's imposed on you as a response, um - the Danes are like that, the country is different, but no, it's more because we are older, so it's harder to meet people," said Nataša. Milica expressed a similar opinion: "It's just that sometimes I sit there and imagine conversations. How pathetic that sounds. But I just have to put myself in situations where it's possible to find a company here at the age of 34."

Iva's efforts can be linked to personal growth, and her case perhaps points to the 'inclusion through becoming' that Lapiņa has explored in her own case (2018), but the fact that Iva began her Danish adventure at a certain age led her to understand her belonging in more exclusive terms. One could argue that age played an important role in women's experiences of inclusion, but even more so was the way age intersected with gender and nationalism. Both the symbolic and reproductive functions attributed to women in the context of gendered nationalism may have most to do with women in their thirties. This is due to the symbolism having to do with women of childbearing age, which in the geographical context of Europe today is usually realised in women's thirties.

Iva was undoubtedly the "protagonist" of this thesis, whose story was significant for me because it shed light on the lives of post-Yugoslav migrant women in Denmark, whose rather difficult position in Danish society shone between the walls of her Facebook group. Iva was not only the protagonist of my story, she also seemed to be the lead character of her group. Indeed, her position in Denmark was doubly challenging, firstly as a woman who, despite sharing a common language, did not fit in with the Danes she imagined, and secondly because she did not share common views with the members of her group. In short, she was often the target but also the archer of arguments in which the members of the group condemned her efforts to belong to Denmark and, conversely, in which she denounced their lack of effort. This is not surprising given her thoughts about not feeling at home in Croatia because she had different interests from the Croats, and the fact that she only formed a group when she realised that, despite all her efforts, no Danes entered her life. It could be argued that she was looking for alternatives to belonging to Danish society, so she herself created a world of "others" with whom she felt no camaraderie. Indeed, the women in her group were not only from the former Yugoslavia, with whom she had no common interests, but were also outcasts of Danish society who, in reaction to their own exclusion, used the group to highlight cultural differences and ridicule the Danish nation.

Recapitulation of the Section

In the second part of my analysis, I brought gender into play and the narratives took a different turn. I analysed the women's attitudes to three topics of interest: Gender equality, comparison with Danish women and encounters with Danes, and came up with quite interesting results. Gender equality, which they liked and thought was the highest Danish value, turned out to be too modern, which provoked their criticism of it. Their interpretation of gender roles both in society and in the family sphere involved a traditional division in which women were associated with procreation and community and symbolised home and motherhood. For women constructed in this way, it was natural to be excluded from public and political life in order to take care of their private community, in contrast to the individualistically oriented Danish women. Their interpretations seemed to be in line with the images about foreign women that were part of the Danish collective consciousness, which could explain their rejecting encounters with Danes, both in public institutions and in the sphere of everyday encounters such as children's playgrounds. Not only did the women feel different from Danish women (with no

intention of changing this, unlike the case where gender was not in question), but they also dared to criticise their female hosts (which was the opposite in the first part of the analysis too). These things can also be linked to their exclusion from Danish society, which is particularly evident in encounters with Danish women. The results showed that the lack of meaningful relationships with Danes made them feel excluded from the society they thought they belonged to because of the shared values, which led to loneliness and being alone. The experience of these feelings was accentuated by the role that age and motherhood played. In summary, the building blocks of Danish and post-Yugoslav women for the creation of nation and nationalism seem polar opposites, so that post-Yugoslav women seem to identify with the reproducers and signifiers of national boundaries and differences.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

Drawing upon the theoretical framework of imagined communities, the Danish cultural war of unbridgeable differences and gendered nationalism, this thesis has investigated the belongingness of well-educated women in their thirties who immigrated from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia to Copenhagen, Denmark, and lived there for more than two years.

I have chosen Denmark as my case study because of its distinctive nationalism, which consolidates homogeneity in history, and its radical immigration policies, and focused my research on this particular group of immigrants for the following reasons: women, because gender equality is an indicator of Danish national identification, which is threatened by the more traditional family roles of foreign women; women in their thirties, because this is the age at which women are likely to start a family and therefore fit into this framework; post-Yugoslav origin, because of the lack of interest in intra-European migration; and well-educated due to Denmark's high demand for highly skilled labour migrants, meaning that women are likely to meet the predisposition of employment, a key determinant of inclusion. The influx of women targeted by this study can therefore be interpreted as a desirable exchange. Evidently, the case of the three post-Yugoslav nationals is not generalisable, but it can speak to the challenges of other migrants in the Nordic countries, all of whom share the identity of the 'Nordic Other' (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2016). Finally, in the world of population movements, the question of belonging should be seen as an everlasting and all-inclusive phenomenon.

Before diving into the research and analysis, I hypothesised the following about what I expected to find: *female immigrants from post-Yugoslav countries in Denmark understand their belonging, hence their lives are shaped on their interpretation of the Danish-built image of an undesirable "other" and understanding how they themselves fit that image*, which I tested in a way that sequenced my theoretical framework so that each theory served as an individual analytical tool for each research question. Accordingly, this thesis theoretically suggests three conclusions:

Research question 1: *How does the media portrayal of foreigners as "the other" influence women's self-perception and positioning in Danish society?*

The women interpreted their understanding of a foreigner, constructed by the Danish media and embedded in the Danish collective consciousness, as the reality that should not be questioned. The foreigner does not look like a Dane, does not behave like a Dane and does not think like a Dane, so the differences should be acknowledged. My findings show that the women have been 'infected' by what Hervik calls the 'Scandinavian nexus of exclusionary thinking' (2015, p. 68) rooted in anti-Muslim racism. In their understanding, belonging means being invisible. Some women felt they fit into the image of the foreigner, others felt they did not. The latter were prevalent.

Research question 2: *How do women understand and interpret the community with the Danish nation?*

The results have shown that the media created a sense of community of "culturally akin" Danes and the six women, where belonging means excluding others. Belonging also means not belonging to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia or Serbia respectively.

Research question 3: *What role does gender play in the experience of belonging to the Danish nation?*

The embodiment of (post)Yugoslavian femininity and motherhood obviously represented the greatest deviation from Danish norms, which the Danish mothers fought against by isolating Kristina and Iva. In Yuval-Davis' view, belonging to a nation was conditioned by women's gendered performance and responsibility to multiply the Danish nation. The results of this analysis show that the women were neither symbolic nor reproductive representations of the nation, as they did not exhibit behaviours and thoughts that were consistent with Danish women. It could be argued that their innate urge to protect their own nation placed them in such a position that their access to Danish society was undeserved and thus limited. That is, because the women could not properly fill their gender roles, their discourses did not correspond to those of concern for the Danish nation, so that the women could not claim belonging and their

self-constructions exhibited characteristics of the 'other'. Despite their demonstrative commitment to Danish society, the fact that they lead different lives made them fail to prove their cohesion with the Danish nation, which commanded their experience of belonging.

The nations that have been studied to such an extent in terms of integration and have been present in Denmark for so long and so strongly could be understood as a solid sample for tracking patterns in the inclusion of a particular culture in Denmark. The sample could be even more valuable as it can be studied from the point of view of comparing progress in integration when the national group has chosen to migrate as opposed to when it has been forced to migrate. Since this is seldom an interest, I argue for focusing on voluntary migration in the present, taking into account the experiences of migrants already living in Denmark - their hardships, but also aspirations. Accordingly, I think women's stories are crucial. In the words of Yousafzai (2019), we hear about them, but not from them. The price the diaspora pays for living in economically advanced countries is that they are viewed mainly through the lens of the benefits they reap, and this view is shared by both locals and people in their home countries. They are inclined to believe that material prosperity brings with it a life devoid of problems. Because of this limited view, people tend to overlook the vulnerabilities of migrants. Challenges such as belonging, which was the subject of my research, not to mention identity issues, loneliness and aloneness, have a significant impact on people's well-being, which, combined with the absence of family and friends, housing issues and language barriers that migrants face, creates insecurity in their lives. I therefore call on future researchers to study the inner processes of migrants while they live in Denmark and ask that a little more attention be paid to women because of the difficult image Denmark has of them. The topic should and must also be examined from the perspective of male immigrants, as homogeneity-driven Danish nationalism as such is by no means more merciful towards men. In order to get a more comprehensive picture and perhaps find a solution that includes women from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia (inclusive in fact of women of any nation) in Danish society, I suggest that researchers examine the case I have studied from the perspective of Danes, especially Danish women. In studies of the emotional impact of the exclusion that migration brings, the interest, if any, is focused on the population that immigrated out of necessity and not out of choice. However, when researching the emotional impact, it is important to remember that the issue affects the entire population and focusing on a narrow group excludes just about the largest population on the move at the present times.

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